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\$1.50

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019

Warren school board appoints new superintendent

BY LUCI WELDON
The Warren Record

The Warren County Board of Education, during its July 9 meeting, voted unanimously to appoint South Carolina native Dr. Mary Young as superintendent of schools. The board approved an initial two-year contract running from July 15 through June 30, 2021, with an annual compensation of \$115,764, including benefits, covered entirely by state funds.

Members of the public had an opportunity to meet Young during a reception on Sunday afternoon.

Young replaces Dr. Ray Spain, who retired last month after serving around 16 years as Warren County superintendent and a career in education of about 50 years. She brings more than 20 years of experience in public education.

Young's appointment marks the end of a superintendent search process which began in February and drew 30 applications.

In a news release from the board of education, board members indicated that they were impressed by the qualifications of the diverse field of candidates.

"Although many qualified candidates applied, the board felt that Dr. Young's diverse experience, visionary leadership and sincere dedication to students would best serve

Warren County Schools' students, staff and the community. The board is confident that Dr. Young will lead the school system to high achievement," the release states.

Young holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of South Carolina, a Master of Education degree in Reading, and a doctorate degree in Education Administration and Policy with a minor in

Business Administration, all from Howard University.

She comes to Warren County after serving for the past five years as executive director in the Office of Employee Performance and Evaluation and as instructional supervisor with Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland with a student enrollment of more than 130,000.

Young previously served as education associate/program director with the South Carolina Department of Education and as principal at several Washington, D.C., schools.

She and her husband, Timothy Young, Sr., have three sons, Timothy Jr., Nigel and Gabriel.

During Sunday's reception, Warren County Board of Education Chairwoman Ebony Talley-Brame introduced Young to the community and returned to the new superintendent an oyster shell

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LUCI WELDON/The Warren Record
Dr. Mary Young, Warren County Schools' new superintendent, left, meets Warrenton resident and district court judge Ben Hunter, right, during a Sunday afternoon reception. At center is Board of Education Chairwoman Ebony Talley-Brame.



LEA BEAZLEY/Lake Gaston Gazette-Observer

The front view of the Edward Dromgoole House shows scaffolding around the damaged chimney.

Eaton Ferry Bridge construction complete

BY ADAM FOREMAN
Reporter

Work on the Eaton's Ferry Bridge project is complete.

According to Marty Homan of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, during the rehabilitation project: repairs were made to the substructure such as repairing cracks in the concrete; all of the substructure steel beams were stripped, blasted, recoated and painted; epoxy coating was applied to the concrete pedestals and the horizontal caps that come out of the water; polyester polymer concrete overlay was applied to the deck; all joints were replaced; some guardrails were replaced; and riprap repair was done in three locations on the causeway.

The total cost of the project, which started in September 2018 and concluded on July 1, was over \$3 million. NC DOT does not anticipate the need for any more work on the bridge outside of regular maintenance in the near future.

Community grants available from the W. C. Community Foundation

The board of advisors of the Warren County Community Foundation is currently accepting grant applications from area nonprofits that serve general needs in Warren County. Grants will be awarded from the community grantmaking fund.

Applications are available online at nccommunityfoundation.org. The deadline for applications is noon Aug. 13.

"We are excited to offer this funding opportunity to our nonprofit partners," said Richard Hunter, WCCF board president. "Warren has a vibrant nonprofit community, and we look forward to supporting their endeavors to better our wonderful com-

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Funds needed to save Dromgoole House chimney

BY LEA BEAZLEY
Correspondent

The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation desperately needs funds to save one of the chimneys on the historic Edward Dromgoole House, located down a dirt road in Valentines, Va.

Tom King of Henrico, N.C., who has done all preservation work on the house so far, said he noticed the damaged chimney a couple of weeks ago when he was mowing the grass, part of his regular volunteer work.

"It was leaning about six inches toward the back of the house, and it was taking part of the house with it. It has actually flexed the studs inside the house," said King. "The stone base under the chimney had also started collapsing outward to one side."

