



Vision:

The Story of St. John's Country Day School



*To St. Johns our hymn we raise
Full of love and full of praise
Wisdom gained for future days
Leads us on to righteous ways
With our days our strength shall grow
As our words and deeds may show,*



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VISION:

THE STORY OF ST. JOHNS COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

by Owene Weber

Edited by Helen Van Wagenen and Owene Weber

ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA 1990

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*To Dorothea Becker Heinrich and Edwin Paul Heinrich,
whose vision and pioneering spirits made possible
the founding of St. Johns Country Day School
and insured its continued success,
we dedicate these words with love and gratitude.*



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C O N C L U S I O N

HONORS AND HONORABLE PEOPLE



Preface

PREFACE

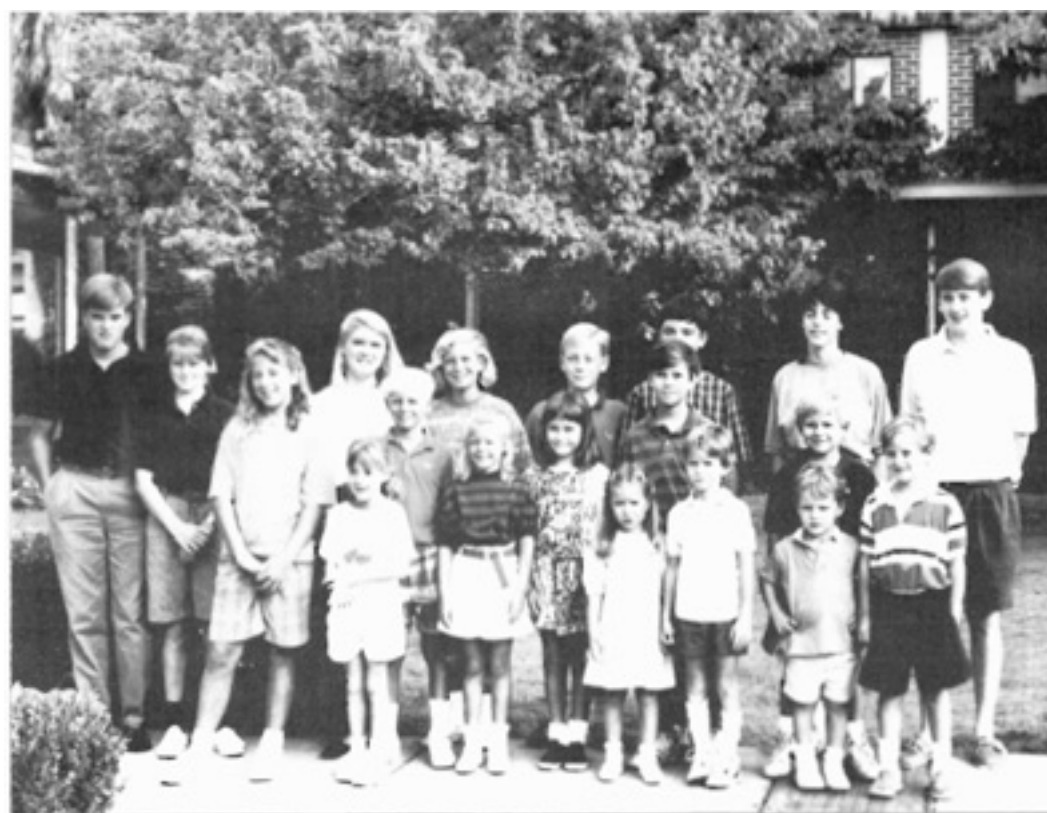
When I first talked with Dot Heinrich and Benji Mallory, I decided that writing the history of St. Johns would be a difficult and time-consuming project, and I did not think I wanted to attempt it. I was right on the first two counts; Dot convinced me I was wrong on the third. Once I began, I estimated it would take three years to complete; it actually took more than twice as long. And I still might be writing and rewriting if Helen Van Wagenen had not stepped in to lend her extraordinary wit, wisdom, and editorial skills for the last 18 months. As it turned out, the writing became a work of love, and I find myself even now in awe and admiration of the founders, sustainers, and principles of this great school.

A word about the plan of the text seems appropriate here. This book is a story about a school, what it stands for, and how it came to be. It focuses necessarily on the founders at first but thereafter on the institution itself. The pictures also tell the story of how it was then, and how the present came to be. It is a story about a product not a people, and it is an unfinished work. I have only begun it by recording the past.

There were days when I sat at my computer that I felt very much alone in the work. Now as I look back, I am amazed at the number of friends who helped make it possible. I would like to thank first those who took time to tell me what they remembered about their St. Johns days and to share notes and clippings they had saved: Ramona Archibald, Sue Bingaman, Betsy Blau, Bill Courtney, Sr., Frank De Grim, Jan Francis, Hilda Heinrich, Frankie Kelley, Jean McGhee, Minerva Mason, Helen Palmer, Do Skypek, and Reed Sourbeer among many others. I would also like to thank the St. Johns faculty, administration, and staff for their time and assistance, and especially Jeannette Savilonis who was my very special resource person and cheerleader.

Another group to whom I am grateful are those who took time and care to read and advise on part or all of the many working editions: Helen Adams, Rabun Chappell, Owene Courtney, George Hallam, Cathleen Henning, Dot Heinrich, Cynthia and Del Landry, Priscilla and David Lee, Steve Russey, Bill Ticknor, Raleigh Thompson, and the two very valuable and patient editorial husbands, Wick Van Wagenen and Larry Weber. In addition, I am quite certain I could not have completed this work without the help of my computer consultant, Nick Weber, and Sam Morley, who found Chapter XIII when I deleted it. I also owe thanks to the many editors, staff writers, and photographers of *The Saints' Scroll* and the *Chalice*, and to the recording secretaries of the board of trustees. Those carefully compiled documents are the history of St. Johns kept in trust for future days. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Heinrich, whose spirit guided me and chided me, haunted me and helped me, and I hope will now smile on my work as a credit to his.

Owene H. Weber,
June 23, 1990



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Introduction, April 2, 1953

INTRODUCTION

April 2, 1953

Edwin Paul Heinrich had a dream and a wife who shared it. They believed that the hand of God intervened and directed them to Orange Park. The dream came true with St. Johns Country Day School.

Dot and Ed Heinrich were a pair of experienced teachers who came from Washington, D.C., to look at schools in Florida. They really wanted to found their own. They had planned it a hundred times — books, buildings, finances, philosophy.

Years later, Dot could recall that they were driving east from Gainesville toward Green Cove Springs when Ed abruptly turned onto Blanding Boulevard. Dot thought it odd considering the circumstances.

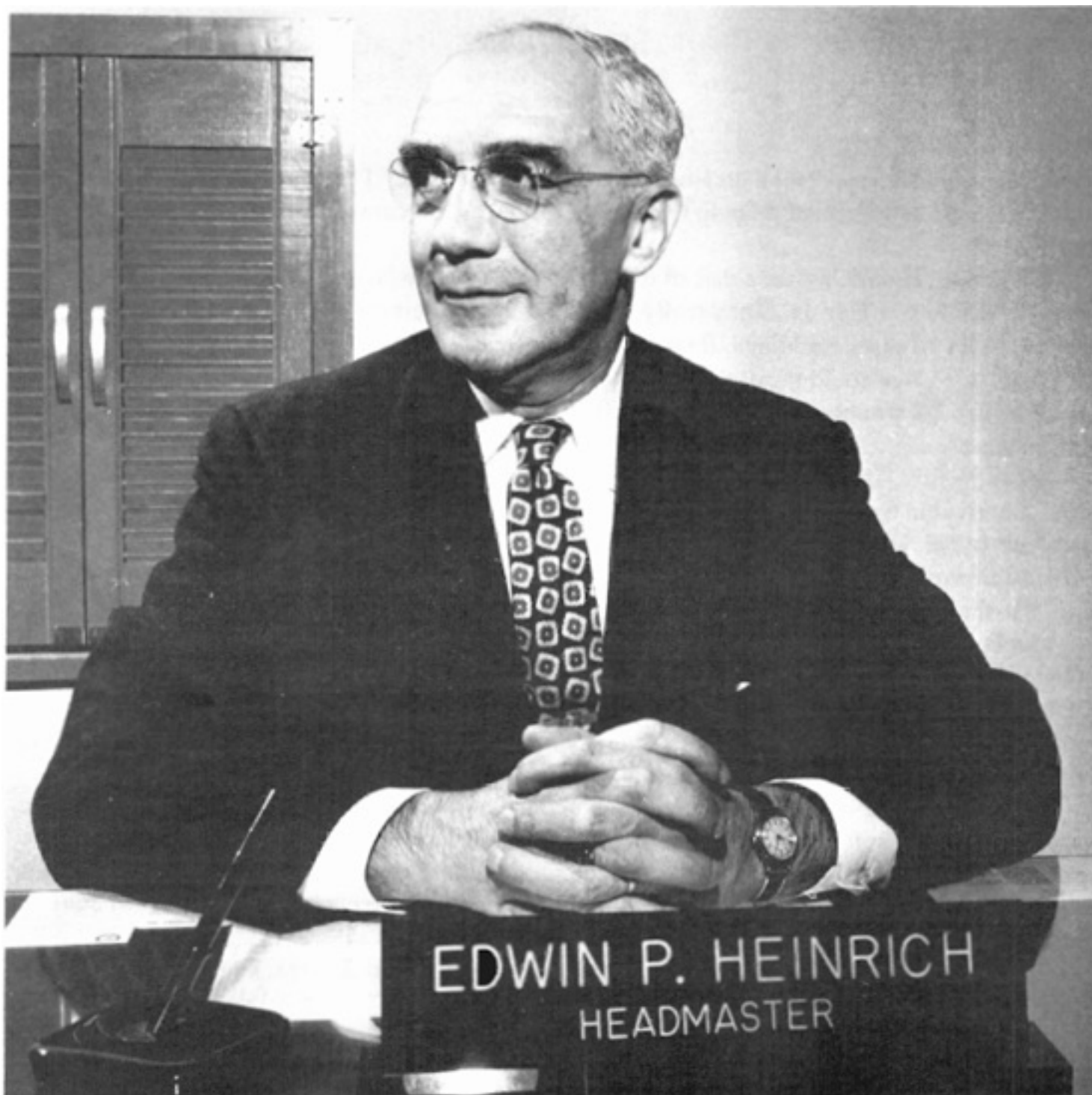
It was April 2, 1953, their son's birthday. They had left their two children with Dot's parents across the river in Switzerland and intended to get back early. Suddenly, Ed felt compelled to visit their friend, Helen Brown, in Orange Park.

He had worked briefly in her real estate office one summer. She might not even remember him...but she did.

In fact, she told the Heinrichs that she had just been thinking about them. The population of Orange Park had doubled in the past 10 years to over 1500 residents. People were beginning to talk about the need for an independent school. The Buckman Bridge would not be built for another 20 years, and parents found it a long commute to Bolles and Bartram. Helen's daughter, the mother of three children, had suggested that their friends the Heinrichs might be interested.

The Heinrichs agreed to wait while Helen phoned her daughter, but Helen Brown Adams walked in the door before her mother could pick up the receiver. The Heinrichs did not have to be asked a second time if they wanted to meet a group to talk about starting a school. They knew they had found the opportunity they were looking for. After the reception, so did a lot of concerned parents.

Was it coincidence or Divine intervention? Either way, April 2, 1953, marks the beginning of the St. Johns story.



