# **TECHnically Speaking**

A Publication of the Arsenal Technical High School Alumni Association

Fall/Winter 2020

www.athsalumniassociation.com • athsalumniassociation@gmail.com

## Tech Alumni Association Awards Ceremony



(L to R) - Phil Ranelin, Stanley J. Irwin, Elaine Thompson Pfenning, Linda Hill, and Otis Curry

resident Dennis Nichols has chosen as the President's Award recipient, Phil Ranelin ('57). A 2016 inductee of the Indianapolis Jazz Hall of Fame, Phil was a member of Indianapolis's All-City Elementary School Band becoming a valued member of the concert and marching bands as well as the concert orchestra. He has performed with such artists as Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Rahsaan Roland Kirk as well as fellow Hoosiers, Wes Montgomery, and Freddie Hubbard ('56). He has been recognized by the cities of Detroit and Los Angeles for inspiring young artists in the creative arts.

**Stanley J Irwin**, who retired in 2017 as Director of the

Tech Math/Science Magnet, came to the Tech faculty via Northwest High School, a stint as president of the Indianapolis Education Association, and Shortridge High School. He left teaching to work in the private sector for Public Service Indiana (now Duke Energy). In 1983, when he decided to return to teaching, he was offered the position as Director, Math/Science Magnet at Crispus Attucks High School and was reassigned to Tech in the same position in 1984. During the "Small Schools Era" he served as the Academic Dean of the Math and Science. For his 34 years of service as a member of the Tech faculty, the Alumni Association is proclaiming Mr.

Irwin an Honorary Tech Graduate.

The Karl Stipher Award is given to a person who has dedicated themselves in some way to Arsenal Technical High School. Elaine Thompson Pfenning ('62) has officially been a part of the Tech family since 1957 when she attended Tech Jr. High on the 3rd floor of the Arsenal. It was in 2010 that a chance discussion led Elaine to attend Alumni Association board meetings to find a way to give back to Tech. She started by assisting with Alumni Day events and eventual assumed the responsibility of Alumni Day planning. Seeing the many happy people on Tech's

Continued on page 3

## Introducing Our New Treasurer



As many of you are aware, Linda Clark Hunter was the Treasurer of the Alumni Association for several years prior to her passing in June 2020. While we continue to miss and mourn her, we are grateful for the opportunity to introduce to you our new Treasurer, **Mrs. Dountonia Slack Batts**. Please join us in welcoming Dountonia to the ATHS Alumni Association Board.

#### Donate Today

Help support the ATHS Alumni Association. Your donations are tax deductible and many employers have matching programs. Your donations help support projects for students and teachers and improve the quality of school life for all Tech students. Donate Online @athsalumniassociation.com or send a check to: ATHS Alumni Association, PO Box 11433, Indianapolis IN 46201





## **A Message from the Alumni Association President**

Welcome to this edition of Technically Speaking. As a proud graduate of the Class of 1981, I am excited to serve as the new President of the ATHS Alumni Association for the school year of 2020-2021. I am grateful for this opportunity to represent our incredible Alumni Association and I can assure you that I take very seriously the responsibilities associated with this position.

This year, we have all had to manage so many changes because of COVID-19 pandemic. Changes in the economy, change in our personal and professional lives and changes affecting our beautiful campus. Many of you are aware that our students have had to manage significant changes in their school calendars, which has challenged their resilience and flexibility.

While the changes have challenged each of us to think differently, to operate differently and to prioritize differently, this certainly has not "changed" our commitment to our "Mission." The mission of the Alumni Association is to institute, sponsor and conduct scholarship programs and other charitable and educational programs and activities for the students and graduates of Arsenal Technical High School while, in parallel, preserving Tech's rich history and traditions of excellence and achievement.

Our drive to fulfill our Mission has not changed. Currently, Tech has approximately 2300 students enrolled. On average, the attendance rate is at 75%. Statistically, while the graduation rate has improved over the years here at Tech, there is still so much work to do.

There are so many ways that you can help us out. First, please consider serving on one of our committees. Our committees are: Membership, Communications (includes Publicity and Publication), Service Projects and Programs, and Sponsored Events/Fundraising. If you are interested, please email me. Secondly, please consider volunteering. Your time and talent are needed either in assisting with administrative tasks and/or supporting our students through mentoring. Third, send your monetary donation. The money you send not only provides scholarships to the students and grants to the staff, but it helps us with our operating costs, which includes the production of the newsletter.

