



# WPHS Alumni News

Volume II, Number 1

West Philadelphia High School Alumni Association

March 2012

## Mayor, Dignitaries 'Open' New School

### Challenge Made To Students By Speakers

With the Mayor, School District officials, and other dignitaries in attendance and participating, the new West Philadelphia High School was official opened on September 6, amid much ceremony and entertainment in the gym and cafeteria.

It replaces the old school—on Walnut Street from 47th to 48th—after 99 years.

Located at 49th and Chestnut Streets (on the site of the former West Philadelphia Catholic High School for Boys—for those older alumni who have not been to the old “neighborhood” lately), the new building was designed to serve the nearby community as well. The school, which extends along 49th Street to Market Street, has two gymnasiums, a computer lab, a huge library, among its host of other special features.

The principal architect for the new school is Emmanuel Kelly (June 1961) of the firm Kelly/Maiello Inc. The \$66-million school meets the standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), which means it qualifies See **SCHOOL**, page 4



Mayor Nutter, Alumni President Paula McKinney-Rainey were among the speakers. The Junior ROTC Presented The Colors.

### 4th Bowling Night Set for April 28; Aids Scholarships

Volunteers are being sought to help with the Alumni Association's fourth annual “Bowling for Scholarships” Night on Saturday, April 28, at the Gehris Lanes, 65th and Market Streets, Upper Darby, PA, from 8pm to midnight.

The \$30 cost includes the charge for the shoes and the bowling ball, as well as the food and drinks, and entertainment by a DJ.

Help is needed in advance, as well as on the night at the bowling alley.

The annual event is the Association's main source of funds for the presentation of awards to two graduating seniors. Last year, enough

See **BOWLING**, page 3

### 1st 'Pavers' Installed In Centennial Courtyard

Sixty-five “pavers” have been installed in the Centennial Courtyard, in an area set aside in the school's grounds.

Intended to enable alumni to memorialize family, friends, their classes, and their favorite teachers, the special bricks measure 4 inches by 8 inches by 2 1/4 inches. They carry up to three lines of copy. Each line can take 20 characters (including spaces and punctuation). A selection of six “clipart” is available, in which case the maximum characters per line will be 12. The art that is available is on the order form.

The “pavers” cost \$50 each, with or without artwork.

Part of the proceeds from their sale will go the Alumni Association's Scholarship Fund.

“The Courtyard is at the entrance used by the students,” said Alumni Association President, Paula Mc-Kinney-Rainey, “and we hope they will be inspired by the names and the classes that have proclaimed their pride in being from West Philly.”

Three teachers are among those memorialized in the first group.

Copies of the necessary forms may be had by downloading from the Association's web-site: [www.wphsaa.org](http://www.wphsaa.org). A separate form is needed for each paver. Payment, made out to WPHSAA, must accompany each order.

### Jack Marshall Dies; Was President of 1st Alumni Association

John “Jack” Marshall (June 1938), the first president of the fore-runner of today's Alumni Association, died in December. He was 91.

When the association was formed, in 1940, to satisfy a growing demand that there be some sort of organization for the alumni of the school, Marshall, who had been president of the student government in his senior year, was voted president.

He served for two years before he joined the Navy in World War II. Upon his return from active service, he resumed his ties with the alumni association and was one of the signers of the Charter creating the formal organization, in May 1952, and maintained his active support for more than 25 years. (The Charter for the incorporated Association hangs in the Alumni office in the new school.)

In addition to being the student-body president, Marshall starred in several Shakespeare productions (for which West Philadelphia was nationally famous), and was voted “peppiest” member of his class.



(Above) Before installing the bricks in the Courtyard, some of them were aligned in the shape of a “W”  
(Right) One of the bricks after installation



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*From the President . . .*

*Welcome to the fourth edition of the WPHS Alumni News, from our new home in the state-of-the-art facility at 49th and Chestnut Streets, designed by noted local architect and WPHS alumnus Emanuel Kelly.*

*The Ribbon Cutting and Bell Ringing for the start of the school year is covered fully on page one and nearly 100 alumni attended the first General Meeting in October which featured a tour of the building by Mr. Kelly.*

*This has been a pivotal year in the lives of our students with a new team of administrators and teachers, adjusting to the new Promise Academy concept for turning around schools that have not met adequate yearly progress as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind regulation. It has also been a year of upheaval and challenge in the district as it, too, is functioning under new leadership within the district itself, as well as the School Reform Commission, the governing body—grappling with unprecedented cuts from the State, leaving gaping budget holes that spare not personnel or programs for students.*

*It is in this climate that we continually endeavor to be the village for the students at WPHS, and assisting the school and its administration where we have the capacity to step-up, be it sponsoring the Girls Basketball Team with bags and shoes; procuring distinctive ties for the seniors to distinguish them from lower grades; outfitting the Football Team with winter gloves and providing them protein smoothies and fresh fruit; and "Lunch with the Seniors" where*

*MEET OUR ALUMNI***Dr. James R. Dumpson**

Dr. James R. Dumpson (June 1927), the oldest known graduate of West Philadelphia High School, marks his 103rd birthday, in April. That would be reason enough to "Meet" him.

