

FIRST WARD ELEMENTARY RECORDS, 1980-2013

5.3 c.f. (6 document boxes, 4 flat boxes, 1 cylinder, 1 cassette tape , 2 DVDs, 1 floppy disk)

ABSTRACT

First Ward Elementary, today known as First Ward Creative Arts Academy, is located at 715 North Caldwell Street in one of the oldest and most culturally diverse neighborhoods in uptown Charlotte. Originally built in 1900 and named North School, it was one of three schools in Charlotte's first public school system; the others were the South School, and Myers Street School, for African-American children. First Ward is the only one of the three still operating on the same site, although the school has been rebuilt several times. First Ward is now a full arts integration magnet school, for grades K-5.

This collection contains articles, programs, publications, photographs, negatives, slides, artifacts, DVDs, an audio cassette, and a floppy disk.

ACCESS

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PREFERRED CITATION

Cite as: First Ward Elementary Records, 1980-2013, Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

ACQUISITION

Presented by the Staff of First Ward Elementary.

Processed by Hannah Cox, 2014.

HISTORICAL NOTE

First Ward Elementary, initially named North School, was built in 1900, following two other schools in the 1880s. The plans for the school, submitted by Frank P. Milburn, had

been originally intended as a hospital. Accommodating white children only, North School served grades one through five, and a city-wide tenth grade. J.A. Bivens was the first principal.

Over the next few years, Bivens would be replaced by H.P. Harding, and a city-wide eleventh grade was added. In 1912, the decision was made to divide North School in two, with North School housing grades six through eleven, and a newly named First Ward, grades one through five. First Ward's first principal became Allie Nooe. The two buildings were later united in 1925, following the formation of Central High, for senior high school students, and Alexander Graham, for junior high grades, leaving grades one through six, as First Ward Elementary.

By the 1950s, First Ward was no longer a school for white students, due to the migration of their families to the suburbs. Alexander Street School became overcrowded, and moved into the old First Ward building, and brought about the addition of another building facing Caldwell Street. For a while, Alexander Street and First Ward Schools shared a principal. The school system built a new school building in 1967 in front of the old North School, which was torn down afterwards. Alexander Street School closed two years later, and First Ward returned to being a school for first through sixth grades, with African-American children.

During this time, desegregation and urban renewal began. Although many white families had previously left First Ward, many middle and upper class African-American families remained. Some of these families were caught in the redevelopment of the area, and pressured to leave as well. Earle Village, a housing project, replaced the homes in this community. In 1969, desegregation brought white children from the suburbs back into First Ward, along with white teachers. The principal, Preston Allison, was African-American, and urged all of the parents to work together to improve the school for all of their children. Beginning with small projects, the parents did just that, and in a few years advanced the school greatly.

Cleo Gullick became principal in 1981, and continued the push for parental involvement, while also emphasizing academic excellence. First Ward Elementary became a National School of Excellence in 1987, and was visited by Vice-President Dan Quayle. Patricia Holleman became principal that year, and two years later, new buildings were completed. In 1991, Carl Flamer, who had served as Assistant Principal under Holleman, became principal. By 1994, the Magnet School Program came to Charlotte, and the following year, First Ward Elementary became First Ward Accelerated Learning Academy. First Ward received the honor of being named a School of Distinction in 2000, and celebrated its centennial anniversary.

The building currently housing First Ward Creative Arts Academy was built in 2003. This elementary school specializes in “arts integrated learning experiential learning across all curriculum using elements of dance, music, theatre arts, and visual arts.” Children attending the school come from all around Charlotte, and are placed through lottery.

REFERENCES

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. “First Ward Creative Arts Academy.”
<http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/firstwardES/Pages/Default.aspx>

Jones, Nancy Byerly and Deborah Washam Fullbright. *...and This is a True Story, First Ward Recollections of Yesterday*. Charlotte, NC: The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, 1985.

Kooy, Debbie; Nancy Jones; and Debbie Fullbright, *First Ward, Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow*, 1984.

RELATED MATERIALS

First Ward Elementary School. *Of the People: Written, Illustrated and Spoken by First Ward Elementary Fourth Graders, 2008-2009*. Charlotte: Main Street Rag Pub. Co., 2009. (Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room call number: Carolina Author, 323.11)

Yearbook. Charlotte: First Ward Elementary School, 1984-2010. (Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room call number: NCR Yearbooks, NCR 9756)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The First Ward Elementary Records consists of items relating to First Ward Elementary, the surrounding area, and the staff and children in attendance. The bulk of the collection is from 1980-2005, with some outliers. The series includes Ephemera, History, Programs, Publications, Photographs, Negatives, Slides, and Artifacts.

Ephemera, 2005 and n.d., includes printed materials such as thank you cards, and student ephemera such as badges.

History, 1980s-2000s, comprises Charlotte, the First Ward neighborhood, and First Ward Elementary histories. These contain photocopies, histories, and notes from events.

Programs, 1976-2010, includes programs from school building anniversaries and dedications, along with children's school programs.

Publications, 1960-2009, encompasses newspaper and school publications. The newspaper publications consist of articles written by and about First Ward Elementary staff and students. The school publications comprise booklets, brochures, handbooks, manuscripts written about the school, reports, songs, student work, and yearbooks.

Photographs, 1980s-2000s, consists of predominantly color photographs of administration, buildings, class, events, groups, programs, publicity, staff, students, teachers, visitors, and workshops.

Negatives, 1980s-2000s, includes some of the negatives to the above photographs. Most of these concern events in which children participated.

Slides, 1980s-2000s, comprises three slides of events.

Audio/Visual, 2000-2009, includes two DVDs and one cassette of events important to First Ward Elementary.

Artifacts, 1980s-2000s, encompasses ephemera, clothing, scrapbooks, oversize items, and vinyl signs. These boxes contain a brass bell, bumper stickers, buttons and pins, clothing and a fabric bag, laminated newspaper articles, ribbons, scrapbooks, signature stamps, a three-way marker, and vinyl signs.

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