

INSIDE MPISD

A PUBLICATION OF MOUNT PLEASANT ISD

Tiger Dolls



Lasting Legacy

60 YEARS OF TIGER DOLLS // TOP 10 PERCENT // SCHOOL FEATURES

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

MAY 2023

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On the Cover: Three generations of Tiger Dolls

INSIDE MPISD MAGAZINE

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Superintendent's Message

MPISD Superintendent
of Schools Judd Marshall



A Major Challenge for Our Schools

When trying to decide what I was going to write about in this particular edition, I felt convicted to talk about school safety. Unfortunately, school safety has become the number one point of concern in America's schools. For what I believe are multiple reasons, society has failed to address the root causes of violence in our schools. Bullying, infatuation with guns, lack of parenting in the home, mental health issues, and social media are several reasons that students and former students have turned to violence as a way of acting out against others. Far too many cases of violence have reached the doors of schoolhouses all across America, and we continue to suffer from these tragic events.

One of the things that schools must do to help address this issue is to take a proactive approach to preventing an act of violence such as a school shooting. Communication among all stakeholders is critical to helping ensure that each school day is a successful day. It is kind of funny that in today's technology and social media boom, where it is easier to communicate with others now than ever before, many of us have worse relationships with others than we did in the past. It is so much easier to post something on a social media account, or shoot a text to someone, than it is to actually sit down and visit with someone in a face-to-face setting. This practice is really harmful to the social development of our nation's youth. What happened to the days of visiting with family and friends on the couch in your living room or on your back porch? Where did the days go when we actually spent time with others at a family gathering, church, community events, or other social settings when people actually "knew each other?"

Another issue is how schools deal with threats made towards them. We all crave drama, good or bad, and we want to know everything right now, whether or not we have the correct information. Media outlets all across the globe are masters at putting out information, and sensationalizing that information, to gain the attention of the viewer. Furthermore, those same outlets make money if you keep coming back for more, day after day, so their ratings stay up and advertisers continue to pay to advertise. However, I feel it is important for schools to make sure that the information they

**Communication among
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put out about a particular threat is the correct information. Our schools are also accountable for ensuring the safety of all each day. Please know that we do our very best to put out any necessary information, as soon as we can, because we need our "viewers" to trust us and understand that we are doing everything we can to have a successful school day.

We continue to work hard to provide a quality education to every student in our district, while feeding them, loving them, providing social services to them, having outstanding extracurricular programs, and making sure they feel safe at school. My hope is that our stakeholders will understand that in a crisis situation, there is some information we can release, and there is some information that we cannot release, due to an ongoing investigation. We take any and every threat seriously, and we communicate those threats to our community.

Our kids need structure, and they need to be educated, and we must attend school each day for those two things to happen. Should we have a credible threat, and if that threat has not been handled, we will not go to school. Please feel free to reach out to any of our campuses, or our district office, with any questions you may have about a particular safety issue at MPISD. However, I can assure you that we are never "asleep at the wheel."

Judd Marshall
MPISD Superintendent of Schools

Lasting Legacy: Tiger Dolls celebrate six decades; new line has 3rd-generation dancers

BY KELLY COWAN

MPISD Director of Communications

The birthplace of drill team is right here in Northeast Texas. Gussie Nell Davis graduated from Texas Womans University in 1927 and began her career the following year, right down I-30 at Greenville High School as an instructor of physical education and sponsor of the Greenville Flaming Flashes. Over the next ten years the team's activities evolved and became more elaborate, including different drills with rhythm and dance steps to music.

Kilgore College president, Dean B. E. Masters, hired Davis in 1939 to form a group that would keep football spectators in their seats during halftime, rather than consuming alcohol and brawling under the stands. President Masters had an additional goal of increasing the college's female enrollment. The Kilgore College Rangerettes first performed in September of 1940, and were the first all-girls dance-drill team in the United States to perform during halftime of college football games.

It didn't take long for drill team to make its way to Mount Pleasant. In 1963, under the direction of high school P.E. teacher, Sue Hargrove, the Mount Pleasant High School Tigerettes were formed. Of course, things were certainly different back then. The uniforms could be no shorter than 6 inches above the knee, they did not wear hats, and the girls performed to music played on a record player. But like the Rangerettes, those very first Tigerettes wore white boots. And after much preparation and practice, they performed at the first football game that year.

After a few years, the Tigerettes disbanded and until 1967, there was no drill team at MPHS. When there was interest to have tryouts again for the drill team the name had to be changed because the basketball team had taken the name Tigerettes. Thus, in 1967 the name Tiger Dolls came into existence.

In the early 1970's, the Tiger Doll uniform consisted of a gold top hat with a satin vest and skirt. White gloves were worn along with those traditional white boots you still see today. And Tiger Doll summer practice was held in an unairconditioned gym at the school as there was no Tiger Doll room like there is today.

In 1984, the traditional halftime entrance onto the football field was born. Every Tiger Doll for the last 40 years



From left are three generation of Tiger Dolls. Pictured are mom Michelle Huggins Luck (1993-1996), daughter Mollie Luck (2022-present) and grandmother Linda Graham Atkinson (1971-1973).



From left are three generation of Tiger Dolls. Pictured are mom Jeannie Pat Fox Jagers (95-98), daughter Kenlee Jagers (23-present) and grandmother Sherri Lee Fox (1963).

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will tell you there is nothing like shaking your fringe and striding across the field to the sounds of the Goin' Gold Band playing "Vegas" in front of a stadium full of spectators. The Tiger Doll uniform of the 1980's consisted of a tuxedo with a round skirt and tail and an overlay and jazz skirt with fringe. In December of 1989 at a football playoff game, the uniform worn today made its debut on the field.

And as the old saying goes, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Some Tiger Doll traditions like those white boots have stood the test of time. Each new mem still gets a Big Sis during summer practice and her identity is kept a secret until a fun reveal. They form Victory Lines during pregame to cheer for the Tigers as they take the field and they sit in rows in the stands and perform stand routines when the band plays.

Vegas is still the traditional entrance with the officer portion updated to reflect the dance style of today. The Tiger Dolls perform traditional field routines including high kick, pom, jazz, and various props at halftime of every Tiger football game. They still compete in the spring with team and officer routines, solos, duets, and ensembles. And the annual Tiger Doll Spring Show is held every spring with the sounds of the traditional finale to "If My Friends Could See Me Now" echoing in the newly renovated MPHS auditorium.

Still other new traditions have kept the Tiger Dolls relevant and on the cutting edge in the 21st century. With the passing of the MPISD bond in 2019, the Tiger Dolls got a brand new Tiger Doll room complete with a full-sized gym floor, yard line markings, locker rooms and dressing spaces, and a large storage area. The seniors decorate those 60-year-old traditional white boots with paint, glitter, rhinestones, and feathers as special Senior Boots the night of the last home football game every year. And while they still perform traditional-style halftime routines, they incorporate many technical dance skills including difficult leaps and turns.

