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## Black History Month: Highlighting Mecklenburg's Black Schools

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**\*Editor's Note: We will be highlighting each of the four historically black schools in the county every week in February to honor Black History Month.**

### **EAST END HIGH SCHOOL**

The original school was opened in 1916 in the old True Reformer Hall with students and teachers used rented desks and equipment. Mrs. Nancy Simmons served as the school's first teacher and in the spring of 1918, the School Board, with the financial aid of the parents, erected the first three-room school building. This building became known as the Mecklenburg County Training School.

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A new school building, East End High School, was built in 1953 just four miles outside of South Hill on what is now Dockery Road. East End served students from the Mecklenburg County Training School and all other black students on the eastern end of the county.



## Stunning New Camper Vans



East End High School started with an enrollment of 450 students in 1953. Students from the Mecklenburg County Training School and all black students from the Eastern End of the county attended the school upon its opening. The first principal was Mr. Emmett Taliaferro along with Assistant Principal O.G. Walker. The school was operating in what is now known as Park View Middle School on Dockery Road in South Hill.

In September of 2013, East End High School alumni celebrated 60 years with “a well- attended banquet”. According to alumni in attendance, “the highlight of the banquet was a presentation by Mrs. Lucille Hudson, deceased, a former elementary supervisor for Mecklenburg County Schools. Mrs. Hudson kept the audience spellbound as she covered the history of education in Mecklenburg County.”

When Virginia Public Schools became integrated, East End High School was changed to Park View Middle School for both black and white students.

Alumni and associates from the four historically black high schools in Mecklenburg County have been meeting monthly to plan, strategize, and to accomplish their mission to secure land in a suitable location to construct a building meant to not only serve as a display of artifacts and accumulated history of the four schools but also as a community center for gathering and more.

The Historically Black Schools of Mecklenburg County, VA organization came into existence in January of 2014 and consists of Alumni from East End High School, West End High School, the Thyne Institute, The Mecklenburg County Training School, and supporters of their efforts. Their mission is “to collect, assemble and preserve a collection of artifacts, memorabilia and profiles” for prosperity and for future generations.



## Stunning New Camper Vans



The idea for the organization came to be when Mecklenburg County Training School Alumni, W.P Hudgins, Mr. Glanzy Spain, Mrs. Jean Spain, and other alumni decided that something needed to be done to preserve the memory of these historic schools. “A lot of the alumni [from these schools] are senior citizens and there aren’t too many left. So we thought what if we could come together and figure out what kind of legacy we could leave for these schools,” said Mr. Spain.

There are several sites being considered for the Community Center based on availability of funds. Letters of interest have been sent to the Mecklenburg County Board Supervisors for the project to be considered for the soon to be vacant Park View and Bluestone Middle Schools. “We feel confident that our requests for the artifacts [from the Mecklenburg County School Board] will be granted but we need a suitable location to house this very important history.”

“In order to accomplish our mission, we need your help. Previously, several mailings soliciting support have been sent. Many responded with financial donations and we thanked them for their support. The organization, being incorporated, is exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501C3 of Internal Revenue Code.”

Please consider pledging a tax-deductible financial donation to the Historically Black Schools of Mecklenburg County Virginia to help make this dream a success. Contact committee President Glanzy Spain or Priscilla Walker at 434-738-6669 for donation details or questions about the project.