

2001. The *Herald* published his entire speech October 4, 2001.

"My childhood years in Water Valley have shaped so profoundly who I have become as an adult," he said. "In a very meaningful sense, none of us who grew up here have ever really left Water Valley – the playmates, friendships, food, values and landscape endure as attributes which influence our thoughts and behavior. Many of the indelible memories, not surprisingly, are related to the period that Davidson High School was located on Cemetery Street." In what sounds like a charge to all gathered and still relevant to us today, Kerry added, "My father's generation struggled to create opportunity in an environment of educational deprivation and despair. We must continue this struggle, while maximizing the advantages which currently exist."

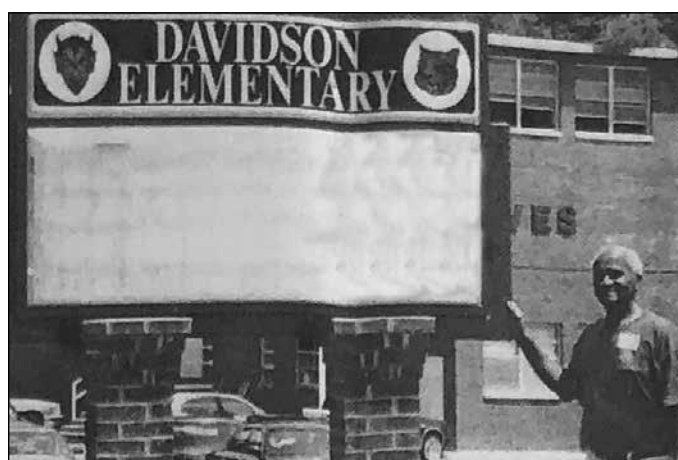
On May 17, 1990, The *Herald* printed an article recognizing Ezra C. Davidson, Jr., MD as the first African American president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. We are including this article (right). Dr. Davidson passed away on March 12, 2018 at age 84. His nephew, Kerry Davidson Jr., recalled recently that Dr. Davidson did not want a funeral or memorial service. The accomplishments of the Davidson children and grandchildren speak for themselves as do those of the many students who attended Davidson Schools over forty-six years, including those from the twenty-eight graduating classes that began in 1942.

In the fall of 1970, thirteen years after Professor Davidson died, the doors of the all-black/segregated Davidson school system were shut. All students had to attend what were the practically all-white schools in the Water Valley School system. Three black students, Dorothy Boston, Dorothy Neely Middleton and Annette Hervey Westmoreland, had enrolled at Water Valley High in 1966 through the freedom of choice option. They were featured in Article 9, November 29, 2018. Many white students refused to attend school with blacks and enrolled in newly formed private academies, several of which still exist today.

Professor Davidson defines leadership, organizational development, fortitude and fatherhood. In an era of strict segregation, he refused to let any obstacle deter him from his vision. Just think how desolate our community would have been had he not provided an opportunity for blacks in Yalobusha County to get an education. Let's salute him on this Father's Day by sharing his story with our little ones who may be students at Davidson Elementary this fall or have gone through there without knowing its history. Let's continue his legacy. The epitaph on his tombstone reads, "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."

The obituary that appeared in the *Herald* on Thursday, September 5, 1957 sheds even more light on how much Professor Davidson meant to the Yalobusha Community and the many students who passed through the halls of Davidson. Hail to thee our dear old Davidson and to thee be true. We will love our Dear Ole Davidson, Hail oh Hail to thee!

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**Dr. Kerry Davidson spoke at the Davidson School reunion and re-dedication of Davidson Elementary School on July 7, 2001.**

### Water Valley Native Heads American OB/GYN College

Ezra C. Davidson, Jr., MD, has been named president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) at the group's 38th Annual Clinical Meeting in San Francisco, May 7-19.

Dr. Davidson, a native Water Vallian and the son of the late Professor and Mrs. E. C. Davidson, is chief of obstetrics and gynecology at the King/Drew Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Since 1971, Dr. Davidson has been a professor and the chairman of the OB/GYN department at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. From 1982 to 1986 he was the University's vice-president for academic affairs. He is also vice-chairman and professor of OB/GYN at the center for Health Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles.

Because of his interest in delivery of perinatal care, especially for high risk communities and adolescent perinatal health care, Dr. Davidson has served as chairman of the first Surgeon General's Workshop (U. S. Public Health Service) on Maternal and Infant Health, as a panel member for the Institute of Medicine on Access to Prenatal Care, a member of ACOG's Committee on Health Care for Underserved Women and former chairman of its Committee on Adolescent Health Care.

For the past year he has served ACOG as president-elect and before that, as national secretary for six years.

He was an elected officer for his California District, a member of several task forces on adolescent pregnancy, medically underserved women, and regional planning. He was also a member of the Health Care Commission which recommends standards and policy for the practice.

Dr. Davidson has been actively involved in other organizations as past president of the Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics, the Los Angeles Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, and the Golden State Medical Society. Presently, he is examining for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Medical College in Nashville. He did his ob/gyn residency at Harlem Hospital and a fellowship in blood coagulation at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, both in New York City.

