

## The Second Quarter Century

1892 - 1917

It was twenty-five years since Lizzie Caprone, Mattie Decker, Kate Hopkins, Sarah Lacock, and Mary Seybold constituted the first graduating class of Washington School District, and Union School stood as the pride of the community.

Society had changed. The home was no longer the center of industry; it was the schools. They had to adapt to the new thirst for knowledge. To read and to cipher were no longer the basic issues of education. Rote memorization was no longer employed. Teaching techniques centered on cultivating alertness, capability, flexibility, and adaptability.

In 1896, directors were eager for more suggestions and innovations for their teachers and students. Faculty Days were instituted in the form of mandatory educational round tables, and educational rallies were encouraged. Talent was brought from Europe to assist in training teachers in new educational philosophies and techniques. Parents' Day was also initiated during this time to allow mothers and fathers to come to school to view the progress of their children and to speak with teachers. Salaries for teachers improved to \$44.29 for male teachers and \$36.59 for female teachers per month. A. G. Braden continued to administer high school faculty and students until 1897.

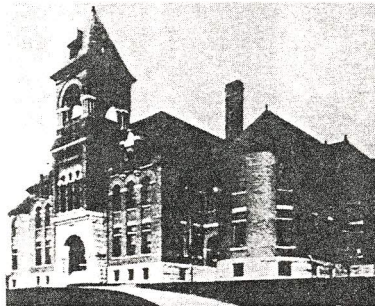
H. H. Elliot succeeded Braden as principal until 1898, then Arthur H. Hays, another native Washingtonian and son of Washington and Jefferson College President, took over the reins of the Union School until 1900. It was Hays who participated as Washington's delegate in the new Principals' Day organized in 1898.

The most important event to occur during these twenty-five years happened at 5:45 a.m., on Sunday, February 12, 1899. Fire destroyed one of the city of Washington's most priz-

ed institutions and its greatest source of pride — Union School.

It began as a result of a build up of gas pressure. Cold weather hampered the work of the men from the Little Giant Fire Company. Even professors and students from W & J worked feverishly to prevent the shingles from burning on the nearby college structures.

High school students and teachers were relocated to their new home, where they remained for the next thirty years — The West Side School, constructed in 1895-96 on the site of Dr. Alfred Creigh's home, Ellendale, on West Beau Street.



*Old West Side School served as Washington High School for 30 years.*

From 1900 to 1904, W. D. Brightwell was principal of Washington High School, and William Kirchbaum's successive tenure as administrator lasted from 1904 until 1911.

During this time, in 1905, a handbook was issued to cover a number of directives regarding student behavior:

"1. All quarreling or fighting, vulgar, profane, or disrespectful language or conduct, either in school, during intermission, or on the way to or from school will be severely punished, and for the second offense, the student will be reported to the board.

2. Chewing tobacco, or using it in any form in or about the school premises, as well as eating fruit or any food of any kind is strictly

prohibited.

3. Each pupil shall have a particular desk assigned and shall be required to keep it, and the floor beneath, in a neat and orderly fashion.

4. No child will be permitted to remain in any of the public schools without having its person and apparel in a clean and tidy condition."

Teachers were not without rules governing their actions, which were also included in the handbook:

"1. They were to maintain discipline — kindly, firmly, and judiciously.

2. They were not to permit falsehood, profanity, cruelty, or any form of vice.

3. They could not, during school hours, occupy their time with needlework, entertaining visitors, writing letters or anything else that might interfere with the regular exercises of the school."

Washington School District separated from the county system of schools with Professor William Kirchbaum, Principal, being elected to the superintendency in 1906. At this time teachers' monthly salaries rose again to \$60.96 for men and to \$47.17 for women.

High school students enjoyed many opportunities to participate in a variety of athletic, dramatic, and musical organizations at this time.

The year of 1911 saw many changes for Washington High School. Thomas McCleery became principal; an annex was added to the high school, and split graduating classes were begun — one in January and one in June.

Washington High School football teams began to vie for W.P.I.A.L. honors against Pittsburgh city schools, and began a winning streak as W.P.I.A.L. champion in 1917 that continued until 1920.

