

## **Introduce Elected Representatives, School Trustees, Honorable Mentions**

### **Recognize Heights Neighbourhood Association**

#### **Burnaby**

Incorporated on September 22, 1892 with a population of just 300. Two years later, in 1894 came the District's first school. Prior to then, children would attend schools in either Vancouver or New Westminster. But parents were apprehensive about this – sending children off in the morning with a lunch pail had its risks – you never knew if your child would be mauled by a bear or cougar while traversing through the vast wilderness. The first school came at Canada Way and 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with over 30 students, ranging in age from 4 to 16.

#### **Vancouver Heights**

1905 – 1924

*On December 13, 1912, The British Columbian Weekly described the Vancouver Heights neighbourhood as follows: "The northern portion of the municipality in the vicinity of Boundary Road has during the past three years made tremendous strides towards settlement. At that time Mr. James Herd and Mr. Peters were the only residents of the district...Soon, however, the timber was removed, streets laid out and other conveniences such as water, light and transportation provided... The school population of the district has increased so rapidly that the school has been enlarged twice this year and is at the present time inadequate. About 200 children are attending now. There are three churches in the district and one mission...At present time there are two large blocks containing six stores..."*

Celeste Redman:

This neighbourhood was initially intended to be the haut riche neighbourhood of Vancouver. This is where we find a lot of the older mansions in the area, like Over Lynn Manor, Mr. and Mrs. Peter's mansion, which was later converted by the founders of St. Helen's School to an all girl's school, prior to being converted to use for the retirement facility that towers above it, Seton Villa, a property of Action Line Housing Society.

The subdivision itself was to be called "The Heights Over Vancouver." However, speculation in Vancouver's west side led to Kerrisdale being selected instead.

In the 1930s, the buzz in the area was the opening of the Standard Oil Refinery. Residents cheered the large U.S. company's introduction into the area, marking a potential savior to the rampant unemployment resulting from the Great Depression.

Up until the late 1980s, there were plans to construct a major highway connecting Coquitlam to Vancouver, along the shores of the Burrard Inlet. Had the roadway gone in, it would have created a major cloverleaf intersection at Cambridge Street and Boundary Road.

## **St. Helen's**

If you read the agenda sent home with students, an entry will read that the name St. Helen is honour of the Helen of Colchester, England, who was born in 326, and later went on to birth Constantine the Great, who went on to rule the Roman Empire. (She was also know for leading an exploratory crew to the Holy Land to uncover the cross where Jesus was crucified. She found it, along with the nails used to crucify Jesus and the sign used to mark his cross. How did she know the sign belonged to Jesus? She searched for an unhealthy woman in the village near the dig site. When the woman touched two of the signs, she felt nothing, but on the third sign, she came to full health. Having found the wood cross, she carried the find to Rome, where she built a church to house the sacred piece) However, what is less known is that the name Helen comes from the name of the daughter of an early donor to the church. During the original church's construction in 1912, a Justice decided to donate a small fortune for the time of \$6,000 (\$121,700.00, 2012) to the church. To show appreciation for the generous donation, the founders decided to name their church after the Justice's daughter, Helen. It was convenient coincidence that church had over 10,000 saints to chose from (the process of canonization was severely tightened up in 1983 to prevent more frivolous saint-hooding).

St Helen's- school is 89 years old, the church is celebrating its centennial this year, about 60% of the students get dropped off for school

## **Crabtown**

*1912 – 1957*

*North Burnaby's waterfront was the location of a unique squatter's community known as Crabtown. Although its origins are obscure, it is believed that the first shacks were built before 1912. When the depression of 1913-1917 began, the shacks became permanent homes for impoverished workers. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the community grew larger. Crabtown was not a slum, but a neighbourhood - the community even rallied together to build a water supply system and trails up the steep bluff with steps and banisters so children could go to school safely. In 1957, the National Harbours Board decided that Crabtown was encroaching on Federal property and evicted all 130 residents. Within a few months, residents were relocated and 114 homes were levelled.*