The Goin' Gold Band plays "Vegas" every week and always plays "Magnificent Seven" for their traditional Homecoming kick routine, but the Dolls dance to recorded music the rest of football season as the band's halftime shows have become very elaborate and require much more practice time.

Freshmen new members are now allowed on the team, but the officer line is still made up of only juniors and seniors. Football season of 2022 brought the addition of Officer Batons, a nod to their predecessors, the Kilgore College Rangerettes. And while the Dolls have always had Big and Little Sisters, the team focuses much more on team bonding and unity with events like the Senior Dinner the



From left are three generation of Tiger Dolls. Pictured are mom Kisha Price (1993-1996), daughter Maggie Price (2023-present) and grandmother Teresa Nelson Price (1972-73).



Jaton Broach has served as Tiger Dolls director since 2017. She was a member of the drill team from 1995-1998. week of Senior Night at the final home football game.

They hold their annual potluck in November, aptly named Dollsgiving. And there is always a final lock in after the end-of-the-year banquet. Finally, the Always a Doll Alumni Association, formed in 2021, keeps former Tiger Dolls

See Tiger Dolls, Pg 10.



Payton, Joey and Carter Chism enjoyed a special undefeated regular season in lone year together.

Special season: Chism legacy comes full circle as dad gets to coach both sons

By JOHN WHITTEN
INSIDE MPISD Editor

In high school, Joey Chism excelled on the basketball court at the old Brice Gym. Between his thunderous dunks and his innate ability to score at will and take over games, Chism was an offensive force.

A 1997 MPHS graduate, Chism went on to play college basketball at Jacksonville Baptist and Western Illinois before returning to MPHS in 2005 as an assistant coach.

While Joey enjoyed great seasons on the court as a player, it would be as a head coach where he has made his greatest contribution to the basketball program.

And few seasons could be more special than the 2022-2023 season.

This past season gave Joey the opportunity to coach both of his sons -- Payton, a senior, and Carter, a freshman. It was the lone opportunity for all three to be in the MPHS

basketball program at the same time.

"This year was an unbelievable season," Joey said. "As a basketball coach, it was surreal, because as a coach you dream of coaching your son. And this year I was able to coach not one but both of my boys, something we had all been looking forward to for years."

Carter and Payton have been used to their dad coaching them while younger, but that doesn't mean this season didn't come with challenges.

"It had its ups and downs, but it was a good experience and had bonding moments," Payton said. "I think he challenged me to make me a better player, so I overcame it by sticking with it and listening."

Added Carter, "I was able to step up to the challenge and do what he asked of me this past year."

Carter said one challenge was separating

Joey being his dad at home and coach at school.

Joey said that both of his sons were able to play well together which made it easier on him to guide them.

"I didn't feel like it was a challenge to coach them," Joey said. "They both understand the game, they have great chemistry together and they both are really competitive and that competitiveness brought out some brotherly love."

"And at the end of the day, they both wanted what was best for each other and expected each other to be at their best every single game."

There was no doubt that both brothers and their teammates pushed each other to do their very best. This year was a special season as the Tigers posted a 34-1 record and earned a No. 4 ranking in the state. Their season was

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Chism from Page 6

perfect until an area round loss to Forney.

“As a coach your goal is to win it all, but at the end of the day, I wouldn’t change anything about this season,” Joey said. “This team gave our coaching staff everything we could ask for and more. I am proud of this team and their ability to fight.”

Payton and Carter echoed their dad on how great of a season it was.

“It was really special to share it (season) with my dad, brother, and teammates. It wouldn’t have been possible without everyone,” Payton said.

Carter said, “It was a fun season even though we didn’t get the outcome we wanted.”

Joey said this season didn’t come without challenges while being a dad and a coach.

“One of the hardest things that I had to learn from coaching my sons is to learn how to separate being their father and their coach,” Joey said. “There were many times they needed me to be their dad and there were times I needed to be a coach and I had deviated between them too.”

This season was filled with achievements for both of the Chism brothers. Carter said making the All-Tournament Team at the Dallas Mavericks Tournament and being named District Newcomer of the Year were his highlights.

For Payton, he reflected more on his achievements over the past four years which there have been many.

“My biggest achievement to me is being a part of a regional tournament team three years in a row because it stamped Mount Pleasant as a top program in the state,” Payton said.

He added his other biggest achievement was earning a district superlative all four years of high schools. Chism was also named to the Class 5A TABC All-State basketball team recently.

While there is always a distinct difference in being a senior versus being a freshman in the every day life of a high school student, it was different story on the court for the Chism brothers.

One could tell that the two had a special bond that comes from being brothers who had grown up with the game and having their father there to guide them.

“It was great to share the court with my brother this season. We have planned it since we were little, so we expected this,” Payton said.

For Carter, he learned to defer on the court to his older brother and learn from him.

“It was a good experience. I had to let him (Payton) be the leader of this team and fol-



Coach Joey Chism barks out instructions in a game. Below, sons Payton, 11, and Carter, 24, show off their basketball skill on the court.



low his lead,” Carter said.

Throughout his coaching career, Joey had enjoyed much success as he has turned MPHS basketball into one of the best basketball programs in the state.

“Every season you have moments that stand out to you, and throughout my career there have been several,” Joey said. “But the biggest moment for me has been setting the school record with 33 wins in 2020 and then breaking that record this year with 34 wins.”

Add in four trips to the regional tournament, over the past six years and you have a legacy of success.

A legacy can be defined as a lasting impact on this world. For the Chism family, they have left a legacy on the basketball court.

While Joey initially left his mark as a player, his legacy may well be defined by what he has done as a coach. His sons have continued that legacy. A legacy filled with not just success but one with a family bond that all three got to experience this season.

It was a season to remember for the Chism family --- undefeated district champions, a perfect regular season record and a No. 4 state ranking. That is a legacy that will stand out forever in Tiger hoops.

MPHS Top 10 Percent



Valedictorian Ethan Harbour
College Plans: Texas Tech
Major: Biology

Mount Pleasant High School has 37 students who earned Top 10 percent honors this year. Over the next three pages, students list their plans for the future.



