

Launching Educational Assistance Programs Forward, Inc.  
LEAP Forward, Inc.  
Prince Frederick, Maryland

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Rhonda Thomas  
President & Founder  
301.509.3872**

**Date: July 13, 2014**

### **LEAP Forward, Inc. Awards 2014 Scholarships**

**On July 13, 2014 LEAP Forward, Inc.** administered the Wallace Lorenzo Leeper, Randolph Adams and Clifton Morsell, Violet Parker, Rev. Charles H. Lee Sr. and Raymond Harris Memorial Scholarships. These scholarships honor the memories of six outstanding individuals.

The Wallace Lorenzo Leeper Memorial Scholarship honors the memory of one of the most outstanding counselors who served at Calvert Senior High School in Calvert County, Maryland. Wallace Lorenzo Leeper graduated from Richmond, VA public schools and Virginia Union University with a BS degree in Education. He later received his Masters Degree in Guidance from Indiana State University. His teaching career started in Calvert County as a History and English Teacher at Brooks High School. He continued to work in the school system as a coach and guidance counselor at Calvert Senior High and the Calvert Vocational Technical Center. During the 1970s, Wallace Leeper was heavily involved with the Patuxent Naval Air Station engineering cooperative education program. More than 20 Calvert County students earned engineering and technology degrees through this program under Mr. Leeper's guidance. LEAP Forward was established in Mr. Wallace Leeper's honor.

The Clifton Morsell and Randolph Adams Memorial Scholarship honors the memory of a World War II veteran who served in the United States Army/Air Force in 1943. Mr. Morsell received several honors including the Good Conduct Medal, African-Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon and the World War II Victory Ribbon. He was a devoted Calvert County farmer and father who stressed the importance of education. Mr. Adams was a resident of Calvert County and worked as a sand and travel truck driver. Marseta Adams Dill, daughter of Mr. Adams is a past recipient of LEAP Forward community outreach efforts and is an Electrical Engineer with the Federal Aviation Administration. This scholarship was established by Mr. and Mrs. Baron Dill.

The Violet Parker Memorial Scholarship honors the memory of a Calvert County resident and farmer whose joy was toiling in her garden and tobacco crops. Though not formally educated, she was certainly educated by life and shared her wisdom with all. She desired the best for everyone not just her family and was excited and proud of those who pursued higher education. This scholarship was established by the children (Waverly Parker, Grace Parker, Estella Willett, Gloria Parker and Mary Ann Bell), grandchildren and great grandchildren of Mrs. Violet Parker.

The Reverend Charles Lee Sr. Memorial Scholarship honors the memory of a Pastor, Korean Conflict Veteran, Civil Rights Activist and Education Supporter. As a student, he was a leader in Student Sit-in Demonstrations and in the Selma to Montgomery March. Rev. Lee served in the United States Army—Europe, Pacific Far East where he served in the Korean Conflict (Private to Captain- Airborne and Infantry; Chaplain (Major) in the California Army National Guard (Retired). He served as pastor to several Methodist churches in TX, GA and CA. He was also appointed in 1987 as District Superintendent for the Golden Gate District of the California/Nevada Conference for the United Methodist Church until his retirement in 1991. This scholarship was established by his widow, Mrs. Carol Carruthers Lee and her sons, Charles Lee, Jr. and William Lee.

The Raymond Harris Memorial Scholarship honors the memory of a life-long Prince Frederick resident, Activist, Community Leader and Businessman. Devoted to his country, Mr. Harris served in the U.S Army during 1960-1962 and was a member of the American Legion Gray-Ray Post #220. From owning three businesses, he served in multiple capacities including the NAACP, Carroll/Masonic Lodge #71, local union #832 and being a school bus contractor. Mr. Harris had a great desire to give back. This scholarship was established by his widow Rosalie Harris and daughter Rose Bourne to continue to give back and encourage youth to follow their dreams.

**The LEAP Forward Scholarship Reception** was held on July 13, 2014 at the Mount Olive United Methodist Church in Prince Frederick, MD.