1. The Man and the Motive, 1905-53

Chapter I

The Man and the Motive 1905-1953

Edwin Paul Heinrich was born August 8, 1905, in Berlin, a city of nearly 2,000,000 people and one of the great cultural and commercial capitals of the world. He was the younger of the two sons of Carl and Rosie Heinrich. His father owned a Swiss-German trading business and at one time served as the Swiss Consul in Berlin. Ed and his brother Kurt lived with their parents in a large apartment in the heart of Berlin.

From 1925-1927 Ed Heinrich attended the University of Heidelberg. After completing his degree there, he went into business with his father, but he soon realized that education was his true calling. Although he had taught as a student at Heidelberg, he began his first full time teaching position at a state secondary school in Berlin, the "Prinz Heinrich" — no relation to the family — where he taught mathematics and sports.

In 1931 the young teacher published a book on the methods of gymnastics entitled *Schwingen und Schweben*, ("Swinging and Soaring"). A Berlin critic of the time notes that "Heinrich speaks with the voice of the experienced school instructor, who has enough courage to turn his back on the old fashioned sequence of...exercises." Ed Heinrich never stopped turning his back on the old fashioned and creating the new. He taught at a private secondary school in Switzerland from 1931-34 and then returned to Berlin to begin work on his doctorate while serving as co-director and instructor at a private secondary school, the "Waldschule Kaliske." During this period he was also a leader of the German Sailing Association for Youth.

"He was fantastic with young people," recalls Hilda Heinrich, Kurt's widow, who now lives in New York. "Children of all ages would come to him with problems." She also remembers that he was sure he could do anything. In her family home in Berlin, there was a large brass lamp with a broken pull chain. The first time he was in their house, Ed decided to fix it. Hilda's father was appalled when he saw his dismantled lamp, but the young man at work never doubted the result. Confidence, know-how, and love of youth were a part of Ed Heinrich from the beginning.

In 1936 Kurt and Hilda Heinrich came to New York City where Kurt would practice medicine for many years. He wrote his family in Germany glowing reports about life in America. Since many Americans still held Europeans in awe, he and his wife were treated almost like royalty.

Ed Heinrich encountered a shocking contrast in attitude once the winds of war had blown hatred of anything German across the world.

After his father's death in 1937, Ed brought his mother to the United States to visit. War was coming, and it was time to consider a new beginning. When they arrived on the *SS George Washington*, Kurt Heinrich rode out with the harbor pilot to meet his mother and brother. Unfortunately, neither of them could get a visa because the German quota for the year was filled.

They found a unique solution to the problem. In 1936 while Ed was working with the German Olympic team, he had met the U.S. Ambassador to Germany, William E. Dodd. By 1937 Dodd was back in Washington, and Heinrich sought his advice. Dodd wisely pointed out that while entry to the U.S. as a German citizen was impossible, the Cuban quota was not yet filled. He suggested that they try to enter the U.S. via Cuba. Ed promptly cashed in their return tickets to Germany and bought passage to Cuba. After a two-week stay in Havana, he and his mother entered the U. S. under the Cuban quota.

Ed Heinrich never forgot those early days in America. Years later he told Ron Sercomb in an interview for the *Times Union* on May 17, 1970, "For a while it was all very confusing. My English was very poor. Furthermore, I had been fed so much Nazi propaganda that it took me a long time to adjust to real freedom. I found it all bewildering, but my bewilderment soon changed to enjoyment. Ah, what a wonderful word — "Freedom!" Sometimes I wonder how many

American citizens genuinely appreciate the wonderful gift of freedom. After less than a month in America I decided 'This is for me,' and I began to think seriously about my new career."

Although he had studied English as a boy and had taught in the language, Heinrich soon realized he needed help. With his usual inventiveness he worked out several ways to improve. He would buy a movie ticket and sit through a film two or three times until he knew every word. He also joined a dollar book club to force himself to read regularly. He eventually developed a remarkable command of English. For the rest of his life, he would combine this fluency with his natural public speaking ability and his quick mind to meet any occasion.

Early in 1938, Heinrich went to Baltimore where he had an introduction to the headmaster of the Park School, Hans Froelicher, a Quaker known for his interest in progressive education. Heinrich shared Froelicher's interest and had great respect for the Quakers because of the help they had given German school children after World War I. Unfortunately, Froelicher could offer Heinrich only a temporary job but gave him an introduction to Major Louis E. Lamborn, headmaster of McDonogh School, near Baltimore.

Heinrich arrived at McDonogh in the middle of the school year and again found no opening. Lamborn, however, suggested that he could use the young man's previous experience that summer to develop a sailing program at a camp he owned in New York. Heinrich was delighted with the chance to work, but it was months until June. "Meanwhile," he told the Major, "he had to eat." Once Lamborn realized how serious Heinrich really was, he created a place for him tutoring French and gave him room and board in the school dormitory. For the rest of his life Heinrich would remember Lamborn's kindness in his own dealings with those in need.



Ed Heinrich teaching crew

At the end of every summer, it was Lamborn's custom to invite the McDonogh faculty for a week at his camp. In August of 1938, a young woman from Baltimore was one of the new teachers who attended.

Dorothea Aldine Becker was born September 12, 1915, in Paynesville, Ohio. Her family later moved to Baltimore, and she was graduated from the Maryland State Teachers' College in 1934. She stayed in Baltimore to teach in the public schools for four years after her family moved to Florida.

In the spring of 1938, she got a job as a fourth form teacher at McDonogh and a free vacation, also. Here the two young educators met, unaware that someday together they would bring a new idea to the world of education.

After their week at camp they returned to McDonogh where Ed became a full time physics teacher and coached crew while Dot began teaching in the Lower School. In spring of 1940, they became engaged and were married on August 27, 1940, at the home of Dot's parents in Jacksonville, Florida. The young couple moved into a faculty apartment and took their meals in the school dining room. Their first child, Sue Aldine Heinrich, was born on March 10, 1942.

Meanwhile, Heinrich began work on an M.A. in administration at the University of Maryland. He realized that he would also need American credentials in pursuing his new career.

Hard years followed. Most of all, Heinrich wanted U.S. citizenship. He was clearly eligible because he had lived in the U.S. for three years and had married a U.S. citizen. Each time he applied, he was turned down with no explanation — but he could guess. Prejudice against Germans was not unusual during the war.



Ed Heinrich with Sue

In the summer of 1942, the young couple decided to leave their happy and secure positions at McDonogh. They thought if they moved to another legal district, they might find more favorable consideration for Heinrich's citizenship application. For two years he taught physics and chemistry at Landon School in Bethesda, Maryland. Then they moved again, this time to Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, where Heinrich was employed as assistant headmaster at Perkiomen School and Dot became the director of Kindergarten. It was a good move: Edwin P. Heinrich became a U.S. citizen on June 6, 1944-D. Day.

Prejudice was not over, however. With no explanation less than a year later, the administration at the Perkiomen School abruptly fired Heinrich in the spring of 1945.

Perhaps it was time to get out of education. He had a wife, a child, and a second baby due in a month.

To provide his family with security, Heinrich took the first job he could find — personnel manager at the Baldwin Hotel in Beach Haven, N.J. Next he began systematically examining every job available, including one at a prison which his wife was very much afraid he might decide to take.

Then another major event occurred in his life. On April 2, 1945, Heinrich met with Edwin Zavitz, headmaster of the Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. Before the day was over, Zavitz had offered him a job, and Heinrich had signed a contract. Full of good news he immediately phoned home but was surprised to get no answer from his wife. Only later did he discover that she had driven herself to the hospital where Edwin Paul Heinrich, Jr., was born.

The next few years added rich and rewarding experiences to Heinrich's teaching career. While at Sidwell, he learned much from Zavitz's example as headmaster; he also had the chance to teach part time at the University of Maryland while he completed the degree he had begun earlier. Later, he taught physics at George Washington University and, eventually, held a position as adjunct professor of physics at American University.

After eight years in Washington, the Heinrichs had to make another important decision. Sidwell was a Quaker school, and while Heinrich was a deeply religious man and actively involved in his church, he was a Lutheran. He realized that as acting head of the Upper Division, he had gone as far as he could in the Sidwell administration without being a Quaker.

Furthermore, the Heinrichs still had a dream. On their wedding trip they had planned a school which would be in many ways like McDonogh where they were teaching. The summer they had lived in Florida they tried to get financial backing, but nothing had come of it...yet. During their Washington years, Dot Heinrich developed her own reputation as a reading specialist. If necessary, they knew that the family could live on the income from Dot's students while Ed looked for a new administrative position.



Ed Heintz

In 1953 they spent their spring break in Florida with Dot's family. While there they took time to drive across the state to look at independent schools, but they could not seem to find the right one. Their last stop was in Gainesville to ask at the University of Florida what was happening in reading around the state. It was good news to learn that the kind of work Dot was doing in Washington had not yet begun in Florida.

Then they headed home and made that all important turn.

2. On Location, 1953-1954

Chapter II **On Location** **April 1953-June 1954**

What the Heinrichs had to offer was exciting. What they needed was someone to share their enthusiasm and a place to meet. Within hours Helen Adams arranged a reception for them on Saturday, April 4, at "Mira Rio," now the main building of the Club Continental in Orange Park. Margo and Ash Tisdelle and their three children had recently moved into this impressive Spanish mansion which was built by Margo's grandfather, Caleb Johnson, president of the Palmolive Company. People would come to see the house and also to hear the man.



Helen Adams



Minerva Mason



Raymond Mason



Ramona and Kenneth Archibald

The man and his message were both impressive. The group was pleased. He spoke to them about a school which would provide a new dimension to the cultural picture of Jacksonville. He would "stress Christian principles," "challenge

the gifted," and "pioneer preventive rather than remedial teaching." His school would offer discipline in a permissive society, "relieve the overburdened public schools," and "adapt to the justifiable demands of patrons." It was agreed that he would return in three weeks to make further arrangements.

The Heinrichs went back to Washington with a move in mind. They sold their house for enough cash to feed the family for a year. They believed so strongly in the school that they were willing to work for a year without pay — although this was never necessary. Then Dr. Heinrich told his plans to the headmaster and board of trustees at Sidwell and asked for their blessings. It was fast becoming too late to turn back.

Fortunately, they never had to consider that option. Helen Adams, among others, saw to that. She began contacting anyone who might be interested in the new school. Word of mouth and the press stirred curiosity; the dream began to take shape.

Dr. Heinrich returned to Jacksonville on April 25 and met a larger group of prospective patrons at the Florida Yacht Club. As a token of faith, Raymond Mason and Kenneth Archibald each gave him a check for \$1,000, which he promised to return if anything went wrong. Instead, the school went so well that Dr. Heinrich repaid the sum in full before the end of the first year. In the weeks that followed, they chose a board of trustees and applied for a charter. Tentative applications began trickling in. Back in Washington, Dr. Heinrich submitted his resignation and called the movers.

Now it was time to name the new school. The Heinrichs had originally planned to call it "The Pioneer School." Later they abandoned that title because of a Soviet youth group known as the "Pioneers," but they never gave up the pioneer spirit.

Instead they chose St. Johns Country Day School, a name they thought appropriate for many reasons. First, the St. Johns River had created the need because there was no independent school on the west side. Second, the saint's name would be a reminder of religion as the fourth "r" along with reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic. Finally, unlike Bolles and Bartram, the school would be out in the country and for day students only.

