



The Mighty **SPARTAN**

B. W. Harris Alumni Association-USA

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BWHAA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN SPEAKS

by Chairman Harris



As we begin a new administration of our association, our goal is to be guided by principles outlined in achievable objectives that will have the potential to transform B. W. Harris. As national officers, we are committed to building on what has been passed on to us, so that we leave the association stronger, larger and more beneficial to the students. As national chair, I take these to be solemn duties.

The most important immediate need facing the school is the hiring of a qualified principal. To assist in realizing this goal, it is essential that the

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association effectively collaborates with Bishop Hart and the board of trustees. To this end, I have established channels of communication with the Bishop and the board, and facilitated the presentation of the resume of a potential candidate; who is under consideration for the position. Maintaining the good relationships I have established with the board and the Bishop will be central to my administration.

If we were to use simply asking: "Does this positively change the learning environment in B. W. Harris?" as a standard of measure for everything we do, then I believe

we cannot go wrong.

Over the years, we have focused on the high school at our alma mater, and while it is important to ensure that graduates of B. W. Harris meet and exceed standards, when they graduate; we should also begin to direct adequate resources to developing educational programs in the middle, elementary and kindergarten classes. By establishing stronger educational foundations in the lower classes, then we could set appropriate expectations for



BWHAA - STUDENTS

students as they progress through to high school and beyond.

The E. G. W. King Jr. Scholarship Program is a major program of the association; the resources it provides to the scholarship program are significant, and represent a major portion of our budget. It is also the longest running program of the association. In order to ensure that our scholarship program is comprehensive, it is our goal to implement academic programs for the scholarship students that will help them as they continue their academic careers.

Considering the resources we provide for scholarships, I believe it is extremely important that the families of the student recipients be made aware of their children's participation in the program. They should be involved in the life of the school.

It is one of our goals to develop a platform to increase the connection of scholarship parents to the school and our connections to these parents.

Recent records show that many students of B. W. Harris struggle with the West African Examinations Council exams.



WAEC EXAMS

One of our goals is to see how we can mitigate the students struggles. It is no secret that the quality of teaching available at the school plays an important role in how students fare on exams; hence, teacher training and students' evaluation of teachers are two measures we intend to consider

NATIONAL CHAIR cont

as a means of addressing the issue toward improving WAEC outcomes for B. W. Harris.

The most effective means of achieving the objectives outlined above for the betterment of our alma mater is to have a strong and solid alumni association.



"Giving back" to B. W. Harris can never be overemphasized. We, as members, will always be the most reliable, consistent and generous donors to our alma mater. We will only succeed when members give back.

In order to ensure the continuing success and future of the association, and the vital support we provide to the school, we must grow the association. Growing the association and expanding its membership base is one of the essential objectives of our administration. While respecting their autonomy, it is our goal to increase the involvement of organized classes in the association, and to facilitate where we can, the organization of more classes.

Transparency and accountability are hallmark standards of our administration. Members must

be aware of what the national association and the chapters do. We will continue the policy of making quarterly financial reports. These reports will be available to members. Going forward, each national officer will be required to submit a quarterly report about their activities. I believe, transparency and accountability are so important that there should be a requirement that reports are made, and punitive measures taken against anyone who fails to make the required reports.

Digital Archives Information System



(We are very pleased to have implemented a Digital Archive Information System DAIS)

that will be displayed on our website shortly. DAIS is a central repository of archived documents of the association that will be accessible to members.

Information from chapters to national is presented in multiple formats, when presented at all. This administration is proposing the introduction of a Chapter Uniform Reporting and Information System (CURFIS), which will introduce regularity and uniformity to reports about chapters' activities, finances and membership. The goal is not to control chapters, but to ensure that as the holder of the not-for-profit corporate designation and the custodian of the 501(c) (3) status, we have access to comprehensive information, because the association now is required to submit annual reports because of our income, and in the event the authorities were to request

NATIONAL CHAIR cont

such information. CURFIS will not impact chapters' authority to operate autonomously within the parameters of the association's legal status.

As national chair, I am very excited by the opportunities for growing the association, giving back to B. W. Harris, significantly improving the learning environment at the school, and making our association larger and stronger. I believe this is the duty of each succeeding national chair. With the unity and generosity of our members, we will meet our objectives, and I look forward to working with the entire membership over the next two years.

CONVENTION 2012: SPARTANS MARCH TO TRANSFORMATION

By Handel KC Diggs



From the streets of Brooklyn on Ocean Parkway to Lefrak City in Queens, Spartans informally converged to reminisce about their days as students, while entertaining thoughts of supporting their

alma mater, B.W. Harris School. Spartans from the New York Boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island eventually matured into the B. W. Harris New York chapter. Other Spartans, the classes of 1975 and 1978, forged ahead with reunions of their own.

