Broken Dreams, Broken Promises, Broken Windows, Lies, Corruption & Lost Opportunities!!! Old North Shelby School, Old CCS Legacy!! Old School Board Blows through $100 Millions in 2020!! Sad, but true story by Robert A. Williams and Willie Green

History Overview from North Shelby School Website:
Northside (North Shelby) School was constructed at 1205 Northside Drive in 1965 at a cost of $189,267. It operated as a black elementary school from 1966 to 1971, and became a Title I kindergarten from 1971 to 1975. It became the Children's Center for the special needs in 1975.

The Truth:
The 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education ruled that segregation of schools based on a separate but equal principle was not working as intended and therefore unconstitutional. Many states, including North Carolina sought to get around the Court Decision in many ways. In the early 1960s NC Governor Terry Sanford even threatened to shut down public education in North Carolina to stop integration enforcement. Also, a flurry of construction of new black schools was started in an effort to show the Federal Courts

that schools in North Carolina were indeed “equal.” Northside School in Shelby and several other black schools around Cleveland County were constructed for this purpose.
The dreams of the black community in Cleveland County that finally at last the promise of a better education for black children appeared to be coming true. It quickly became obvious that those dreams were not coming true. The flurry of construction of black schools was only a ruse to ward off enforcement of full integration of public schools in North Carolina, Cleveland County and elsewhere.
The next ruse used by Cleveland County Schools to ward off integration was to consolidate the many neighborhood white schools as a prelude to construction two large “County Schools,” Burns and Crest High Schools and Middle Schools. After that construction was completed, then all the students in Cleveland County, black and white, would “feed” into those integrated schools. Burns and Crest High Schools did NOT include swimming pools and auditoriums because of the fears at that time of mixing races in large numbers in close proximity.
This “consolidation” caught me in the Eighth Grade when I was bused from Fallston to Belwood for the Eighth and Ninth Grades and then returned to Fallston for the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth grades. I graduated Burns at Fallston in 1965 never to have been to school with a black person. The “big” Burns High School was under construction and full integration began in 1968. Many of the newly constructed black schools ceased operation at this time because white parents didn’t want their kids to attend former black schools (as they were somehow inferior) and were sold off cheap to “friends” of local government officials. It always seems to happen that way. Somehow Northside School in Shelby escaped that fate. That school remained under the ownership of Shelby City Schools.

Besides the opening in Burns and Crest High Schools in 1968, something else happened that taught me about the “separate but equal” so-called defense of segregation. 1968 was a Presidential Election Year, I had turned 21, a Junior at NC

State University majoring in Nuclear Engineering and my first time to vote. As I was in the line to vote, a young black man that I knew, maybe a year or two older than I, a product of Cleveland County's segregated schools was right in front of me. When the Poll Worker handed the black man his ballot, the black man asked for help with his ballot. He COULD NOT read. The Poll Worker pointed to a place on the ballot and TOLD the black man, "right HERE is where YOU vote "Straight Democrat!" the black man hesitated and asked for more help. The Poll Worker, an older white man, short and wearing his glasses down on the tip of his nose, reared back his head so he could look down his nose at the taller young black man, raised his voice and TOLD the young black man "RIGHT HERE IS WHERE YOU VOTE STRAIGHT DEMOCRAT!!" The young black man took his ballot and walked away. To this day I do not know how that young man read his ballot or marked it. To this day I remember that incident and became convinced that school segregation based on the "separate but equal" principle was a farce and a lie. I also continue to NOT understand why black voters vote straight Democrat when the results of doing so are so often NOT in their best interest.

Back to the article.

Sometime later, Northside School became North Shelby School and the school was used for children with "Special Needs."
Also, there was the merger of Cleveland County Schools, Shelby City Schools and Kings Mountain City Schools into one School District and one combined school board. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction began tightening up on school operations and school performance expectations.

The North Shelby School's special needs program was exempt from many of those school performance expectations and requirements. Other Cleveland County Schools were not exempt and failed in school performance expectations according to NCDPI testing standards. The NCDPI ordered improvements to Cleveland County failing schools and put down time limits for

improvement. Otherwise NCDPI would take over operation and control of the failing school or schools. If that would happen the “cat would be out of the bag” that the failing schools were a product of a failed OLD school board that never wanted to hear any bad news. Or let anybody know that bad things were happening at CCS. They did NOT want it to get out that the OLD School Board had broken all their promises that everything was going well and everybody was happy with things just like they were.