The next step was to find a location. "Sycamore Manor," at 1724 Plainfield Avenue in the middle of Orange Park, seemed made to order. The large frame house was situated on 10 acres of property with a swimming pool and a strawberry patch. It had high ceilings and spacious rooms which the Heinrichs hoped to turn into classrooms. When zoning ruled this out, the Heinrichs bought it anyhow. They could envision "Sycamore Manor" as a gracious setting for the headmaster and his wife to hold academic and social functions for many years to come.

But where would they hold classes? The answer came when the town offered Dr. Heinrich the unused second floor of a public building at the corner of Highway 17 and Kingsley Avenue. The council knew how valuable a school like this would be to the area. The price was right at \$1.00 a year, and the old stone structure with its upstairs porch looked right, too. The building had originally been part of the Hand School, built in 1890 to educate blacks in the area and financed by a northern philanthropist. When that school closed, the facilities were sold to Moosehaven and later given to the Town of Orange Park.



Sycamore Manor

In 1953 the town still used two of the original buildings, and the third housed a community center on the ground floor. The upper floors had been so neglected that Dr. Heinrich would not even show the rooms to his wife until they were cleaned.

Soap and water did the job, and the new school got an ideal location with enough space for a good start. They could use the first floor for assemblies and meetings, and there was always the third floor when the school got larger.

Early that summer Dr. Heinrich told the board that he wanted to operate the school as a nonprofit organization. The Heinrichs opposed the idea of an independent school in business for profit. They saw the board's approval of their idea as a vote of confidence. On July 21, 1953, the school was incorporated and granted a charter by the State of Florida.

A month later St. Johns opened formally for applications. The idea quickly gained popularity. By opening day, September 14, St. Johns had 26 students and two new teachers: Helen Palmer, an elementary teacher who was suggested to Dr. Heinrich by the parents of a prospective student, and Gary Johnson, a young history and English teacher who was looking for a job to make enough money to take a trip to Europe.

Meanwhile, after a carpenter made classrooms out of bedrooms, August found the new headmaster and his wife in work clothes, hammering, painting, and mopping. Along with them were their children and their faculty. Together they readied the second-story school house. With green paint and plywood they created chalk boards. For the primary grades they cut down night tables and chairs bought from Moosehaven at \$1.00 each. For the upper grades they had bought tables from Army surplus in Washington and shipped them to Florida with their household goods. Everything was in order by the first week in September.

To celebrate the opening, the new school invited parents and patrons to a reception on September 12, coincidentally, Mrs. Heinrich's birthday. The press gave the event a full page in the social notes. It was a gala occasion with ladies in hats and white gloves and men in summer suits. The rooms were decorated with dark blue and light blue, the school colors, and students and their mothers served refreshments on the gallery. St. Johns was off to a festive beginning, and it would continue the custom. Every year thereafter the school year would begin with Open House.



Punch on the porch

Opening exercises took place at 8:45 A.M. on Monday, September 14, with an invocation and address by Chaplain Weldon Gatlin of NAS Jacksonville. During the ceremony, Raymond Mason, president of the board, commissioned Dr. Heinrich as headmaster. In response Dr. Heinrich stated that he had "a holy task — never to forget that these children [were] the children of God." Then followed the pledge of allegiance and messages from the Orange Park Mayor and the Clay County Superintendent of Schools. And finally the time came for the 26 to get to work on their four "r's."

One student who was particularly busy at the new school was eighth grader Sam White. Since the old building had no electrical bell system to announce time for changing classes, and the school had no spare funds, Dr. Heinrich found an old cow bell and designated Sam the official bell ringer. For as long as the school was in that building, the bell was affectionately known as "Sam" in honor of its first ringer.

Within a few days the school began adding new students and new needs. First on the needs list was transportation. They bought a small, used bus from NAS for \$210.00, painted it with the school colors, and charged \$5.00 a year for the privilege of riding. Before the end of the year, the "new" bus had cost almost \$600.00 in repairs and safety modifications, but it was worth it. Car pools did not always work, and the bus let students enroll who would not have had a ride otherwise.

Gary Johnson drew the dubious honor of becoming the first bus driver. He named the bus "Gertrude" after his mother — claiming that both bus and lady were equally cantankerous. When "Gertrude" broke down, the entire school waited for her.

In their early plans, the Heinrichs proposed that 500 students would be the maximum enrollment — and they KNEW they would get there. They wanted the school to grow slowly so they could know every student and every family well. They saw the school as a logical step in the social growth of a child: first family, then school, next college, and finally the big world. A coeducational school with grades 1-12 would offer an extended family of brothers and sisters to enrich a child's experiences.

They also had other children to consider — their own. From the beginning the Heinrichs explained the school to Sue and Win as a family venture. They all needed to cooperate and share. Sometimes Win and Sue would spend their evenings at the dining room table doing homework alone with as many as five boarding students under the close supervision of Dr. Heinrich.

The boarders began with Jon McLeod, one of Dr. Heinrich's students at Sidwell who admired his teacher so much that his parents let him come to Florida to continue his education. He moved into "Sycamore Manor" along with two other students, Emma Gray Hillyer and Sam White. For several years the Heinrichs took in students and gave them room and board, along with the Heinrich brand of discipline and parenting. It helped the students, and it helped pay the Heinrichs' bills. As soon as they could manage financially, however, they found other places for out-of-town students.

Years later when Win Heinrich was married and living in Texas, he would recall his father's generous spirit which gathered people in need into his home and his mother's hospitality. Like his parents he would also develop the impulse to act on this spirit as he and his wife, Sandy, began taking in very young foster children and encouraging their own three children to welcome these little ones as part of the family — the legacy and the lesson of early days in "Sycamore Manor" not forgotten.

So the first year got under way with tuition coming in one door and going quickly out the other to cover expenses. Before long they even managed to hire a part time teacher. Jan Gomez, to help with the elementary grades so that Mrs. Heinrich could give special help in reading.

In December the whole school began work on a Christmas program written and directed by Dr. and Mrs. Heinrich. It told the story of the life of Christ from birth to crucifixion in song and scripture. Dr. Heinrich taught the older students to sing "Silent Night" in German, while Mrs. Heinrich taught the younger ones "Away in a Manger," and they all struggled to coordinate rehearsal and routine.



Boarders

The performance took place at Grace Episcopal Church with the students in dark blue and white outfits. The dress and the program became tradition at St. Johns — down to the finishing touches. Mrs. Heinrich tied little blue ribbons on the girls' blouses, while Dr. Heinrich saw to it that all the students held their red construction paper booklets just so. Unfortunately, the church asked them not to come back because the primary grades had dripped wax on the carpet. Otherwise the celebration was a great success.

The holiday celebrations did not end here. Students draped the school porch with big red bows and shone spot lights through cellophane "stained glass windows." The town could not miss its new school.

When Christmas vacation had ended, 34 students and four full time faculty members came back to some good news. The board announced that from September to December the school had been completely self-supporting (and it would remain so). They would not have to issue bonds as originally planned.

There was even a waiting list. In an interview with the press, Dr. Heinrich explained that the school had not expected such great demand. To keep classes small, he added that he would postpone taking new students until more teachers could be trained "in the school's teaching methods."

In February St. Johns opened registration for the coming year and announced that all new students would have to take an entrance exam. At the same time the school joined the Educational Testing Bureau so it could use national standards to evaluate incoming students and measure progress.

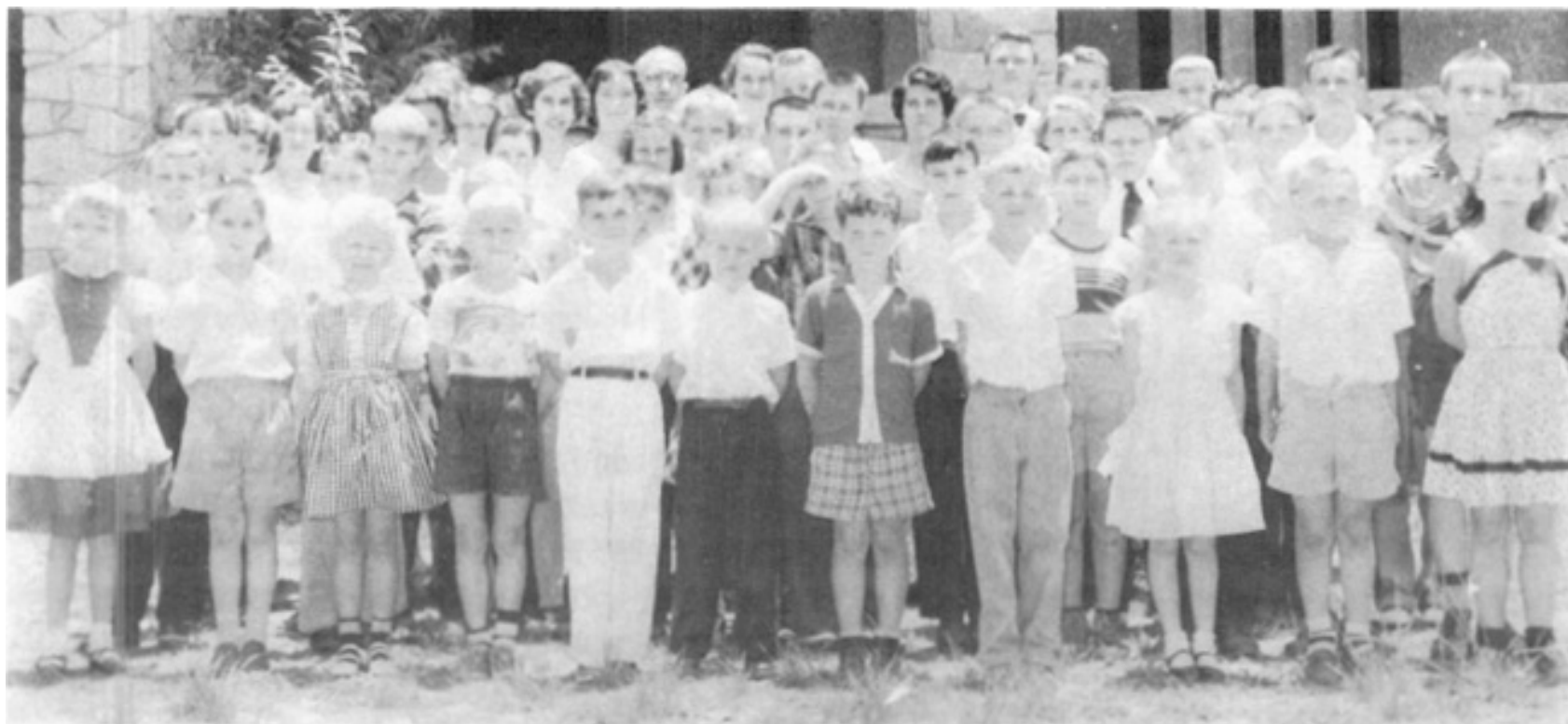
The Heinrichs believed another measure of a school's worth was its service to the community. Dr. Heinrich led the way by taking responsible volunteer positions. He served on the boards of the educational television station and the Northeast Florida Mental Health Association. He also accepted speaking engagements at schools, churches, and civic organizations.

The students particularly approved when Dr. Heinrich joined the volunteer fire department. The minute they heard the fire alarm, they knew they had a break coming. Suddenly, their teacher would drop his chalk, rush down the stairs, and hop on his motor scooter. Once the blaze was out, the "Doc" quickly rode back to class.

As yet another gesture to the community, St. Johns opened its doors in March 1954 for local artists to exhibit their work. The new school had begun to establish an image as a center for art and learning.

