

Yearbook calls honor student 'Black girl'

Special to Sentinel-Voice
DALLAS (NNPA) — Shadovia Jones holds no animosity towards her high school in Waxahachie. She "appreciates" the apology she recently received from district officials. However, there is one thing she wants to make clear; her name is not "Black Girl," even though that is how her class peers identified her in this year's school yearbook.

Jones, a National Honor Society member at Waxahachie High School, recent graduate and recipient of numerous academic distinctions, had a cool response when contacted about a recent event at her school that made the news last week. Underneath her photo in the school yearbook is what district officials have called "a mistake." Instead of placing her name underneath her photo, someone placed the words "Black Girl" beneath her image.

After being contacted by the city's local newspaper about the misidentification, district spokesperson Candace Ahlfinger said an apology was immediately is-

sued. Jostens, the company that prints the school's yearbooks, printed replacement pages to correct the mistake, she said.

Ahlfinger also said the process for proofing the yearbook has changed because of the mistake. In the old process a student laid out the page, she said. That student was responsible for things like getting the names of persons in the yearbook, she said. After that student lays out yearbook pages a student editor would proof the yearbook for mistakes and finally, the journalism teacher would proof the students' work, she said.

The new process has two new steps, Ahlfinger said. A student still conducts the initial layout. However, that student may be assisted by others to get factual information that the page may need. Instead of sending the page immediately to the student editor, "a new set of eyes," another student, proofs the page for mistakes. Once that student proofs for mistakes, the student editor does their job, followed by the journalism teacher. Finally, a faculty

committee made up of "at least three faculty members" will review the page, she said. "There are always mistakes because we are human," Ahlfinger said.

Jones' mother, Judy, is not buying that line of reasoning. Waxahachie, a town of about 21,000 people (17 percent African-American and 70 percent Anglo) located about 26 miles south of Dallas, has made national headlines as a result of the mix up. Jones' mother takes issue with the fact that her daughter — the only African-American in the school's National Honor Society — was misidentified in the school yearbook.

"It's an embarrassment, a total embarrassment," the mother said. "For all that she's accomplished, it's just embarrassing."

Judy wants answers. How could this have happened? Who could have let this happen? Why did a mistake like that make it past that many sets of eyes?

"What I want to know is how and why it could have gotten out," she said. "I'm waiting on those answers and I have not received those answers yet. If they think this

is a joke, I'm not laughing.... Why does everyone have their name and she doesn't? How could you forget that? Basically there is no excuse for this. None."

Shadovia Jones graduated from Waxahachie High School among the top students in her class.

In the fall, Jones will attend Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas to major in marketing and advertising. She said she was "disappointed" and "embarrassed" at the identification. Like her mother, she is "appreciative" of the apology, but still, questions linger, she said.

"There are a lot of questions that still need to be answered," said Jones. "Like 'Why?' and 'Who?'...I just want them to know that I appreciate their apology but there is still so much that has to be done and there is still so much to be answered."

Betty Jefferson of the Waxahachie NAACP will work with the Joneses and the district to reach an appropriate resolution.

Shekeira R. Gillis contributed to this story.

Andre Coe writes for the Dallas Examiner.

Father

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he was "bothered most that this man (Lipscomb) is still walking the street."

Johnson also expressed his dismay that "the man wasn't even charged," asking, "What are they waiting for?" Lipscomb was arrested and held, but released without any charges filed against him. This was one of Johnson's main reasons for coming to town himself to ask for "anybody who can help me."

Among the individuals and four civil rights organizations represented at the meeting, held at Second Baptist Church at 500 W. Madison was Second Pastor Rev. Jesse Scott, Larry Gamell of the NAACP, Gene Collins of National Action Network, Rev Willie Davis of the Ministers Alliance, and meeting coordinator Stan Washington, a close family friend.

Central to the meeting was Danny Bakewell Sr, President of the Brotherhood Crusade, a well established Los Angeles-based business and civic development organization aiding thousands in the African-American community, who came to support Johnson, a family friend, but also said he wanted to "meet with some of the local leaders in the community" before advising on any further steps to help Johnson in his efforts.

Johnson said that after the many weeks since his son's death with no charges being filed, plus getting no satisfactory answers to questions, the appeal to the community for help was necessary.

Johnson also informed the members of the meeting that he felt his son's life was not important, citing the lack of news coverage, and said, "Nobody seemed to know anything."

In his quest to see that his son's attacker was brought to justice, Johnson met with North Las Vegas Mayor Montandon on Tuesday.

"It was an election day, and he spent a lot of time to talk to me. I really appreciated that, he didn't have to do that, but he did," Johnson said, feeling that he was beginning to be heard.

Late Wednesday afternoon, official notice was issued from the District Attorney's office that charges had been filed against Lipscomb earlier in the day. Executive Assistant Kathy Karstedt in the D.A.'s office confirmed the State's complaint against the defendant Lipscomb on the felony charge of "murder with use of a deadly weapon."

"The arraignment is set for July 13," she said.

Johnson's son and his fiancée Tamara Fluker had two daughters, Daylan, 4-

years-old, and Dylan, 8-years-old.

He worked at Bonanza High School for several years and resigned days before he started his dream career in law enforcement."

When his father was told about the D.A.'s decision to file charges, he was "overwhelmed," as he repeated, over and over.

"I don't know what to say... I'm overcome, over-

whelmed... I came here and I just wanted some help. I have so many people here to thank."

Johnson said he was glad, but aware of the huge tragedy.

"It's a sad thing, and it's a small victory, but it's a victory nonetheless. It's an incredible ending to an ordeal."

Johnson said he'll stay in Las Vegas until after the arraignment.

Walter Reed closing: Community weighs in

By James Wright and Velencia Mohammed
Special to the Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — With little notice, supporters of the historic Walter Reed Army Medical Center came from as far as Pennsylvania and New Jersey to voice their concerns about the recent recommendation by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to close the hospital facility.

Supporters said they were shocked and speechless at the notion that the internationally known landmark was about to close its doors.

"This is not a military base but a medical facility. It does not fit the criteria used to close military facilities. Walter Reed provides patient services," said Martin Coty, retired, U.S. Navy.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth L. Farmer Jr., commanding general of Walter Reed, listened intently as residents of the District and patrons spoke of the overall effect of the possible closing.

"Where does the community weigh in on some bearing on the decision," asked Joyce Baychest.

Annie Watley said she was one of Walter Reed's closest neighbors and could not imagine what the area would be like without the hospital.

"We need information about the economic impact (of this closing) on our community and our city," said Watley.

If the Walter Reed Army Medical Center is closed, as recommended by BRAC, District Councilman Adrian Fenty, in whose ward the facility is located, wants to make sure residents of the city have a voice in what will become of the property.

"I think that if Walter Reed is closed, city officials should defer to the community in terms of what will be made of that site," said Fenty (D-Ward 4). "I believe there should be a community-wide process in terms of what should happen to that site, and that city and federal leaders should respect that."

Walter Reed, a 113-acre complex, has been selected as one of 180 military sites to be closed.

The reasons given include the site's outdated buildings and lack of expansion opportunities. Most of the center's operations and employees would be transferred to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

Located in the center of a middle-income community that is mostly homeowners and small retail shops. The area around Walter Reed is majority Black, but a number of young Whites are buying homes in the area.

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