

# **History of West Ashley Schools**

**In 1897, St. Andrew's School was established in an old church on the plantation of Mr. Edward Legare, called Charlestown. The first pupils of the school were his children, grandchildren, and neighborhood children. One teacher taught all grades. A second school was started in 1899, for children living on Savannah Highway that could not get to school.**

**The two schools consolidated in 1909, and located on Savannah Highway. In 1918 the schools were moved to the present location of St. Andrew's High School. It was known as the "little Brown Schoolhouse." In 1919, due to increased number of students the building was enlarged. A new brick school was erected during the 1929-30 school year, on the same site. The overcrowded conditions and difficulty in obtaining transportation to the high schools in peninsular Charleston were factors in establishing St. Andrew's Parish High School in 1940. The addition of the high school marked a decided change in the Parish since high school students living in the parish had attended Charleston High School for boys and Memminger High School for girls in the city. Until 1947-48 all grades were housed at St. Andrew's Parish School.**

**Because of phenomenal growth in the parish there were many additions to the building. During the year 1947-48 the elementary and high school grades were split, grades 1-6 attended St. Andrew's Elementary and grades 7 – 12 attended the high school. During this time period, the Tobin Boyd School, Deming School, and other branch schools served the black children living in the parish. They were eventually consolidated to form Wallace School in 1953, which eventually housed grades 1-12.**

**The sixties brought the integration of all schools and the Act of Consolidation put all schools under the umbrella of the Charleston County School System. The schools continue to grow and in the spring of 1970 the decision was made to convert St. Andrew's Junior High to a high school.**

**That school became known as Middleton High School. As student bodies and faculties were split, each school took on its own identity. Soon the Razorbacks were trying to score that winning touchdown against the "Rock-like" goal-line stand. Each school prospered and continued to send out fine graduates. Olympic Gold Medal Winners, famous rock stars, CEO's, legislators and successful business people have been spread through out the world from the halls of these two schools.**

**With two schools West of the Ashley, community resources were split as parents from each school pledged their support to their own child's school.**

**In 1993, the decision was made to merge the two schools and build a new state of the art facility. Soon several committees consisting of more than one hundred staff, parents, and community members toured schools around the Southeast to determine what was desired in a new facility. A principal was named and committees were soon formed to pick the name of the school, its mascot,**

colors, and school seal. A contest was held to write the school alma mater and a selection written by a student was picked from more than two hundred entries.

During the 1999 year, students were bussed back and forth between campuses as the bands, chorus programs and NJROTC programs were merged. There were some interesting moments during athletic contests. Community interest was high and the final events were well attended. Fans will never forget the last football game held at Ravenel Stadium between St. Andrew's and Middleton. The stadium was packed and each school wanted desperately to win that last game. First St. Andrew's scored and the band consisting of students from both schools played the Rock Fight Song. Then Middleton scored and the band consisting of students from both schools played the Razorback Fight song. All present at the game could not have been prouder of the kids in the band! They understood that although the teams were battling each other on the field, the members in the band, from different schools, could work together as one team.

In May of the year 2000, after 60 years for St. Andrew's Parish High School and 30 years for Middleton High School, the last graduations for both schools were held. These events marked a very significant time in the history of the West Ashley Schools. As another chapter was completed, a new chapter was just beginning.

The next Fall was full of anticipation as students attended West Ashley High School, located on split campuses. All programs were merged and students, parents, and teachers found new classmates, friends and co-workers. Athletic teams moved up to the "Big Sixteen Conference" and old rivalries with Summerville and other local teams were renewed. The increased level of competition challenged the teams and coaches. In the Spring of the year, the new school had its first Individual State Tennis Champion. Also in the Spring, the DECA Team won the State Championship in Myrtle Beach and went on to compete at the National Level in California.

Though out that year, all anticipated moving into the new campus and as construction moved ahead, excitement mounted as the new school facility became a reality.

The opening of the new campus was celebrated during the Summer of 2001 with three "Open Houses" which drew nearly 5,000 citizens to view the new facility.

Today the high school serves 2300 students from every area of Charleston County. Federal legislation, "Leave No Child Behind," has enabled students from other schools to transfer to the school.