

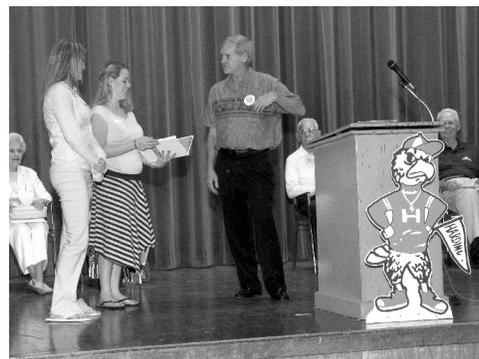


# Open House a Great Success

## Report From a Harding Alum

As a 1960's era graduate of Harding High School, I have always had a great deal of pride and nostalgia for my school, my teachers and for life in general during those days. As the years went by, I realized just how lucky I was to have had those highly educated and motivated teachers who always seemed to take the time to care. Mrs. Wisner and I had a very big disagreement during my senior year. I won the argument, but twenty years later I realized SHE WAS RIGHT. I'm sure a lot of alumni can relate.

I never gave a second thought to how safe those hallways or classrooms were. I never worried about who was walking behind me or who might be carrying a weapon. My classrooms were filled with students who were learning – sometimes unknowingly – so they could go forward with their lives. I wonder how many times during our senior year the question was asked --- “Where are you going to college?” Usually, the answer was “Oh, O.U. of course”, or “O.S.U.” Sometimes it would be “Harvard”, or “U.C.L.A.”. Sometimes I would hear “I’m going into business with my Dad”, or “I’m a little short on the grades so I’m going to start off at a small state college”. Some opted for the military or out in the work force to make their way – and they did. The answer we never heard was, “I CAN’T GO TO COLLEGE OR SUCCEED BECAUSE I DON’T HAVE THE OPPOR-



Phil Kernan receives the first ICHS @ Harding yearbook

TUNITY OR THE BACKGROUND TO MAKE IT. I CAN'T EVEN DREAM ABOUT IT.”

I attended the open house and assembly for Harding High School Alumni Association, which was held June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004 at Independence Charter High School @ Harding. Former 1960's teachers and staff attending included Jane Pemberton Campbell, Marjorie Miller, Audrey Dragg, Jerry Potter, Francis Baxter, Ed Rotzinger, Caryll Gorman and Judson Young. We were introduced to a very impressive ICHS faculty. The program was scheduled for 45 minutes with a max of 1 hour. It lasted an hour and a half – and no one left early.

Clark Musser shared some of Harding's history, from the 1920's to the present and our auditorium was again filled with much laughter. Phil Kernan was presented with an ICHS 2004 yearbook signed by the students in appreciation of his help and for working so diligently to locate 2700 alumni who were former HHS students from 1958-68. There were many dedicated people who helped make this event possible, but the highlight of the program was Mr. Richard Caram, principal of ICHS @ Harding.

Mr. Caram told us that the teachers

**Inside this issue:**

Alumni Association Goals	2
ICHS @ Harding	3
How You Can Help	4

# Open House

and staff within those walls are once again HIGHLY EDUCATED, MOTIVATED AND TAKE THE TIME TO CARE. Their single most important goal is student academic achievement. There are no longer metal detectors to go through and policemen who patrol the halls and classrooms. Visitors and alumni are welcomed into ICHS, not turned away at the door. The classrooms are starting to fill up again with students who want to learn. Many of these students didn't think they could dare dream about being a success in life, about college – NOW IT IS THEIR GOAL.

I suppose the part that touches my heart the most was hearing Mr. Caram talk about starting the school – about how he wanted to give his new students some kind of connection, something to value, something to have pride in. He wondered where it would come from, what he could tell them. The answer came from our yearbooks, from our alumni, from us. It was already there; it had always been there. Harding Pride had just been asleep for awhile and a passionate, determined principal was giving it a wake-up call.

The following is a portion of an e-mail I received from a high school friend I had not seen for 40 years until this past June at our 40<sup>th</sup> reunion

"I reveled in memories of our reunion for many days and now they come and go, especially as I tell one more story to friends. The Open House and the presentation by the Charter School has ripened into my favorite event, bringing anything about our reunion that might have been "typical" into a whole new realm. It was at first appalling to me to hear of the struggle that the schools have experienced these past 35 years. But the fact that we have an opportunity to support things moving in a positive direction was extremely inspiring. My, oh my."

- report by Mary Susan Bond, HHS '64

## OUR PURPOSE

**The Goals of the Harding High School Alumni Association are two-fold:**

**Support the Harding High School Alumni Association (HHSAA) comprised all students at the former Harding High School.** This will facilitate our staying connected with classmates and other students who attended Harding and will avail the opportunity to renew old friendships.

- Obtain 501© (3) non-profit status.
- Recreate the "Marionette" in the form of a newsletter.
- Maintain the association by annual membership dues.
- Promote reunions.

**Support Independence Charter High School @ Harding (ICHS @ Harding).**

- Create a volunteer auxiliary.
- Establish a mentor/ tutoring program.
- Help with maintenance of building and grounds.
- Donate professional services/ goods.
- Establish college scholarships.
- Match the Challenge Grant.
- Establish private and corporate levels for donation, bequests and planned giving.
- Restore and support excellence in public education, of which we were all recipients while attending Harding High School.

### **Did You Know that Harding High School was Considered the "Crown Jewel" of Oklahoma City Public High Schools?**

1. 90% of Harding High School graduates attended college. This compared to other high schools in the area where, at best, 60% of graduates went to college.
2. Performance of Harding High School students as a group on standardized tests was in the top 2% nationally, far above other Oklahoma City high schools.