But if we add some of the milestones in his long career in the health and human services as public servant, educator, administrator, social activist, advocate, humanitarian and scholar and add that his influence on public-policy development for the health and human services has been felt across many policy domains at the international, national, and local level, we know that we are meeting a truly outstanding individual—and one of the finest graduates in our school's 100 years.

Dr. Dumpson was among the outstanding alumni who received an Award of Merit from the Alumni Association at the 1962 Gala marking the 50th anniversary of the school.

*alumni visit the cafeteria during their lunch period.*

*As we observe the centenary of WPHS (built in 1911, occupied by students in 1912), we concurrently maintain our commitment to put the students first as articulated in our mission. You can help directly by supporting the "Bowling for Scholarships" on Saturday, April 28, 2012, at 8PM–12PM at Gehris Lanes (Liberty Lanes), 65th and Market Streets. All proceeds benefit scholarships presented to graduating seniors attending four-year colleges/universities.*

*Our legacy is directly related to the progress of our students in this generation, because we will always be graduates of West Philadelphia High School.*

*Paula McKinney-Rainey*

Although beginning as a case-worker for the Philadelphia Department of Public Welfare, Dr. Dumpson spent most of his distinguished career in New York and with the United Nations.

Dr. Dumpson served New York City as a public servant reporting directly to six different Mayors.

In 1951, Mayor Vincent R. Impelleri appointed him a member of Mayor's Commission on Homeless Men.

From 1953 to 1954, Dr. Dumpson served as a United Nations Advisor and Chief of Training in Social Welfare to the Government of Pakistan. In 1971, he worked as a consultant in Pakistan and Thailand, and, in 1977, received a fellowship to Pakistan through the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

In 1959, Mayor Robert F. Wagner, named Dr. Dumpson Commissioner of Welfare for the City of New York, becoming the only African-American welfare commissioner in the country. His appointment also marked the first time that a social worker had held the position. He later to become administrator of the Human Resources Department.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy appointed Dr. Dumpson to the Commission on Narcotics and Drug Abuse—the only African-American appointed. He went on to serve Presidents Kennedy and Johnson on various advisory commissions.

In 1966, Mayor John V. Lindsay appointed Dr. Dumpson a member of the Mayor's Council Against Poverty, and in the following year he was designated Chairman of the New York City Commission for the Foster Care of Children.

In 1974, Mayor Abraham D. Beame, appointed Dr. Dumpson Commissioner of Social Service and Acting Administrator of Human Resources Administration.

In 1976, Dr. Dumpson was named Dean of Fordham University's School of Social Work. With this appointment he became the first black Dean of a non-black school of social work.

In 1979, Mayor Edward I. Koch appointed Dr. Dumpson Chairman of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board.

**REUNION SET**

Class of 1972 – 40th Anniversary Reunion (BYO drinks and Food). August 4, Holmes Center, 55th and Chestnut Sts. (entrance on Ludlow St.). \$35. Contacts: Willetta Nelson, 610.259.4101, sluggownel@ren.com; Valerie Thomas, 215.806.4674, valoette@aol.com

In 1987, he served as Senior Consultant to the New York Community Trust.

In 1990, Mayor David N. Dinkins appointed Dr. Dumpson Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation and Health Services Administration

His honors include the Lifetime Achievement Award of the New York City Chapter National Association of Social Workers, the Lifetime Achievement Award of the New York City Black Agency Executives, a "Spirit of Life" Award from the State Of New York Legislature.

Among Dr. Dumpson's other numerous service awards include a named Professional Chair in Child Welfare Studies at Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service, the Keystone Award for distinguished service in Social Welfare from the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, the Distinguished Service Medal from the Council on Social Work Education, and Honorary Lifetime Member of the Institute of Social Sciences and Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine

In semi-retirement, from his posts as Senior Consultant with the New York Community Trust, and Visiting Professor with the Fordham University School of Graduate Social Service, Dr. Dumpson continued to serve on national and city boards, publish, mentor, and accept public-speaking engagements until his full retirement from public life in 2002, at the age of 85!

