

Harnett County to Honor Trailblazers at Annual Awards Ceremony

The Harnett County African American Heritage Center is proud to announce the upcoming Harnett County Trailblazers Awards, set to take place on Saturday, June 28, 2025, at the Harnett County Commons Building in Lillington, NC. The event will begin at 5:00 PM and will recognize the outstanding contributions of individuals and organizations that have made a significant impact on the community and beyond.



This year, the awards will honor the following trailblazers: Beatrice Bailey Hill

- Tony Spears & the Harnett County NAACP
- Carolyn McDougald
- Sharon Gainey
- Bishop Brenda Johnson
- Dr. Jasmine Nixon
- Dr. Benika Thompson
- Dawn Young
- Tiffany Artis
- Dr. Calvetta Sutton-Beard
- Renee Gilmore
- Jeffrey Booker
- E. J. Stewart
- Lawanda Leggett
- Rosa McDougald
- Dallas Dafford
- Kittrane Sanders
- Sandhills Family Heritage Association
- Willie Brinkley
- Naomi Ried Swann

A special recognition will be given to Beatrice Bailey-Hill, a centenarian who has paved the way for future generations through her leadership and advocacy. Her lifelong contributions to the community will be honored as part of this special recognition.

The ceremony will take place at the Harnett County Commons Building, located at 309 W. Cornelius Harnett Blvd. in Lillington, NC. The public is invited to attend and celebrate the achievements of these remarkable individuals and organizations who have made a lasting impact on the Harnett County community.

Tickets for the event are priced at \$25 and are available for purchase at Walker Funeral Home, the Harnett County African American Heritage Center, and online via Eventbrite. For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact the Heritage Center at 910-514-7198.

This annual event is an opportunity to come together as a community to honor those who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to preserving African American culture and advancing social change in Harnett County.

"You are not and yet you are: your thoughts, your deeds, above all your dreams still live." — W.E.B. Du Bois, activist and sociologist

Please scan to join
our mailing list



910-882-3851

Desi L. Campbell/Editor

sandhillsblackvoices@gmail.com

www.africanamafricanexperience.org

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JUNETEENTH

Desi L. Campbell
Staff Writer

Juneteenth, also known as Juneteenth National Independence Day, is a holiday that commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans in the United States. The name "Juneteenth" is a combination of June and nineteenth, as it marks the date—June 19, 1865—when Union Army General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced the enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, which had been signed by President Abraham Lincoln two and a half years earlier, on January 1, 1863.

Although the proclamation declared the freedom of enslaved people in the Confederate states, it was not immediately enforced in areas still under Confederate control, including Texas. When General Granger's announcement was made, many enslaved people in Texas were freed, and it marked a significant turning point in the history of emancipation and the fight for equality.

The celebration of Juneteenth became a way for African American communities to mark the end of slavery and to celebrate freedom, resilience, and African American culture. Over time, it has grown into a celebration of African American heritage, pride, and ongoing struggles for civil rights.

Why We Celebrate Juneteenth:

- Freedom: It marks the moment when the last enslaved people in the United States learned of their freedom, signaling the end of an unjust system of slavery.
- Heritage and Culture: Juneteenth has become a day to celebrate African American history, culture, and contributions to American society.
- Reflection and Education: It serves as an opportunity for people to reflect on the past, discuss the history of slavery, and continue to advocate for social justice and racial equality.
- Juneteenth was officially recognized as a federal holiday in the United States in June 2021. Celebrations often include parades, picnics, music, art, and community gatherings.

Juneteenth Events



THE 1865 SOCIETY OF PENDER COUNTY PRESENTS

SPECIAL MUSICAL GUEST
GOSPEL LEGEND
PASTOR JOHN P. KEE
AND NEW LIFE

JAMES MURPHY
THE HARRISON FAMILY
PASTOR MONICA ROSS AND FAMILY
TRU PRAYZE

THE 3rd ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION
Gospel Concert 2025!

SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 2025
PENDER COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE
100 SOUTH WRIGHT STREET
BURGAU, NC 28425

CONCERT BEGINS AT 4:30 P.M.
SAVE THE DATE AND DONATE!



