

# The Comet II

October 31, 2020

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Booker T. Washington Foundation

[www.bookertwashingtonfoundationsc.org](http://www.bookertwashingtonfoundationsc.org)

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## \* DEATHS \*

Deaths will not be reported as a separate category. They will now be reported under each class news.



## From the Desk of the President . . .

Greetings Washingtonians!

In April, U.S. House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn announced that South Carolina has received \$1,043,897 in National Park Service (NPS) funding from African American Civil Rights Historic Preservation Fund grants dedicated to preserving the sites and history related to the African American struggle for equality in the 20th century.

After several years of seeking additional funding to support the continued restoration of the Booker T. Washington High School Auditorium, the National Park Service has committed \$500,000 to begin the next phase of rehabilitating the auditorium building, including the restoration of windows, placing safeguards against water intrusion, and installing additional display panels chronicling the school, the community, and the civil rights movement.

## **Popular UofSC civil rights exhibit will have a permanent home** **Grant will fund restoration and upgrades to Booker T. Washington Auditorium Building**

Posted on: April 9, 2020; Updated on: April 9, 2020  
By Carol J.G. Ward, [ward8@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:ward8@mailbox.sc.edu), 803-777-7549

Booker T. Washington High School, Columbia's first public high school for African American students, has a powerful history as a significant landmark in South Carolina's civil rights history. Civil rights leaders J. Andrew Simmons, Septima Clark and Modjeska Simkins taught at the school in the 1920s and 1930s, and NAACP attorneys Matthew Perry and Lincoln Jenkins attended the school as students, along with many other individuals who were active in the community.

The auditorium building, which the University of South Carolina acquired after the school closed in the 1970s, is the only remaining structure of the original 4-acre school complex. Renovations and historical preservation in 2013 not only made important physical upgrades to the building on Wheat Street but also created a space for permanent displays to highlight the school's six-decade history — 1916 to 1974 — of educating students and future leaders.

- Continued on page 5 . . .

## Class of 1943



Hello Washingtonians!!!

The "Faithful Few" have been staying as active as we can these days and still gathered news here and there.

Nathaleen Martin Jenkins celebrated her birthday at Red Lobster on August 21st. This was indeed a very special treat. Our wish for her is that she continues this special day for years and years to come.

Speaking of birthdays, Betty Jefferson "Nanny" Hassell's, '58, children took months of planning for a drive through celebration. It was unforgettable to see so many cars, vans, motorcycles, police department and many other friends, families, former co-workers, and other well wishers, being of good cheer, ride by her house with signs of congratulations and encouragement. Walter and Ida Jefferson Jackson, '55, and Josephine Jefferson Hall called the three of us the "Golden Girls" Thanks to everyone who was a part of this great occasion. We also pray Betty has lots and lots more birthday celebrations.

We heard our classmate, Hattie Mae Adams Marley, continues to do well. Her children have become her caregivers.

We sadly report, at this time, the passing of our dear classmate, Celestine Kennedy Grant, in Denmark, SC. Our Thoughts

and expressions of sympathy were shared with her family. She earned her B.A. degree from Benedict College in 1946. She was very successful throughout her lifetime. We will cherish the memory of those days with her at our Alma Mater.

Our devoted and very supportive classmate, Rubye Brown Collins, also passed away. She loved her family and friends. She was especially proud to be a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School. Rubye attended class meetings sometimes when only three of us were present. Thanks to her nephew, Tom, who lives in Marietta, GA, for taking care of his aunt.

Another classmate, Paulene Blocker Richardson, recently passed. More information is forthcoming.

A Celebration of Life, Legacy, and Memory was held at Bible Way Church, Atlas Road, October 8, 2020 for Deacon Leroy Bolton. He was a member of Zion Pilgrim Baptist Church. He was our community leader for years. He served as president of Act Work for Arthurtown, Little Camden, Taylors, and Washington Park. Your reporter represented at his services.

Be Blessed,

Josephine Jefferson Hall, Reporting



## Kudos and Shout Outs

**Josephine J. Hall:** She is closer to 100 than she is to 90, but she is the first to send her class news and it is always on time. She has done this ever since I began working with the newsletter in 1995.

