

WINTER 2008 / ISSUE # 23

ALUMNI  
CALLUMIET



## THE PASSING OF A REMARKABLE MAN

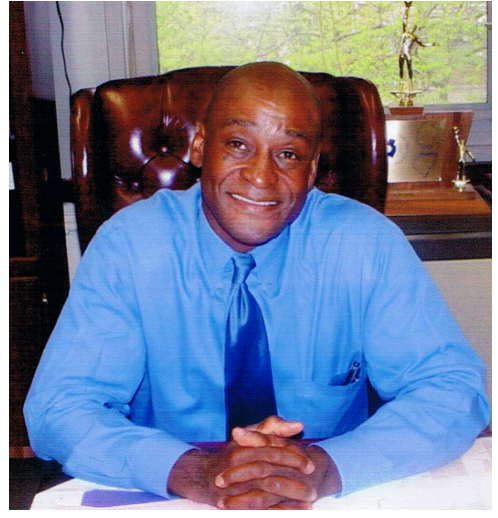
### PRINCIPAL RONALD G. STONE

By Phil Yourish, 1964

*How do we fathom the precarious nature of life? What explanation can we give when somebody dies young and suddenly? How do we begin to understand and cope with a loss that seems so inexplicable? How do we find solace when a rich and productive life is taken too soon? How do we grieve, heal and move forward?*

Weequahic High School Principal, Ronald G. Stone, passed away suddenly on Sunday, November 4, 2007 at age 57. His passing is a great loss to the high school, the Weequahic community, and the city of Newark. Mr. Stone was a passionate, dedicated, and determined educator. He was an inspiration to his staff and students. He brought to the high school a fresh vision, a compelling agenda, and a strategy for success. He embraced Weequahic with energy and enthusiasm. His bold, dynamic and extraordinary leadership truly made a difference.

During his tenure, the school made significant advancements. This included creating an atmosphere for learning and success; instilling school pride; the renewal of the school's accreditation; improved test scores; an increase in students graduating and attending college; better facilities for the marching band and athletic teams; the renovation of Untermann Field; a state championship football team; the use of conflict resolution as an alternative to gang violence; and the establishment of a



working partnership with the school's active alumni association.

Although a Barringer grad, Mr. Stone bled orange and brown with the same fervor as any homegrown alumni. He brought the great Weequahic tradition back to the high school. His dream was for Weequahic to return to the glory days of earlier years. Faced with the many challenges of running an urban high school, Mr. Stone used the athletic teams to spark student interest. He had the school building and Untermann Field painted in orange and brown and had T-shirts made for the students with the large letters "IP" on the back for *Indian Pride*.

He spent school funds to build an exercise facility so that the athletic teams would have greater parity with the suburban schools that they competed against. He organized pep rallies and made Friday a day when both students and staff were encouraged to wear school colors. He was always visible at sporting events with his deep voice booming above the rest - cheering, urging Weequahic to victory.

Once he got the students' attention, he emphasized the importance of the classroom and the pursuit of academic excellence - and Weequahic was making strides in that direction.

For four years, he was a member of the alumni association Board of Trustees and attended almost every Board meeting. A regular part of the agenda was the "Principal's Report." He helped us to establish guidelines and priorities. His contributions were essential to our success. During this time, the high school and the alumni association became a collaborative effort.



*Continued on page 2*

## **STONE** *continued from page 1*

Moreover, Mr. Stone was always very accommodating. At Homecoming each year he would share with alumni his thoughts on education and report on the progress that the school was making. On the occasion of our first Scholarship Fund Raising Dinner, he played "Taps" on his trumpet.

At our recent "American Gangster" fund raising event, "Heart of Stone," a trailer for the documentary being made about Mr. Stone, the high school and the alumni association, was shown before the movie. When Mr. Stone was introduced, he touched the hearts of the 500 people present with his inspirational words - concluding by raising his fist in the air and shouting "IP." For many of us, that was the last time we had an opportunity to be with him.

