Harrison, Dr. Robert W.

Contents:

- Images
- Newspaper clippings
- Excerpt from Afro-American Sons & Daughters
- Obituary

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Dr. R.W. Harrison Jr.

Yazoo civic leader,
Robert Walker Harrison Jr., 74, the Yazoo City dentist who was the first black named to the state College Board, died of complications following a stroke Thursday in Methodist Medical Center in Jackson.

Services are 3 p.m. Sunday at Zion Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Natchez with burial at Natchez City Cemetery. A memorial service is 2 p.m. Saturday at L.T. Miller Community Center in Yazoo City. Mackel Funeral Home of Natchez is in charge.

A Natchez native and son of a dentist, Dr. Harrison served from 1972-84 on the board that oversees Mississippi’s eight state universities. He was board president in 1982.

Dr. Harrison received his doctor of dental surgery degree from Northwestern University Dental School and a bachelor of arts degree from Tougaloo College. He was a board of directors member of the Mississippi Economic Council, the Boy Scouts of America and Security Life Insurance Co. He was active in many state and national professional organizations.

Former governors and longtime colleagues admired the soft-spoken Dr. Harrison and praised his even-handed support of universities.

“He did an outstanding, superior job,” said former Gov. Bill Waller, who appointed Dr. Harrison. “He was intellectually able to interface with the eight senior colleges.”

Waller, Mississippi’s first modern governor to bring blacks into state government, said he picked Dr. Harrison at the urging of Yazoo County citizens.

“We were interested in appointing a black person, but a black person who had a contribution to make and could contribute to the quality of higher education,” said Waller.

Former Gov. Bill Allain said Dr. Harrison “had an interest in the black universities and colleges, but I don’t think he let it blind him” to the other universities, Allain said.

Dr. Harrison “was as objective as any board member could be. He helped the board understand the needs of historically black schools,” said Hattiesburg businessman Bobby Chain, who served with him 12 years on the College Board.

“He was a gentleman’s gentleman. We’ve all lost a friend,” Chain said.

In 1989, the University of Mississippi recognized Dr. Harrison as an outstanding black Mississippian.

Dr. Harrison was active in Yazoo City affairs — from the PTA to the Chamber of Commerce — and loved jazz, said Rep. Joel Netherland of Yazoo City.

“He was a black dentist, but he had a lot of white patients. He did dental work for many children and families that couldn’t pay,” Netherland said. “Dr. Harrison was a fine fellow.”

Survivors include: wife, Charlotte; son, Robert Harrison III of Little Rock, Ark.; daughters, Charlotte Harrison Baker and Kathleen Harrison, both of Yazoo City, and Pamela Harrison of Atlanta; and 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.
Harrison debates NCAA eligibility rules for Southern’s inquiry, debate program

The new NCAA eligibility rule for athletes was debated March 24 during the Inquiry and Advocacy Program at the University of Southern Mississippi.

USM students debated the following resolution: “The 700 SAT or 15 ACT eligibility requirement should be deleted from NCAA rule Number 48.” Resource people who were interviewed by the students were Yazooan Robert W. Harrison Jr., president of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning; Dr. Norman Francis, president of Xavier University; Lee Hildman, USM psychology professor and Roland Dale, USM’s athletic director.

The I and A program’s unique feature is the participation of public leaders directly involved in the issue. Each person brings a different perspective on the difficult and crucial decisions regarding academic eligibility requirements for student athletes, said Dr. Susan Siltanen, forensics director at USM.

Dr. Harrison, who was appointed to the Board by Gov. William L. Waller, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Economic Council for six years. He is currently vice-president of the Continuing Conference of Minority Members of Governing Boards in America and a member of the Minority Advisory Committee of the Association of Governing Boards. Dr. Harrison is a retired official of both football and basketball.

Since 1963, Hildman has been teaching education and developmental psychology, psychometrics and school psychology courses at USM. He received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Florida State University and has done additional work at the University of Florida. Before coming to USM, Hildman worked as a counselor at Florida Presbyterian College and the University of Florida.