We are counting on your unwaivering support. Together, we WILL continue to make progress, and build upon our rich legacy while sustaining our Alumni Association.

I recognize that I am the next link in a long chain of dedicated professionals that have served as President of the ATHS Alumni Association. While I now hold the torch, I pledge to continue the important and valued work of those that came before me. I will represent the ATHS Alumni Association professionally, I will foster and encourage growth of our extraordinary organization of Alumni members, and I will personally be of service to as many members as I am able.

Please keep in touch with the Alumni Association by contacting us at 317-693-5459 or email us at athsalumniassociation@gmail.com. Our website address is www.athsalumniassociation.com. Please send all mail communication to P.O. Box 11433. Indianapolis IN 46201

Best Regards, Anita Chambers Matthews ('81) President, ATHS Alumni Association

#### **TECHnically Speaking**

## Tech Alumni Association Awards Ceremony

#### Continued from front page

campus on Alumni Day is the reason Elaine loves planning Alumni Day Activities. Elaine also is seen assisting the Ways and Means Committee at football and basketball games, TechFest, the Woodruff Place Flea Market, and anywhere else Tech Alumni merchandise might be sold.

The daughter of two Tech graduates, **Linda Hill** ('68) was destined to be a part of the Tech Alumni Association family. In 2007, Linda was asked to replace one of her classmates on the Alumni Association Scholarship Committee. This experience exposed her to some of the work that the Alumni Association was in-

volved in. Linda established a scholarship in memory of her Tech parents and continued to be part of the scholarship selection committee. When she retired from IUPUI, Marilyn Hoffman asked her to take over as Scholarship Director. Linda also participated in the planning of 2012 Tech Centennial Celebration. She made large posters of photographs she had taken that are now hanging in the Tech Museum which is located in the Media Center. In addition to her duties on the Alumni Association Board, Linda volunteers in the museum every Wednesday. She also has used her photography skills to help raise money for the museum by creating

posters, snow globes, Christmas ornaments, and refrigerator magnets. Her volunteering has also extended to assisting in the registrar's office a few hours a week. Linda has proved that she bleeds green and white – a trait of the Duane Blankenhorn Award.

**Otis Curry** ('66), co-captain of Tech's 1966 state basketball finalist team, is this year's recipient of the Wally Potter Memorial Award. After leaving Tech, Otis served in the military, returning to Indiana to earn degrees at Ball State University and IUPUI. He taught at Howe and Northwest. He has served IPS in many roles – both in the academic arena as well as the athletic arena

- 8 years as head basketball coach at Howe and 11 years as athletic director at Northwest. He was a social studies teacher and department head as well as basketball coach (both boys and girls). He was recognized as 1984 Marion County coach of the year and as 1986 and 1991 IPS coach of the year. Although his talents were used at Howe and Northwest, it is the leadership lessons that he honed at Tech that has led to his successes. In retirement, he has continued his involvement in the Indianapolis community. Otis, Wally would be proud.

## Virtual Alumni Day 2020 – an Event to Remember!

On September 19, 2020, the Alumni Association unveiled its first ever virtual event on Association's website the (www.athsalumniassociation. com). The event is made up of a series of YouTube videos (skillfully compiled by Rondell Jackson '98) that you may watch at your leisure. On the Welcome page you will find a video with Immediate Past-President Dennis Nichols '71 giving us a brief orientation on how the Virtual Alumni Day pages are arranged and a mention that we have available Tech Alumni merchandise that can be ordered online. Included on the welcome page is a welcome by President Anita Chambers Matthews '81, an invocation by Dr Ramon Batts '90, and a message from Tech Principal Corye Franklin.

The next segment of the program revolves around the annual business meeting of the Association. Treasurer Dountonia Batts presents the treasurers report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. Endowment Grant Director Dr Ramon Batts '91 gives a short overview of the grants that were awarded to faculty and students projects. Scholarship Director Linda Hill gives a report on how scholarships were awarded despite students abruptly becoming online learners. A list of those recipients is found on page 8 of this publication.

A "Shout Out to the Class of 2020" (our newest members) video is included along with President Anita Chambers Matthews' remarks that were part of the 2020 ATHS Virtual Commencement. The "Spirit of the Class of 1970" is presented by Recording Secretary Deborah Deckard Gerlach '70. A "Roll Call" of the classes is included with links to yearbooks that are available at http://www. digitalindy.org/cdm/search/ collection/aths.

