



*(website)*

**LAKE HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**9501 Ferndale Road, Dallas, TX 75238**  
**HISTORY**

**Before the Beginning:**

In the Lake Highlands area from 1903 to 1918, the white students attended Rogers School, and the African-American students attended Little Egypt School. Rogers School was located on land belonging to the Rogers family. The school was located near what is now the intersection of Audelia Road and Parkford Drive and consisted of one room.

In 1918 the state educational requirements necessitated the construction of a larger, two room school that was built on the same site. Grades one through six were in one room and grades seven through nine attended classes in the other room.

In 1929 the school was incorporated into the Richardson Independent School District. Many of the students and parents talked of a “Farmer’s Rebellion” to protest the school district annexation. Students were bused to Richardson for the next twenty-five years.

*This information is from a report compiled by Sam Childers who is a History Research Associate for Old Red Museum*

**The Beginning:**

The small group of mostly farmers’ children who lived in the area of RISD north of Northwest Highway, west of Jupiter Road, south of Forest Lane and the area surrounding “Flagpole Hill” had always been bused to the red RISD two-story school building in Richardson on Greenville Avenue. In the early 1950’s, developers began building houses mostly within the area surrounded by Plano Road (east), Kingsley Road (north), Audelia Road (west) and Northwest Highway (south). As a result, the elementary-aged student population began to increase.

The RISD Board of Trustees and Supt. J. J. Pearce looked into the future and saw that an elementary school site was needed in the Lake Highlands area. A site was purchased

from the Turtle Realty Company for \$2,750 an acre and the building of a six-room partial wing of what was to become Lake Highlands Elementary School was started in late 1954. It was projected to be ready for classes in the fall of 1955.

**The Board of Trustees in 1954** included: J. C. Handley, Lynn Floyd, C. G. Smith, W. H. Stults, R. L. Johnson, C. E. Terry, Charles Murphy, and J. J. Pearce – Superintendent.

**In the early summer of 1955**, a staff was selected to teach one section each of grades one, two, three, four and five. Students from the Lake Highlands and Flagpole Hill area were assigned to these teachers. It was apparent by the middle of August 1955 that the six rooms would not be ready for occupancy come September when school was to start. The decision was made to house these Lake Highlands Elementary students and teachers in the Greenville Avenue building until the new classrooms were ready for occupancy. The total number of students assigned to the new staff was just over 100.

Students within walking distance of the new building under construction were to walk to that site and be transported by a special bus to the school on Greenville Avenue in Richardson. Other students living outside of walking distance were picked up on the regular routes of the other school buses. The driver of the special bus was the newly assigned half-time principal of the school, Bill Passmore!

**After approximately six weeks**, the new rooms were ready; the temporary restrooms were sitting on a temporary porch on the east side of the building. The day finally came for the teachers and their students to report to the new Lake Highlands Elementary School. The charter faculty members of the brand new school were as follows: Mrs. Irene Johnson 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Mrs. Irma Davis 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Mrs. Malvin Bond 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Mrs. Nadyne Hill 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Mrs. Juanita Warren 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and Bill Passmore Principal. The second grade was the largest group with 28-29 students. The fifth grade had only 18.

At the end of the first day in the new building, one of the first graders was asked by his mother who his principal was; the first grader excitedly replied, “My bus driver!” Mr. Passmore served that first year as principal of the new Lake Highlands Elementary, but he also worked half time as business assistant to Superintendent J. J. Pearce.

The sixth room of the new school served as the principal’s office, the milk room (student’s brought sack lunches), and the storage room. As the building was in the middle of a large field, heavy rains during the summer did cause mud problems. Albert Davis, mechanic, custodian, bus driver, and over-all fix-it person for RISD, drove a bus to the building each morning and usually stayed most of the day. He was especially needed on rainy and muddy mornings to keep the building clean and sometimes to rescue mothers whose cars would become stuck in the mud holes around the building. One morning Davis came into the office holding a muddy skirt! Evidently, a mother’s car had become stuck and she had placed her skirt under the wheel for traction! The mother never called or came by to claim the lost item!