Dale, who has been athletic director for USM since 1974, is a native of Magee.
James Herbert White Preeminence Awards and Scholarship Gala

Friday, April 28, 2006, 7 PM

Robert W. Harrison
Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Complex
Featuring
Peabo Bryson
Honored Guest
Nancy Wilson
Black-tie optional
$75 per person

Mississippi Valley State University
Dr. R.W. Harrison Jr., long-time resident of Yazoo City, dentist and former president of the state College Board, died Thursday morning at Methodist Hospital in Jackson.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, May 2, at 2 p.m. at the L.T. Miller Community Center. Funeral services will be held Sunday, May 3, in Natchez from the Zion Chapel A.M.E. Church at 3 p.m.

Burial will follow at the Natchez City Cemetery under the direction of Mackel Funeral Home.

"Dr. Harrison, 74, was hospitalized on Friday, April 24, after suffering a stroke. The news of his death caught Yazooans by surprise, causing many to reflect on their experiences with him."

Yazoo City Mayor Hugh McGraw remembered Dr. Harrison from his days as postmaster.

"He never came into the post office that he didn't carry on a bunch of mess with Herman Asher and me," McGraw said.

"He was a true friend." Yazoo Fair and Civic League president Herbert Scott remembered the days when Dr. Harrison was active on the softball scene.

"When he first came to Yazoo City, we played on a softball team. We used to officiate games together," Scott said. "I had heard he was sick but I thought he'd pull out of it."

Appointed by Gov. Bill Waller, Dr. Harrison served 12 years on the College Board, including the role of board president during the 1982-83 term.

He also served as director of the Mississippi division of the American Cancer Society, treasurer and finance committee chairman of the Mississippi Lung Association, a member of the Yazoo County Chamber of Commerce, director of Books for the World, an executive committee member of Taproots, the Madison-Yazoo-Leake Family Health Centers, director for the Yazoo Community Action Headstart, director of the Comprehensive Health Planning Board and a director of the Mississippi..."
To Serve On Extension Council

Dr. Robert W. Harrison Jr. of Yazoo City (left) is a new member of the 12-member volunteer advisory council to the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service. He is welcomed to the council by Extension Director Dr. James R. Carpenter at a recent council meeting at Mississippi State University. The council, formed in 1984, makes recommendations to Extension administration on programs and resources, public support and long-range planning in all program areas of the organization. Selection to the council is based on nominations from Extension employees throughout the state.
AFRO-AMERICAN SONS & DAUGHTERS

YAZOO CITY, MISSISSIPPI

1849-1949

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS TO YAZOO COUNTY AND THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

BY JOSEPH C. THOMAS

THOMAS & KIRK PUBLISHING
YAZOO CITY, MISSISSIPPI

1997
Scenes from Dr. R.W. Harrison's Dentist Office
Located on Main Street
Courtesy Mrs. R.W. Harrison
Dignitaries honor new College Board president

Yazoo's Harrison first black to hold title

By MARGARET HARRIS of The Herald staff

Dignitaries from around the state came Thursday to honor Dr. Robert W. Harrison, newly elected president of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

Harrison, a 64-year-old Yazoo City dentist, became the first black president of the board, commonly referred to as the College Board, on May 8, after serving 10 years as a board member.

During a luncheon honoring Harrison at the Mississippi Chemical Corporation boardroom Thursday, Mayor Charles Fulgham proclaimed May 20 as “Robert W. Harrison Jr.” Day in Yazoo City.

More than 100 persons, including Gov. Winter and former Gov. Waller, were on hand

More than 100 persons, including Gov. William Winter, former Governor William Waller, members of the College Board, and presidents of state universities, were present at the noon luncheon, sponsored by the Yazoo County Chamber of Commerce and the Yazoo City Municipal Separate School District.

Awards were presented to Harrison on behalf of Yazoo County, Mississippi Valley State University, Jackson State University, and Radio Station WPEJ.

Speakers at the luncheon included Gov. Winter, chamber executive vice president Tom Gillies, city school board president Joseph Thomas, Harrison, the first black ever elected to the position, served as a board member for 10 years.

Winter expressed his appreciation for being able to have the opportunity to join with Yazooans in honoring Harrison for his contributions to the state. Winter also thanked Gov. Waller for appointing Harrison to the board in 1972. "I want to express my appreciation to Gov. Waller for breaking the boundaries that should have been broken many years ago," Winter said. He also said that he was proud to be a friend of Harrison and that he and Harrison would work together as "long as we both are public servants of the people."

