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## **Former Students of Former African American High School Slated to Take *Last Walk* Through the Building in June**

Former students of Princess Anne County Training/Union Kempsville High School are slated to take a *Last Walk* through their old school building on Saturday, June 30, at 2 p.m. The school, now the Center for Effective Learning (CEL), was the first African American public school in Virginia Beach and will be torn down later this summer to make way for a new \$65 million Alternative Education Center called The Renaissance Academy.

The afternoon promises to be not only highly symbolic but very sentimental as graduates and former students walk through the school building one more time. The new building which will be completed in 2010, will contain a museum, dedicated to capturing the accomplishments of former students and faculty. The design of the museum will be that of the school's auditorium and will be the repository of numerous artifacts.

This school building plays an important historical role in Virginia Beach/Princess Anne County history. In 1925, a group of black parents wanted their children to have what segregation was denying them, an education. They raised money to purchase land and build what became the Princess Anne County Training School. This one-story facility evolved into a larger school, Union Kempsville High School.

Union Kempsville served as a place of pride for African American students until integration closed its doors and black students joined the ranks of other high schools in the city. Following its closure, the old school was turned into the headquarters for the school division's trade operations and also housed CEL, an alternative school for middle school students operated by the Virginia Beach school division.

During their *Last Walk*, the former students will be joined by city, state and school dignitaries as they walk down hallways and visit classrooms that played such an important role in their lives. *The Last Walk* will conclude in the gymnasium where a program will feature speeches from former students and teachers as well as musical selections from members of the Union Kempsville High School Chorus. As part of the festivities, former students and faculty members from the Princess Anne County Training School/Union Kempsville High School will present artifacts for the planned museum.

A meeting to discuss *The Last Walk* and the collection of artifacts will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 28, at the CEL.

A committee comprising former students is developing plans for *The Last Walk* and artifact donation and collection. Those who wish to attend the event must register by Friday, May 25 by calling Carolyn Jones, Class of '66, who is serving as the chief organizer of the event. Her telephone number is 202.546.8498. Additional contacts include: Margie Coefield (Class of 1962), at 523.2785; and Theophilus Lawton (Class of 1962) at 420.0715.

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