BRING THOSE FANS OUT
★ **LINE DANCING** ★

Riley Hill Recreational Sports Presents:

JUNETEENTH
★ *Celebrating our* ★
History & Future

FIREWORKS  **BOUNCY HOUSE**

Saturday, June 21st **COUNTRY FUN**

LIVE DJ 5 pm - 10 pm; Fireworks at 9 pm
\$10/person or \$5/school-age child

FOOD TRUCKS 3205 Edgemont Road **TENTS & CHAIRS WELCOMED**
Wendell, NC 27591

★ **REMEMBER THE PAST : SHAPE THE FUTURE** ★

 **POET QUEEN ELIZABETH**
3 BROTHERS
INFLATABLE ADVENTURE 



MANIFEST

Website coming soon! Stay tuned for full event details and registration info.



One of the most meaningful aspects of these reunions is the opportunity to learn about family history. Elder relatives often share personal stories of hardships and triumphs, connecting the younger generations to the past. These stories not only provide a sense of identity but also instill a deep sense of pride in the richness of African American culture and heritage. In some cases, families use the reunion to share their genealogical discoveries, with DNA testing revealing deep connections to African nations, such as the Igbo tribe, and fostering a greater sense of cultural belonging.

Activities That Strengthen African American Bonds

- The heart of any family reunion is the shared activities that bring family members closer together. For African American families, these activities often include cultural expressions such as music, dance, storytelling, and food.
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- Soul food is at the center of many reunions, with beloved recipes passed down from generation to generation. The joy of breaking bread together is a tradition that strengthens family ties and fosters a sense of community.
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- Music plays a central role as well. Many reunions feature gospel, blues, jazz, or soul music—genres that trace their roots to the African American experience. These musical traditions are not only a form of entertainment but also a way to connect to the cultural rhythms of the past. Whether it's a spirited line dance, a soulful family sing-along, or storytelling through song, music becomes a vital part of the reunion experience.

Preserving History Through Storytelling and Genealogy

- For African American families, storytelling is one of the most treasured traditions. It is through the stories passed down from generation to generation that history is preserved. These family narratives often include rich accounts of overcoming adversity, building communities, and making strides toward progress. Storytelling sessions during reunions allow family members to bond over shared experiences and create new memories while keeping ancestral knowledge alive.
-
- In recent years, many families have embraced technology and genealogical tools to preserve their history. With the help of DNA testing and online ancestry databases, family members can come together at reunions to share the results of their genetic research, tracing their lineage to African countries, Native American tribes, or even distant European connections. These discoveries strengthen the family's connection to the African diaspora and highlight the importance of maintaining and honoring family heritage.

Strengthening the African American Community

Family reunions also play a key role in strengthening the broader African American community. Many reunions are held in hometowns or cities that were historically significant to the family's origins. These gatherings help individuals reconnect with their ancestral roots, revisit local history, and celebrate the places that shaped their identities.

Moreover, these reunions often extend beyond just immediate relatives. Aunts, uncles, cousins, and even close family friends are invited to join the celebration, creating an expanded sense of community. As families gather to honor their shared heritage, they also create a broader network of support that strengthens the African American community as a whole. Whether through community service projects, mentorship programs, or local scholarships, family reunions often serve as a springboard for giving back to the wider community.

2025 Family Reunions

DNA Family Festival

Descendants of Joe/Jennie McLean &
Jim/Lucy McLean
June 6-8, 2025
Harnett County Commons

Mckoy Family Reunion

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Everettstown Families & Friends Reunion

July 3-7, 2025
Lynchburg, Virginia

Cameron-McNeill Family Reunion

July 4-6, 2025

Fuller Family Reunion

July 12, 2024
Goldsboro, NC

Wells-Smith Family Reunion

August 1-3,
2025

Smith Parker Family Reunion

August 2, 2025
Community Outreach Center
Fayetteville, NC

Howell Family Reunion

July 26, 2025

Campbell Family Reunion

September 6, 2025
Hope Mills, NC

McDougald Family Reunion

October 4, 2025
Shawtown Community Center
Lillington, NC

Jack Williams Family Reunion

August 15, 2025

Murchison Family Reunion

July 26, 2025



Descendants of George Shepard Smith & Martha Parker

Join Us for the Smith Parker Family Reunion: A Day of Fun and Celebration!