After his graduation from West Philadelphia, James Dumpson went to what was then Cheney Normal School, graduating in 1932 (and is, thus, that school's oldest graduate as well). He then went on to Temple University where he earned his further degrees.

### Need for Good Food, Business Services 'Vision' Fulfilled

Others passed by and saw an empty lot and an eyesore.

Arnett Woodall (June 1982) saw a challenge and an opportunity to fill a need in the area.

Thus was born the West Phillie Produce on 62nd Street, near Ludlow Street. But in addition to providing healthy eating alternatives such as fresh produce, customized fruit salad, tossed-salads party trays, freshly-squeezed fruit and vegetable drinks, as well as fresh flowers, customized gift baskets, Woodall offers a business-service center providing facsimile services and Internet access.

When Sleighton Farm School closed in 2001, where he had been working for 17 years, Woodall started a landscaping and construction company, but he had a vision—to bring fresh-produce store to his neighborhood. In 2009, after seven years of building and holding two jobs to help pay for his dream, he opened for business. He had help and advice from the Enterprise Center and the Food Trust.

While it would be wonderful to report that all is going well, it has to be reported that old habits die hard. In an area used to packaged and canned fatty, sugary and salty items being sold in the corner stores, and while West Phillie Produce has its loyal and grateful cus-

### Residents Honor Bill Niemeyer With 'This Is Your Life' Event

There wasn't an empty seat in the house as more than 200 people, including nearly 20 family members and 30 Lulu Shriners, crowded into Martins Run Senior Living Community's auditorium last November 30 for a special "This Is Your Life" event honoring resident William Niemeyer. (June 1944).

Martins Run residents Alan Goldman and Ethel Hamburger called upon guests to come up and share anecdotes and memories of the "Martins Run marvel."

Among those who paid tribute were his pastor from the Spruce Street Baptist Church; his barber of 40 years; the owners of Mrs. Marty's Deli in Lawrence Park Shopping Center, where Niemeyer was a frequent customer; the Delaware County Office of Veterans Affairs; American Legion Post 805; the Newtown Square Business Association; Marple Township

tomers, Woodall is finding that fulfilling his dream is getting difficult.

He says, frankly, that it is the success of his building and construction company that keeps his dream alive. In his opening year, Woodall employed 12 local youngsters; now he can afford only six. But, he did not learn defeat at West Philadelphia High School, and he is planning for the long haul.



Board of Commissioners; a representative of the office of the local Congressman, Patrick Meehan.

A representative from the John Deere Association, headquartered in North Carolina, flew in to present an inscribed watercolor of a deer bounding across woodlands. The print is an artistic rendering of the John Deere insignia. Niemeyer's company was a high volume John Deere distributor over several decades.

Representing West Philadelphia High School Alumni Association were Michael Brown, vice-president, who presented Niemeyer with an Alumni Association T-shirt, and Andrew Kevorkian, Alumni News editor, who presented Niemeyer with a copy of his yearbook, which he had never received.

### 2 Grads Subject Of Joint Biography Now Available

"From Zero to Eighty: Two African-American Men's Narrative of Racism, Suffering, Survival, and Transformation," a joint biography of Charles E. Harmon (June 1949), and Dr. John T. Groce (June 1950), has just been published.

Written with Helen K. Black, their story tells the struggle with racism faced by older African-American men, from their childhood—when they are discouraged or, at least, not encouraged, to achieve their potential—through to their ultimate success in their lives.

They tell their story against the backdrop of deep-seated cultural beliefs that engender racism.

Published by iUniverse, the book sells for \$21.95.

**BOWLING**, from page 1 money was raised for two \$750 grants to cover the cost of books.

Association vice-president Michael Brown, and Corresponding Secretary Cheryl Smith are co-chairs of the Bowling Committee whose members are: Andrew Johnson, Kenneth Lesesne, Paula McKinney-Rainey, and Ann Nettles.

Those who wish to heed the call for volunteers or those who want more information and tickets in advance (they will be "more at the door") should contact the Association at wphsaa149@gmail.com.

## WEST PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

### Membership Form

Yes, I wish to join the West Philadelphia High School Alumni Association

- I wish to join for Life. I enclose my one-time payment of \$200
- I wish to join on an Annual basis. I enclose my first payment of \$20. I understand that the dues "year" is from September to August.
- I was graduated within the past three years, and I wish to join at the special \$5 rate

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (ZIP Code) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Make check or Money Order payable to:  
West Philadelphia High School Alumni Association  
Mail form and dues to:  
WPHS Alumni Association,  
P.O. Box 7906  
Philadelphia, PA 19101

Please note that the Alumni Association is now a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization

**SCHOOL**, from page 1 as a “green” building.

The themes of all the speakers were pretty much the same—a challenge to the students to take advantage of the most up-to-date school in the country with the latest state-of-the-art facilities.