With the end of the first year in sight in April 1954, Dr. Heinrich wrote the following message to the *Newsletter* of Phi Delta Kappa at the University of Maryland:

My new field of action turns out to be a challenge beyond all trembling fears. To start a new school from scratch means being a real estate man, public relations officer, purchasing agent, painter, digger, and everything else too, while trying to survive all this and, maybe, to do some good at the end...all this accomplished without incurring any debt...a lifetime of experience and teaching methods put into action...a gain of 1.8 years average [student academic progress] during first semester...things are going right...students are having the time of their lives.



Student Body '54

3. Down the Road, 1954-57

Chapter III Down the Road 1954-57

There were great things down the road — literally and figuratively. By the end of the third year, enrollment had gone from 26 to 127. St. Johns was gaining a good reputation. It was also about to outgrow its building.

Each year as soon as school was out, the Heinrichs and the board tried to find a way to expand the rented building without too much expense. In 1954 they built classrooms on the third floor. The next year they enclosed the front porch. By the end of 1956, the lease was expiring, and they still needed space for a lab and a library. To stay in the old building would mean putting more money into someone else's property. What they needed was a place of their own.

In February 1955, the board looked at two lots in Orange Park with large old houses that might do for classrooms. First one thing was wrong and then another. The parents wanted the school close by, but the businessmen wanted it out of the middle of town. Then in 1956 when Doctors Lake Drive was extended all the way to State Road 224, dividing many large lake-front lots in half, Hilda Russell McCrory offered to sell the school her property on the north side of the road. On July 31, 1956, the contract was signed: 26 acres for \$26,000.



Groundbreaking

Within a year St. Johns would build and move into its own building. By November the board had hired an architect, Taylor Hardwick, and a contractor, Fred Cox. They were instructed to draw plans for a U-shaped brick school which would hold 205 students. If the project should fail, the Heinrichs felt confident they could sell the complex as a motel.

The press got word and was on hand with cameras for the groundbreaking ceremony on February 27, 1957. The entire student body of 140, together with parents, friends, faculty, and board, stood in the shade of enormous oaks and a

huge yellow Caterpillar tractor while The Rev. John McTammany blessed the new beginning. Glorious things had taken place in 3 1/2 years, and another was commencing.

Unfortunately, neither a building fund nor a benevolent grant was available to cover the cost. As a result the board put together a plan. Peninsular Life agreed to lend half the funds if St. Johns could raise the rest. Then a generous board member, Connor Brown, stepped forward with \$25,000. The sale of stock brought in the rest. Tuition would give a cautious administration just enough to repay the loan before it was time to add on.

Generosity marked the board members from the start. They gave time and thought to work out strategies that would see the school through hard times and good. Often, when the budget would not cover an item, a board member would pay, like the time Raymond Mason bought the school a bus. They were leaders of the community who recognized the value of independent education, and they worked to make it succeed just as they worked in their homes and businesses.

The board, like the school, was in many ways a family affair. When Raymond Mason stepped down after two terms as president and many years of service, his wife Minerva took a place on the board and in time became president. Downing Nightingale, the second president, would one day be followed by his own son. Dot Heinrich's father, E. Jay Becker, was the first vice-president. Board members sent their children to St. Johns and then their grandchildren, and they told their friends.

It was the same story with the faculty. Helen Palmer, the first teacher Dr. Heinrich hired, stayed for 16 years, and her son Ricky graduated after 12 years at St. Johns. Dr. Heinrich used to say, "The school began without money, without students, without a building, but with Mrs. Palmer."

Dr. Heinrich rarely missed an occasion to hire a good teacher. He would offer a job to a parent, someone he had just met, or someone he had only heard of. He had a special sense for hiring super teachers — perhaps because he was one.

When a parent recommended Helen Palmer, right away Dr. Heinrich wrote and then called on her in person to get her to come to St. Johns. And she came.



Helen Palmer

She soon found out that you had to be strong to teach at this new school. It was first remake and then make do. For a while the faculty met every afternoon to brainstorm. Then things eased up a bit after the first year — more students, more money, more room, more teachers.

Somehow they never minded long hours. "Dr. Heinrich was the greatest schoolman I've ever known," Helen Palmer used to say. "I learned how to teach from him, and I felt apologetic for previous years." Students would not forget the lessons learned from him either: often along with learning they would get a little laughter provoked by one of Dr. Heinrich's famous cartoons of the cigar-smoking Uncle Joe.

He urged teachers to drop in his office at the end of the day to let him know how things were going. And he liked to drop in on classes, too. "Ask him the right question," Jan Francis remembers, "and he could teach the whole period for you."

The summer of 1954, Dora Helen Skypek called Dr. Heinrich to ask if she could teach at St. Johns in return for tuition for her children. Years later she would look back and comment that she "felt like a graduate of St. Johns" because

she learned so much. As head of St. Johns' Mathematics Department, she first discovered the need to coordinate elementary and secondary mathematics teaching; she could do something about it with all 12 grades under one roof. When she left at the end of the school year in 1958, Dr. Heinrich named the school's highest award for a St. Johns girl in her honor. Her experience led her to pursue first an M.Ed., then a Ph.D. in mathematics education, and ultimately a teaching career at Emory University.



Dora Helen Skypek



Nell Murphy on field trip to Times-Union

An early teachers' handbook at St. Johns stated that the school never was able to provide luxuries, but that "true happiness came from finding God's plan in life and pursuing it." There was often a lack of funds but never a state of poverty. St. Johns was a place where Bob Chisnell, an English teacher with a background in drama, could direct plays; Nell Murphey, a strong leader, could become dean of faculty; and first grade teacher Jan Francis could move up to be head of the mathematics department.

The Heinrichs were good to their teachers. They started the year with a faculty picnic and finished it with a bang — cocktails at the headmaster's and dinner on the town. Mrs. Heinrich entertained graciously and regularly, although she did not insist that guests eat the raw meat which Dr. Heinrich occasionally enjoyed "to stimulate his brain."

Dr. Heinrich kept the brains of the public stimulated, too. He was much in demand as a speaker with his old world accent and his brave new methods. The press liked his style. He told a county workshop that "the gifted child was the most neglected in education." He told the *Jacksonville Journal* that "Johnny can't read" if his teachers do not know him well enough. He made headlines when he brought a specialist all the way from New York to teach typing from the first

grade on. He astounded a math teachers' conference by saying that "Einstein couldn't get into college today." And he would prove his words personally if you visited his school.

The personal touch was everywhere. No student could be accepted without an interview or return without reinvitation. Even the first year there were scholarships for the deserving and tuition reductions for faculty children. The Heinrichs offered summer school and private tutoring and sent school-to-home letters to keep parents up to date. They also invited parents to their home to get to know each other and the rules.



The live Nativity

From years of teaching, the Heinrichs knew that traditions gave a school a sense of pride and belonging. Religious holidays were of special importance. At Christmas time in 1954 the school presented Orange Park with a live Nativity scene, put together with high aspirations and a low budget. Mothers made costumes, fathers built a manger and a fence for a few sheep and goats from local farms, and the faculty drilled the students — angels and all — in the seriousness of the event. The town turned out en masse and viewed it with enthusiasm. All went well until one of the goats got hungry and ate the straw Baby Jesus. But the show went on with a sound system and lights, and the custom might have lasted over the years if the school had not moved.

The school motto was as important as any idea the Heinrichs brought with them: "As thy days so shall thy strength be." It was the motto of the camp where the Heinrichs met. It was also the parting advice which Moses gave to the children of Israel. Everything the Heinrichs did was aimed at giving the St. Johns children a strength and a spirit that would last. When they first planned "The Pioneer School," Dr. Heinrich composed the music for a hymn. Before St. Johns was many years old in 1957, Dora Helen Skypek and a group of girls took Dr. Heinrich's music and wrote words for the new school's hymn — based on the motto.

Another tradition was Headmaster's Day. It was more than just a "brag" day or a spring Sunday afternoon for parents and projects. It developed into a time when students — sometimes whole classes or departments — would work together on vast projects or alone on small ones. One year there was a scroll of the ten commandments 8 1/2 feet high, and later there was a flag pole sitter, a soccer field full of rockets, and even a French café. It was good for the students and the school image — and occasionally a headache for the faculty.

Participation and cooperation — that was the name of the game. By the time the enrollment reached 100, Dr. Heinrich decided the students should have a representative governing body. He thought young Americans should learn the democratic process at school, and he felt they should have a voice in the decision making. To this end one morning in

October 1955, he called an assembly and read the students a formal proclamation of his intent. He then invited them to elect officers, and they chose Jon McLeod as the first St. Johns Student Council President. They also elected representatives, wrote a constitution, and, with the help of a faculty advisor, began to run their own show — within limits. Early on, however, the show ran into debt. Dr. Heinrich wrote that he was "just horrified" they let themselves overdraw their account. He quickly shifted funds that raised their balance to \$6.67 and apologized to the bank. They learned how to govern and then some.

Self-government was never far from Dr. Heinrich's mind, but he also knew a school needed credentials from a recognized governing body. Before the end of the second year, St. Johns sought and gained accreditation by the State Department of Education. It also became a charter member of the Florida Council of Independent Schools which Dr. Heinrich helped found. Two years later as secretary-treasurer of the FCIS, Dr. Heinrich worked to prepare a bill to present in the Florida legislature to fight state control of independent schools. The FCIS won. Thereafter it could set and safeguard the standards of its own members.



The class of '56

Meanwhile the seven members of the St. Johns class of 1956 set their own precedent as the first graduating class. It was a coming of age for the school as well as for the students.

Dr. Heinrich called it "a true commencement in the noblest meaning of the word." The Rt. Rev. Arnold Lewis, father of graduate Buzzy Lewis, blessed the new beginning at the baccalaureate service held at St. John's Cathedral in Jacksonville, and the Heinrichs honored the graduates and their parents at a tea at "Sycamore Manor."

Graduation took place at the Prudential Auditorium at 8:00 P.M. on June 5, 1956. After a full day of organizing every detail, the proud headmaster told the seven it was up to them to prove that a St. Johns diploma was "an honor and a key that opened doors." Guest speaker Laurence Lee advised them that "the world does not pay for what a person knows, but for what he does with what he knows." They were out in the wide, wide world with a St. Johns diploma to help them make their way.

At the next commencement Dr. Heinrich noted that each of the first four years had a "different emphasis." The first concentrated on getting settled and taking bearings, the second worked to achieve accreditation, the third aimed at making the first commencement a crowning experience, and the fourth focused on financing and erecting "a building free from frill but full of charm."

4. Setting Precedents, 1957-60

Chapter IV Setting Precedents 1957-60

The building "free from frill but full of charm" was completed ahead of schedule, and moving day took place August 2, 1957. Pupils, parents, friends, and relations pitched in with cars and vans to move books, and willing hands helped assemble the shiny new desks. In a special ceremony on August 21, Taylor Hardwick and Fred Cox presented the keys of the \$ 120,000 building to Dr. Heinrich and Board President Gardner T. Gillette. As planned, the new school contained 12 classrooms, six on either side of a courtyard, offices, a library, a faculty lounge, an "educational therapy room" — which housed a cot and a Band Aid box — and, at last, a proper laboratory.



Moving Day

The fifth year opened with 163 students, an increase of 30 over the previous year. This meant creating a second section of ninth grade and making a waiting list for the sixth and eighth grades. The new building had come just in time.

Students were not the only items that had to go on a waiting list. The spartan budget had not included the services of a landscape architect; thus the weekend after school opened a group of parents decided to spend the day planting shrubs and laying sod. Often for the good of the school and the children, friends stepped in to provide both luxuries and essentials. Ironically, while they were donating their labor, many of them were paying someone to work in their own yards.

