



Alston-Pleasants
Post-Graduate Scholars Fund

NEWSLETTER

Alston-Pleasants Scholars 2014 Fall Luncheon



In keeping with tradition, the Trustees met with members of the Alston-Pleasants Community during the 2014 Fall Luncheon at the Carolina Inn in Chapel Hill, NC on October 25, 2014.

Pictured (Left to Right) – Front Row: Maria Aguilar Noyola, Helen N. Parker and Allison Blackburn; Second Row: Melanie-Lark Benning, Meghan Howard and Patrick Fiorilli; Back Row: J. Gilbert Stallings, Jazmin Alston and Debbie A. Daniel.

Current Alston-Pleasants Scholars

Maria Aguilar Noyola
Class of 2015

Sam Nixon
Class of 2016

Jazmin Alston
Class of 2017

Patrick Oliver Fiorilli
Class of 2018



*"Education is an ornament in
prosperity and a refuge in
diversity." -Aristotle*



TRUSTEE UPDATE

By Helen N. Parker, Trustee

Welcome to the Fall 2014 issue of the Alston-Pleasants Post-Graduate Scholars Fund Newsletter! As activities over the summer and fall of this year clearly show, the Alston-Pleasants community continues to flourish, as both undergraduate Alston-Pleasants Scholars and Post-Graduate Scholars demonstrate the wisdom and far-reaching impact of Miss Missouri's investment in the future of the Franklin/Halifax/Warren area of North Carolina.

In September, Trustee Gil Stallings, who had missed our Spring 2013 Meeting at Cherry Hill, in Warren County, arranged for a visit that included a tour of this ancestral home of the Warren County wing of the Alston Family with Mary Brodie Raiford, Cherry Hill Historical Foundation, Inc., Executive Director, and Patricia Scott, Miss Missouri's great-niece. While in the area, he also had visits with Richard Hunter, Clerk of the Warren

County Superior Court and Patricia B. Chastain, Clerk of the Franklin County Superior Court, as well as with Alice Faye Hunter, the retired Clerk of the Franklin County Superior Court and an Alston-Pleasants Champion.

In October, our annual Fall meeting in Chapel Hill gave current undergraduate Scholars and several past Scholars a chance to connect/reconnect and "catch up" with each other. The group welcomed our newest undergraduate Scholar, Patrick Fiorilli, and enjoyed a lively lunchtime discussion of the impact the scholarship awards have had on them, and ideas about how to increase local community and educator awareness of this very significant scholarship opportunity. We especially thank our senior undergraduate Scholar, Maria Aguilar Noyola, for starting off our conversation by sharing her thoughts about the impact of the Alston-Pleasants Scholarship and her educational career at UNC.

Recent Scholar updates shared at the Fall luncheon include Blair Stephenson Kuplic's (Class of 2011, JD '14) commission as an ensign with the US Navy JAG Corps, Meghan Howard's (Class of 2012) research work in Nepal, and Allison Blackburn's (Class of 2013) work with senior citizens in the Triangle area. Miss Missouri would be very proud!

Early planning has begun for a Spring event, tentatively set for early April 2015 in Franklin County, for current and past Scholars, local community educators, and other community leaders. Look for more details in coming months on our website, www.alstonpleasants.org or on our Facebook page (and be sure to "like" our page!).

The Alston-Pleasants Post-Graduate Scholarship Fund is an Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt 501(c)(3) private foundation. If you would like to contribute to this very worthwhile endeavor, including Memorial or Honor Gifts, please contact us at alstonpleasants@aol.com.

We welcome news and updates from past and present Scholars, suggestions for how to enhance communications and connections across the entire Alston-Pleasants community, and your participation in our ongoing conversation. Please feel free to post to our Facebook page or email us at alstonpleasants@aol.com.



 WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Probably the most significant, and almost certainly the most immediate, effect of Larry's winning the 1968 Alston-Pleasants Scholarship was that it made him decide to attend UNC. Up to that point he had leaned toward Davidson. He was justifiably proud of his achievement of having been admitted to that institution.