The Smith Parker family is excited to invite all relatives and friends to the much-awaited family reunion, "It's A Family Affair!" This joyous occasion will take place on Saturday, August 2nd, 2025, from 2:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Community Outreach Center in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Event Details:

Location: Community Outreach Center, 651 Country Club, Fayetteville, NC, 28301

Ticket Prices:

- Adults (18+): \$25
- Children (6-17 years old): \$15
- Kids 5 and under: Free



Get ready for a day filled with music, food, and family bonding. The event will feature DJ Raw providing the tunes for a lively atmosphere, ensuring there's something for everyone. The family reunion will also be catered by Another Helping Please Catering, offering a delicious variety of food to keep everyone fueled for an afternoon of fun and togetherness. This event is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with loved ones, make new memories, and celebrate the unique bond shared by the Smith Parker family. We look forward to seeing you there! Don't miss out on the fun – mark your calendars and come join the Smith Parker family for an unforgettable day of celebration!

DNA FamFest 2025

"Together We Celebrate"
The Descendants of Joe & Jennie McLean/Jim & Lucy McLean

Armstrong, Austin, Bailey, Bolden, Cameron, Campbell, Chalmers, Chapman, Clark, Cofield, Covington, Elliott, Faulk, Ferguson, Gandy, Harrington, Hicks, Holder-Ritchie, Iudd, Lucas, Massey, McDougald, McKethan, McLean, McNeill, Moore, Murchison, McRae, Muse, Nelson, Patterson, Pipkin, Price, Ramsey, Ray, Tolbert, Smith, Surles, Swann and all other connecting families

Registration \$30
Deadline: May 31st



Scan QR Code to Register

Friday, June 6th
Meet & Greet
6pm-8pm

Saturday, June 7th
Harnett County African American Heritage Tour
10am-2pm
IGBO Nigerian Gala
African Attire
6pm

Sunday June 8th
Morning Worship
10am
Norrington AME Zion Church

Hotel
Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham
Lillington / Campbell University
910-893-2626

June 6-8 2025

Harnett County Commons Area
309 W. Cornelius Harnett Blvd. Lillington, NC

For More Information contact
Desi L. Campbell at

910-882-3851

DNA FamFest 2025: A Celebration of Legacy and Family

By Desi L Campbell

DNA FamFest 2025 is more than just a family reunion; it's a powerful gathering of generations connected through shared ancestry, culture, and history. Set to take place June 6-8, 2025, in Lillington, North Carolina, this special event will celebrate the descendants of Joe and Jennie McLean and Jim and Lucy McLean, two key figures whose legacy spans several generations.

The McLean family's roots run deep, with descendants across North Carolina and beyond. Through years of careful genealogical research, including DNA analysis, the McLean family has been able to trace their lineage, connecting branches that span from North Carolina to the West Coast and even across the Atlantic to Nigeria. These connections have been further enriched by discovering ties to the Igbo people, with some family members participating in the Igbo Naming Ceremony as part of their ongoing connection to their ancestral roots.

Joe and Jennie McLean were born into a world where African American families were often separated by the tragic legacy of slavery. However, their story is one of perseverance, survival, and strength. Their descendants have continued to honor their legacy through ongoing research and celebration of their heritage, ensuring that the stories of their ancestors are passed down to future generations.

Jim and Lucy McLean, also vital to this heritage, were part of a powerful family narrative that has shaped the McLean legacy in both personal and historical ways. These two families – Joe and Jennie McLean and Jim and Lucy McLean – are central figures, providing a foundation for the extended McLean family tree, which includes a wide range of surnames such as Austin, Bailey, Bolden, Cameron, Campbell, and many others. The DNA FamFest serves as a platform for these descendants to reconnect, share their family stories, and celebrate their shared history. This year's event promises to strengthen those bonds as descendants gather to honor their ancestors' struggles, triumphs, and the rich cultural heritage they've preserved over the years.

This gathering is not just about remembering the past, but also about forging new connections and creating a sense of community that transcends generations. With each family reunion, the McLean descendants come together, united by their shared heritage and their dedication to keeping the legacy of Joe, Jennie, Jim, and Lucy McLean alive for future generations.

For many of the attendees, this event will serve as an opportunity to further explore their family histories, understand the importance of their cultural roots, and share in the collective pride of their ancestors' journey. From researching old family records to engaging in lively discussions, the DNA FamFest is a celebration that will leave a lasting impact on all who attend.

