

## PANTHER BLUE



**MCKINLEY  
HIGH SCHOOL  
CONTINUES  
THE LEGACY**

### The McKinley Miracle



In this season when we celebrate black achievement, McKinley High School stands as the beacon that produced miracles in the lives of so many of its graduates. From the early days of this century to the day that the 44th US President set foot on McKinley soil, to this day, we can look all over this city, state and the world and find members of the *McKinley family* making significant contributions in every way. They were taught to believe that everything is possible. And where everything is possible, miracles become commonplace. So, in this Black History Month, let's celebrate the vision of our founders and the phenomenon that McKinley remains to this day.

### McKinley: Strong, Tough, Durable

#### Resilient

There have been many stories of what happened when blacks integrated Baton Rouge Schools, but what was it like when white students came to McKinley? The Gifted and Talented Program was brought to the school in 1982, and although a few whites already attended, the GT Program as it was called really accounted for measurable

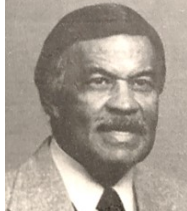
integration and added a new dimension to McKinley.

**Armond Brown** and **Clarence Jones**, two administrators during those years, speak of a smooth transition, of administrators preparing teachers and teachers preparing students for a new reality. As a result, McKinley, one of the big three schools of color in the city, had the most successful integration program of them all...at the same time keeping its traditional identity. The gifted classes were separate, but the electives and school organizations were fully mixed. McKinley remains to this day the only one of the three high schools for blacks that maintains an integrated program. Although class sizes were different for gifted and traditional, and for a while there were separate valedictorians and salutatorians to ensure each group received its due recognition; students and teachers, for the most part, accepted and embraced the radical change. They proved that whatever challenges McKinley faced, the school would meet them with strength and dignity. *And continue to stand!*

### In the Beginning...



Mr. Thomas



Mr. Breda



Mr. Jones



Mrs. Warren



Mr. Hanley



Mr. Brown

These were some of the administrators who successfully shepherded McKinley to a smooth transition from an all-black school to a school that eventually embraced students of all ethnicities. The difficulties faced by these pioneers as they welcomed change, while holding onto an important legacy of the black community, will probably never be completely known. What is known is that they stood up for an ideal which sent out ripples of hope to the entire community that children's lives could be made better. These principals endured the complaints, criticisms and sometimes congratulations as they enforced change. But most of all they depended on the courage and support of people who knew that there is strength in unity.



## *From the pen of the Alumni Association President...*

Once again we pause as a nation to celebrate the contributions of the African- American Community. As McKinley graduates, we must continue to strive for a way to make a difference in the lives we touch. Let us proclaim to the world the miracle of McKinley and the quality of education it still provides...more than 100 years after it was formed. We are called to heed the words of 1 Peter 4:10: *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.*

*Reverend Dale Flowers—President*

## **McKINLEY GRADUATE NAMED TO 5TH CIRCUIT**



**Stuart Kyle Duncan**, a student in the Gifted and Talented Program and a 1990 graduate of McKinley, joined the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in 2018 after a nomination by President Donald Trump. Trump nominated Duncan to the Fifth Circuit on October 2, 2017, and in April 2018, he was confirmed.



## **ARMOND BROWN: DISCIPLINE WITH DIGNITY**



In 2015 when **Armond Brown** became McKinley's principal, one could have thought that he was channeling the school's first principal, **J.M. Frazier Sr.**, as he could always be seen walking the campus and streets of Baton Rouge to make sure that his students were where they were supposed to be...just like Professor Frazier would do *back in the day*. His no-nonsense manner and insistence on discipline masked a sincere love for children and a determination that they should be put on the right path.

**Mr. Brown** even risked the displeasure of his superintendent, who was upset that the principal was not always in the office when he called. His presence around the school was in keeping with his philosophy that a good principal is a principal who walks the school corridors and even the streets when necessary. Teachers, students and parents attest to the fact that **Mr. Brown**, who was educated at McKinley's once arch-rival, Capitol High School, gave his all to maintaining the image and the magic that still allows McKinley to thrive.

\*\*\*\*\*

The late congressman **Elijah Cummings** recited the following 46-word poem in his first speech before Congress. Written by Benjamin Mays, Cummings called it a simple, but compelling -- very short summary of the fleeting nature of anyone's life, and the things we're called to achieve within our short time on this planet:

*I only have a minute.  
Sixty seconds in it.  
Forced upon me, I did not choose it,  
But I know that I must use it.  
Give account if I abuse it.  
Suffer, if I lose it.  
Only a tiny little minute,  
But eternity is in it.*

## **Reverend Dale Flowers**

President

**Melvin Mitchell**

Vice-President

**Brenda G. Turner**

Secretary

**Hagar Brown-Anderson**

Assistant Secretary

**Vera Ellois**

Financial Secretary

**Drusilla Carter**

Treasurer

**Daryl Blacher**

Parliamentarian

**Georgia Neal**

Chaplain

**Jeffrey Neal**

Sergeant At-Arms

## **Alumni Association Board**

Throughout McKinley's 100-plus-years of change and growth, one thing has endured -- its commitment to students. The accomplishments of McKinley's graduates and the dedication of the staff has created a tradition and atmosphere of excellence. McKinley is a great school because of the people who lead it and their commitment to our community.

