



Casaundra Wilson is a living testament to determination, faith, and the transformative power of education. Born against medical odds and raised in Reidsville, Georgia, Casaundra is the youngest of 11 children born to Johnny and Marjorie Byrd. Growing up she embraced sports as an escape from household responsibilities, not knowing then that it would become a defining part of her life. Despite uncertainties about her future after high school, she ventured to Fort Valley State College, initially considering a path in sociology but discovering her passion for mathematics education under the guidance of Dr. Leroy Combs. Casaundra graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics Education from Fort

Valley State College where she also became a member of the distinguished sorority of Delta Sigma Theta, Incorporated. She also holds a Masters Degree in Education and an Educational Leadership Certificate from Cambridge College in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1986, she married Ronald Wilson, her college sweetheart, and began a family while continuing her academic pursuits. Together, they have four children and are proud grandparents to 11 grandchildren. Her dedication to education led her to a career spanning 33 years, teaching mathematics and coaching at various institutions before retiring in 2016 with her husband. She has since been called back from retirement to continue making a difference in the lives of young people at Northside by returning as a classroom teacher. Casaundra's accolades include Teacher of the Year in 1988-89 and 2008-09. Coach Wilson's legacy at Northside transcends mere statistics, spanning nearly two decades as the guiding force behind the varsity girls' basketball program. Her coaching tenure culminated in a remarkable record, highlighted by a notable appearance in the final four during the 06-07 season. Beyond the court, Coach Wilson, alongside her husband, dedicated themselves to supporting aspiring players across Middle Georgia, in securing scholarships, allowing them to pursue their dreams of playing basketball at the collegiate level while obtaining a higher education. Notably, their leadership extended to orchestrating one of Middle Georgia's most thriving high school basketball summer camps, alongside organizing multiple kids' camps. She sees her impact on students' lives in the classroom and on the court as her most significant accomplishment. She sees Northside High School as a beacon in the community, a place where students find family, tradition, and excellence. Her journey stands as a testament to resilience, the transformative power of education, and the impact one person can have on generations to come.

### *What does Northside High School mean to you?*

Wow! As I reflect on what Northside High School means to me, the only way to describe it is as a diamond in the rough, a shining gem that I'm honored to be a part of. My time at NHS has been nothing short of remarkable. It provided me with the canvas to craft a legacy, uphold its powerful winning tradition, and most importantly, experience the true essence of family. Northside High has been a hub of 'firsts' in my life. I was privileged to be named the First African American Teacher of the Year, coach a team that refused to lose at home for two consecutive years; lead the Lady Eagles to a historic 29-3 season of victories and a semifinal Georgia High School Association (GHSA) state appearance in 2007. I was able to witness my daughter (Janay Wilson) win the first and only GHSA Region Girls Cross Country Championship (2007) for NHS.

Yet, beyond the victories and accolades, Northside means family. It welcomed me and embraced my entire family, extending love and support to all of us. Northside High School holds an irreplaceable place in my heart. They took me into the Eagles nest and gave me a chance to **fulfill my calling to teach.**

**Thank you, Northside,** for being the place that shaped me, challenged me, and allowed me to contribute to something greater than myself.