Later, the Class of 1978 evolved into a formal and organized unit. After overtures by Father E.G. W. King, Spartans from around the U.S. held organizational meetings in Detroit, MI, which led to the formation of the B.W. Harris Episcopal School Alumni Association. Exulting in Spartan Pride, former students from the 60's, 70's and 80's convened in 1993 and were hosted by the DC Metro area Spartans.

Spanning fifteen years of existence, the association has provided much needed supplies, to include, generators, stationery, computers, teacher capacity building programs, and copiers, executed small scale renovations and established scholarships for students at B.W. Harris Episcopal School.

While members bonded and fostered good relationships, their alma mater faced serious hurdles. There was a migration of underpaid teachers to other schools, a deterioration of the physical structure and most troubling, a prolonged vacancy for the position of full-time principal.

Within the association, students from the late 60's and early 70's were becoming endangered species; estranged by the

CONVENTION 2012: SPARTANS MARCH TO TRANSFORMATION cont



dominance of younger alumni in the organization, who they perceived to be more preoccupied with socializing than consequentially impacting B.W.H.E.S.

There was also the unofficial orthodoxy that the association would

not take on transformational projects, as members were not willing to embrace the challenge.

In 2007, the association reached an all-time low total of 35 convention registrants and that shook the confidence of its membership.

Sensing the challenges and the opportunities for transformation, we moved swiftly to instill confidence and reinvigorate the organization, and its membership, with the promise to produce quarterly financial statements. After two consecutive quarterly financial releases, the leadership infused a new paradigm, repositioning the organization to assume consequential projects that could significantly expand our influence at our alma mater and simultaneously increase membership.

For the next three years, we implemented the association's Smart Technology Computer program, which is now integrated into the school's curriculum for grades 7 to 12, funded an annual \$17,000 teachers' salary upgrade, collected donations of \$200

each from 46 Spartans and completed the robust renovation of our crown jewel project, Project Spartan Pride. Our association boasts an extraordinary home-grown Spartan donor army; 45 Hall of Famers (\$500), 51 Wall of Recognition donor (\$200), nine Wall of Memory (\$150) and 29 Gold Club donors (\$800+), along with the newly minted five lifetime members (\$2,000). Thus, we have effectively punctured the myth that Spartans will not make substantial contributions to the association!

Today, our association is a major stakeholder at BWHES, now convention registrations exceed 100 with an unprecedented 220 in 2011! The structure of the association now serves as a magnet for multigenerational participation, with the Capital Campaign as one notable example.

CONVENTION 2012: SPARTANS MARCH TO TRANSFORMATION cont

The execution of these landmark projects and exemplary transparency has catapulted BWHAA into national prominence. The organization is the envy of other alumni associations, with some renowned ones emulating our fundraising and honoring programs. The strength of our association was most evident during the recent elections for national chairman, which many characterized as the most competitive in history. It was the concern of members that the outcome would rip the heart out of our unity.

The Commission delivered with uncommon transparency, exceeded expectations

and mitigated the concerns.

The elections illuminated the fiber of our being: we are competitive, yet we are die-hard Spartans!



The Midwest chapter will be the host for the 20th reunion. As hosts for the 7th and 15th conventions, they are well positioned and experienced for what promises to be a flawless weekend of grandeur and pomp. National Chairman Harris and her team promise that Convention 2012 will be characterized by a seamless

interaction, planning and execution by the National Convention Committee and the Midwest chapter.

This is the recipe for exceptional performance and a new template for success will be established.

The penultimate moment of Convention 2012 will be the realization that our long nightmare of vacancy in the principal's office will be over! At year 20, DC Metro, Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina, PennDel, Rhode Island, and TriState Chapters, classes and Friends of B. W. Harris Episcopal School will march to the red carpet of host Midwest chapter. With the gavel opening Convention 2012 in Detroit, the exuberance of 20 years of service to our alma mater and bonding amongst each other will permeate the veins of Spartans and Spartan Pride will rise to heights yet unseen!

MEET THE NEW NATIONAL OFFICERS

by Miyesha Cheeks

The BWHAA-USA campaign trail was on fire for several months with candidates actively pursuing three contested positions: national chair, 1st national vice chair and 2nd national vice chair.

The culmination of the politicking occurred on July 2, 2011 when Spartans made their voices heard and voted for BWHAA's next corps of national officers.

For the next two years BWHAA will be led by a motivated team of Spartans who are committed to transparency, accountability and forward movement. The team is comprised of an eclectic group of professionals whose varying abilities we believe will benefit the association.