The College Board governs all state supported four-year colleges and universities. It approves budgets and also approves the hiring and firing of school officials. The board allocates funds appropriated to the schools by the state legislature. It also approves capital improvements and renovations and has control with the Research and Development Center in Jackson.
Ole Miss recognizes Espy, Harrison, Williams

Three men having ties to Yazoo County were recently recipients of the University of Mississippi 1989 Awards of Distinction, presented to outstanding black Mississippians. They include U.S. Rep. Mike Espy of Madison, who was born and raised in Yazoo City; Dr. Robert Harrison, a native of Natchez and longtime resident of Yazoo City, and Ben Williams of Jackson, a native of Yazoo City.

Rep. Espy became the first black Congressman elected from Mississippi since Reconstruction in November 1986 and in November 1988 was re-elected by carrying all 22 counties in the Second Congressional District. He is a member of the House Budget Committee and the House Agriculture Committee. He also sits on the House Select Committee on Hunger and serves on the sub-committees on cotton, rice and sugar; wheat, soybeans and feed grains; domestic marketing, consumer relations and nutrition; and department operations, research and foreign agriculture.

In his first term, his colleagues elected him vice president of the 1986 House Democratic Class and chairman of the House Democratic Freshman Class Budget Task Force. He was one of the few freshmen members of Congress to pass a major piece of legislation in the 100th Congress—the Lower Mississippi River Valley Delta Development Act, a blueprint for economic development in a seven-state area, including Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana.

Before his election, Rep. Espy served as Mississippi’s assistant attorney general for consumer affairs and as assistant secretary of state for public lands. He holds a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Howard University and, after graduation from Santa Clara Law School, worked with Central Mississippi Legal Services.

Dr. Harrison has combined the successful practice of dentistry with leadership in efforts to support and improve education in Mississippi. In 1972, Gov. William Waller appointed Dr. Harrison to a 12-year term on the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. In 1981-82, he was College Board vice president and in 1982-83 he was as president, the first black ever to hold that post. While president, he also called for a strong partnership between the board, universities and secondary school leaders in addressing deficiencies in math and science education and emphasized the need for an adequate core curriculum as a requisite for college entrance.

Dr. Harrison chaired the special committee to develop the faculty and staff objectives of the 1974 Desegregation Plan of Compliance for Mississippi’s universities. In 1983 he was awarded the National Distinguished Service Award in Trusteehip, Public Sector.

The Natchez native is an honor graduate of Tougaloo College and Northwestern University Dental School. He played a key role in establishing the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry and has been a clinical instructor at the school. He is currently on the board of directors of the Mississippi Division of the American Cancer Society, treasurer and executive committee member of the Mississippi Lung Association, a board member of the Yazoo County Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Council for the Support of Education.

Since 1974 he has been either secretary of president of the Jackson chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. He is a former board member of Security Insurance Company of the South, Mississippi Economic Council and Andrew Jackson Council of the Boy Scouts. In 1965-67 he served on the board of the South Central Region Educational Laboratory, whose emphasis was early childhood education. For 35 years he was a college and high school sports official.

Williams is this year’s recipient of the Mississip Now Award for a young black Mississippian who has demonstrated early career achievement and leadership. After a successful gridiron career, he retired from the pros in 1986 and started his own construction company in Jackson—Lynco and Associates. He also serves on the board of directors of the University of Mississippi Alumni Association, the Ole Miss Drive for Athletics, the Mississippi Kidney Foundation and the M-Club Alumni Chapter. The young contractor also is active in the Easter Seals Society, the Multiple Sclerosis Association and the Association of Building Contractors.

The first black football player at Ole Miss, Williams was defensive lineman from 1972-75 and was a three-time All-SEC performer. In 1973 he was chosen Colonel Rebel, the first black to ever receive the university’s highest elective honor. After earning his bachelor of business administration degree in 1976, he played pro ball with the Buffalo Bills for 10 years, earning All-Pro honors in 1986 and being named to the Bills’ silver anniversary all-time team in 1984. Williams’ other honors include the Ralph L. Wilson Leadership Award.

School figures told

JACKSON—Yazoo County School District ranked first in the state in current expenditure per pupil during the 1987-88 school year, according to the 1989 report of Superintendent of Education Richard A. Boyd to the Legislature.

