

# Public Comments for Virtual School Board Meetings #28

**My public comments are related to: \*** General Public Comments

**Which date and time works best for you?**

**Topic \*** Renaming of TC Williams High School

**Name \*** William (Bill) Burruss

**What is your relationship to ACPS? \*** Community Member

**To include your comments as part of the Public Comments agenda item at weekly Special Called School Board Meetings, enter your comments here:** July 4, 2020

Dear Alexandria City Public School Board, Dr. Hutchins, and Community members,

I am writing to encourage you to rename T. C. Williams High School in honor of George Webber, Social Studies teacher at TC from its opening in 1965 until his retirement in 1981. Allow me to outline why I believe that Mr. Webber is the outstanding choice to receive this honor.

When TC opened in September of 1965, I was transferred from GW to TC to be head coach of its rowing program. Having already taught two years at GW, at age 24 I was older than half the teachers. We needed experienced leadership. Except for the business department, all department heads were white. However, several veteran black teachers were role models and valuable helpers to those of us white teachers who had little, or no experience working with black students. I remember Flora Chase (business), Hollis Williams (science) and especially George Webber. Mr. Webber had come from Loudon County to teach history.

Born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, George Webber was educated in Catholic schools, receiving his college degree from Xavier University in New Orleans. After serving in the army in World War II, Mr. Webber was discharged at Ft. Belvoir, whereupon he moved to Alexandria with his young family. Mr. Webber began teaching in Washington, D. C.

When Mr. Webber applied to teach in Alexandria, he was turned down by Superintendent T. C. Williams. As head of the Parker-Gray PTA, George Webber had annoyed Williams by frequently asking that Parker-Gray receive the same quality equipment, books, and teaching

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supplies that George Washington High School had. (While in high school, I worked one summer painting classrooms. I were shocked by the dilapidated condition of the books in Parker-Gray classrooms. They still had the stamped name of GWHS, disintegrating hand-me-downs.)

In 1963, the Alexandria School Board had hired John Albohm from New Jersey to be T. C. Williams' replacement as superintendent. Albohm was a skilled politician who laid out a gradual plan to integrate the schools. The implementation was not without problems, but avoided the kinds of disruptions that had rocked school systems in Arlington, Norfolk and especially Prince Edward County. As Mr. Webber had done with young teachers, he also gave unofficial advice and support to Albohm.

During the years that Mr. Webber taught at TC, he was a model and confidant for white and black students, and a steadying influence on the newly integrated social environment. His assistance to the smooth integration of the school and the intellectual and social growth of students and faculty alike was tremendous.

I apologize for the last minute quality of my recommendation. I live in Oregon and do not always keep up with events involving my favorite of all high schools. My 28 years on the faculty contain some of my most cherished memories.

Yours truly,  
William B. Burruss

