

BROWN-FISHER ASSOCIATION – ANNUAL REUNION MINUTES

The Brown Fisher Association, Inc. held its annual reunion on Saturday 21th September 2019 on the grounds of the Michael Brown (Old Stone) House, with 62 members and friends in attendance. Registration began at 10 a.m. Attendees were greeted by Debbie Brown Taylor and Sandra Allen Phillips. Members met on a recently cleared area overlooking the house which will be the site of a new Visitor's and Education Center. Invocation was given by Vice President Deane Brown of Spartanburg, SC after which a picnic-style luncheon of hot dogs, hamburgers, baked beans and all the trimmings was served at 11:30 a.m. Lunch was prepared by Norman Ribelin and Larry Brown, among others.

After lunch, President Stephen Brown called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone attending. President Brown opened his comments discussing the relationship between the Browns and Fishers and how the two families have supported the restoration and continued upkeep of the Old Store House. He informed those attending of the recent removal of the 1950s caretaker's house, making way for building the Visitor's and Education Center which will generate the most construction on the site since the house was built in 1766. He then thanked Larry Brown and Norman Ribelin who, in coordination with Rowan Museum, have been doing most of the legwork on behalf of the Association. President Brown indicated that Juanita Lagg had bequeathed \$240,000 to the Association, \$200,000 of which we've already received, designated towards the new building. Rowan Museum is in the process of developing a capital campaign which will kick-off in 2020, if not before. In closing, he noted he was descended from both the Brown and Fisher lines and reminded everyone of the welcoming smile that Juanita Lagg offered everyone who came to reunions over the years. He challenged the members to carry on that tradition.

President Brown recognized Coordinator Doug Robinson, who distributed minutes of the 2018 meeting on behalf of Secretary Paul Bryan Walker who had out-of-

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town commitments and could not attend. Rather than reading the minutes, President Brown said he would entertain a motion that the reading of the minutes be dispensed with and approved as presented. Keith Wolf presented said motion which was seconded by Ann Bostian. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer Larry Brown gave the current financial standing of the Association for information only. The Association has a checking account and a money market account, both held by First National Bank in China Grove. As of September 20, 2019, the money market account balance was \$283, 803.93 and checking account balance was \$2,497.69, making total assets on hand \$286,301.62. The Association has received \$200,000.00 of the Lagg bequeath which explains the large balance in the money market account. Given that interest rates continue to be dismal, the funds will likely be left there until dispersed. He reported the following fund balances: General fund - \$7,976.52; Life Memberships - \$57,745.45; Memorial fund - \$1,995.66; Cemetery fund - \$1,512.64; Reunion Trust fund - \$10,000; Publications fund - \$8.965.60 (may be used as an advance towards printing anything related to either family); Old Stone House Improvement fund – \$198,105.75. He explained the high balance in the OSH fund is due to the \$200,000.00 Lagg bequeath. A bill of \$1,138.43 for producing Rowan Roots is outstanding (may reduce future newsletters to two annually and send letter only for reunion reminder) as is \$1,000 for website services.

President Stephen Brown then recognized and awarded \$1 gold coins to the following: oldest persons attending - Jack Taylor of Salisbury, age 91, and Shirley Brown of Salisbury, age 87; youngest person attending - Brooks Brown, son of Ben and Candace Brown of China Grove, age 4; person who traveled the farthest – Melissa Brown Hayes of Nashville, TN; person with most descendants attending – Grace Brown Marlatt who had 10 first cousins of Juanita Fisher Lagg;

President Brown again recognized new Coordinator Doug Robinson who noted that it was impossible to follow in the shoes of Mrs. Lagg but that he would do his

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best to carry on the standards she established. To that end, he stated that the 2019 membership drive had been disappointing due to the late kickoff following the death of newsletter Cathy Kirchin. New Board member Brenda Zimmerman had agreed to take up the task of Editor, but the transition delayed the delivery of the September newsletter. He next discussed the fact that the Association had not increased membership dues in 25 years since it was formed in 1994. He noted that after considering our expenses, the Board recommends that the dues be increased as in 2020 as follows: Annual – from \$10 to \$15, Donor – from \$20 to \$25, and Sustaining – from \$50 to \$75. President Brown stated that this was coming from the Board as a motion, second was made by David Brown. Motion passed unanimously.

President Brown then thanked the following Board Members whose terms expired this year: Debbie Brown Taylor of Salisbury, and Norman Ribelin of Granite Quarry and Keith Wolf of Albemarle. He announced that each had agreed to serve another term, if so elected. With that, he opened the floor for additional nominations, and none were offered. Kaye Brown Hirst motioned that the slate be approved as presented which was seconded by Carrie Ribelin. Motion approved unanimously. President Brown then thanked the current officers whose terms expire in 2020.

President Brown closed the meeting by encouraging attendees to enjoy Rowan Museum's GERMANFEST which was also held on the grounds of the Old Stone House.

Doug Robinson
Interim Secretary