The district’s average expenditure per pupil, based on average daily attendance, $3,726. Pass Christian Public School District, with $3,721, was second, while Bolivar District No. 2 was third with $3,716.

Pontotoc City School District was last in the state in average current expenditure per pupil, with $2,190.

The superintendent’s report states that the statewide average per pupil expenditure last year was $2,677. However, the report also includes a table provided by the National Education Association, which calculates the state average as slightly higher, $2,760.

Of the 12 states listed as Southeastern states, Mississippi had the third lowest per pupil expenditure, Arkansas, with $2,410, being the lowest, followed by Alabama, $2,752.
Dr. Albert W. Dumas, Sr. arrived in Natchez in 1899 from Houma, Louisiana. Three years later, he married Cornelia Marcella Harrison of Vicksburg. Now their descendants (above) gather annually. These include (from left) Charlotte Mackel Harrison and Dr. Robert W. Harrison, Jr., of Yazoo City; Gloria Dumas Rucker of Baton Rouge; Eric Moore of Los Angeles; and Marjorie Dumas Lawless of Baton Rouge. In 1916, Dr. Dumas founded the Colored Christmas Tree Fund (left), a charitable organization which distributed toys and groceries during the holidays. He is pictured here (far left) in the early 1940s with children, grandchildren, and his wife (next to Santa).
MY ANSWER: ... Man, I appreciate your letter, and your confidence in me as a source. I believe the book you're talking about is a recently published one titled "the content of our character," written by Shelby Steele, a Black English professor at San Jose State University in California. Mr. Steele, whose writings in this book, and other dissertations, is widely known as a "conservative" when it comes to citizens of this country whether they're African Americans or whoever. I don't care what he is, the book is highly informative, and extremely enjoyable. You know, the trouble with most people is that they don't understand, or what they don't like, they condemn. Steele said, in a recent interview, "I feel that the dialogue on race in America is very stifled and straight-jacketed. People aren't really saying what they honestly feel about racial issues. This was frustrating to me, personally. I wanted to try to find out what I really did think and feel about the state of race relations. It was that motive that set me to work." He was speaking on why he wrote the book. Let me suggest you write Shelby Steele, the University of San Jose, California. (Department of English) I'm sure they'll direct you to the company that published "The Content of Our Character" by Shelby Steele.

DEATH OFTEN WALKS QUIETLY AND UNINVITED AMONG US ... Such was our reaction when the passing of Dr. Beatrice Butler Mosley was announced a few days back. Although born in Memphis, I remember Dr. Mosley first, as a member of the United Christian Church, where, at a short time, she became interested in fortifying the church's day care center. She was a graduate of Lanier High School, and received the Bachelor of Science degree from Tougaloo College; a Master of Science degree from Indiana University, and a Doctor of Education degree from Mississippi Southern University at Hattiesburg, Miss. She also pursued post graduate study at Syracuse University (New York) ... in the field of speech and language, and additional post graduate study at Columbia University (New York).

BORN IN NATCHEZ, 74-years ago, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tougaloo College, and his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Northwestern University. Although he served on the board of directors of the Mississippi Economic Council, Security Life Insurance Company, and the Boy Scouts of America, he came into real prominence over the state and nation when Mississippi Governor Bill Waller appointed him to the State Board of Education, the first Black appointed ever to serve on the board. Waller knocked many segregated walls down when he took office. Harrison was one of the "Big Three" which included Jim Runnels, Administrative Assistant to the Governor, and educator Amos Wright, to the Board of Educational Television in the state.

HE SERVED ON THE BOARD FROM 1972 to 1984. In speaking of Dr. Harrison, Governor Waller opened that: "We were interested in appointing a Black person who had a contribution to make, and could contribute to the quality of higher education. He did an outstanding, a superior job." On a personal note: This writer valued my lifetime friendship with Bob Harrison. Naturally, some Blacks had expected him to lean over backwards to help Black schools, first and only. Perhaps former Mississippi Governor Bill Allain stated it best. "Dr. Harrison had an interest in Black universities and colleges, but I don't think he let it blind him" ... Another board member, Bobby Chain who served those 12 years with Harrison stated, "He was as objective as any board member could be. He helped the board understand the needs of historically Black schools." Still others noted that, "He did dental work for many children and families who could not pay." That's only part of the legacy he leaves.