LEAP Forward, Inc. is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization that has served the community since 2001. One of their major thrust is a scholarship program and to date they have provided over 100 scholarships in the Southern Maryland and Metropolitan Washington D.C. community. Founder and President, Rhonda Thomas is an engineer with the Federal Aviation Administration. She began the program with the welcome address and stated how grateful she was that despite struggles and challenges, the organization was able to provide a record number of awards this year. Rhonda noted the theme for the evening, "Celebrating the Success of our Next Generation" and expressed her excitement for the program ahead.

Serving as Master of Ceremonies was a past scholarship recipient, Torez Cooke. Mr. Cooke is a college senior attending Salisbury University majoring in Sports Medicine. Mr. Cooke ushered the ceremony and provided the recipients with words of advice from his own experiences as a college student and encouragement throughout the ceremony.

Invocation was provided by Pastor Dana Jones who serves as the Pastor of Mt. Olive United Methodist Church. Mrs. Tonya Jackson, an adjunct professor and faculty member at the College of Southern Maryland in Calvert and St. Mary's counties, led the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing".

Entertainment for the evening was provided by Ms. Kendall Isadore who provided three beautiful selections on her violin. Kendall is a recent graduate of Howard University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and the

current instructor at KIPP. Music has always been her passion. She is a vocalist, violinist, pianist, songwriter and instructor who have been classically trained. Her niche is playing R&B, jazz, gospel, contemporary and hip-hop on the violin. Ms. Isadore is a part of several musical groups including "The String Queens"; "Harlem Gospel Choir" at the Howard Theatre, the DMV based group "Roderick Giles and Grace", and the all-female band "Dream Unleashed". From her years of practicing her musical talents, she has had the opportunity to perform across the country with multiple talented artists including Roberta Flack, Fantasia, Mike Phillips, Jeff Majors, Kim Jordan and many more. Ms. Isadore was introduced by Kensley Benjamin, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Calvert Middle School.

The keynote address was delivered by guest speaker Mr. Kevin Coby, the President and CEO of SITEC Consulting LLC. Mr. Coby graduated from Tennessee Union City High School in 1986 and joined the U.S Air Force working in Military Intelligence. After nine years of active duty, he left the Air Force in 1995. The years after his service, Mr. Coby served as a systems engineer and program manager in support of federal government contracts with various Fortune 500 companies. In 2003, he began his career as an entrepreneur operating a small consulting firm; which later achieved corporation status in 2006. He was able to obtain nine (9) NSA contracts and managed a business with a net worth of thirteen (13) million dollars. His main interest is giving back to the community and mentoring others with an interest in business. Mr. Coby was introduced by Dorien Minor, a freshman at Calvert High School.

Mr. Coby's message to the 2014 recipients was very inspirational and provided principles to live by. His message centered around three main points. First, he told the recipients to have faith in God and noted that they should "get an education but don't leave out the grace and favor of God." He reiterated multiple times that it is important to have faith in God because with faith in Him, all things are possible. Secondly, he wanted the students to work hard. With faith in God and hard work, nothing should stop them from reaching their goals. If you are on a path towards a goal, have a vision and are pursuing a dream you have to put forth the hard work. He said "take the opportunity to do the best you can. Life is going to get harder but you are going to get wiser." Lastly, he wanted the students to dream BIG and to learn how to dream early in life. From his past experience of being a product of a single parent home and living in poverty, he did not know how to dream bigger than what he was exposed to and his environment. Upon meeting his wife, a successful engineer, Mr. Coby was pushed to dream BIG and to make his visions happen. He now lives in abundance and prefers the life he is able to live now. He challenged the recipients and the audience to start to dream BIG and to create a vision and write down what their tomorrow looks like. From having faith in God, working hard, to dreaming BIG with a vision, the recipients will be successful and will accomplish their goals.

The scholarship awards ceremony began with a short biographical sketch of the person to whom the scholarship was named, an introduction of family members present, accomplishments for each student and acceptance statements made upon receiving their awards. Nineteen (19) scholarships

awards were presented to students from Calvert, Huntingtown, Northern, Patuxent, Great Mills, Chopticon, and Archbishop Carroll High Schools.

