



Washington Park/Rochelle High School Alumni Association, Inc.

P O Box 90452—Lakeland, FL 33805

www.wp-rochellealumniassociation.com



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Naomi Williams, Chairperson

Clarence Childs

James Griffin

Robert Zackery

Mary McElrath

Honorary Member:

Mr. Robert Fields

POLK PROUD HISTORY

VOL. 45

FEBRUARY 2020

NO. 1

POLK COUNTY'S LEADING LADIES

A Year Long Series Recognizing Historic Female Contributors To Our County

ELSIE LUCRETIA DUNBAR (1898-1967) by LuAnn Mims



Elsie Dunbar, circa 1947

Elsie Dunbar was a Leading Lady in Polk County. At the turn of the century, females were somewhat limited in possible career opportunities, but being a teacher was a solid option which Elsie chose. Her higher education was completed at Hampton Institute's satellite campus in Atlanta, Georgia. She moved to Lakeland in 1918 and married William Dunbar, a railroad

fireman, in 1921. Her educator career began in 1928 as a math teacher in the newly opened Washington Park High School. She was instrumental in providing educational opportunities for students. As a club and class sponsor, she ensured social successes as well. By her retirement in 1962, Mrs. Dunbar had served more than three decades as a teacher, principal and librarian.

One of Elsie's biggest achievements was to help establish a branch library for blacks in Lakeland during the time of racial segregation. At the time, Elsie was both a teacher and principal who wanted to expand prospects for her students beyond the small library at Washington Park. She began working with then city librarian Serena Bailey on ways to achieve that goal. By 1933-34, blacks were able to sign-up for a library card to access public library materials which were circulated through the black high school.

When the Virginia Avenue Branch opened in 1937, it was only the second library for blacks in the entire state. Using Works Project Administration funds, a small bungalow house located at 1042 Virginia Avenue was renovated as a city operated library, which made it an official branch of the main library near Lake Morton. The small facility held books, magazines, maps, reference materials and a dedicated

children's area. Patrons had benefit of requesting materials from the main library via interlibrary loan.

Mrs. Dunbar was the single librarian there until her retirement in 1962. She would open the library for limited times during the week in the afternoons and evenings, plus extended times on Saturdays. The Virginia Avenue Branch was in close proximity to Washington Park, later renamed Rochelle High School and to the Colored Auditorium, dedicated in 1938. The branch library remained open until the Coleman-Bush Building opened in 1975, which contained a small public reading room. In 1995, ground was broken for the current branch library which was named for activist Larry R. Jackson in 1998.

Little is known about Elsie Dunbar's private life, but as an educator, she was very visible in the community. In 1947, she was the first person to receive a master's degree from Florida A & M University. Her thesis, "Role of Washington Park HS in a Program for Improving School/Community Relations," contains valuable information about her ongoing drive to provide the best opportunities for students.



Elsie Dunbar, Virginia Avenue Branch Library, circa 1947

Albertha Whittley-Tabron
 Alice Speed
 Angela Terrell Walker
 Annie Day Henry
 Arnold L. Washington
 Beverly Boatwright
 Carolynne Patterson Mather
 Clarence Childs
 Dianne Robinson
 Debbie J. Cobb
 Delores Pickett Patterson
 Dolores Hamilton
 Doretha Brooks
 Eddie Lake, Pastor
 Earlene Coney
 Eugene Williams
 Gloria Porter Perkins
 Gwendolyn Curtis
 Helen Brown

WP/ROCHELLE



Jacqueline Speed
 James Griffin
 Jesse Bryant
 Joseph Garvin
 Laddie Russell
 Laurastine King
 Lorenzo Hicks
 Lynnette Giles Canady
 Mary W. Forte
 M. Patricia Parks
 Robert Hamilton
 Rodney Giles
 Ronald Thompkins
 Rosa Hughes
 Dr. S. Daniel Mobley
 Sharyn K. Cole
 Shirley Johnson
 Terry Coney
 Trudy Underwood Hayes

2022 Yearly Membership

Paid for 2023

Andrew Mobley
 Annette Dunn
 Annie Campbell
 Asonja Corbett
 Autry Denson
 Barbara Harrison
 Betty Lazard
Betty Stancil Bailey
 Carl J. Willis
Clifford Leonard Johnson
 Cynthia Terrell
 Doris Moore-Bailey
 Dorothy Haynes Spencer
 Edward Quarry, Jr., Pastor
 Emma Brooks

Helen Figgs
 Homer Lee Boatwright
 Inez King
 James Niblack
 Jay Williams
 Jeanette McDougal
 Larry Mitchell
 Leon McDougal
 Lorenzo Campbell
 Louis Harrison
Mamie Stancil Cox
 Marva Short
 Mary Barnett
 Mary Dwight
Mary McElrath