**The teachers and principal that first year** were a child-centered, but fun-loving group of people. An old barn sitting just off the school property to the north (where St. Patrick's church and school later were built) was always referred to jokingly as the "teacherage" by the staff. An "open house" was conducted after school one afternoon for other teachers "from Greenville Avenue." LHE teachers were dressed in clothes of the 1890's, some directing traffic as visitors drove to the building, and others greeting them at the door.

Although the furniture, supplies and teaching items were simple compared to today's classroom, that fact did not dilute the teaching and learning that went on in that "little school house on the prairie." The students were happy and serious about learning, and the teachers probably looked back over that year as one of their most successful years. Parents who had been residents of the area were ecstatic to have a school close by.

**Families moving into the new development** did not always know they were moving into the Richardson ISD. Because the area was in the city of Dallas, they assumed the little school was a part of the Dallas ISD. The real estate sales people did not, in most instances, volunteer the information!

Parents, moving in thinking they were in DISD, were very unhappy when they learned their children would be attending schools in the "country school district of Richardson." They were more than pleased with LHE, but they wanted their children to go to Hill Junior High and Bryan Adams High School of DISD after sixth grade. By the end of that first year at LHE, most of them were quite pleased to be in the "country school district!"

**Shortly after moving into the new building**, the teachers and principal wanted to find a better way of communicating with parents. It was decided that a newsletter sent home once each month would improve contact with parents. The newsletter included teacher-written news from each grade level and general information from the principal. Student written articles would also be included. The newsletter was called *The Highlander*.

A Parent-Teacher Association was not formed at the new school until the late spring when officers were elected for the 1956-57 school year. The PTA was formed in the hallway of the building in the spring of 1956. The first PTA president was Mrs. Charles (Betty) Bruce.

**In 1955-56 just before the end of the school year**, it was announced that Bill Passmore would not be back the next year. He had been appointed principal of Richardson High School. The new principal would be J. Alvin Smith who was coming in from outside RISD.

*Prepared by Bill Passmore –2004 (d. 2007)*

*(Note: Anyone reading the above gets a taste of who Bill Passmore really was; he was a true leader, the kind of principal we all dream of and some of us fear just a little bit because his expectations are so high, and the kind of person everyone admires. And, maybe best of all, Bill Passmore always had a twinkle in his eye and some fun up his*

*sleeve. Lake Highlands was lucky to start out with Bill Passmore as their leader. –By Sarah Scott, who attended LHElementary and wishes she had had Bill as **her** principal. Bill just had that love of human beings cornered. He was one of a kind; and the RISD was a better school district as a result of his leadership and the friendship he offered to each of us.)*

### **Beyond the Beginning:**

In September 1957, there were 18 classrooms and teachers plus a music, art, and PE teacher. There were 555 students (up from 344 the previous year). Activities that year included a school carnival that netted \$750 and a Book Fair. In September 1958 there were 31 classrooms, 30 teachers, 850 students. The carnival this year netted \$1357.20. In the spring of 1959 the PTA proceeds purchased an air conditioning unit, 24 fans, amplifier and a microphone.

**Growth in the LHE area exploded in the early 60's.** In 1960 the school housed only the first three grades with 810 students and 29 classroom teachers. In 1961 the fourth grade was added, in 1962 the fifth grade, and by 1963 the school was again serving grades one through six. In 1963 six new classrooms opened, 37 teachers on staff and 1109 students. Speed limit signs were put up and there were now sidewalks on three sides of the building. The sixth grade band program was started in 1965.

“J. Alvin Smith was principal for the three years that I taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade at LH Elementary between 1964-67. In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, we had 6 sections,” wrote Ann Adams in 2008. “At that time we had no air conditioning in the schools; and it was very hot in the springtime.” Adams, went on to become a principal at several RISD elementaries.

