

A MUSICAL LEGACY THAT LIVES ON
IN THOSE WHO KNEW THE LEGENDARY MUSICIAN AND TEACHER
WALTER PLEMMER, JR.

The Conetoe High School Alumni Mass Choir will host an appreciation service honoring the late Walter Plemmer Jr. on Saturday, December 23, 2023, at Cherry Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Tarboro starting at 3 p.m. Preserving the history and memory of those who helped make history is considered a tremendous asset to the Conetoe High School Alumni Association, Inc.

Plemmer, who contributed to his community as an English teacher, musical composer, band director, school chorus leader, church musician, husband, father, and friend left a legacy of musical and literacy gifts to everyone who had the opportunity to be in his orbit. Although he's no longer with us, his memory lives on and has changed the lives of every student who stepped into his classroom or music hall.

Plemmer was born in Edgecombe County to musical parents and lived on Rest-A-Bit Farm with his six siblings. He was born with hemophilia and developed crippling rheumatoid arthritis and had to use crutches as a child. At the age of 10, Plemmer fell behind in school after being in the hospital for a length of time but continued to strive and graduated from Pattillo High School. His education continued at Knoxville College in Tennessee where he achieved a B.A. degree in music and later earned an M.A. degree from North Carolina Central University.

Walter returned home after teaching in Wise, N.C., and served as a music and English teacher at Conetoe High School and North Edgecombe High School for over 35 years. During that time, he excelled as the musician for Cherry Hill Missionary Baptist Church for 55 years while also serving as a Deacon. He married Martha Albritton in 1950 and together they bore one son, Andre. Plemmer played many instruments including the saxophone, trumpet, piano, organ, clarinet, banjo, and guitar. He only had to hear the tune once and conquered it.

Plemmer's accolades didn't stop locally, he took four aspiring students (Jimmie Stanley, Warren Jones, Ellis Ray Vines, and Robert Earl Slade) to New York City to appear on the Vincent Lopes Show at the Taft Hotel. While in NY, they performed for the Jimmy Dorsey Band at the Statler Hotel and even provided entertainment on a Manhattan Island tour boat.

In the spring of 1976, the Tarboro Jubilee Singers were organized and performed at the Tarboro Bi-Centennial Celebration which bolted them into the spotlight and the World's Fair in 1982.

After losing everything in 1999 due to Hurricane Floyd, Plemmer never lost his zest and desire to use music as a healing tool for his community. He could never say "no" to a request to perform. His final performance was in May-2000 at the Nash County Cultural Center with fellow musicians Joe Jones and Joe Hines. They were known as the "Walter Plemmer Trio."

The CHSAA, Inc. feels compelled to continue sharing the stories and legacy of Walter Plemmer Jr. who inspired so many as a musician, teacher, friend, and good man.

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