



The Mighty SPARTAN

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THE BW HESAA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Featured Spartan: Amb. Henry D. Williamson, Sr.



By Getahn Ward

It didn't take Henry D. Williamson long to get noticed upon arriving as a junior at B.W. Harris School.

He played on the basketball team and other students admired his ability to speak

French and Arabic. But it was beating the candidate that some faculty members and administrators preferred in elections for student council president during his senior year in 1972 that thrust Williamson into the spotlight.

"Up to now people refer to it as the hottest elections in B.W. Harris," he said; adding members of his party such as Cllr. Cyril Jones and Rev. Budu Shannon helped. "We had always been a school of more girls than boys; I had to persuade the girls to vote for me, and have a lot of friends who had ideas."

Upon graduating in 1972 and earning a political science degree from the University of Liberia five years later, Williamson set out on a professional career highlighted by work as a diplomat for two decades.

When he left the Foreign Service in 2001 as Liberia's Permanent Representative

to the United Nations and other organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, Williamson was the only Liberian foreign service officer who spoke three languages – English, French, and Arabic. Often, he was the sole delegate representing Liberia at major conferences.

Shannon has fond memories of Williamson's time at B.W. Harris and wasn't surprised by his successful career in the Foreign Service and communications, considering that he was a great spokesman in high school.

Williamson's leadership traits including his foresight, and ability to get along with other people and to build consensus between the people he met at B.W. Harris and others like himself who were newcomers were the key reasons Shannon said they supported him for student council president over Genevieve Sherman.

Continue on Page 2

Special points of interest:

Amb. Henry Williamson: the diplomat

PennDel hosts 2013

B. W. Harris Building Infrastructure Development Initiative Launched

Chapter Updates

- *North Carolina*
- *Tri-State*
- *Midwest*
- *Georgia*
- *Metro*

Class of 1981: 30 Years later

National Chair to visit school

2013 Convention goes to PennDel

By Staff Writer

The B. W. Harris Episcopal School Alumni Association-USA, Inc. will hold its 21st Convention, July 4 - 8, 2013 in PennDel.

The PennDel Chapter, under the leadership of Chapter President Alfred Major, has appointed members Gloria Caine and Varney Coleman as Convention

Co-Chairs to plan events for the 21st Convention.

PennDel is anticipating a large turnout of members because of its central location. In addition, it is expected that with the timing of the Convention, which encompasses celebrations over the July 4th weekend, many Spartans will consider bring-

ing members of their families to the 21st Convention.

Excitement is also building because members will have the opportunity to hear first-hand the report from the fact finding mission to the school that National Chair Gudrun Harris is scheduled to make in September 2012.



Members at 2012 Convention

Amb. Williamson

"It was a historic event because it was like the people speaking vs. faculty members who thought they had the edge to elect our leadership," recalled Shannon, who graduated three years after Williamson.

He lists giving sixth graders the vote and a seat on the student senate among changes Williamson initiated. On a personal level, Shannon said friends named Williamson "Jabber," and took him when going to buy shoes at Lebanese-owned stores because he could bargain with store-owners in Arabic for a lower price.

Family Man

Despite all his professional accomplishments, Williamson is most proud of the three daughters that he had with his now deceased wife Massa Clarke, a Spartan who graduated in 1978. He enjoys spending time with his three grandchildren, with another two on the way. One of his daughters is expecting twins.

Williamson's strong sense of family resulted in part from experiences growing up in his parent's home in Liberia during the '60s and early '70s.

Williamson recalls how he and his five siblings never got a clue that their parents had any problems because they resolved any differences privately in their bedroom.

After the three boys and three girls grew up and became husbands and wives, they all tried to follow that example, he said. "We were fortunate and blessed to have gotten a bit from each parent," he added.

When between ages 8 and 11, Williamson, now 58, got an early taste of life in Foreign Service when his father served as Second Secretary and Chargé d'Affaires at the Liberian Embassy in Cairo.

The son later began his own diplomatic career 17 years later, was first assigned to Zaire, and later to Geneva.

After Egypt, Joseph Williamson, Sr. returned to Liberia, worked as Assistant Minister of Justice for Litigation and practiced law including as Legal Counsel with the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment.

Williamson's father lives in Liberia, where his mother passed away in January 2012. His mother, the late Rev. Mother Alzetta Bahnti King-Williamson, served as pastor for churches in Silver Spring, Md., and Liberia. She was a friend of poet Maya Angelou, who wrote a poem that was read at her funeral.

