

The Year was 1993

Community reflects on MHS history

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At 5 a.m. on a fall morning in 1993, the final roll of carpet was installed in what was the skeleton of Marquette High School.

Two years prior, a \$65 million bond issue allowed for the building of two new schools: Marquette High School and Rockwood Summit High School.

Jessica Hutchings, science teacher, entered the building 30 years ago as a student, and now returns as a teacher. Turning a corner on the third floor and entering her classroom, Hutchings is exposed to a space that did not exist during her time as a student.

This is Hutchings' first year as an MHS teacher, and it also marks 30 years since the school first opened for the 1993-1994 school year.

"I think high school students, whether it be the 90s or today, are pretty much the same," Hutchings said.

What has changed in the past 30 years is that multiple additions have been added to the school. The STEM-wing where Hutchings now teaches is only one of multiple additions that have been added to the school in the past 30 years. Other changes have included the new science wing, theater, G wing, leveling the Commons and expanding the Library.

While additions have been made, the student desks in Hutchings room have not changed in 30 years.

Hutchings also said a difference in the high school experience of today and hers of 30 years ago is locker usage.

"I was carrying around a billion textbooks, but I also used my locker. Kids don't use their lockers so much because it is digital," Hutchings said.

Freshman Principal Dr. Rick Regina has also noticed the increase in digital technology.

"Early on, if students wanted to type a paper, they would have to go to either the Writing Center or the Library," Dr. Regina said. "Now, every student has a Chromebook, and the Writing Center and the Computer Lab are obsolete."

The Computer Lab was located in the Library in the space that is now the Testing Room. It was staffed by the library staff.

The Writing Center was a classroom on the second floor that housed enough computers for 1-2 language arts teachers to bring their classes. It was staffed by language arts teachers who also offered editing and conferencing.

Dr. Regina started teaching language arts in 2000, and became an administrator in 2014.

"I could say for the first four or five years, I was the only place students could get the information," Dr. Regina said.

What Regina hasn't seen change is students' energy.

"Kids are happy, they're smiling, they're laughing," Dr. Regina said.

Jessica Brown, language arts teacher, also attended MHS 30 years ago.

With the opening of Rockwood Summit and MHS, Rockwood shifted from junior high, grades seventh

through ninth, to middle school, grades sixth through eighth. This meant MHS and Summit first opened with only the Classes of '96 and '97.

"We literally grew the school population as we advanced, but because it was so much smaller, the two classes tended to be much more united," Brown said.

Over the past few years, all original teachers from the opening year of MHS have retired. Last year, Kim Hotze, German teacher, who was the final original teacher from MHS, retired.

"Last year's retirees marked the end of that era," Brown said.

Despite changes over the years, Brown still loves being a member of the MHS community.

"We are rooted in traditions that I helped establish, and I truly believe this is an exceptional and welcoming place for students and staff," Brown said.

The traditions that Brown and Hutchings helped establish started with choosing the mascot, name and school colors.

Dr. Keith Kinder, former associate principal, said the administration worked with incoming students from Selvidge and Crestview to plan the new high school.

"Because they would have been the first group of two classes, a tenth grade and a ninth grade class," Dr. Kinder said.

Former Superintendent Dr. Eric Knost was among the first teachers to welcome students when MHS opened.

As band director at that time, Dr. Knost said he



Two elementary students from feeder schools (schools that will go to MHS) help break ground on the pile of dirt that will be MHS. The names of the feeder schools are featured in the background. *Photograph from MHS Archive*

During the early years of MHS, the Commons had steps, smaller tables and doubled as the theater. Since then the theater has been built, the steps leveled and longer tables added. *Photograph by Elliott Jorgensen*

recalls being unable to enter the school until opening day as it was still under construction due to scheduling and budgeting conflicts. Members of committees and meetings had to congregate at neighboring schools, and the band had to rehearse there as well.

"I remember driving by MHS a month before it opened and some parts of it were still just a skeleton structure," Dr. Knost said.