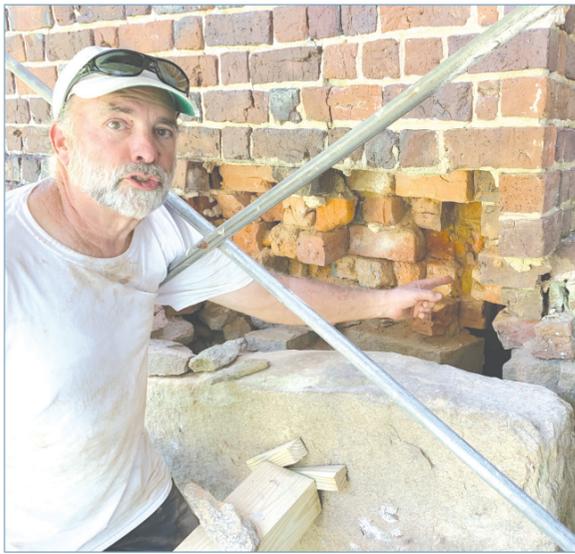
King immediately got busy

stabilizing the chimney. First, he used 4-inch-by-6-inch timbers and long threaded rods with nuts and washers to clamp the chimney in place against the house, tying it to one of the large corner-framing members.

"These old chimneys are built on a base of stones and dirt, just sitting on top of the ground, which was really typical for 18th-century chimneys, and well into the 19th century," explained King.

Next, he excavated by hand the inside of the chimney base, from the first-floor firebox down to the ground, leaving only fixed stones that are holding the weight of the chimney.

"The remaining structure of the chimney base will be filled with concrete, after the stones are washed of all the loose dirt and dust, to bond



LEA BEAZLEY/Lake Gaston Gazette-Observer

Tom King points to the collapsing chimney.

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NEWS

DROMGOOLE

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all the remaining base stones together, and give support to the chimney, as it sits," he said. "Once that concrete is cured, a part of the dirt under the base of the chimney under the current low side will be excavated, another concrete footing poured, and the chimney can be jacked back up to its proper plumb position."

Once the chimney is back in position, other spaces will be excavated to pour larger concrete footings for the chimney.

The Dromgoole House actually has two chimneys, and the second one will need the same treatment as soon as possible, King said. For now, it hasn't moved, but the stone base is showing signs of increasing cracks.

"The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation does not have anything like the amount of money needed to do this work," said King. "So far, anything they've done to the house, which has been little, and far between in time, has come out of their own pockets. They really don't understand much about raising money, even though they are a charitable organization, and people can deduct what they donate."

"So far, we are only barely been able to stay ahead of the whole place falling down, even though it is an important shrine in the history of the Methodist Church."

Why should we care?

The Edward Dromgoole House is the only remaining United Methodist Church, Virginia Conference, circuit rider home. It was built in 1798 by Edward Dromgoole (1751-1835) and today sits on 16 acres of land. According to a nearby historic marker on N.C. Hwy. 46, the Dromgoole House "was an important hospitality and educational stop for Methodist preachers, including the first American Methodist Bishop, Francis Asbury." In 2008, it was purchased by The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation, a tax exempt 501(c)3 organization, so it could be preserved and restored to its original state.

When the Foundation purchased the home, it was, in King's words, "borderline salvageable."

"Vines and trees had practically overtaken it; the plaster walls and ceilings were crumbling; the foundation was falling in; there was at least eight inches of water in the basement; the tin roof was leaking; termites had eaten many of the support



LEA BEAZLEY/Lake Gaston Gazette-Observer
This historic marker on NC Hwy. 46 explains the significance of the Brunswick Circuit and Canaan, the original name of the Edward Dromgoole House.

beams under the house; the floors had caved in all the way to the ground in the basement; and the back of the house was slowly collapsing," he noted.

In 2009, the home was covered in a weather-resistant house wrap to try to prevent further decay. Two years later, when King began working on the home, the first thing he did was clear a little over an acre to "try to get ahead of the wisteria jungle surrounding the house," as he put it.

In 2013, King began waterproofing the basement and foundation of the single room.