The 2020 Alumni Awards are introduced in a series of videos by Past President Dennis Nichols listed on page 1. Reviving the ATHS Athletic Hall of Fame, Dr Ramon Batts introduces us to the 2020 inductees: Jacob "Jake" Caskey '23, Otis Curry '66, Haldene Griggs '21, Robert Nipper '22, Madison Miller '77, Paul Meyers (coach), Herbert Sears '29, Earl Townsend Jr '32, and Donald Walker '48. Alumni Day would be incomplete without Techoir Alums singing the Battle Hymn of the

Republic and at least one of the various fight songs. Videos with both are also a part of this event. One Voice Community Choir provides the background for tributes to two former officers of the Alumni Association. Ronald Jackson ('53), a former President and Treasurer, passed away in January of 2020. Linda Clark Hunter ('64), former Treasurer and Ways and Means Director, passed away in June of 2020. Both individuals bled green and white. Both were past recipients of several of the awards the Alumni Association gives every year.

And lastly, please look at the "Special Thanks" as there is a slideshow of some of the best of Linda Hill's photos of the Tech campus.

**TECHnically Speaking** 

Send your class reunion news to ATHSAlumniAssociation@gmail.com with Reunion News in the subject line.

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Guidelines for Posting Class Announcements	Reunion notices and other class announcements are published in <b>TECHnically Speaking</b> on a space- available basis. Priority will be given based upon proximity of the event to the publication date of the newsletter, and to those groups which incorporate the Alumni Association's Tech Alumni Day activities as an integral part of their reunion events. Event planners are encouraged to keep their announcements brief. All class announcements must include at least 1 but no more than 3 contacts, with each having a phone number and/or e-mail address.
TechFest Sept. 11, 2021	<b>Techfest</b> will be held on September 11, 2021 at the Sertoma campgrounds located at 2316 S. German Church Rd. The event starts at noon and continues until about 8 PM. There will be a car show, class pictures, 50-50 drawing, live music, food, fellowship and much more! Five dollar donation appreciated. Please bring your own chairs, drinks and a side dish to share. For info, call Mike at 317-709-5815. Techfest is also on Facebook.
Class of 1961 60th Reunion/June 2021	Donna Moon Opel, David Opel and several other members of the class of 1961 are starting to organize a gathering of the Class of 1961 for June of 2021. Questions - call the Opels at 317-796-2031 and watch for further information.
<b>Class of 197/1</b> 50th Reunion June 11, 2021	We are in the final stretch making plans for our 50th reunion for the class of 1971. Registration forms were emailed in October to those who have signed up for updates. Those with only a mailing address will receive a registration form early in 2021. Mark your calendars, our reunion date is set for the evening of Friday, June 11, 2021, at Primo Banquet Hall & Conf Center, 2615 National Ave, Indianapolis, IN. We have scheduled a fun filled list of experiences starting at 6:00 pm with a cocktail/social hour followed by a full buffet dinner, program, live band, dancing, socializing and photographer. The cost is \$50.00 per person. Checks or money orders should be made payable to: <u>ATHS Class of 1971 50th Reunion</u> . Mail payment to Bruce Oakley, 8540 Palm Court, Indianapolis, IN 46219 before Friday, May 7, 2021. Cancelled check will be your receipt. This coincides with Alumni Day which is on Saturday, June 12th on the Tech campus. Save these dates on your calendar, and we will keep you informed through emails. If you have any questions, contact Dennis S. Nichols at dsam3417@gmail.com or Bruce Oakley at boakley53@aol.com Reunion Planning Committee: Bruce Oakley, Debbie Coffman Durrett, Dennis S. Nichols, Frances Bradley McCavley, James Isbell, Jim Lingenfelter, Maureen K. Sands Treece, Paul Wilson, Randy Auble, Ronald Davie, Ronald Seats, Sally Harding Frances and Terri Wong Kurbusky.
<b>Class of 1981</b> 40th Reunion June 2021	We are beginning to make plans for our 40th class reunion. If you wish to receive email updates and/or be part of the planning committee, please send your contact information to: majorclark@att.net. If you do not have access to email, please leave a detailed message on our alumni office voice mail (317) 693-5459. Include first name, maiden name, and last name, address and telephone numbers for a return call. Mark your calendar! Our event is set for June 2021. The exact date, time and location will be communicated soon. If you have any questions, please contact Anita (Chambers) Matthews at the above email.
Class of 2001 20th Reunion	Members of the class of 2001 have started planning for their 20 Year Reunion by meeting every first and third Thursday monthly via Zoom. Call or email for additional information: 317-210-3750 or ArsenalTech2001@gmail.com. Members of committee are: Angia Young, Anthony Sanders, Cynecqua Goodridge, Janel Jackson, La'Toya Martin, Musa Siddeeq, and Willie Dynamite.
Other Classes June 12, 2021	To celebrate the anniversaries of the 55 year, 45 year, 35 year, 30 year, 25 year, and 10 year classes, separate tables will be set up so that you can catch up with former classmates. The Alumni Association looks forward to seeing you on June 12th.

