

Members of Atkins High class celebrate 60-years of life

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

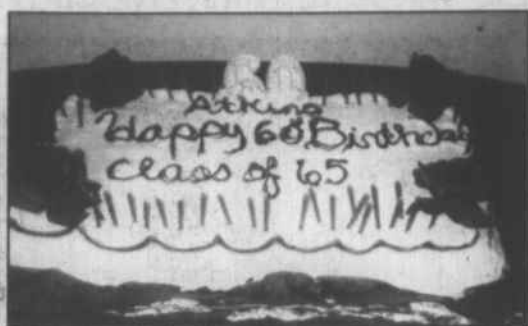
A happy 60th birthday celebration rang out at the Ivy Arms Center on 2nd Street. It was held on June 26 for the Atkins High School Class of 1965.

Approximately 30 of the classmates fellowshiped by talking about old times, sharing pictures and class annuals, playing games, lots of music and food! Most have already turned 60 years old or will be in a few months.

Cameras flashed throughout the evening. The DJ was Danny Ijames. He played the oldies but goodies. The food



Members of the class in their party hats.



was catered by beloved classmate Connie Fletcher and family. Everyone wore a birthday hat and gathered around the beautiful cake with

60 candles and blew them out. It was a very exciting and enjoyable evening.

Members came from far and near for the occasion from

places such as Oklahoma, Georgia and North Carolina. The celebration ended on Sunday with a breakfast, catered by Ossie Hairston Catering and a church service at the First Baptist Church on Highland Avenue.

The committee members did a wonderful job putting the event together. Members expressed gratitude for Lois Hanes Young, George (Choppy) Johnson, Shirley Peoples Bishop and Alberta Hayden Mickens. After hugs and farewells to one another, it was off to their separate ways until they meet again in the future.

"Friends" reunite to raise money

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The Friends of the School of Education at N.C. A&T State University, a 20-year-old support organization recently reactivated by Dean Lelia L. Vickers, has launched a campaign to raise funds for student scholarships in time for the opening of the new School of Education building.

Mary Purnell, an A&T graduate and retired official with the state Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, serves as chairwoman of the Friends of the School of Education, which is made up of alumni, retired and active faculty members and administrators, community supporters and public schools personnel.

The group's purpose is "to support and strengthen the School of Education's mission of developing teachers and other school personnel." Purnell says she and other Friends are keenly aware of the nation's shortage of teachers and the role A&T plays in addressing that shortage.

"Having been in education all my life and knowing the need for good teachers, I think the Friends have an obligation to do all we can to ensure that the state provides students the best education they can get and the best teachers we can find," she said.

The Friends are continu-



A&T Photo

Friends of the School of Education members, Dr. Myrtle Sampson, first row, from left, Mary Purnell, Dr. Jesse Marshall, Dean Lelia Vickers; (middle row, from left) Dr. Mel Swann, Dr. Miriam Wagner, Linnie B. Foster, Margaret Foskey, Mary Peek, Dr. Charles Hayes, Dr. Vivian Barnett; (back row, from left) Dian Williams, Dr. James Battle, Dr. Fred Wood, Dr. Larry Powers, Dr. Morris Peterkin, Dr. Stephen McCary-Henderson and Dr. Patricia Whitfield. Not pictured: Dr. Dorothy Barnett, Dr. Isaac Barnett, Dr. Velma Speight-Buford, Sharon Board, Dr. Walthea Cobitz, Dr. Katie Dorsett, Nelda Bynum, Dr. Karen Guy, Walker Sanders, Faye Sharpe, Georgia Williams and Michael Fleming.

ing the work envisioned by the administrators who initiated the organization in 1987: raising money for scholarships.

The early success was due to the work of individual members such as Sampson, Dr. Vivian Harding Hampton, the late Ann Kornegay, Georgia

Williams, who was the first recording secretary, and former Greensboro Mayor Carson Bain, who was the group's first treasurer. Other early members included the late Coach Bert Piggot and faculty members B. W. Harris, who presented plans for the first fundraiser, and J. Niel Armstrong, who was

the group's first chairperson.

The Friends awarded numerous scholarships ranging up to \$1,000, depending on funds available, to students chosen based on criteria including financial need, personal motivation and GPA.

Among the early high-

lights of the Friends history was a \$20,000 gift that Greensboro businessman Michael B. Fleming made in honor of his late housekeeper, Emma Wilson, a longtime member and soloist in the choir at Greensboro's Bethel AME Church.

Although the Friends as an organization became

inactive between deans, the generosity of "friends" such as Fleming has continued to play an important role in providing support for the School.

The group's fundraising plan is to use many avenues, Purnell says. Among these are soliciting pledges from Friends members, direct mail appeals to alumni, businesses and School of Education faculty, selling bricks for a memorial wall or walk at the new building, and a resumption of Friends fundraising banquets.

The organization hopes to attract more supportive alumni, retirees and other allies to become official members, and invites all who are able to do so to contribute to the campaign. Some generous pledges already have been received from current Friends members, including \$25,000 from Sampson, more than \$15,000 more from Fleming and \$10,000 from Purnell.

For information about joining the Friends of the School of Education at North Carolina A&T, contact Purnell at 336-272-2795. Contributions can be sent to the NC A&T Foundation, 200 N. Benbow Rd., Greensboro, NC 27411. Donors should make checks payable to the NC A&T Foundation and write "Friends-The School of Education" in the memo line.

Johnson

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old men in funny clothes do on television. Their attitudes about golf eventually change, the coaches say. Some develop a passion for the sport that extends beyond the summer and the clinic.

Kierra Brown is a case in point. The 12-year-old has been attending the clinic each summer for the past four years. She had never played golf before then. Now it is something that she doesn't want to live without.

"It is my second favorite sport," said Brown, a talented all-around athlete who still claims basketball as her top love.

Golf also comes in a close second for Tony Hall. The 18-year-old has been coming to the clinic since it started. The clinic is providing Hall with a scholarship, which he will put toward his freshman year at Johnson C. Smith University this fall.

"I am going to play football in college," said Hall, the son of Sam Puryear Jr., a city native who is now the assistant golf coach at Stanford University, "but I will always play golf. It is a relaxing sport."

Participants like Brown and Hall, those who return each year and develop a true respect for golf, make Johnson proudest. When he started the program, he went into his own wallet to buy supplies and snacks for the kids. He even shuttled the kids to and from the clinic. Today, the program receives some funding from Network 2000, an organization made up of retired and current African-American Reynolds American employees.

Johnson started the clinic because he wanted to give young people something positive to do during their lazy days of summer. Johnson's love for children is well-known. Before he retired, he dedicated his entire professional career to teaching and coaching. As a School Board member, he is known for making surprise visits to schools to check on those who take part in the golf clinics.

Brown says he has become a role model to her and many others.

"He doesn't have to do this for us. He could just be at home relaxing, but he still cares about us," she said.

Even Johnson would concede that relaxing would not be a bad idea, especially on days like Tuesday when the temperature was above 90 degrees. He has had his share of health problems over the years and doesn't get around the golf course as effortlessly as he once did. But the resilient Johnson has no plans to end his clinic or pass it along to someone else.

"These kids energize me," he said. "And they need to know that somebody cares about them and their future."

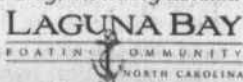


Tony Hall helps a fellow golfer.

Photo by Kevin Walker

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