Rhonda T. Norman
 Robert L. Zackery
 Ronald Coleman
 Rosetta McDougal
 Ruth Niblack
 Stephanie Davis Kindle
Thaddeus Speed
 Valarie Niblack
 Valda Browning
 Veronica Rucker
 Vincent B. Bryant
 Vivian Campbell Williams
 Willer Rean Ward
 Yvonne Roberts
 Yvonne Wilson

Honorary Member:

Mr. Robert Fields

Join or Renew
 your membership

**YOUR \$\$\$\$ SUPPORT THE ONGOING
 EFFORTS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

2023 Alumni Officers

Beverly Boatwright – President
Rosa Hughes – Secretary
Corresponding Secretary – Gwendolyn Curtis
Assist. Financial Secretary – Kebresha Williams
Sargent-at-arms – Terry Coney

Valarie Niblack – Vice President
Alice Speed – Asst. Secretary
Financial Secretary – Angela Walker
Treasurer – Ronald Coleman
Chaplin – Jay Williams

You're invited to
Join Us

Alumni Regular Monthly Meeting Schedule—4th Tuesday

Coleman Bush Building, Lakeland

You are invited to attend



“Let’s Do It Again”

Prom Night was held on December 30, 2022 at the Cleveland Heights Golf and Country Club in Lakeland. It was a blast!

160 alumni and friends showed up dressed in semi formal and formal attire. What a beautiful sight! There was live entertainment and a fantastic dinner featuring steak and chicken with all the trimmings including dessert.

We are so grateful to our sponsor, Ronald Thompkins, (Rochelle Class of 1966) of Watson Rice Accountants and Advisors. Your donations helped to make this classic event a success. **WE DID IT AGAIN!**

To see photos from the event, click on link below OR copy into your web browser.

[Washington Park Rochelle High School Holiday Prom - Flash Photography \(smugmug.com\)](http://Washington Park Rochelle High School Holiday Prom - Flash Photography (smugmug.com))

 **Your
donation
is greatly
appreciated**

Your association works
diligently to
“KEEP US TOGETHER”

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Lifetime Member Laurastine King and family in the loss of their loved one, Deacon Russell King. In lieu of flowers, the family requested that donations be sent to WP/Rochelle Alumni Association.

Thank you King family

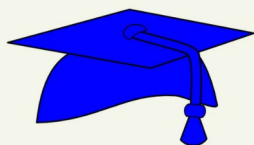
HELP US REACH OTHERS

Please send email addresses of alumni to :
WPRHSAlumni@gmail.com

Email!



Soul Food Sunday—April 16, 2023 12—2:30 PM
Coleman Bush Building



Joseph Garvin Scholarship Awards Ceremony
Friday, June 9, 2023
(In memory of Margaret Garvin)

Alumni Annual Golf Tournament
Saturday, June 10, 2023
Huntington Hills Golf and Country Club



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership \$50 Annually

Lifetime Member Life Membership status is acquired with the payment of a \$500 one-time assessment.
Payments toward lifetime membership are accepted.

Membership Form Washington Park/Rochelle High Schools Alumni Association, Inc.

Name _____
First Middle/Maiden Last

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Email Address _____ Phone: _____

Enclosed is:

- \$50 payment for Yearly Membership
- \$500 payment for Lifetime Membership
- _____ payment toward Lifetime Membership

Alumni Checking Account Financial Information for 2022

Beginning Balance: 1/1/2022 \$94,235.73
Ending Balance 12/31/2022 \$52,240.60



Your \$\$\$ supported

Scholarships Awarded: 15	\$30,000.00
Scholarship Ceremony Venue, Catering, Printing	\$ 5,310.00
Est. misc. Ceremony Expenses: Photographer, Awards, etc.	\$ 800.00
*Other Donations and Expenses	\$16,130.60

*Other expenses include: Benevolence, Community involvement, membership fundraising receptions, accounting and software fees, postage, P O Box, safe deposit box fees, website maintenance, and more!

Fundraisers and Events in 2022

Bus Trip	Tee Shirt Donations	MLK Parade
Soul Food Sunday	Dinner Cruise	Golf Tournament
Sock Hop	Holiday Prom	Lifetime and regular Membership
Membership Reception & Picnic		

2023, the alumni will begin awarding financial and other supportive services to scholarship recipients for a full 4 years of education. Awardees will be required to meet certain criteria that are currently being developed.

The 2023 Scholarship Application will be posted to the website by
February 1, 2023
www.wp-rochellealumni.com