Join us for DNA FamFest 2025 to be part of a celebration that honors the legacy of the McLean family and the enduring strength of African American heritage.



Kim Person Marks 25 Years in Gospel Music with Anniversary Celebration and Album Release

Raleigh, NC – June 2025

Celebrated gospel recording artist Kim Person is set to commemorate a significant milestone in her illustrious career. Marking 25 years in the music industry, Person will host a special Anniversary Celebration and Album Release on Saturday, June 21, 2025, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM at the Martin Street Baptist Church Family Life Center, located at 1001 E. Martin Street in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Presented by KLP Music Enterprise, the event promises an afternoon of uplifting music, reflection, and celebration as fans, family, and supporters gather to honor Kim Person’s enduring contributions to gospel music. Known for her powerful vocals and inspirational message, Person has become a beloved figure in the gospel community, earning accolades and touching countless lives over the past two and a half decades.

Tickets for the event are priced at \$25 and are available now via Eventbrite. Attendees can expect a soul-stirring performance featuring selections from her newly released album, a project anticipated to reflect her journey, growth, and unwavering faith.

A QR code included on the promotional material provides direct access to ticketing, ensuring a seamless experience for those eager to join in the celebration.

For more information and to secure your tickets, visit Eventbrite or contact the Martin Street Baptist Church Family Life Center.

HARPO'S JUKE JOINT

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BY:
LYNETTE BARBER & WILL ELLIS

AT THE ACE CENTER

7027 KNIGHTDALE BLVD., KNIGHTDALE, NC

SAT. MAY 17TH. 2025

VIP RECEPTION 5:00PM - 7:00PM
TICKETS START AT \$40

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT US AT (919) 714-3854

MISSIONARY DAY Celebration

HOST	MISSIONARY PRESIDENT	GUEST SPEAKER
REVEREND DAVID L. SMITH, PASTOR	DEACONESS SHELIA J. WRIGHT	REV. / DR. CATHY MATTHEWS (ST. JOHN M.B.C. MAPLE HILL, NC)

SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025 | 11:00 AM

BETHLEHEM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
9374 SOUTHERN BOULEVARD, WINNABOW, NC 28479

POTTERS' HOUSE OUTREACH MINISTRIES
4900 BUNNLEVEL ERWIN ROAD, ERWIN NORTH CAROLINA

Speaker: Apostle Charles Marsh

Host Pastor: Bishop Kareem Corbin

Sunday
NIGHT FIRE

SUNDAY MAY 18TH
5:00PM

COMMUNITY NEWS

sandhillsblackvoices@gmail.com
by the 20th of each month for the next month's edition

SUBMIT

LILLINGTON AREA MINISTER'S ASSOCIATION ANNUAL

DR. QUEEN B. PENNY SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

Tickets: \$25

SATURDAY, MAY 17TH 2025 5PM

HARNETT COUNTY COMMONS
309 W. CORNELIUS HARNETT BLVD.
LILLINGTON NC 27546

WITH
Pastor Kenneth L. Swann
CAMERON GROVE AMEZ
PASTOR THERESA M. WALSER, PRESIDENT

SIXTH PASTORAL ANNIVERSARY Service

PASTOR DANIELLE GLAZE

GUEST SPEAKER
REV REGGIE MATHIS
Central Triad Church, Winston Salem NC

MAY 25TH 2025
9:45 AM

307 Log Cabin Rd.
Teachey, NC 28464

Rising Kingdom Academy

5-Day ONLINE CERTIFIED Minister Training Course

ARE ALL YOUR MINISTERS CERTIFIED IN THE PULPIT?

Introducing Ministers Certification Program
An empowering course designed to equip you with the spiritual, and practical tools to become an Certified Minister and a transformative spiritual leader.

CLASSES START- MAY 12, 2025
9AM-10AM & 6PM-7PM

\$149
Online Course

Certificate of Completion

OUR TRAINING PROGRAM STARTS EVERY WEEK, RUNNING MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY. EACH CLASS IS 1 HOUR LONG, AND PARTICIPANTS CAN CHOOSE ONE TIME SLOT PER DAY

WE'LL BE MEETING FOR CLASS VIA ZOOM.