In 1973 the kindergarten program was started. By 1975 there were 701 students and 33 teachers. This year the first safety patrol was initiated. 1975-76 was the twentieth anniversary of the school and a Bicentennial year. The PTA planted an oak tree for the anniversary. At a PTA meeting, the program consisted of the fourth grade singing while other students did a parade of the fifty states. The students wore costumes representative of the past two hundred years. In 1978-79, the Dallas Museum of Natural History brought to LHE a display of Mammals of Dallas for the third grade to see. Also, later that year they brought a Birds of Texas display to the school.

**The yearly family picnic** for the opening of school each year is one tradition that has continued throughout the years. Some clubs organized at the school are the Chess Club for K-6<sup>th</sup> grade, Beta Club, Student Council, and the Guitar Club. A Family Math Nite was formed to introduce the parents to what students are studying in their math classes. It is a fun night that the entire family can enjoy. Usually there are 30 games to choose from for all ages. Later a Family Science Nite was formed.

**In 1986-87 L.O.A.N (Love One Another Now)** program was started. The program was set up to make available services for the students at the school to enable them to be nourished, clothed, and prepared for the classroom. The Clothes Closet in conjunction with RISD provides lunch money, school supplies, emergency medical funds, attendance

to the PTA plays for kindergarteners, and extra coats for field trips for the primary grades.

**A Good Deed chain was made.** The links represented honesty, compassion and responsibility. The chain grew quite large.

In 1997-98, the fifth and sixth grade students started a project to raise money for the fee to go to Camp Goddard. The camp is a science camp the students attend each year. The students didn't want anyone to miss going because of money problems. Mr. Hyatt, head custodian, suggested making snowmen to raise the money. A volunteer mother pursued the idea and now the students are into making valentines, bears, pandas, St. Patrick's Day Irish bears and spring rabbits.

In 2000, Kathy Holland was contracted to paint murals throughout the school. A park setting complete with winding paths, storybook characters sitting on a bench reading and swinging from the trees was the theme.

**A tile mosaic was made in the foyer of the school.** The theme was generated by the students and assembled by Charlotte Lindsey. LHE is unique in its rich cultural diversity. The students and parents worked with Ms. Lindsey to develop a project that would express the idea. First, the students discussed the school's culture and history. Second, the ideas had to translate verbal images into drawing. Third, part of the project was the installation of the mural. The mural depicts flags and symbols for many of the specific cultures at LHE.

**Bill Passmore (1955-56) was the first principal** followed by J. Alvin Smith (1956-, Weldon Morgan, Bill Passmore (1976-79), Mike Thomas, Sue Garcia, Libby Vernon, Caren Edelstein, Joyce Wilson, Karin Holacka, Angela Ribo, and Kim Sullivan (2008).

Assistant principals through the years have been Dr. Caren Edelstein, Pat Onley, Joyce Wilson, Anthony Moton, Kim Sullivan, Duane Kindle, Denise May, Ana Garcia and Suzanne Fields (presently).

The PTA members always wore their finest outfits to the meetings, and refreshment was also served. The Girl Scouts provided childcare for the older children for the meetings and the PTA hired a sitter for the younger children. The first PTA president was Mrs. Charles (Betty) Bruce followed by Mrs. Ralph Matthews, Mrs. Sid Holcomb, Mrs. E. M. Emmons, Mrs. L. J. Bicking, Mrs. Don Mary, Mrs. John Hoyt, Mrs. Harold Attaway, Mrs. Wilson Wilkins, Mrs. George Haney, Mrs. Lee Royal, Mrs. Brady Cox, Mrs. Donald King, Mrs. Edwin Kuny, Mrs. Phillip Reagan, Mrs. Nelson Ogden, Mrs. Shirley Grenminger, Mr. & Mrs. Dick Watkeys, Mr. & Mrs. J. Armbruster, Mr. & Mrs. L Flewharty, Mrs. Marla Mabry, Mrs. Carol Wilkins, Mrs. Eve Hoag Johnston, Mrs. Linda Cooper, Mrs. Kappy Bodecker, Mrs. Joyce McBroom, Mrs. Judy Beller, Mr. & Mrs. Ben Hyde, Mrs. Christine Taylor, Mrs. Vicki White, Mrs. Karen Flanagan, Mrs. Sue Kerr, Mrs. Lynette Stegeman, Mrs. Terri Justus, Mrs. Alisa Hake, Mr. Jerrel Sutton, Mrs. Nancy Rabe, Mrs. Diane Lowry, Mrs. Jan Gillis, Mrs. Nancy Sales, Mrs. Beth Hanks,

