

A Journey Taken

By

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Introduction

Approximately ten years ago a student, Rachel Deddens, in my Ragtime, Blues, and Jazz history course at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, who I also learned was the Assistant curator (presently is the Museum Educator and Volunteer Coordinator) at the Lynchburg City Museum informed me that the Clarence W. Seay collection of papers, documents, pictures, and artifacts was housed at the museum. She further recommended that I should spend some time perusing his papers. The collection, which was truly amazing represented facets of not only educational history, personal history of his years in Lynchburg, VA, but also, history of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. On first hearing this information I was surprised because I knew both the late Mr. and Mrs. Seay personally and also because I grew up on Pierce Street both in the 1200 block and later in the 1300 block a few houses away from the "Seay" home. I also was interested because I attended Dunbar High School during the years Mr. Seay was principal. Also, his administrative team included Mrs. Pauline Weeden Maloney.

Finally, one summer day I decided to take some time to research and peruse the Clarence W. Seay documents at the museum. I met Tom Ledford, then Executive Director of the Museum, who was very cordial, gracious, diplomatic, quiet and respectful. He too stated that the Seay papers were "quite a collection". Thus started my adventure with Mr. Seay.

This experience caused me to recall the days of my childhood, beginning at age five or six in the 1950s. This was when I first noticed neighbors on Pierce Street both in the 1200 and 1300 blocks. Twelve years of my life occurred at 1216 Pierce Street—the daughter of Herman and Fannie Walthall and a brother, Rick. I always noticed neighbors in the 1200 block, but most especially the neighbors in the 1300 block of Pierce Street. For in that block were some very distinguished looking people. I also noticed the trees, sidewalks, and how yards were very well

manicured. Even though these people shared my complexion, there was something unusual about them. Eventually as a child I came to know the names of the Spencers. There was (Mr.)Edward Spencer who always appeared at Hamilton's Grocery store in a brown tweed suit, shirt, tie, and a hat. There was (Mrs.)Anne Spencer, the nationally renowned poet, who I would see walking in her front yards with silver braides, and a comfortable jacket with pants. I always thought it was quite unusual to see a woman wearing pants all the time. She had beautiful skin and I always thought she features similar to a native American. Their address was 1313 Pierce Street. There was (Mr.) Warwick Spencer and his wife, Carrie at 1317 Pierce Street. They lived next door to brother Edward and sister-in-law Anne. This couple always appeared so stern, serious, and quiet. There was also Shelley Spencer (next door to Edward and Anne) at 1311 Pierce Street who incidentally as neighborhood kids, we called him Mr. Squeak Squeak because when any of us approached him in walking along the sidewalk near Hamilton's Store he would make this noise with his mouth and chase us in a playful clown-like manner. Then there was Samuel and Dorothy Meade at 1321 Pierce Street. This house located on the corner of 14th and Pierce (childhood home of the Spencers). Dorothy Meade was a relative of the Spencers. This home located next door to the home of Warwick and Carrie Spencer. Mr. Meade was always so friendly however, Mrs. Meade, who taught at Robert S. Payne School during my elementary years K-7 had the most quiet room in the entire school. She was a very strong disciplinarian. Also in that block was Hamilton's grocery store and Peaceful Baptist Church. On the other side of the Spencer neighborhood as we called it, lived the Cardwell families at 1316, the Greene family at 1310, the Bondurants, Mr. Thornhill and his mother at 1306(Daughter-in-law Ann Spencer and wife of the late Chauncey Spencer and granddaughter (Edward and Anne Spencer), Shaun Spencer Hester resides in the home presently).

