

**Washington High School Alumni Association has chosen four graduates for their Distinguished Citizen awards in 2013.**

**The honorees are:**



**WHS Distinguished Citizen: Homer C. Floyd - Class of 1955**

**[IndeOnline.com staff report](#)**

Posted Feb 05, 2013 @ 10:00 AM

Honored in the areas of: Athletics and civil rights

Education: B.S. from University of Kansas (1961).

Professional experience: Following graduation from Washington High, Floyd attended the University of Kansas, where he pursued a degree and represented his school on the football field. Following graduation, Floyd started a career during which he would fight for the rights of minorities. From June 1999 to 2011 he led the processing and resolution of 55,000 cases resulting in benefits to more than 8 million people.

Awards and honors: Named All-Big 8 in football; Chosen as co-captain of the University of Kansas football team (1958); Distinguished Pennsylvanian Award by William Penn Committee (1981); Pennsylvania House of Representatives Distinguished Service Award (2011); Pennsylvania Senate for Distinguished Service (2010); Central Pennsylvania Martin Luther King Center \*Keeper of the Dream\* Award (2012); U.S. Post Office Legacy Award (2004); U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Outstanding Achievement Award (1999, 2002); Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Cornerstone of Excellence Award (2008)

Something you may not know about Mr. Floyd: During the 1959 season, Floyd played professional football as a member of the Canadian Football League\*s Edmonto



## **WHS Distinguished Citizen: Lori E. Lightfoot – Class of 1980**

### **IndeOnline.com staff report**

Posted Feb 05, 2013 @ 07:55 PM

Honored in the area of: Law

Education: B.A. in Political Science from University of Michigan (1984); J.D. from University of Chicago (1989).

Professional experience: After graduating from college, Lightfoot began her legal career as a legislative assistant for U.S. Congressman Ralph Regula. From there, she went on to serve in both the public and private sectors. Her jobs included law clerk for Michigan Supreme Court Judge Charles Levin, Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Criminal Division for the Northern District of Illinois and Chief Administrator for the Chicago Police Department's Office of Professional Standards.

Community Service: In addition to her professional work, Lightfoot serves the Chicago community through a number of service organizations. Most notable is her work as a founding trustee of Christ the King Jesuit High School, which serves underprivileged African-American community members on Chicago's west side.

Something you may not know about Ms. Lightfoot: She is a longtime member of the St. James AME Zion Church where she served as a member of youth boards and activities growing up.



## **WHS Distinguished Citizen: Walter Charles Richardson - Class of 1959**

### **IndeOnline.com staff report**

Posted Feb 06, 2013 @ 11:16 PM

Honored in the area of: Music

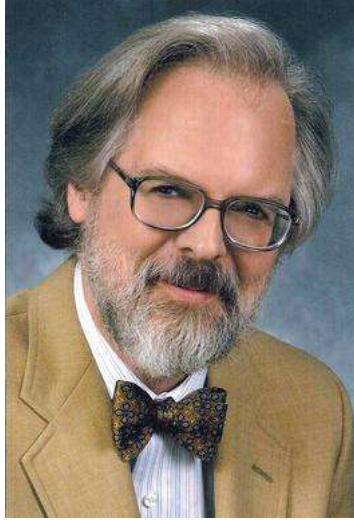
Education: B.A. from Central State University (1968); M.A. in voice, University of Michigan (1971)

Professional experience: Following vocal training, Richardson leapt into a career as one of New York City's finest singers. Mentored by Metropolitan Opera bass Simon Estes, Richardson made his debut on stage in Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*.

Richardson has gone on to perform in several operatic stage productions and has sung with the New York Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Leonard Bernstein.

Awards and honors: Richardson performed in the world premiere of Bernstein's *Mass* during the opening of the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The piece was conducted by the celebrated composer.