Salutatorian Perla Guzman
College Plans: NTCC then transfer to Texas A&M
Major: Biomedical Sciences



Natalie Crockett
College Plans: UT-Austin
Major: Biochemistry



Reese Ball
College Plans: University of Oklahoma
Major: English



Vanessajane Bayna
College Plans: NTCC
Major: Mechanical Engineering



Camdon Johnson
College Plans: UT-Austin
Major: Biochemistry



Param Poudel
College Plans: UT-Austin
Major: Computer Science



Devin Castaneda
College Plans: UT-Arlington
Major: Mechanical Engineering



Amy Vazquez
College Plans: NTCC
Major: Nursing



Clayton Brison
College Plans: Texas A&M
Major: Mechanical Engineering



Manoa Bagic
College Plans: UNT
Major: Electrical Engineering



Jose Trejo
College Plans: NTCC
Major: Nursing



Camila Serrano
College Plans: UT-Austin
Major: Biochemistry



Norma Delgado
College Plans: Tyler Junior College
Major: Dental Hygiene



Fernanda Salazar
College Plans: UT-Arlington
Major: Mechanical Engineering



Chris Russell
College Plans: Baylor University
Major: Public Health



Anthony Orellana
College Plans: UT-Austin
Major: Psychology



Eli Rider
College Plans: Texas A&M
Major: Nuclear Engineering



Samantha McClenan
College Plans: Texas A&M
Major: Forensics, Investigate Science



Madeline Plascencia
College Plans: Texas Tech University
Major: Biology



Natalie Hernandez
College Plans: NTCC
Major: Nursing



Kylie Humber
College Plans: NTCC
Major: Nursing



Madison Carpenter
College Plans: Texas A&M
Major: Aerospace Engineering



Jenna Cook
College Plans: University of Arkansas
Major: Exercise Science



Jack Welborn
College Plans: University of Arkansas
Major: Finance



Karli Hill
College Plans: NTCC
Major: Radiology



Raegan Houchin
College Plans: University of Mississippi
Major: Exercise Science



Paulina Diaz Ramirez
College Plans: Stephen F. Austin
Major: Biology



Xitlali Rivas
College Plans: NTCC
Major: Human Performance



Alison Majors
College Plans: UT-Tyler
Major: Psychology



Alexandra Estrada
College Plans: UT-Tyler
Major: Medical Sonography



Michelle Vazquez
College Plans: UT-Tyler
Major: Biology



Melissa Vasquez
College Plans: UT-Tyler
Major: Dental Hygiene



Isaac Hernandez
College Plans: UT-Arlington
Major: Accounting



Anna Kate Fisher
College Plans: Oklahoma State
Major: Hospitality and
Tourism Management



Payton Chism
College Plans: Collin College
Major: Engineering



Merlin Cardona
College Plans: Tyler Junior College
Major: Diagnostic Medical
Sonography program

2023 Top 10 Percent

2023 Magna Cum Laude graduates

Along with the Top 10 percent, a number of other students were also recognized as Magna Cum Laude honorees for Mount Pleasant High School.

A total of 36 students earned Magna Cum Laude recognition with means their grade point average was 5.62 and higher.

Those students with a grade point average of 6.0 and above and earning Magna Cum Laude honors include Chelsea Maldonado, Gyselle Lozano, Nancy Netro, Mauricio Farias Jr., Briana Sanchez, Wendy Alarcon, Adriana Orona, Caleb Whitten, Saul Al-

varado and Chloe Carter.

Other Magna Cum Laude students with a GPA between 5.9 and 5.62 were Isabel Gonzales, Hannah Bowles, Heslie Castanon, Javier Vazquez, Luis Garcia, Gracelyn McClendon, Lizzette Ramirez, Cesar Flores, Emma Sellers, Jose Lopez, Lolita Solis, Kendall Walker, Jordyn Hargrave, Madison Craig, Marcela Mata, Kimberly Pina, Esmeralda Ramirez, Pilar Gonzalez, Jackie Gonzalez, Nayeli Jaimes, Paris Beard, Arenia Tigert, Juanita Gutierrez, Nayeli Rivera, Daniela Palomo and Raul Vazquez.

Tiger Dolls from Page 5

involved in the organization long after they have taken off their boots for the last time.

The 60 year Tiger Doll legacy is stronger now than ever. Jatón Smith Broach, a Tiger Doll from 1995-1998, has been the Tiger Doll Director since 2017. And the newest line of Dolls features a number of family connections, including three whose mothers and grandmothers were Tiger Dolls themselves. Mollie Luck will be a sophomore Tiger Doll in 2023-2024. Her mom, Michelle Huggins Luck, was a Tiger Doll from 1993-1996 and her grandmother, Linda Graham Atkinson, was a member from 1971-1973. Kenlee Jagers will be a freshman new member in the fall of 2023. Her mom, Jeannie Pat Fox Jagers, was a Tiger Doll from 1995-1998, and grandmother Sherri Lee Fox is an original

Tigerette from 1963. And Maggie Price will be a freshman Tiger Doll in 2023-2024. Her mom, Kisha Price, was a Tiger Doll from 1993-1996, and her grandmother Teresa Nelson Price was a member from 1972-1973.

The 60-year-old Tiger Doll legacy started by Sue Hargrove in 1963 lives on through the Dolls of today. Young girls in the Mount Pleasant community grow up anticipating the day that it will finally be their turn to shake their fringe under the Friday Night Lights. And thousands of women live each and every day with the memories of performances, the lessons they learned along the way, and a sisterhood that bonds them all through shared experiences, no matter their age.

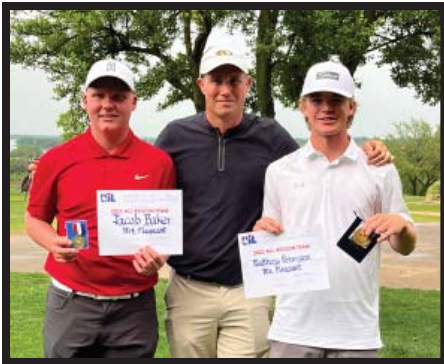
Oh, if my friends could see me now.

High School Happenings



Prom Royalty:

Morgan Brooks, left, was crowned Prom Queen and Kelcey Morris was voted Prom King for MPHS by their fellow seniors.



State Qualifiers:

Jacob Baker, left, and Matthew Peterson advanced to the state golf tournament to be held May 22-23 in Georgetown. Pictured from left are Baker, Coach Benny Blaser and Peterson.



Regional medalists:

Pictured above are UIL Academic students who earned a medal at the regional meet. Advancing to state were Social Studies students Vanessajane Bayna, Estven Perez, Yahir Garcia, Jeisy Munoz, speller Isabel Gonzalez and Nathaniel Martinez.in Calculator Applications.



50 Years of Service:

MPHS Registrar Gay Miller recently was honored on her 50th Anniversary with MPISD. She began working at the district on April 3, 1973.



FBLA National Qualifiers

National Qualifiers for FBLA are from left :Olivia Reed, Kiara Rundles, Javier Vasquez, Madison Carpenter, Anthony Orellana, Eli Rider, Natalie Crockett, Hope Powell, Reese Ball and Advisor John Whitten. Not pictured are Mea Banda, Madeline Plascencia and Sophie Greco.



Golden Gavel

Senior Anthony Orellana won the Golden Gavel award for having the most speaker points in Class 5A this year. It the second year in a row he has won the honor and fourth straight overall for MPHS

Morris has made lasting impact as coach

By JOHN WHITTEN
INSIDE MPISD Editor

Sports at the high school and junior high level have changed tremendously just in the last decade or so.

In many ways, sports has seen athletes specialize and play one or two sports and some coaches are responsible for coaching just one sport.