**Alonzo Phelps:** He has been as consistent as J. Hall. I may have to call him sometimes now, but he comes through just fine. He also researches and verifies news when I call and ask him and he does not have the answer at hand.

## Class of 1955



Well, Washingtonians and especially our classmates, we thank GOD we have made it through another quarter, although the COVID-19 virus is still very present and contagious.

I am still on deck, holding on and hope you are continuing to practice distancing and other precautions.

I watched the virtual Heritage and Scholarship program and Fundraiser on Friday July 31, 2020. I really enjoyed it to the max. By seeing my grandson in the 2020 BTW Foundation Scholars really made me proud. I only wish my aunt, Fannie Phelps Adams, could have been here to witness this occasion also. I know she was looking down and smiling proudly with tears of joy and congratulation.

Well my time for writing has dwindled, since we do not meet right now, so I let our president, Ida J. Jackson add to/complete our report.

Let us continue to pray and keep each other lifted up in prayer. We cannot do anything about the current health crisis that is affecting lives worldwide. We must pledge to call each other and stay prayed up, knowing God is in control. I call and check on several of our classmates as often as I can. We are 80+ years and it is a blessing that God continues to let His Holy Spirit fall fresh on us each and every day.

Prayer List: Georgella Blocker Foust, Mary Brown Jones, Oretha Kenly Young, Gloria Johnson Prileou, Janie Jackson Chapman, Karponia Lewis Prince, Carrie Bell Tucker, Walter Jackson, and Elder Martha Anderson.

Alonzo Phelps & Ida Jefferson Jackson, Reporters

## Class of 1956

Hello Washingtonians,

I thought about not contributing any news for the class this quarter, but I could not allow the last issue of The Comet II for 2020 to not hear our voice.

We have not been meeting, but several of us try to stay in touch.

We are elated to know that classmate, Sarah Griffin, will soon be back in her house. A fire can be devastating. We are thankful that all of her family are safe and there were no injuries.

We are continuing to adjust to the "new normal" for safe living and continued good health.

Several people have said they tried to call me, but got no answer. This is my information, Phone: 803-622-3956; E-mail: jjohn-niepatt@aol.com. If I do not answer right away, I will eventually return your call.

- Johnnie Mae Corley Patterson, Reporting

## Class of 1963



Greetings,

Because of COVID-19, we have not been able to have in person meetings. Communication for BTW/ CAJ Class '63 meetings has been challenging; however, we are in the process of investigating social media avenues in order to keep in touch with classmates in a non - contact group setting. Presently, we've had to rely on phone calls from classmates to receive pertinent information, but prayerfully this will soon change and we can again start planning some of our usual activities or perhaps broaden our horizon.

**Condolences:** The Class of '63 regrets to report the passing of **John Rumph**. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

James E. Parker and Jacob Jones, Reporting

## Scholarship Information



The Booker T. Washington Foundation has several scholarship opportunities available to graduating seniors. All applicants, except for the Susan B. Freeman Scholarship, must be the legal child or grandchild of a Columbia, South Carolina Booker T. Washington graduate. Susan B. Freeman Scholarship is restricted to seniors planning to attend Benedict College. Applications are available on the BTW website: **[bookertwashingtonfoundationsc.org](http://bookertwashingtonfoundationsc.org)**. Applications are scored independently by each committee member using a rubric. Scholarships are then awarded to the applicants with the four highest combined average scores.

The Scholarship committee reviews applications submitted. Scholarship recipients are recognized at the Heritage Weekend Banquet and are acknowledged at the John Work Chorus on Sunday.

Questions may be directed to Doris Johnson Andrews (803)754-7736 or email [dorisandrews33@gmail.com](mailto:dorisandrews33@gmail.com), Geraldine Stroman Parker (803)754-8093 or email [parkergrs@bellsouth.net](mailto:parkergrs@bellsouth.net), Ida Spells English (803)779-3734 or email [minnieschild@yahoo.com](mailto:minnieschild@yahoo.com), or M. LaNelle Kohn (803)865-1547, or email [sciencelady@gmail.com](mailto:sciencelady@gmail.com).



