



Remembering Hutch

Hutcheson Junior High 1970-2015

The final day of the school year, June 5, 2015, was also the final day for “Hutch.” Now just a few weeks into the summer break, all the furniture, books, computers and school supplies are being moved out. The old, worn out school building is about to come down.

The students who would have attended Hutcheson next year will consolidate with Workman Junior High, while a new districtwide Career and Technical Center will eventually rise up to take Hutch’s

place on Pioneer Parkway. The 2014 Bond package is enabling this progress, but progress doesn’t make it easy to say goodbye to the much-loved junior high.

Opened in 1970, multiple generations – many from the same families – have called Hutch their school. The students and teachers who passed through gave Hutcheson the vibrant life it has known for over four

decades, and they will maintain the legacy and impact of the junior high long after the building has been razed.



THE BEGINNING

Hutcheson wasn’t always Hutch. The building first opened in 1963 as Sam Houston High School, just the second high school in Arlington. It was a big deal for the rapidly growing city to split its teenagers between Arlington High School and this new building flanked by farmland. The 1964 Cherokee, Sam Houston High School’s first yearbook, described it this way:

“On September 4, 1963, when the halls of Sam Houston High School first echoed with the sounds of shuffling feet and students’ voices, a long tradition was broken, that of having one high school in our community. Along with that broken tradition, a certain amount of unity among the youths of Arlington was lost forever. But as the weeks passed and we at Sam Houston became friends, the knowledge that the group attending Big Sam were members of an undertaking which had great promise more than compensated for any broken traditions and lost unity.”

As Sherry Furgeson Ball, a member of the first “Big Sam” class, put it, “In other words, we never looked back. The Class of 1965 didn’t follow traditions, we made traditions.”



A photo of Sam Houston High School in the 1966 yearbook.

Ball attended a memorial event for Hutcheson and Sam Houston in the final days before the school closed and shared memories from the first year. She recalled how the bell that still rings at Big Sam football games was a gift from her class.

“It was found by accident on a lazy Sunday drive around town. Two students saw it in the yard of a second hand store and thought it would be a great idea to buy it. We thought we only had to come up with \$165, which we did by shaming people into donating their lunch money many times over. We found out that bell was much like life, with hidden expenses and responsibilities. We had to have a trailer. We had to register that trailer. We had to insure the bell and the trailer ... an early lesson that good ideas aren’t always as simple as

we think.”

While 1963 was full of good memories for that first class, the year also held tragedy. Bell continued:

“Just a little shy of three months into that fall semester in 1963 we were devastated when we heard over the PA that President John F. Kennedy had been shot just 20 miles away. My strongest memory of that day was changing classes, and not a word was spoken in the halls. All you heard were shuffling feet and a few sobs.”



By the third year of Big Sam, the school was already filling up. A new wing was built, but the building couldn't keep up with the pace of Arlington's growth. So by 1970, Sam Houston moved out and into the new larger building on Sam Houston Drive.

Thus, in the fall of 1970, the name on the building changed to Guy C. Hutcheson Junior High. Don Carson occupied the principal's office and took on the responsibility for developing the new school. Jannette Workman, the school's first history department chair and Texas history teacher from 1970-1996, joked that they had the only school with a parking lot big enough for 300 cars but had no students who could drive.

Hutcheson was a fitting name for the new school and still evokes strong emotions for the highly-respected namesake. His own education, adventure and successful career comprised the type of legacy and example any school district would covet as an example and inspiration for its students.

Guy C. Hutcheson was born in Springtown, Texas, the youngest of nine children. "Always a dedicated student," wrote Hutcheson's grandson Brantley Hightower, "he earned a degree in the emerging field of radio engineering at Texas A&M University. With that technical education, he was able to launch a career that literally allowed him to see the world."

In the 1930s he traveled to a part of the world most will never see when he joined Admiral Richard E. Byrd's second Antarctic expedition as a radio operator. An article from the Arlington Daily News on April 7, 1969, recounted the adventure:

“A youth of just 21, just graduated from Texas A&M and holding down a good job during the depression years with Texaco Texas Co., Hutcheson says it was adventure that attracted him to the Byrd expedition and 13 months of seal meat, snow and new experiences that he will never forget.

“For Hutcheson it was a totally new world, going from the mild climate of Texas into the fierce, cold climate of the Antarctic where temperatures have been known to drop as much as 80 degrees below zero.”

In the 1940s Hutcheson worked as an engineer for CBS in New York before returning to Texas. He started an engineering company in Arlington where he and his wife, Ruth Beal, raised their two children and played an active role in the community. Brantley Hightower, one of their five

grandchildren, wrote, “Hutcheson was part of a generation of early Arlington professionals who selflessly helped build the city that we know today.”

As a leader in the city, Hutcheson served on the AISD Board of Trustees for 19 years, often as the secretary and chair of the school naming committee. During his tenure the district planned and built 27 new school buildings. Eventually, after he had retired, one would be named for him. When Sam Houston High School left its original building for a new, larger one, a junior high was planned to take its place.

An article in The Citizen Journal on April 9, 1970, announced the new junior high would be named for Hutcheson:

“You know the present Sam Houston High School building that will become a junior high and which was named Emma Ousley Junior High School about a year ago when plans for the fifth junior high were first disclosed?”

“Well, it’s been renamed again!”

“Acquiescing to the wishes of a group of parents who live in the area that the new junior high school ‘be given an entirely new name,’ the board of education Tuesday evening accepted the suggestion of the naming committee that the building be known as Guy C. Hutcheson Junior High.”

TEACHERS

Teachers are the heartbeat of a school, and Hutcheson has had many great ones. While the students attended for two or three years, many of the teachers taught at Hutcheson for many more than that – even decades.

Some, like Jannette Workman, Hutcheson’s first history department chair and Texas history teacher from 1970-1996, taught multiple generations within the same family. “I had grandkids of students I taught,” she said. Workman remembers her time at Hutch with great fondness. “We used to have fun here as teachers.”

One of Workman’s proudest memories is from 1986 when she and the seventh-grade class made a tile mosaic that celebrated the Texas sesquicentennial. It hung at the school’s front entrance near the source of Workman’s inspiration, a similar mosaic, which is 10 years older and commemorated the U.S. bicentennial. Workman convinced a company in Fort Worth to donate the tile and used a

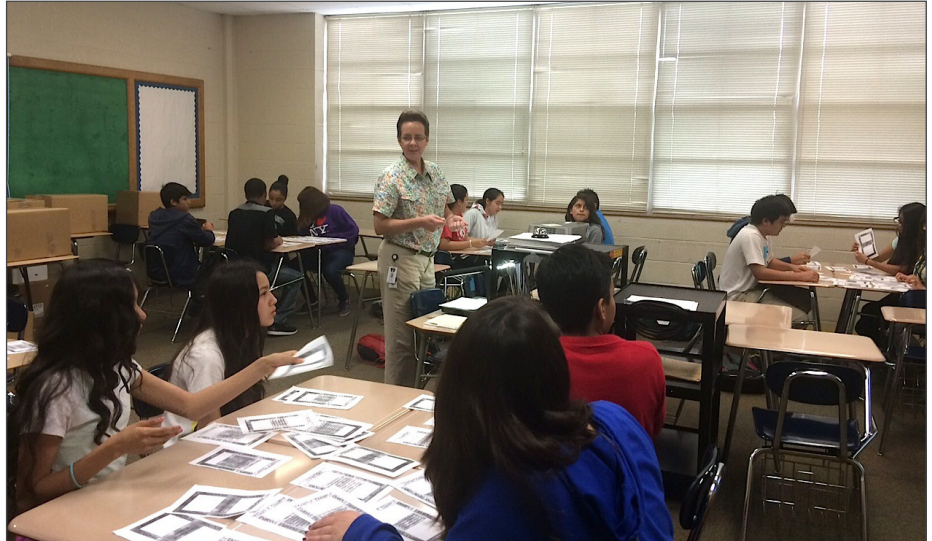


Jannette Workman and Elizabeth Zimmerman with the mosaic they made in 1986.

hammer in her home to smash it all into small pieces. Then each seventh grader helped place all the pieces into the mosaic.

