

# Pattillo alumni gather for annual fellowship event



The Rev. Dr. Patricia W. Wesson, Ronald D. Wesson and Nellie W. Wesson, from left, pose for a photo during the W.A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association's second annual Fellowship Brunch at Pattillo Middle School in Tarboro.

## From Contributed Reports

**Saturday, February 25, 2017**

The W.A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association recently held its second annual Fellowship Brunch at Pattillo Middle School in Tarboro.

The association strives to support education in Edgecombe County by strengthening its relationship with Edgecombe County Public Schools and the communities of Tarboro and Princeville. The association interfaces annually with all the schools in the Edgecombe County Public Schools through its Scholarship and Incentive Award Program and has adopted Tarboro Middle and Princeville Elementary schools as its charter schools.

Ronald "Ron" D. Wesson, a former student of Pattillo High School was the keynote speaker. He grew up a few blocks from Pattillo High School. Nellie W. Wesson, his mother, was the librarian at Pattillo Middle School for 12 years and Pearl Ward Bennett, his great aunt, was a noteworthy civic leader and educator in Tarboro and Edgecombe County. Mr. Wesson had a 31 year career at Dun & Bradstreet Corp. in various positions and he retired as senior vice president and global leader in 2006. Ron has been honored with various national and local awards. He was recently elected to a second 4 year term as County Commissioner in Windsor, NC, Bertie County, where he currently resides with his wife, the Rev. Dr. Patricia W. Wesson, who is a local practicing psychiatrist.

Ron told the story of a young boy who grew up in Tarboro and attended Pattillo Middle School through the eighth grade. The boy grew up with eight women in a multigenerational home that he said was, "rich in love and warmth." The boy's fondest memories were his friends, the Pattillo Middle School band, the noises and echoes of voices from Pattillo, going to the movies in the balcony, Garrett's Drug Store, Dr. Quigless's Clinic, Julius Woodley's store and Clemey Cole's Café.

Ron was the boy in his story. He referred to Tarboro as being a "Magical Place" and Pattillo High School as "the beacon of the community."

"Our hopes, compassion and fears held us together as a people," he said. "Students today are different from the way we were, but they need the same love, support and listening to as we did. It is our duty and responsibility to help the next millennials. Nobody is going to save us but us. In order to have better, we must do better."

His point was, "we are our brother's keeper," and we are obligated to step up and help each other and future generations of students.

Edgecombe County Public Schools program participants included the welcome by Jalen Razor, SGA president of Pattillo Middle School, who described Pattillo as “a very supportive and caring school because it lets every child know they have a voice,” musical performances by the Pattillo Middle School Glee Club directed by music teacher Christopher La Vignette, blessing of the food by Princeville Elementary School student Antrelvion Higgs, a tribute to the octogenarians of the Alumni Association by Brianna Ricks, a senior at Tarboro High School, and remarks from the principals of Pattillo Middle and Princeville Elementary Schools — Lauren Lampson and Mrs. Annette Walker — who both thanked the association for its financial support to their schools.

Walker challenged members of the association to adopt a family in Princeville to offer needed support to parents victimized by Hurricane Matthew. Lampson presented the remodeled corridor of Pattillo Middle School, which houses historical yearbook photographs and memorabilia from W.A. Pattillo High School.

Several new individuals joined the association and the octogenarians were presented with long stem red flowers. Pieces from the late Robert Whitehead’s African American Art Collection were displayed, the Edgecombe County Memorial Library had a display and other vendors were available at the event. A hearty brunch was served and the event was well attended.

Consistent with its bylaws, the W. A. Pattillo High National Alumni Association Inc. will continue its plight to support the education of students in Edgecombe County Public Schools. The association’s Scholarship Program is now open to interested eligible new candidates who can visit the W. A. Pattillo High School Alumni Association’s website for criteria and applications at: <http://pattillohsalumni.webs.com>. Also, please like us on Facebook at W. A. Pattillo Alumni Association. The website and Facebook page are sources of ongoing association news.