Next was this very aristocratic style residence of Clarence and Clara. Seay at 1300 Pierce Street. (Refer to exhibit). On most afternoons while playing in my front yard at 1216 Pierce Street around 5:00/5:30 P.M., I always noticed this very distinguished looking man dressed in a gray suit, white

shirt, tie getting out of his car and walking briskly on the walkway leading to his front door. The picture of Mr. Seay in my elementary school years was a man with straight black hair in a suit and tie. One must understand that in the late afternoons in the 1950s it appeared unusual on a weekday afternoon to see an African American man in the neighborhood dressed in a suit and tie unless he was a minister or teacher or it was a Sunday enroute to church. I never noticed him walking back to his car later that evening because most of the neighborhood children would be sitting at the dinner table with family around 6:30 P.M. Eventually, my family built a home and moved in the 1300 block of Pierce Street at 1322. We actually said that we had moved up in the world in the world with the Spencers—all of them. Incidentally, for our open house in spring 1968, Anne Spencer visited our home and gave my parents a berry bush as a welcome to the neighborhood gift and the Anne Spencer bush still exists today planted in the front yard so that Anne Spencer could watch it develop out of her front windows.

I also reflected back to my high school days at dear old Paul Laurence Dunbar High School from 1964-1969. Mr. Seay as principal was a strong disciplinarian, but also kind-hearted yet to most of us as students we revered him. Many students, like myself who graduated from Dunbar High School, were and still remain extremely proud of attending the school. That a greater percentage of us while attending never wanted to miss a day of school – that it was something special about the campus, administrators, teachers, custodian staff, and students that bonded us still to this day. Generations of students who entered the halls of Dunbar during a five year high school period appreciated the administration, faculty, and staff. We all felt in some unique way that we were “special” and “privileged” and that there truly were no other black students quite like us in the entire state of Virginia and certainly in Central Virginia. Of course as we became adults we all realized that there were many students, not only in Central Virginia but across America, very much like us.

This research caused me to further reflect back to pre-baby boomers and baby boomers growing up in a very segregated society in Lynchburg, VA. It caused me to reflect about the

struggles of black folk dealing with racism through much of the twentieth century to finally adapt to a more integrated community. It caused me to think about so many of my peers who looked like me and hundreds of students in Central Virginia who watched their parents daily deal with a segregated community on their jobs, downtown Lynchburg, and throughout either walking or driving their cars throughout this city in early to mid-twentieth century. Students from 1923 through the early 1960s literally grew up in segregated Lynchburg. Yet, we successfully adapted to an integrated city, state of Virginia and America. We became successful on our jobs, attending either Historically Black Colleges and Universities and in the later 1960s and early 1970s attended predominantly white institutions not only in Lynchburg, but in other states from the Midwest to the Mid-Atlantic to the Northern states.

Thus I became extremely passionate about finding the answers to:

1. What made Paul Laurence Dunbar High School so unique and strong academically from 1938-1968 under the leadership of Clarence William Seay as principal?
2. How did most of us who were born in segregated Lynchburg, Virginia succeed as strong academic students at Dunbar High School- maintaining high academic grades, standards and also achieve well at colleges or through apprentice-ship programs in the industrial community after Dunbar High?
3. How did many of us who were born in segregated America become successful in a more integrated society throughout America beginning in the mid-1960s?
4. How did Mr. Seay through his administration and dedication (and so many administrators like him) prepare us for a different world in adulthood today?
5. How did Mr. Seay who was born approximately 38 years after the abolition of slavery come to Lynchburg, Virginia and prepare students for a different world in the late twentieth and twenty-first century?

John Hope Franklin in the last book of his life that he wrote, *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Frankin*, stated "Slavery was a principal centerpiece of the New

World Order that set standards of conduct including complicated patterns of relationships. These lasted not merely until emancipation but after Reconstruction and on into the twentieth century. Many of them were still very much in place when beginning in the late 1950s, the sit-ins, marches, and the black revolution began a successful onslaught on some of the antebellum practices that had become a part of the very fabric of society in the New World and American society in particular” (p. John Hope Franklin). Clarence William Seay’s life had been dedicated to and publicly defined by his commitment to the High School education of black youths, thus hoping to create better citizens, thus create better communities, thus create better societies. I began to realize that a part of my journey as a kid up to this time now had been intertwined or connected to the journey of Mr. Seay beginning here in Lynchburg, VA. For Mr. Seay’s history has affected my history and the histories of so many who share my ethnicity and similar background. His struggle has been our struggle as people of color.