After being recalled from Geneva to Liberia in 2001, Williamson worked as an international consultant with a law firm and spent three years with steelmaker Arcelor Mittal as its government/communications liaison, handling matters between the company in Liberia and government agencies and the media.

Since leaving that job, he has dabbled in international consulting, but now is more focused on his health.

Committed Spartan

In Spring 2011, during a visit to the United States to celebrate the 10th anniversary of his wife's passing, Williamson was diagnosed with renal failure; his kidneys were not functioning properly.

His condition requires dialysis, a treatment that was not available in Liberia. Williamson remained in the United States with his sister in Maryland; he, however, was able to travel home in January to bury his mother.

Williamson attended this year's B.W. Harris alumni Convention in Detroit and last year's in Providence, R.I.,

something he has tried to do even when he worked in Geneva.

He enjoys the fellowship with classmates with whom he graduated 40 years ago, and is ready to lend his expertise as needed by the Association.

Among suggestions, Williamson wants to see if for the Convention to consider a homecoming year for classes reaching a milestone from the year they graduated. For example, in 2013, that would be the classes of '73, '83, '93, and 2003. "The speaker at the Chairman's Renaissance Ball would come from one of those classes," he said. "That's my personal thing --try to make it as intimate as possible," Williamson stated about his proposal.

Williamson also would like to see annual conventions becoming more family oriented. For instance, discounts could be offered to encourage members to bring their spouses and children. He also would like to see Spartans in ministry given the opportunity to preach during Sunday services at conventions.

Williamson fondly recalls the kindness of B.W. Harris administrators, such as Rev. Fr. Edward G.W. King, then principal; Mr. J. Wah-Doe Bedell and Mrs. Zoe Traub, after he arrived from the Lutheran Training Institute (LTI). Shannon credits Williamson with improving relationship with the school's staff, often seeking advice from Fr. King.

Despite playing basketball and holding office in high school, Williamson took his studies seriously and encourages younger Liberians to do the same. "In Liberia, one cannot just depend on his athletic ability, there has to be something to back it," he said. "You cannot be all brawns; you've got to have brains."

Williamson enjoys fellowship with his classmates and is ready to lend his expertise as needed by the Association.

North Carolina Elections & Summer Fish Fry on August 25, 2012 in Charlotte, North Carolina

News from North Carolina

*By Georgina Briggs
North Carolina Chapter*

North Carolina was pumped up after Convention 2012 and had its first conference call on Sunday July 8, 2012. During the teleconference, members of the Chapter discussed highlights of the Convention in Detroit Michigan, and updated those on the call about new registration guidelines for all future Conventions as well as the revised Constitution.

The information was well received and members reported looking forward to meeting those obligations head-on.

The Chapter will hold its Summer Fish Fry in Charlotte, North Carolina, on August 25, 2012. Elections of officers will be held at that time, with members looking forward to the next phase as new officers are elected.

North Carolina has continued to plan for the 2nd annual EGW King Recognition and Awards Dinner in November 2012.

Members of the Chapter continue to strive to make it a viable part of the National Association, and look forward to 2014 when North Carolina will host the 22nd Convention.



Kennedy Center

***B. W. Harris
Episcopal
School Alumni
Association's
Building
Infrastructure
Development
Initiative
Kennedy
Center Event
on Saturday,
October 6,
2012***

B. W. Harris Infrastructure Development Initiative Launched

By Mohamedu F. Jones

In March 2012, with the approval of the National Chair, Gudrun Harris, the Capital Campaign Committee established a special initiative called the "B. W. Harris School Building Infrastructure Development Initiative."

This is the brainchild of alumnus Eugene Bedell, who has been appointed Chairman of the B. W. Harris Building Infrastructure Development Committee. Eugene is assisted by Alumna Cherrine Smith, who is the Coordinator of the Committee.

Membership of the Committee, which will comprised Association members and non-members, will be selected by Chairman Bedell, and report to the Chair of the Capital Campaign Committee, Cllr. Mohamedu F. Jones.

The first event of the B. W. Harris School Building Infrastructure Development Initiative, "An Autumn Evening In Washington" will be held at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts on Saturday, October 6, 2012.