*Congressman Garret Graves*

**Have a Story About McKinley to Share? Contact the Alumni Center.**

## LEGENDS AND LIVE WIRES



**Jonathan J. C. Gray**

**Jonathan Gray**, president of the Student Government Association and graduate of the class of 2000, had many high school choices but chose McKinley because of its family atmosphere and dedication to education. The staff made him want to always be the best, and he remembers the encouragement of McKinley alums, principal **Almenia Warren** and the mentorship of **Dr. E.J. Mencer**. His fondest memories of high school come from his involvement with the music department where he was a member of both the jazz and marching bands. The music department afforded him his first trip to Disneyworld.

**Mr. Gray** is a graduate of Morehouse College and Georgetown Law School, and currently serves as a federal prosecutor in Columbus, Ohio. Just as he was supported by teachers like **Frances Williams**, he also mentors the youth in his community. In the future, he plans to become even more involved in criminal justice, giving back to the community many of the things he learned at McKinley.

In Representative Ted James' own words:

*Been to many places, but I'm McKinley's own. I didn't just go to school there, I was nurtured there. My relationship with McKinley began before I entered the world. My father, Edward "Poo" James and his brothers attended McKinley and made sure I understood the importance of legacy.*

*I learned leadership and the importance of community at McKinley. It was there that I became interested in law and the government. Every award and every title I've earned is because of my principals, -teachers, counselors...even the cafeteria workers and custodians. My McKinley family saw potential in me that I didn't see in myself. They nurtured me and prepared me for the world.*

*Although I graduated in 1999, I have always held McKinley close. I take her with me to the State Capitol as representative of the 101st District. I have been an unapologetic and passionate advocate for the public schools of our state. Serving others was ingrained in me early in my life, and McKinley High, a school that has stood for more than a century, deserves much of the credit.*



**Rep. Edward "Ted" James**

## *In Memoriam*



**Joseph Albert Delpit, Jr.**, a native of Louisiana and resident of Baker, passed away on November 6, 2019 at 6:48 a.m., at the age of 61. A '76 graduate of McKinley High School, he was the son of **Joseph Delpit Sr.** and his wife **Precious Delpit**.



**Lorri Burgess**, a dedicated public servant, and 1981 graduate of McKinley High School, lost her battle with cancer on January 15, 2020. A former councilwoman, she was the first black woman to serve as mayor pro tem and became Chief Operating Officer of the Baton Rouge Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation.



McKinley High School  
Alumni Association

1520 Thomas Delpit Dr.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

## McKinley Alumni Newsletter



Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
MCK Alumni Center  
Permit 569



**Calling all graduates!** If you are a McKinley High graduate, but not a member of the Alumni Association, please join and keep in touch with your school and its activities. Give back to a PLACE and an IDEA that has given you so much!!! Pick up an application at the center or call the office at (225) 383-4865.

Yearly dues: **\$50.00**  
Sustaining Life: **4x\$50.00 ( to be paid within one year)**  
Life membership: **\$200.00 ( plus \$25.00 yearly)**

Join online at: [www.mckalumniassociation.com](http://www.mckalumniassociation.com) or call (225)383-4865 for an application . You may also pick up an application at the Alumni Center, 1520 Thomas H. Delpit Dr., Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70802.

McKinley High School  
Alumni Association  
**Blue & White Gala**  
Theme:  
**Continuing The Legacy of McKinley**  
*The Greatest of Them All!*  
Saturday, April 25, 2020  
Baton Rouge Marriott Hotel  
Live Band 8pm - 12am  
Ticket Price: \$50  
Attire: Semi-formal or Formal

**COPIES TOO  
PRINTING & COPYING**

**Richard Mitchell  
Owner**

5251 Nicholson Dr. Suite N.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70820  
Email: [orders@copiestoo.com](mailto:orders@copiestoo.com)

Phone: 225-761.1888  
FAX: 225.761.1090  
Web. [www.copiestoo.com](http://www.copiestoo.com)

## The McKinley Miracle!

In this season of celebrating Black History, we also recognize those whose contributions to the world can in part be attributed to the miracles that McKinley works in the lives of her students.

We'd like to feature you in future publications, so If you have a story of a miracle or anything special that McKinley helped to bring about in your life, contact the Alumni Center at 225-383-4865.