Two (2) \$1,000 Violet Parker Memorial Scholarships funded by SITEC Consulting were presented to recipients **Juwan Hawkins**, a graduate of Huntington High, who will attend North Carolina A&T State University and major in Electrical Engineering; and **Martese Johnson**, a graduate of Patuxent High, who will attend Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and major in Mechanical Engineering.

Memorial acknowledgement of the Rev. Charles Lee, Sr. was provided by his son, William Lee who acknowledged the great advice provided by the guest speaker and the words of wisdom provided by MC Torez Cooke. At eighty-two years old, Mrs. Carol Carruthers Lee (widow) was also present to acknowledge the \$1,000 awards presented to **Reika Haskell**, a college sophomore at University of New Haven majoring in Forensic Science and Chemistry; and **Dillon Longo**, a Calvert graduate, who will attend Liberty University and major in Kinesiology and Sports Injury.

The family of Mrs. Violet Parker (Grace Parker, Estella Willet, Mary Ann Bell) presented the remaining \$1,000.00 Violet Parker Memorial Scholarship to **A'Miya Williams**, a graduate of Patuxent High School, who will attend Johnson and Wales University and major in Accounting and minor in Financial Analysis.

Rose and Tia Bourne presented two (2) \$600.00 Raymond Harris Memorial Scholarships to **Kayla Bush**, a graduate of Calvert High, who will attend University of Maryland Eastern Shore and major in Criminal Justice and **Trinity Mitchell**, a graduate of Huntingtown High, who will attend Johnson and Wales University and major in Sports/Entertainment/Event management.

Marseta Dill, Mae and Timothy Morsell presented five (5) \$600.00 Adams-Morsell Memorial Scholarships to **Eric Gross Jr.**, a sophomore at University of Maryland Eastern Shore who is majoring in Hotel and Restaurant Management; **Anthony Jefferson**, a graduate of Calvert High, who will attend College of Southern Maryland and major in Nuclear Engineering Technology; **Arnez Bowens**, a graduate from Huntington High, who will attend College of Southern Maryland and major in Accounting; **Kadesha Mitchell**, a graduate of Calvert High, who will attend Anne Arundel Community College and major in Physical Therapy; and **Malik Washington**, a graduate of Patuxent High, who will attend Livingstone College and major in Business Management.

Five (5) \$600.00 and two (2) \$500.00 Wallace Leeper Memorial Book Scholarships were presented and/or acknowledged and included the following recipients: **Iysha Dent**, a graduate of Northern High, who will attend University of Delaware and major in Early Childhood Education; **Kevin Jackson Jr.**, a graduate of Patuxent High, who will attend Pensacola Christian College and major in Engineering; **Beth Mead**, a graduate of Patuxent High, who will major in Computer Science and minor in Marketing; **Jabrena Milburn**, a graduate of Chopticon High, who will attend Delaware State University and major in either Special Education, Computer Science or Biomedical Engineering. She is still considering her major choices; **Simone**

**Nicholes**, a graduate of Calvert High, who will attend North Carolina A&T University and major in Biology and minor in Epidemiology; **Bryan Mack**, a graduate from Archbishop Carroll High, who will attend Tennessee State University and major in Architectural Engineering; and **Dymond Estep**, a graduate from Great Mills High, who will attend Bennett College and major in Computer Science.

Engineering professionals Henderson Benjamin and Henry Nicholes led the ceremony for the Calvert County Creative and Striving Hard to Succeed (CASH) National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE Jr.) Chapter. The ceremony included sharing the purpose and mission of the organization, certificates for all members who participated during the 2013-2014 and a swearing in of new officers for the 2014-2015 term. The mission of the organization is to increase the number of culturally responsible Black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community.