MEET THE NEW NATIONAL OFFICERS cont



From left to right: Lafayette Willis (national chaplain); Albertha Gillespie (national financial secretary); Meyartha Perry (national treasurer); Nee Allison (national secretary); Georgina Briggs (2nd national vice chair); Darren Wilkins (1st national vic chair); Gudrun Harris (national chair)

Gudrun Harris - national chair; Class of 80; former president of Tri-State chapter, 13 years of managerial experience in tourism and hospitality.

Darren Wilkins - 1st national vice chair; Class of 88; Former 2nd national vice

chair, 15 years of experience in information and communication technology, business and education.

Georgina Briggs - 2nd national vice chair; Class of '80 and still serves as vice chair of North Carolina chapter. She has 19 years of experience as registered nurse.

Albertha Gillespie - National financial secretary; president of the Class of 87; Former Class of '87 Student Council president; currently works as a POS analyst with 11 years of experience in Information Technology.

Meyartha Perry – Class of '86; financial consultant national treasurer; and chairperson to Georgia's convention committee in 2010. She has 15 years of experience in finance/taxes .

Nee Allison - National secretary; Class of '83, works as a social worker.

Lafayette Willis - national chaplain; Class of '82, is pastor of Power of Grace Ministries and has many years of experience as a telecommunications engineer.

The Diggs Administration left a legacy of professionalism at BWHAA that the newly elected national officers are intent on perpetuating. The baton has been passed and this team is poised to take up the challenge to serve the association well and restore its alma mater to the days of past glory.

SMART TECH IV

by Darren Wilkins



The “Smart Technology Program” funded by the B. W. Harris Alumni Association in the USA is a five-year program aimed at moving the school from a traditional learning environment to a 21st century learning environment. The project has been divided into five phases. Phase I (2008) saw the creation of a “School Technology Plan”, installation of a 21st century-like computer lab, the transformation of the library to a partial media center, the

connection of the school to the Internet, the formation of the school’s SWAT (Students Working to Advance Technology) team, the creation of an Acceptable Use Policy, and the creation of a school’s website. Phase II (2009) saw the installation of a professional development room, and an instructional training workshop for teachers.

The most recent project was Phase III (2010), “The Smart Board Project”, which saw the implementation of yet another pioneering initiative, the Smart Board replete with hand-recognition features. In addition to the smart board the following were implemented: seven pull-down screens to include the auditorium, science laboratory, the library and other classrooms, a technology boot camp for students and a teachers’ boot camp which included participants from other academic institutions.

Since the beginning of the Smart Technology program, B. W. Harris School has made several strides in achieving the program’s goals which include but are not limited to preparing students for today’s global workplace, and providing a 21st century learning environment. Some additional advances made by the school include receiving certification from the Ministry of Education as a vocational institution, and inclusion of technology education in the school’s 7th through 12th curriculum.



Satellite Dish for faster Internet access

The technology education being provided is done in two ways: in the classroom and in the computer lab!

At Convention 2011, the general assembly approved over \$17,000 for the implementation of Smart Tech Project III.

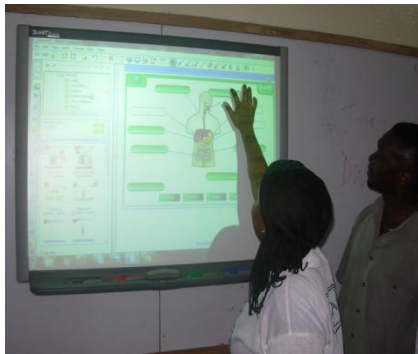
SmartTech Project IV is yet another massive project that B. W. Harris Alumni USA has embarked upon, which involves the revamping of the school’s IT infrastructure. In addition to revamping the school’s IT infrastructure, Smart Tech IV is expected to introduce a distance learning program aimed at assisting the school in its efforts to provide professional development for faculty and staff. The project is also expected to identify and implement high-speed and increased access to the Internet for the school, as well as provide the necessary

SMART TECH IV

cont

technology for the elementary division, especially the kindergarten and first grade classes.

Meanwhile, in addition to the amount approved by the B. W. Harris Alumni Association USA board of trustees, several members of the Association have made donations to the project. **They include:** Counselor Mohamedu F. Jones and Ebenezer Sowah. The project is expected to begin in December of this year.



Student Smartboard Demonstration

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE REFORMED

by Staff Writer

In the wake of the SmartTech IV project which is expected to begin in December of this year, the First Vice National Chairman, Darren Wilkins has revamped the technology committee. Those constituting the committee include: Darren Wilkins- Chairman and Jimmy Neal as co-chairman. Others include: Albertha Gillespie, Edam Sasso, Lafayette Willis, Toyuwah Harris, Marvin Cassell, Miyesha Cheeks, Charles Johnson, Christian Neal, and Archie Hall.

