

For Immediate Release

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Contact:

Andy Pruitt 843-937-6583

Media Release

Special Collection at AMHS Library Honors Charleston History and Local Leaders

Office of Strategy and
Communications

Dr. Gerrita Postlewait
Superintendent of Schools

Erica S. Taylor
Executive Director

Charleston, SC — In late 2014, Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) parent and community member, James Turner, approached AMHS Principal, Judith Peterson, about helping the community understand more about his alma mater, Bonds-Wilson High School. Bonds-Wilson was a historically African American school which occupied the campus on which both Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) and AMHS now reside up until its closing in 1985. During this time, Peterson and Turner met with several other members of the Bonds-Wilson Alumni Association and after several discussions, collectively decided to commission a special room adjacent to the AMHS Media Center called the Bonds-Wilson Reading Room.

The Bonds-Wilson Reading Room houses pictures, memorabilia, yearbooks, and other items. Together with an AMHS student, William Pugh, who took on the room for his Eagle Scout project, the Bonds-Wilson Alumni group assembled an array of items for the room. Once the room was complete, there was a brief ceremony to "open" the room to the public. Members of the Alumni Association, including Lonnie Hamilton, Art Shell, and James Turner, students from AMHS and SOA, and members of the faculty gathered to celebrate the opening of the room.

A recent addition to the Bonds-Wilson Reading Room and AMHS library is a collection of 35 books focusing on the recent history of Charleston and South Carolina, and the integration of various national and ethnic groups into the fabric of Lowcountry life. The special collection features books about former Mayor Joe Riley, Congressman Jim Clyburn, Chief Reuben Greenberg, Gedney Howe, and others. Interviews with Mary Moultrie who led the MUSC hospital strike and Morris Rosen who successfully navigated legal issues during the civil rights era as city attorney are also included. The collection houses council photographs of Marjorie Amos Frazier, the first African American female elected to Charleston County Council, and Lonnie Hamilton, the first African American chairman of County Council, as well.

"The idea for such a collection developed as a result of the tragedy at Mother Emanuel," said Turner. "National attention noted that Charleston citizenry and leadership reacted to the horrible event by attempting to promote healing rather than violent outbreaks and confrontations. It struck me then that our community has historically always been blessed with leaders who constantly strived for tolerance, inclusion, and understanding. Also, it occurred to me that many are or were individuals that I have been honored to know."

Several of the works are signed and inscribed to the collection by the subjects or their family members if deceased. The collection also contains a book on the local Jewish community and another on the contributions of the local Greek community both signed and inscribed to the collection by each author. The Jewish guidance is written in anglicized Hebrew as *La Dor, Va Dor*, meaning from generation to generation, and *Tikkun Olam*, meaning to repair the world.

"That project could never have been a smashing success without the continued assistance of Judith Peterson who immediately embraced the cause," said Turner. "That is why she and my daughter Abby have the display dedicated in their honor by me. The bookplate reads from generation to generation since we [my daughter and I] both worked together to develop these permanent displays. Additionally, it was uplifting that she was attending a high school on the same grounds as the former high school where I was in the first class to desegregate in 1971."

The room also serves as the meeting place for SAME (Students Advocating for Multi-Cultural Education) and other groups at AMHS. The connection of the schools on the Bonds-Wilson Campus was further cemented when graduates of Bonds-Wilson High School Class of 1966 were invited to and recognized at the AMHS Class of 2016 Graduation.

The support for this project came from Turner, and the selection was made in cooperation with Susan Henley, Media Specialist at Academic Magnet High School. The collection is now available, and those interested in Bonds-Wilson High School and recent Charleston history are invited to visit the Bonds-Wilson Campus and specifically, the Bonds-Wilson Reading Room, anytime.

Turner hopes, "that the appreciation and work for inclusion and tolerance will continue and the youth in our schools will draw future inspiration."

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 schools and several specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities led by associate superintendents. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.