

Katy School Namesakes

Pillars of the Katy community are paving the way for educational excellence

Written by Shetye Cypher and Kennan Buckner | Select photography by Anetrius Wallace



Wolman Elementary Ray and Jamie Wolman

Ray Wolman began his career in education as a biology teacher at Katy High School, the only high school in the district at the time, and later was an instructional officer at the Outdoor Learning Center - the first time for an educator to have continuously worked 40 years with Katy ISD. His wife Jamie Wolman shares, "We are long-term educators." Throughout her career, Jamie taught both as a special needs teacher, a junior high counselor, and a high school counselor.

Continued Involvement

Even after retirement, the couple still made time to visit the school. "We're there every

week. Ray built bird feeders outside four of the classrooms," Wolman says. "We are involved with their explorer science and discover learning programs," shares Wolman. To the Wolmans, providing Katy ISD students a great education is their most important priority. "We are so lucky to get to be in Katy where education is so important." Wolman adds, "I hope that our school demonstrates a love for education and will always have a great appreciation of education and teachers."

Wolman Fact

Wolman Elementary has volunteer-implemented programs such as Explore Science and Discover Learning





Shafer Elementary Fred and Patti Shafer

Fred and Patti Shafer are no strangers to education. Together, the couple has given a combined 73 years to the field of education. "Our goal as educators has always been to keep our focus on what is best for the students," says Patti. Throughout their careers, the Shafers believed by maintaining a focus on what was best for students they could make a difference through quality education. "When we were hired as administrators for Katy ISD, we knew we would be working for an exemplary school district."

After becoming namesakes, the Shafers made the commitment to be actively involved in the life of the school. The couple dedicates a day each week to visit the school - in addition to attending and participating in as many school activities. By spend time in the cafeteria, on the playground, reading in the classrooms, as well as mentoring students - the Shafers are keeping that promise.

Character-Driven

In keeping with the school's theme "Seven Virtues of Character," the couple has initiated the Shafer Elementary "Circle of Character" to help students understand the importance of living a character-driven life. Students who join the "circle" receive a wristband to remind them of their commitment. Students can also visit the Circle of Character website to post examples of how they have demonstrated one or more

"Our hope is that when they leave Shafer Elementary they will leave with lasting memories and prepared for their next education adventure."

- Patti Shafer

of the seven virtues of character at school, home or in the community. "At this time we have over 300 students and staff members who have joined the Circle of Character," smiles Patti.

Education is critical to the success of individuals, and society as a whole. Fred says, "We see the community of Katy thriving because of the quality of education that is provided by the school district and the value the community and parents place on education. Our value in education is the driving force behind our continuing to be involved in the school district and why we are so humbled to be a namesake in a great district like Katy ISD."

The Shafers hope that when students walk through the doors they know there are teachers who care about them. Patti says, "Our hope is that each student who attends Shafer Elementary will have developed an understanding of the importance of the value of learning and living a life of character."

Shafer Fact

Both Fred and Patti Shafer volunteer as KEYS mentors at Shafer and Cimarron Elementary



Kudos

First-grade team and Fourth-grade team awarded grants from Katy ISD Education Foundation

Exhibit of School Architecture Value Award





Stanley Elementary Stan Stanley

Stan Stanley was at a statewide reception for the Boy Scouts at the Texas Lieutenant Governor's office in Austin when he heard the news that he was unanimously selected as a namesake for his volunteer service and commitment to the Katy community. Stanley says, "Five years after the decision to name elementary No. 32 in my honor, it is still unbelievable."

Stanley credits his success to his upbringing. "My parents instilled in me the importance of service to others when I was a child and that influence has carried over into my adult life," says Stanley. Stanley has also provided leadership in various organizations, such as his church, the Boy Scouts of America, the Katy ISD VIPs program, the Katy Area Chamber of Commerce.

A Growing Community

"Ten years ago, I had the opportunity to be involved in the formation of the Katy Area Economic Development Council, which has been heavily involved in bringing over 10,000 jobs to the Katy area. This organization was formed to bring industry and quality businesses to the Katy area to assist in keeping our tax rate low - in comparison to other areas."

Stanley says it has been an honor to work as a volunteer in several Katy ISD Bond referendums with the hopes of seeing the Katy ISD nationally recognized as a premier school district. He adds, "We have seen that occur in Katy ISD this past decade. The Katy area has become a destination community."

Building Relationships

Stan and his wife Patsy, a retired teacher and counselor, go to Stanley Elementary once a week to visit with students and offer support to the teachers and staff. "This is so rewarding as we witness the smiles from children of all grades and through that effort, we are confident that it is a positive experience for those children," he shares.

With a foundation like Katy ISD, the Stanley's believe that "each child who attends SSE will enjoy their elementary school education experience through a top-quality learning process, coupled with developing leadership skills, and broadening their interpersonal relationship with their fellow students and the staff."

Stanley Fact

Patsy and Stan Stanley were honored as grand marshals of the Katy Rice Harvest Parade in 2013.