Despite talk in the community that MHS wasn't going to be done in time, the school opened to students in the fall of 1993.

"It was emotional and exciting for all of us, and we loved every minute of it," Dr. Knost said. "It was

this mixed bag because none of us had ever opened a brand new school with a brand new identity."

After retiring in 2018, the Knost family has stayed connected with MHS as Kaylin Knost, Dr. Knost's daughter, was hired in 2020 as a band teacher.

"He was over the moon when I got the job at Marquette," Kaylin said. "After his retirement, I know he was glad to have the opportunity to stay connected to the district and specifically the Marquette quadrant through me."

Kaylin said her father had encouraged her to join the band in sixth grade. Her love for music began with a flute that Dr. Knost picked out for her, and it eventually expanded to much of the woodwind family.

Kaylin said she always loved the school, which isn't surprising as her parents met at MHS, where they both taught since its opening in 1993.

"Getting to work at Marquette has felt almost serendipitous," Kaylin said. "I grew up hearing all these stories of the amazing place that Marquette was and now I'm experiencing it myself."

While teaching, Kaylin has found artifacts from the beginning of MHS. She said the biggest band trophy they have is one her father won, where it stands

Flannels became a popular clothing item as grunge bands like Pearl Jam and Nirvana grew a large teen fan base.

Doc Martens was one brand that represented the craze for platform shoes, accompanied by Converse and Air Jordans. These shoes trends have stuck around, and can still be seen in high school hallways.

'90s Pop Culture & Trends

Scrapbooks were common ways to organize pictures, but their usage went down after phones became more prevalent and advanced.

Hair scrunchies, a trend that re-emerged in 2020, were common to see holding up ponytails.

Radiohead, an English rock band, released the song "Creep" in 1993, which became one of the most popular songs of the year.



Photograph by Elliott Jorgensen. Infographic by Anvi Talyan. Information from Mr. Pop Culture

Magical



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2

1. Mystique dancers from the 1990s perform in the gym. Mystique outfits have undergone many changes since then, with sleeves and pants being exchanged skirts and strappy tops. Pom poms have also been updated, with the sparkly silver and green evolving to white.

2. The current Mystique team dances on the sidelines of the football field at the Color Out game on Sept. 8. Dancers perform at every Friday night football game, such as the one taking place tonight. *Photographs from MHS Archive and Elliott Jorgensen*

Mystique

tall in the band room.

"It's so cool to still have that for our students, and myself, to see and reflect on our past successes," Kaylin said.

Kaitlyn Laurentius, senior, has been in the RSD since preschool. After going through elementary and middle school with Dr. Knost as superintendent, Laurentius has been in band with Kaylin since her first year.

Laurentius said she remembers Dr. Knost, especially his signature nickname "DK" that he had students and staff refer to him as.

"He was just a really good superintendent for the whole district," Laurentius said.

Laurentius works with Kaylin in symphonic and marching band, for which she plays clarinet.

"She's a really nice teacher," Laurentius said. "I know that everybody in the band absolutely loves her."

Brady Payne, senior, also has ties to the opening of MHS. Payne originally lived in Florissant before his mom, Lesley Payne, Class of '99, moved their family back to RSD when Brady was in third grade.

"She's a big fan of Rockwood," Brady said. "It's one of the better school districts in the area, so she was definitely insistent."

Brady said hearing his mother reminisce about MHS helped him feel more comfortable when he came in as a freshman. Brady also has had uncles attend MHS, one of whom was in the first graduating class.

"We've been here for a generation now," Brady said. "And so it definitely made me a little bit more confident coming here."

Brady said some teachers have mentioned his mom during class, such as his current art teacher Melissa Wilson who graduated from MHS in 1999. Wilson was friends with Lesley through marching band. Hotze taught Lesley German.

"There's been funny little stories, like my German teacher would show me my mom's photo in the yearbook," Payne said. "There's definitely funny moments where it kind of leads back."

Additional reporting by Rue Siddiqui