

Alexandria Harmonizers 70th Anniversary Throwback Thursdays

No. 4 – First Annual Show

The Alexandria Chapter's first annual show or "Spring Tonic" in 1951 was a combination of barbershop parade and theme show at "the new auditorium" of Mt. Vernon Elementary School, 2500 Mt. Vernon Ave. Featured on the show were The Pittsburghers, 1948-49 International Quartet Champions, and Alexandria's registered quartets – Virginia Hams, Virginia Gentlemen, and Old Dominion Four.

Anyone remember these schools? In 1935 George Washington High School (GW) opened at 1005 Mount Vernon Avenue, merging students from two former high schools. In 1956 Francis C. Hammond High School opened at 4646 Seminary Road. All of these schools served the white population of Alexandria, as segregation was the law in Virginia until after the 1954 Supreme Court decision.

Parker-Gray High School on Madison Street served Alexandria's black population until 1965 when integration came to the city's schools. GW (1935-1971) and Hammond (1956-1971) gradually became junior highs/middle schools in the years after T.C. Williams High School (TC) was established in 1965 at 3330 King Street ("Remember the Titans").

Notable graduates of GW include: Alexandria Mayor/State Senator Patsy Ticer (1935-2017), Class of 1951; TV/Radio personality Willard Scott (1934), Class of 1951; "The Doors" Jim Morrison (1943-1971), Class of 1961; "The Mamas and The Papas" Cass Elliot (1941-1974), Class of 1961, and John Phillips (1935-2001), Class of 1963; and Medal of Honor Recipient (posthumous), Navy hospital corpsman Francis C. Hammond (1931-1953), Class of 1951, for whom Francis C. Hammond High School was named.

Notable graduates of Hammond High include Harmonizer Tommy Morris, Class of 1962. Mt. Vernon Elementary and Hammond High were favorite sites for early Alexandria Harmonizers annual shows. TC was our "go-to" show venue for 36 years thereafter (1967-2003). Notable graduates of T.C. Williams include Alexandria Mayor William D. "Bill" Euille, Class of 1968.

In 2007, a new state of the art, environmentally green T.C. Williams High School building opened its doors on the school's original site. The Harmonizers plan to present an annual show at the new TC for the first time this December.