ACE SAID THE REE ... 'Some of you all think Jesus and Mr. Hall down there that you're falling beh- y'all done missed three car- that Jesus paid it ... The all, to him I owe. This credit that's the Lord's due in church. Jesus the Lord thy labor and do all they w- working three days a wo- together and pay your b-

IN ANSWER TO A TIONS THE TRUTH regarding the Japane-
How many ‘firsts’ do you know about Mississippi blacks?

By Dorothy Stewart

Here are some significant firsts to keep in mind while studying black history in Mississippi:

- **1862** — The first public schools for blacks were established at Corinth.
- **1884** — John Roy Lynch became the first black to preside over a national political convention. He chaired the Republican Party’s national convention after being nominated by Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts. The nomination was seconded by Theodore Roosevelt.
- **1890** — First medical journal written for and by blacks was published in Jackson. The first editor was Bandaburst Lynk, a physician. The journal lasted 18 months.
- **1955** — Thelma Sanders of Jackson became the first black woman in the nation to own and operate her own business, opening Sanders Millinery, a black women’s wear shop.
- **1970** — Pete Brown, first professional black golfer to play in PGA.
- **1972** — Dr. Robert W. Harrison, first black to serve on the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. Other blacks first appointed to statewide boards were Marvin Morgan, Welfare Board; Cleve McDonald, Penitentiary Board; and Talmadge Portis, Lay Board of Education.
- **1975** — Helen Ford of Hattiesburg crowned Miss Black America.
- **1975** — Eugene Short of Hattiesburg became the first black Mississippian to sign a multi-million dollar bonus contract to play professional basketball.
- **1977** — The Rev. A.W. Crump Jr. became the first full-time black campus minister/Wesley Foundation director in the state of Mississippi.

Other firsts through the years:

- Lucille Price — the state’s first black professional social worker.
- William Dilday — first black TV station manager.
- Constance Harvey (Forest) — first black female to graduate from University of Mississippi School of Law.
- Reuben Anderson (Jackson) — first black to graduate from Mississippi School of Law. First black Supreme Court justice to serve since Reconstruction.
- Jane Ellen McAllister (Vicksburg) — first black woman to earn a Ph.D.
- Robert Earl James (Hattiesburg) — youngest black president of a major bank.
- Bill Foster (Rodney) — first black to play professional baseball.
- Spencer Haywood (Silver City) — led America to a Gold medal in 1968 Olympics.
- Patricia Dansby — first black female registered pharmacist.
- Eliza Pillars — first black public health nurse in Mississippi.
- George Scott (Greenville) — first black to sign with the Boston Red Sox.
- Alfred Jenning — first black superintendent of the Penitentiary at Parchman.
- Charles E. Pugh (Shubuta) — first black head of the U.S. Labor Department of Budget.
- C.H. Wilkes (Greenwood) — first black 4H Club agent.
- Henry Kirksey (Tupelo) — one of the first blacks elected to the Mississippi Senate since Reconstruction.
- B.B. Daniels — first black to have five-year college degree in mathematics to teach in Mississippi.
- Joe Y. Haynes — first black official in the Southeastern Conference.
- Mike Espy — first black Mississippian elected to Congress since Reconstruction.

The Clarion-Ledger Newspaper in Education
Mrs. John Warren, clerk of a downtown store, is under $500 bond to appear in Mayor's court Monday on charge of wielding a pistol at a group of young Negroes.

According to Mayor Jepie Parmer, the incident took place late Monday afternoon, almost immediately following a recess in Mayor's court, during the trial of Will Fisher. He was found guilty Tuesday on a charge of failure to obey a policeman's command to refrain from blocking the doorway to the same store.

Mrs. Warren was a witness in the case which was concluded Tuesday.

Will Fisher, 18-year-old Negro was convicted in City court Tuesday for failure to obey the lawful command of a police officer.

He was fined $500 and sentenced to 60 days jail. His lawyer John Stann, a member of the Mayor's Committee Under Civil Law, announced an appeal. Fisher posted bond.

According to testimony, police officers and a woman clerk, Fisher was with a group of young Negroes clustered on the sidewalk in front of a downtown store Saturday, Sept. 13.

Police were called to the scene when store operators determined the presence of the youths was keeping shoppers from entering the store.