The beautification efforts were to prepare for the dedication of the new building which took place on September 14. Congressman Charles E. Bennett, who had been a friend of the Heinrichs in Washington, spoke to a crowd of over 400. The community looked on St. Johns with a mixture of pride and curiosity and welcomed the chance to inspect the new building. Bennett called the school "an experience in faith and cooperation" — the Heinrichs' faith to undertake the challenge and the cooperation of many to justify it. Two years later Dr. Heinrich would use the same words on the cover of the new school brochure.

The school now had 18 teachers on faculty, among them a dynamic newcomer named Myrtle O'Shea. Before coming to St. Johns, Mrs. O'Shea had taught Latin and English for 17 years, served as principal of a suburban Pennsylvania high school, and had volunteered as a member of the WAVES during World War II, where she headed the testing division of the Armed Forces Institute. She would remain at St. Johns for 13 years and leave a lasting mark as dean of faculty, head of foreign language, sponsor for the Student Council, and founding sponsor of the yearbook. Her Latin students would also remember that she had the coolest class in the school after her husband installed an air conditioning unit in her room — the school's first.

As the school adapted to the new surroundings, there was more room and encouragement for student activities. One afternoon each week, the Upper Division classes ended early so student clubs could meet. The clubs, each with a formal constitution approved by the Student Council, represented a wide range of interests such as chess, music appreciation, publications, and sports. A special favorite with the boys was the Technicians' Club. With Dr. Heinrich as their sponsor, they learned how to fix everything from doorknobs and bells to "David," the tractor. Student help soon became almost an activity in itself. There were office aides, library aides, school store aides, teachers' aides — all helping and learning how to run a school.



Technicians Club



Photography Club



Safety Patrol

The Lower Division also had its share in making the school work. In the fall of 1957 a group of sixth grade honor students were chosen as the first patrol officers. Their job was to assure the safety of walkers, bikers, and motorists at the railroad crossing outside the St. Johns gates. The 8:00 A.M. and the 3:00 P.M. trains made patrol duty serious business. Even today, Little Saints direct traffic in the proverbial rain or shine. Although most of them are less than 12 years old, they command respect and can boast a long record of safety.

The first issue of the school newspaper, *The Saints' Scroll*, appeared in December 1957, with a birth announcement: "We, the members of the Publications Club, are the proud parents of the first newspaper to be published at St. Johns...Maturity will be achieved with time, guidance, and hard work." It was just a four page leaflet, typewritten and run off on an old ditto machine, but it would grow into an award-winning journal rated first place by *The Miami Herald*. It was distributed free to the whole school, and students were not allowed to solicit for ads from the community. The school provided a budget; the students and their sponsor, Mrs. Skypek, had to make do. Putting out a newspaper was a lesson in life as well as journalism. The name and the policy still hold.

Like any commercial publication, the little paper always had a thought provoking editorial by the editor, Judy Anderson, and space for educational nonsense as well as news. The staff writers particularly liked word games: "If the King of Arabia sent you a *plenipotentiary*, what would you do with it?" Gene Skypek — "Throw it in the trash can." Steve Whitmarsh — "Ride in it." Ralph Danson—"Hide it."

St. Johns was finally a real "country day school," and time for play was important, especially for the Little Saints. In the shade of the trees outside their classrooms, they would spend their free time exploring in the leaves and twigs — no commercial playground equipment in sight. In later years, swings and jungle gyms were added, but not until nature's toys had taken a firm hold as a way of life.

A major mark in the life of St. Johns after they moved to the new campus was "chimes." Once the school had an intercom system, Dr. Heinrich obtained a carillon recording of the "Doxology," which he played every day at noon as a grace before lunch. Students and faculty alike were requested to stop all activity and remain quiet for the duration of "chimes." It was a time of respect in keeping with the fourth "r" although occasionally the younger students also used it as a time to play statue — freezing every muscle and snicker until the last note. When the recording was destroyed years later, it was decided that the school had become too complex a system to try to hold an all-quiet.

The way of life and the way of education were both of primary importance to Dr. Heinrich. In February 1958 he told the American Association of University Women in Jacksonville that American educators were victims of "Sputnik Hysteria." They had reacted to the successful Soviet space launch of October 1957 by making a "dangerous swing" towards science — at the expense of the humanities. He stressed the need for a strong liberal arts background beginning in first grade and told his audience that the public school system "could put the private sector out of business" if they adopted such a program. "Scientists whose knowledge does not embrace the good and the beautiful might just as well stay at home," he said.

Among the good and the beautiful at St. Johns was an activity which started in March 1958 — the Girls' Club. Like its name, its purpose was simple: the girls could enjoy each other's company and at the same time contribute to the welfare of the school and the community. In the tradition of all women's organizations, at their first meeting they elected a president (Mary Jo Cotney), planned a tea, and organized a fundraiser — a bake sale. Still today St. Johns' girls regularly mess up their mothers' kitchens making cookies and the next day sell them to their brothers and sisters at recess

— known as "break time" at St. Johns. The proceeds have bought team uniforms, trips, turkeys for the needy, and even put on dances and fashion shows.

Just as spring had sprung, the new school paper noted that the Lower Division students had suddenly begun arriving with pockets full of marbles. Other springs it would be yo-yos or jacks. Over the years a sure sign of the vernal equinox at St. Johns came to be the arrival of new fads in Lower Division and of teachers tearing their hair trying to redirect bursts of energy.

Across the way the Upper Division teachers would wrestle with the opposite problem and try to lead lackadaisical young lovers and smitten students back on track with Headmaster's Day projects and field trips. That spring Dr. Heinrich drove a bus loaded with students to the Edge-wood Theater to see the *Ten Commandments*, and later Mr. Chisnell and Mrs. Heinrich took a group on the annual pilgrimage to Lake Wales to the Black Hills Passion Play.

Putting on plays at school also provided an outlet for outbreaks of spring fever. For many years Robert Chisnell not only directed students and faculty in plays, he also acted in local productions. Seeing their teacher on the stage delighted the students so much that one year, lacking their own academy award, they created the "Peachy Teacher" award. On the new campus plays could be held "in the round" (in the quad). Sometimes the school would present as many as three one act plays — so everyone could get in the act.

Sports were another way to raise spirits and burn off energy. The first competitive sport was boys' baseball. In the spring of 1958 with the superior hitting duo, Goody and Harold Murray, the "Saints," according to *The Scroll*, "nipped" Landon Jr. High and "whipped" Clay High. Led by pitcher Todd Walters and Coach Danny Holcomb, the team played and won games as "far away" as Fletcher High School at the beach.

The new campus provided more space for intramural sports, too. Touch football was a favorite between boys' teams with names such as the "Buzz Bombers" or the "Fighting Tadpoles." Not to be outdone, the girls also kept the pigskin flying between teams named the "Blue Angels" and the "Spartanettes."

Combatting spring fever was not the only task of the faculty that fifth year. The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools arrived on May 15, 1958, for a two-day evaluation. Preparing for a visiting committee means hard work, especially for a young school. The association required 300 pages of self-study and then an evaluation by the committee. It is a valuable process and one which St. Johns continues to follow. "Good schools," as Dr. Heinrich put it, "voluntarily submit themselves to close supervision by accrediting agencies." Nevertheless, it is tough going, and anyone who has been there will say, "Ah yes, I remember it well."

The SACS inspection brought considerable praise. The team commended Dr. Heinrich for his leadership and resourcefulness and Mrs. Heinrich for her reading program. They praised the faculty for the way they had developed and implemented the school philosophy. Finally, they recognized the students themselves: "It is not merely a matter of school loyalty, they just simply like it, and they do not mind saying so."

The committee also made suggestions such as additions to the curriculum: expansions in art, music, and foreign language; and to the plant: a gym, a cafeteria, and library equipment. Then the following December they notified St. Johns that it had been formally accredited.

Changes, many of which had already been anticipated, took place as time and funds would permit. The sports and physical education programs were increased, and the school's architect was asked to begin plans for "an indoor exercise facility." The next dream would be of a gym although it would be 10 years coming true.

Another change took place in the library. Early shelves had been equipped generously, though somewhat sparsely, with gifts from parents. After the evaluation a generous patron provided all new furniture. Then the school hired a professional librarian, and before long the number of books was increased by over 50%.

The driveway was paved that year, too, and the "screening" process was completed. At first there was not enough money for window screens, but little winged creatures soon made them a priority. It started when two parents, Dick James and William Mason, donated funds for the screens in the sixth and second grade rooms. Then the manufacturer dropped the price hoping for more business. Right away the enterprising seventh graders raised money by rolling and selling old newspapers and screened their homeroom — vowing to take their purchases with them every year as they moved on.

The art and music programs also expanded but not so quickly. For the moment, as SACS realized, Headmaster's Day and the Christmas program with their emphasis on art and music served as two St. Johns-style multidimensional learning activities.



Christmas program

With his usual creative logic Dr. Heinrich could easily argue that a piano and a box of crayons was all the aesthetic equipment you needed. He would also argue that St. Johns children had an acquaintance with the arts in their homes which freed the school to put additional emphasis on academics, and that his elementary school teachers all taught the arts in their classrooms. In the same vein he would say that the school had no need for a cafeteria, since these children had hot breakfasts and dinners and preferred a sandwich lunch. To complement this line of thinking and the brown bag lunch, he always pointed out that the school provided free milk to every student and teacher. Lacking a cafeteria, students would eat lunch in their classrooms, an experience which he argued would avoid the chaos of a large lunch room and, despite a few crumbs and spills, strengthen the bonds of friendship between students and teachers.

The third annual commencement took place, as usual, at the Prudential Auditorium with eight graduates headed for college. The first year in the new building was over; another milestone had been established. "The new building proved not only outstandingly beautiful but also eminently practical, and has found the undivided admiration of many experts," Dr. Heinrich reported to the board at the end of the year.

The following year got off to a spirited start. When the baseball lettermen, known as the "J-Club," came back in the fall of 1958, they elected six "Jay-ettes" to promote school spirit and stir up interest in baseball. Headed by Jeanne Eckard, the girls' first project was to sell orange drinks to raise funds for baseball equipment. With the cheering girls came a change in school colors: they soon discovered they could not yell, "Go, dark blue. Go, light blue!" From then on it was blue and white.



"Jay-ettes"



Soccer team

In 1958 the school also began the practice of mailing copies of *The Saints' Scroll* to the alumni, who by this time numbered 20 and had given birth to two alumni children: David South-worth, Jr. (son of David Southworth '56), and Clyde Higgs (son of Nancy Hawkins '56).



Cheerleaders



Lettermen

At Halloween all 80 of the Lower Division children were driven by mothers to the Heinrichs' for a peanut hunt and a costume contest. In later years the Girls' Club would put on parades around the concourse while the Upper Division applauded and teachers chose the best witch or devil. Eventually, between costumed children and cheering siblings, the parade got too large, and other forms of celebration had to be devised. But before the passing of small scale fun, creativity ran high with memorable rigs such as little Julie Newton done up like a fig.

Some of the early traditions survived in a different guise. Members of the Great Books Club would read major literary works — *Antigone* and the like — and meet to discuss them in the evenings at the Heinrichs' house. As the English program enlarged, more great books were covered in class, with little time left for the average student to browse among the masters. A few, however, would find time for such reading even without the club — and make sure their peers knew it. In the sixties Stan Chappell and Van McGee carried copies of *Being and Nothingness* while working on their honors papers, and in the seventies Howard Gale took a copy of *The Female Eunuch* to a press competition "to intimidate the opposition."