According to Wilkins, the technology committee oversees all matters related to technology within the B. W. Harris Alumni Association Inc. USA.

It is **responsible** for setting the technology strategic direction of the association, and develops, recommends and implements technology

policies, procedures, tasks and standards as needed.

“The committee,” Wilkins continues, “advises the association's board of trustees on all matters related to technology.” Wilkins also listed the most immediate tasks that the committee is expected to perform. These tasks including:

- Implement, complete and monitor the Smart Tech project in Liberia

- Develop and maintain the association's website and social network (MySparta)

- Develop and maintain the Convention Discussion Board (ASAP)

- Develop and maintain the Benevolence Bulletin Board (ASAP)

- Develop and "assist" in the maintenance of the school's Website (ASAP)

- Develop standards and guidelines for receiving donations

- Develop and maintain the Digital Archive Information System (DAIS)– ASAP

- Assist with the newsletter in the creation and dissemination of the newsletter and other electronic materials

- Assist convention host as needed

- Others to be determined.

According to Wilkins, there is a great need for Spartans with computer programming skills

To reduce the workload on the current programming team. Skills in PHP and MySQL and knowledge of the Linux operating system will be beneficial but not required..

A CHAT WITH GA CHAPTER



The Georgia Chapter will host its first annual **J. Wah-Doe Bedell Award and Recognition Dinner on October 29, 2011.** Tickets for the event are \$30 per person. It includes dinner and a chance to win a prize. Spartans please support the event by purchasing a ticket and placing an ad in the program (\$70 full page; \$35 for half a page). For more information, call Jerome Cole 678-232-5132.

You may make payments online by clicking this link: <http://www.bwharrisalumnius.org/georgia.htm>.

A CHAT WITH RI CHAPTER



The Rhode Island Chapter has scheduled a fun-filled fundraiser; a **bus trip to Foxwood Casino on Sept 24, 2011.**

It costs you only \$25 for the bus ticket and in return you will receive \$30 to play with at the casino and a free buffet.

Spartans interested in joining us, please contact Vickie Peah, 401-419-2666. We will love to have you. Come one; come all!

The more the merrier!

A CHAT WITH NC CHAPTER



The North Carolina Chapter has planned its first annual **E.W. George King Awards and Recognition Dinner on November 11, 2011.** Cost of the tickets are \$10 This will be the first year this event will be hosted and the chapter intends for this to become one of its longstanding fundraisers.

Please look forward to receiving detailed information about the event as we near November. However, you may contact the chapter president, Wanda Jones via email at wjones50@gmail.com.

A CHAT WITH PENNDEL CHAPTER



The PennDel chapter on August 13, 2011 held its first-ever chapter sponsored soccer tournament, which offered great entertainment.

Later that night, Spartans from near and far enjoyed the “Cocktail Ball and Queen Contest” held at the palatial Bella Vita-Cavalier Country Club.

To see pictures from the event please click on the following link:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/112572135957512668643/BWHarrisPenDeLChapterQueenContestSoccerTournament>

A CHAT WITH TRISTATE CHAPTER



The Tristate Chapter recently hosted its yearly Family & Friends BBQ.

On September 10, 2011 the chapter held elections: Elyne Padmore –President; Lousie Merchant – 1st Vice President; Rilette Hammond – 2nd vice president; Harriette Harris – Treasurer; Eugenia Burphy-Andrews – Financial Secretary; Rosina Henries-Wallace – Secretary; Ciatta Diggs – Chaplain, David Moore and Muriel Wayne – board members.

<https://picasaweb.google.com/107462051937088634213/TristateElectionMeeting?authkey=Gv1sRgCPDq-a3i2sXWkwE&feat=email>

A CHAT WITH MIDWEST CHAPTER



The Midwest Chapter will be hosting convention 2012 and it is expected to be the crème-de-la crème of conventions.

The yearly board meeting is also scheduled to be held in the Midwest on October 15, 2011. Spartans who are able, please come that weekend to support their fundraiser that kicks-off fundraising for next year's convention.

This chapter is also gearing up for elections to vote in their next corps of leaders.

The association also wishes you the best as you strive to hold free and fair elections.

A CHAT WITH MN CHAPTER



The Minnesota Chapter remains committed to the mission of the association and were represented at convention 2011 in Rhode Island.

Leadership of the chapter is currently in transition. As members settle and identify potential members to serve in the various leadership roles; let us remember to offer support when needed.

However, at the time of this publication information about chapter events had not been submitted.

A CHAT WITH DC METRO CHAPTER



The DC Metro chapter will host *the Second Annual Emmanuel W. Johnson Sr. Awards and Recognition Dinner on Saturday September 24, 2011.* Tickets are \$35 each.

