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## Mentor Recalled as an Award Is Given

By DAVID HOLMBERG

### NEWARK

LaTISHA PROPHETE stepped into the spotlight at Weequahic High School when the school's principal, Ronald G. Stone, her mentor and friend, died suddenly seven months ago.

Ms. Prophete, 17, a graduating senior at Weequahic with ambitions for law school and beyond, was selected to speak on behalf of the student body of nearly 1,000 at a memorial for Mr. Stone in November of last year.

Mr. Stone, a dynamic educational presence who was revered at Weequahic and credited with turning the school around, died of a heart attack on Nov. 4, a Sunday; he had celebrated his 57th birthday the day before. Ms. Prophete spoke about her mentor when she accepted a medal and \$500 award last week from Pathways to College, an organization based in Englewood that helps college-bound minority students.

The school "felt different" after Mr. Stone's death, Ms. Prophete said in an interview before the awards ceremony. "Something was missing."

Mr. Stone, she said, "was like a father, a mentor, to all of us."

In her eulogy for Mr. Stone, which was reprinted in the school newspaper, The Calumet, Ms. Prophete asked: "What now? What will we do now that Mr. Stone is gone?"

Her answer: "As students at Weequahic High School, we are going to stand up and do what we know is right. We are going to create an environment where the students have an understanding that we must continue to accomplish the education that was denied to us before. We need to put aside all our differences and help one another."

Yvonne Bolling, the regional program director of Pathways to College who presented the award to Ms. Prophete, said the eulogy was "a factor but not the factor" in the award, which recognized "determination, tenacity and creative action in the face of obstacles; empathy and active concern and caring for others," and a "commitment to excellence." Ms. Bolling noted that Ms. Prophete had maintained a grade point average of 4.0 throughout high school, and was a member of the National Honor Society.

Ms. Prophete will attend St. Elizabeth College in Morristown in the fall on a full scholarship, majoring in prelaw. She was also admitted to the [University of Chicago](#), but decided she would fit in better closer to home and family. She summed up that decision, "How am I going to move from what I've known here?"

She said that she might consider law school at the University of Chicago, but that she could make a greater

contribution as an undergraduate at a smaller school.

“I want to make a mark wherever I go,” she said.

She has specific career goals already: She would like to be general counsel for the Newark public school system, and then superintendent of schools. Later, she said, she might consider going into politics. When she thinks of her goals, she said, she thinks of her mother, who has worked hard to help her and her 14-year-old twin stepsisters through school.

“I want to help my community,” she said. “And I want to accomplish something that my mother couldn’t.”

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