The same year she put the mosaic together, a college student at the University of Texas at Arlington began her student teaching at the junior high. “I had two great mentors – I can tell you that,” Shelley Bulin said about the teachers she worked under, Brenda Duckworst and Marsha Freeman.

Bulin had such a great experience she didn’t want to leave. When she drove away from the school – with tears in her eyes – after completing her student teaching, little did she realize it was just the beginning. She began substitute teaching at Hutcheson the following semester and was hired the next year in 1987 as a Texas history teacher. When Hutcheson closed its doors for the final time in 2015, Bulin was still teaching. In fact, she was teaching in room 136, the same room where she did her student teaching.



Shelley Bulin teaching Texas history in 2015 in the same classroom she did her student teaching in 1986.

“She’s an amazing teacher, by the way,” raved Hutcheson’s last principal, Inelda Acosta. “She’s not going to say it, but I’ll say it for her... She really sparks and motivates their learning.”

For 28 years, Bulin’s motivation has come from the students she teaches and loves. “The drive that I have hasn’t changed to give the students these life-long lessons,” she said. “I give it my all every day ...”

Bulin is quick to tout the benefits that the future Career and Technical Center, which will replace Hutcheson, will bring for the community and district. But she is also sad. “This is my toolbox,” she said of her classroom. This room and the school are “like my second home.”

“It’s been a good school,” she reminisced, with lots of good memories, friends and colleagues. She quoted former Hutcheson principal Anita Buttrum about the junior high: “This is the best kept secret in Arlington.”

Not far behind Bulin in terms of Hutcheson tenure is Coach Debra Stroud. Hutcheson’s final year was Coach Stroud’s 20th at the school. She has coached every sport but football and practically bleeds Hutcheson purple.

“Every year is a good year,” she said. “Every kid that I’ve ever had impacts me.”

The news that Hutcheson was closing was difficult for Stroud. “It’s very sad,” she admitted. “It’s a sad thing to see something so powerful go.” At first she considered retiring when Hutcheson closed, but then realized she isn’t ready. “It’s a new beginning, a new start,” she said. You have to “walk in, take the bull by the horns and go.”

Lashall Jones took the bull by the horns when she first joined the Hutcheson faculty back in 2003. She threw herself into the job. "I practically lived at that school," she said. "Nothing can compare to that job."

From 2008-2013 Jones served as the site coordinator for the Century 21 Grant, a grant that provided funds to implement before- and after-school programs to help

students who might be struggling. It gave kids the opportunity to do things not included in the normal school day, like extra tutoring, soccer, boxing and cooking classes, among other activities. Jones even taught an ESL class for parents. Whatever was needed, she tried to provide.

Jones also started the Hutcheson step team, "The Lady Show Stoppers." "That was my baby," she said. The team was very successful and even traveled to places like Atlanta and St. Louis for competitions, winning many awards. The step program gave Jones the opportunity to mentor young girls who lacked strong female role models and help them become young women.

"We had the best kids in Arlington, Texas," she gushed. "They loved us and we loved them." However, Jones admitted, they weren't always happy with her. "I was the witch... My goal was to help them succeed" and learn life-lessons to take on to high school and the rest of their lives. If that meant being strict and making students do their schoolwork, then so be it.

"It's bittersweet," Jones said about the school closing, "because Hutch blessed my life. I had some awesome leaders – Rosemary Bolden was awesome, David Tapia was awesome, Sam Nix was awesome ... We loved those kids."



Jones reminisced about the camaraderie and the shared goal of caring for and educating the students. "My fondest memory is how we were family." Even after she left Hutcheson, the faculty remained close. When Jones' son passed away recently, they rallied around her "like I was still a member of that staff. They've been there."

"There will never be

another Hutch,” Jones declared.

Workman, Bulin, Stroud and Jones are just a few of the hundreds of teachers who have called Hutch their second home. They gave of themselves year after year to serve Arlington’s seventh, eighth and ninth graders. It is they who are most responsible for the positive legacy and thousands of enriched lives that came out of Hutcheson Junior High.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

Memories can’t all be good, and the same is true at Hutcheson. Aging can be difficult and the school went through a rough patch in the early 2000s. In bad shape and developing a poor reputation, it was struggling academically. But a rapid, remarkable revival served as a testament to the dedication and character of its teachers and administrators, along with its students.

David Tapia helped lead the turnaround. He had been the principal at Ferguson Junior High – the first and only principal that school had ever had – and was content to stay. But when the AISD superintendent asked him to go to Hutcheson, Tapia took the challenge.

After only one year, Hutcheson started to turn the corner and moved out of academic sanctions. “I’m really proud of what we did at Hutch,” Tapia said. Faculty threw themselves into turning the school around. Tapia and others, including one of the assistant principals, Sam Nix, went door to door in the surrounding neighborhoods talking to the community about their school. People were truly sad about its condition, Tapia recalled, and were grateful someone was trying to fix it.



Students were allowed to write on the walls the last week of school and many wrote thank you messages like this one to teachers.

As the faculty changed the school’s culture, parent involvement increased. High teacher turnover stopped. Transfers out slowed and enrollment soared from 600 to 1,000. By the end of the third year, according to Tapia, they were hitting on all cylinders. In years four through six the school even received academic distinctions from the state of Texas.

“It was a team effort,” Tapia emphasized. He praised other faculty for their leadership, specifically Shelley Bulin. “She was a big part of our transformation.”

Nix, then an assistant principal at Hutcheson and now the principal at Seguin High School, looked back at that time and shared his reflections:

“I appreciate the opportunity to share a few thoughts concerning the legacy of Hutcheson Junior High, a dilapidated building with character, blanketed with the history and pride of generations of chaparrals. I think about the obstacles, stereotypes and perceptions that the students and staff had to overcome being associated with Hutcheson. I think about how once the limitations were lifted, standards were established and belief was cultivated, how the students rose to the challenge and excelled in every area. I think about the dedicated and committed teaching staff who understood their jobs as not only educators, but motivators, encouragers, enlighteners and supporters.”

“As Hutcheson Junior High is on the horizon of being replaced by the Career and Technical Center, I applaud the educators who have sacrificed so much to ensure that all students through the years have experienced a quality education. I feel a sense of appreciation for having the opportunity to have served the teachers and students and am looking forward to the beautification of the community with the addition of the new center and the new opportunities for all AISD students. Hutcheson the building may cease to exist, but the memories, relationships and achievements will last a lifetime.”

STUDENTS

The measure of a school is ultimately its students, which means Hutcheson will indeed have a strong legacy. Shelley Bulin will tell you that the kids were great and wanted to do well. Tapia believes that the quality of Hutcheson students was excellent, as was the instruction they received, and that they went on to make a positive impact at Sam Houston High School. Many Hutch alumni have been very successful and continue to benefit their families and communities here in Arlington and around the world.

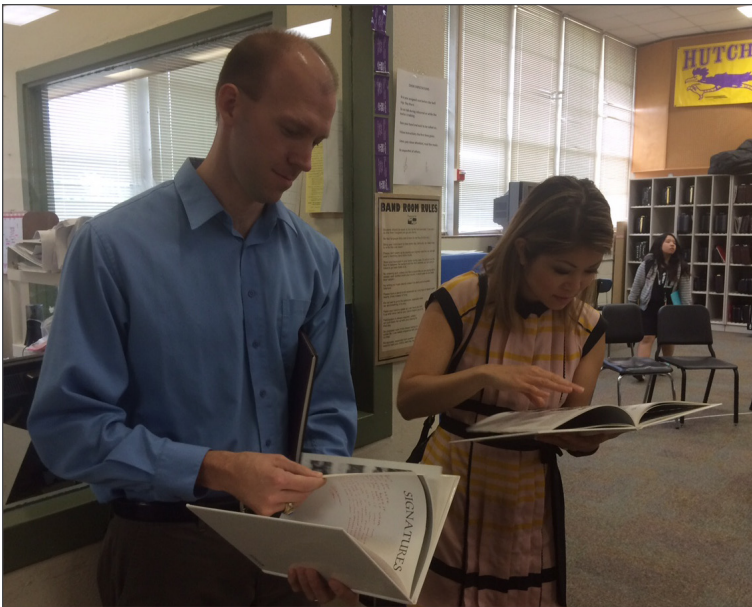
Some, like Elizabeth Zimmerman, have given their lives to serve the students who follow in their footsteps. Zimmerman attended Hutch in the 1980s (where she met her husband) and was one of those seventh graders who helped Workman put together the Texas sesquicentennial mosaic. She returned to her junior high as an instructional coach for its final year. “I was very excited to know that I was coming home for the last time,” she said.

Thousands of memories are contained within the school’s halls, and for Zimmerman, the distinctive smell of the old building is enough to take her back to her junior high days. Her best memories are from the band room, where she and her musical friends often hung out. “We were just kind of our own family,” she remembered.

After returning to Hutcheson as a faculty member in 2014, she avoided the band room for as long as she could. She wanted to preserve the memory she had of what the room looked like when she was a student. She made it until May – just a few weeks before the end of school – before she finally had to go in.



The ninth-grade math team, 1981 city champions.



Sean Lipscomb looks through yearbooks in the band room with Elizabeth Dinh, a Hutch alumna. Dinh is now a reporter for CBS 11 News and was back at Hutch to do a story on the school's final year.

Sean Lipscomb, Hutcheson's last band director, is another former Hutch student turned teacher. As a student, Hutcheson played an important role in Lipscomb's developing passion for music. "This is the building where I fell in love with band and music, which turned into a career," he wrote. "I have many warm memories of the band's accomplishments on both sides of the baton. I learned teamwork, respect, how to win graciously, and how to lose with dignity. It has been awesome to teach these same lessons in the same building. I am going to miss walking down the halls and remembering my past teachers and friends."

Like other teachers, Lipscomb emphasized how the new building that will take Hutcheson's place will be good for the district. But, "as a former student and current teacher of Hutcheson the closing of the school is a very somber feeling," he wrote. "As a pre-

teen I learned many things in that building, both academically and socially, and it has been a thrill to be a part of the same development in others in the same halls and rooms. All year long I have been surrounded by memories of my formative years and am sad that the halls I roamed will soon be gone."

Lipscomb directed the Hutcheson band in a performance at the memorial event for Hutcheson in May, which included a rousing rendition of the alma mater. Hundreds of former Hutch and Big Sam students packed the school's auditorium that night to remember their days as junior high or high school students. They then roamed the halls one last time, taking photos, pointing out classrooms, telling stories and recalling memories.

One of those nostalgic alumni in attendance was Steve Martindale, now the president of Six Flags Over Texas. Martindale grew up in Arlington, on the east side, and went to Carter Junior High for seventh grade. But he moved to Hutcheson for eighth and ninth grades when the school first opened in 1970.

Martindale's years at Hutch proved extremely influential and continue to impact his life today. In fact, he met his best friend at Hutch, Danny Jones. Jones also still lives in Arlington and they remain friends and golf partners.

One of the most influential mentors Martindale had at Hutcheson was his track coach, Jimmy Jones. Jones would later become the principal of Lamar High School and was recently honored, along with his wife, Laura Jones, as the namesakes for one of the AISD's new fine arts and dual language academies. "He was an impressive character," Martindale said of Jones, "and he still is."

"The first thing that impressed me was how well he ran the hurdles," Martindale said. It was obvious to the kids that their coach knew what he was talking about. Martindale, who played football, basketball and track at Hutch, learned a lot about discipline from Coach Jones. "He pushed me to be

better than I thought I could be. He made me a much better athlete.”

Hutcheson also helped make Martindale a leader. “Somehow I managed to get elected as student body president,” he recalled. “I think it was because I had better signs than the other guy.”

The summer before his ninth grade year as president, the student council traveled to Hardin Simmons University in Abilene for a leadership and training camp, the beginning of a definitive year of growth for Martindale. Science teachers Anita Bayless and Dick Powell served as the student council advisors and demonstrated “what it meant to be a leader ... I had a great couple of sponsors that helped me. I owe a lot to those two,” Martindale said. “I think they also helped instill my sense of responsibility.” They “taught me that leaders first have to learn how to serve.” Martindale credits the culture of service that Bayless and Powell encouraged with helping prepare him for his 42-year career in the service industry.



Steve Martindale (left) with Dick Powell at the memorial event for Hutch several weeks before it closed.

After ninth grade, Martindale went on to Sam Houston High School. In 1973, at age 16, he followed the lead of his next-door neighbor and got a seasonal job at Six Flags – and never left. He graduated from Sam, earned a business degree at the University of Texas at Arlington and went full time with Six Flags in 1979. He eventually ran a water park in Hollywood, Florida, and served as operations director at Six Flags in St. Louis. But, he said, he “couldn’t wait to come back to Arlington.”

Martindale, Zimmerman and Lipscomb are just a few of thousands who grew up at Hutcheson, guided and influenced by caring teachers like Bayless, Powell and Jones. While most don’t run theme parks or teach at the schools they attended, most have used the lessons they learned at Hutcheson to develop successful careers and positively impact the lives of countless others.

THE END

When the AISD conducted a facilities assessment in 2013, the study revealed the district was overcapacity at the junior high level, with two more schools than it really needed. Thus the district made the difficult decision to close two junior highs – Ferguson and Hutcheson. Hutcheson’s old age and location made the difficult decision straightforward. The building had simply seen better days, and the property, as the center point of Arlington in terms of population, would be the perfect spot for the districtwide Career and Technical Center, funded by the 2014 Bond package.

Hutcheson students and staff will consolidate with Workman Junior High at the current Workman location. To make room for the influx of students, Workman will receive an addition with 16 classrooms, the cafeteria will be expanded, a new entry will be added and other life cycle updates will be completed. In addition, Newcomer Center, an AISD alternative school located in Workman, will move to a new location. Like Hutcheson, Workman was originally built as a high school and so, with

the improvements, will accommodate well the merger of the two schools.

The principal of the consolidated junior high, Inelda Acosta, envisions a powerful new school. “In the end the environment is going to be an environment where students can be successful,” she said. She is leading Workman to become an International Baccalaureate campus, which will improve and expand academic opportunities.

Back at Browning Drive and Pioneer Parkway, the old Hutcheson building will be torn down. Planning for the new Career and Technical Center to be built in its place is already underway. Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2016 and the building will open in the fall of 2017.

While the new building will soon replace the old, the AISD is intent on preserving the memory of the original. Hutcheson’s memorabilia, including Jannette Workman’s mosaic, will be preserved. And a tribute to Hutch will be included in the Career and Technical Center.

Though the building that housed Hutch and Big Sam will soon be gone, the impact and legacy of the schools will carry on for generations – thanks to the dedicated faculty and students. And as Shelley Bulin said, “We always have our memories.”

