

## DARWIN SCHOOL

(1928-1963)

Putnam Co., TN

West Cookeville Junior High School was constructed in 1928 for African American students with funding from the local community and the Julius Rosenwald Fund. In 1936 a high school was added to the junior high school and named to honor J. Claude Darwin, a white Cookeville businessman and member of the Putnam County Board of Education, who promoted education for African Americans. Darwin's first graduating class was in 1938. Darwin School provided education to the African American students of Putnam and surrounding counties until it burned in January 1963, prompting school desegregation in the Upper Cumberland a year later. (Tennessee Historical Commission)

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\*Read more about the schools of Putnam Co., TN in Schoolyard Tales at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>



Celebrating the new plaque, from left, are Rebecca Keeton, Katherine Roberts Strode and Freddie L. McClennon, who were members of the last graduating class of Darwin School in 1962. A dedication ceremony was held this past Saturday to honor the installation of the historical marker.