If you were to look at Jesse Morris' career, you would find a man whose responsibilities resemble a smorgasbord of sports coached -- and a coach whose impact goes beyond the field of play.

Morris has coached at Mount Pleasant Junior High for more than two decades among his coaching stops in his career. During that time, his coaching responsibilities have ranged from football to cross country to soccer. Those are just some of the many sports he has coached which include basketball, volleyball and track.

"I coached mostly where I was needed. If they needed help, I just jumped in and tried to help," Morris said.

Morris is on his second stint at the junior high, having returned to the district in 2016. Of all the sports he has coached, there is one that he loves the most and that is track.

"I love coaching track, and I participated in it. That is why I have a passion for it," Morris said. Morris competed in the triple jump and the 400-meter relay in track and played fullback in football at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. He also became a two-time All American in the triple jump.

Morris had a storied career in high school in track as well, advancing to state in the 400-meter relay and long jump. His relay team took third at state and he was fourth in the long jump.

Morris' high school coach, Philip Holt, inspired him to become a coach. Morris graduated from Honey Grove High School in 1972 and would graduate from college in 1977 before starting his education career.

"He (Holt) was always caring and had an interest in us," said Morris. "If it wasn't for him, I probably wouldn't have made it this far."

Shortly after graduating college, Morris began his coaching career in Atoka, Okla. Along the way, his coaching stints have also included Marshall, Gladewater and Chisum.

Like all great educators and coaches, his success is not measured in victories or medals his players won but his impact he has made.

"I love that I get to be with the kids. Some kids don't have anyone telling them that 'you can do it.' That is what I like about coaching," Morris said. "

As for advice to a new coach, Morris said to take the initiative.

"If they see something that needs to be done, go do it. Don't wait for anyone else to do it," Morris said.

Morris and his wife Myra of 47 years have two daughters, Marsha and Monica, along with nine



Morris is seen coaching on the sidelines during a football game earlier this year. Below he is pictured with Myra, his wife of 47 years.



grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He got to coach both of his daughters.

"It helped other girls that I was coaching see that I wasn't playing favorites. I expected the same out of my kids as anyone else. Actually, I expected a little bit more out of them," Jesse said.

Morris said while some athletes limit themselves to one sport, he believes that with a little encouragement from coaches that more athletes would compete in additional sports like track.

"Some kids will tell you they can't run track because they are slow but track is good for slow

people. You just stay after them and once they have success, they are hooked," Morris said.

Morris related a story on a former cross country and track runner that he coached. He said he would have to prod the runner and sometimes go by his house to get him out of bed to run.

The student eventually went on to run track at Lon Morris College and Southern Arkansas University. He eventually earned his master's degree and continues to remain close to Morris.

His story is just one of many Morris could tell about the impact he's had --- a story worth telling.

Junior High Journal

High School Visit



Junior High students recently got the opportunity to explore the different electives that the high school offers.

Leap Expo



Science Fair



Six students from Mount Pleasant Junior High competed in the Region VIII ESC Science and Invention Fair held earlier this semester. Pictured from left are Marley Broach, Makayla Mather, Rubi Gutierrez, Rey Munoz and Jesus Mata. Not pictured is Rylie Mendez. Broach placed sixth, Mather fifth, Mata sixth and Mendez second. Gutierrez and Mata both received ribbons for participating in the event.

Elliott's impact on her students inspires son to become teacher

By KELLY COWAN

MPISD Director of Communications

Education was never the career Jared Elliott envisioned as a child in his mom's 6th grade Science and Social Studies class at Wallace Middle School. However, that choice changed as he continually witnessed the impact that each and every school employee had on kids.

"I have been stopped by others all of my life to say they had my mom in the classroom or knew her from Wallace," said Elliott. "I wanted to be a part of those lasting impacts."

Elliott's mom, Dona Elliott, was a longtime teacher at P.E. Wallace Middle School. She taught for twenty-four years in Mount Pleasant with the bulk of that time spent in P.E. She was the founder of the Wallace Running Club, an active participant in the annual Wallace Veteran's Day program, and was honored as the Wallace Teacher of the Year in 2017.

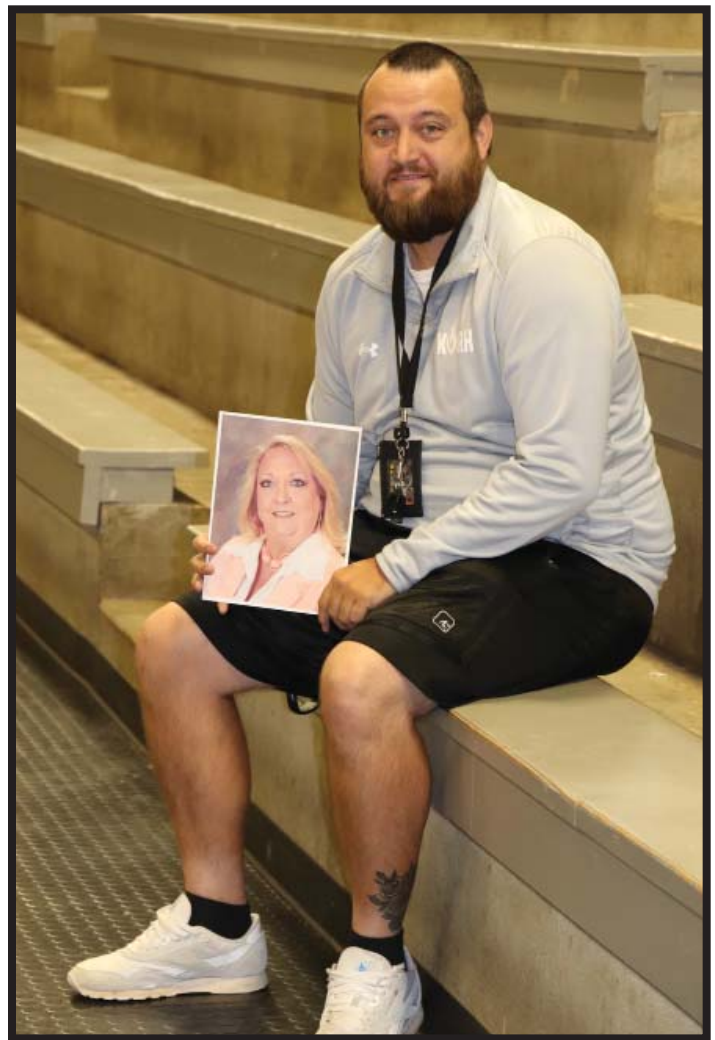
"I have a lot of memories of my Mom and her time as a teacher at Wallace," said Elliott. "Some that stand out to me are how she always brought her classroom atmosphere to life with things like snakes, rats, birds, etc. which always made it more fun and exciting for her students. I also remember that although she loved summer vacation, she was always most excited in August for the start of a new school year. She would say to me often, 'P.E. Wallace and my students are what keep me going.'"