*Ron Stone was a genuine Weequahic hero. For six years he was a precious gift to the high school. His impact was immense. We all have benefited by knowing him. In his memory, the **Ron Stone Endowment Fund** has been established by the alumni association.*

## **Walking with a Chief**

**By Mary Dawkins, Co-President, 1971**

*Mary Dawkins is the Weequahic High School Alumni Association's new Co-President. She has been a Board of Trustees member for the past 5 years and served as the Co-Chair of our*

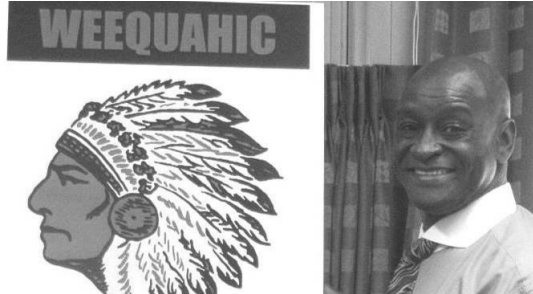
*very successful Scholarship Fund Raising Dinner in honor of Alvin Attles.*



*Mary is the Executive Director of Grace West Enterprises, which includes child-care, senior citizens, and homeless housing programs.*

*She is a graduate of Rutgers Newark and has a Master's degree in Education. She is married to Mack Dawkins (South Side High School) for 32 years and has one son Mack III and his wife Jenea.*

Weequahic High School was ambushed last month with the sudden and shockingly unexpected death of Ron Stone - a man amongst men - a man with a dream for the success of every student who passed through the doors of the school - the man who taught all of us about the meaning of **IP** for **Indian Pride**.



Ron Stone was a source of strength for each warrior who donned the Orange and Brown and anyone else who dared to share his dream. He has left us, but that dream still lives. His wisdom - his authority still inspires us.

When we were last together, Ron spoke about how we must support our kids and prove to everyone that they can be successful at school and in their lives after they graduate. Clearly, he faced a bittersweet battle every day. Yet he was both the authority and the role model. He showed the tribe that there was a better way - a path towards a more positive, productive and fulfilling life - the path of education - no u-turns - because their goals and future lie straight ahead.

Ron's dream was left with us and we must continue his legacy. Ron now is *In the Presence of God*. His work is done. It is we who must roll up our sleeves, get behind his dream and make it resonate within us.

The WHSAA worked closely with him to forward his academic and athletic programs and we will gladly do the same with his successor. We pledge to whomever is chosen our new chief to dedicate our time, talent and resources toward assuring that Weequahic High School will regain its reputation as one of America's finest academic institutions.

At the Memorial Service in Untermann Field many students dedicated their educational future to Ron's memory. We urge you to continue the dream of our Beloved Chief. You will find that those who traveled the path before you will be with you - encouraging you, committed to you. *You will be the dream fulfilled*

## **The ALUMNI CALUMET** is a publication of the **WHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

*Editor, Layout & Design:*

**Phil Yourish, 1964**

*Proofreading:*

**Dave Lieberfarb, 1965; Hal Braff, 1952; Myrna Jelling Weissman, 1953; Vasco Jardim.**

*Masthead*

**Rich Brospies, 1964**

*Our thanks for articles from The Star-Ledger, NJ Jewish News, other publications, and our WHS alumni.*

*Printing:*

**Village Press of Orange, NJ**

## **CONTACT US**

**Weequahic High School  
Alumni Association**

**P.O. Box 494  
Newark, NJ 07101**

**(973) 923-3133**

**whs@weequahicalumni.org  
www.weequahicalumni.org**

## **HELP WRITE THE NEXT ISSUE**

Send us letters, articles, stories, memories, poems, recipes, photos, cartoons, trivia, obituaries, reunion information, etc.

## **SEND US YOUR WEEQUAHIC / NEWARK MEMORABILIA**

We are creating an archive of all items relating to Weequahic and Newark for exhibitions at our events.

If you have old photos, newspaper articles, year- books, films, Calumets, Ergo magazines, books, schedules, rosters, certificates, letters, hats, jackets, sweaters, WHS athletic equipment and uniforms, or any other interesting memorabilia, please call us before you discard any of these items.

## *In Loving Memory*

**Ronald G. Stone** was born in Newark's Central Ward on November 3, 1950. In his youth, the seeds for future success were planted. His values were formed and his consciousness raised by his mother, Dr. Elayne D. Brodie, a well-respected community activist, who marched in the streets of Newark for quality education in the 60's and 70's. She encouraged him to excel in academics, music and athletics.

