

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

After over 30 years, Lala Fyall continues to serve CCSD

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Charleston, SC – Lala Fyall, also known as "Bea," is a lifelong North Charleston resident. Almost everyone from the area has either been a student in her classroom, attended her Sunday School classes and church youth programs, or served with her in the numerous civic and non-profit capacities she has taken on in her 92 years.

Serving others is a part of Fyall's make-up. That's why a re-election run for a seat on the Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Constituent District 4 Board (Cooper River School District) was the only natural thing to do.

Fyall's held the seat for 30 years and ran unopposed in the most recent election. She is now the oldest and longest serving constituent board member in CCSD.

A call to serve

In 1948 Fyall married her childhood sweetheart, Rev. Leroy Fyall. They met when she was about 13 years old. The like-minded couple embarked on a relationship that would engrain the pair in the community as servant leaders.

In the early years of their marriage, Fyall and her husband owned a restaurant and a nightclub. Teenagers were allowed at Club Riviera once a week from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. to dance and socialize. It was their way of giving back to the children of the community. Fyall's bond with those young children and teenagers came easily.

As the years went by, Fyall watched with pride as their daughter Jacquelyn matured. It was a juggling act, though, raising a young girl and running a business that called for late hours.

In addition to the nightclub, Fyall was a cook and babysitter for a local veterinarian's children. Every evening she would make supper and babysit his two daughters. All the neighborhood children showed up in the yard to

play until he got home from work. Fyall found herself drawn to the children, and children were drawn to her.

"They all called me Bea," said Fyall. "I loved Dr. Willis and those kids so much. His daughters and I still stay in touch. I think it was my time with his girls and the idea that I could spend more time with my daughter that sparked my interest in working in the school system."

Like so many Lowcountry residents, Fyall is a product of CCSD. She attended Liberty Hill Elementary School, Six Mile Jr. High School, and Burke High School. Her next stop was R.B. Stall High School where she received her Adult Class Diploma. Fyall promptly enrolled in Trident Technical College and went on to attend Baptist College (now Charleston Southern University) and the College of Charleston. She earned her Early Childhood Education certificate from Stanford Career Institute.

Fyall started her career teaching at Bonds Wilson High School. She taught there under Principal Ted Collier for 23 years. Since then she has been a classroom teacher or substitute teacher in every high school in CCSD and every school in District 4.

Military Magnet Academy Principal Robert Perrineau, Jr. is appreciative of her dedication to students.

"There aren't enough words to truly express appreciation for one of Charleston County School District's long-time supporters," said Perrineau. "The families and communities in the North Charleston area have truly been blessed by the presence and service rendered to them by Mrs. Lala Fyall. She has also been an influence on the lives of my own children during their time as students. The knowledge and wisdom she has imparted on those she has encountered over the years has surely been priceless. I believe part of my professional success is at least in part due to her sincere support and encouragement."

Fyall is so well loved at Military Magnet that during the annual Veterans Day program, Fyall was surprised when then principal Anderson Townsend honored her for her birthday.

"The students are my heart," said Fyall. "I love them all and, because of that, I got no problems from my students. I knew how to keep them straight."

Serving her community

In addition to serving CCSD, Fyall has also served as a poll manager for 50 years, she has been dedicated to her church, Royal Baptist, since 1939, and serves in a multitude of capacities. She was also first lady for 20 years at Friendship Baptist Church where her husband was the pastor. She is a member of the YWCA, the NAACP, and the North Charleston Arts Advisory Committee. Fyall has done

everything imaginable to ensure she lives by her creed "Reaching Out to Help Others."

Fyall has earned numerous honors from a variety of organizations, such as a volunteer service award, Woman of the Year, lifetime achievement awards, church recognitions, as well as local and state acknowledgments. Serving her community as an elected official was an idea not out of the ordinary for Fyall.

As a teacher, Fyall noticed that an inordinate number of students were being expelled from school for minor infractions. She wanted to run for the constituent board to see if she could bring change to the system. When Fyall ran, she said there was only one other Black female on the board. Both of them were concerned with the number of expulsions.

"When I ran I was just thinking that maybe I could make a difference," said Fyall. "I didn't think I could win. But now here I am in my thirtieth year."

Today, CCSD has alternative programs that allow a student to continue with their school but in an environment, where they can receive additional behavioral guidance. On occasion she is also a substitute at Greg Mathis Charter High School under the leadership of Principal Eleanor H. Hardy where she can see the alternative programs in action.

"Mrs. Fyall has truly been a servant leader to the community of North Charleston," said R.B. Stall High School Principal Jeremy Carrick. "I have worked with Mrs. Fyall in recent years as a faithful constituent school board member and substitute teacher. As a constituent board member, her high expectations for student behavior and concern for all students made an impact on me. She believed in holding students accountable for their actions. As a substitute teacher, Mrs. Fyall served many long-term substitute positions at R.B. Stall High School."

In fact, she has worked at Stall under the leadership of six principals including former CCSD Superintendent Lynda Davis and current principal Jeremy Carrick.

Fyall said she loves serving and does not hesitate to tell the students that come before her, exactly like it is.

"I tell them that if they've done wrong, they have to pay the price," said Fyall. "The hope is that they will learn their lesson."

Fyall's sincere investment in her students allowed her to easily recognize if a student was having a bad morning. She knows when to reach out to a student that may need some extra attention.

"She always carried positivity and the same high expectations in the classroom," said Carrick. "I always felt her consistent presence in the schools as a substitute helped her maintain a connection to her schools and made her a better advocate

for all as a constituent board member. I was honored to work alongside Mrs. Fyall during my time at R.B. Stall High School. My favorite memory of Mrs. Fyall was when she was substituting at Stall on her 90th birthday. We were able to present her with a card signed by her students and a bouquet. It was a small token of what she deserves as District 4 icon!"

Perrineau expressed his gratitude for how she has always treated others.

"To so many, she has been an excellent friend, teacher, mentor, and a great inspiration," said Perrineau. "Mrs. Fyall has inspired many to pursue their goals with hard work and dedication. Most importantly, she has preached and constantly reiterated to all the value of good manners, honesty, and living life with purpose and to the fullest. I truly appreciate and value the times that I have been able to work with Mrs. Fyall. It will forever remain a lasting memory of how one small individual can be so impactful. I look forward to the day I can do the same for someone else."

At 92 years old, Fyall has no plans of slowing down. When not volunteering or in the classroom, Fyall enjoys time with her husband Leroy, her daughter Jacquelyn, and her extended family.

"You have to keep moving and stay involved," said Fyall. "I've had two full-length careers in one lifetime, and both of those have allowed me to serve and help others. That is what has been a joy for me."

Fyall thanks God, her Pastor Rev. Dr. Isaac Holt, and her family for their continued support and encouragement.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.