After graduating from Mount Pleasant High School in 2007, Elliott spent time in the United States Marines. Prior to his position at Wallace, he was employed at Diamond C Trailers in Quality Control.

But soon after his mom's passing on June 6, 2021 from a brief illness, Elliott felt the call to come back home to Wallace Middle School where she had given so much to her students. Elliott began his journey just 2 months later in August of 2021. He assists in 5th and 6th grade boys' pre-athletics and boys' P.E. including a 5th grade Archery class.

As a teacher, Elliott pulls from all those memories of being a student in his mom's class 22 years ago.

"Before the year started she made sure to tell me 'In the classroom, I am your teacher and the same rules



Jared holds up a photo of his mom Dona.

apply to you as they do to each of my students," said Elliott.

"I appreciate a lot of aspects of Wallace but I most enjoy the staff and the different personalities of each student which keep each day fun and interesting. My favorite memory since working at Wallace has been the Veterans Day Program in 2021. They always work hard and it was always my mom's favorite program of the school year. This particular year was soon after her passing and our family was presented a bench in her memory. I thought honoring her during one of her favorite school programs was extremely special."

Dona Elliott's legacy lives on through her son, Jared, in the Wallace Middle School gym each and every day and through Elliott's sons, Jadon age 12, Jacob age 9, and Jason age 5.

World of Wallace

Aladdin Musical



Dance Showcase



FBLA National Qualifiers

National Qualifiers for FBLA Middle Level include first row from left: Blakely Garrett, Aloani Laboy, Zoe Zuniga, Sebastian Otero and Annie Crabb. Second row from left are Jaliyah Brown, Charity Prater, Sage Jordan, Aubree Hawkins, Abi vernal, Hudson Rider, Sabrina Otero and Emily Crabb. Third row from left are Alba Zeqaj, April Lozano, Mykaela King, Isabella Furnish, Cooper Rider, Kaiser Sheppard, Juan Mata and Jayden Baker.

Family Ties:

Mom, daughter share love of teaching at Brice

By IDANIA CASTANON
INSIDE MPISD Reporter

Frances Hooks has been teaching at E.C. Brice for 32 years, and she has never wanted to do anything else but work at the elementary she has called home away from home.

Brice became even more like home a couple of years ago when her daughter, Skylar Morgan, joined her at the school. Now the mom and daughter team work together each day.

Frances is a first-grade teacher at Brice, while Skylar teaches kindergarten.

"I was ecstatic when I found out my precious daughter would become a teacher!" Frances said. "Having her working at E.C. Brice with me is like a dream come true....I felt like my prayers have been answered."

For Frances, the best part of teaching for so many years is that she can see some of her former students' children. She loves being able to put smiles on her students' faces. Like many, her inspiration to teach came from some of her previous teachers.

"Great teachers play a vital role in the lives of their students," Frances said. "It was because of them, that I chose the path that I did! I wanted to become that someone who made a difference in others' lives like they made in mine."

Among those who Frances has inspired is her own daughter. While Skylar could have chose many different pathways, including dance, she opted to go with teaching.

"As much as I loved performing, that feeling watching your students achieve something they worked so hard for is like no other," Skylar said.

When her mother asked her to teach kindergarten at E.C. Brice she couldn't say no. They are so grateful to be able to work so closely together every day. They have many fun experiences learning and teaching next to one another.

"I realized that this is exactly where I was supposed to be," Skylar said. "All those years watching my mom in her classroom, the countless summers I came to help her for summer school, and of course my mother's consistency to get to come home and teach with her, I feel like I always knew. Working alongside my mom is nothing short of a blessing."

She always thought that dance was something that she would do for the rest of her life and she wanted it to be her main path, but she doesn't regret working at E.C. Brice either.

"Dance will always hold a special place in my heart," Skylar said. "Performing arts will always have a huge part of my life, but working for the best district, on the best campus, and with my amazing mother, I wouldn't trade my life for anything in the world."

Skylar attended Brice when she was of elementary age. So it would be only be natural if she was going to teach in MPISD it would be the elementary she attended.

"She attended Brice, so she has come full circle," Frances said. "It is also very comforting to know that when she has a question about anything or needs clarification, she comes to me!"

Hooks was ecstatic when she found out that her daughter would become a teacher as well. Just knowing that she is also making



Skylar, standing, is following in the footsteps of her mom Frances as a teacher at E.C. Brice Elementary. Below, the mother-daughter duo team up for a learning project with their students.



a difference in kids' lives, she says, is the greatest feeling in the world.

"She has such a giving heart and there is no better way to serve her purpose than to share that love with children in her community," Hooks said. "I knew she loved changing lives and becoming a teacher is where it starts. I will always encourage and support her. I am so proud of her."

Skylar is just as proud of her mom.

"To know Frances Hooks, it's well...it's an honor some would say. To call her mom, now that is a true blessing," Skylar said.

Brice Beat

Children's Museum

Brice first graders got the opportunity to visit and explore the Northeast Texas Children's Museum in Commerce.

The interactive museum gave students the opportunity to experience and try out a large number of exhibits.



Read Across America



Multicultural Night



Booker T Washington alumni keep memory of school alive

By IDANIA CASTANON
INSIDE MPISD Reporter

It's been almost 50 years since the former Booker T. Washington school had a group of students graduate. The old campus eventually became Frances Corprew Elementary.

The school was first built in 1926 so that African Americans could learn but also so that they were separated from the white kids. During that time the high school only had two teachers and 50 students, and the elementary school only had five teachers and 295 students.

After 1931 they were able to get more improvements, such as being able to have a junior-senior prom, and they were able to wear caps and gowns to graduation.

In 1950 there was a new building constructed for the high school which made the old school house the elementary students. Almost 35 years went by with both schools not having much of a difference; however, in 1964 the Civil Rights Act was adopted and the students at Booker T. Washington enrolled at Mount Pleasant High School. Those that wished to graduate from Booker T. Washington were given the opportunity to, but in 1968 the last class graduated from high school and those that remained enrolled in Mount Pleasant High School.

Even though the school was left behind, no one has forgotten its history. The Booker T. Washington Alumni Association was created to help those in the community that were given the opportunity to attend the school all those years ago.

Betty Roberson, a 1961 graduate, was voted president of the association. When she was attending high school, she said that her principal would always be out in the hallways keeping an eye out.

"I remember our principal Mr. Millsap. When you saw him, you knew what you were supposed to be doing. We were friends with everyone and our teachers. Those were wonderful years at Booker T. Washington," said Roberson. "We were more like a family at Booker T."

"We didn't misbehave at school. Mom and dad knew about it before you got home and took care of it."

She was also a part of the school band, playing Clarinet, and she was also a majorette in the band. While Roberson didn't play sports, the school did have football, basketball and track teams giving students the chance to compete in extracurricular activities.