The BTW Foundation tries to help graduating legacies reaching to new academic heights.

## Desk of the President Cont'd from page 1 . . .



More than 4,000 visitors toured *Justice for All: South Carolina and the American Civil Rights Movement*, the popular and successful 2019 exhibit that shined a spotlight on turning points in South Carolina's civil rights history that influenced nationwide change.

Now, the university will continue rehabilitation and preservation of the historic building, built in 1956 and named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2018, to create a permanent space for the Center for Civil Rights History and Research's exhibit *Justice for All: South Carolina and the American Civil Rights Movement*. Funded with a \$500,000 grant announced by the National Park Service this week, the restoration will advance efforts to create a destination for people to learn the history of Columbia and of the school.

"The National Park Service grant will enable the university to expand earlier efforts to rehabilitate the historic building and address some long-term maintenance issues," says Bobby.

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"The National Park Service grant will enable the university to expand earlier efforts to rehabilitate the historic building and address some long-term maintenance issues," says Bobby Donaldson, professor of history and director of the civil rights center. "But for us, one of the more exciting components is that a portion of the funds will be dedicated to developing a space where the *Justice for All* exhibit may continue and be available to the general public."

The popular and successful **2019 exhibit** shined a spotlight on turning points in South Carolina's civil rights history that influenced nationwide change. More than 4,000 visitors toured the exhibit, which showcased historic items from more than 60 university library collections. The center, launched in 2015, is a collaboration of University Libraries and the College of Arts and Sciences.

"University Libraries and other faculty have built an impressive archive of historical material that is housed in multiple sites on campus. This will provide a space where students and the general public can now see many of these items firsthand and up close that have been largely stored away in boxes for preservation," Donaldson says.

The Booker T. Washington restoration is one of **51 projects** across 20 states and the District of Columbia that will receive grants totaling \$14 million from the African American Civil Rights grant program, which is funded by the Historic Preservation Fund and administered by the National Park Service, Department of Interior.

"The preservation of these projects is an invaluable investment in the campuses, communities and individuals they serve," says S.C. Congressman James E. Clyburn in announcing the grant. "I am pleased that these funds will continue to allow our communities to learn from the civil rights movement and the important role that South Carolina played in making America's greatness apply more fairly and equitably to all of its citizens."

Clyburn, a strong supporter of UofSC's Center for Civil Rights History and Research, donated his congressional papers to the center in 2015.

- Continued on page 7 . . .

**Booker T. Washington Foundation**

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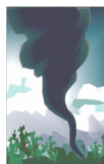
E-mail: jcpatterson@netzero.com

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**About Our Organization**

The Booker T. Washington Foundation began as a way to remember our school which closed in 1974. It was a way to keep the family together and to give our legacies an idea of why we are so passionate about our Alma Mater. Scholarships are awarded to persons who apply and withstand the rigorous prerequisites and requirements. The dues for membership is \$35.00 per year, payable by April 15 of each year. \$25.00 of the total helps pay for utilities and up-keep of BTW/Montieth Cultural Center.

Our Motto:  
"Lest we forget."

**Class of 1964**

Members of BTW Class of 1964 participated in the culminating activities of Heritage Celebration: John Work Chorus and the Millennium Society Induction. There were songs chosen from previous John Work performances. One of the songs chosen was a dynamic rendition of "Hold On" led by classmate, Melvin McKie. For Class '64, that was one of the highlights of the evening.

COVID-19 is still a challenge for our lives. We have not been able to meet in our traditional setting; however, we still manage to keep in touch via telephone, text, Facebook, email, and ZOOM. It still appears that we will be suspending the rest of our in person 2020 activities. We really miss that personal contact, in-person meetings, and other celebrations. We know that life, as we knew it, will never be the same again. Thankfully for us, no one in our class has been reported to be suffering from COVID-19. WHAT A BLESSING!

