VCS annual banquet honors recent retirees

An audience of about 150 people gathered in the cafeteria of Northern Vance High School during the evening of December 10 to honor 37 long-time employees who retired by the end of the 2014-2015 school year.

Former U.S. Rep. Eva Clayton, who represented Vance County in the U.S. House of Representatives, was the featured speaker for the evening. She urged all of the honorees to enjoy their retirement and to continue to contribute to their communities.

“You have all touched the lives of thousands of children,” she said. “Retire from work, but not from life. You still have a purpose and your community needs you.”

Those honored received gifts from the school system and words of praise from school administrators. The honorees included, pictured above, seated from left, Janice Ellington of Carver; Lucille Alston of Aycock; Pam Grissom of E.M. Rollins; Erma Boyd of Pinkston Street; Edna Bartley-Hargrove of Pinkston Street; and Joyce Bullock of Pinkston Street. Standing, from left, are Laura Fisher of Clarke; Ronald E. Gregory, former superintendent; Linda Gregory of Southern Vance; Katrina Waters of Pinkston Street; Margaret Kittrell of Dabney; Rey Pharr of Aycock; and Audrey Skipwith of Southern Vance.

Additional retirees honored who were unavailable for the photo were Wanda Eley of Zeb Vance; Shirley Kit of Dabney; Suzanne Bray of

See Retirees on Page 2

Former U.S. Rep. Eva Clayton is shown at the podium as she addresses the audience at the school system’s Retirement Banquet at Northern Vance High School on December 10.
‘Community to Schools’ event brings leaders to four local schools

Elected officials and business leaders in Vance County participated in a “Community to Schools” event on December 9.

Approximately 30 officials and business leaders participated in the half-day event which was designed to show them the everyday operations of our schools and to highlight the many good things happening in local public schools.

The participants included members of the Henderson City Council, Vance County Board of Commissioners, Vance-Granville Community College department directors, Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Henderson-Vance Economic Development Commission, Vance County Public School Foundation Board and the Vance County Board of Education.

They began their day with a light breakfast at the schools’ Administrative Services Center and then visited four local schools: STEM Early High School (bottom right photo), Pinkston Street Elementary School; Aycock Elementary School (top right photo) and Southern Vance High School. At each school, they visited with teachers and students in classrooms and learned about several special programs, including the Vance Medical Academy and Fire and Public Safety Academy. The event ended with lunch at the administrative center.

Retirees

Continued from Page 1

Dabney; Deborah Bryan of E.M. Rollins; Emma Clack of Aycock; Wanda Ellington of Dabney; Brenda Fariss of New Hope; Karen Franklin of Transportation; Susan Freeman of E.M. Rollins; Shirley Harris of L.B. Yancey; Patricia Hester of Eaton-Johnson; Gloria Hornage of Northern Vance; Elizabeth King of Southern Vance; Sharon Kittrell of Northern Vance; Gail Martin of E.M. Rollins; Sally McLaughlin of E.O. Young; Dottie Miller of Finance; Reba Oakley of Eaton-Johnson; Eric Pierce of Western Vance; Rita Pierce of Zeb Vance; Carolyn Powell of Northern Vance; Kelly Shotwell of Technology; Martha Smith of Zeb Vance; and Goins Sneed of Maintenance.
Blakebrough, Crosson earn doctoral degrees

Donna Blakebrough, an assistant principal at Henderson Middle School, and Jacqueline Crosson, assistant principal at New Hope Elementary and Pinkston Street Elementary, have earned doctoral degrees in education.

Both were notified in late October of their success in completing requirements for the degrees. Blakebrough earned her doctorate in school leadership and administration from N.C. State University. Crosson earned her doctorate in educational leadership with a concentration in curriculum and instruction from the University of Phoenix.

Blakebrough and Crosson worked full-time as school administrators while they worked on getting their doctoral degrees. Both admitted that meeting all of their responsibilities, while doing the indepth work required for the degree was challenging.

Blakebrough began work on her degree about eight years ago. During that time, her husband became ill and battled cancer for two years. He lost his battle and Blakebrough said it took another two years for her to gain the motivation again to pursue the degree. She did her dissertation on the teaching and learning that went on at Henderson Institute from 1952-1970, interviewing 10 graduates of the school. “After the interviews, I knew I had to finish this for all these wonderful alumni,” she said.

Crosson took almost four years to complete work on her degree. Her dissertation was on the correlation between teacher retention and the principal’s leadership style in Vance County Schools. “I received such wonderful support from people here in our schools,” she said. “I couldn't have done it without their help.”

Session provides opportunity for teachers to offer their input

Superintendent Anthony Jackson met with two teachers from each of our 17 schools during a special session in the afternoon on November 23.

Jackson brought the teachers together at the Administrative Services Center to seek their input on several key issues for the school system. He explained to the group that he is continuing to seek input from all stakeholders in the school system including administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members.

“I want a collective vision for our school system,” Jackson told them. “I want us to look at what we can change in our schools to make them better.”

Jackson noted that the school system soon will launch a new marketing campaign focused on a “Vanceformation.”