Mrs. Cinda Koch, Mrs. Patti Jaggars, Mrs. Tammy Williams, Noel Walling, and Anita Siegers

Ann Burke has been at LHE for 35 years and is still teaching there (in 2009!) and Kitty Shaw was there 30 years.

**The awards the school has received are:**

- Recognized by TEA for the TAAS in 1997, 98, 99, 2000, 2001
- Superintendent Medallion Award for great strides in student learning in 1999-2000
- Silver Cup Award for the school giving their time and energy to apply for Community Outreach in 1998-1999, 2001-02
- Silver Cup Award “Community Outreach – Bilingual Programs” 2004-05
- Recognized by TEA for TAKS 2006-07
- TBEC Honor Roll Campus 2007
- Region 10 Council of PTA Volunteer Services “Platinum Award” 2001, 2002, 2005-06 (Highest Award)
- Region 10 Council of PTA Golden Award 1990-00, 2002-03, 2003-04

**The “Space To Learn” project in 1990-91 was a big event**, which included the school, community, and district involvement. School officials planned to turn an old Richardson school bus into a rolling model of a space shuttle and make it the centerpiece of a study unit on space exploration.

A teacher received literature from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration describing a simulated space shuttle built by a school in Ohio. The teachers and school administrators thought “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could get the whole school, parents and the community involved in something like that?” Committees were organized to create the shuttle and plan the big launch. The school lined up financial assistance from the school district’s RISE Foundation and technical assistance from NASA and Rockwell International Corp.

**The school was decorated around a space theme.** Each hallway was named for a planet, galaxy or asteroid. The gymnasium was decorated as a space station. The space theme was incorporated into many school activities. Students, who traditionally draw a self-portrait at the beginning of the school year, drew themselves as astronauts.

Other activities included a family night of stargazing, a field trip to a planetarium and a visit from a NASA astronaut. All of the students had a role in the space shuttle operation. They were astronauts, ground crew, maintenance people, and people doing payload experiments – just like at NASA.

The yellow bus was transformed into a space shuttle. The seats were removed and the bus was painted white and decorated with the school logo and a donated panel from an old NASA Mercury capsule. Wings and folding parachutes were attached. Benches and stations were installed in the bus.

When the shuttle was launched in the spring, it traveled to other Richardson schools that served as alien nations. Fire extinguishers were used to simulate smoke and parachutes opened for the landing.

**Dr. Sanders wrote a “Space to Learn” rap** to help build enthusiasm for the program. Debbie Richard, music teacher, reworked the rap and put it to music. Mr. Richard of NASA came to the school to talk to the students about the National Space Program. He presented the school with an electrical panel from the “Mercury” program. Soviet Cosmonaut Vallentin Lebeden and his interpreter visited with LHE students. Lebeden was a flight engineer aboard the Soyuz T-5 mission to the Soviet Salyut 7 space station in 1982. He was in Dallas as part of the Soviet Space exhibit at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History. Members of the LHE School’s “Space to Learn” project visited the Space Medicine Lab at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and met a real astronaut, Dr. Drew Gaffney. Dr. Gaffney, associate professor of internal medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern and payload specialist for the NASA space lab Life Sciences 1 flight, is scheduled to go up on the space shuttle Columbia.

*Prepared by RRTA member Joann Zastoupil with material from LH Elementary’s first principal, Bill Passmore; a report by Dallas County historian Sam Childers; and the PTA Historian books. –2005*



**We celebrated our 50th Anniversary all year long in 2005/06!** We still have one more celebration to come. We will be placing the official "State of Texas Historical Plaque" with a ceremony finalizing the celebrations. Details will come once we have received the plaque from the state which takes time.