"The original foundation was stonework laid on top of the ground. The basement was dug after the house was built, with bricks laid against the cut earth to hold it up," said King. "The bricks didn't work as intended, and as you might expect, this wasn't a long-lasting design. As the dirt eroded away from under the stone wall of the foundation, it completely caved in over the years. Stones have been added back on top of the pile of rubble."

In 2017, King jacked the whole house up to "level everything out" and get ready for the next phase of the project, rebuilding the stone foundation, which would happen as funds were raised.

"Estimates for this ran from \$70,000 to \$220,000," said King. "The steps needed to accomplish this task include: disassembling what remains of the current foundation, digging down

deep enough to pour concrete footings, and rebuilding the dry-stacked stone walls."

No work has been done on the house since the summer of 2017.

"There has been no money to do anything with," said King. "A couple of benefactors did buy a donor house that I found that is from the same period, though. There are enough parts in the donor house to replace anything that needs to be replaced in the Dromgoole House, with exact duplicates from the same period. The problem is, the donor house is 100 miles away."

How to donate

To donate to the restoration of the historic Edward Dromgoole House, go to the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation's website at oldbrunswick.org, click on Our Sites, then on Edward Dromgoole House and on the Donate button near the bottom of the page. Donations may also be mailed to: The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation, PO Box 385, Lawrenceville, VA 23868. On the Memo line, write "Dromgoole."

King is offering tours of the home every Saturday at 10 a.m., if it isn't raining. Meet at the Kennon House, 7001 Gasburg Rd. in Gasburg, Va., and drive over from there.

"The entrance to the path going back in to the house is almost invisible from the road, so it is best to follow me over there," King said.

SUPERINTENDENT

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which Young presented to the board during the interview process. Nestled inside was a pearl.

Talley-Brame said that she was returning the oyster shell so that it could be placed in a prominent spot during upcoming board meetings as a constant reminder that children are developing pearls.

Young, a native of Hilton Head, S.C., said that she had been given the oyster shell, and that its pearl provides a lesson about the role of educators and that students always come first.

"The pearl is created through agitation, but it is precious and is protected," she said. "We as a group are here to protect our children. Every child sitting in our schools is an oyster waiting to have a pearl grow."

Young said that she draws inspiration from the lives of her great-grandmother, the daughter of a former slave, and great-grandfather. In 1920, they settled in Hilton Head, overcoming the hardships of the past and purchasing land as their legacy for future generations.

"(They had) tenacity, fortitude and wisdom," Young said. "I stand on their shoulders."

She told the public that over the next 90 days, she plans to review school system data, such as test scores, in order to develop a strategic plan.

Young said that as superintendent, she will be the chief role model for other local educators, leading by example, motivating and encouraging the school system's staff members.

"I want to inspire a shared vision for our children's success and enable others to act and grow as leaders in their (school) buildings," she said.

Young said that she wanted to ensure that all students receive a world-class education while showing them that opportunities for them are limitless so that they will be able to reach their potential.

In interacting with school system staff and the community, Young stressed both accountability and transparency.

"I will hold people accountable, but be transparent about the process," she said.

Luci Weldon is asst. editor at The Warren Record in Warrenton, N.C.

GRANTS

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community."

An affiliate of the North Carolina Community Foundation, the Warren County Community Foundation is a growing family of philanthropic funds, source of grants for local causes and partners for donors.

The WCCF was founded in 1999 and is led by a local volunteer advisory board that helps build

community assets through the creation of permanent endowments, makes grants and leverages leadership, all for the benefit of Warren County.

The WCCF board advises the Warren County Community Fund, the unrestricted community grantmaking fund, to support local needs. This competitive grants program is held on an annual basis. Since advisory board members live and work in Warren County, they can leverage resour-

ces to help meet local needs and access opportunities.

In addition to Hunter, board members include: Bob Lesser, vice president; Linda Browne, secretary; Barbara Brayboy, Sears Bugg, Chalis Henderson, Walter Lowe, Cheryl Reddish and Candy White.

For more information, contact NCCF Regional Director Kelly Lee at 252-557-0278 or klee@nc-communityfoundation.org or visit the NCCF website at ncccommunityfoundation.org.

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