



Alston-Pleasants
Post-Graduate Scholars Fund

NEWSLETTER

Alston-Pleasants Scholars 2013 Fall Luncheon



In keeping with tradition, the Trustees met with all current Scholars and a few recent graduates during the Alston-Pleasants Scholars 2013 Fall Luncheon at the Carolina Inn in Chapel Hill, NC on September 14, 2013.

Pictured (Left to Right): J. Gilbert Stallings, Angela Spruill, Helen N. Parker, Jazmin Alston, Maria Noyola, Melanie-Lark Benning, Meghan Howard, Sam Nixon, Blair Kuplic and Debbie A. Daniel.

Congratulations to
current Alston-Pleasants
Post-Graduate Scholar

Blair Stephenson Kuplic
from Halifax County
Class of 2011
pursuing a Law Degree at
UNC

Welcome to the newest
Alston-Pleasants Scholar

Jazmin Alston
from Halifax County
Class of 2017



*"The mind is not a vessel to be
filled, but a fire to be kindled."
-Plutarch*



FUND UPDATE

By J. Gilbert Stallings, Trustee

On August 28, 2013, the Alston-Pleasants Post-Graduate Scholars Fund reached its fifth anniversary. In new ventures, the first five years provide a valued indication of the soundness and effectiveness of the plan purposes, design and early implementation.

The Fund is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) private foundation that makes scholarship awards to Alston-Pleasants Scholars who wish to continue their studies on a post-graduate basis at any appropriately accredited American university.

Over this initial period, the Fund has provided scholarships to each Alston-Pleasants Scholar applicant. The Fund has recognized and encouraged students in post graduate Library Science, Business Administration, Nurse Practitioner, Public Administration and Law studies and we expect, over time, to assist an even broader array of graduate and professional scholarship.

The Fund's financial resources are well positioned for the future and we especially appreciate Denny Organ's recent substantial Memorial Gift in remembrance of Mr. Joseph Talley, former Principal of Roanoke Rapids High School and Superintendent of Roanoke Rapids Public Schools.

The Fund also provides significant non-financial services to the broader Alston-Pleasants Community, including the provision of specialized social media facilities, enhanced high school visibility, improved local press coverage and effective working arrangements with the University Student Aid Office and General Alumni Association (visit our website at www.alstonpleasants.org).

The Fund has the effective oversight and support of the Alston-Pleasants Scholars' home county Superior Court Clerks and, in that connection, we welcome the recent appointment of the Honorable Patricia B. Chastain as the new Clerk of the Franklin County Superior Court.

The Trustees continue to recognize those whose interest in and support of the Alston-Pleasants Community are so very important, including the recent designation of Denny Organ as an Alston-Pleasants Champion and the Alston-Pleasants Post-Graduate Scholars Fund Honor Gift recognitions of W. E. (Bill) Alston and Patricia Scott, great

nephew and great niece of Miss Missouri, and Spencer Scott.

Additional Alston-Pleasants Post-Graduate Scholars Fund Memorial and Honor Gifts would substantially help to broaden public awareness of the importance of the Alston-Pleasants Scholarships while further augmenting the Fund's financial strength.

If you would like to make tax-deductible contributions, including Memorial and Honor Gifts, to the Fund, please contact me at alstonpleasants@aol.com or Alston-Pleasants Post-Graduate Scholars Fund, P. O. Box 101, Basye VA 22810-0101.

So how do you think the Fund is doing as it moves into its next five years of service to the Alston-Pleasants Community? Please tell us what you would like to see in our future and how you would like to help.



 MORE ON MISS MISSOURI

Considering how much we owe to Missouri Alston Pleasants, we seem to know rather little about her—the kind of person she was, what her motivation might have been in founding and funding the scholarships granted to us, or the people who mattered to her. From this organization’s website, we learn that she was born in Warren County at the “plantation,” Saxon Hall. What I had not known was that the land surrounding her home was a grant from the English crown and is still listed as such in the family documents. She was the youngest of eleven children, an Episcopalian, and dedicated the Alston-Pleasants Scholars Fund to the memory of her grandfather—who was a major player in North Carolina politics in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. She married William Henry Pleasants, who died not very long after their marriage; they had no children. Miss Missouri lived most of her life in Louisburg, NC, and she died in early 1959, which would have been very close to the time that the first scholarship to UNC from her fund was awarded to Gil Stallings.

To learn more about Miss Missouri, we sought some help from her great-niece, Patricia Scott, who in turn directed us toward her brother Bill Alston, who lives in Henderson, NC. I called him and we chatted for a while, as I warmed up to the purpose of inquiring about his great aunt. Bill is virtually blind from a worsening condition of glaucoma. Still, he insists on living in his own home.