The occasion will include an internationally acclaimed live music performance, which will be followed by an intimate dinner prepared by renowned chefs in Washington DC. Invitations have been mailed to interested alumni and friends of B. W. Harris.

The Building Infrastructure Development Initiative was described by National Chair Harris as "the most transformative and ambitious undertaking" in the history of the Association. Immediate past National Chair Handel K. C. Diggs called it a "major and significant step" in changing the

learning environment of the school. Cllr. Jones, the Capital Campaign Chair described the idea as "an innovative concept of historical proportion," and thanked Eugene and Cherrine for "giving back" to their alma mater in this unique way.



Students of B. W. Harris

News from Tri-State Chapter

*By Elyne Padmore
President, Tri-State Chapter*



Tri-State Chapter

In the second quarter of 2012, the Tri-State Chapter has been very busy. As we mentioned in our last communication in April, we hosted our 13th Annual Bishop George D. Browne Achievement and Honoring Dinner. At this year's dinner, we honored Alumnus Mohamedu F. Jones, Esq., Class of

1971.

During his speech, Cllr. Jones issued a challenge to Tri-State, to undertake a project at B.W. Harris Episcopal High School to be completed by December 2012. He offered \$500.00, which the chapter would match to complete the project.

The Tri-State Chapter accepted the challenge, and as a result will be providing teaching tools to the school in the forms of book, and DVD's for the Kindergarten class.

Several members of the Chapter visited the school over the last six months, and have spoken of the need to renovate

the clinic at the school. Tri-State understands the need for a functioning clinic at the school to meet the needs of the students, faculty and administrative staff.

To this end, we have undertaken another project to provide the clinic with first-aid supplies, an air conditioner, paint for the walls, sheets, pillows, fans and a water fountain.

As we announced at Convention 2011 in Rhode Island, we will be awarding a Scholarship in the upcoming 2012-2013 school year in the name of our past president, National Chairman Emeritus Handel K. C. Diggs. The scholarship will be awarded to a deserving senior

News from Midwest Chapter

Continued on Page 4

*By Stephen A. Taylor,
President, Midwest Chapter*

In 2010 we said, "Yes We Can." Today, in 2012, we say, "Yes, Midwest did it". As the host chapter of our 20th convention, held in Detroit, Michigan, June 29 – July 1, 2012, we worked diligently to ensure our guests had the time of their lives. From feedbacks received, our mission was accomplished.

We would like to thank our National officials, our 2012 convention committee and those that shared lessons learned, ensuring that convention was a success. We especially extend thanks and appreciations to our families for being patience while we assumed that monumental task.

To our friends that supported our cause, and continue to do so, we salute you.

What is next for the Midwest chapter? Focus. Engage. Execute to plan.

During the convention board meeting on Friday, June 30th, we presented a laundry list of

challenges we would like to address. To name a few, chapter meetings attendance and chapters dues payments. In addition, there are goals we would like to accomplish over the next year. For example, increase chapter dues payments to 90%. Today, we are at 28% dues payment.

Another, increase involvement with the Chicago members. To realize these challenges and goals, we must remain focused as a chapter.

For any chapter to remain active, particularly after hosting convention, being engage with one another is a critical recipe. Hence, continuation of bi-monthly meetings, whether it is face to face or conference calls, the team must meet. Also, always reaching out to one another during happy times and sad times, must be put into practice.

A phone call every so often is the 8 ball. On that note, we ask that you keep our chapter member Marca Stubblefield in prayers as she recovers from her recent mishap.

Executing to plan is a vast part of achieving our chapter's

obligations and projects. We have broadcast fund-raisers activities that need to be undertaken to ensure our 2013 convention assessment is paid, project at the school is initiated and completed by December 2012, a challenge extended to the Midwest chapter by Cllr. Mohammed F. Jones.

In closing, as the PennDel chapter prepares to host the 2013 convention, we wish you all the best with the planning. Please feel welcome to reach out as we are prepared



What is next for the Midwest chapter? Focus. Engage. Execute to plan.

***Please support the Capital Campaign and the Scholarship Program!
Make a difference in the life of a child.***

Tri-State News Cont'd

high school student in the amount of \$300.00.

We are proud to be the first Chapter to have paid its 2013 Convention assessment of \$1500.00. We are also honored to have been the winners of the purse of \$280.00 offered by Tri-State Chapter Senior Board Member, David Moore for having registered for Convention 2012 twenty five or more

members by the deadline of June 15, 2012.