**Early Paper Next Week**  
 Next week's *Herald* will be printed on Tuesday, May 22 and mailed Wednesday, May 23.



**Professor Davidson married Theresa Wood Cogburn around 1931-32.**  
 Photo compliments of Valerie Herod Belay

### My Closing Thoughts

On May 28th I got the best news from a military official informing me that my son deployed in Kuwait will be returning soon – by Father's Day the notice said. I hope by the time you read this he and his fellow soldiers will be back at Fort Bragg, NC. We were asked not to jeopardize their return by posting the information on social media so that is all I can say. I can say he lives in Raeford, N.C. where George Floyd was born. While I watched the memorial service for George that was held in Raeford, I realized why the name George Floyd flutters in my head when I say it. Beyond thinking it sounded like two first names, it dawned on me that the idea for this column was born at my cousin George Adams' funeral. And my late brother's name was Floyd. So, there you have it – George Floyd – Perry Jr. is what they called him.

George Floyd was loved, and he was a father, his youngest just six years old, with two children. Dr. Christopher Stackhouse, whose church I have attended with my son and grandson in Fayetteville, N.C., said during his eulogy of George that there was something different about the day he was killed – that his death sparked a fuse that is going to change this nation. I pray he is right! Speaking to mourners, Dr. Stackhouse repeatedly invoked his name: "George Floyd, Perry Jr. is what they called him."

I must admit that in the midst the social justice protests and the pandemic I remain self-quarantined or on lock down because I fall in that critical group where if infected, I don't believe I could survive. I am forever concerned about my other two sons and all black boys and men who live with the fear of being singled out because of the color of their skin anytime, any day as they go about their daily lives here in America.

This inequality and racism must end! Folks like Professor Davidson, his family and our parents have been fighting too long for equal treatment for Black America. I applaud the current efforts that are underway to overturn the systems of racism, police brutality and discrimination. We must all do our part. Change is going to come, but it will be slow. I truly believe that a new America is indeed on the horizon for my people and for all people.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Blackmur Library Offers Curbside Services

Blackmur Memorial Library is offering curbside service to patrons during the COVID-19 pandemic. To check out an item, go to the on-line card catalog, select the items you want and call the library at (662) 473-2444 with your selection. Library workers will give you an estimated time when your order will be filled or you can provide an estimated pick-up time. To access the library's card catalog, simply Google Blackmur Memorial Library and go to the web-page. A link on the page will take you to our on-line card catalog.

The library is also offering curbside copying and faxing services. To utilize this service, call beforehand to make arrangements. The cost to send a fax is \$1 per page (no charge for toll-free numbers). Copies and incoming faxes are 20 cents per page.

### Absentee Voting Is Underway For Republican Primary Runoff

The Republican primary runoff for U.S. District representative in the Second District is scheduled June 23. Brian Flowers and Thomas L. Carey are battling for their party's nomination and the winner will face Democratic incumbent Bennie Thompson. The election was originally scheduled March 31, but with the outbreak of COVID 19 Governor Tate Reeves pushed back the election date to June. Voters who did not vote in the first primary on March 10 or voters who voted on the Republican ballot in the primary are eligible to vote in the runoff. Voters who cast a Democratic ballot in the March 10 primary cannot vote in the Republican runoff.

Absentee voting is underway for the election and eligible voters can visit either courthouse in the county to vote absentee. You can also request a mailed absentee ballot by contacting the circuit clerk's offices at (662) 473-1341 in Water Valley or (662) 675-8187 in Coffeeville.

In Mississippi, registered voters are eligible to vote absentee because of age, health or work demands, or their affiliation with the U.S. Armed Forces. For example, voters who will be outside their county of residence on election day are entitled to vote by absentee ballot.

### Weekend Activities Resume At The VFW Post 4100

Weekend activities at VFW Post 4100 will resume Friday night, June 22, with bingo. The doors open at 5 p.m. and play starts at 7. The Saturday night dance is scheduled from 8 p.m. to midnight with Midnight Riders providing the music. Post 4100 is located at 11535 Hwy. 315, west of Water Valley.

### Historical Society Meetings Are Suspended Until Further Notice

Due to COVID-19 Yalobusha County Historical Society meetings are suspended until further notice.

### WV Head Start Is Accepting Applications For 2020-21 School Year

The Water Valley Head Start Center is taking applications for the 2020-21 school year. Applications will be accepted for prospective attendees from birth to 36 months old, and for three and four years-old. To register your child, call the Water Valley Head Start at (662) 473-1552.

There is no cost to participate in this program, but Center Administrator Helen Willis urges parents to call as soon as possible, as slots are limited at the center.

Mary Johnson serves as the Family Community Worker at the center.

### School Board Meets Monday

The Water Valley School Board of Trustees will meet Monday, June 22, at 6:30 in the central office. The public is invited to attend.

### Free Face Masks Will Be Distributed At Tillatoba Fire Dept. Thursday

Yalobusha County EMA Director Dalton Coleman and Sheriff Mark D. Fulco will be distributing free masks at Tillatoba Volunteer Fire Department on Thursday, June 18, from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Coleman reported the masks will be available until 4 p.m. or until supplies run out.

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