

# THE EAGLE'S EYE

FOURTH EDITION, JULY 19, 2019



## EVENTS

- Grand Reunion Sept. 20-22, 2019. Event cost is \$70. Partial payments are accepted  
Please make money order or cashier's check out to the GW Carver High School Alumni Association, PO Box 644, Kannapolis, NC 28081
- Reunion Packets may be received by calling one of the following:  
Georgia Harris  
(980) 432-0335 or  
Leon Thompson  
(704) 699-4102
- Alumni Yearly Dues are \$30.  
Please make money order or cashier's check out to the GW Carver High School Alumni Association, PO Box 644, Kannapolis, NC 28081
- Souvenir journal fees are due August 26, 2019.



## A Note from the President

Dear Alumni and Friends,

I hope you are enjoying these hot, sunny, summer days thus far.

If you have not registered for the reunion, which is September 20-22, 2019, please do so as the reunion weekend is quickly approaching. Also, please join us at our meetings which are held on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 2:00 pm. They are held in The Eagle's Nest (our new meeting room) at the G.W. Carver Elementary School located at 525 East C Street, Kannapolis, NC.

I hope to hear from you or see you soon!

Respectfully,  
Georgia Harris  
President

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY MS. MAGGIE BRYANT!!

On July 2, 2019, our beloved librarian, Ms. Maggie Bryant, celebrated her 104th birthday!





DOWN IN THE HEART OF THE  
DEAR OLE NORTH STATE.  
IT'S A SPOT THAT  
WE CHERISH TODAY.  
FOR THERE STANDS A SCHOOL,  
WHOSE IDEALS AND RULES  
WILL SOON BE A GUIDING RAY,  
TRUTH AND HONOR  
IN HER HALLS,  
THAT'S CARVER HIGH SCHOOL!  
FAITH AND LOVE  
WITHIN HER WALLS.  
THAT'S CARVED HIGH SCHOOL!  
IT'S THE SCHOOL THAT WE  
ALL LOVE THE BEST.  
IT'S THE SCHOOL WHERE WE  
STAND ALL THE TESTS.  
GLORY WILL SOON BE OURS  
FAITH WILL STAND HIGH ABOVE  
**THAT'S CARVER  
HIGH SCHOOL!**



“The eagle has no fear. It has a fearless spirit of a conqueror!”

-Joyce Meyers  
(Paraphrased)

## **EAGLE UPDATES VALERIE CALDWELL GRAY**

The Carver Alumni is still soliciting items, pictures, etc. to be displayed in The Eagle's Nest (alumni room).

Scheduled meeting days are the second and fourth Fridays at 2:00 pm. Additional meeting dates and times can be obtained from Georgia Harris (980-432-0335) or Leon Thompson (704-699-4102).

### **MOMENTOUS OCCASIONS AND MEMORIALS**

Please forward information regarding any momentous occasions such as birthdays, new grandchildren, anniversaries, weddings, etc. which you would like to share. Please send to Carolyn Harrington (info below).

The Grand Reunion will memorialize those alumni/attendees who have passed between September 2017 and September 2019. Please forward (text or email) names to Carolyn Harrington at 704-796-8485 or calliekids@yahoo.com.

### **SCHOLARSHIP**

The Alumni Association will award one scholarship (\$250) during the Grand Reunion. Please contact Valerie Caldwell Gray (704-996-5205) in order to receive an application.

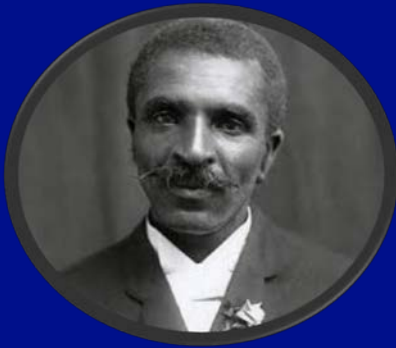
### **DR. WILLIAM H. GRIFFIN, JR.: A 1945 CARVER GRADUATE SERVES AS A SOLDIER IN THE ARMY OF THE LORD MAYO CALDWELL**

In the 1950s, after completing their education, many young people, energetic entrepreneurs, and tradesmen believed in the assumption that in order to achieve their goals, and live relevant lives, the safest route was to save enough money to board the Greyhound Bus. The buses traveled north to cities such as New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. Upon graduating from our beloved George Washington Carver High School, unlike other young people going north to the Promised Land, Dr. Griffin got off the bus in Greensboro. He enrolled at Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary. Following graduation, his long career as a Minister of the Gospel as well as a participant on the front line of the struggle for equality began.

Chronologically, Dr. Griffin's professional life coincided with the period of development of black American struggles for full citizenship, full representation in the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod and general everyday respect – beginning for him in the 1950s and continuing unabated to the present.

Dr. Griffin's years at Carver were “enjoyable.” He recalled some of the teachers that impacted him during his high school years including: Ms. Bryant, Ms. Sutton, Ms. Wesley, Mr. Duncan and Mr. Kiser. They and others made impressions upon his life in a most significant way, influencing him to move onward and upward!