## Gilmore

1915 – (100th anniversary will be in 2015)

*Bowman & Cullerne, Architects*

*This Classical Revival school was originally designed as a two-storey four-room brick building in 1915, with a two-storey four-room addition in 1922 and an auditorium in 1929. It was built to replace a wooden schoolhouse that had been built on the site in 1912. The original section was designed by Joseph Bowman (1864-1943), a specialist in school buildings who was the school board architect for South Vancouver and Burnaby, with the additions designed after the formation of his partnership with Harold Cullerne in 1919. One of Bowman's first designs for Burnaby was a utilitarian two-storey school that could be built with two classrooms and later expanded to eight rooms as the district's school population grew; five schools from this design were built in 1908, and then four others in modified versions between 1910-16, including this school. This school was named after provincial politician Hugh Gilmour, but the spelling of the name was inadvertently changed by a civic clerk. The classrooms retain their thick wood doors, cloakrooms and rounded walls. The first addition was built by the contracting firm of Patterson, Cope & Thomson. Original features include the dentilled cornice that encircles the entire building and its red brick façade. The school was the first brick school in Burnaby and is the only school of this era left in Burnaby.*

The Community School designation? Lobbied for by business and resident groups.

In the early 1970s, some teachers went to great lengths to ensure that children walk to school. One teacher insisted that the practice, for children as young as kindergarten, was essential to build independence. Even parents walking with children was not permissible. This however, wasn't aided by the busy traffic along Oxford, which can attract up to 8,000 cars per day. Add to this, at the time, there were very few pedestrian crossings. This was solved in the early 1990s, when Councilors Jim Young and Doug Evans introduced stop signs to the neighbourhood, making crossings much safer.

2001 had the highest enrollment of 475, lowest of 385 in 2010, current is 408, with 20% ESL students, about 360 live in catchment, students who walk to school is unknown.

## Schism in Burnaby

In the early 1940s, the only way for Burnabites to pay taxes or do any municipal business was to travel by tram into Vancouver, and back into Burnaby along Kingsway to the municipality's first municipal hall at Edmonds and Kingsway in South Burnaby. To Heights residents though, this amounted to Taxation Without Representation. They felt that they were treated unfairly, and answerable to far-flung municipal government. To solve the issue, Burnaby Council called for the construction a satellite municipal office at 4142 Hastings Street – where the previous site of Helen's Children's Wear stood.

### **Swinging Girl Sign – Helen’s Children’s Wear** (Heights Merchants’ Association)

*While the building here is of some importance as the former North Burnaby municipal office, its primary importance is its delightful neon sign that has become a North Burnaby landmark. Helen Arnold opened Helen’s Childrens Wear shop in the building next door to the old Municipal offices in 1948. In 1955, when North Burnaby moved out, she moved into the vacated building. As part of the renovations, Helen enlisted the assistance of her good friend Jimmy Wallace, owner of Vancouver’s Wallace Neon Company, to create a new sign for her expanded business. One of the company’s designers, Reeve Lehman, created the swinging neon girl that was installed in 1956. Designed in two parts, one section of the sign is cloud shaped and reads ‘Helen’s’ while the other section is a moving representation of a little girl on a swing. The sign is nine feet six inches high and nine feet wide, and the lower section is animated with an internal motor and gears. It immediately became a landmark on Hastings Street, and recently the sign’s design fame has spread far and wide as one of the best surviving examples of kinetic neon art in North America. – In 2010, with the assistance of the City of Burnaby, the sign was brought back to former glory with the renamed ‘Heights’, using the stylized lettering previously used by Helen’s Childrens Wear.*

### **Rosser Elementary**

1923 –

*Bowman and Cullerne, Architects*

*Originally built as North Burnaby High School, this eight-room school became Rosser Avenue School in 1945. It has been altered with replacement windows, the application of stucco over the original siding and an addition, but has retained its historical form including a hipped roof with half-timbered gables and a domed roof ventilator. The Rosser Elementary School was designed by the architectural firm of Bowman & Cullerne, who specialized in school design. The firm’s projects include Seaforth School (1922, now relocated to Burnaby Village Museum), Windsor Street School (1923), and Nelson Avenue School (1927).*

But before becoming Rosser Elementary, this was Burnaby North High.