August 6,7,8 2010 marked the Fifth All-Dunbar reunion that has been observed, participated and recognized by not only Lynchburg citizens, but also by numerous Central Virginia businesses. The first All-Dunbar Reunion was held in August 1989 and has continued approximately every five years since. John Hughes, III, DHS class of 1958 and co-chair of the All-Dunbar Reunion Committee states that “ This first reunion (1989) set the tone for those to follow with demonstrations of the uniqueness of our Dunbar experiences. Then and thereafter, there have been many instances of shock and surprise from non-Dunbarians such as significant-others, who just can’t understand how people who haven’t communicated regularly for so many years can come together and demonstrate such closeness, camaraderie and love for each other. This is what we refer to as the “Dunbar Family.” To understand the feeling of “family” among Dunbarians is difficult for those who never actually experienced it. Dunbar was a place of nurture. The school itself was a center of activities for the African-American community with many community-wide functions occurring on the site. The faculty was made up of top-notch personnel who were very

dedicated to assuring the best possible education and always pushing, and helping, the students toward greatness. Faculty/student relationships were also family-like with many lasting friendships formed. The student body was indeed fortunate to have the faculty we had because of their dedication to their own preparation. The Dunbar faculty was composed of a very high number of persons with advanced degrees. This has resulted in Dunbarians excelling in many different areas on the local, national and international stages of life.”

Our Mayor, the Honorable Joan Foster, attended one of the plenary programs and proclaimed this:

Whereas, the Dunbar High School Graduating Classes of 1923-1970 have chosen to come together in the spirit of fellowship and love, and

Whereas, the members of these classes hold fond memories of their high school days at the historic Paul Laurence Dunbar High School and are determined to keep those memories alive, and

Whereas, Dunbar High School and her students were fortunate to have such educators as Clarence William Seay who became the first African American principal of the school, serving in that position from 1938 until his retirement in 1968 and the noted poet, Anne Spencer, who once served as the school's librarian, and

Whereas, these noted and other outstanding administrators and educators had a vested interest in the students and because of their diligence and encouragement, they have forever established their place in history and have gone on to make their mark in the world, and

Whereas, these Dunbar alumni have achieved success in diverse fields including medicine, law, education, administration, industry, armed services, and many other professions, and

Whereas, in the heart of each of them resides a deep and abiding love for Dunbar High School and the educators who nurtured and encouraged them to succeed at their chosen fields, and

Whereas, these individuals are also active in their communities, volunteering their time, money, skills, and talents to numerous organizations, churches, and civic groups.

Now, therefore, I Joan F. Foster, Mayor of the City of Lynchburg, Virginia, do hereby proclaim August 6-8, 2010 All Dunbar Reunion Days and congratulate and welcome the members of the 1923-1970 classes. August 7, 2010 signed by our Mayor Foster.

What was the making of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School from its birth to 1970?

In an article that was published on June 8, 1927 issue of the Dunbarian, the school newspaper, the writer gave a brief overview of history in the founding of a high school for black children (earlier would have used colored instead of black). It states, "The generation which came directly under the influence of Mr. Yoder is rapidly passing, and as it passes, may it pause a while to tell succeeding generations about this unselfish man, and to pay tribute to one to whom the negro race owes much, to whom the public school system is indebted, and to whom the whole city owes respect. Jacob Eschbach Yoder, the eighth of sixteen children born to Jacob E. and Anna Yoder, was Born February 22, 1938, at Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania. His father was a prosperous farmer in this district where nothing but Pennsylvania Dutch was spoken. He received his early education in the country schools and then learned the trade of a tailor. He worked at this trade until he made enough to go to the state normal school at Millersville, where he was noted for his studiousness and scholarship. The known details of Mr. Yoder's early life are very meager because whenever he did give up to reminiscences he unconsciously reverted to Pennsylvania Dutch which none of his family could understand. (The Dunbarian, June 8, 1927 issue).