Leading Ladies of Harnett County's 2ND ANNUAL SIGNATURE TEA PARTY

JUNE 21, 2025
2:00PM-5:00PM

HARNETT COUNTY RESOURCE CENTER
455 MCKINNEY PARKWAY
LILLINGTON, NC 27546

\$25 PER PERSON

TICKETS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Catered Meal, Music, Giveaways, Keynote Speaker & Entertainment
Cashapp: \$LLofHarnett
Zelle: llohcbb@gmail.com
TICKETS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE THROUGH OUR ONLINE STORE
Or see any LL Sista

leadingladiesofhcc.org

25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & ALBUM RELEASE

Kim PERSON

SAT 21 JUNE
2PM - 5PM

TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW
Eventbrite

Martin Street Baptist Church
Family Life Center
1001 E. Martin Street, Raleigh, NC

CAROLINA ROOTS AND LEGACIES

AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGY INTEREST GROUP

for more information
Desi L. Campbell
www.africanamericanexperience.org

Calling all North Carolina African American Researchers to participate in our Carolina Roots and Legacies Genealogy Interest Group!

At Carolina Roots and Legacies, we are dedicated to uncovering, preserving, and celebrating the rich tapestry of African American genealogy in North Carolina. Our mission is to empower individuals and families by providing resources, education, and community support to explore and document their ancestral heritage. We strive to bridge the past with the present, honoring the legacy of our ancestors while inspiring future generations through collaborative research, shared stories, and cultural pride. Through partnerships with scholars, historians, and community leaders, we work to ensure that every narrative is valued, every history is preserved, and every voice is heard.

There are no dues and no commitments. We will have lectures, group discussions, hands on activities, and various workshops to help you with your North Carolina African American Genealogy. We will discuss using Family Search Wiki fort genealogy

Sandhills African American Churches



Bishop Reginald S. Hinton
and Lady Janet Hinton

Mount Pisgah Harnett Original Freewill Baptist Church

145 Prospect Road Church
Erwin, NC
Sunday School 9:45
Sunday Morning Service 11am



Pastor Coleman and Francine Elliott



Lillington Grove FWB Church
106 East Washington Street
Lillington, NC 27546



183 Bailey Way Road, Lillington,
NC, (910) 893-5792
lillingtonstar@gmail.com
www.lillingtonstar.org



Pastor-Elder Timothy Thomas



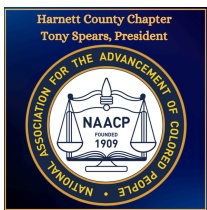
Experience the
Glory!!
CONTACT INFO
(910) 893-2448
Facebook/Instagram: Victory
Tabernacle
TikTok: Victory_Tab



Email Church news/events to: sandhillsblackvoices@gmail.com



Tony Spears President



Harnett County NAACP President Tony L. Spears
Shares Strong Message on Change

LILLINGTON, N.C. — Tony L. Spears, president of the Harnett County NAACP, recently shared a powerful statement about the challenges of making real change. Spears said, “People WANT Change, but People WON’T Change,” pointing out how many people hope for better conditions but are often unwilling to take the necessary steps.

In his statement, Spears explained that real progress in areas like education, jobs, and justice requires action, not just words. He urged the community to look at what they are willing to do, not just what they wish would happen.

As leader of the Harnett County NAACP, Spears continues to encourage residents to get involved, take responsibility, and work together to create a stronger future.

The NAACP chapter remains committed to promoting civic engagement, equal rights, and community improvement across Harnett County

A Guide to Local Funeral Homes and Services



163 Irene Roberts Rd , Lillington, NC
(910) 814-1200
walkerfuneralhome@aol.com
walkermemorialfh.com

FAMILY FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATION SERVICES

DUNN, NC
302 Spring Branch Rd
Dunn, NC 28334
Tel: 910 292 2507

Dafford Funeral Home, Inc.
707 E. Edgerton St. | Dunn,
NC 28334
Tel: 1-910-892-6061



