

From the Office of the President

Fellow Pirates, more than 300 alumni and friends celebrated the 2016 Adkin High School Alumni Reunion during Labor Day weekend. Alumni came from every section of the country to participate in the celebration of our proud legacy, while renewing relationships with classmates, friends and family members in the Kinston community. The City of Kinston and the local business community joined the National Chapter in extending welcome to returning alumni. Much of this spirit was captured by *The Adkin High Mirror*, published by the Reunion Committee of the National Chapter.

Key concerns in the business meeting involved the election of two new Board members to fill vacancies arising from resignations, the status of our application to the North Carolina Historical Preservation Office regarding the listing of the Adkin Gymnasium Complex in the National Register of Historic Places, and on the success in raising funds to complete the new roof on the South-North/ East-West L section of the Gymnasium Complex. Two members of the Board resigned their seats on the National Board, Jesse Wiggins, our financial secretary, and Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and Claude Randolph, Chairman of the Building Committee. By vote of the members present, they were replaced by Felix Coward, a former president of the National Alumni Association, and Rita Joyner. Felix is now the chairman of the Building Committee. Rita is the national Secretary.

I was delighted to inform alumni that the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office was favorably considering the Adkin High School Gymnasium Complex (The Charles B. Stewart Alumni Center) for national recognition as one of the nation's historic sites. This was in recognition of the 1951 student walkout during which 720 Adkin High School students marched to the court house in protest of the inequality of educational facilities provided for black and white students. The story of that march has become an official part of America's history. It is a part of the digital collection of interviews of more than 130 stories of the African American experience that have been collected by the Smithsonian, a part of the holdings of the Library of Congress and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

We have been informed by State officials that the problem holding back our application for historical recognition of the Adkin High School Gymnasium Complex is related to the vinyl casing covering the 38 windows of the gymnasium itself. Our immediate problem has been in raising sufficient funds to remove the vinyl cases. The problem of the vinyl cases was brought to the Board's attention at the time of the fundraising that was being undertaken to complete a major section of the gymnasium's roof.

We were successful in raising sufficient funds to complete the roofing of the section of what we have referred to as the L-shaped roofing pattern over the south to north corridor and east to west corridor of the gymnasium complex. The project cost \$26,000.00. Mr. Ray Sutton, the roofer, discounted the last \$1,500.00, making the cost \$24,000. One of the local motor cycle clubs contributed to our fundraising initiative.

On the matter of raising money to complete the roofing of the entire gymnasium, I would like to acknowledge the leadership role played by fellow Pirate Theodore Gooding in bringing our need for financial resources to the forefront during the Reunion. During the Alumni Banquet Dinner, he challenged Pirates and Friends to pledge \$1,500.00 to this project. More than fifty pledges were made, and many of them have paid their pledges. I was delighted to see the support of alumni.

In the second week of October, 2016, Hurricane Matthew struck the Adkin Complex with devastating winds and near record flooding. The Hurricane struck as we were moving forward with our plans for development, which also included strengthening our ties with the community. Among these, Audrey Nobles, Board Treasurer, had just received a Walmart Community Grant to sponsor a health fair at the Gymnasium Complex to provide health and community resource information. We had hosted The African American Heritage Commission of Kinston/Lenoir County first Annual Funk Festival, which was organized to honor Maceo Parker for his contribution to the establishment of funk and jazz. We had made the Complex available to churches, families, as well as to the local motorcycle club. Now other community organizations are inquiring about its availability as a venue for holding social and cultural events at the Center.

Restoration of the Complex is well underway thanks to the contributions of alumni and the availability of financial resources from the North Carolina

Community Action Program which made it possible to hire five unemployed workers from the community who are working under the supervision of Felix, who is a retired architect, and two retired workers in the building trade. These two skilled workers have been paid with funds from our fundraising. We owe Felix a great debt of gratitude for volunteering his time and expertise. This is a project that one professional company had estimated to cost at least \$175,000.

As we look forward to returning to our mission, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for your support. Marilyn Patrick and Audrey Nobles deserve special recognition for helping to collect emergency supplies and funding for this restoration project. When it is finished, I will post a comprehensive report of our expenses.

Charles Jarmon  
President