

Neil Campbell School The First Ten Years 1956-1966

The first ten years of Neil Campbell's existence was a period of rapid change and growth in East Kildonan. The population of East Kildonan grew by 10,000 in the ten years from 1956 to 1966 an almost 60% increase in the decade but in the same period the school age population grew by almost 100%. This rapid growth affected all of the schools in East Kildonan including Neil Campbell. To handle the rapidly increasing school population new schools were built in this decade; Sherwood School in 1957, Munroe Junior High in 1958, McLeod School in 1959, Morse Place Junior High in 1959, Hampstead School in 1960 and John Henderson Junior High in 1962. As well there were additions to these and the other schools in East Kildonan.

The East Kildonan School District found it necessary to shuffle the school boundaries on a yearly basis and move students from school to school in order to contain this great population explosion and Neil Campbell was not immune from these changes. In the 1956-1957 school year Neil Campbell had two classes of grade one students, two classes of grade two students and one class each of grade three, four, five and six. The next year, there was the same distribution of grades but in the following year 1958-1959 this changed in a dramatic fashion. Neil Campbell became a school for just four grades; three classes of grade ones, two classes of grade two, one class of grade three students, one class of a combined grade three and four students and one class of grade four students.

After the first addition to the school in the 1959-1960, the grade five and six students returned but because of the shortage of space for junior high students, Neil Campbell became home for the first and last time to grades seven, eight and nine students. Thus for this year, there were two classes of grade one, , four classes of grade two, two classes of grade three, two classes of grade four, two classes of grade five, one class of grade six, three classes of grade seven, one class of grade seven and eight students and one class of grade eight and nine students.

The following year 1960-1961 saw the school move back to just the elementary grades; three classes of grade one students, one class of grade one and two students, three classes of grade two students, three classes of grade three students and two classes each of grades four, five and six students. The final year for this combined grade class occurred in the 1963-1964 school year. The following year 1961-1962 saw the second last year of the two grade classes with a combined grade two and three classroom in existence. This year saw a class of ungraded slow learners as they were called then but we would refer to them now as special education students now. This group had the misfortune of being shuffled from school to school in East Kildonan space permitting until they finally found a permanent home at Polson School though they did return for one final year during the 1964-1965 school year. By the 1965-1966 school year Neil Campbell settled down to a pattern of three classes for each grade with one grade having one extra class.

The year 1957 saw the formation of the first parent involvement in the school with the creation of the Neil Campbell Home and School Association on November 7 with the

first officers being President Robert Sinclair, Vice President Mary Drake, Secretary Frances Beard, a teacher at the school and Treasurer Grace McMillan. This association was in existence until June 1965 when it was dissolved by Principal Charles E. Douglas.

The year 1959 saw two big changes to Neil Campbell first was the departure of Neil Campbell's first principal Marion Anderson and the coming of Charles Douglas as the new principal, he was to remain in this position for the next 29 years. Mr. Douglas had been the vice principal of Miles MacDonell Collegiate, when he left Neil Campbell in 1988 he returned to Miles Mac as its principal.

The second big change was the two storey addition on the north side of the school; this \$195,000 addition added the gym and twelve additional classrooms. The original eight room school had cost \$130,000 including the cost of the land and furnishing the school. With this addition Neil Campbell became a larger school jumping from 243 students in 1958-1959 to 528 students in 1959-1960. As result of this Neil Campbell obtained its first vice principal George Wall who later became a superintendent in the River East School Division. It was at Neil Campbell that Mr. Wall met and later married Miss Joan Milan a grade one teacher at Neil Campbell. The school continued to have a vice principal on its staff until the early 2000's.

The early and middle 1960's saw students involved in many of the activities that later became familiar to later students. There was the start of jam pail curling, interschool soccer, baseball, the annual field day and of course the music festival. The grade six patrols had become an important part of the school and ensured the safety of the students.

As the years passed staff arrived and left; George Wall left as vice principal in June 1962, he was replaced as vice principal and grade six teacher by Orest Lazaruk who remained until June 1967. Original Neil Campbell teacher Ada Allen left in June 1966 leaving Kathryn Harper as the last original teacher still teaching at Neil Campbell when the 1966-1967 school year began.