For more information and to purchase your ticket please contact the following officers:
Joseph Walker at daca50@verizon.net
Or Addo Davies at adavies@bsg1.net

We look forward to seeing you!

Stay tuned for information about the chapter's upcoming Christmas Party.

FEATURED SPARTAN

by Getahn Ward



Spartan Reverend Charles Martin

At an early age, the Rev. Charles Levi Martin sensed a call on his life to Christian ministry.

That was a source of struggle as Martin also had an interest in secular music and drama. Sweet Charlie Baby was his nickname as a member of the singing group Junior Temptations, which performed Motown R&B music at talent shows, in nightclubs and on television in Liberia.

Anger at God after the death of his mother and biggest spiritual influence Janie Zipporah Fleming Ward led the then 19-year-old Martin to realize that it was time to yield to the call.

“I decided you can’t win, so just do what He wants you to do,” said Martin, a 1974 graduate of B.W. Harris Episcopal High School, current church pastor and sales and marketing executive.

His is a life that has included many twists and turns. Among them: a chance encounter with former.

B.W. Harris principal Rev. Father E.G.W. King led to his unusual enrollment in the school for his senior year after being expelled from Saint Patrick’s High School for excessive absences. Then two years ago, a nearly fatal car accident led Martin to quit drinking alcohol altogether.

Early influences

Although his father was a well-known Baptist preacher in Liberia, Martin recalls his mother having the biggest influence on his faith and his interest in the ministry. She taught him how to pray, he said, recalling Sunday morning family prayers at their home where his mother “would pray until tears would run down my eyes and hers.” They also studied the Bible together. And Martin’s mother introduced him to the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through photographs on the walls throughout their

home and playing recordings of the civil rights leader's speeches.

King's style of speaking including using rhythm, repetition, rhyme and rest for emphasis caught Martin's attention. A room in the back of their home with only a podium in it became his first pulpit. There, Martin's mother would give him various monologues to memorize and recite.

"She was preparing me for public speaking, for the podium," he said, recalling *The Creation* by James Weldon Johnson as one of those monologues. "I would stand on that podium. She would sit and she was my audience of 1,000 and also my critic. She would say: 'I hear you, but I don't feel the inflection. I don't hear your pronunciations. And

where are your gesticulations?'"

At age 9, Martin felt God's call to ministry that would be confirmed later through dreams, visions and revelations. "God began to equip me with certain oratorical gifts," Martin recalled, citing as example the ability to absorb and memorize multiple passages of scriptures within little or no time. "Like a sponge, I would absorb them and they would just come out of my mouth."

But as Martin grew up, so did the rift between his calling to the ministry and his desire to pursue his interest in drama, music, dance and theater. Sweet Charlie Baby loved the stage, the parties including dancing, and perks such as multiple girlfriends that came along with popularity. "I was doing everything other than go into ministry," he added. "I was singing and chasing girls."

After Martin's mother was diagnosed with cancer for

which she had to travel to the United States for treatment, his interest in education waned during his junior year at St. Patrick's High School, which he'd attended since the seventh grade. Martin recalled being unmotivated to go to school and depressed. He only showed up on days when he knew there were tests or exams.

Martin had a B average, but he was expelled from St. Patrick's because of the high number of absences he had accumulated. That meant he had to find a new high school for his senior year.

After watching a movie one day at Rivoli Cinema on Broad Street in Monrovia, he looked up Snapper Hill and saw Father King leaning over the banister at B.W. Harris Episcopal High School. At the urging of an inner voice, Martin struck a conversation with principal King that included discussing Martin's interest in the ministry, his mother, and his being expelled from St. Patrick's.

That conversation ended with Father King agreeing to make an exception from the school's policy of not accepting new seniors to allow Martin to enroll at B.W. Harris for his senior year.

Committed Spartan

Martin became instantly popular on campus and was asked by a group of students to run for student council president. But Father King made it clear that the presidency was for Cyril Jones, a classmate and rising senior who became a good friend of Martin's. That year, Martin played on the school's basketball team that won a championship. He also became known for his singing prowess including often being asked by King to sing Mahalia Jackson's "*Without God, I Could Do Nothing*" at chapel services and served on the debating club. Reflecting his leadership abilities and charisma, Martin

was elected president of the senior Hi-Y, a YMCA organization for boys.

The unusual circumstances that brought Martin to B.W. Harris and how administrators and students took him as their own left a lasting impression on him. "This school took me in when I had nowhere to go," he said. "I was like a man without a country, a student without a school and then they embraced me, they treated me like I had always been there and I felt like I had always been there. I had a ball in B.W. Harris and that is why I'm so committed to the school."