The teachers offered him their ideas on how they can work with their colleagues to make positive change in their schools and stressed they want to have more of an impact on making school decisions. More meetings will be held later in the school year.
N.C. Rep. Nathan Baskerville tours schools

N.C. Rep. Nathan Baskerville took time from his busy schedule to visit several Vance County Schools on December 2.

He is shown in the photo at above left, standing at left, as he is greeted by students in Rose Jarrell’s class at Dabney Elementary. Joining him is Superintendent Anthony Jackson as Jarrell looks on. In the photo at above right, Baskerville talks with instructor Ben Arrington in the masonry class at Southern Vance High. Baskerville also visited with teachers and students at Pinkston Street Elementary and Early College High School. At each location, he visited in several classrooms.

Early College and BioNetwork

Early College High School biology students were treated to special instruction on December 9, led by James Sanders of the BioNetwork of North Carolina.

The BioNetwork is an outreach science program that has facilitators visit schools and community colleges each school year to promote scientific instruction and learning.

Sanders led sessions in three different classes during the day. Shown at right, students Blake Elliott, Alayna Gallagher and Stephon Sample, from left, pose after they dressed in protective gear for a mock chemical experiment.
Decorating talents

Occupational Course of Study students in local high schools did a great job in decorating the Christmas tree in the lobby of the Administrative Services Center on December 1.

They completed their holiday work under the guidance of Carnetta Blakely and Sheila Burwell, both of the school system’s Department for Exceptional Children. From left, are students Suzanne Burwell, Nia Hodges and Jermaine Alston, far right, joining Sheila Burwell with the finished product.

Thousands of items donated in VCS Canned Food Drive

Families in Vance County Schools came together again for the school system’s annual Salvation Army Canned Food Drive to donate thousands of items of nonperishable foods.

During November and into early December, students, parents and school staff members donated food items to be given to needy families during the holidays.

In the photo at above right, students from Zeb Vance Elementary School stand in front of a bulletin board promoting the food drive in their school. The colorful display featured a huge cupcake with the motivation to “Be Sweet and Donate.” The large cupcake was surrounded by smaller cupcakes representing students and teachers in each classroom. Zeb Vance Elementary collected 700 items for the food drive.
E.O. Young Jr. Elementary gets community support

The community surrounding E.O. Young Jr. Elementary School has provided great support for the school during this holiday season.

On December 5, the Dollar General store in Middleburg, hosted an all-day “Stuff the Bus” event to collect new toys and other holiday gifts for needy students. The event was a great success with local residents coming out to purchase and then donate gift items. A large number of the school’s staff members were on hand throughout the day to devote their time to collect donations and urge shoppers to contribute. Some of the staff members are shown at the event in the photo at top right.

In late November, leaders of the Guiding Star United Holy Church delivered donated school supplies for needy students to the school. The church representatives were led by the Rev. Mary Williams, Carolyn Bagley and Elizabeth Hendricks. They are shown at bottom right presenting some of the donated supplies to students and Principal Marylaura McKoon, standing at far left.

KOZV on the air

Students at Zeb Vance Elementary are shown at right during one of their recent broadcasts of the daily morning show on KOZV (Kids of Zeb Vance).

The approximately 10-minute broadcast is done at the beginning of each school day and is led by Lisa Webster, a member of the school’s faculty. Students do all of the on-camera work, as well as manning cameras for the video production. Several elementary schools now have morning school broadcasts, but KOZV was the first such operation when it began many years ago.
Outreach ministry program helps families

The Risen Faith Outreach Ministry, led by the Rev. John Miles, again this school year donated frozen turkeys to needy families in all 17 local schools.

Miles, along with two members of the ministry, Dr. Gary Miles and Dominic Harris, took time in late November before the Thanksgiving holidays to deliver two turkeys to each school.

Administrators and social workers in the schools worked with teachers to identify needy families to be given the turkeys for their holiday meals.

Shown in the photos, from top right to bottom left, during the deliveries are at E.M. Rollins, from left, Gary Miles, Harris, John Miles, social worker Kristen Tharpe and Principal Dean Thomas with students; at Early College High, Harris, counselor Mary Mangum, Gary Miles, Principal Michael Bullard and John Miles; at Eaton-Johnson Middle, Gary Miles, Harris, Tharpe, John Miles and Principal Brad Jones; and at STEM Early High, John Miles, two students, Harris and Gary Miles.
Transportation gets high marks in state ratings

The school system’s Transportation Department received high ratings during the recent state safety inspections and TIMS audit.

In the annual state inspection of school buses, the department got a rating of 28.76, well below the state average of about 55. With the inspections, departments want to receive the lowest total possible.

The TIMS audit, which measures the efficiency of bus routes, resulted in a score of 98.4, well above the state requirement to score at least 90. The outstanding staff of the department is shown above. They include, from left, Tyler Duncan, Bryan Smiley, R.C. Creech, Petronia Hicks, Kimberly Crews, Jimmy Waverly, Bobby Jones and Clay Owen, director of Transportation.

Jackson presents gift cards

Superintendent Anthony Jackson, center, is shown with Wil McLean, executive director of Finance and Human Resources, left, and Phyllis Newcomb, director of Child Nutrition, right, after he presented each of them with a $50 gift card.

McLean and Newcomb won the gift cards from Jackson in a drawing held during an administrative meeting of principals and directors at Henderson Middle School on December 8.