But once ensconced in Chapel Hill, Larry made the most of it. His interest in history connected him to one of my own favorite professors, James R Caldwell, who in turn connected him to another favorite professor, Bernard Boyd in the religion department. Thus did Larry get to join the group that Boyd led to the annual archaeological digs in Israel, with stops in Europe including Greece. His love of travel and history has continued unabated.

Upon finishing Phi Beta Kappa with his A. B. at Carolina in 1972, he went on to law school at UNC. While at UNC, he served an internship with the Attorney General's Office, North Carolina Department of Justice. During that internship, he spent a substantial amount of time with Joseph Branch —then an Associate Justice on the North Carolina Supreme Court, later the Chief Justice, discussing pending cases, the practice of law and career opportunities.

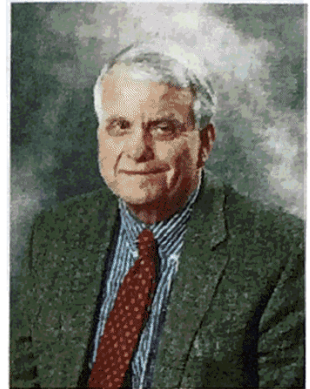
Larry had not planned from the outset to return to his roots in Enfield, NC. Though he had a number of other options, he decided to return to Enfield to practice in Justice Branch's old law firm, where he has sculpted an impressive career in private practice and contributions to the public sector, notably in education. He opened his own law firm as a sole practitioner in Enfield in 2006.

Since 1979, he has served as General Counsel for Halifax Electric Membership Corporation, which is not only a major power supplier in northeastern North Carolina, but a leader in industrial development and civic and charitable activities.

He is the attorney for the Halifax County School System, and his interest in public schools, along with his expertise, led to his involvement with an all-star lineup of lawyers in the Leandro case. Some readers will already have known what this case is about; I did not know about it until talking to Larry. For those who might not be familiar with the particulars, in 1994 attorneys for boards and parents in five counties, including Halifax, challenged the process by which public schools in poorer counties were funded. That process made it difficult to recruit the high caliber teachers and provide the kind of infrastructure that more affluent counties could make available. The legal team argued that it is a fundamental, constitutional right by all children to a sound, basic, quality education, which was defined in explicit, precise terms.

The litigation has resulted in an opinion of the North Carolina Supreme Court declaring that every child in the state of North Carolina has the right to the opportunity for a sound based education as specifically defined by the Court and the obligation to provide that opportunity is the non delegable responsibility of the State. A subsequent trial court opinion found that the State has failed in its obligation to provide that opportunity and that holding was upheld by a second Supreme Court opinion. The case was remanded

continued...



*Alston-Pleasants Scholar
Larry Armstrong '72*

 A SPECIAL THANK YOU


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

to the trial court for further hearings to determine how the State would remedy that failure. After twenty years the litigation is still ongoing and has had a dramatic impact both in Halifax County and statewide.

Larry continues to be involved in the ongoing legal process of "Leandro," while serving his private clients. He is rated AV by Martindale, which is said to be the "gold standard" in the objective calibration of legal expertise and performance.

Somehow, with all the work involved in his private legal practice and contributing his valuable time and expertise to the public sector, he manages to find time to travel and sail. And he once spent 15 days on a movie set with Robert Duvall, filming a Civil War movie.



Please visit the Facebook page and "Like" us to stay informed of what's going on and to connect with others in our community!
www.facebook.com/alstonpleasantscholars

The Alston-Pleasants website (www.alstonpleasants.org) is a great resource for information.

If you have suggestions for our Facebook page or website, please email Melanie-Lark Benning at mbenning09@gmail.com.

MORE ON MISS MISSOURI



Did you know?...

- She established the Alston-Pleasants Scholars Fund in 1958 for selected undergraduate UNC students from Franklin, Halifax and Warren Counties.
- To date there are 86 Alston-Pleasants Scholars.
- She spent her summers at Saxham Hall in Inez, NC (shown below).



RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

In Memory of
George F. Hunter

Fred was the beloved husband of Alice Faye. After 23 years of Air Force service, he worked for the United States Postal Service while also a leading member of fire and rescue squads serving the communities in which they resided and farmed.

Contributor:
 Alice Faye Hunter, Retired Clerk, Franklin County Superior Court, and Alston-Pleasants Champion

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.

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