The new building was too far down the road to attract an audience for a live Nativity scene as the school had presented in town, but they continued the practice of celebrating the occasion at a local church with song, scripture, and

full student participation. In December 1958 all of St. Johns came in from the country to the Orange Park Baptist Church to make their Christmas offering.

By spring 1959, Dr. Heinrich decided it was time for the students to have their own judicial body. He called a special meeting of the Upper Division to help them work out a code of honor. For the first St. Johns Honor Court they elected nine members with Harold Murray as chief justice, Goody Murray as prosecutor, and Sue Heinrich as scribe.

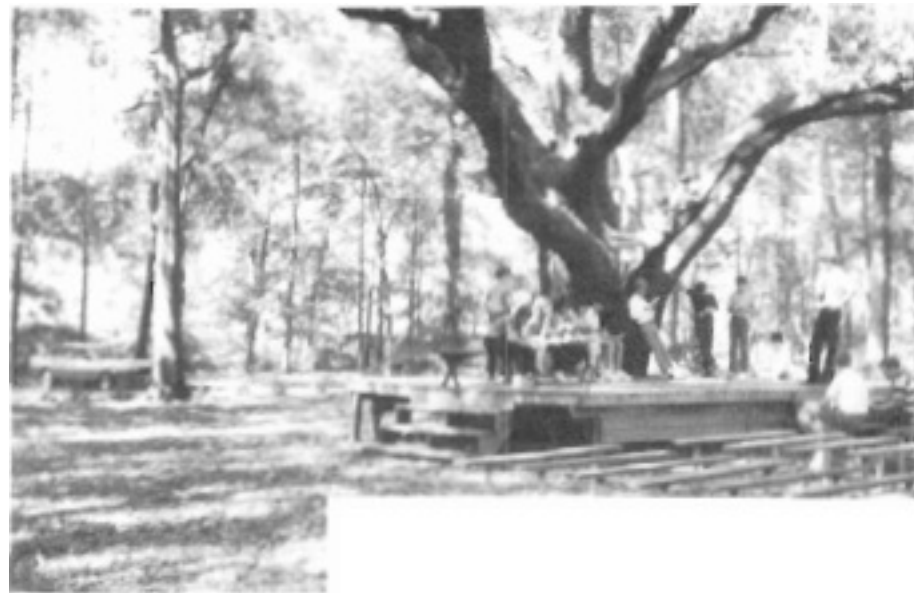
From the beginning Dr. Heinrich told students that cheating was wrong. He was sure that if you told people that you trusted them, they would not let you down. He also believed that if students were well taught, they would rather succeed than cheat. He even insisted that teachers leave the room during tests. Perhaps the system worked at St. Johns better than at many other schools because of the unshakable faith of the headmaster.

Not long after the SACS visit, the planning committee of the board sent out a questionnaire to parents about school policies, curriculum, extracurricular activities, buildings, and grounds. The survey confirmed the board's previous decisions to keep enrollment under 500 and not to have either boarding students or a kindergarten.

In time the school would open both a kindergarten and a pre-kindergarten, but in the meanwhile it would keep close ties with the local preschools by inviting teachers to visit and occasionally holding workshops at St. Johns for groups like the Duval County Kindergarten Association.

At the 1959 graduation the first Dora Helen Skypek Award was presented to Sue Heinrich, who not only had shown the same high ideals of her friend and mentor, Mrs. Skypek, but had done so in spite of the awesome privilege and responsibility of being the daughter of the headmaster. It is interesting to note that Sue went on to become the head of the mathematics department at Charlotte (N.C.) Country Day School and later, at the suggestion of Dr. Skypek, to pursue an M.Ed. in mathematics at the University of Georgia. The interaction between teachers and students in the informal small class settings and in the numerous faculty sponsored student activities often led to lasting friendships.

In September 1959 a student body of 205 assembled under the canopy of the 600 year old oak facing the school. That morning the area was formally dedicated as the Chapel of St. John "wherein cultural pursuits and services of prayer may be offered in this and coming generations." Over the years the Chapel, equipped with wooden benches and the bounty of nature, has dominated much of the life of St. Johns. A wooden stage was added later with an electrical outlet for lighting and the school loudspeaker affectionately known as "Thor" because it sometimes made thunderous noises.



Chapel



“Thor”

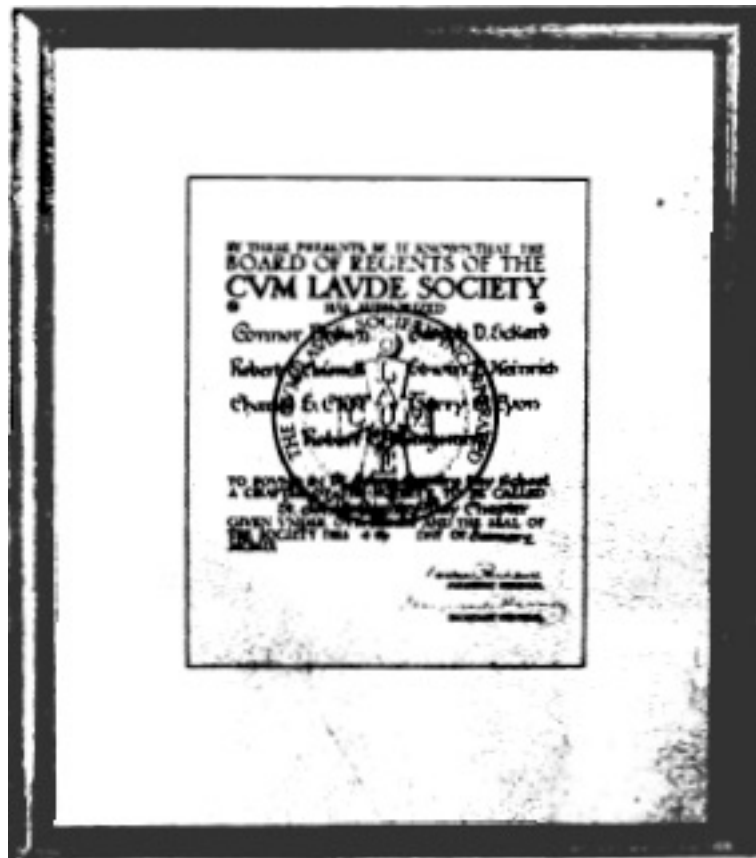
The setting of the Chapel, however despite its beauty, was not without problems. The 9:00 A.M. train would often challenge speakers, and mosquitoes would plague listeners. Later, as the student body grew larger, many assemblies moved to the gym where there was more seating — and protection.

Students and faculty began getting to know another Chappell that year also, Rabun C. Chappell. The new teacher with three sons in the Lower Division began as a geography and religion instructor and retired 21 years later as chairman of the English department. During her stay at St. Johns she would lead the newspaper and the seventh and eighth grades to unexpected excellence, mastermind spectacular Headmaster's Day projects, and perhaps more than any other teacher promote school spirit by her regular attendance at games.

On the new campus St. Johns was becoming increasingly outdoors oriented. Flag raising, for example, and daily announcements took place in rain or shine with students standing outside classrooms under the canopied walkways of the concourse. Here every morning you would see Dr. Heinrich leading students in the pledge to the flag, and the Little Saints hunting for their hearts — anywhere from the waist up — followed by a "dandelion grab" at the end of announcements, a mix of fun and free weeding.

Athletics at St. Johns had to be an outdoor activity in the early days. In 1959 the sports program took a giant leap forward with the addition of a multipurpose court constructed as the result of a donation from Connor Brown. The new court was a concrete rectangle with markings and nets for basketball, volleyball, and tennis. As a result, that fall the girls played their first competitive games in volleyball. Although they lost to Bartram 2-3, they had started on the road which would lead to future success.

On the playing field the boys began their first season in another St. Johns success story — soccer. The varsity lost its first game to the "Cadets" of Bolles but came back to win the return match, and the junior varsity won both games. The first "road" game was played in February 1960 against Savannah Country Day, a team which would quickly earn most favored rival status at St. Johns.



Cum Laude Charter

It was a banner year in academics as well. In March 1960 the school became a member of the Cum Laude Society, an honor society for secondary schools modeled after Phi Beta Kappa. Honorary and charter members were chosen from the faculty, trustees, and alumni, and Dr. Heinrich, who had been a member at another school, was elected president.

That same month the *Jacksonville Journal* ran a series on exceptional children. One of the articles, "Private Schools More Geared to High I.Q. Children," featured Dr. Heinrich advocating the use of multi-grade teaching and multi-faceted placement testing. "The truly gifted advance not only intellectually but also in every other area," he said. "If you are cautious with it, you avoid social misfits." The general public still thought most private schools were for problem children. Dr. Heinrich's stand for the total child would begin to prove its effectiveness in the next year when the public schools had to face their own inadequacies.

Multi-grade teaching worked well at St. Johns. Students not bound to lock-step progression could operate at their own speed. Lower Division students could move on to take seventh or eighth grade courses. If Upper Division students completed all the offerings in one discipline at St. Johns, they could take additional study at one of the local colleges.

In the early days Dr. Heinrich considered articles in local newspapers as an important aspect of St. Johns' public relations policy. Likewise his frequent appearances as a guest speaker served to publicize the school. The school also considered messages to parents and invitations to school events as a kind of publicity, given the members of the Publications Club had a role to play. The newspaper and the school news columns which they wrote in local papers represented the student arm of public relations. Sometimes young writers could spot very colorful news. "Getting there is half the fun," claimed Cheryl Mussler in the *Jacksonville Journal*, May 21, 1960, with pictures of Marney Massee riding her horse to school, Sam Lande and Ross Taylor driving their sports cars, and Downing Nightingale, Bill Hall, and Billy Yates arriving by boat — no ordinary school bus routine for these "Saints."

At the close of school in 1960 the board suddenly found it had a plumbing problem. State regulations decreed that the school could accept no more students until it built more restrooms. Thus the building only three years "new" began to grow. By fall it would have a new wing at right angles to the Upper Division with four big classrooms, two project rooms, and the required facilities.

So the early years in the new building moved on, and in June 1960 after graduation at the Prudential Auditorium, and all the announcements of honors bestowed on students by the school and on the school by the students, supplies were packed up and most of the teachers went home.



Dr. Heinrich and Students

Then for the summer the Heinrichs would rent the building from the school and run the summer school as a private business. It offered students the same quality education which they received in winter school and gave the Heinrichs additional income. At the close of the school year 1959-60, however, the Heinrichs found they had something extra to do over the summer. They had worked almost without ceasing since 1953, and the board decided to recognize their efforts. Thus it was resolved "that the headmaster is instructed to take a complete vacation of not less than three weeks during the summer months of 1960, and that Mrs. Heinrich be furnished with a certified copy of this resolution."

And in the spirit of generosity and cooperation typical of the school, the Masons offered them their beach house.

5. Spreading Wings, 1960-64

Chapter V

Spreading Wings 1960-64

The school was now eight years old. It had 225 students and a new wing to accommodate them. Dr. Heinrich cautioned the students that the school had stretched its budget to finance the addition and that everyone should take care of the new rooms. Among other lessons he always taught respect for property.

Not only did the Saints learn in style, they rode in style that year. The old bus, Gertrude II, was retired, and a bright new "Gail" replaced her. On September 12, Gail Mallory, a charter student, christened her namesake and surprised Dr. Heinrich by producing a bottle of champagne instead of the ginger-ale he had expected.

There were new subjects and new teachers, too. Julie Newton began that year to enrich the lives of tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders with the history of art. She later taught Lower Division art, Upper Division English, and history of thought. Her five children all attended St. Johns, three were graduated, and she eventually served on the board. When her youngest son Will was graduated in 1985, he could claim that his family had 65 years of experience in the school.