So, instead of taking a good hard look at what was causing the failing schools to fail and what had to be done to fix them, the Old School Board along with the Old School Board’ s Old Superintendent-Stephen Fisher-the Old School Crowd conjured up this idea that the Old North Shelby School needed to be replaced with a newly constructed school building that was attached to a failing elementary school. That way they could kill two birds with one stone. They could just change the classification of the failing school by mixing in special needs students with the failing school student population. AND, throw some big money, Million$, to their favorite architect in the process.

The rest is history. Some old history and some recent history.

If you scroll on back to the first if this article, the “History Overview, you will find no mention of the NEW North Shelby School Project ever being built. You will NEVER see the figures where the New North Shelby School Project budget of $10 million ballooned to over $16.5 Million because of poor site selection and building construction on land that was unsuitable for such construction. If you look up the link to the North Shelby School on the internet, you will find the full text of the history of the North Shelby School that was not included at the first of this article that the full history of the North Shelby School history also never mentions anything about the new school construction and the carrying forward of the North Shelby School name. It is like the NEW

North Shelby School just gobbled up the failing James Love Elementary School without leaving a trace of the failing James Love School. I reckon that is how the Old School Board and Old Superintendent Fisher pulled the wool over the eyes of the public as well as the NCDPI.

But these sets of Broken Dreams, Broken Promises, lies and corruption by the Old Cleveland County School Board and Superintendent Fisher had unintended consequences for the Old School Board. Robert P. Queen, a Registered and Licensed Civil Engineer was attending school board meetings while the Old School Board was planning for the NEW North Shelby School Project to be built on the James Love Elementary School property. Robert Queen recognized that the cost of the NEW North Shelby School Project would be prohibitive by the million$ of additional costs to level the steep slopes around James Love where the proposed new project was to be built. Unnecessary costs when compared with other available building sites without steep grades. Robert Queen informed the Old School Board of these problems and I reported them at the time.

The Old School Board was determined to be “stuck on stupid” and continue their plans to build the new project on James Love School property. (Those of us attending school board meetings at the time had not yet figured out the “failed school angle” that caused that particular site selection.) So, the Old School Board bought a 14-acre tract adjacent to James Love property with the intent of moving dirt off the additional tract to fill the slopes of the old track. Apparently thinking they were smart as they would reduce the cost of hauling the dirt from one tract to the other.

However, the Old School Board outsmarted themselves. Twice over. Soil testing of the remaining North Shelby site as well as the new tract showed that the top six feet of soil was not suitable for compaction that would be suitable for the new North Shelby School construction. The “bad” top layers of

acres and acres of soil would have to be stripped away and hauled somewhere else. The soil below those acres and acres of "bad" soil would have to be3 scrapped up, moved to the building site, compacted and the "bad" soil would have to be brought back and spread around to level up the areas surrounding the construction site only for use in planting grass, scrubs and such. Robert Queen had warned the OLD School Board of that too. Only to be ignored again. Such a waste, bad construction site selection topped by ignoring good advice, obviously set Robert Queen on his course to run and win the Chairmanship of the Cleveland County School Board. That is a continuing story for other articles.

The windup of the bad soil conundrum was the ignorance and arrogance of the OLD School Board in building construction practices allowed them to be talked into still using the bad soil, with a grid of "piles" dug down to good soil and poured full of concrete to support the construction of the New North Shelby School project. The overall construction cost of the New North Shelby School ran up to $16.5 million. Eighty-six TIMES the ORIGINAL cost of the Old North Shelby School and $6.5 Million over budget.

Now, the New North Shelby School has suffered damage to poured concrete floors that have settled due to the poor soil as well as inadequate pile support. Cost accounting has shown that floors and doors have been repaired at the new school. But, hey! Robert Queen told them so. I am sure such stupidity by the CCS administration will not be repeated as long as Robert Queen, Joel Shores, Ron Humphries, Rodney Fitch and Danny Blanton are in charge at CCS.

So, now let's discuss the REST of this story. How the Old North Shelby School, which could have been refurbished for further special need use as it was has moved from Broken Dreams and Broken Promises to Broken Windows. On top of More Broken Dreams and Broken Promises. And the same old lies and corruption.

Crime rates in Shelby have increased dramatically. Especially among young black men. In just one week in recent days, eight young men, five black and three white, have been arrested and jailed. Charged with first degree murder. Many of the eight were school age and several were known to be CCS Turning Point Academy drop-outs.

Without further ado from me, I am going to include a message from Willie Green to Shelby, Cleveland County and CCS leaders, black and white, that speaks for itself. Things don't have to be this way.

