

## **STEPHENS-LEE HIGH SCHOOL MONTH 100 YEARS & STILL STEPPING**

**WHEREAS**, Stephens-Lee High School (the Castle on the Hill) opened during the 1922-1923 academic year, and the first graduation took place in 1924, and;

**WHEREAS**, from the moment it opened, the Academic Gothic style building became a center for black culture, education, and athletics throughout the North Carolina mountains, and;

**WHEREAS**, the school drew students from throughout Buncombe, Madison, Yancey, and Transylvania counties, and represented a focal point and key source of pride for the extended African-American community in the state's western region, and;

**WHEREAS**, class members agree that Stephens-Lee was the only cultural outlet they had at the time and it was made unique by the camaraderie they all shared. Families had very little but made sure students got to school - it was a family affair with little or no division between the school and the community, and;

**WHEREAS**, Stephens-Lee's graduates were proud of the school and its educational program. The school's famed marching band reflected this fierce pride, and;

**WHEREAS**, almost all the faculty had their masters degrees, and some were working on their doctorates, which means students got the benefit of the latest in education, and;

**WHEREAS**, the final graduation took place in 1965, but the school's legacy continues - as its gym was converted to a community center in the 1970s and is still in use today, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Alumni Association, has organized community outreach efforts including oral history workshops for Asheville youth, a forum celebrating the opening of the Stephens-Lee Community Center, and a presentation at UNC-Asheville, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Buncombe County Commissioners recognize the importance of Stephens-Lee and its alumni's continuing contributions to the community to this day,

**NOW THEREFORE**, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners hereby resolves and declares the month of July 2024 as **Stephens-Lee High School Month**.

This 18<sup>th</sup> day of June 2024.



Brownie Newman, Chairman  
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners