

Looking back on RSF School's impressive history

The school history for Rancho Santa Fe commences in 1887 when the Aliso School District was formed. In 1905 Ferdinand Cohen and his neighbors erected a one-room wood frame school building and named it the Aliso Canyon School. As years went on, and particularly after the Santa Fe Land Company began to develop what is now Rancho Santa Fe, the number of families in the area increased. In the early 1920s, students moved into the Village of Rancho Santa Fe where a new Lilian Rice-designed building, located on the northwest corner of La Granada and Paseo Delicias, was being completed. Their first graduating class had one student, Ivy Fidero (Laughter), who recently passed away. Several years later Mrs. Laughter, Principal Glenda Sumida, (also a Rancho School graduate) and Esther Goshorn (our youngest student at the time) unveiled the "First School" historical plaque.

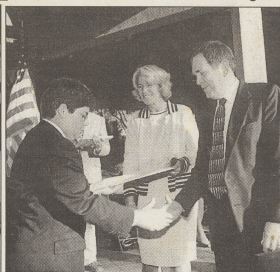
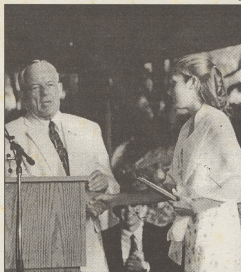
In 1927 we officially became the Rancho Santa Fe School District. By 1931 there were more students on the Ranch and it was time to construct a larger schoolhouse, which the community did. This is now the Association building and 35 to 40 students, with two teachers, moved into the building in the early 1930s. Rancho Santa Fe was slowly being discovered and by 1947 there were 47 students, K through 6. By the early 1950s the school population had increased to more than 100 and the Association building was no longer large enough. It also failed to meet new California earthquake standards so a third, and the present school site, fronting on La Granada and Avenida de Acacias, was selected. The first seven-room building here was completed in 1955. Numbers continued to grow and in 1960 some classes returned to the Association building. In 1961, the addition of the second four-room

wing and 200 students, grades K through 6, came together on the same campus.

About that time the community was recognizing the need for a library and the district sold 1/3 of an acre to the new Library Guild for \$1. This was the first of several transactions between Guild and school which has helped make possible a lovely library for the community and facilities and programs for our students. By 1968 the school was bulging again and the community approved construction bonds and authorized the return of seventh and eighth graders from the junior high in Solana Beach. 1971 saw completion of the Middle School and present administration building and all students, K through 8, were educated in the local school. Following a very generous contribution by Gene Fletcher and the dedication of a new Rancho Santa Fe Youth Board (with original members guaranteeing construction loans for up to \$10,000 each) a school gym and youth center was constructed.

The community and its school population continued to grow slowly but inexorably over the next years with classes housed, at various times, in the Fire Station and in portable classrooms located on school and Association property. The Middle School library, auditorium, art and computer rooms were also being used for classrooms by the late 1980s. In March, 1991, district residents overwhelmingly approved a bond measure and the two-story building was completed in time for September 1992 classes. The new 13-room addition has 11 classrooms, a large art studio, and facilities for special education and music. It also permits us to use Middle School and older facilities for the purposes for which they were planned.

In addition to the increasing enrollment of 2002-03, the most sig-



THE PAST AND THE FUTURE OF RSF SCHOOL— (Left) Former RSF School Superintendent Dr. Roger Rowe congratulated students at this year's graduation ceremonies in June as did (right) current RSF School Superintendent Dr. Dan Vinson (with RSF School Board President Kathy Stumm, center). For photos of the recent first day of school, see page B23.

nificant development impacting the school program during recent years has been the increasing and very important role played by the Parent Teacher Organization and the Rancho Santa Fe Community School Endowment Fund. The opportunities these two organizations and their parent and community members provide for students make more complete their lives of today and, hopefully, will lead to fuller and more rewarding years ahead. The potential, dedication and will demonstrated by parents through these organizations enable our children and their teachers to make the most of each school day.

During the period 1991-1996, school enrollment increased by 113 students. From 1996 to the close of the 2000-01 school year 109 additional children arrived, with 74 of those arriving from March 2000 to June 2001. The 1990 projection of "700 students by the year 2000"

matched the growth of the community, when 700 were in district classrooms in January 2000. Despite the growth since that time, class sizes remain quite small because of state support at grades K-3 and endowment provision of additional grade 4-8 teachers. Growth within the Covenant area has accelerated and many additional students are anticipated from Rancho Cielo, with over 500 homes, and The Bridges, with approximately 250 in district residences. The district has needed to make use of relocatables during recent years in order to realize the benefits of smaller classes at a time of significantly increasing growth. We have been engaged for several years in the search for a second school site to serve the area close to the Bridges and Cielo and other growth anticipated from developments north of Escondido Creek. The architect is proceeding with plans for construction of a school

addition on the present site, which will enable us to serve the southwest portion of the district and make possible removal of the relocatables.

2001 also marked the end of an era with the retirement of Dr. Roger Rowe, who worked for the district for 43 years, 37 of those years as its superintendent. The district welcomed Dr. Daniel Vinson as its new superintendent.

From the parents and neighbors who constructed the Aliso Canyon School in 1905 to the community-supported addition of 1992 and school-and parent-provided programs of 2002-03, Rancho Santa Fe has worked to plan and provide well for its children, that they might be prepared to become participating and successful citizens. We seek to provide a school which academically and in all regards reflects this splendid community and enhances the values and welfare of all our citizens.

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