Martin has held leadership roles with both the TriState chapter and the national alumni association. They include serving as national and

TriState chaplain. As chairman of the national convention held in Staten Island in the mid-90s, he led efforts to secure venues and sponsors.

Martin has also been a regular attendee at national conventions, missing only the one held in Long Island in 2009 as he recovered from the car accident -- and perhaps one other convention. This year, Martin had a wedding to perform on the Saturday of convention weekend, but he still flew into Providence, R.I., after Sunday's services to play in the basketball game that afternoon. He then joined other Spartans for the farewell party before flying back to New Jersey Monday.

Martin would like to see the association organize more chapters across the United States and do more in Liberia beyond the walls of B.W. Harris School. He mentioned, as one example, starting an elementary school in rural Liberia to help meet the

need for educational institutions.

After 35 years of being away from home, Martin plans a three-week mission trip to Liberia in December with his wife, Jurudoe Ann Harris Martin, and his 11-year-old daughter, Charlese. He's raising money to rebuild a war-damaged monument on the campus of Ricks Institute in Virginia, Liberia, that feature a bust of his deceased father Rev. Dr. Levi Hamilton Martin, former Liberian president J.J. Cheeseman and an angel. He's also collecting toys for indigent children in Liberia. Details about the mission trip are available at Martin's Web site, www.clevimartinministries.org.

Pursuing American dream

Upon graduating from B.W. Harris, Martin enrolled at the University of Liberia before joining the first class at the Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary in 1975. At age 19, Martin preached his first sermon

at Providence Baptist Church in Monrovia and went on to preach at the chapel at the executive mansion and other locations. Martin's music also changed from R&B to gospel.

In November 1976, Martin jumped at the opportunity provided by his older sister, Rhodesia, to pursue studies in the United States. He worked during the day and attended college at night, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration and statistics from the College of New Rochelle in 1980. Martin then enrolled at the New York Theological Seminary to earn a master of divinity degree in hopes of returning to Liberia to eventually pastor Providence Baptist Church. Those plans changed after the Liberian government was overthrown in a military coup.

Martin, who was ordained a minister of the gospel in 1985, held leadership roles at churches in New York such as

servicing as pastor for the United Christian Assembly Church and for All Saints Baptist Church, both in Brooklyn. Martin would later move to the predominantly Liberian African United Methodist Church in Trenton, New Jersey, where he was assistant pastor, and then was associate pastor at predominantly African American Alpha Baptist Church in Willingboro, N.J.

In 2002, Martin started Unity Fellowship Baptist Church in Willingboro where he is senior pastor. While serving in the ministry, Martin has continued to pursue his professional career that has included roles mostly in sales with financial institutions such as Citibank and the bank now Wells Fargo that was once Wachovia and before that, First Union. For the past three years, Martin has been a sales and marketing executive with Comcast,

dealing mostly with residential customers. "I have to maintain a certain lifestyle that I like and my family deserves," Martin said, adding that he uses his interpersonal skills in both his roles as a pastor and sales professional.

Tough choices

Throughout his life, Martin says that he's seen the hands of God at work. The accident in 2009 that involved a truck and that nearly claimed his life confirmed God's promise to answer his faithful when they call on Him in times of need. It also led Martin to stop drinking alcohol.

"I could have lost my life," Martin added. "It's only by the grace of God that I didn't die."

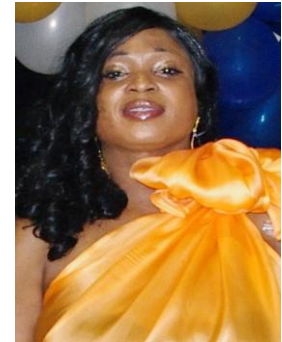
Martin also sees a testimony in his recovery about how all things are possible with God and a determined mind. Today,

he has full use of his hands although after the surgery the doctor had told him that he would have only 50 percent to 70 percent use. Martin also runs five miles a day on a knee that doctors had insisted needed immediate surgery. "The Lord told me about the surgery on my hands, but He said nothing about my knee," Martin recalls telling the doctors.

Martin sees nothing biblically wrong with drinking to celebrate without getting intoxicated, but he decided to quit feeding his habit. "By nature as human beings, there's always a conflict, a struggle between right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice," Martin added. "And there are two bulldogs fighting in all of us and the one we feed the most is the one that's going to win."

MAKING BWHES A PREMIER 21ST CENTURY SCHOOL

by Angeline Bishop-Oshoka



"A simple question to ask is 'How has the world of a child changed in the last 150 years?' And the answer is 'It's hard to imagine any way in which it hasn't changed.' Children know more about what is going on in the world today than their teachers often because of the media environment they grow up in. They are immersed in a media environment of all kinds of stuff that was unheard of 150 years ago, and yet, if you look at school today versus 100 years ago, they are more similar than dissimilar."