> *December 18, 2020*
> *From: Willie Green*
>
> *To: Pastor Lamont Littlejohn, Jeff Ross*
>
> *Copy to: CCS School Board, All School Board, Dante Murphy; Robert Williams; Clyde Edgerton; Rev Ray Lockhart; Charles Webber, Pastor Billy Houze; Pastor Wade Wallace, Emanuel Hunt Jr; Mary Accor; Rev Michael Hill; Mary Degree; Rev James Smith, Velvet Brisco; Mayor Stan Anthony; Melvin Clark; Rev Robert Devoe; SPD Chief Jeff Ledford, Andy Dedmon; Andrew Hopper; Mike Philbeck; Rev Roger Fuller, Willie McIntosh; Marcus Strong; Joyce Coleman; Rick Howell; Andrea Fite; Donna Huie-Brooks; Violet Dukes; David Causby; David White; Eric Hendrick;*
>
> *Subject: N. Shelby School: A Possible Broken Windows Theory. Please Keep Your Promise You Made to the Community*
>
> *Reference Link*
>
> *Pastor Lamont Littlejohn,*
> *The purpose of this email is to give you an assessment of the N. Shelby School and to also encourage you to keep the promise you made to the young people in the community. The promise that you would purchase the N. Shelby School and use the school as a community center.*

I visited the school this morning and I notice several windows are now boarded up. As early as this morning or late yesterday afternoon, the front door window had been busted out and the school's locksmith was there at the same time I was this morning boarding up broken windows. Prior to your church's decision not to finalize the sale, there was no prior vandalism or the breaking of windows. Now it looks like windows are being broken out on a daily basis and the school system is having to spend thousands of dollars on expensive plywood and manhours to board up the broken windows and keep the property free of unwanted guests.

I understand that you and Jeff Ross have had extensive conversations and meetings with City Manager Rick Howell. I pray that those conversations included the City helping you fulfill the promise you made to the community for a community center. Since Mr. Howell or the City Council would not support my sports facility concept.

You made a promise to the community, please keep it. Or if you feel the project is too much of a financial burden for Mt. Calvary Church to handle. Or running the day-to-day operations of a community center is not your area of expertise. Then please support my efforts to build my facility and let me do what is needed for the community, so the promises made to the students will be promises kept.

I look forward to your response.

Willie A. Green, Sr.

Editor's Note: The Old North Shelby School now has about 20 percent of its windows broken out as well as the front door. Rev. Littlejohn and Mt. Calvary Baptist Church still owe $522,500 of their $550,000 bid on the Old North Shelby School Property. That $523,500 payment is about 9 months in arrearage.

To the New School Board: The Old North Shelby School, as it

stands now, is a wasting asset and a nuisance to the community. A place for drug use and vandalism. The fact that the School Board has not acted on settlement of the legal debt owed by Mt. Calvary on their legitimate bid in the past nine months and refusal to maintain the property they bid on, indicates some action must be taken. And taken SOON. If the debt is not settled soon, CCS must rule the account delinquent, repossess the property, collect damages on the property since the bid and take further action to either dispose of the property or put it to some good use.

It is also my understanding that Rev. Dante Murphy has, during this delinquent debt period, submitted a bid on this Old North Shelby School Property-but that bid was rejected by CCS and the deposit returned. I would suggest an investigation on:
1. How the previous negotiations between CCS and Mt. Calvary Baptist Church was handled.
2. Immediately begin collection of the $522,500 from Mt. Calvary.
3. If the Property is repossessed by CCS, determine what to do with the property. Beginning with contacting Rev. Dante Murphy to see if he is still interested.

The fact is the Northside School (OLD North Shelby School) was born out of an effort to delay segregation, relegated to low priority service, and finally used and misused for corrupt purposes clearly shows a legacy Broken Dreams, Broken Promises, Broken Windows, lies, corruption and lost opportunities. Which sadly corresponds with the OLD School Board and the OLD CCS Superintendent “blowing through” over $100 million dollars during this pandemic, leaving a legacy of children not in school and virtual learning mostly a failed proposition.

We are fortunate that the voters of Cleveland County saw fit to “clean house” on the School Board in the 2020 School Board Elections. We are blessed that the candidates that were elected, along with Danny Blanton have a new vision and

direction for CCS, just when we need new vision and direction the most. I look for good times for CCS are coming and coming soon. Anything less will be a disaster for the future of Cleveland County!!!