When the school integrated and students joined MPISD, Roberson said "it was a mixed feeling with the name being changed."

The school also grew in numbers when it took in Mount Vernon's 9-12 students.



A monument marks the original site of the Booker T. Washington School and recognizes the Booker T. Washington Alumni. Below is a yearbook from 1940.

"It was exciting for us to see another school to come graduate with us," Roberson said.

Roberson went to Prairie View A&M, and worked as a secretary for 46 years at George Carver School in Omaha. She also worked for the IRS and a telephone company.

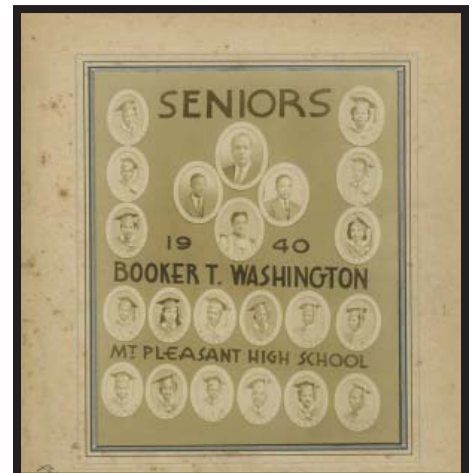
She said that she has seen many changes since her education days.

"The atmosphere is different. It is totally different; home life is totally different. Parents helped their children get along with their teachers or other people. The attitudes were totally different," Roberson said.

Roberson and her husband George of 40 years had three children. They emphasized the importance of education for their children.

One of their children is Betsy Fluellen who is the Education/Disability Manager for the CDC. Another daughter, Sandra Wright, taught at Corprew and P.E. Wallace for almost 20 years and still subs in the district. Her other daughter, Georgia Walker, works for FedEx in Longview.

Though parts of Booker T. Washington are still



being used in the Corprew Elementary School, the alumni association is still striving to keep history of the school alive so that it will never be forgotten. The Alumni Association meets every two years around Father's Day weekend to keep the memory of the school alive.



Corprew Connection

Literacy Night



Black History Month Program



Four generations have love for MPISD

By DESIREE AVILA
INSIDE MPISD Reporter

Four generations, one district.

There may not be a clearer definition of legacy and loyalty than when a family sees multiple generations come through the same school system.

From great-grandfather Joey Mayfield to great-grandson Kash James, the MPISD school system has played an integral part in the family's life. Joey along with his son Jason Mayfield, granddaughter Alexi Smith and great-grandson Kash James all took time out to answer questions regarding MPISD and its impact on their lives.

Joey is a former boys MPHS head soccer coach and board member, Jason is the current boys soccer coach, Alexi is currently a teacher at Vivian Fowler and Kash is a second grader at the school. Kash's late father Monty James was also a MPHS graduate and football legend.

Below are questions that Kash, Alexi, Jason and Joey all took time out to answer.

Kash James:

What is your favorite class?

I like PE because we get to play games and have fun.

What is your favorite sport? And why?

It's a hard decision because I play all sports. But, I like baseball the most. I like throwing people out.

What is it like to attend school where your mom teaches? Do you enjoy being at the same school with her?

Yes, I like her being at the same school as me. When I need something, I'm able to walk to her room and ask. Also, when I do not like what is for lunch I am able to go ask her to bring me something else to eat.

What do you love most about your school? And why?

I like my friends at school. We are there for each other and have a good time.

What is one thing you could teach to your classmates? Why that?

How to be kind. Being kind is the right thing to do.

Do you have a career goal?

I haven't made up my mind yet. I either want to be a major league baseball player like Tatis or player soccer like Ronaldo.

Alexi Smith:

What interested you to come work at MPISD?

MPISD is home. Every member of my family that is an educator is invested in MPISD. MPISD is a part of my family. I moved here in 6th grade and graduated high school here. There is no other place that I would want to be.

What is one thing you love about MPISD?

The thing I love the most about MPISD is that it has the "small town" vibe. We all know each other or know of one another. From admin to elementary we all know the people we are around.

Would you do anything differently in high school if you had the chance to? If so, what would you do differently?

I loved high school. I loved my friends and I loved being a Mount Pleasant Tiger. I think that if I could go back, I would have played soccer my entire 4 years instead of only 2. I also would change the opportunity for Mr. Marshall to give me swats for leaving campus for lunch. He still gives me a hard time about it today.

What is it like to work at the same school your son attends? Do you enjoy being there with him?

When Kash was ready for kindergarten there was no question of where he would attend elementary school. I knew I wanted him at Fowler with me. I love having him on campus and knowing what is going on. I love seeing his face in the hallways and giving him hugs during the day. Having him close is a true blessing.

What is it like to follow your dad and grandfather in the education field at MPISD?

I feel honored to have them as my dad and grandfather. I really think I should I should have been a soccer coach. I mean they are two of the BEST soccer coaches I have ever met. They both have spent many years



From left are Joey Mayfield, Kash James, Jason Mayfield and Alexi Smith.

at MPISD and have created a culture for our soccer program that some can only dream of. I respect the legacy they have built and will forever be proud of them. They both have had a huge impact on me and my decision to become an educator. If I become half the educator they both are I will definitely change the lives of many students along the way.

Jason Mayfield:

What do you love most about coaching soccer?

I really enjoy coaching by being able to take a group and help create something special with each group. We do this by building relationships and working hard to achieve goals together.

What do you love most about MPISD? Why that?

As an educator we have an opportunity to help kids become successful in life. That is very important to me. Here at MPISD we strive to help kids overcome and be successful in real life. I love how MPISD gives opportunity to their own. We take care of one another here.

You are part of four generations at MPISD with your dad, you, Alexi, and now Kash. How special is that is to have that many generations come through MPISD?

Loyalty is very important to me. It is very important to pass down the tradition, pride, and foundation from one generation to the next. Going to games and knowing the fight song and the traditions for MPISD is important to pass down to the next generation.

How has high school soccer changed for you since you've last played?

When I was in school, we did not have a locker room or an off-season program. The kids now have access to better things to help them be successful on the soccer field.

If you had a chance to go back to high school and do it all over, what would you change and why?

I do not think I would change anything. I think every aspect in life helps you grow into what you become.

Joey Mayfield

What do you miss about coaching soccer? Why that?

I miss the kids and watching the kids compete. I really enjoyed coaching and being able to make an impact on kids daily

What do you love most about MPISD?

See Mayfield, Pg. 20

Fowler Features

Career Day



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Mayfield from Page 20

There is an intertwine with the school and my history and they are both very important to me.

You are part of four generations at MPISD with you, Jason, Alexi, and now Kash.

How special is that to have that many generations come through MPISD?

Yes, it is special. It's a good thing, Once a Tiger always a Tiger. My family will always be Tigers.



Alexi and Kash at Fowler

Malone Family continues legacy at Sims

By JOHN WHITTEN
INSIDE MPISD Editor

For the Malone Family, MPISD and Annie Sims hold a special place in their hearts. From Deputy Superintendent Debbie Malone down to her grandson Beau, the district and Annie Sims have played an integral part in their lives.