MAKING BWHES A PREMIER 21ST CENTURY SCHOOL cont

-Peter Senge, Senior Lecturer, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Although the primary role of the high school is academic proficiency, the school must also be committed to the development of the whole student. With the world rapidly shifting to an informational, global economy, B. W Harris should be examining its pedagogies and methodologies so as to best prepare our students for the 21st century. We should be engaged in active dialogues and conversations with both elementary and university partners, and with professional associations as well as listening to parents and teachers concerns.

When determining strategies to improve classroom and the school's

effectiveness for the 21st century, we as the professionals must answer one pivotal question: "What affects overall student achievement?" Or phrased in

terms, "What conditions do we control that can be altered to improve student achievement?" When answered, nearly all issues related to student achievement derive from these four broad areas: (1) the quality of curriculum, "What is being taught"; (2) the quality of instruction, "How is the curriculum been taught"; (3) the overall effectiveness of school, "Where we teach"; and (4) the unique characteristics and backgrounds of the students and the support of their families, "Who are these students that we teach and how supportive are their families." The quality of each area in a school can either

enhance or negate the overall level of student performance. Together these four variables provide a clear organizational model for classroom and school improvement.

Some immediate goals that should be discussed include: Hiring a principal who is a "leader of learning," who orchestrates activities of the school toward student success and develops a spirit of unity and trust. This principal must be a person who is a "developer of people" who organizes a school-wide structure for on-going professional growth to improve student achievement. This principal should be proactive in securing and blending resources to support 21st century student learning including providing staff with the technological and content specific tools.

This principal must be a person who is committed to an evaluation system

which allows teachers to demonstrate continuous professional growths, and provide opportunities and processes that develop leadership skills for students.

This principal must be able to ensure the following:

- Staff commitment to personal learning demonstrated through participation in ongoing growth and development such as professional learning communities, certification, and credentialing.

- School-wide model that embeds information and communications literacy, "reading to learn," vocabulary development, writing strategies and use of digital technology tools in all subject areas.

- Rigorous core graduation requirements for all students that include completion of a specific program of studies to prepare

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- for post-secondary education and/or careers.

- Reduce the distinction between college level courses and senior studies through credit bearing courses on the high school level, encourage Advanced Placement and dual enrollment privileges in collaboration with universities in Liberia.

- Implement a quality curriculum that includes rigorous elective offerings, honors, dual credit, virtual learning and/or college courses that transition students to post secondary education and/or careers.

- Develop interdisciplinary strands of study that emphasize applied science, mathematics, and humanities, and weave into each content area

career awareness education, e.g., Collaborate with the nursing school program so that students are prepared to pass placement tests after graduation from high school.

- Incorporate new information, communication, and research technologies that enhance teaching and learning. For example, electronic white boards in every classroom.

- Use of a 21st century balanced assessment system that includes classroom assessments, benchmark assessments and summative assessments. Incorporate benchmark assessments before students fall hopelessly behind.

- Formalize school structures and/or processes such as advisory or mentoring programs that provide on-going support and guidance from a caring

adult to all students.

- Form proactive partnerships and relationships within the community that are mutually beneficial, that result in the school being a respected and valued partner and that expand the school's ability to meet the needs of all students.

I believe that after faith, it is academics that make the difference in one's life. Therefore, we should be committed to providing the best college preparatory education.

21st Century Skills

Newly trained teachers should bring fresh concepts and talent that merge with the practical experience and valued tradition established by the core faculty. This convergence of innovation and experience leads us to examine the 21st Century Skills curriculum.

An effective 21st century school sees the quality of the instructional process as key to student success. Thus, basic facts and basic skills are important to the extent that they provide a foundation for understanding of complex issues, to solving problems and to thinking critically and creatively.

The instructional process is intentionally designed as a journey to deep understanding and application of that knowledge to relevant issues. This kind of instruction affects the design of instructional strategies, the quality of authentic assessments, the selection of resources and even the setting for instruction.

However, the most pronounced characteristic of the 21st century School is its view of

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the learner. Students living in a world constantly changed by technology must be life-long learners.

Thus, 21st century schools focus on creating learners who are active and self-directed; who are given help in understanding their own learning styles; who are given choices in the learning process and clear guidance through rubrics on how to judge the quality of their own work. The 21st century school is truly about creating a community of learners, where students are guided partners in the learning process.

B W Harris's academic foundation should rest on mastery of these core content areas:

Religious Studies, English, World Languages, Performing Arts, Studio Art, and Music, Mathematics, Science
History, Geography, Economics.

