

Parkway School – A History

By Lee Palmer Redmond
Parkway Elementary School Historian, 2007

The Creation of Parkway School

In the 1900s there were more than 100 one-room schoolhouses in Frederick County. In 1916, The School Law was adopted to consolidate the one-room schoolhouses. In the 1920s there was a need for a school to be built in Frederick City to consolidate the many schools into one school.

Before the 1930s, the area west of Bentz Street was undesirable. It was swampy and used as a place to dump garbage. In the late 1920s the area was graded and Carroll Parkway and College Avenues were created. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dill Baker purchased land in this area in 1926 and gave it to the city for the creation of a park. The park was named Baker Park.

The land for Parkway School was purchased in 1927. The architect for Parkway School was John W. Hamme and Lloyd C. Culler was the contractor. (Mr. Culler was also the Mayor of Frederick at the time. Culler Lake was named after him.) The cost of the land and improvements was \$21,596.23 and the cost of the building and heating plant (a coal furnace) was \$93,034.76. The landscape plan was designed by Stuart Haller and was implemented by The Garden Club of Frederick. Parkway School opened in September of 1930 with an enrollment of 484 students in grades 1 through 7. The principal was E. Virginia Wenner.

On Friday, October 10, 1930, Parkway School was dedicated. Approximately 400 people attended the dedication. Members of the State Board of Education were among the speakers. Dr. Albert S. Cook, Secretary-Treasurer of the State Board of Education dedicated the new school. In his dedication address he congratulated Frederick County on its “fine new school” and its progress of consolidating the one-room schoolhouses into larger schools. Mr. Emory L. Coblenz, a member of the State Board of Education declared that the “expenditure of money was a good investment”.

Parkway School – The Early Years

At the time that Parkway School was built, children were given a certificate at the end of 7th grade. For most children, this was the end of their education. There was a high school in Frederick City at the time, however, only the children whose families had the money and the means to send them, went to high school. Since Frederick was an agricultural area, many children received their certificates at the end of 7th grade and went to work on the family farm.

PTA

The Parent Teacher Association for Parkway School was formed on Monday, September 30, 1930. The meeting was held in the auditorium. Professor G. Lloyd Palmer, Superintendent of Frederick County Public Schools, opened the meeting. The first PTA officers included:

President – C. Thomas Summers
First Vice President – George L. Rothenhoefer
Second Vice President – Miss E. Virginia Wenner (Principal)
Secretary – Mrs. William R. Slemmer
Treasurer – Lewis M. Sponseller
Historian – Mrs. Sam W. Maples

Committees were announced and chairpersons selected. The committees and chairpersons included:

- By-Laws – William T. Delaphaine
- Program – Mrs. C. C. Sparks
- Membership – Richard F. Simmons
- Playground – Mrs. H. Jewett Orth
- Publicity – August T. Brust

The meeting also included prayer at the beginning and the end of the session, which was offered by Rev. Douglass Hooff. Songs were sung accompanied by pianist Mrs. A. B. Collmus. At the conclusion of the meeting visitors toured the school.

PTA meetings in the past were very different than they are today. A flag ceremony was performed at the beginning of the meeting by the school Girl Scout or Boy Scout troop. Along with the presentation and discussion of “old business” and “new business”, prayers were spoken and songs were sung. A soloist, high school band or musical group sometimes performed “special music”.

Over the years, the Parkway PTA has been involved with thousands of school issues. PTA fund raisers have helped purchase classroom materials, supported carnivals, bought playground equipment, provided meals for teachers during conference times, created scholarships for college students and provided refreshments for school holiday parties just to name a few. The PTA has taken on issues such as traffic safety around the school, healthy lunches and redistricting. In the mid 1970s, the PTA was instrumental in saving Parkway from being closed and torn down. In the early 1980s, the PTA fought for funding to remodel the school due to fire concerns.

Renovations

In 1947, the interior of Parkway School was repainted to give the walls “personality”. The objectives of the repainting were to “protect eye sight, reduce glare and provide pleasant and attractive surroundings”. The halls were painted sunlight yellow and the classrooms were painted pastel colors with a flat finish.

In 1961, 2,167 square feet was added to the building. The contractor was Callas Contractors and the cost was \$103,000. Renovations included a lunchroom and kitchen with new dining and cooking equipment. A classroom on the first floor was converted into the library. The old lunchroom was converted into 2 classrooms. A new gas heating system was installed. The health room and the teacher’s lounge were remodeled.