Something you may not know about Mr. Richardson: He is acclaimed throughout New York City for his robust voice and vocal range. His reputation led him to perform on both *Late Night with David Letterman* and *Today*



## **WHS Distinguished Citizen: Niall W. Slater – Class of 1972**

[IndeOnline.com staff report](#)

Posted Feb 08, 2013 @ 07:00 AM

### **Honored in the area of: Education**

**Education: B.A., The College of Wooster (1976, valedictorian); M.A. Princeton University (1978); American School of Classical Studies at Athens (1979-80); Ph.D., Princeton University (1981).**

**Professional experience: Slater never left education. Following graduation from Washington High School, he continued to pursue higher education and later established his career in the same field. He has taught at Concordia College, University of Southern California and Emory University, where he went on to serve as director of the Center for Language, Literature, and Culture.**

**Throughout his career, Slater has published several works including \*Plautus in Performance: The Theatre of the Mind\* (Princeton University Press, 1985) and \*Spectator Politics: Metatheatre and Performance in Aristophanes\* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).**

**Awards and honors: Slater received the Emory Williams Award for Distinguished Teaching from Emory University in 1999. He was also the president of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South from 2002-03.**

**Something you may not know about Dr. Slater: While he has represented universities around the world, Slater was a visiting scholar for the American Academy in Rome in both 1997 and 1999. He also served as a Visiting Fellow at Magdalen College, Oxford University, in 1997.**

**Rotary is honored to host and welcome the Washington High School Distinguished Citizens at Rotary's weekly luncheon meeting:**



**Homer C. Floyd, Carole Tobert (representing her uncle Walter Charles Richardson, Lori E. Lightfoot, Esq., Professor Niall W. Slater and Rotary President Greg Butler:**



**WHS Distinguished Citizens and the WHS Committee with current students doing the introduction of the Distinguished Citizens:**



**Members and students of the WHS Distinguished Citizens Committee:**



**Our Birthday Rotarians for April:**



**Dan loses again in Rotary's Scholarship Drawing. Please note that Tim has the Joker in his shirt pocket.**



## Washington High Distinguished Citizens recipients introduced Wednesday

[Lightfoot, Slater trace their success back to Massillon](#)

**By Heather Beyer**

[IndeOnline.com staff writer](#)

Posted Apr 03, 2013 @ 11:11 PM

[April 2; Washington High Distinguished Citizens events begin Wednesday](#)

MASSILLON —

Distinguished Citizens Award recipients Homer C. Floyd, Lori E. Lightfoot and Niall W. Slater were seen walking the halls of Washington High School on Wednesday. So was



Walter Charles Richardson's niece, Carole Tolbert, who was present on behalf of Richardson, who died in October 2010.

"It is really a privilege to be here," Tolbert said. "I wish that he could have been here to see how he was accepted into such a great cast of members and ... distinguished citizens."

Richardson is being honored for his achievements as a professional vocalist. He was a longtime member of the Gregg-Smith Singers, performing in concerts in New York and around the world for 30 years.

"I spoke to one of the members of the group," Tolbert said, "and they were thrilled that he was being honored."

WHS senior Rylie Woods formally introduced the award recipients at a tea with WHS faculty and staff, and escorted them on a tour of the high school.

"It was a great privilege to be able to present these people and be able to recognize the things that they have done," Woods said.

"I feel that some of the students here are kind of more self-centered and don't really realize the accomplishments of other people. I think assemblies like this bring everyone's attention to people who do incredible things and maybe inspire them to go out and follow their own dreams."

Although Washington High School was built in 1991, some of the recipients were visiting the facility for the first time.

Lightfoot returned to Massillon from Chicago and is being recognized for her work in law.

"It's quite an honor to be here," said Lightfoot. "It's a tremendous honor and I am overwhelmed."

Lightfoot was marveling at the facilities at the high school and was amazed by the school's indoor practice field.

"When you walk in and see this, it is just amazing," Lightfoot said.

Slater never left the world of education and said that he, too, found the practice field to be really spectacular.