In showing our support for the good work of our Association, we have with pride, donated \$500.00 to assist with the travel expenses of National Chairman, Ms. Gudrun Harris, Tri-State Chapter member and past Chapter president, as she travels to Monrovia on the Association's business.

Lastly, we hosted our Annual Backyard Barbecue on Saturday, August 18, 2012. This annual affair is an expression of thank you to our members, friends and their families for a job well done in the past year.



Kindergarten Students

DC Metro Chapter is on the Move

*By Joe Walker
President, Metro Chapter*

The DC Metro Chapter continues to make meaningful contributions to the development of the Association and our alma mater. The Chapter, being the first Chapter to host a Convention in the Association, continues to live up to her status in the Association. Under the leadership of the current President Spartan J. Wleabo Walker, II, the Chapter has gone beyond the call to assist the National Association achieve its goals.

After assuming the leadership of the Chapter, Spartan Walker AKA "Joe Tex" of the class of 81' attended the Tri-State George D. Brown Annual Awards and Recognition dinner and saw the need to emulate and organize similar program in his Chapter.

The Emmanuel W. Johnson, Sr. Program was born and this year we will celebrate the third edition on October 13, 2012 at the Kahler Hall in Columbia Maryland. This program has been financially successful since its inception and members look forward to attending it annually.

A release from the Chapter reports that this year's program is expected to be filled with excitement. The 1st Vice President Mrs. Mona Diggs revealed that the program will be done in a different style. Presenters will be non-Spartans who will add to the financial success of the program, and there will be delicious food, lots of entertainment and dancing. Famous

Liberian DJ Noko4 of Radio-LIB will provide the music.

The Chapter has also achieved in these areas as highlighted below:

- Contributed to the National Association in 2012 the amount of \$2,981.00 for the "DC Metro Chapter Library Book Project" for the school in Liberia.
- Organized the DC Metro Cllr. Mohamedu F. Jones, Annual Scholarship. The chapter provided \$353.00 for a scholarship this year and will donate the cost of tuition for a student in Perpetuity.
- Held its Annual Country Cook and Family Fun Day.
- Became the first Chapter to pay its annual assessment months in advance of Convention.
- Instituted quality programs to make the Chapter financially stable.

Despite these successes, the involvement of members in the Chapter's work continues to be a major challenge. There are few committed members who continue to carry the load of the Chapter.

The leadership will continue to exert effort to encourage and motivate members to get involved in the development of the Chapter, the Association and our alma mater.



DC Metro Chapter

Class of 1981 marks 30th Year at 2012 Convention



Class of 1981

By Staff Writer

One of the highlights of the 2012 Convention in Detroit, Michigan was the marking of their 30th Anniversary by members of the Spartan Class of 1981.

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**Alumni Association, Inc.
USA**

News from Georgia Chapter

*Georgia Chapter Upcoming Event
By Miyesha Cheeks
Georgia Chapter*

The Georgia Chapter is gearing up for its second annual J. Wah-Doe Bedell Sr. Award and Recognition Dinner in October 2012. We are excited to report that this school year is the first year we will be offering the J. Wah-Doe Bedell Sr. scholarship established after our first award dinner. Expect an email soon detailing the venue, date, and time of our event.



Seniors at B. W. Harris

The BWHESAA Quarterly Newsletter is produced by the Association to keep its member informed about the activities and events of the Association.

This edition of the Newsletter was prepared by

Gudrun Harris

Getahn Ward

Nee Alison

Joanna Freeman Richards

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BWHESAA National Chair To Visit School in September 2012



**Gudrun Harris, National
Chair, BWHESAA**

By Staff Writer

The National Chair of the B. W. Harris Episcopal School Alumni Association-USA, Inc., Gudrun Harris, is scheduled to travel to Liberia in September 2012 for two weeks. During her visit, the National Chair will tour the school and inspect Association-funded projects.

She will also consult with the Episcopal Bishop of Liberia, the Rt. Rev. Jonathan B. B. Hart, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Mrs. Deroe Davies and Principal Lurleen King Falla.

The National Chair will also meet with students, teachers, staff and parents of the school during her visit to B. W. Harris, and with BWHESAA alumni in Liberia.

**J. Wah Doe
Bedell
Honoring
Program
will be held
in October
2012**