Mr. Stone spent his teen years in the North Ward section of Newark where he attended Summer Avenue School,



Broadway Junior High, and Barringer High School. At Barringer, he was first chair trumpet and leader of the Blue Jackets Jazz Band. A three-year varsity athlete in track and wrestling,

Ron won both the City and District championships in wrestling in the 157-pound weight class and didn't lose a match in his senior year in 1968.

As he moved on to higher education, Mr. Stone earned a BA degree in Physical Education and an MA degree in Administration and Supervision from Kean University. He also became the starting fullback on the football team and was the captain of the lacrosse team earning All Metropolitan honors.

In 1974, Mr. Stone became a Physical Education teacher and coached in the Newark Public Schools. In early 1980, he started the first wrestling club for elementary youth at Franklin elementary. He coached basketball at Peshine Avenue, Dayton Street, and First Avenue schools. He influenced the lives of numerous young athletes.

In 1993, at age 43, in pursuit of new challenges to test his physical limits, Mr. Stone won the North Atlantic Power Lifting Championship, squatting 680 pounds and setting a State dead lift record of 710 pounds. He also had a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and placed



tenth in the NJ State Cycling Criterion Championship. His varied hobbies and interests - golf, chess, tennis, music - were met with the enthusiasm of a student who would soon become a 'master' of that particular skill.

A motivational speaker, Mr. Stone received numerous recognitions and awards - most recently, the Benedetto Croce Educator's Award. He was also inducted into the Newark Athletic Hall of Fame and made the keynote address.

Prior to coming to Weequahic in 2002, Mr. Stone was Vice Principal of Avon Avenue School. Weequahic was his greatest challenge and he assumed leadership with confidence and optimism. *"There is a crisis in urban public schools,"* he declared, *"but I strongly believe that these institutions are indispensable!"* He passionately felt that it was up to us to change the culture of hopelessness, to a culture of *"we will succeed, no matter what!"*

Mr. Stone led a very active life with his loving wife Meg. Her thoughts of him are: *"my idol, my best friend, who enriched my life in a way no one could imagine a human could do. His spirituality brought me to a higher level. My greatest joy was just waiting for him to return home to enjoy our evenings together. Our different cultures came together and formed a bond of strength, dignity and respect that emitted an energy that was felt by all who witnessed our relationship. The bond will never end. We will live now at opposite ends."*

To cherish his memory, Mr. Stone leaves his wife of ten years, Meg; his four sons, Bobby, Ronnie Jr., Jesse and Jarrett; brothers, Hugh, Howard and Larry; sister,

Jacquetta Campbell; grandmother, Marlyne Brown; mother-in-law, Selma Charney; brother and sister-in-law, Sandy and Rona Steinberg; many nieces, nephews, friends and his Weequahic High School family. He was predeceased by two brothers, Gary and Kevin.

His legacy and devotion to his family, his students, and his colleagues will live in our hearts forever!

### **Some thoughts on Mr. Stone:**

#### **Sharmayne Fontaine, WHS Student**

*"Not only was Mr. Stone a Principal, but he was a father, friend and a mentor. He cared for his students. He gave them guidance when their lives were going astray. He went beyond his duty to make sure that his students were safe."*

#### **Elizabeth Haden, Acting Principal**

*"He was our leader, our biggest cheer-leader, our father, mentor, protector and my friend. His dedication to the staff and students inspired and instilled in his administrators the charge to supervise and to lead professionally and efficiently. I am grateful for having the privilege to know him, to work with him, to learn from him, and to love him."*

#### **Ras Baraka, former Vice Principal**

*"Mr. Stone protected our children with his life. I know because I was there beside him. He faced guns and gang members. He confronted abusive boyfriends and misguided parents. He put himself in harm's way to assure that our children were safe."*

#### **Michelle Bryant, Mr. Stone's Assistant and a Barringer High School classmate.**

*"Remembering Mr. Stone means realizing his dream to make Weequahic one of the top comprehensive high schools in the city and also continuing his legacy of Indian Pride. A good friend is hard to find, so when in life you have that one opportunity to work alongside a true friend, you must consider yourself truly blessed."*

## WHAT NOW?

By LaTisha Prophete, WHS Senior

The tears are drying from the faces of our students, but the one thing that remains evident is the fear of the unknown wandering in our minds. What now? What will happen now that Mr. Stone is gone? It feels like just yesterday Mr. Stone was walking around playing, joking, and talking with us. Now that he is gone, it feels like no one can fill the void that he has left at Weequahic. Yet, what we don't know is that we can all fill that void. We can take control. We can continue the legacy that Mr. Stone has set out for us. We are on the right track. All we need is focus.

