



Then and Now

Stillwater in School Since 1889

Stillwater High School celebrated the Class of 2017 last month inside Gallagher-Iba Arena. The gathering heard from students and administrators about the year that was.

And so, the memories flow for a 1985 SHS graduate. Many of those memories come from an area between 8th and 12th Avenue from Duncan to Duck.

In August 1889, a city charter empowered a three-member board of education to levy taxes for schools to purchase school sites and erect buildings. That first school board consisted of Parker Milligan, Charles Willis, and Nathan Davis. A faculty of one – Edward Clark – was hired.

A group of 30 students gathered for instruction in Stillwater's first two-story building on the northwest corner of 9th and Main. Amon Swope opened the town's first bank downstairs.

By December 1889, led by Hays Hamilton, the school board had raised \$185 and education's place in the community continued its steady progress. Clark was replaced by Harry Donart and by the summer of 1890 there were three school rooms – the Swope building, one at 119 West 9th, and another on the northeast corner of 8th and Main.

By 1891, School District 16 was organized and the first school building was erected, a two-room structure on Lewis between 11th and 12th Avenue. In the fall of 1892 a second school was built between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, Jefferson School, now housing the Board of Education. Jefferson's southern rival, Lincoln School, on 12th between Lewis and Lowry Streets, opened in 1900.

But the hub of community education for more than 100 years was between 8th and 9th Avenue, Duncan to

Duck. Stillwater's first high school, Alcott School, opened in 1896 just south of 8th Avenue. Built by Louis Jardot, the school brought about grumblings from some in the community because it was "too big and a waste of money."

From one small building, the block has gone through myriad change.

Horace Mann School opened in 1910 and became the high school and junior high with Alcott housing elementary school students. Old South High, on the corner of 12th and Duck, opened in 1919 and served as the high school until 1942 when North High, now the Community Center, became the high school and South High the junior high until 1960 when C.E. Donart High School, now Stillwater High School, opened on the north side of town.

Get all that?

Until 1987, North High served as the Middle School, home to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders that also included short walks to South High for Industrial Arts and various classes.

While sitting in the spacious Gallagher-Iba Arena for yearly commencement, it does not hurt to think about the educational foundation that started near downtown Stillwater between 8th and 12th.



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The Stillwater Community Center Foundation and the Friends of Stillwater Community Center strive to provide supplemental resources for the Stillwater Community Center to ensure its accessibility, affordability and sustainability for its use by residents and visitors of Stillwater and surrounding area. Visit www.sccfriends.com for more information.

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