The first of four celebrations was held on Thursday, Oct. 13, 2005, with a community wide Family Picnic. Our students, staff and neighborhood friends celebrated with hot dogs, bratwurst, pizza and cookies! The picnic was held here at LHE on the playground from 5:30- 7:30pm.

In December we held a luncheon for our staff that included former teachers and staff as well as our very first principal Mr. Bill Passmore. A power point presentation was given showcasing the past 50 years. Lunch was served by Highlands Cafe and we also celebrated the retirement of one of our employees.

**A Commemorative Scrapbook** commemorating the 50th was put together by parent and PR person JJ Pair. Commemorative Bricks are being sold to be placed in front of the school under the Oak Tree which was planted commemorating LHE's 30th anniversary. If you are interested in purchasing a brick, e-mail JJ Pair at [rarepair@airmail.net](mailto:rarepair@airmail.net) or [pr4lhe@yahoo.com](mailto:pr4lhe@yahoo.com) Our third project for the event was a Commemorative Cookbook that was produced. Please email Angel Cochran at [Angel.cochran@risd.org](mailto:Angel.cochran@risd.org) for details. We are still accepting photographs taken at LHE- primarily in the early years. (Photos can be returned once scanned). Everybody in this area recognize the Wildcat mascot and LH school colors: red and white.

Information on the school website will be updated frequently. [www.risd.org/schools/lhe](http://www.risd.org/schools/lhe)

**History of LHE:** *From the website which has the school's history with photos*

Lake Highlands Elementary has the distinction of being the first elementary school built in Lake Highlands. When LHE opened its doors in October 1955, to a mere six classes, the entire Richardson Independent School District had only two buildings and fewer than 800 students. The Lake Highlands attendance area now encompasses nine elementary schools and two junior high schools, all of which feed into Lake Highlands High School (one of four high schools in the RISD).

[www.risd.org/schools/lhe/History](http://www.risd.org/schools/lhe/History)



*Lake Highlands Elementary School when under construction*

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

*Lake Highlands Elementary in 1955. (Website photo)*



**First LHE Staff-** Principal Bill Passmore, Juanita Warren, Nadyne Hill, Malvin Bond, Erma Dairs and Irene Johnson *(Photo courtesy of Sue Passmore)*



*J. Alvin Smith, LHE's second principal.*

By 1962, student population at LHE was up to nearly 600; and in the early 1970's, when this neighborhood's first growth cycle was at its peak, LHE served nearly 1,000 students. As this neighborhood's first generation of children grew older, the population of LHE declined; and as space became available in the building, RISD chose LHE as one of it's sites for several specialized programs, including bilingual education, pre-kindergarten, and one of the district's centralized special education program.

**In 1993, the youthful repopulation of Lake Highlands** became evident when LHE added extra classes to meet it's kindergarten, first and second grade enrollments. It is apparent that we are beginning the second generation as a traditional neighborhood school, with exciting new challenges and achievement potential ahead. Yet, LHE maintains its distinction in Lake Highlands in that our physical structure can accommodate some growth without the addition of portable classrooms.

During the 2001-02 school year, bond funds provided much-needed renovation and additions to our building. We had a new library and computer lab added on to the building. With our school being one of the oldest in the district, we fell under a "complete renovation" category. Hall by hall the school was closed off throughout the school year. Classes rotated in and out of temporary portable classrooms and the school was transformed into a brand new structure. The halls were painted, new flooring through out, and a newly configured main office space was added. The outside of the building still maintains it's original structural design, with updated windows, handicapped ramps, exterior doors and some fresh paint all became part of our changes.

**We just celebrated our 50th anniversary here at LHE.** Our pride goes deep and our wildcat beliefs grow strong! *After all... "Once a Wildcat, always a Wildcat!"*



*LHHS first graduating class, the Class of 1964, pictured here with teacher Nadyne Hill.  
(Photo courtesy of Sue Passmore)*

*Additions from the website...by Sarah Scott, LHE graduate '58, LHHS Class of '65*