## DR. WILLIAM H. GRIFFIN, JR: A 1945 CARVER GRADUATE CONT...



“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of Freedom!”

“Where there is no vision, there is no hope.”

“Do what you can, with what you have, and do it now!”

-George Washington Carver



Rev. Griffin attended and graduated from Immanuel Lutheran College in 1951. In the Immanuelite (the student newspaper of the Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary) appeared an article that year. The caption was “Griffin’s First Missionary Journey”. According to the article, student William Griffin was scheduled to deliver his initial sermon at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Catawba, North Carolina. He apparently thought that this was a large congregation (he had never been to the town of Catawba). He boarded a bus early that Sunday morning in Greensboro headed to Catawba. While riding, he settled back in his seat to concentrate on his first inspiring sermon which he had prepared. However, the driver dropped him off at the wrong intersection on a desolate highway and gave him incorrect directions to the church. Obviously putting his safety in the hands of the Lord, he walked around despondently, looking for the church that was large only in historical reputation. Mt. Olive was nestled in a grove and concealed by trees and cornfields. But according to the school paper, Mr. Griffin didn’t give up easily. He searched relentlessly up and down the highway in vain for hours. Finally, he gave up and hitch hiked back to Greensboro – unable to deliver his first sermon! It was only the beginning of God’s plan for Dr. William Griffin’s life! That plan included his becoming a theologian, professor, and community leader.

Rev. Griffin’s first call was to a group of small churches near Camden, Alabama. They were begun through the ministry of Rosa J. Young. The churches included Holy Cross (Camden), Our Savior (Possum Bend) and Redeemer (Long Mile). He preached at all three churches every Sunday. During this time, he also assisted Rev. Richard Dickerson in recording sermons for a radio station in Monroeville, Alabama. “That’s where I learned how to be a pastor,” he lamented. “The congregations, although not rich in money, shared whatever they had with my family.” Reminiscing, he recalled “one parishioner raising one hog for himself and one for the church.”

In 1952, Rev. Griffin accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church in Selma, Alabama. In 1954, he moved his family to Montgomery, where he started a new Lutheran mission. There, he rubbed shoulders and shared knowledge with Dr. Martin Luther King – who filled the pulpit at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

Rev. Griffin learned and came to believe at Immanuel Lutheran Seminary that one of the central tenets of the Lutheran doctrine was that it was not proper for the church to be involved in The Social Gospel Movement and that the church and state should be separated. This movement used the applications of Jesus’ teachings to solve social problems. The church’s teachings worked against his conscience. Despite this spiritual paradox, Rev. Griffin could not stand idly by as Dr. King, Rosa Parks and other soldiers risked their lives during the bus boycott. He used his family’s 1954 Chevrolet to give rides to jobs between December 1955 and December 1956 while the boycott occurred.

## DR. WILLIAM H. GRIFFIN, JR: A 1945 CARVER GRADUATE CONT...

In 1956, when Rev. Griffin received a call to Christ the King Lutheran Church in Chicago, Illinois, he was ready to leave the troubled south. However, there were troubles in the north such as slum lords, discrimination and poor schools. He then began to extend his ministry to tackle the problems unique to the urban population that were being worked on by activists such as Drs. King and Abernathy, Rev. Jackson and Stokely Carmichael.

Rev. Griffin's love for education and its importance propelled him to earn a master's degree from Concordia University (Chicago) and a doctorate from Concordia Seminary (St. Louis). Dr. Griffin was a member of both faculties and served at two more churches on Chicago's south side, retiring in 1993.

Dr. Griffin is one of fourteen children, born to his parents, Willie and Bessie Griffin. They were long standing members and builders of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Kannapolis, NC. According to Dr. Griffin, "there was no slacking in the Griffin household and church was always attended. They instilled in us the importance of praying and working. We were to work as though everything depended on us and to pray as though everything depended on God."

Dr. Griffin is the proud father of four children: Marie, Mark (deceased), Marvin and Millicent. His wife, Ella Mae is also deceased. His sons and a daughter (Mark, Marvin and Millicent) followed in his footsteps, becoming ministers of the Gospel. His daughter Marie enlightened and broadened young minds as a teacher. Dr. Griffin also has ten grandchildren and thirteen great grandchildren.

This year, Dr. Griffin celebrated his 90th birthday on March 24, 2019. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod recognized his faithful service as a pastor and community leader. His family recognized him in Chicago, and he will also be honored at the 2019 Griffin Family Reunion which will be held in Kannapolis, North Carolina on July 20, 2019 at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church.

Due to Dr. Griffin's dedication to the Gospel, the community, the church and his family, he is honored as one of the wise men of the Griffin Family and the Lutheran Church diaspora!

Dr. William H. Griffin, Jr., a colossal graduate of the 1945 class of the George Washington Carver High School!



"Sometimes history takes things into its own hands."

"We got here because somebody - a parent, a teacher, an Ivy League crony or a few nuns - bent down and helped us pick up our boots."

-Thurgood Marshall

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

-Nelson Mandela

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