The deadline for submitting information for the Spring 2021 issue of *TECHnically Speaking* is March 12, 2021.

## Tech Alumni Association Contributing Members

We acknowledge those who have contributed \$10 or more to the Alumni Association as of September 30,2020.

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Name & Address				Check here if this is a name or address change		
Name:	Middle	(Maiden)	Last	Class Year:		
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Correspondence			Please send to th	e address above or e-mail it to us.		
We welcome your comments and encourage you to share information with us about yourself and other Tech alumni that might be of interest to others in future issues of <i>TECHnically Speaking</i> .						
Your Name:				Class Year:		

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#### 2020-2021 ATHS Alumni Association

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President, Anita Chambers Matthews ('81); Vice-President, Clifford Bennett ('69), Treasurer, Dountonia Slack Batts ('92); Corresponding Secretary, Midge Kelley ('92); Recording Secretary, Debbi Deckard Gerlach ('70); Endowment Grant Director, Ramon L. Batts ('90); Scholarships Director, Linda Hill ('68); Communications Director, Jenny Goodnight Yarian-Scalpelli ('64); Ways and Means Director, Diana Wong Poett ('73); Alumni Day Coordinator Director, Elaine Thompson Pfenning ('62); On-Campus Liaison, Edric Mitchell ('08).

#### **Board Advisors**

Immediate Past-President, Dennis S. Nichols ('71); Past-President Emeritus, William Buckley ('69); Reunion Director, Rondell Jackson ('98); Director of Museum, Beth Aubrey Meyer ('77); Veterans Outreach Program, Joe Fuller ('82); Special Projects and Events, Jacqueline Newbern Hudson ('72); Technically Speaking Layout Editor, Mary Paula Collins Nicewanger ('67); Ex-Officio Member, Tech Principal, Corye Franklin; Betty Brock Stucker ('50); Judith Maxwell Coons ('56); Howard Geralds ('68); Cindy Lewis Hartshorn ('70); John Habig ('64).



Arsenal Technical High School Alumni Association, Inc. P.O. Box 11433 Indianapolis, Indiana 46201

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## **Class of 1970 Reunion Recap**

by Debbi Deckard Gerlach '70

Our reunion was a success (despite COVID) with 57 people in attendance! Even though it was small, it was a great event and we had lots of time to visit and talk! The committee worked very hard on the reunion and we have had only positive comments! We are pleased that both of our class projects have met with success... (1) to purchase a gravestone for the unmarked grave of Bessie Anderson Speights, the first black female to graduate from Tech in 1916 (the first 4 year graduating class) and, (2) to establish the Class of 1970 - Bessie Anderson Speights Scholarship Fund. Bessie is buried in Floral Park Cemetery on the west side of Indianapolis. Upon graduation from Tech, Bessie went on to receive a teaching certificate and taught at IPS #37 for over 30 years. We have enough money to purchase the aravestone and hope to have the dedication/installation in the spring and inviting local media to attend. Be sure to check out all the Tech Facebook pages and the Alumni website for future information about that. Also, thanks to the generosity of our classmates, we have a strong beginning for the scholarship fund! Our goal is to keep this funded with ongoing donations so that we can award a yearly scholarship. That being said, if you wish to make a donation, checks should be made payable to ATHS Alumni Association and mail to P.O. Box 11433. Indianapolis. Indiana 46201. Be sure to include a note on the memo line that it is for the Class of 1970 - Bessie Anderson Speights Scholarship Fund. If you have any questions, please email Debbi Deckard Gerlach at dkgerlac@yahoo.com.

### **Congratulations!**