In January 1866, the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, a religious organization supported largely by Quakers, sent several missionary teachers to Lynchburg and adjacent territory to open schools for the colored people. Mr. Yoder was leader of these teachers and had general oversight over all the schools. At that time he was very unwelcome to the south. The feelings engendered by the Civil War being still very bitter, his sensitive nature often suffered keenly from the stabs he received, but undaunted and in face of the obstacles and objections he went to work to provide a place for his school. The government had taken over the barracks at Camp Davis, now the section on Fillmore and Pierce Streets between Twelfth and Fourteenth (This is my neighborhood of streets I grew up on). In these barrack Mr. Yoder fitted out living quarters for these Pennsylvania teachers and rooms for the school. Under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, Mr. Yoder conducted the missionary school until 1871 when the

public school system was established and the negro schools were incorporated in the city system. From that time until his timely death he was connected with the public school system as supervising principal of colored schools. Having in the Superintendent of schools, Mr. E.C. Glass, a broad minded, liberal, and charitable leader, Mr. Yoder was able to advance the course of study as fast as practicable. Before the establishment of a high school department, Mr. Yoder taught high school subjects to those who were ready for them. Just as soon as the number prepared for high school justified it, the colored high school was established. Mr. Yoder took a personal interest in the pupils and did much for their advancement along many lines. Since his death the City School Board has honored him by naming a school after him the Yoder Building on Jackson Street." Also, in the Dunbarian issue, "Miss Helen Dunn Urguhart entered the Jackson High School during the last few months of Mr. Jacob E. Yoder's years of faithful service. Soon after this Miss Urguhart became principal. Under her regime our high school has evolved from a three year into a four year institution; from a secondary into an accredited high school; from an enrollment of 44 to 297; from a graduating class of 8 to 36; from a teaching force of four to a teaching force of nine; from a four-room building to a modern building of thirteen class rooms, a gymnasium, cooking room, manual training department, library, and an auditorium with a seating capacity of 450.

During this period of the early years of a "colored school" in Lynchburg, Virginia, Clarence William Seay was born in Nashville, Tennessee July 17, 1902 to Mr. and Mrs. Clarence W. Seay, Sr. He was educated in the public schools of Nashville, TN (see photo- age 11) attended the Carter School in 1914. He then entered Fisk University probably in 1921 at the age of 18 years old- fifty-five years after Fisk University was founded. Fifty-six years after the end of the Civil War.

Fisk University

Fisk University was founded by the American Missionary Society in 1866 as the Fisk Free Colored School. It was named after General Clinton Bowen Fisk, who was a member of the Unionist Home Guards and took part in the seizure of Camp Jackson from the supporter's of Missouri secessionist

governor. As commander of the thirty-third Missouri Volunteers, Fisk fought all over Arkansas and Missouri and took part in the vain pursuit of Confederate General Sterling "Pap" Price. By the time Fisk was mustered out, he was a brevet major general. He had a round tuba player's face, and equally genial gaze, and a full beard.

After the war, Fisk was detailed as assistant commissioner of the Tennessee and Kentucky Department of the newly formed Freedmen's Bureau, or , as it was known officially, the bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and dAbandoned Lands, (p 49, Andrew Ward). Thus the founding of the Fisk Free Colored School and eventually Fisk University. Teachers were recruited from either Oberlin College or persons who had strong religious convictions and had a somewhat collegiate education. Clarence W. Seay received his Bachelor of Science Degree in 1925. He later obtained his Master of Arts Degree in 1935 from Columbia University (leading University that accepted African American students in the early part of the twentieth century). Additional study was done at University of Kansas and the University of Chicago.

While Seay was matriculating through Fisk University in Lynchburg, Virginia a new High school was erected in 1923 at the corner of twelfth and Polk Streets. The school was named after the great poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. Eventually through many obstacles, the Citizens League (later Commonwealth Alliance comprised of local black citizens concerned about the educational plight of black youth) were concerned with full accreditation matters, equality in salaries and availability of Negro teachers and principals.

From 1929-1935, Clarence W. Seay taught French and Chemistry and was the Athletic Coach at a High School in Paducah, Kentucky, Topeka, Kansas, Phoenix, Arizona, and then Lynchburg, Virginia. He served as Principal of Peabody High School in Petersburg, VA 1935-1938. In 1938, the Lynchburg School Board brought him back to the Hill City as Principal and then a year later the school board broke their tradition of having no blacks in administrative positions by naming Clarence W. Seay principal of Dunbar High School (from an editorial "A Man for All Season", The Daily Advance, May 27, 1982).

