



Councill Training School (CTS) Alumni Association

The idea of forming a CTS Alumni Association was conceived by the CTS Reunion Planning Committee in July 2016. Under the leadership of Bettye Thompson, committee chair, members wanted to go a step further than just plan reunions. Several prior reunions had been successfully conducted over the years, with Councillites enjoying the fellowship and fun. This committee not only planned reunions, they acted as the governing body entity for Councill Training School events. It was comprised of representatives from classes at CTS from 1948-1970, therefore all Councillites had voice in plans and decisions made.

Reunion Committee leadership was approached by Dr. Bernice Richardson, Director of the Dr. Virginia Caples Life Long Learning Institute (VLLI) at Alabama A&M University seeking pledges of at least 100 alumni at \$1,000 for the renovation project of the Councill Training School building. The VLLI wished to use the old CTS building for housing the VLLI and its programs. Donations for Councill Training School Alumni would be requested under the proposed name of CTS Alumni Association. It was felt that it was important to have an Alumni Association for the school that will show some permanent structure to support the legacy of the school. It was approved by the Reunion Committee to establish a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization named the CTS Alumni Association for the purpose of promoting fellowship and camaraderie among alumni through activities and reunions and to assist Alabama A&M University (AAMU) in renovating the old CTS school building for housing of the Dr. Virginia Caples Life Long Learning Institute (VLLI). Another motivation was donations given to save the CTS building could be claimed as a tax credit. In November 2016 the VLLI leadership asked the Reunion Committee to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which stated that CTS alumni should raise one million dollars over the course of the next 3 years towards remodeling the old CTS building and the VLLI agreed to raise 6 million over the same period of time. The Reunion Committee approved to commit to raising up to 1 million dollars and agreed for its leadership to sign the Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU was signed on August 26, 2017 with Bettye Thompson signing for the CTS Alumni Association. The Reunion committee continued to pursue filing the appropriate papers with the State of Alabama and the Internal Revenue Service in order to obtain tax exempt status as an organization. As a result, the IRS approved the application for non-profit status and the organization achieved its 501 c (3) status on October 20, 2017.

During the August 2017 All School Reunion, new leadership was elected to head the Reunion Planning Committee when Elbert Drake was elected as chair. Upon review of the Articles of Incorporation approved by the State of Alabama and the IRS, the Articles of Incorporation listed the name as the Councill Training Alumni LLC, and it did not include members. Because this structure did not satisfy the original intent of the Reunion Committee members, which was to recognize all Councillites as members, paperwork was filed with the State of Alabama to establish a CTS Alumni Association as a 501 c (3) entity that included members, with associated

dues since this was the original intent in 2016. Actions were taken by new incorporators to make the change and include members in the governing document of the organization. Therefore, a name change form was initiated by new incorporators who registered the name of CTS Alumni Association with the State of Alabama, requesting recognition as a non-profit organization. As a result of advice from the Alabama Secretary of State's Business Entity office - that it would be more expedient to submit a conversion document and list the entity under the name of CTS Alumni Association, - since both had very similar purposes. This recommendation was presented to the Reunion Committee members who approved the conversion to establish one non-profit organization under the name of CTS Alumni Association, and on February 3, 2020 the conversion was finalized by the State of Alabama that established the CTS Alumni Association, effective as of April 27, 2017, original date of the approved LLC. Required documents were filed with the State of Alabama and the IRS requesting amendments and updates to the original Articles of Incorporation of the organization.

As a result of the conversion, the new incorporators organized the Association by developing new bylaws that set up an organization structure. The CTSAA is comprised of a Board of Directors who manage the overall organization, establish policies and approve any actions requiring their attention. There is an Executive Committee which is comprised of elected officers, Standing and Special Committee chairs who serve as the operating component of the organization and execute policies. These appointed officers serve in interim positions until the first annual alumni association meeting when voting members choose their leadership. Membership in the association is comprised of those who either attended, or graduated from CTS. Membership dues are assessed depending on the category of membership selected.

Activities of the association include projects to raise funds to support the renovation of the school, fundraising projects to award scholarships to deserving high school students; and assist charitable organizations in Madison County that support higher education of African American men and women.