

**Freedom of Choice Students**  
**Tunstall High School**



Adams, Alphonza	Devins, Jeanette	Martin, Catherine	Roher, Anita
Adams, Barry	Dixon, Janice	Martin, Deborah	Roher, Steve
Adams, Charles	Eggleston, Clarence	Martin, Fleater	Shelton, Ray
Adams, Charlotte	Ferguson, Barbara	Martin, Helen	Smith, Carolyn
Adams, Fairy	Ferguson, Delores	Martin, Howard	Smith, Jeanette
Adams, Hattie	Fulton, Deloris	Martin, Ivory	Smith, Robin
Adams, Jimmy	Fulton, Harry	Martin, Joe	Smith, Vergie
Adams, John	Fulton, Harry	Martin, Joseph	Smith, Virginia
Adams, Juanita	Hairston, Arlene	Martin, Leroy	Smith, William
Adams, Marvin	Hairston, Carolyn	Martin, Marie	Stamps, Valerie
Adams, Marvin	Hairston, Carolyn	Martin, Naomi	Strange, Joel
Allen, Barbara	Hairston, Jerry	Martin, Roy	Tarpley, Della
Allen, Mae	Hairston, Mary	Martin, Tony	Tarpley, Joan
Amos, Paul	Hairston, Melvin	McDaniel, Donnie	Thornton, Rosa
Breedlove, Brenda	Hairston, Melvin	Millner, Alvin	Watkins, Jessie
Breedlove, Harold	Hairston, Phillip	Millner, Floyd	Wilson, James
Breedlove, Walter	Harris, James	Millner, Lois	Wilson, James
Carter, Alease	Harris, Sandra	Murrell, Charles	Wilson, Janie
Carter, Annie	Holt, Deborah	Parrish, Ann	Witcher, James
Carter, John	Hopkins, Derrell	Parrish, Ann	Witcher, Larry
Carter, Lardell	Hopkins, Susanne	Parrish, Gracie	Woods, Joyce
Carter, Lelois	Jefferson, Herman	Parrish, Henry	Woods, Katie
Carter, Randolph	Jefferson, Stella	Parrish, James	Woods, Lavern
Carter, Reggie	Kernodle, Donna	Parrish, James	Woods, Nancy
Clark, Douglas	Law, Cecil	Parrish, Mike	Woods, Patricia
Clark, John	Law, Leslie	Powell, Wilbert	Yarbrough, Calvin
Deering, Carlotta	Lovelace, George	Powell, Willard	Yarbrough, Earl
Deering, Wallace	Martin, Bertha	Powell, John	Yarbrough, Glenn
		Price, Ameila	

# FREEDOM OF CHOICE

**TUNSTALL HIGH SCHOOL - FEBRUARY 3, 2024 - 1:30 PM**

**PRESENTATION  
OF COLORS**

TUNSTALL THS JROTC

**SELECTIONS**

SOUTHSIDE REGION CELEBRATION

**WELCOME**

REV. REGINALD CARTER

**PRAYER**

REV. REGINALD CARTER

**GREETINGS**

DR. MARK JONES, SUPERINTENDENT PITTSYLVANIA CO. SCHOOLS

**STATEMENT  
OF PURPOSE**

MR. MICHAEL BROWN

**MOMENT OF  
REFLECTIONS**

MRS. RUTH YARBROUGH,  
PARENT FREEDOM OF CHOICE STUDENT  
MR. JOHN POWELL

**SELECTION**

SOUTHSIDE REGION CELEBRATION

**SPEAKERS**

MINISTER CALVIN YARBROUGH  
REV. JOAN TARPLEY ROBINSON

**SELECTION**

SOUTHSIDE REGION CELEBRATION

**UNVEILING OF PLAQUE - LOBBY**

FUNDING PROVIDED BY: DANVILLE REGIONAL FOUNDATION

# FREEDOM OF CHOICE

STUDENTS OF FREEDOM OF CHOICE

## TUNSTALL HIGH SCHOOL - FEBRUARY 3, 2024 - 1:30 PM

ADAMS, ALPHONZA  
 ADAMS, BARRY  
 ADAMS, CHARLES  
 ADAMS, CHARLOTTE  
 ADAMS, FAIRY  
 ADAMS, HATTIE  
 ADAMS, JIMMY  
 ADAMS, JOHN  
 ADAMS, JUANITA  
 ADAMS, MARVIN  
 ADAMS, MARVIN  
 ALLEN, BARBARA  
 ALLEN, MAE  
 AMOS, PAUL  
 BREEDLOVE, BRENDA  
 BREEDLOVE, HAROLD  
 BREEDLOVE, WALTER  
 CARTER, ALEASE  
 CARTER, ANNIE  
 CARTER, JOHN  
 CARTER, LARDELL  
 CARTER, LELOIS  
 CARTER, RANDOLPH  
 CARTER, REGGIE  
 CLARK, DOUGLAS  
 CLARK, JOHN  
 DEERING, CARLOTTA  
 DEERING, WALLACE  
 DEVINS, JEANETTE