# Independence Charter High School @ Harding—Program and Goals

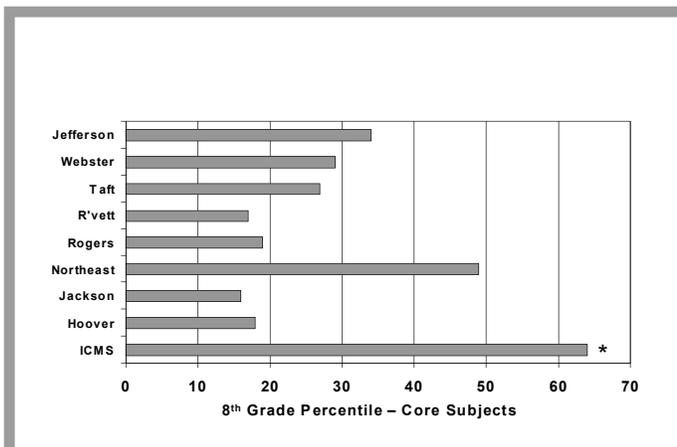
Independence Charter High School @ Harding admitted its first class (all ninth graders) in the fall of 2003. The high school is an outgrowth of the already successful Independence Charter Middle School (ICMS) that began operations in the former Independence Grade School building six years ago. The Core Knowledge Curriculum, offered by the middle school, has made it the most successful middle school in the Oklahoma City School District among those schools that do not pre-select students based on standardized test scores (see graphic below). The Independence Charter High School @ Harding (ICHS @ Harding) began after parents of students in the middle school asked for the development of a high school that would emphasize the same academic standards that their children received at the middle school. ICHS @ Harding offers a liberal arts, college preparatory curriculum with Advanced Placement (AP) courses. AP courses are offered in all subject areas and are accepted by the majority of colleges and universities for advanced college credit. A full range of extracurricular activities are also provided. Students are required to wear school uniforms, sign and abide by a code of conduct and complete a community service project (30 hours per year) while attending ICHS @ Harding. Parents must pledge to perform 50 hours of volunteer service to the school per year. The school will add one grade per year up to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Next year ICHS @ Harding is projected to have 180 students in the freshman and sophomore classes. The overall goal of ICHS @ Harding

is to provide a quality college preparatory curriculum to students in the Oklahoma City area in an environment that is safe. Quite a difference from the old Harding Middle School that had become known for its gangs and unsafe environment!

Charter schools are tuition free, public schools that are independent of the governance of the school board in most ways. Charter schools operate under the auspice of their own Board giving them a high degree of flexibility and autonomy. Although public funding is provided, an administration fee is collected by the public school system from the funds allocated to ICHS @ Harding. Historically, charter schools spend more of their dollars on the education their students because their overhead costs (5 %) are much lower than the public school systems (31 %).

Although public monies do come to ICHS @ Harding, there is still a need for additional financial support. This year the faculty of ICHS @ Harding was successful in obtaining grants of \$10,000 from the Gaylord Foundation and a \$10,000 grant from the Kerr Foundation that was matched by a Harding alum. A \$149,000 grant came from The Challenge Foundation. These funds will supply vital educational needs in all departments, including the science program, computers, and library resources. The Challenge Foundation has invited ICHS @ Harding to apply for another two years support through a matching grants program. This means that ICHS @ Harding must raise \$75,000 to match \$75,000 from the Foundation. If successful, ICHS @ Harding will become eligible to become a “Challenge Academy”. This could lead to further funding by the Gates Foundation.

The Harding High School Alumni Association can be instrumental in helping ICHS @ Harding meet this \$ 75,000 challenge through obtaining corporate sponsors for the school and through individual donations made by members of the HHS Alumni Association. Our ultimate goal is to provide students in the Oklahoma City School district the same quality education that we enjoyed when we were students at Harding High School.



# Eagles Soar!!



## Are You Interested in Helping the HHS Alumni Association or ICHS @ Harding?

**For those interested in helping to ensure the success of the Harding High School Alumni Association and/or ICHS @ Harding, several different options are available.**

To indicate your level of interest, please check the appropriate box and mail the form and donations with your HHS Alumni Association membership card. If you have already joined the alumni association but have not had the opportunity to designate your interest for service, please send in this form.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ HHS class \_\_\_\_\_

**1. If you would like to help ICHS @ Harding raise \$75,000 to match a grant from the Challenge Foundation please check one of the options below. (Make checks payable to ICHS @ Harding. Donations are tax deductible.)**

- Eagle doner**—amounts up to \$99.00
- Special donors** (recognized by a certificate and your name placed on a display poster placed in a prominent location in the halls of ICHS@Harding)
  - **Platinum Eagle** - \$ 1000 +
  - **Golden Eagle** - \$500 to \$999
  - **Silver Eagle** - \$250 to \$499
  - **Bronze Eagle** - \$100 to \$ 249
- I am interested in a corporate/business or individual sponsorship of ICHS @ Harding—please contact me.** (recognized by a plaque identifying the sponsorship at ICHS @ Harding, recognition on a display poster placed in a prominent location in the halls of ICHS @ Harding and a Greg Burns print of Harding for your home or office)

**2. If you would like to help the HHS Alumni Association or ICHS @ Harding through donation of time, professional services or goods, please check the appropriate box below.**

- Mentoring or tutoring students at ICHS@ Harding.
- Helping with maintenance of building and grounds (painting, gardening etc)
- Professional services or goods. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- I am interested in serving on the board of the Harding High School Alumni Association.
- I am interested in working on the HHS Alumni Association Newsletter.
- I am willing to attend meetings of the Oklahoma School Board to support quality education in Oklahoma City.