As the new principal, Seay began in a one building with a single academic curriculum, a five thousand dollar indebtedness, no available funds, and non-accredited academic course status.

Seay's educational goals for the high school:

1. Molding a strong High School
2. Issue of High school drop-out rate
3. Teacher recruitment
4. Developing a strong administration and faculty staff dedicated and totally committed to the achievement of students.
5. Developing a community School
6. High School –College articulation
7. Strong academic curriculum
8. Strong vocational arts curriculum
9. Maintaining strong educational values in line with family values
10. Producing the best of the best in order to become better citizens that make for better neighborhoods and communities that make for better cities that make for better societies that make for a better America that includes all of us

During the years of the Seay administration much was accomplished from 1938 to 1968. He started his administration with meager fares throughout the varied facets at Dunbar and changed much. He states in the Dunbar article dated Sunday, May 24, 1981, "The curriculum was altered from a one-shot curriculum to five separate curriculums: two for college preparatory—science and classical; general course, business course and vocational courses. In the 1930s, Negro schools went to only the 11th grade. That was changed. Lynchburg was not the only place this was done—it was an attempt to save money, a whole year's salary and upkeep. It was morally and legally wrong. Dunbar had a \$5,000 debt and no credit in 1938. We couldn't order anything without putting our money down in cash—not a football, not a basketball. Dunbar faculty, students, parents and alumni went into action." Haywood Robinson, Jr. class of 1946 stated in the same article, "The

black community had to do much more, by and large, than the white community did to keep the school going". "In 1946, Susan F. Davis (originally from Tennessee) came to Dunbar as the school's first accredited librarian. She stated" I really learned to love Dunbar. The students understood the importance of the library. We had a faculty that was very close and we considered ourselves a family. Each member would attempt to help the other person. I always felt like it was one of the greatest schools because we worked together"(The News and Daily Advance). Incidentally, for thirty years faculty meetings were held once a month at in the evening time of 6:00 P.M. These meetings were held at the Amelia Pride Cottage which always included a dinner meal. After the meetings there was a social time of fellowship and card games.

In the same article, Carolyn Brown, class of 1944 and who worked as a secretary there until 1970 stated, "The school was a center for cultural activities for Negroes – school musicals and operettas. We couldn't attend the Little Theatre on Rivermont or the movies. Eventually the Harrison Theatre opened up on Fifth Street and the black community had a movie theatre they could attend." Therefore to the Black community Dunbar High School became the cultural center. From approximately 1940 on, much was accomplished to challenge the many social and academic issues that plagued Mr. Seay" (from Clarence W. Seay documents):

1. 1940-1941 School clubs was inaugurated
2. 1941-1942, two shop courses were added on vocational credit basis.
3. A \$30,000 shop was erected by the school board. The shop building provided space for three shops; Wood, auto and brick masonry
4. 1942-43 – After a comprehensive study by faculty and administration, the school had a new philosophy, aims and goals necessary that would make it possible for every student at Dunbar to want to stay in school and graduate. Reorganization of the curriculum to meet the needs of all students, both college bound and non-college bound.

5. 1949- Amelia Pride cottage built for Home Economics classes, etc.; An athletic field behind Dunbar for football practice was developed rather than players continually having to go to Jefferson Park in Dearington area for practice;
6. Eventually, because of increased enrollment and the daily demands of more space, other buildings were built and erected which Dunbar became the Greater Dunbar.

Teacher recruitment

In an article titled "Dunbar" in The News and Daily Advance dated Sunday, May 24, 1981, Elaine Watson, class of 1944, stated, "When it first started, those students were only two generations out of slavery and education was very important to them. They thought they could better their lives with education. It was something to look up to—just to finish Dunbar High School". The article continues to state "The school changed from the 1920s to the 1930s as did the staff, with black teachers filling many positions. Mr. Seay stated in the same article, "You couldn't work at the school without realizing that a lot needed to be done...Creating an outstanding black high school was not a goal." Seay further states "I didn't want a black school—I never did and never will. I wanted a school, the best school we could possibly put together". But there were problems to be solved—with curriculum, personnel and public relations. "There were two sets of schools—one set for Negroes and one for whites, which was not unusual. For Negroes, it was always second-class everything—faculty, building and equipment." It did not matter if a Negro teacher had a degree. We started working on that—until we had everyone with a B.S., some with masters and some with more." Seay later stated that "those selected for the Dunbar staff also had to understand the special needs of black children. We went to colleges all over the southern portion of the United States to recruit. Although some members of the white community were "marvelously helpful, there were bitter overtones of racism in the community. At the time, there was not much we could do about it except deplore it".