Opened: 2009
Students Enrolled: 1,310

"My parents instilled in me the importance of service to others when I was a child, and that influence has carried over into my adult life."

- Stan Stanley



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Wilson Elementary Tom Wilson

When Wilson Elementary opened its doors in August 2012, they began with the vision of their namesake Tom Wilson - to create an environment where children feel safe, respected, and encouraged.

Wilson says, "I worked in the district a long time, and I worked with a lot of people. My interactions with those people were all positive." Tom has served as a teacher, an assistant principal, a principal, as well as the district's personnel coordinator.

"I usually spend about three or four days at the school a month. I let the teachers schedule time to come in and read, or help out with class, or be there at lunch." He also participates in the fishing club on weekends. Wilson says education has been part of his

"I hope [the students] are all going to be successful and have a well-rounded education."

- Tom Wilson

whole life. "I'm the only one who became a teacher in my family. After leaving Katy ISD, I taught part-time at the University of Houston."

Wilson has many fond memories of his own days in the classroom. "It's a fun part of my life," he smiles. "And I enjoy learning myself." As students at Wilson Elementary prepare for their academic futures, Wilson hopes through the many activities offered, they are able to achieve the successes they dream of. Wilson adds, "I hope [the students] are all going to be successful and have a well-rounded education."

Opened: 2012
Students Enrolled: 967

Wilson Fact

Wilson Elementary was awarded Top New Fundraising School in the Nation by the American Heart Association for their efforts with Jump Rope for Heart in 2012.



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Holland Elementary Bonnie Holland

With “Blazing a trail” as its school motto, Holland Elementary has continued in the path of excellence in education just like its namesake, Bonnie Holland. Holland has served the Katy community for more than 45 years. Holland shares, “I have always strived to exceed the expectations of the campuses, departments, students, and parents.” Some initiatives that began during Holland’s tenure are: the establishment of Super Saturday, an annual enrichment activity for gifted and talented students; the development of a systematic response to intervention process for students in need of academic or behavioral support; and the creation of the Professional Advancement Through Career Education program.

Satisfying Results

“It is very rewarding to know that programs that have been initiated under my leadership have grown and endured over time,” says Holland. The support of parent centers for parents of students with limited English proficiency and the expansion of services and programs for students with disabilities are just a few of the many ways Holland revels learning.

“There is nothing more gratifying than being a part of the celebrations of learning and accomplishments that are an ongoing part of the tradition of excellence that has been established at Holland,” she adds. “At times, I function as a cheerleader or encourager. At other times I enjoy reading to students, attending special events, or simply observing students and staff as they go about their work.”

“*The real value of education comes from building the capacity and desire within each student to continue to pursue knowledge throughout their lifetime.*”

- Bonnie Holland

Holland Fact

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Tompkins High School Obra D. Tompkins

After entertaining several options, the school naming committee chose Obra D. Tompkins by an overwhelming majority to become the namesake for Katy ISD's eighth high school. A former principal of Mayde Creek High School, Tompkins has also served as a teacher, coach, and assistant principal during his 35-year career. Tompkins shares, "I try to visit the school at least two times a week assisting where needed."

Student-centered

Tompkins also attends different functions and monitors the halls during class changes. His emphasis on a student-centered approach can be seen in his everyday life. "Education is one of the keys to successful life," says Tompkins. "There are many rewards available when obtaining an education." He stands by the mantra Katy ISD is known for providing "an outstanding educational background that is rewarding and fulfilling." KM

Tompkins Fact

Tompkins High School's extracurricular programs, such as FFA and debate, have had successful students at all levels of competition.



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- Pattison Elementary
- Raines High School
- Rhodes Elementary
- Rhodes Stadium
- Rylander Elementary
- Schmalz Elementary
- Stephens Elementary
- Taylor High School
- Williams Elementary
- Winborn Elementary
- Wolfe Elementary

Leonard Merrell Center Leonard E. Merrell



A milestone for the Katy community, the Leonard E. Merrell Center is a 145,000-square-foot arena that has become a gathering place for Katyites from sporting contests, graduations, banquets, and more.

Leonard Merrell says, “This special financial transaction, because of our unique funding formulas different from the city’s, did not have to use any local tax dollars to construct the facility.”

Perfect Partnership

The center has become a great benefit to the west side of Houston and has become an additional source of revenue for the school district. “My primary efforts in Katy center on my work with the local Katy YMCA. Through the Y’s after-school programs and the multiple number of student and resident services (including Turkey Dash), I am able to be a part of giving back to this wonderful community,” he says.

“The student’s lives are enriched through practical experience with business leaders from the greater Katy and Houston area.” Merrell adds, “Junior Achievement’s interaction with students through their community volunteers is integrated throughout the curriculum for students from elementary through high school.”

His passion for education and the future of the community is evident. “Education is the heart and soul of a free society. A free and appropriate education for all children should never be taken for granted,” Merrell shares. “Education continues to be the one biggest factor for success of our young people. It is the basis for which America was founded and should be the priority for each person in our society.”

Merrell Fact

The Merrell Center contains four sets of locker rooms to accommodate athletic tournaments.

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