

2024 MRSPT NEWSLETTER

Greetings and Best Wishes for 2025!

Although this Newsletter will highlight MRSPT's activities over the past 12 months or so, 2025 marks the 30th Anniversary of the Military Road School Reunion! On October 14, 1995, alumni who had attended the school between the 1920's and 1954, when it closed as a public school, gathered at the Charles Sumner School Museum and Archives to reminisce and reconnect with classmates, many of whom they had not seen since leaving the school!

From that event, a small group formed the Military Road School Alumni Association in 1997 for the primary purpose of preserving their beloved school building. On July 23, 1998, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board designated it a historic landmark, listing the structure located at 1375 Missouri Avenue, NW, on the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites. Subsequently, at the Board's recommendation, the building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 25, 2003.

Through giving presentations as well as hosting conferences and other events, the Alumni Association expanded its mission of preserving the Military Road School's historic legacy, which dates back to the Civil War era and includes a connection to Fort Stevens. In 2001, the Alumni Association began awarding college scholarships—a tradition that continues under MRSPT. Beginning in 2025, scholarships will also be offered to students who elect to pursue a career path through acquiring a vocational skill in lieu of a college degree.

Military Road School Presentation ~ February 6th



As part of a three-member panel that shared local history with Georgetown Day School students, Ms. **Theresa Saxton** spoke about some of her experiences as a student at the Military Road School.

MRSPT Scholarship Awards

The Military Road School Donnesa Lucas Memorial Scholarship Fund offers financial assistance with education-related expenses to qualified local students pursuing a college degree or vocational certificate from an accredited institution. On January 7th, a virtual Scholarship Reception was held for our 2024 award recipients, Ms. **Laci Joseph** and Ms. **Aretha Were**, at which time the students were introduced, and MRSPT supporters joined our Board members in wishing them well as they resumed their studies after the winter break.

Because MRSPT does not engage in fundraising to finance its programs, scholarships are funded entirely through your tax-deductible donations. The recipients and MRSPT thank you for making these awards possible!

Fort Stevens Day ~ July 13th



MRSPT Board member Ms. **Joyce Bailey** and Military Road School alum Ms. **Rose Harper** greeted visitors at the 160th Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Stevens. This annual event, sponsored by the

National Park Service and the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington, featured speakers, Civil War period music, "living history" reenactors and a variety of activities and displays celebrating the diversity of DC Civil War experiences. Visitors at MRSPT's exhibit area learned about the Military Road School's history of having been established in 1864 in a deserted army barracks within the Fort's gaze and about our organization's mission to preserve its rich history.

Lincoln-Thomas Day ~ September 21st

Ms. **Kym Elder**, NPS Program Manager for the Civil War Defenses of Washington, welcomed attendees to the 100th Anniversary of this annual commemoration, which was initiated by the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC) and first observed nationally on September 22, 1924, to honor President Abraham Lincoln and Brightwood resident, Mrs. Elizabeth Proctor Thomas. MRSPT's President, Ms. **Patricia Tyson**, gave opening remarks. Special remarks were offered by Ms. **Opal Bacon**, NACWC's 31st National President, and DC & Vicinity President Dr. **Sheryl Lucas Giles**. Mr. **Brian Joyner**, Superintendent of Rock Creek Park, and Brightwood Community Association President, Ms. **Merlene Horan** offered greetings. NPS Ranger **Bryan Cheeseboro** spoke to the historical essence of the Day; and historian, Civil War reenactor and writer, Mr. **Bernard Siler**, gave the keynote address entitled "*The Battle at Fort Stevens.*"

Other program participants at this centennial gathering included **Rev. Aubrey Lewis**, Pastor of the St. Luke Baptist Church, the **Paul Laurence Dunbar High School JROTC**, Ms. **Annette Singletary** and the **Montgomery Blair High School Singers**. Authentic **Civil War Reenactors** participated in the wreath-laying ceremony and visited informally with guests throughout the event.

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This year's expanded observance also offered an opportunity for attendees to learn more about Civil War-related history at a book-signing event featuring six distinguished local authors and a documentary about Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas produced by Mr. **Marvin Tupper Jones** (*A gallery of photos of this centennial Lincoln-Thomas Day observance is included in this Newsletter and also on our website www.mrspt.org*)

MRSPT's Annual Meeting ~ October 29th

MRSPT's Annual Meeting is the occasion when our Board expresses gratitude for those of you who have shown your support for our programs and who may also wish to become more actively involved with us in some way. Because NACWC initiated Lincoln-Thomas Day in 1924, we were most pleased that Ms. **Denise Williams**, their current National President and past National President, Ms. **Opal Bacon**, attended this year's meeting. Some of their members are hopeful for future Lincoln-Thomas Day celebrations to be observed on a national level as they were originally.

Thank You One and All!

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Military Road School Reunion provides a great opportunity for us to look back and recognize many of our long-time friends--including several below--some of whom may not have been able to attend the prayer breakfasts, symposiums, receptions, or other events, but have made substantial contributions to this organization in some manner.

Although unable to attend most of our events, Ms. **Mary Gamble** has consistently supported MRSPT since 2001.



Mr. **Thomas Reardon**, who grew up in Brightwood and discovered the Alumni Association in the early 2000's, has continued to support MRSPT even after he relocated to Arizona many years ago.



In addition to diligently volunteering her time, expertise and resources in support of numerous events over many years, Ms. **Dayo Akinsheye** has served on MRSPT's Scholarship Committee for the past several years.

Several MRSPT Board members have frequently attended monthly luncheon meetings held by **The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of DC (AOI)**, which has been a major supporter over many years. Some of their members featured below have also individually supported our organization. MRSPT is honored to have recently been invited to serve a one-year term as an institutional member on AOI's Board of Directors. <https://www.aoidc.org/aois-leadership.html>



Pat & Bill Brown



Ms. Mara Cherkasky



Alan & Monica Cole



Ms. Martha Jewett



The **Daughters of Union Veterans (DUV's)** have supported our scholarship fund since the mid 2000's. Their Treasurer, Ms. **Carolyn Baker**, and member, Ms. **Nancy Hoffer**, both of whom also attend AOI's luncheons, have personally offered support which has encouraged MRSPT to stay the course.

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*These supporters are representative of countless others who have been a part of this organization's success throughout its 28 years of existence. Each has been an integral part of our mission to preserve, honor, and share the legacy of the historic Military Road School. We could not have done it without them!*