Dr. Heinrich with teachers



Julie Newton

In 1960 Betty Osborne also joined the faculty. She took command of the fourth grade and later of the second, and for 16 years taught math, manners, and mindin' among other important subjects.

Another newcomer on campus in 1960-61 was a school yearbook named the *Chalice* for the school emblem. The student editors Craig Harris and Judy High worked with their sponsor Myrtle O'Shea to put together copy and pictures while business manager Allen Blount sold subscriptions — \$4.85 if you bought in September, but \$5.50 after October 24. They signed a contract for 125 copies of 48 pages each. The first *Chalice* was dedicated to "our esteemed faculty," and like the other publications it would quadruple in size and earn awards for quality and originality.

This was also the year that the Girls' Club held the first of its famous house parties. For years to come, on a designated Friday afternoon in the fall, a large number of the Upper Division girls would leave school at 3:00, armed with blankets, sleeping bags, and brownies and head for someone's lake cottage. About midnight the boys would show up and promptly be sent home by chaperones. After a full night of serious gossiping and eating, the sleepy girls would drag home. In time it became too hard to find a free weekend to schedule it. But while they lasted, the retreats provided one more school-sponsored opportunity for younger and older students to get to know each other.

Volunteering and service also continued as one of the school's major assets. That fall the board sent a letter to patrons asking for an inventory of their skills and interests. One father was already helping the yearbook with photography; others came forth with their special talents.

By 1960 everyone at St. Johns was learning about soccer whether in P.E. or intramurals or just as spectators. The team changed its name from the "Saints" to the more aggressive "Spartans," and by the end of their second season could claim a record of 5-1. (The girls, who were becoming adept at soccer in P.E., maintained that if *they* could have gone out for varsity, it would have been an undefeated season.) In between regular games Coach Cameron scheduled practice matches with Jacksonville University, the University of Florida, and Rollins to toughen up the team.

A first-rate playing field was slow coming, like other aspects of the St. Johns plant. "Is it a soccer field or a sand box?" wrote team member Frank Silkwood in a *Saints' Scroll* article. It would take years of effort to wrest a lush green field out of sand. Meanwhile, the Spartans played their big games on the lawn at Moosehaven. When the tuition increased the following year, all unused funds were designated for the North Field, as the playing place was called specifically because it lay to the north of the main building.

In just such a way a living school had grown out of its dusty beginnings. In the commencement program for the class of '61, Dr. Heinrich told the 16 seniors that he hoped they would always continue "to be provocative and cooperative, accepting and questioning, laughing and serious, each in its good time and in its proper place."

The ninth year opened with 251 students, a much improved soccer field, and yet another word of caution from Dr. Heinrich: keep off of the grass. "Until the seeding has taken hold," he said, "even a footprint might disturb its perfection." But equipment was not the secret to success. That year they won only one game and lost five.

Despite athletic defeats, spirits remained high. Everywhere things ere expanding. In November the *Saints' Scroll* featured a little collection of student writings stapled to the back of the paper and appropriately called *Afterthought* Like the newspaper and the yearbook, the literary magazine grew into a full-fledged publication.

Among the new sights in Lower Division was Frankie Kelley who would be calming and guiding confused first graders for the next 20 years. She also taught Upper Division home economics, a course which gave way to more academic pursuits in time. Like many other St. Johns teachers Mrs. Kelley had taught in the public schools first and brought with her a son who stayed to be graduated — the family pattern, a familiar part of the school.

Whenever possible, Dr. Heinrich attended independent school conferences. He could inform his colleagues of St. Johns' happenings, and he could also bring back new ideas to share with the students and faculty. He would tell them of changes in college requirements and predict the implications. Returning from a conference at Duke in the fall of 1961, he told students that colleges were no longer interested in "late bloomers." It was now-or-never for performance.

Sometimes he misjudged. Roger Reep '69 recalls that Dr. Heinrich was reluctant to recommend him for college because his G.P.A. was not what his college board scores indicated it should be. In the end, however, Roger earned a Ph.D. — in physics like his mentor. At other times Dr. Heinrich was right on the money. In 1962 when Jan Burton asked him what qualifications her daughter needed to enter first grade, he looked at 5 1/2-year-old Sally and asked her how many teeth she had. Sally explained about her inner mouth and wound up with the recent arrival of her six-year molars. "You're ready," he said, and Sally was a very successful first grader.

He was certainly right in predicting the growth of the school. By the end of the ninth year, the Upper Division needed more space again. Adjacent to the newest wing, two large rooms were built with a movable partition between them. They became the seniors' domain and were so spacious that on one Headmaster's Day the students constructed a near life-sized Moby Dick there. The double rooms also provided a much needed place for parent or faculty meetings.

Meanwhile on the corner of Kingsley and Highway 17, the old Moosehaven building, where the school had begun, was torn down to make way for a new town hall. As a bystander commented, it was like "The Fall of the House of Usher." According to Daniel Patterson, a one time board member and patron, the stones in the building were brought over from Europe as ballast for ships coming to America. Those same stones can still be seen in the pillars to the gates of the Pattersons' former residence on Doctors Lake.

With the tenth year approaching, the board made several decisions which looked toward the future and would insure smooth transitions in administration. Most important was the creation of a policy for terminating the headmaster's contract, with or without notice, including a provision for arbitration should dispute arise. Future boards would find this foresight invaluable.

As the school was about to complete its tenth year, in the fall of 1962, Dr. Heinrich announced three plans which he hoped to see carried out: continued strict economy, a new teaching method, and increased emphasis on religion.

The matter of economy was hardly a new idea; however, ongoing expansion to the plant and the athletic field made it a major concern. But the school kept growing and so did its sports program. Moreover, the soccer team had brought a new spirit to St. Johns and put the school in the public eye.

The new double classroom gave the school the chance to try a new teaching technique. Dr. Heinrich had long been fascinated with the structure of the university, both European and American, and he constantly sought ways to emulate the halls of higher learning at St. Johns. The alumni had also suggested that St. Johns should prepare students for the large classes at college. Here was the answer. It began with eleventh grade English which alternated between large lecture sessions and small group discussions. The new technique also allowed more than 21 in a class — the maximum up to then — and prevented hiring another teacher.



Senior Shack

Stronger emphasis on religion, as Dr. Heinrich hastened to remind the students, did not mean that the school had been weak. He just wanted to be more "aggressive" in religious studies. He had seen what happened to his homeland when it tried to exist without God. His belief protected the school from involvement with the hot issue of school prayer when it arose: religion had always been a part of St. Johns. In the early days even faculty meetings began with prayer.

In keeping with the emphasis on religion, in November 1962, Dr. Heinrich introduced the service of Senior Presentation. It combined the traditional Thanksgiving service with the recognition of the seniors' coming of age. The year before Dr. Heinrich had attended a similar ceremony when his daughter had been a senior at Agnes Scott. The service, as he adapted it for St. Johns, has remained unchanged to date. The words carry great meaning:

As a teacher I present you to the academic world that you may enter it and meet its demands honorably and successfully.

As your Headmaster I present you to your schoolmates so that they may accept you and look up to you as their leaders and their shining example.

As your friend I present you to your parents so that they may accept you as adults who have come into their own and who are to be dealt with from henceforth on an equal basis.

As your fellow human being I present to you your calling in life that you may always have the wisdom to recognize it and the strength to live up to the divine calling in your life.

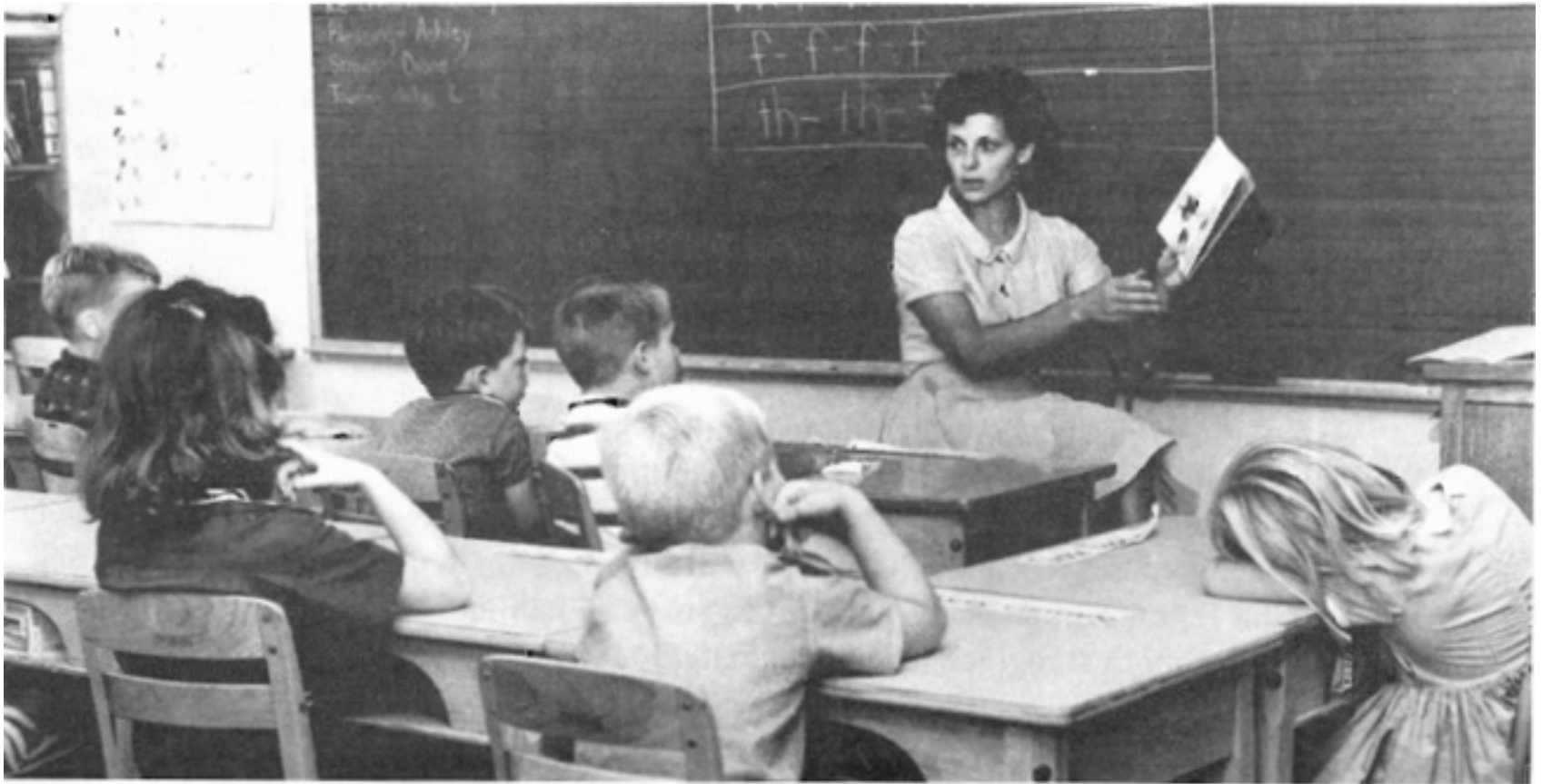
Unlike graduation when seniors are usually so excited that they cannot remember anything, the seniors at Presentation have time to anticipate and savor the ceremony and its significance. With parents, fellow students, and alumni all present, it has become one of the special rewards for "hanging in there." In addition, compulsory student attendance at the service would discourage parents from taking children out of school for a longer holiday.