Malone's son Matt attended Sims and his wife Bethany is a kindergarten teacher. So Sims roots run deep for the family. Last year was a special one for the family as Bethany got to teach Beau.

"Last year was so rewarding to see him learning and to get to be a part of that," Bethany said. "I also enjoyed seeing him interacting with his friends and getting to know all of them as well."

Debbie agreed that it is special to have her grandson and daughter-in-law involved with the same school and district as her son.

"Matthew received an excellent education at MPISD, and Annie Sims will always be a special place," Debbie said. "To have Beau and in a couple years Tatum, following in his footsteps is amazing. Having Bethany carry on the Malone Tradition is a blessing for all of us. She works long hours to ensure her Sims students learn and are nurtured."

Beau, who wants to be a physical therapist like his father, said he likes going to the same school that his mother works at.

"I like that she gets to see me, and I get to hug her because I love her," Beau said. "I enjoyed having my mom as a teacher because she is sweet and nice. It made me happy to be in her class because I got to see her all the time."

Matt, who is a co-owner of Kinetic Physical Therapy, spoke highly of his wife's ability to educate their children also at home.

"Even when he (Beau) is not in school, he's always learning. Bethany is a very good teacher in the classroom and is intentional at home with exposing both of our boys to letters, numbers, learning strategies and word associations," Matt said. "She does it casually with general conversations or when they play, so they don't feel like they are in school but are always learning."

Separating being a mother vs. being her son's teacher was a challenge she faced last year.

"I think teaching your own child presents many challenges," Bethany said. "Our biggest one was learning how to keep mommy and teacher separate. I had be aware of how I was treating him and make sure that it was the same as the rest of my students."

Debbie said having Bethany as her grandson's teacher was definitely a benefit from an educational standpoint.



Bethany and Matt Malone, standing, are pictured with their son Beau and Matt's mom Debbie.

"Educationally speaking, it couldn't have been any better. Having his mother also meant he was guaranteed not to get away with anything," Debbie said.

Without a doubt, both Debbie and Bethany said that Beau is definitely more like his dad and has similar traits.

"Matthew and Beau are definitely from the same tree," Debbie said. "Both want to do their best, work harder than anyone else, help others, are early risers and have huge hearts....Beau wants to be just like his daddy."

Bethany added "Beau is definitely more like Matt, though he does have some of my tendencies as well. Like Matt, Beau is very driven and wants to do well in whatever he does."

As for Matt, he also sees there are a lot of ways that Beau also resembles him as well.

"Beau enjoys school, both learning and playing with friends while there. Those are both items that I enjoyed as a child growing up," Matt said. "He's also a pleaser, in that he wants to try hard to make Bethany and me happy, which is so sweet. And I remember wanting to try so hard to do well in school for my parents."

Beau, who plays soccer for MP Azul and baseball for the Mariners, said what he like about school is "we learn stuff that we didn't know before because it makes my brain bigger and stronger."

Bethany, whose mom was also a teacher, said having her son at the same school is a blessing.

"I enjoy being able to see Beau throughout the day in the hallways," Bethany said. "It's just nice to get to check in with him for a minute and get a quick hug!"

While the buildings may be different from the ones that Matthew attended and the one Beau and Bethany are at now, Annie Sims Elementary will definitely provide memories for all.

"Even though it is technically a different campus compared to when I was there, it was still the place where I have so many good memories starting school and making friends," Matt said.

"Hopefully they will enjoy it as much as I did and can make their own memories there that I will be able to be a part of."



Bethany and Beau at Annie Sims Elementary

The Sims Scene

Dr. Seuss Birthday

Favorite Storybook Character



100th Day of School



Back home: Former CDC student returns to campus now as school RN

By KELLY COWAN

MPISD Director of Communicatins

Corina Olvera Flores attended the Child Development Center (CDC) in 1999-2000 as a bright-eyed four-year-old in the PreK program. The CDC began as a Prekindergarten in 1991 and expanded its services to include Head Start and Early Head Start over the next 10 years.

Flores was among the first to attend the CDC in its current location when MPISD renovated the former Gibson's Department Store building in 1998. She remembers fondly her teachers Dorothy McCarver and Eva Velasquez.



Flores as student

Flores continued her education in MPISD attending Annie Sims and Frances Corprew Elementary Schools, P.E. Wallace Middle School, Mount Pleasant Junior High, and Mount Pleasant High School.

It was at MPHS where her curiosity about healthcare was peaked in the MPHS Health Science program. Upon graduation in 2013, Flores completed both the LVN and RN program right here in Mount Pleasant at Northeast Texas Community College.

Today, Flores is the RN Health Coordinator and part of the management team at the CDC, the literal place where it all began. When asked what made her want to take on the role of nurse at the CDC, she said it was her love for pediatrics and the need for bilingual health professionals within the field of school nursing.

"I love working with families and helping them get the resources they need," said Flores. "It is a blessing to be bilingual and to serve my Hispanic community in their own language. My favorite thing about working at the CDC is when I get to see our babies come to school with a smile, ready to have fun and play."

"Our ultimate, long-term goal for our CDC students is that they grow into adults that positively contribute to our community, and Corina embodies this," said CDC Principal, Jamie Cook.

"Corina is kind, compassionate, and a committed supporter of those around her. She works hard, not only to care for our students, but also to teach and empower their families with knowledge to support their children's overall well-be-



Flores was among the first students to attend CDC.

ing. Corina takes initiative to collaborate and build relationships with outside community health organizations to benefit our staff, children and families. Corina is committed to grow and learn and is always eager to help others in any way she can. To the CDC, Nurse Corina is a rock star, a superhero, a doting mother, a trusted coworker, a thoughtful sister, a strong woman, and the keeper of the band aids. And for many of our students, Nurse Corina is who they want to be when they grow up."

Flores and her husband, Erick, a 2010 MPHS graduate, have two daughters, Eliza and Clarissa, who also attended the CDC and MPISD schools, continuing the legacy started by their mom, Nurse Corina.

Celebration CDC

CDC

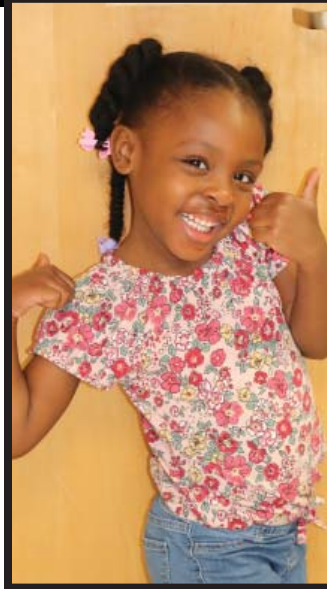
Q and A Time

“What do you want to do this summer”

The MPISD Child Development Center serves children 0-5 years of age in high quality preschool classrooms as well as pregnant mothers. The CDC offers Early Head Start providing early learning, care, and enrichment experiences, Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten engaging children and families to prepare for Kindergarten, and the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD). For more information and to apply, visit www.mpisd.net.