The Class was able to participate in a drive thru parade on October 31, celebrating the birthday of Barbara Seabrook Spry. We met in Ephesus Seventh Day Church parking lot, put the finishing touches on our decorated vehicles, and proceeded down Meadowlake Drive to the cul de sac where we circled to come back up Meadowlake Drive where we stopped to share well wishes with Barbara who waved from her porch. There was a huge celebratory Happy Birthday banner on her well-manicured lawn that was provided by her family.

Members of who participated in Virtual John Work Chorus, Millennium Society Induction, and/or Barbara's Drive-thru Parade include the following: Frances Jenkins (Matthew) Addison, Dolores Herbert Anderson, Doris Johnson An-

draws, Jasper (Sandra) Brown, Eugene (Denise) Carter, Eunice Watson Cornelius, Jessie Thorne Edmonds, Julia Prince (John) Edwards, Wardell (Ella) Epps, Emma Dell Reese Ford, Clarence Goodwin, Mary Wilson Guinyard, Ann Gardener Jennings, Melvin (Jerald) McKie, Lorenzo Mills, Albert Noble, Geraldine Stroman (James) Parker, Samuel "Tank" (Rosa) Pelzer, Frankie Campbell Point, Gloria Richardson Priester, Barbara Seabrook Spry, David (Gloria) Tucker, and Jacqueline Washington.

**Kudos**

Congratulations to **Genitra Andrews Hypolyte**, daughter of **Doris Johnson (William) Andrews**, on being inducted into the Millennium Society. Doris' nephew, Wilton Kitt, was a featured speaker.

**Condolences**

Class of '64 regrets to report the passing of two classmates: **Fredrick Boston** and **Charles Trapp**. Our thought and prayers are with their families.

Doris Johnson Andrews and Geraldine Stroman Parker, Reporters



## Desk of the President Cont'd (from page 5) . . .



In addition to creating a permanent home for the *Justice for All* exhibit, the grant will fund restoration of the building's historic facade by repairing water damage to the brick masonry walls and refurbishing the architecturally significant original windows. The building also currently houses the university's TRIO programs, which serve low-income and first-generation college students, and the College of Arts and Sciences' lab theater program.

Continuing preservation efforts affirm UofSC's commitment to documenting and interpreting the history of the movement in South Carolina and the nation and will help strengthen partnerships between the university and the Booker T. Washington High School Foundation and the Ward One and Wheeler Hill neighborhood organizations.

"The University of South Carolina is fully committed to the center and its mission to foster our clear understanding of the past, our appreciation for the present and our shared vision of the future," says university President Bob Caslen. "We are grateful to the National Park Service for this grant funding. Special thanks to Congressman Jim Clyburn for his support of this important project, which will serve as a reminder that our true strength comes from both our diversity and our unity. Through the center, we hope to empower individuals to come together with knowledge and understanding and move forward with a purpose that will elevate our community and our great state to new heights."

Donaldson says the work that will be funded by the grant will remind the broader community of the significance of Booker T. Washington High School by expanding the interpretive history and telling a deeper story.

"It's not just a building on our campus," Donaldson says. "The BTW auditorium has a much longer and deeper history that has a far-reaching meaning for the community. The hope is that space will become a destination where you can learn the history of the civil rights struggle in South Carolina, but also where you can learn the history of the school and the community around it."

Credits:

[https://www.sc.edu/uofsc/posts/2020/04/04\\_booker\\_t\\_washington\\_grant.php#.X6Wi9YhKiUI](https://www.sc.edu/uofsc/posts/2020/04/04_booker_t_washington_grant.php#.X6Wi9YhKiUI)

<http://www.sc.edu/>

<https://clyburn.house.gov/press-release/congressman-clyburn-announce-more-1-million-african-american-civil-rights-historic>

Article submitted by,  
Gloria Susan Graham Boyd, '65  
Booker T. Washington High School Foundation, President

### From the Booker T. Washington High School Foundation . . .

The Board of Directors extends its thanks to Congressman Jim Clyburn and Dr. Bobby Donaldson for finding and providing opportunities to perpetuate the history of Booker T. Washington High School.