Captain H. M. Merritt, and Officer Philip D'Angelo arrived at the scene. Capt. Merritt asked them to move and all moved on. However, he said Fisher returned and took a position in front of the doorway.

At that he ordered Officer D'Angelo to arrest him.

On the stand Fisher denied that he had blocked the doorway and said the officers arrested him as he was walking back down the street. He said he was not stopped in front of the door.

Among the witnesses for the defense was Ruben Shields who in that case also described himself as a volunteer worker for the NAACP. The NAACP is sponsoring the downtown boycott which started last May. He testified or Fisher and the others were just school. They walked the sidewalk.

Shields was not in the group but was engaged in a conversation with two other men nearby and witnessed the arrest.

Fisher was also convicted in the early weeks of the boycott for public profanity. He has appealed his fine and sentence.

The announcement by Dewey Pascagoula, 60, sponsor of the Mississippi Council's education program, which emphasized scholastic achievement, encouraged good this direction of students. The Star emphasizes this direction.

To qualify for the Star Program, any student must be registered in an or private school. They are the American (ACT) in the years.

In each high school, students who are higher grade and who are not eligible. In this direction, higher school and the American (ACT) in the years.

Benton High and Campbell at Holly Bluff, MEC's Study Achievement Program.

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STATE PUBLIC OFFICIALS—Dr. Robert W. Harrison of Yazoo City, (center, back) Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning president, was among those who attended Ole Miss Public Officials Day at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson. Diane O’Brian, (left) UMC nursing student, welcomed Harrison, his wife and grandsons (from left) Dreck Baker, Michael McCarter and Charles Baker, to the health sciences campus.
SUCCESSFUL MEET MEAL TOPS ALL
CONGRATULATES THE CENTURY LETTER

AN ENTHUSIASTIC FOOTBALL FAN

complimentary copy of the No-
Voice, and have read the same
Your paper contains much in-
that you and your associates are
mechanical make-up and the
sure that your leadership, as
orial s- and items relative to in-
re of great benefit to your sub-
associated with you, every suc-
 your, "
very truly,
R. NORQUIST

RE ADVERTISERS
probably reach its zenith during
outing our readers to spend their
go the furtherest and where-
ed. We have listed a number

Little R. W. Harrison, 3rd, 14 months old son of Dr.
and Mrs. R. W. Harrison Jr. This picture was snapped by a
Century Voice representative as Little Robert watched his
father referee a football game. Dr. Harrison is Yazoo City's
popular and progressive dentist.

FAITHFUL CITIZEN DIES
Would You Like a Memory, Mister?

Have you ever cut out a clipping, savored its sweet memories, prepared to mail it and share it with a close friend to whom it meant as much as it did to you, and then been paralyzed to realize you had no one to share it with?

It is happening to me with frightening regularity these days and leaving me lonely with the memories of yesteryears. With whom do you share the warm tugs at your heart and soul from those times and places that live only inside you?

Mississippi magazine’s feature on Jerry Clower by Willie, The Clarion-Ledger’s spread on John Oakes’ home becoming a black history museum. The 25th anniversary of Larry Kramer and Yazoo’s Big B football championship. The obituary about Dr. Harrison’s life and death. Mary Jones’ paragraphs about Yazoo landmarks and Yazoo characters you love. Cleaning out an old drawer and discovering a set of photos of a Trinity Episcopal Church picnic or Christmas pageant with little angels who have now become brides. Finding a huge file full of old toasts and salutes and humorous barbs to folks at MCC who have gone on to other lives and other worlds.

What is the meaning of this bittersweet loneliness? Where are all the boys of summer? The old gang from the MCC coffee bar and the Elks Club Lions’ lunches? They float like ghosts through my mind, as impossible to grasp as Larry Kramer was twenty-five autumns ago on the abandoned, overgrown Yazoo Indian football field.

Somehow I picture centurion Civil War veterans in front porch rockers with more stories than listeners. And posing for pictures in front of Civil War memorials is not the same as sharing the memory with someone who lived it. And there are no reunions or memorials to the “battles” my era fought—the William Winter vote, the Yazoo school desegregation, the annual battle to finance the Yazoo cultural triangle, MCC’s battles to balance its budgets and please 20,000 farmer-owners, and the eternal battles to claim one’s spiritual and emotional maturity. Maybe I need to reread Willie’s poignant stories about leaving a rose on the grave of his childhood dog, and on the jitney parking lot that covers his grandmother’s home...and the skyscraper that now occupies the abandoned, overgrown Yazoo Indian football field.