Some students took out their time to answer the question, *“What do you want to do this summer”*

Answers and photos compiled by Kelly Cowan



“Play with daddy”
--- Ja’Saiya Roberts, 5



“Play in my kitchen”
--- Kayland Shelton, 5



“Go to Sea World”
--- Kyleon Brown, 4



“I want to run”
--- Ethan Garrett, 5



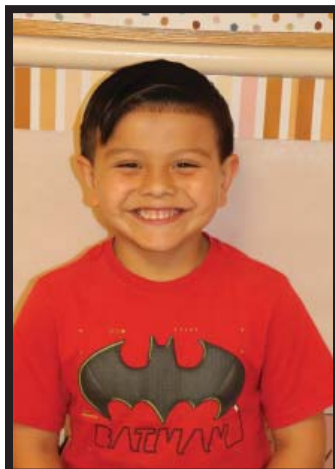
“Play water slides”
--- Bryson Weekley, 5



“Go to the park”
--- Rosalie Pye, 5



“Play with baby brother”
--- Enzo Ramirez, 4



“Have a party”
--- Aiden Zepeda, 5



“Play in the park with mama”
--- Matthew Munoz, 5



“The pool. My sister’s best friend has a pool.”
--- Yamileth Rodriguez, 4

MPISD Teachers of the Year



Kristi Houchin
Mount Pleasant High School



Ronald Henry
Mount Pleasant Junior High



Jason Barfield
P.E. Wallace Middle School



Natalie White
Annie Sims Elementary School



Sonia Garcia
E.C. Brice Elementary School



Marquita Peters-Jones
Vivian Fowler Elementary School



Tracey Collier
Frances Corprew Elementary School



Esther Okolo
Child Development Center

MPISD Employees of the Year

High School - Kay Hargrove
Junior High - Perla Mayfield
P.E. Wallace - Jaqueline Castro
Annie Sims - Marisa Ojendis
E.C. Brice - Sayra Netro
Vivian Fowler - Kerrie Holt
Frances Corprew - Jennifer Rangel Ballesteros
CDC - Flor Moreno
Early Head Start - Brittney Allen

Alumni Notes

Compiled by Editor John Whitten

Shelby Courreges

2020 graduate

CURRENTLY: Attending Texas Tech University and will graduate in December 2023. Shelby is majoring in physics with an astrophysics concentration and a minor in mathematics.

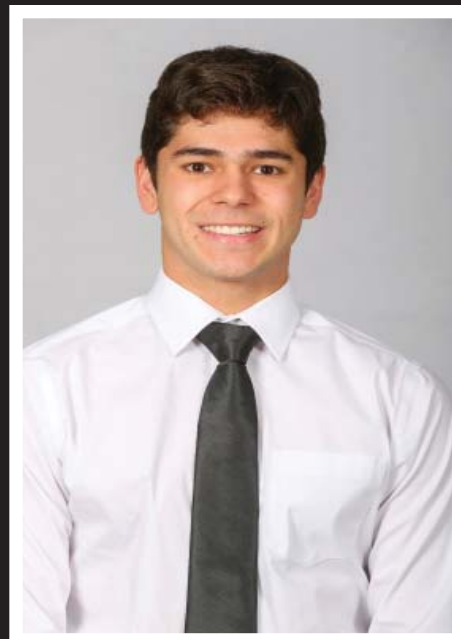
HOW DID MPHS EXPERIENCE PREPARE YOU FOR COLLEGE? Taking upper-level classes such as Dual Credit and AP at MPHS was a game changer for me as it set the stage for my college success. The advanced coursework not only refined my fundamental academic skills like reading, writing, critical thinking, and time management but also instilled in me the drive to pursue a type of excellence in my academics.

Being a STEM major, I have come to realize the significance of the classes of Algebra II and Statistics taught by Mrs. Russell. Although these classes may have seemed tedious while you are taking them, the mathematical skills I acquired have become the bedrock of my college education. I am grateful for Mrs. Russell's effort and support in shaping my mathematical foundation, and I am confident that I will carry the knowledge I gained from her classes throughout my life.

FAVORITE MPHS MEMORY: Having exchange students live with me and attend school with me at MPHS were some of my most cherished memories from high school. I believe that the experience broadened my horizons and taught me about diverse cultures. It was an eye-opening experience to learn about the customs, traditions, and values of different countries from my exchange students. Going to school with my exchange students was an adventure in itself. It was fascinating to watch how they approached their academics and see the stark differences in the educational systems of our respective countries. Not only did I learn from their unique perspectives, but they also encouraged me to embrace my own educational journey and approach it with newfound enthusiasm.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS: If there's one piece of advice that I would give to high school students, it would be to adopt a growth mindset and don't be too hard on yourself. I think that it is important that rather than solely focusing on getting the best grades or achieving a high class rank, that you should focus on developing a love of learning and a willingness to take on challenges. In addition, I would encourage people to explore different interests and career paths. High school is definitely a time for self-discovery and experimentation, so don't be afraid to try new things and take risks. High school is just one chapter of the story of your life. While it's important to work hard and do your best, it's equally important to enjoy the journey and make meaningful connections with others along the way.

COLLEGE EXPERIENCE: Reflecting on my college experience thus far, I think that I can confidently say that it has been a truly enriching and fulfilling time for me. Compared to my high school years, I find myself enjoying college life on a whole different level. The main reason is that unlike high school, I no longer have to wake up at the crack of dawn every day. I am also grateful for the opportunity to study something that truly captivates my interest. Attending lectures on topics that I'm passionate about often feels less like a chore and more like a rewarding experience. Overall, I find that college has provided me with the chance to grow as an individual, explore my interests, and connect with new groups of people. I think that the experiences and knowledge that I've gained thus far have helped shape me into the person I am today, and I'm excited to see what the future holds.



Ryan Sharp

2021 graduate

CURRENTLY: Attending Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island where I am pursuing an Accounting and Finance double major.

HOW DID MPHS EXPERIENCE IMPACT YOU? The experience that prepared me the most at MPHS was the time management. Balancing swim, school, debate, and other extra-curricular activities helped me learn how to be effective with my time.

FAVORITE MPHS MEMORY: My favorite memories from high school were travelling and competing in my extracurricular activities. There were so many fun car rides with my respective teams that I will always look back on.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS: The piece of advice I would give to high schoolers is learn to have fun while working towards a goal. Hard work and having fun do not need to be mutually exclusive.

COLLEGE EXPERIENCE: College has been lots of hard lessons and discipline. Being a part of a Division 1 program, I have come to learn that there are no short cuts to good grades or athletic achievements. If anyone wants to be truly successful, then it has to be earned.

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for your service
to MPISD!***



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