Annie Chambers Pinn, retired Lynchburg Public School educator and guidance counselor in an interview dated in summer 2002, recalled the process in which she was hired. Even though it was years later from the time Mr. Seay started in 1938, his same hiring process remained. Mrs. Pinn stated " I taught in Amherst County for thirteen years, And then I started teaching in Lynchburg, around 1961. When I retired in 1990, I had a total of forty-two years in education. (When) I came to Dunbar I was hired as a part-time counselor and part-time 8th grade English teacher. I was really seeking something in the field of counseling. Because during the time that I had been out of school, I attended Columbia University, and I received a Masters degree in guidance. And then I went back and I received a collegiate professional diploma, which is 30 hours above a Master's in guidance. And I was interested in getting into the field of guidance. And I didn't find, see any hope of getting any in Amherst County because they only had one counselor. And they didn't have many counselors at that time in 1961. So I applied in Lynchburg, And I was hired as a counselor, and I didn't know Mr. Seay, personally, I had seen him, and the superintendent sent me to have an interview with him. And he was very cordial, he seemed to have been very congenial. I just thought he was wonderful (chuckles). And he just said to me, he had done research, he had checked me out and everything when I got there. So he said to me,"Well, Miss Pinn, you have the job as far as I'm concerned. So that's how I got the job working at Dunbar. And he told me, "I want you to be a part-time teacher and part-time counselor. And that way, you will get to know the students better if you're in the classroom and doing that. So the first year that I was there, I worked as a part-time counselor and part-time 8th grade English teacher". Pinn further states as to Seay in his professional rapport and relationship with teachers. "He (Mr. Seay) was very frank. And he wanted you to know, he was the principal. He allowed the teachers to have input in any decision that was made. But yet he had the final say. And he expected you to do a good job. He let us know that our focus point at school was on the students. And the students were the most important people at our school. And the parents, we had to have time for conferences with parents. And of course if we had problems with students, he always took care of

it. He was an excellent disciplinarian.” In my interview with Mrs. Pinn, I stated that “most of the students held him extremely high esteem and we truly were most times intimidated his administration and many were afraid of him”.

In James Elson’s book entitled, *Lynchburg, Virginia: The first two hundred years 1786-1986*, in his chapter *Civil Rights for Civic Wrongs*, he “highlights the Clarence W. Seay’s administration of trials and tribulations with a school board especially in the hiring of black principals and supervisors. He states, “In 1943, Seay calls on the school board to develop a policy of employing Negro principals and supervisors in the local Negro schools as retirements, transfers or other contingencies create opening in these positions. Elson further highlights a quote from the letter to the school board that indicates a strong sentiment of Seay’s, “No one who has never been trapped in a blind alley job can quite know what it can do to feeling and personality to realize that no matter what your qualifications or your ambitions, you can go no further.” Elson continues “Mr. Seay eventually go the all-black administration at Dunbar he had requested. The results of his continuous work toward improving Dunbar’s separate and unequal facilities, curriculum, and extra-curricular activities became obvious: The school grew from a one-building to a five-building complex (one of the five was the C.W. Seay Gymnasium) and its quality of their instruction made it possible for Dunbar’s most talented students to continue their educations at some of the nation’s top colleges and universities. Teams and individuals in athletic, speech, musical, and a variety of other activities regularly brought honors to the Dunbar “Poets” on a regional and sometimes national level.”(p. 424 Elson).

