



Dr. Benjamin N. Tuggle, Class of 1971, was a three-sport athlete in football, wrestling and track and field. He was the recipient of The Jimmy Perkins Award as Northside's Most Outstanding Athlete. After graduation he would attend Fort Valley State University where he excelled in track and field and would qualify for the 1972 Olympic trials in the long jump, break FVSU school records in track and field and become a two-time All America selection in the sport.

Always fascinated by the life sciences, while at Fort Valley State he would major in biology, earn Dean's List recognition for 4 years, be selected for the Beta Kappa Chi Science Honor Society and graduate with Honors in 1975. Dr. Tuggle's academic pursuits would lead him to achieve his Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Zoology and Wildlife Disease Biology from The Ohio State University.

Dr. Tuggle began his distinguished professional career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the National Wildlife Disease Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin. Throughout his 40-year career, he held a number of prominent leadership positions with the agency. He would become

a member of the Senior Executive Service, the highest-ranking non-political position in the United States Federal Government, and served in 7 Presidential Administrations.

Recognized Nationally and Internationally for his expertise and leadership skills in collaborative applied conservation science and research, Dr. Tuggle testified before the United States Congress on wildlife and ecological conservation issues of National significance to promote the protection of the Nation's wildlife and natural resources.

Winner of several National conservation awards, Senator John McCain would recognize Dr. Tuggle's significant contributions to wildlife conservation, science excellence and community engagement in the United States Congressional Record of the 115th Congress. Prior to his retirement, as the agency's Assistant Director of Science Applications, he would oversee a budget of over 45 million dollars to support the development of conservation science and ecological research.

Dr. Tuggle is a noted scientific author who tirelessly advocates for the development of educational and career training opportunities for youth interested in natural sciences and ecological conservation; thus ensuring our Nation has a diversity cadre of conservation leaders for the future. As a testament to his work and contributions in this field, a scholarship at the University of Texas – San Antonio bears his name, the Tuggle Scholars Program, that is dedicated to mentoring and training graduate students who aspire to become leaders in environmental science and ecology.

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

Northside High School, to me, will always be a place where faculty and staff members cared for and nurtured the development of each student, inside and out. It is a place where the development of a sound educational foundation and support of students is paramount.

For me, it was a safe place, a place of unity, where students learned to the value of working together to solve social problems. Thus preparing them with the expectation that they would contribute to society in a positive and consequential way.

A place where kindred spirits abound; where the trust of and comradery with my classmates resulted in the development of lifelong friendships and so many wonderful memories. To me it was a place where I could grow and receive direction and support, and where I learned the power of a kind word. I feel that Northside High School continues to be a place where the "Drive to Excellence" goes beyond only to be good, but encourages students to continue to do their best to be Better! And that "Drive" manifested itself in so many different disciplines: in academics, the arts, sports, and civic responsibility. Because everyone knows, "Eagles Rise!"

I will forever be grateful for the gift of support that Northside's faculty and staff, as well as my classmates, provided me as they helped shape my foundation and principles for my life's pursuits.