Lillington-Shawtown Elementary

Students Honor Black History Through Creative Expression

Harnett County African American Heritage Center Lillington, NC

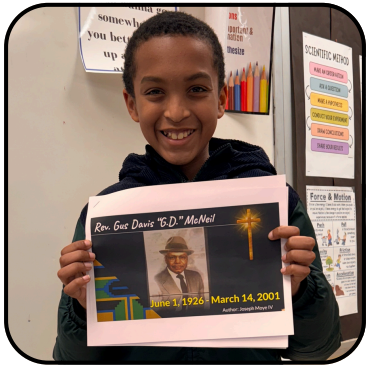
The mission is to empower, educate, and enlighten the African American community with the tools and resources to explore and celebrate the rich African American history of our ancestors in Harnett and surrounding Counties.

www.africanamericanexperience.org

Harnett County African American Heritage Tour

910-882-3851

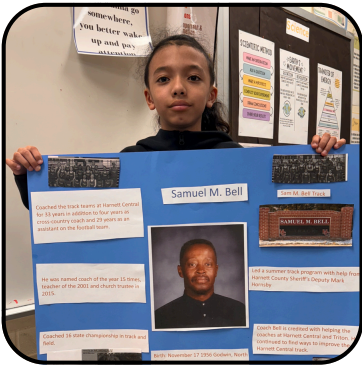




Joseph Moyo
1st Place



Kylah Smith
2nd Place



Lucas Devone
3rd Place

In celebration of Black History Month 2025, the Harnett County African American Heritage Center partnered with Lillington-Shawtown School to present a powerful history display highlighting the rich legacy of African Americans in Harnett County. The interactive exhibit featured a wide range of historical artifacts and stories that helped students connect with the local African American experience.

As part of the celebration, 5th grade students participated in a Black History Month poster contest. Students were provided with biographical information on several notable African Americans from Harnett County and were invited to creatively present what they learned. Entries included poster boards, PowerPoint presentations, and essays, all showcasing thoughtful research and artistic talent.

After much deliberation by the judges, three outstanding students were selected as winners. First Place was awarded to Joseph Moyo, Second Place to Kylah Smith, and Third Place to Lucas Devone. Each winner received a cash prize for their exceptional work.

The Harnett County African American Heritage Center applauds all participating students and commends Lillington-Shawtown School for encouraging young learners to celebrate and preserve the county’s African American heritage.



Shawtown Alumni Association Ground Breaking Ceremony

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY
PATRICIA WALKER-SMITH. AND
CONTRIBUTING FACTS BY THE EDITOR



Patricia Walker-Smith
President SHSAA

On Wednesday, May 7, 2025, the Shawtown High School Alumni Association (SHSAA) held a groundbreaking ceremony for our Community Resource Center. This project has been in the works for sometime now and we are finally seeing some physical evidence. The building will be located on the campus of the high school which has since been demolished and graduated its last class in 1968.

In 2013 the county gave the organization 10.3 acres of the land that had been the campus of the school with the condition that we construct a functional building on the land within 20 years. We have raised the funds needed to construct the shell of the metal building which should be finished by early 2026.

An estimated \$200,000 is needed to finish the interior of the building and make it a functional facility. Once completed, the building will serve the community as a resource for community gatherings and educational programs. As a result, we are currently in a capital campaign to raise those funds. Contributions are being solicited from all who are willing to help. You may donate in your name or in memory or honor of someone. We are a 501 3C organization and therefore donations are tax deductible. Donations can be made on the Shawtownhs.org website, on a GoFundMe.com page (search for Shawtown High school) , or by mailing a check to SHSAA, P.O. Box 1446, Lillington, NC 27546 made payable to SHSAA.

We are so excited about the progress we have made and look forward to completing this project with your support. The Shawtown School began around 1915 as a two-room structure built approximately three-tenths of a mile west of its current location. At a time when the state provided little support for the education of African Americans, the Shawtown community took action by purchasing an acre of land and constructing the first school building themselves. Teachers' salaries were either fully funded or supplemented by local citizens, reflecting the community’s deep commitment to education. Mr. H. Suggs served as the school’s first principal and also taught classes, playing a vital role in shaping the school’s early development.

The school later became part of the Rosenwald initiative, a groundbreaking philanthropic effort led by Julius Rosenwald from 1912 to 1932 that funded the construction of schools for African American students across the rural South. The Shawtown Rosenwald School was one of many institutions that benefitted from this program, which sought to close the educational gap in underserved communities. The school stands today as a lasting symbol of perseverance, community pride, and the transformative power of education.

Photo Credit Rev. Troy Williams