In 1982 4,200 square feet was added to Parkway School. A one-story addition was added to the east side of the school to house 1st and 2nd grade. The size of the library was increased and the bleacher area in the gymnasium was closed in to create 1st and 2nd floor offices and classrooms. Renovations for fire safety included enclosing stairways, installing fire doors, installing a sprinkler system, and replacing combustible materials throughout the building. The mechanical and heating system was updated.

Fire

In July of 1979 a fire broke out on the first floor. It was accidental and caused by some workmen. The gym and some other areas of the school sustained smoke damage.

List of Principals

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|-------------------------|-------------|
| Miss E. Virginia Wenner | 1930 – 1935 |
| Miss Ella V. Kreig | 1935 – 1940 |

Mr. Hubert Derr	1940 – 1940
Miss Mary E. M. Smith	1940 – 1966
Mr. T. Fenn Rider	1966 – 1969
Mrs. Nancy S. Watkins	1969 – 1970
Mr. John B. Carter	1970 – 1972
Mrs. Nancy N. Hendricks	1972 – 1980
Mrs. Retta Barkley	1980 – 1984
Ms. Albertine (Tina) Baker	1984 – 1990
Mrs. Ritta Barkley	1990 – 1994
Ms. Adrene Harper	1994 – 2001
Mrs. Yvonne Wright	2001 – 2007
Mrs. Sunora Knill-Wilbar	2007 – 2010
Ms. Elizabeth Little	2010 - 2016
Ms Stephanie Brown	2016 - current

Anniversary Celebrations

25th – October 12, 1955

The 25th Anniversary of Parkway School was observed at a PTA meeting, which was held in the auditorium. The PTA president, Theron Green, introduced Miss Mary Smith, principal. The Superintendent of Frederick County Public Schools, Eugene W. Pruitt talked about how when Parkway opened in 1930, the policy was to compare a child with other children instead of the emphasis being on the individual child. Two teachers, Miss Hattie Willet and Miss Marie Michael, were recognized and given corsages for being at Parkway since it opened.

50th – Friday, September 26, & Sunday, September 28, 1980

The 50th Anniversary of Parkway School was observed with two celebrations. The first was for the students on Friday, September 26th. The students celebrated with a program filled with stories and songs written by students, eating ice cream and taking part in a balloon ascension. On Sunday, September 28th, the public was invited to Parkway School. The program included the introduction of past principals and selections by the Parkway Chorus. Following the program, guests were invited to tour the school, look through old scrapbooks and enjoy refreshments, which included a cake made in the image of the school.

75th – Friday, May 26, 2006

Celebrating Parkway's 75th Anniversary came at the end of the 75th year instead of at the beginning. On Friday, May 26, 2006, Parkway's students, family and friends joined former students, Board of Education, County and City Officials to celebrate Parkway School's 75 years. A program was presented which included addresses given by Steve Martin, Associate Superintendent of Frederick County Public Schools and by Dr. Michael Schaden, President of the Board of Education. City and County Officials presented documents proclaiming May 26, 2006, as Parkway School Day. The program continued with the singing of the Parkway School Song, the presentation of a time capsule and the dedication of the new marquee. Everyone was invited to tour the school and browse the history of Parkway School depicted on presentation boards in the cafeteria.

Parkway's School Song - Published February 1932 (Tune: Stars and Stripes Forever)

With voices glad and true

Parkway School we sing only to you.
To our colors maroon and gold
May our song never grow old.
And now let us sing this glad cheer
To the school that to us is so dear.
Rah! Parkway School here's what we'll do,
We'll work and play, well try each day
Because we love you!

The song was revised in April of 2006 for the 75th Anniversary for Parkway's current school colors of blue and white.

With voices glad and true
Parkway School we sing only to you.
To our colors blue and white
May our song always be right.
And now let us sing this glad cheer
To the school that to us is so dear.
Rah! Parkway School here's what we'll do,
We'll work and play, well try each day
Because we love you!

****Information for the history of Parkway School came from scrapbooks that were saved in the basement of Parkway School, Mirror on Frederick Through 250 Years by Frances A. Randall, and recollections of school days from my family.**