High School and College Articulation

Approximately in 1961, Seay wrote a letter to several Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities expressing an important concern of his, a stronger high school and college academic rapport. Presidents of the following institutions responded favorably to his letter:

Hampton Institute (University), Virginia Union University (Richmond), St. Paul College, Virginia State College, Norfolk State University. In an article, published in the 1964 edition of the Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Seay states, "Articulation in education is coordination of effort in those areas in the field where there are joint concerns and responsibilities between more or less independent units. Good articulation insures smooth transition, continuity of the educative process, efficient development of pupils and maximum use of resources. It minimizes conflict and time-consuming readjustments which frequently result in confusion and sometimes n frustrations. It reduces failures and eventual drop-outs. It is involved with physical, intellectual and emotional readiness for the next step. Good articulation is a requirement in administration, curriculum, guidance, instruction and use of facilities. Its basic tool is COMMUNICATION—two way communication. The failure of the high school and the college to consult with each other at strategic points, to coordinate efforts, to teach, counsel, plan and evaluate TOGETHER where necessary has placed considerable difficulty in the way of a smooth, orderly transition from the secondary school to higher education". And on the topic, "An Excessively High Percentage of Freshman failures, drop-outs and misfits, he further states, "Some of these casualties (more than we care to admit) occur not because the students don't have the ability to do college work—but because little or nothing has been done by either the high school or the college to orientate them to this more mature world of education. They have been over-sold on the glamorized sports program, the social program, the recreational program, etc., but there has scarcely been any mention of the fact that the main function of the college is the development of scholarship. Many of the youngsters leaving high schools at 16 and 17 years of age need lots of guidance and supervision before thy are ready to assume more mature roles. They have not had enough of these on either level". He later further states, " It would be a tragedy in the face of all these indications of increased college enrollments if we took no steps at all to explore the possibility of making a smoother, more efficient transition from high school to institutions of higher learning." A letter to Mr. Seay dated November 17, 1964, states "Dear Mr. Seay: I have read with much interest your recent article on

“High School – College Articulation” which appeared in the Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Congratulations on your good analysis of this area of concern and for your constructive treatment of this particular question. With best wishes to you, I am Sincerely yours, William F. Quillian, Jr. President, Randolph-Macon Woman’s College.

Community School

One of Mr. Seay’s philosophies that is displayed on the commemorative marker at Dunbar Middle School on the site of Dunbar High School was “The successful school and its community are inseparable. The school is the community and the community is the school. All who knew and loved Dunbar High School admired its Quest for Excellence and its positive approach to public understanding. Both were factors in mutual respect and reciprocal action without which there could be no educational growth or development. Long live the Dunbar experience. Honor to its sons and daughters.”

William A. Johnson, Jr. Class of 1960, elected as the 64th Mayor of the City of Rochester, NY(incidentally the first Black mayor of Rochester)- served three terms as Mayor and has a very interesting story in his relationship with Mr. Seay as a student. In my very recent conversation with him I asked the following questions:

1. What are your feelings about Dunbar High School?
2. What made Dunbar High School so special to many of us?
3. How would you characterize the administrative skills of Mr. Seay that caused Dunbar to become a successful academic and vocational high school through segregation?

William Johnson’s response was this, “You should understand that my relationship with Mr. Seay was very complicated. In September 1958, I was appointed editor-in-chief of the Dunbar CHRONICLE, and according to my faculty advisors, it was the first time in the history of publication that the honor had been bestowed on a junior. Within two weeks I submitted a letter to the editor of the DAILY ADVANCE (at the time, the evening newspaper), subsequently published,

which strongly condemned the “massive resistance to integration” policies of the ruling Democratic machine in Virginia. I proudly signed that letter with my newly-won title, “Editor-in-Chief”. The next morning, Mr. Seay immediately summoned me to his office and threatened to expel me for violating the “unwritten” policy of using the school’s name without permission. In the face of overwhelming community pressure, he relented and merely stripped me of my editorship. In my senior year (1959-60), I was named co-editor, along with GERALD TURNER (Butler).

