

# Mike McNair

## Your alias:

Pud, Big Dog, Kunta Kinte, Starchild, Guido

## Family (married, divorced, etc; children, grandchildren; ages):

Married for 18 years to Alta and we have two children  
Michael Jr. - age 13  
Marie – age 8

## Anything you would like to share about your family:

Feeding my family is like feeding piranha. It just never stops. One a serious note, family makes all the frustrations of life worthwhile. We have a close knit and supportive family. I love them madly.

## Your profession/vocation/occupation (i.e. where do you get the funds to maintain your lifestyle?):

I've been in the public sector since 1988. I now serve as the Director for Community Development and Housing for the City of High Point, NC. I joined the High Point management team in 2003.

## College, reform school; major(s); degree(s):

BA, History, UNC Chapel Hill, 1978  
MPA, NCSU, Raleigh, NC 1988.

## Military service (include service with foreign legions or mercenaries):

N/A. I missed the draft by one year. I remember classmates talking about going to Canada if drafted. When I was asked about my plans, I said ...“what's a black man going to do in Canada? If I get drafted, I'm going to Vietnam and duck!”

## Your avocations (civic, social, political, charitable):

I'm active in the United Way. I served as the campaign coordinator for the city's United Way drives for 3 years in a row. I also received the Chairman's award from the United Way Board Chair for community service in 2008. My work is by nature extremely rewarding and enjoyable that I times I view it as my contribution to society. You can't do this stuff from 8 to 5 and you can't be good at it if you aren't passionate about it.

## Your hobbies, interests (what keeps you out of trouble or gets you into trouble in your spare time):

I love music so I spend an inordinate amount of time listening to music, making compilations of my favorite songs and sharing the joy of good music with friends and family. My wife and I are also Trekkies. When she was pregnant with Michael Jr., we were sitting on a couch in the delivery room watching an episode of Star Trek, Next Generation when her water broke. Never being one to miss a moment of opportunity, I said to her, "...I'm sure glad we're at the hospital cause if we were at home, you would have just messed up the couch!"

## Your greatest contribution to the betterment of mankind:

I didn't marry that stupid bimbo I used to date before I met my wife. That would have been bad news for me and mankind. She (the bimbo) was a lot of fun but her stupidity had a way of complicating my life. My wife on the other hand was intelligent and capable (not to mention very attractive); she brought clarity and simplicity...until the children came. I still have to wait for them to get theirs before I get mine. Anyhow I digress.



Mike

**What has your time and education at Asheville School meant to you:**

I found that I really couldn't appreciate the benefits of my time at Asheville School until I got to my 30's. When I arrived at UNC I quickly realized (maybe not quickly enough), that the souls and spirits I encountered at the Asheville School were not representative of the outside world. I was very disappointed and disillusioned about that. I also realized that I had been absorbed (you know like the Borg) by the Asheville School culture and I needed to find the right balance for that. My years amongst the great unwashed have affected my attitudes resulting in increased cynicism and lowered expectations. However, this group (our class) manages to rekindle my flame even when I think it's been blown out. It seems every 5 years I'm reminded that there are no friends like old friends. .

I found my initial year at Asheville to be dreadful. The culture shock was gargantuan. I remember getting demerits for gross table manners because I picked up a piece of fried chicken with my hands the first time they served it. It felt like being in the Twilight zone and I wanted to get out. By the time I was a senior, I loved the place and the people in it. I had tears in my eyes on graduation day.

I think my most vivid memories are numerous and both positive and negative. It was at Asheville School when I first encountered the enchanted upchucks (positive?). My most vivid positive experiences used to occur during those mixers we had with real girls my freshman year (it was Asheville School for Boys then). I seem to recall doing squat thrusts on the dance floor with my pink super bell bottom pants and patent leather Flagg Brothers shoes. I also have fond memories of sports (both the agony and the ecstasy). I'll never forget being in the huddle during a football scrimmage and watching Butch Gudger pause to regurgitate his liver before calling the next play. I thought... "What manner of beings are these? Don't they know that's some nasty shit?" I've held Butch in the highest regards ever since.

It was also at Asheville where I encountered my first personal experiences with racial prejudice and that's what really stuck out in my mind. I remember my freshman year, playing basketball at home against Patterson. I believe I was the only black person in the building. Anyhow, I stole the ball and made a mad dash down the court to make a layup. One of the players on the other team decided he couldn't catch me, stopped at mid court and hollered "Go Blacky Go!" The referee stopped the game and ejected the player. I didn't know what to make of it and just stared at the crowd, the other team and then my team with a blank look on my face. Upon reflection I find it to be a much more painful incident now than I did then. I guess I just couldn't process it then and

**What else would you like to share (here is your chance to boast and outshine your classmates.**

I'm only feeling it now as I look back on it. Anyhow, I'll never forget that moment for the rest of my life.

This past reunion made me realize something that I had never actually verbalized or given a lot of thought to. I love my classmates, well at least most of them. .

My freshman year, I got to dress with the varsity football team. At our first away game (it was Patterson) I forgot to bring my helmet (brilliant you say?). I had to borrow a helmet from the opposing team to use during warm-ups. Later I was told to go in the game and when I replied that I didn't have a helmet. Coach told me to borrow one. It was really hard to put somebody else's mouth piece in your mouth. I guess it was one of those hurdles you have to cross to reach manhood. Needless to say I never forgot to bring my helmet again!

My sophomore year, we played Christ School at their place. I actually dressed out with the Jr. Varsity and the Varsity B-Ball teams. We had a killer JV team and often our games were over by half time. Consequently I would leave the JV game late in the second half and change clothes with the Varsity. When we arrived in the locker room, our uniforms had been piled in the middle of the floor and covered with cow shit!! Yes COW SHIT!! After a moment's pause, Chunky told us to shake 'em off and put 'em on. Fortunately, none of the farm animals suffered from bovine diarrhea. We smelled like shit but we won the game. I'm convinced the funky smell gave us an edge.

I remember taking my physical science final exam. Chunky gave us a mystery substance that we had to analyze and tell how we identified it. I got everything except for this white stuff. I thought to myself, man that shit really looks like salt. I couldn't think of any way to test for salt so I used a tried and true method; I tasted it and notated as such on my test. Chunky was not amused.

I'll never forget the Abrero's - a figment of the fertile imagination of Karl Himes. It was a black thing, you might not understand. They really helped me get through the early years. I saw Gil Prince ('71) at the reunion. I thanked him profusely for all the ass kickings dispensed by him, Al McDonald and others to clear the way for Doug, Larry and me. They were the Jackie Robinsons of Asheville School.

Since I don't know where this may be published, I'll stop here.

**What are your most vivid memories of Asheville School:**