Our teaching methodologies should integrate these interdisciplinary themes with the core curriculum:

- An informed Episcopal view toward a global community Integration of international content across all subjects Financial, Economic, Business and entrepreneurial literacy
- Personal, Civic and Community responsibility
- A respect for the ethical use of power Environmental accountability Health and Wellness Awareness.

The academic experience at B W Harris should encourage these learning skills:

- Communication Skills: information, media, and technology skills as well as reading, writing, and speaking competencies.
- Creative Thinking: benchmarking innovation
- Critical Thinking: problem-solving education
- Concrete Learning: research informed teaching
- Collaboration: team based learning
- Character formation and leadership training
- Multicultural and International exchanges. **For example, student exchange.**

•Global awareness - Ability to cooperate with people from a range of social and cultural differences to achieve measurable goals

•Assume a responsible leadership role with peers

The integration of 21st Century skills with the core curriculum is essential to an education committed to preparing students for a changing world.

Technology:

Information and communications technologies have become powerful tools in the academic arena, and B W Harris High School is has recently integrated these tools in its educational paradigm shift. An interactive white board light up some the school's computer lab, classrooms are now equipped with white screens that can be used with projection devices to engages

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students in the learning process..

What we need

We need a mission statement to will enable us graduate all students with 21st century knowledge and skills, prepared for success in an appropriate post-secondary education program and able to responsibly live, learn and thrive in a digital global society.

Test preparation courses should be on-line. Distance learning experiences should be introduced as it is becoming common in the western world. Electronic bulletin boards should carry the news of the day to all corners of the school, TI-84 calculators should be available in every student's backpack, and laptop carts should be available.

These new technologies provide accessible and practical personalization of learning. And if we expect our students to make meaningful contributions to society and provide moral leadership for the future, we need to provide appropriate role models for the responsible use of these developing communication and learning tools. This speaks to the professional development for teachers. In the commitment to constant improvement, we should begin to introduce personal computing in the classroom. I am proposing a three-stage phase to creating a laptop-learning environment.

First year—A Laptop-Friendly School.

The academic building should enjoy high-speed, wireless, Internet access throughout. New wiring and wireless

access points should be installed, electric amperage increased, charging stations should be added and appropriate cyber-gates and security management software programs should be installed.

Once registered on the B W Harris network, students should be free to use mobile computing devices in their studies, in the library, guidance, cafeteria, and any open space. Classroom use—note taking, collaborative research projects, writing and editing, etc.—should be permitted at the discretion of the classroom instructor.

Darren Wilkins should work with teachers to develop practical applications and satisfy professional development needs. Laptops should be welcomed, not required. No one operating platform should be prescribed.

Second year—A School of Exploration. During the second year, administration should assess the lessons learned and explore practical applications within their content areas. Best practices, professional development, software, single or multiple platforms, should be shared and examined. An informed policy covering the variety of technologies should be written. Competencies in the use of applied media and informational technologies should be written. A graduation requirement should be articulated. The Computer and Technology curriculum should be revised and appropriately staffed.

Third year—A School of 21st Century Skills. With two years of experience, B W Harris High should move into a fully integrated laptop environment. Computer platform and facility issues should have been resolved. Video conferencing and distance learning should

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become familiar experiences.

Information technologies should be ubiquitous and their presence should be no more remarkable in the classroom than the textbooks and reference books of the last century.

This initiative is described as an evolution, not a revolution. B W Harris High, should be driven by its new mission, should constantly put forth the best in educational methods, innovative teaching, and the effective use of technology.

In preparing, teachers and administrators should visit high performing college preparatory schools, attend professional association meetings, executive

briefings, and have dialogued with institutions of higher education. That is, visit other countries in Africa that are excelling academically, have teachers communicate with others teachers and provide an environment for professional development.

The New Technology experience demonstrates that with appropriate know-how and support, we can effectively launch and implement a 21st Century B W Harris School that can do the following:

- Help education, civic, and business leaders envision, and conceptualize, what 21st century education looks and motivate them to provide funding.

- Create new classroom learning environments for “a culture of Students at Work.”

- Define the school’s Learner Outcomes that students believe they need to know and be able to do, embed them in all projects, and provide students just-in-time assessment feedback on their learner outcomes.

- Systematize 100% project learning in all courses.

- Provide ongoing and systematic professional development. Go beyond training to coaching and a professional learning community.

- Go beyond one-to-one computing.

- Provide students and teachers with technology tools plus an online collaborative learning platform. Build a new student culture of “trust, respect, and responsibility.”

The mix of technology tools will change and evolve rapidly in the future. Today’s technology may be obsolete tomorrow. It is impossible to predict the tools that will be essential for learning and working in the years to come. This is why it is important for people to acquire the learning skills that will enable them to learn to use next-generation technology and why businesspeople and educators need to continue collaborating so schools will stay abreast of new technology.