



## School ties

At Sumner Museum, a link to D.C. history

BY KRIS CORONADO

**Standing in what** used to be a classroom, Kimberly Springle gestures to the dozens of everyday objects surrounding her at the Charles Sumner School Museum & Archives. “That’s what we’re here for,” says the director of the museum, which is dedicated to the District’s public school past. “To protect that history, to make sure that it’s preserved and memories are not lost.”

Created in 1986, the museum holds items such as yearbooks, newspapers, sports equipment and vinyl records, and is housed in the Charles Sumner School (1201 17th St. NW, 202-730-0478, *Sumnerschool.tumblr.com*), formerly an elementary and high school for African Americans in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The D.C. school system, which integrated in 1954, has a history that is constantly evolving, Springle says. “We have documentation from the beginning, 1804, and are continuing to collect,” she says. Here, Springle and resident historian Kenneth Stuckey showcase a few pieces.

Retired music teacher Charles E. Hankerson Jr., 79, donated a **record** and **band cap** from Northeast’s Woodson High. The 1976 album features “The Way We Were” and “Killing Me Softly With His Song.” Hankerson estimates about 500 copies were made for fundraising.



Reginald Delaney, 70, of Laurel donated a circa 1948 leatherette football **helmet**. Delaney is a graduate, former teacher and assistant football coach at Bell Vocational High School, then on Hiatt Place NW. The school opened in 1910 as a whites-only institution.



Evelyn Fuller Ballou, a 1926 graduate of Central High School in Northwest, made a **pillow** from armbands she received from young men in cadet corps at Central and McKinley Manual Training School. Springle says cadets would give old armbands to their sweethearts.



The monthly **Armstrong Torch** was written, designed and printed by students at Armstrong High School on Truxton Circle NW, says Springle. The school opened in 1902 as a black vocational high school. In 1964, it became an adult education center, which closed in 1996.



This **trophy** commemorates the Armstrong baseball team’s victory in the High School Baseball D.C. Championships, against fellow African American schools, in 1937. Before integration, D.C. public schools held separate tournaments at Griffith Stadium.



A **photograph** shows the Central High School’s male track and field team with a plaque the athletes won at a 1917 track meet. “Just look at them,” Springle says of the young men. “They look like kids who took this yesterday.”