Or maybe I need to savor those clippings and memories whether there’s anyone to mail them to or not. Or maybe I just need to thank God for the times and places and people and events that created those memories. Maybe...

—Jo G Prichard

The thoughts by Jo G Prichard (I’m so glad he shares with me) brought to mind some memories I have of Dr. R. W. Harrison, dentist, sports official, AND actor, who died in May of this year.

Many years ago—in 1972, to be exact—Dr. Harrison was appointed to the State College Board (the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning), the first of his race to achieve this honor. He served until 1984, and enjoyed the participation and being the first black president of this group.

The Yazoo County/Mississippi State Alumni, at their first annual banquet after Dr. Harrison’s appointment, asked him to be their special guest. Then they were reminded that the club where the meeting was being held did not allow blacks to enter. Jo G Prichard, then at MCC, had the appalling task of talking to his friend, Dr. Harrison, about this matter.

Dr. Harrison, in his usual affable manner, I’m sure, told Jo G not to worry—it didn’t bother him. He’d just invite the Alumni officers, out-of-town guests, and special speakers from Mississippi State University to stop by his house for ice cream and some of Mrs. Harrison’s delicious, now famous, apple dumplings.

So he did, and they came—and everyone present enjoyed the occasion.

Dr. Harrison served on the college board during the terms of Governors Bill Waller and William Winter, and both became his fast friends. At Dr. Harrison’s funeral Mr. Winter served as an active pallbearer, and Mr. Waller as an honorary pallbearer.

After the memorial service here in Yazoo City, former Governor Waller let Mrs. Harrison know that he would always remember their hospitality.

“Do you still make those great apple dumplings?” he asked.

I guess I’ve been doing so many strange and messy things that no one even notices anymore. Hardly anyone has commented on the glove finger tips which I now wear on my glasses. These are the glasses I got from Roland Stevens after I found out about my chemical sensitivities. The frames went to Dallas, and they coated the complete frames, ear and nose pieces included, with gold.

They have worked fine all these years, but the gold has worn off the most used parts—the pieces that hold the glasses off my nose, and the things that hold them on my head.

They are now making a different kind of nose piece, so Dr. Parker removed what I had and put on pieces made of silicone. These work just fine, and I no longer have the red, sore spots on my nose.

The ear pieces cannot be removed or exchanged—they demand starting all over with the gold plating alone costing about $300.00! Dr. Parker and I thought my solutions best.

After noticing that my head was swelling behind my ears and getting extremely sore (I’m still amazed at how long it takes me to think of my hypersensitivity) I searched for something to cover the frames. Fortunately, I found leather gloves, made long before they started tanning leather with formaldehyde.

So that’s why my glasses have rabbit ears, and why Burke rolls his eyes every time he looks at me!
UM ALUMNI SPEAKER—Dr. Robert Harrison, member of the board of trustees of state institutions of higher learning, spoke to the Yazoo Chapter of the University of Mississippi last night at its annual banquet. Other speakers at the meeting were Herb DeWeese, with University, and Coach John Cropp, offensive coach for the Rebel football team, and Dr. Wallace Mann, dean of The University Medical Center Dental School.

Support needed, Harrison says

Alumni of state colleges and universities must put some loyalties aside and work as a group in order to support higher education, Dr. Robert Harrison, member of the board of trustees of state institutions of higher learning, told University of Mississippi alumni last night.

In his address to the Yazoo Alumni Association at its annual banquet last night, Harrison, who is a dentist in Yazoo, emphasized the need for support of higher education through both contributions to the universities and election of legislators who are in favor of higher education.

"We've got to prepare people for making a living," Harrison said, but the state's colleges and universities are facing problems, just as the nation's institutions of higher learning are. "We have a time of tight money. There are less full-time students going to school, which affects the amount of money that goes to the schools. The schools are going to have to share facilities. Two schools just can't afford to buy some of the expensive equipment, like high-powered electron microscopes. We're going to have fewer new, high-cost programs," the board member told the Ole Miss crowd.

Harrison said the schools are $2 million short on appropriations for next year's "bare-bones" approach to higher education. "It's going to be you people who support the higher education," he told his audience.