In addition to Mayor Michael Nutter, the day’s speakers were: Ron Tomalis, Pennsylvania Secretary of Education; State Senator Vincent Hughes; State Representative James Roebuck; Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell; Jerry Jordan, President, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers; Robert McGrogan, President, Commonwealth Association of School Administrators; Robert L. Archie, jr., Chairman, School Reform Commission; Leroy D. Nunery, Acting CEO and Superintendent School District of Philadelphia; Brian Armstead, Director of Civic Engagement, Philadelphia Education Fund; Terri Gaines, President, School-Advisory Council; Illyaas Muhammad, Philadelphia Student Union; Althea Fogle, WPHS Community Partners.

For her part, Paula McKinney-Rainey, Alumni Association president, confirmed that it was the Association’s “goal to fill the needs for our students. . . . We will not let them down but will hold them up to stand on our shoulders; to be their role models; to provide moral and financial support; to be there in ways big and small.”

The final speaker was James M. Karmolinski, one of the architects

### **Gridiron Speedboys End Season With 11-1**

It started with two words that resonate throughout the West Philadelphia community. Two words that emulate the attitude of this proud neighborhood.

“Discipline” and “Dedication” were the mottos of the West Philadelphia Speedboys 2011 football season, and they certainly used these virtues on their way to the most successful football season in the history of the school, finishing 11-1 and winning the Philadelphia Public League AAA regular-season championship.

There were many key ingredients to West’s success. The Speedboys’ tenacious and intimidating defense led the way to the impressive campaign. The opposition recorded the fewest points per game (6.4 ppg) in the state of Pennsylvania!

They also dominated on the home field at the hallowed grounds of Pollock Field (48th and Spruce Sts.). In five home games, the Speedboys trounced their opponents by a combined score of 162-6. This included the greatest victory of them all—with a dominating win over arch-rival Overbrook in the Turkey Bowl Classic. The overflow crowd enjoyed and basked in the first Turkey Bowl victory in eight years with the scoreboard showing 26-0 in favor of your West Philadelphia Speedboys.

We hope the alumni enjoyed the 2011 football campaign and will come out to support the young men that represent your Orange and Blue in 2012.

—Paul Noon  
*Football Coach*

### **New Alumni Project Aids Girls Basketball**

The first of what will become the Alumni Association’s “Holiday Initiative,” was introduced at the December 8, General Meeting, when Association President McKinney-Rainey announced that she had been approached by the School’s Girls Basketball team co-captains for help.

The girls needed shoes and bags for their uniforms.

After a brief discussion, and despite the short notice, the members spontaneously donated \$550. The Association provided the additional \$300.

On the basis of this appeal and its success, President McKinney-Rainey announced that henceforth there will be a similar project every year, with the target announced in October or November.

In her announcement, the President said, “This is the sort of effort that is within the Association’s mission, to identify and address a specific student need that we have the capacity to fulfill.”

At this writing, the Girls Basketball team is undefeated.

We hope the alumni enjoyed the 2011 football campaign and will come out to support the young men that represent your Orange and Blue in 2012.

—Paul Noon  
*Football Coach*

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### **NECROLOGY**

Charles F. Case, June 1930  
 Morris Sidewater, June 1930  
 Florence Sack Gilbert, February 1937  
 Frances Sherman Kramer, June 1937  
 Saul Bralow, June 1938  
 Henry A. Balestriere, June 1941  
 June McAdams Fagan, June 1941  
 Lois Gross, June 1944  
 Phillip Dansky, February 1945  
 Joseph Zatz, June 1945  
 Jean B. Green, June 1951  
 James Henry, June 1954  
 JoAnn Wyche Brooks, June 1954  
 Eldridge W. Smith, June 1956  
 William West, June 1961  
 Carolyn Patricia Mack, June 1965  
 Charles Fambrough, June 1968  
 William Valentine, June 1971  
 James Albert Guy, Jr., June 1975  
 Sabrina Y. Walton, June 1987  
 James T. Little, June 2002  
 Tyrell W. Little, June 2002

Also, the following who attended WPHS—

**Earnest Daniel**  
**Cecil Hightower**  
**Jerry Ragovoy**  
**Herman Rogul**  
**Rosemary Robinson-Jarvey**

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### **REQUEST**

Please send us your stories—of your activities, of your class’s activities and reunions, of our alumni and their activities.

We want this to be your publication. Send items to the editor at [akprous@aol.com](mailto:akprous@aol.com)

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**Address Correction Requested**