DIXON, JANICE  
 EGGLESTON, CLARENCE  
 FERGUSON, BARBARA  
 FERGUSON, DELORES  
 FULTON, DELORIS  
 FULTON, HARRY  
 HAIRSTON, ARLENE  
 HAIRSTON, CAROLYN  
 HAIRSTON, JERRY  
 HAIRSTON, MARY  
 HAIRSTON, MELVIN  
 HAIRSTON, PHILLIP  
 HARRIS, JAMES  
 HARRIS, SANDRA  
 HOLT, DEBORAH  
 HOPKINS, DERRELL  
 HOPKINS, SUSANNE  
 JEFFERSON, HERMAN  
 JEFFERSON, STELLA  
 KERNODLE, DONNA  
 LAW, CECIL  
 LAW, LESLIE  
 LOVELACE, GEORGE  
 MARTIN, BERTHA  
 MARTIN, CATHERINE  
 MARTIN, DEBORAH

MARTIN, FLEATER  
 MARTIN, HELEN  
 MARTIN, HOWARD  
 MARTIN, IVORY  
 MARTIN, JOE  
 MARTIN, JOSEPH  
 MARTIN, LEROY  
 MARTIN, MARIE  
 MARTIN, NAOMI  
 MARTIN, ROY  
 MARTIN, TONY  
 MCDANIEL, DONNIE  
 MILLNER, ALVIN  
 MILLNER, FLOYD  
 MILLNER, LOIS  
 MURRELL, CHARLES  
 PARRISH, ANN  
 PARRISH, GRACIE  
 PARRISH, HENRY  
 PARRISH, JAMES  
 PARRISH, MIKE  
 POWELL, WILBERT  
 POWELL, WILLARD  
 POWELL, JOHN  
 PRICE, AMEILA

ROHER, ANITA  
 ROHER, STEVE  
 SHELTON, RAY  
 SMITH, CAROLYN  
 SMITH, JEANETTE  
 SMITH, ROBIN  
 SMITH, VERGIE  
 SMITH, VIRGINIA  
 SMITH, WILLIAM  
 STAMPS, VALERIE  
 STRANGE, JOEL  
 TARPLEY, DELLA  
 TARPLEY, JOAN  
 THORNTON, ROSA  
 WATKINS, JESSIE  
 WILSON, JAMES  
 WILSON, JANIE  
 WITCHER, JAMES  
 WITCHER, LARRY  
 WOODS, JOYCE  
 WOODS, KATIE  
 WOODS, LAVERN  
 WOODS, NANCY  
 WOODS, PATRICIA  
 YARBROUGH, CALVIN  
 YARBROUGH, EARL  
 YARBROUGH, GLENN



## Calvin Yarbrough

### My Experiences with "Freedom of Choice" Desegregation of Tunstall High School

My journey to the world of integration at Tunstall was made less arduous by two factors:

- 1) My older siblings had begun attending the year before and thus were there when I arrived to begin the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 1969. This occurred, I would learn later, as a result of families in our neighborhood agreeing to enroll their high school aged children in Tunstall. This was our parents' support of the local NAACP initiative to begin integrating the school, as was warranted by the recently enacted "Freedom of Choice Act" legislation. From our neighborhood, we had Ronnie Carter, Mae Allen, Sandra Harris, John Clark, and my older brothers, Earl and Glenn Yarbrough.
- 2) My teachers and other school staff at Stony Mill Elementary School had significantly taught, guided, prepared, and instilled confidence in me (and others) such that when I arrived at Tunstall I was not intimidated or felt any inferiority.

Because of these factors, along with the close proximity of Tunstall to our home (vs the much longer trip to Southside), there was no question that I'd go straight to Tunstall in lieu of Southside, contrary to what many of my peers did.

#### Significant Events/Observations

##### Interactions

Because my older brothers were there, I knew that there would be, at least, a couple of other Black students that I would know in my first year there. However, once the bell rang and I began attending classes there were classes, more often than not, where I was the only Black student. This took some getting used to. Also, because my last name begins with the next to last letter of the alphabet, and many teachers would sit students in alphabetical order, I was often the last, or next to last person, in the last row of seats. However, the good news for me is that in most classes I'd have the same one or two persons sitting in front and behind me – George Winn and Bob Yeaman. They were both lighthearted individuals like myself and, we formed good friendships that lasted throughout my time at Tunstall.

I remember distinctly one day George and I shared a canned soda and he didn't hesitate to take a drink from the can after me. In my mind, I think that was his way of showing that we were all the same (Although, I'll never forget that at our 10 year class reunion, George had gotten drunk and, as we sat a table with some of our other classmates, both Black and White, he proudly announced that "Calvin was his best 'Nigger' friend." All the White classmates at the table got embarrassed put their heads down and apologized. While disappointed at his actions, I brushed it off and kept it moving. I've not seen him since that night.)



