

## The Beginning of the Luther H. Foster High Alumni Association

In the spring of 1994, at a reunion of the Class of 1959, beloved coach, Mr. David L. Maynard (at Luther H. Foster High School during the 1950's), suggested that we should take the initiative in organizing a school-wide reunion and invite all twenty graduating classes to attend. Since, interest had been expressed by various ones down through the years in doing something of this magnitude, the class of '59 agreed to take on the challenge. It was decided that an open meeting would be called to assess the interest among the alumni. An ad was placed in the Blackstone and Crewe newspapers announcing this initial meeting and Lorraine (Tucker) White Handford, President of the Class of 1959, came in from Chicago to host it. Five other alumnae showed up for this July meeting held at Weston's Restaurant in Crewe: Those present in addition to Mrs. Tucker were: Thomas Boose (class of '58), Webster Boose ('57), Alton Fitzgerald ('56), Lanette (Robinson) Harris ('58) and Sallie Berniece (Ligon) Rich ('59) Even though the turnout was disappointing, the dream of holding a school-wide reunion would not be abandoned. Mrs. Rich had recently relocated back to Nottoway County and agreed to coordinate the reunion efforts, since Mrs. Handford resided in another state.

Mrs. Clarise Wynn Jennings (Class of 1964) had compiled a list of most of the Luther H. Foster High School graduates. Phone calls were made and the word was spread of a second meeting to be held at the old Nottoway Civic League building in August. This time, the turn out was good and interest was strong in holding a School-Wide Reunion the next year. Barbara Bridgeforth (class of '65) introduced Mrs. Rich to Mr. Calvin Jenkins, retired principal of Central High School in Lunenburg, VA who had recently organized a very successful school-wide reunion in that county. Mr. Jenkins readily shared his knowledge with this young organization and offered pointers on how to hold a successful affair.

Many former classmates resided all over the country but continued to subscribe to the local hometown newspapers. Mr. Billy Coleburn, editor of the Blackstone Courier- Record was instrumental in assisting us in "getting the word out" by providing extensive coverage outlining our objectives in a huge article on August 25, 1994.

There was a good turnout at the August 27 meeting and a phenomenal turnout at the next one which was held in September. A formal organization was put into place consisting of Sallie B. Rich as President, Deloris Fowlkes Hurte as Vice President, Barbara Bridgeforth as secretary and Rose Allen Paige as treasurer. The immediate objectives were to build a membership base and hold the First School-Wide Reunion the following summer. In addition, coordinators from each class year volunteered to serve and recruit members of their respective classes. The first mass mailing went out in January 1995 to over 1200 graduates and it announced the **First Luther H. Foster School -Wide Reunion**. In the same letter, alumni were asked to show their support for the organization by sending in membership dues and they would become bona-fide members of the Luther H. Foster High School Alumni Association.

Everyone worked extremely hard and the First School Wide Reunion was held on July 16, 17, 18, 1995, with over six hundred persons joining in the celebration. Mr. and Mrs. Maynard were there and he was one of the six original honorees. Other honorees were: Mrs. Alice Birckhead, Home Economics Teacher; Mr. Bernard Cousins, Science teacher at Luther H. Foster and later principal of A.G. Richardson ; Mr. Freeman Doswell, County Maintenance worker; Mr. David Fitzgerald, Custodian; Mrs. Ruth Johns Pegram, Home Economic Teacher; and Mrs. Allie Wright, Physical Education Instructor. The reunion was a major success. The memory will forever live in the hearts of those who were in attendance.

Since 1994, many of the coordinators have been replaced, four have passed away and some of the original group continues to serve to this day. Sallie Rich served as President from 1994 through 2007. Sandra Farrar Branch assumed the Presidency in 2007. The association continues to function as a strong organization which is a positive force in the community.

**1994 Officers:**

Sallie Berniece Ligon Rich (Class of 1959)	President
Deloris Fowlkes Hurte (Class of 1959)	Vice President
Barbara Dyson Bridgeforth (Class of 1965)	Secretary
Maude Elizabeth Craft Lee (Class of 1962)	Assistant Secretary
Rose Allen Paige (Class of 1970)	Treasurer

**\*Coordinators and Hosts/Hostesses for the First School Wide Reunion:**

Marion Lucille Williams Dyson*	1950
Hazel Smith White*	1951
Herbert L. Hardy	1951
Maude Carter Oliver*	1952
Melvina Reynolds Brooks	1953
Lawrence V. Harris*	1954
Clarence Eugene Williams	1956
Shirley Green Mitchell*	1957
James S. Dyson	1957
Lanette Robinson Harris	1958
Kay Jones Wallace	1958
Deloris Fowlkes Hurte*	1959
Lillie Jones Lewis	1959
Lorraine Tucker Handford	1959
Beatrice Butcher Downs	1960
Ernest King	1960
Barbara Jennings McRae*	1961
Maude Craft Lee*	1962
Joan Bates	1962
Harry Bowler	1963
Barbara Tucker Jones	1963
Clarice Wynn Jennings*	1964
Barbara Dyson Bridgeforth*	1965
Sandra Farrar Branch*	1966
Jean Smith Hobbs	1967
Erma Spicely	1968

Alice Winston	1969
Rose Allen Paige*	1970
Frank Robertson	1970

Program Committee:	Lanette Robinson Harris and Rose Allen Paige (Co-Chairpersons)
Sick and Bereavement:	Clarise Wynn Jennings (deceased)

Written by: Sallie B. Rich, January 25, 2012