There came a time when our community thought that we were all failures. In our minds we believed that, and it reflected in the actions of the students who came before us. But Mr. Stone didn't believe that. He came to Weequahic with hope and he brought back the Indian pride that was missing.

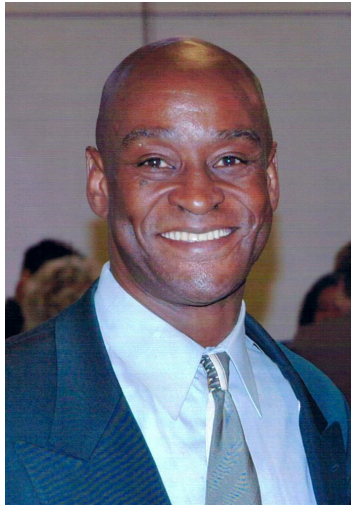
He noticed how the students had low self-confidence and how they were struggling with situations that needed all of his time. So he made time. He taught the students that we should be proud to be an Indian. We had to accept the fact that we can stand up next to any magnet school and be just as good as them.

A friendship was built with Mr. Stone and the students grew attached to his many customs at Weequahic. He created an environment that separated our home lives from our school lives. Academic scores are going up and Weequahic's athletic teams are gaining more than just trophies. Students wanted to do more than just finish high school; they wanted to go to college or trade school. The students gained a confidence that made Mr. Stone and the Weequahic family proud.

Everything was going well at Weequahic and the media grasped at every moment of it. We were compared to the Cinderella story and everybody was excited about our accomplishments. Mr. Stone gained respect and everybody applauded about

how he took control of a struggling situation and found the answer that many people before him couldn't find. He completed the goal that he had set out for himself and now that he has been taken away from us by his sudden death, we have to complete the goal that he had set out for US.

The fear that is presented in our minds is the question that we must answer. WHAT NOW? What will we do now that Mr. Stone is gone? The answer is very simple. As students at Weequahic High School,



we are going to stand up and do what we know is right. We are going to create an environment where the students have an understanding that we must continue to accomplish the education that was denied to us before. We need to put aside all our differences and help one another. There comes a time when we all need a shoulder to lean on and we all can lean on each other. The time is now. We can take control. We are on the right track. All we need is focus.

## Indian Dedication

Appiffanny Boston, WHS Senior

It is freezing cold. The wind is blowing Oh, how I cannot wait to get home in the warmth, away from this torturing November weather. I look around and see how many people are sitting in the bleachers here to support and show their love for our beloved Principal Ronald. G. Stone. It is Friday, November 16th, 2007.

Today is a day in honor of Mr. Stone. Everyone who truly cares, from current students, to staff, to alumni, to the people of the community is here to give tribute to our dearest lost one. With spiritual songs from the soloist and the choir, a combination of current students and alumni, we feel the warmth of the sun, which shines upon us from the start of each hymn until the end of each word.

We now hear the wonders of our Stone, his accomplishments and contributions to our school, what we will miss about him, and what we can do to continue his vision. From students, staff and alumni, we hear the greatness of Stone and feel the impact of a great loss. All reiterate the message to the senior class: *GRADUATE!!* Graduate and continue on with your success in the world and the betterment of yourselves; try to be better than what Mr. Stone hoped for; try to supersede his expectations and make him proud, and you be proud, proud to be an Indian.

Graced by the presence of Mr. Stone's family, we hear the encouraging words of Mrs. Stone. With great emotion she tells us of his dedication to our school, especially to the students, how we were his home away from home. The love and support of the students, staff and community are greatly appreciated by the Stone family and they are grateful to be part of our Indian home.

With the setting of the sun, the ceremony is done, but our journey has just begun. The cold of November is setting in, as we go home to reflect on what has just been said. What will become of our school? And will everyone fulfill his or her duty to make Weequahic great? Sit down. Think about it. Will you be another statistic that fails to do your part? Or are you that dedicated Indian we are looking for?

**Mrs. Stone speaking to the students at the memorial service:**

*"But look at me - I am still standing - and I want all of you to believe in yourselves and know that you all have the strength inside you to help me keep Mr. Stone's legacy alive by continuing your education, find your passion, and be true to yourself."*