In the immediate aftermath, and for several years afterwards, I was unsparing in my criticism of Mr. Seay’s actions. With the passage of time and my own intellectual maturation, I was able to place his actions into a more rational context. I realized the excruciating pressures Mr. Seay had to operate under, in a highly segregated setting. It was through that prism that I better understood what a remarkable job he had done to provide a quality education to his students and to hire and retain highly qualified teachers for such a long period of time. A part of this awareness came through my own collegiate experience at Howard University. A lot of the material being covered in the core courses had already been taught at DHS. It was though we had been enrolled in “advanced placement classes” without the designation.

In 1998, at the All Dunbar Reunion commemorating the 75th anniversary of the founding of DHS, I was one of three speakers who reflected on the importance of Dunbar High. Let me quote a passage that I have used repeatedly in speeches and lecture on the importance of the foundation experience of K-12, and which put in proper perspective my feelings about C.S. Seay, the prodigious educator:

“Dunbar was an education institution that was located in a state and a region in this country which mandated a segregated and inferior existence for its Black citizens, for almost the entire time it existed. The law of the land was “separate but equal” schools and other facilities. The governor and the legislature of the commonwealth of Virginia, and the school board and the superintendent of the Lynchburg schools upheld their end of the bargain —they provided the separate. But we assemble here today to thank God for C.W. Seay, and the powerful faculties that he assembled, the

likes of many teachers, etc., whom we remember and revere. These were the people, my fellow alumni and friends, who in spite of the laws and prevailing customs of the time, they were the ones who provided the equal !! No, they actually did better than that—they insured that we would not just be equal. We would be better

Conclusion

Clarence William Seay died on May 25, 1982. The Lynchburg School Board Memorialized him with a resolution stating, *“Clarence William Seay was, by example, a great teacher. In his work and in his life, both public and private, he was a builder of the values of our society. He often saw common purpose when others were blinded by differences: through his zeal and personal integrity, many were led to see the wisdom of cooperation. He was a man who actively pursued excellence; it was this example of “excellence” which motivated countless students to such high purpose. His directness, goal-orientation, and self-assurance inspired trust and confidence in others. There is no monument that can appropriately or sufficiently recognize the contributions he has made. However, as his monument, this man of quick perception and unusual charm has left a generation of people, scattered throughout the city, state, nation and world, who are products of and committed to his “pursuit of excellence.” His death leaves us with both a deep sense of personal loss and a unique sense of having known an extraordinary human being. The achievements of C.W. SEAY were a victory for all”.*

From an editorial, “A Man for all Seasons”, in *The Daily Advance*, May 27, 1982, *“In a very real sense he was Dunbar High...It is a better Lynchburg because of him and because of who he was and what he was as a human being. A man of immense dignity and dedication... His greatest service was rendered at Dunbar High School. When he became principal in 1939, Dunbar was an all-black school that been allowed to struggle on as best it could. Seay set out to transform it into a high school whose graduates could compete with those of any school, anywhere. He succeeded, by a combination of unswerving determination and an overpowering presence that could be intimidating at times. He was a man for all seasons, and he leaves a legacy that is unmatched by his own.”*

There are many Dunbarians across America who made great accomplishments through their talents, skill, and intelligence.

1. Dr. Vivian Pinn, class of 1958, Director of the Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health
2. The Honorable William Johnson, class of 1960, First African American to become Mayor of Rochester, NY. Served three terms
3. The late Christopher Edley, Director of the National Negro College Fund
4. Zaida Coles Edley – Actor on TV Soap Operas in the 1970s
5. Clayton Taliafero – Actor and Dancer
6. The Honorable James Giles – Pennsylvania Judge
7. Mary Hatwood Futrell, class of 1958, President of the National Education Association
8. Hylan Hubbard, class of 1965 – Entrepreneur and recently seen in Health and TV publications on Men's health issues
9. Lemuel Lewis, class of 1965 – Entrepreneur and owner of varied media communication networks
10. The late Carl Anderson, class of 1965 – Film and stage actor

Lastly, the Dunbar Alma Mater begins "We love old Dunbar best of all thee ideas for which she stand we are her sons and daughters true and we try to bring her fame.

The Paul Laurence Dunbar High School graduates are the legacies of Clarence William Seay's Journey. I of course am Hermina Walthall Hendricks, proud Dunbar High School graduate of the class of 1969, Lynchburg, VA.

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