The Elected officers for CASH NSBE Jr. are President Joseph Berry III, a senior at Calvert High; Vice-President, Dorien Minor, a freshman at Calvert High, and Secretary Joshua Stubbs, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Southern Middle. *The Treasurer, Eric Wilson, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Calvert Middle was not present.*

A beautiful rendition of "My Hero" was provided by CASH NSBE Jr. member, Taylor Jackson, a junior at Patuxent High School.

Closing prayer and blessing of the food were provided by Pastor Jones. Students, parents, board members, friends and financial supporters then enjoyed fellowship and good food catered by Maurice Irvine (Board Member).

LEAP Forward thanks the Community, the Leeper, Lee, Adams, Morsell, Parker, Harris and Thomas families, Board Members, NSBE Jr. Advisors, Mt. Olive United Methodist Church, Southern Maryland Black Chamber of Commerce, SITEC Consulting, Kendall Isadore, Dominion Foundation, program participants and **ALL** financial and volunteer supporters to the organization.

In July 2014, Leap Forward was acknowledged as the recent recipient of a \$10,000 Community Grant sponsored by the Dominion Foundation.

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LEAP Forward encourages youth to **Learn, Excel, Achieve, Perform, Explore and Rise.**

*LEAP Forward, Inc. is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that was officially organized in 2001. Educational support services offered include math and science career interest seminars, college admissions assistance, scholarships, professional growth preparation and encouragement and motivation. For more information please visit our web site at [www.leapforwardinc.org](http://www.leapforwardinc.org) or contact Rhonda Thomas via e-mail at [rthomas@leapforwardinc.org](mailto:rthomas@leapforwardinc.org) or [leapforwardinc@yahoo.com](mailto:leapforwardinc@yahoo.com) and visit us on [facebook.com/leapforward](https://www.facebook.com/leapforward). Photos courtesy of Vernon Jones.*



Group with Scholarship Recipients and Scholarship Donors Photo:

First Row Left to Right: **Kayla Bush, A'Miya Williams, Kadesha Mitchell, Iysha Dent,** Grace Parker, Carol Lee, Mary Ann Bell, Mae Morsell, Rose Bourne, Tia Bourne (daughter Lena)

Second Row Left to Right: William Lee, **Reika Haskell,** Kevin Coby (Guest Speaker), Marseta Dill, Rantessa Anderson, **Anthony Jefferson**

Third Row Left to Right: Dorien Minor, Rhonda Thomas (LEAP Forward Founder), **Bryan Mack, Jabrena Milburn, Trinity Mitchell, Beth Mead**

Fourth Row Left to Right: Wilson Ennis, **Eric Gross, Dillon Longo, Kevin Coby Jr., Martese Johnson, Arnez Bowens, Malik Washington**



Group with Scholarship Recipients Photo:

First Row Left to Right: **Kayla Bush, A'Miya Williams, Kadesha Mitchell, Iysha Dent, , Reika Haskell, Bryan Mack, Jabrena Milburn, Kevin Coby Jr. Beth Mead, Trinity Mitchell, Anthony Jefferson**

Second Row Left to Right: **Eric Gross, Dillon Longo, Martese Johnson, Arnez Bowens, Malik Washington**



NSBE Jr. Group with Award Recipients Photo:



*First Row Left to Right: NSBE Jr. **Officers Joshua Stubbs, Secretary; Dorien Minor vice President, Joseph Berry III, President***

*Second Row Left to Right: Tonya Wilkerson, Kenadi Wilkerson, Cierra Hutchins, Morgan Parran, Amalia Parran, Jocelyn Berry, Kensley Benjamin, Alexis Hill,*

*Third Row Left to Right: Kevin Wilkerson, Henderson Benjamin, Cedric Fowler, Wilbur Robinson, Rhonda Thomas, Terrell Mackall, Henry Nicholes, Martese Johnson, Kennedy Benjamin, Timothy Morsell, Alana Bell, Kevin Jackson Jr, Wilson Ennis*



*First Row Left to Right: NSBE Jr. **Officers Joshua Stubbs, Secretary; Dorien Minor vice President, Joseph Berry III, President***



*Violinist Kendall Isadore*



*Guest Speaker, Kevin Coby, SITEC Consulting*