Throughout my entire time at Tunstall, my interactions with teachers were always good. I never felt disrespected or treated any differently than the other students. In fact, because of my inquisitiveness and good grades, I think I earned their admiration fairly quickly. I was also bolstered by the fact that I had a few Black teachers - Mr. Brown while in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and Mrs. McDaniel, Mrs. Hairston, Coach Caldwell (Track coach), as well as Mr. Hall (Asst Principal who was my former Principal at Stony Mill) throughout my 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades.

One event that stood out to me which related to my teachers, was in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, with my English teacher, Mrs. Rigney. I'm not sure what the discussion was, but I remember her referring to Black students, very innocently, as "Nigras." The Black students heard it, but didn't react or, personally, I don't recall being offended by it. I guess I assumed that's how White people talked and pronounce the term. However, I don't know if Mr. Hall was listening over the intercom system or what, but I remember him coming into the room right at that moment and correcting her. She seemed sincerely embarrassed and repentant and apologized and changed her way of pronouncing it. To me it was also a teaching moment in diplomacy and respect in handling awkward situations. Lesson learned.

### The Fight

While in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, one of our Black football coaches had gotten killed when his car was hit by a train (this is what I had heard). One of the football players, a White student named Sammy Richardson (I think), a Senior and one of the stars on the team was quoted as saying something like he "was glad that the coach had died." Unfortunately, tensions among most Black students (I think this was the first year of full integration) and White students were extremely high and Sammy's comments was the powder keg to set something off. I remember clearly, early one morning as students were arriving to school and before the bell rang for students to go their homerooms, that my cousin and I were standing outside our homeroom door. I heard some rumbling up the hallway a few doors up from us. I quickly learned that a few of the Black students (my brother Glenn included) had confronted Sammy and a few of his buddies about his comments. Suddenly, fists were flying and bodies were rolling down hallway. It reminded me of a ball of wasps just rolling over and over. It seemed like it lasted only a couple of minutes before it was over. I heard that Sammy had to be taken to the hospital.

Later that day, as I was walking in the hall for some reason and everyone else was in class, I met Sammy at the steps. He was heading up and I was heading down. Even though he was a Senior, he knew me and I knew him...and I'm sure he knew that Glenn was my brother. I don't know how, or why, our paths would cross on that day, however, I remember when we saw each other (and he had stitches over his eye) I gave the "Peace" sign and smiled, and he smiled back and said "hi" to me. I remember thinking that he has my respect because they kicked his butt good and still he came back to school that same day, humbled, but unashamed.

Significantly, my brother Glenn shared with me, that he had, many years later at a 30 or 40 year class reunion, spoken to Mr. Reese, the Principal during those early years. They were talking about the fight and what led up to it. Mr. Reese shared that it was one of the best things that could have happened at the time as it allowed a lot of the tension to dissipate and created much needed mutual respect between the Black and White students.

## What I learned

I really felt that my role, while at Tunstall, was to prove to all the White people - students, teachers, administrators, coaches, etc. that Black students were just as smart and capable, if not smarter, as any other people in the world. This was the mindset of all my friends in my inner circle. Not only in academics, but also socially, athletically and in every other way. We wanted to show that Black students had dreams, hurts, needs, wants as would any person and that we could all get along with each other.

The lessons learned by those years of social interactions, conflict resolution, and just gaining a comfort level with people of a different race have served me well in my professional career. As I've traveled across Virginia during my professional career, many times, I would find myself, once again, in situations where I was the only Black participant on a job, in meetings, conversations, or event. The confidence and ability to navigate such situations was learned and nurtured during my experiences while at Tunstall High School.

## The Early Years of Integration at Tunstall High School

I, Alice Jeanette Devins, entered the Halls of Tunstall High School (home of the Trojan) in the fall of 1965, the first year of integration. I along with many others decided that we would attend Tunstall and experience some of the benefits that we were not afforded at an all-Black School; new buses with heat in the winter; hot running water in the winter months and air conditioning in the summer. To my surprise, many Black students reneged on their decision and went to Southside High School. Day one, I was the only 8<sup>th</sup> Black grade girl along with eight Black boys. It was a little scary because the White students didn't want us there and they let it be known by calling us the N-word. They were not accustomed to being up close and personal with Black students.

Katie Woods and I were the only Blacks students on the bus. I remember vividly that there had been a snowstorm and the White kids did not like it that we were on the bus and make sure we knew how they felt about it. The white kids would reach outside of the bus and pull ice sickles off and throw them at us. The bus driver would drive the bus as if he did see or hear anything. These were the kinds of petty things we faced. We were outnumbered so we had to endure it. Luckily, Katie and I didn't live far from each other, nor the school and our parents made sure that we got on the bus together. I only remember one day attending school without Katie being on the bus.

Every year between 1966 – 1970, the number of Black kids increased. I am proud to say that I graduated from Tunstall in 1970. This experience helped me grow throughout my life and my working years. It made me who I am today.