Bill was born in Warrenton, NC, a few miles from Saxon Hall. His memories of Miss Missouri derive almost entirely from when he was a small boy and made his way to the plantation, or when Miss Missouri would venture into town. Mainly he recalls her as just “a sweet person.”

When he visited Saxon Hall, the image that is most vivid to him is seeing Miss Missouri working at her desk coughing, sneezing, and blowing her nose. She told him it was “catarrh”(a term you just don’t run into very often these days, but in 19th century literature denoted a condition of inflammation of the mucous membrane). Well, Bill now has that desk in his home.

Something else that sticks in his memory is that, when visiting Saxon Hall, usually for the purpose of playing with Miss Missouri’s nephew Billy, there always seemed to be a lot of large, pasteboard or cardboard boxes (probably former shipping containers for appliances or machine parts) out in the yard. The kids made good use of them—playing as if they were forts, aircraft, or tanks. In general, one gets the idea that, whether at Saxon Hall or later in Louisburg, Miss Missouri was delighted to provide the means by which the neighborhood kids could enjoy themselves in animated playfulness.

Miss Missouri also provided the means by which Bill could attend Fishburne Military Academy and East Carolina. His great aunt wanted him to study at UNC, but at that time, he just didn’t want to go to a “big school” (he should see the Carolina campus now!); he preferred Hampden-Sydney. But he delayed his departure and eventually linked up with a friend who had a spanking new automobile and told Bill about all the pretty women on the EC campus.

Bill has a friend, Louis Wheless, who drives over from Louisburg once a week to help Bill with his mail, take him to lunch, and check on anything else that is urgent. Well--Bill said Louis is the man I need to talk to if I want



 A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The Trustees of the Alston-Pleasants Post-Graduate Scholars Fund would like to send special thanks to **Dennis Organ** for authoring the article on Miss Missouri.

some Miss Missouri stories. So we agreed to talk the next time Louis came around, and they could take turns with me.

Louis said his father, while growing up, was a nearby neighbor of Miss Missouri in Louisburg. From the details that he recalled, she was like a second mother or genial aunt to all of the neighborhood kids. She always had peaches, apples, or cherry cones to pass around to them. She liked to keep up with what they were doing, what they were studying in school, what they wanted to do in their lives. She had Louis's father refinish some of the ancestral furniture, then gave it to him to sell for his own needs. Thus enriched, Louis Senior was able eventually to get the Chrysler dealership in town and an oil business. When he graduated from high school, he received an envelope from Miss Missouri—inside was \$100, and that was a lot of money in those days, which I figure to have been in the late 1920s or early 1930s.

While Miss Missouri had no children of her own, she did raise a nephew, Billy Alston, who as noted above, was an occasional playmate with Bill. Billy went on to the Citadel and later UNC. He had no children of his own, and he passed away just a few years ago in Lumberton, NC.

Miss Missouri at some point became aware that Louis, Sr. had taken up an interest in golf. He found out that she was very knowledgeable about the sport; she taught him quite a bit, and gave him a book to help him learn more.

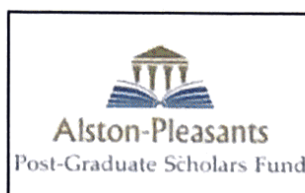
Louis, Jr. recalls from his father's accounts that Miss. Missouri had a substantial crew to help with her Louisburg home and the continued operation of the plantation. Among

that crew was a housekeeper, Lula, whose daughter went on to become a pharmacist. Miss Missouri sent some of the children of that crew to school and apparently helped them pay for college work as well.

Indeed, Joe Pearce, the son of one of the men on Miss Missouri's staff, went on to become an Alston-Pleasants Scholar himself, receiving the award in 1963—one year after me. Many of you know Joe quite well from his frequent and much-appreciated involvement in activities and programs of the Alston-Pleasants Community.

One more story deserves telling. Miss Missouri, sometime just after the end of WW II, had occasion to ask Louis Sr. to drive her, in her Cadillac, to Raleigh. She told Louis: "Drive as fast as you can, but don't let 'the man' get you."

So, you get the sense that we—past, present, and future Alston-Pleasants people—could be regarded as part of the larger brood that Miss Missouri took care of and helped throughout her days.



RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

In Memory of
Joseph Talley
by Dennis W. Organ

In Honor of
W. E. (Bill) Alston
by J. Gilbert Stallings

We Want To Hear From You!

If you have any news that you would like to share with the Alston-Pleasants community, please type up a short announcement, including your name and UNC class year, and send it to the Trustees at alstonpleasants@aol.com. Feel free to attach photos as well. We will do our best to include the information in a future newsletter. Please send us your email address for our files.

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