

# 'Living historical figure' tells students to prepare

By Wilson Brown  
OF THE COMMERCIAL STAFF

**ALTHEIMER** — For Black History Month, Altheimer-Sherrill High School staff and its 18-student member Pathways to College program wanted to show that attending college is attainable by inviting "a living historical figure" to speak.

The first black man to be elected as a judge in Arkansas since the days of Reconstruction told Altheimer students to remember the past but dedicate themselves to their future.

Circuit Judge Marion A. Humphrey for Pulaski and Perry counties, who received his early education at Pine Bluff before attending several Ivy League colleges, told students to "listen to people who've paid their dues" such as their teachers.

Some of those that haven't in the past have ended up on his docket sheet, Humphrey said.

The circuit judge also reminded students and Altheimer High School staff that this May will mark the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court decision, which helped to integrate the nation's public schools.

"We've come a long way from the days of Jim Crow

segregation when people had to work for very meager wages. Folks, there are opportunities now. You don't have to settle for that, but you have to prepare yourself for something better. You have to use your brain."

Humphrey also recounted his days of being forced to sit at the back of city buses and having to enter through the side entrances of area restaurants while growing up in a segregated Pine Bluff.

"A lot of people have struggled and worked hard for you to be here," said Humphrey. "Wherever you are — do the best you can."

Humphrey encouraged students to join the high school's 3-year-old Pathways to College program, which prepares minority students for college with SAT prep work and college essay advice.

"I hope you will listen to those who are trying to steer you in the right direction," Humphrey said.

Sylvia Adams, a former elementary school principal at Minneapolis, Minn. and the current national program director for Pathways to College, urged Altheimer teachers and staff to point their students toward four-year and two-year colleges by hanging up diplomas in their classrooms and offices.