# 1867 - 1917 Fifty Years Of Graduating Seniors

1867 - 5	1892 - 9
1868 - No Class	1893 - 14
1869 - 10	1894 - 16
1870 - 9	1895 - 14
1871 - 3	1896 - 24
1872 - 9	1897 - 17
1873 - No Class	1898 - 17
1874 - 15	1899 - 24
1875 - 8	1900 - 20
1876 - 25	1901 - 25
1877 - 17	1902 - 26
1878 - 16	1903 - 18
1879 - 9	1904 - 37
1880 - 9	1905 - 42
1881 - 6	1906 - 4
1882 - 14	1907 - 29
1883 - 12	1908 - 40
1884 - 9	1909 - 32
1885 - 10	1910 - 26
1886 - 14	1911 - 34
1887 - 14	1912 - 51
1888 - 10	1913 - 37
1889 - 9	1914 - 76
1890 - 8	1915 - 78
1891 - 5	1916 - 83
	1917 - 93



## A Message From The Superintendent About The Future

During the coming months, we will be bringing to you excerpts from the Washington School District's 125-year history in six editions of *The Quest*. Each edition will focus on a twenty-five-year segment of the District's historic sites, prominent personalities, colorful events, and highlight our history as an educational leader and innovator in Western Pennsylvania. The first edition covered the origin of the Washington School District and the individuals involved. The final issue will focus on the future of the Washington School District and the direction in which we are headed.

There have been many obvious

changes over the years; however, there have been some notions that have remained the same. The most significant change has been the move from an industrial economy to a technological economy. Glass plants have given way to high tech companies because of the move to paper and to plastics. Computer-driven production and accounting have lowered costs and eliminated many jobs. Technological approaches to business require higher levels of basic skills. Employers are more selective, because the level of competition is so keen from inside and from outside the country. Job availability for those with limited skills has been reduced. Unlike many families in the past, these factors place pressure on and fragment the family unit, as we know it.

Schools cannot operate in the same manner as they did in the past, not even as early as twenty years ago. Students of today are faced with far different futures than their parents. — a fact that is sometimes hard to face. What was good enough for past generations will not suffice for the future ones. General mathematics will not provide the background necessary to succeed in a world that calls for algebra and geometry as a basic skill. Typing will not be enough in a world that calls for word processing and computer literacy and facility.

Students of today are competing with students who come from countries that place education at the top of the list of priorities, both nationally and in the home. The demand placed on students and the schools from home is an important ingredient in elevating the quality of education. The interest of individuals to involve themselves in school-board elections is an indication of the interest in the community for education. The school board should be a representation of the community and an institution that will make an impact on the lives of the children.

How does one go about keeping the pride and quality alive for the next 125 years in the Washington School District? Life is sustained by the infusion of energy from the community in a coalition of ideas and resources, coupled with clear, measurable goals. Growth is increased through the ability to adapt and to evaluate situations from a different perspective. Students are not and will never be what they were in the past, and until we understand that, our demands of them will go unanswered.

The 125th anniversary provides us with an opportunity to take stock, to

evaluate, and to assess. It provides a moment to reflect on the past and to develop a vision which will confront and best the challenges of the future. This Long Range Plan requires the resources from all segments of a changing community in order to develop accurately a beginning point. A much greater portion of the community must involve itself in the education process in order to set the school-community partnership standard for our children. We will be asking citizens for their help in committee participation and in the provision of opinions on surveys. The Washington School District will be collaborating with a large number of area businesses in an exciting partnership to aid in the planning.

This Long Range Plan will set the cornerstone for the development of the educational system for the next century. The planning process will provide an exciting experience for those willing to become involved in the discussions of the issues, such as Cooperative Learning, basic skills, Choice, Budgets, Distance Learning, alternative education, vocational-technical schools, advanced placement, S.A.T. scores, discipline, curriculum development, teen pregnancy, drug education, school-business partnerships, character education, and basic achievement test scores. It is from these discussions that the plan for an exciting future will be derived.

## On Her Own

Young people — do you dream of going to college some day, but do not know how to even to begin to nurture that dream? Parents — do you hope that your children can attend the college or university of choice, but do not know how to help them to succeed?

The Angel Ragins success story, written by Michael Ryan, published in the September 15, 1991, issue of the *Parade Magazine* provides us all with the fuel to launch our hopes and dreams into a trajectory of success.

Angel's father, a Macon, Georgia grocer, passed away six years ago, when Angel was 12, leaving her mother to work as a seamstress to support Angel and her brother.

Angel knew by seventh grade that she was going to college, and that she would obtain scholarships to finance her dream.

By the time Angel Ragins was eighteen-years-old, she had set, what Georgia officials believe to be a record — offers of more than \$315,000 in scholarships, including stipends from six of the seven institu-