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CHS Alumni Association Seeks Input on New Middle School Learning Center Name

<Clinton>, <MO>, <June 2, 2014> As a result of the successful 2013 bond initiative, the Clinton School District is looking forward to the completed construction of the new media/learning center (library) at the Clinton Middle School facility on Clinton Street. The Clinton High School Alumni Association has been charged with proposing a potential name for this exciting new facility to the school district Board of Education and is seeking community input.

During a series of meetings, a group of CHS alumni and district staff discussed a list of names submitted for consideration as a memorial or honorary title for the new learning center. The categories considered were **District Administrator**, **District Teacher**, or **Community**

Leader/District Supporter. The following list of names are under final consideration for this honor:

District Administrator: Arthur Lee (12-29-1874 to 12-9-1953)

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Arthur Lee was a Principal at Jefferson Park School and then the Superintendent of the Clinton School District from 1900-1944, leaving bound scrapbooks to the Henry County Museum as a

historical record of the School District during his tenure. A tribute to Mr. Lee was also drafted by former student and Clinton Mayor Charles A. Calverd describing him as “His practicability was ideal, his judgment unerring, his learning profound. He had a wit that sparkled, a personality that was magnetic, a gentleness and kindness towards all that was contagious. His speeches, like his writings, were always instructive and entertaining. They were characterized by stateliness of thought and clearness of utterance...his vocabulary was inexhaustible.Mr. Lee was a leader who never sought or assumed leadership, but one whom people unconsciously followed.” Mr. Lee successfully navigated the district and thousands of students and families through two World Wars, the Great Depression and the Spanish Flu – the nations’ most deadly pandemic. His legacy was memorialized in a portrait at the old high school painted by noted artist Louis Freund who was born and raised in Clinton.

Teachers:

Adah Peckenpaugh (5-24-1914 to 5-16-2007)

Miss Adah E. Peckenpaugh was an English teacher for the Clinton School District for 40 years retiring in 1977. Beyond preparing literally thousands of students in language arts/communications, Miss Peckenpaugh was honored in the 1960’s by then-Governor Jim Blair when he established the first group of Academy of Missouri Squires to honor outstanding Missourians. Along with the first group of Missouri Squires are such notables as former President Harry Truman, baseball’s Stan Musial and artist Thomas Hart Benton.

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Joyce Rife

Joyce Rife was hired during the 1984-1985 school year to teach middle school language arts. Mrs. Rife served 20 years at Clinton Middle School before her death. She was the Clinton School District Educator of the Year 2001-2002. Comments regarding Mrs. Rife as an educator included: "Prepares and implements a variety of teaching methods/strategies to ensure student engagement and learning. Innovative!" "Works well with all ability levels and learning styles demonstrating vast knowledge in several content areas. Utilizes many diverse resources to provide opportunities for students." "Establishes high expectations for all students. Provides specific evaluative feedback on student performance." Establishes an environment where students self-monitor their behavior. Sensitive to all students." "Volunteers in many areas that will positively impacts students. Mrs. Rife sincerely cares about all students' success. She is very innovative and a leader at CMS."

A colleague noted "Joyce had a tremendous impact on both students and teachers. She is the perfect example that 'what' we teach is not nearly important as 'who' we teach. She was extremely student-centered in her teaching and ALWAYS had the students' best interests at heart. She routinely reached out to the students who didn't quite fit in and dedicated extra time and attention to those students. At team meetings, she could be counted on to have positive things to say about those students with whom others were struggling. Our students became her 'children' - they loved her and they knew she loved them. As a teacher, I admired the fact that Joyce was always searching for new and better ways to teach. She was an experienced teacher but was never willing to be satisfied with her teaching. She was consistently one of the first to volunteer to try a new strategy or to attend training on a new idea. She was a lifelong learner and inspired those around her to be so as well.

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Joyce was an effective mentor for many new teachers. All teachers share their knowledge with their students. Truly outstanding, excellent teachers inspire their students and those around them to learn

more, achieve more, and excel. Joyce was one of those teachers. She was able to help students find the books that fit them and she was knowledgeable about the current books available for young people; students came up to Joyce to talk about the books they were reading. She loved all things related to literacy.” She was diagnosed with cancer at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year and passed away on October 22, 2004.

Carole Wright

Mrs. Wright began her teaching career in 1966 in Garden City after finishing her degree. She taught there 3 years before moving to Deer Creek schools where she taught Grades 1-8 for three years before accepting a position with the Clinton School District. For 15 years, Mrs. Wright taught 5th Grade for the Clinton School District and started the CAPS program for gifted students as well as the Clinton Future Problem Solvers (FPS) Program, taking many teams to state competitions and a few to Internationals. The Missouri House of Representatives passed a resolution commending her for being chosen Outstanding Educator of the Gifted in 1997 by the Gifted Association of Missouri. The Mayor also made a proclamation commending Mrs. Wright for her assistance on his Drug Free Committee.

In the last four years of her career, she was the Assistant Superintendent where she was mainly in charge of curriculum for the district as well as the A+ program. Mrs. Wright officially retired in 2000 although she continued to work in the superintendent’s office for another year. In total, Mrs. Wright’s teaching career spanned 39 ½ years. She was a pioneer in team teaching (with Mrs. Boyles)

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at Southeast/Henry Elementary; was “Educator of the Year” in 1986-1987; and received the Delta Kappa Gamma International Teacher’s Organization “You Showed Us Award for Missouri;

Community Leader/District Supporter:

J.C. Smith

Clinton High School Alumni Association presented its first annual alumni association award to graduate J.C. Smith. Mr. Smith was honored by the Alumni Association Board with the Distinguished Alumni Award for his “personal commitment to the betterment of our schools, our students, and our community.” Beyond his tireless hours with the local Boy Scout troops, Mr. Smith is also credited with establishing the CHS START program to promote community betterment, youth volunteerism, and student access to post-secondary education through the A+ program. “As a lifelong resident and leader in our community, J.C. has shown time and time again that just residing in a community is not enough. You don't find many people that are willing to give back the way that J.C. has!”

The CHS Alumni Association welcomes your feedback on the Learning Center naming process. You can e-mail your thoughts on the selection to Micah Melling at micahmelling@gmail.com, post a comment on the Learning Center Naming Post on the Alumni Association Facebook page, or drop a note to the Alumni Association through Marvin Rhoads at Rhoades Fashion Boot, 128 S. Main.

For more information on the alumni association, please visit the association’s webpage at www.clintoncardinalalumni.com

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