*Before the high school opened, Burnaby students had to travel to Vancouver if they wished to pursue education beyond an elementary level. In 1921, arrangements were made to use the basement of the Presbyterian Church for instruction of local students. By 1922 the Burnaby North High School opened at its first permanent location. In 1945, the school site changed.*

highest enrollment was 300 students in 1998, lowest was 135 in 2011, current enrollment is 137, virtually all students live in the catchment area, about 80% of students walk to school

### **The school strap** (as we pass by Eileen Daily Pool)

From *Notes from the Outside: Episodes of an Unconventional Life*, Autobiography by Canadian author Allan Safarik, who grew up in the area.

*“Our principal, Mr. Brown, was a piece of galvanized steel. He had eyes like a bird of prey. In his early sixties Mr. Brown wore charcoal suits that matched his enthusiastic shock of grey hair. He had the body of a young Jack Lalane. He purposely exhibited his physical fitness by taking flights of stairs like a gazelle. No one ever attempted to kick sand in his face. Mr. Brown was judge of the court of last resort. The routine wallopings that the teachers administered were child’s play in comparison with those of the master. Whenever he personally delivered corporal punishment with the strap, the whole school took on the atmosphere of a prisoner awaiting an execution. The sound of the blows and the wailing of wayward pupils echoed through the walls like a broadcast from God. The poor punished wretch would be out of action for days. Anyone who went back for seconds was of unsound mind.”*

Celeste Redman:

Eileen Daily was a school trustee for the Burnaby School District. She was later elected to MLA for the area in the early 1960s. In the Dave Barrett NDP government of 1972, Eileen Daily became Deputy Premier and Minister of Education. She was notable for two things: she brought in province-wide Kindergarten, and she introduced legislation to take the strap out of schools, between 1973 to 1974. Some teachers were extremely irate that they lost the strap, some making their anger very publicly known.

### **Burnaby North Secondary**

1923 – 1982

*Burnaby North and Burnaby South were the first high schools built in the City. Before the high school opened, Burnaby students had to travel to Vancouver if they wished to pursue education beyond an elementary level. In 1921, arrangements were made to use the basement of the Presbyterian Church for instruction of local students. By 1922 the Burnaby North High School opened at its first permanent location (4375 Pandora Street – which is now Rosser Elementary). In 1945, this site was established as the new Burnaby North High School. In 1961, the new Burnaby North High School was constructed where it stands now, the Willingdon Avenue site was built and was used until a new building was constructed in 1961 on – on Hammarskjold Drive. From 1962, the school here was used as Burnaby Heights Junior High school, but it closed in 1982 and the junior high students went either to the new Burnaby North on Hammarskjold or to Alpha Secondary (K-12). In 1983, the City of Burnaby took possession of the school site and converted it into a community amenity for several major locally-serving non-profits and other organizations. The City rented out the spaces to local non-profits at heavily subsidized yearly lease rates.*

And to talk a bit about the future of this site, we have **Councillor Pietro Calendino...**

## **Confederation Park**

1965 –

*Confederation Park School was built in 1965 to alleviate increased enrolments in Rosser Avenue and Capitol Hill schools. All elementary schools built in Burnaby in the post-war period share similar features and Confederation Park is no exception. Built low to the ground with no basement, no second stories and no high stairways, the structures could be easily added to as needed as the classrooms were built in a line.*

Current enrollment is 229 and the school is now arts-focused (music, dance, drama, visual arts)