Floyd is no stranger to Massillon Tiger football fans, having been honored as an All-Ohio running back following his senior football season in 1954. While touring the school, Floyd stopped and looked at a photo of himself from his high school football days.

"I was excited to see it," Floyd said. "I appreciated the recognition that I was given. We

had some incredible teams and players. To be honored is fantastic.”

At the conclusion of the tour, Woods said that she really enjoyed escorting the honorees.

“You can tell they are amazed by the improvements and the facilities in the school and by everything that has changed,” she said.

## **WHS Distinguished Citizens give students plenty to think about**



[IndeOnline.com](#) / Glenn B. Dettman

**Washington High School Distinguished Citizen Homer C. Floyd delivers his address to the student body at Friday morning's assembly.**

**By Heather Beyer**

[IndeOnline.com](#) staff writer

Posted Apr 06, 2013 @ 07:00 AM

### **Related Stories**

[April 4: Lightfoot, Slater trace their success back to Massillon](#)



[April 3: Washington High Distinguished Citizens recipients introduced Wednesday](#)



[Feb. 10: Editorial: Cheers to one caring neighbor, four Distinguished Citizens and eight scholarship winners](#)

## **Video**



[VIDEO: Carole Tolbert speaks of her Uncle Walter Charles Richardson \(deceased\), Washington High School Distinguished Citizen](#)  
MASSILLON —

In their final presentations Friday, Distinguished Citizens Award recipients Homer C. Floyd, Lori E. Lightfoot, Niall W. Slater and Walter Charles Richardson's niece, Carole Tolbert, sent Washington High School students home with a powerful message: set your goals high.

Floyd, a legendary Massillon Tiger football player who rose to greatness in the field of minority rights, told students to dream and reach high.

"It is important for you to get as much out of life ... as much out of the opportunities ... that are available to you," he said. "It is also important for you to recognize that the time you put in now is an investment your future. You will see the results down the line."

Floyd said that it is important for the students to remember that they may not always be successful in every project or effort.

"That's not a reason not to try," Floyd said. "Don't let the weeds grow up around your dreams ... if you don't make it the first time, try again."

As a Tiger football legend and a civil rights activist, Floyd explained to WHS students that opportunities come but they don't stay and that it is important to take advantage of them.

Floyd was named an All-Ohio running back following his senior football season in 1954 and was inducted into the Stark County Football Hall of Fame in 2007. He said his proudest moment in high school was when he rushed for 263 yards in a 25-6 win over arch rival Canton McKinley.

Following graduation from WHS in 1955, Floyd attended the University of Kansas where he pursued a degree and continued to play football. After college, he started his life's work, advocating for the rights of minorities. He led the processing and resolution of 55,000 cases resulting in benefits for more than 8 million people.

He closed his speech with a quote honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, noting that Thursday marked the 45th anniversary of King's assassination.

"Cowardice asks the question – is it safe? Expediency asks the question – is it politic? Vanity asks the question – is it popular? But conscience asks the question – is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; but one must take it because it is right."

Tolbert, who was present on behalf of Richardson who died in October 2010, played clips of her uncle's vocal performances for the assembled students.

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Following high school, Richardson graduated with a bachelors of arts from Central State University and earned a masters of arts in voice from the University of Michigan. Later, he became acclaimed throughout New York City for his powerful vocal performances. His credits include the world premiere of Bernstein’s Mass during the opening of the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., as well as appearances on both “Late Night with David Letterman” and “Today” TV shows.

Tolbert said that although she was she was proud to speak on behalf of her uncle, she wished that he could have been present to see the community honor him.

WHS senior and student council president Rylie Woods said she thought the speakers' advice resonated and inspired the students.

“My favorite moment was seeing the distinguished citizens open their heart, connect with us and help us realize what our goals might be. They have inspired the students a lot and it is push for them to go after their goals,” Woods said.