While the religious aspect of school life had grown, students were finding the social life limited. They argued that along with a school newspaper and school plays, the dances which the students organized three or four times a year should be school financed. The administration replied that "the situation was an unforeseen one as the European schools do not provide for extracurricular activities," and agreed "to look into the situation."

In non-profit educational organizations of the sixties, funds for social functions were rarely budgeted. Instead someone was always selling what someone else had managed to buy for a little less or get donated. If the group could raise enough, the school would chip in — provided the cause was worthy, and it had been carefully presented through the chain of command.

Not the least among the fund-raisers, the Student Council began that year to sell "Stewart's Sandwiches" at lunch time. Most of the school had gotten used to bringing lunch from home. Now those who forgot could buy. The students and their sponsor handled the ordering, storage, and sales of lunch supplies and distributed the free milk. Some of the great accountants and financial wizards in the Southeast had their early training in the St. Johns store. Some of the great roaches likewise grew up there.

As it was the only source of food on campus, and as no one was allowed to leave campus, business flourished. The first year the Student Council bought a water cooler for the school with the profits (a real luxury item since it was the only chilled water available). Other gifts followed.



Mrs. Francis teaching first grade

At the same time students were growing independent, they were growing more interdependent. When the first grade teacher Mrs. Francis moved to the Upper Division, she organized a group of girls to go to the Lower Division to entertain the little people by telling — not reading — stories. They wrote their own or told ones they had read. The Storytellers' Club remains yet another unchanged tradition (except that after the eighties boys could also join). In the extended family concept of the school these girls would act as surrogate mothers, big sisters, or just friends, bonding the two divisions.

The school ended its first decade with expansion in every direction including administration. Helen Palmer was named head of the Lower Division, Mrs. Heinrich became an administrative assistant, and Myrtle O'Shea received the title of director of studies. Henry Edmonds arrived from the Sidwell Friends School to take a position as the new dean of students, and from a 30-year career in the Navy came Captain Fred Borries to teach mathematics and physical education.



Captain Borries

If you go in the Naval Academy gym at Annapolis, you will see "Buzz" Borries' picture among the Navy's All-American heroes. If you look down at the floor in that same gym, you may be surprised to find that the surface is identical to the one in the St. Johns gym. The gym floor was only a small part of his influence. He taught math and good sportsmanship and fair play. He was one of those people immediately loved and admired. After his death in 1969 the school established an award for the Upper Division boy who most resembled this outstanding man — the Borries Cup.

With the older students winning games and receiving awards, the Lower Division sometimes appeared neglected: six little rooms with six little teachers each with 21 students sat across the concourse from the lofty Upper Division. Slowly it would grow, gaining additional sections for each grade and its own administration and student government, until a day came when the Little Saints would outnumber the big ones by two to one.

Private school education for the elementary student was far more unusual than secondary. It took time to educate the public to the fact that once a student reached high school, he had passed the time for learning some skills, and he had too much yet to cover to go back. The founders of St. Johns recognized that it was really a matter of how far you wanted to go: the more accelerated the start, the more advanced the finish.

St. Johns set out to enhance public education, not to undermine or belittle it. When the more accelerated children were taken out of the public school, the average children had more chance to express themselves and to learn. Eventually the public schools set up their own gifted programs, taking their lead from the independent schools.

In the nation times were also changing as the Supreme Court handed down the decision that schools must be integrated. In December 1963 Neil Maxwell of *The Wall Street Journal* called Dr. Heinrich to discuss the impact of the decision on the "Deep South." Dr. Heinrich's initial response was that he did not think that it would pose too great a problem and that the people would view it with calmness. In retrospect "calm" is the last adjective historians will use to describe the reaction, but Dr. Heinrich could afford to be calm for St. Johns would not be affected directly for some time.

The major independent schools were looking for any qualified student regardless of race or religion. Over a period of years there arose a number of small private schools designed primarily to avoid integration. This kind of school, however, offered little competition to St. Johns, which after 11 successful years had established its values and its place in the community.

In November 1963 John F. Kennedy's assassination brought a sobering and unsettling tone to the daily lives of all Americans. For the next decade, waves of violence would ricochet from this act and cause mourning over and again. The school was no more isolated from the turmoil than the rest of the world. The senior class must have felt an awesome responsibility at their Senior Presentation that Thanksgiving. Suddenly to be adults in a world where the President of the United States could be murdered in a parade meant a challenge far greater than they had anticipated.

Other signs of troubled times arose in December 1963 when SACS refused accreditation to the Duval County high schools. The deficiencies they noted resulted directly from a lack of funds. The City of Jacksonville and Duval County, a consolidated entity, would have to restructure first the tax base and then the schools. It would take several years and would result in considerable anguish for the school children, the military families, school personnel, local government, and businessmen.

In his message to the class of '64, Dr. Heinrich noted that "education is an investment which often bears interest only after a long period of dormancy..." and he urged them to be "constantly aware of its subtle appearance."

And so the school entered the mid-sixties like the words of a popular song, "Up, up and away, in my beautiful balloon..." in good spirits and anticipating the future.



Mrs. O'Shea and Chalice staff

6. Challenges, 1964-67

Chapter VI

Challenges 1964-67

"St. Johns Over There" — that was what the school paper called the Heinrichs' trip to Europe in the summer of 1964. They took 12 students through eight countries in 35 days and got back just in time to start school. Years before, when the young German educator had graduated from university and left his home to visit America, he could hardly have envisioned returning as a successful headmaster to show his birthplace and the surrounding countries to his wife and a group of students from his own school. When they got back to Florida, they were featured on local television — a nice welcome home from Dr. Heinrich's adopted land and good publicity for the school.

Public awareness of schools, both public and private, ran high that year and for several years to come. When the Duval public high schools lost their accreditation, parents wondered about college for their children. When they looked at private schools, many found their children not prepared to keep up the pace.

In 1964 Jacksonville offered the community a strong contingency of independent secondary schools. The oldest was Bolles, founded in 1933 as a boys' military school offering a college preparatory program for day and boarding students in grades 7-12. Bartram was built the next year for girls only and was a college preparatory day and boarding school for grades 7-12 like Bolles. In 1952 the three Catholic high schools in Jacksonville were consolidated into Bishop Kenney High School, a coeducational Catholic secondary school. Although different, these three along with St. Johns would compete, conform, and even commiserate with each other in their attempts to provide quality education.

Then in 1966 the Episcopal Church announced it would open a coeducational college preparatory high school for grades 7-12. Financed by the church and many wealthy benefactors, the school acquired 60 acres of river-front property and built a set of facilities elaborate enough to put any college to shame — including a football field, a swimming pool, and an enormous air conditioned gym.

This was competition with a capital "C." While the Spartans were reminded to be proud of their new facilities and aware of the sacrifices made to get them, they could see the grandeur of the new school with no waiting and no doing without. Many wondered. To soar with the Episcopal Eagles might be more fun and prestigious than to stay and strive with the Spartans. A few went over. New applicants looked at both, and shopping around for a school became the practice. The market widened further in 1971 when Bolles opened its doors to girls.

Some schools changed their structure to meet the challenge but not St. Johns. Instead, it reminded itself and its people that it never intended to be elaborate. Although it had worked faithfully from obscure beginnings, it still could not offer the luxuries which wealth and power could provide. St. Johns remained true to its principles and weathered that storm and even survived some rather gusty in-house storms. Competition gave cause for thought and improvement wherever possible.

Population growth in Clay County would also help St. Johns prosper. Like the river, the school seemed wedded to the community, for better or for worse.

Meanwhile, in 1964 St. Johns became the only school in the state accredited by SACS in grades 1-12. The school was proud but not particularly surprised. It had grown confident after a dozen years of progress. The evaluators found the school "strong and highly effective, and following a program consistent with its stated goals." They also praised Dr. Heinrich for his "pioneering spirit" and told a very happy English department that "the committee has NO (their caps) recommendations."

In making its self-study St. Johns administration took care to explain its admissions policy. Two ideas were involved: one, that the parent agreed with the school philosophy, and two, that the student would not have to work beyond his

capacity. Having established these concepts which they considered "practical, civilized, and humanitarian," the school had a clear guide when civil rights advocates began to question any form of selection.

Early in the fall of 1964 tragedy struck one of St. Johns' first families. The younger son of Raymond and Minerva Mason was drowned in an accident near his home in Jacksonville. When Dr. Heinrich first learned that the boy was missing, he took a bus load of students to the Masons' river-front home to help with the search. For many students it was the first brush with death. Shortly thereafter, the Walter Mason Memorial Garden was created in front of the school next to the chapel. Over the years it has remained a sacred area dedicated to the memory of the young boy and honored as a place for peaceful, quiet activities.

In January 1965 an event took place in Europe which gave most of the school another cause to stop and think — the death of Winston Churchill. While the great man's life had not directly influenced lives in Orange Park, no student would get through modern history without realizing his debt to Churchill.

The educational scene continued newsworthy. Feature writers began spotlighting the techniques used by the independent schools. The community wanted to know what made the private school different. An article in the *Jacksonville Journal* featured two innovative math techniques at St. Johns. It showed third grade teacher Helen Palmer using a magnetic board. "We stick to mathematics," she told the reporter, explaining the device which put her students two years ahead of national standards.

The article also showed St. Johns students in a mathematical calculation contest with Arnold Rogers at the Chinese abacus and Jim Francis at the electric adding machine. "Sometimes one wins; sometimes the other. There isn't much difference," Dr. Heinrich told the press, adding that once he had to balance the books on the abacus because the power had gone off.

"The Private School: Educational Expressway" was what the *Florida Times-Union* called new academic developments in a full page spread on Sunday, May 20, 1965. The story focused on local elementary schools: Southside Day School, Riverside Presbyterian Day School, St. Andrews Episcopal Day School, and the Lower Division of St. Johns. "Students glide along at accelerated speeds, unhampered by slow traffic and unnecessary stops, but still observing certain rules enforced for the good of everyone." Freedom to choose their own techniques and to develop new sequences were among the advantages cited by the reporter. Many fathers and mothers must have put down the Sunday paper that day and looked at each other, saying, "I wonder if we should consider..."

Earlier that year one St. Johns student got a chance to do her own reporting. Tenth grader Tish Kirill went with local columnist Ray Knight to interview the Beatles at the George Washington Hotel. Eater she told her friends that she felt like "a secondhand celebrity" when a group of squealing fans tried to corner her for news about their idols.

When the 21 members of the class of '65 reached the end of their educational expressway, two very special students walked up to receive their diplomas: Billy Haynes and Rob Thomas, the first charter students to finish 12 consecutive grades at St. Johns. They had literally grown up with the school since the morning of September 14, 1953, when they ran up the stairs of the old stone building.

There were now 122 graduates, and in the fall of 1965 one of them, Charles Keisling '59, became the first to return to the alma mater as a faculty member. Over the Christmas holidays that year the alumni held the first official meeting, electing Kemp Reichmann '57 as president. The annual meetings eventually followed rousing soccer games, but it took time to build a strong alumni association. The graduates in their early twenties had college, careers, and families to claim most of their time. Once their children reached school age, they became more interested. In the fall of 1965 the school hired an alumni secretary, Carol Van Wagenen, who stayed at St. Johns for eleven years to teach French and Spanish. Known to her Spanish classes as "La Brujah," she became head of the foreign language department, sponsor for the junior class, and an inimitable source of learning and laughter. Her twin children would be graduated after 12 years at St. Johns and later be followed by a pair of grandchildren.



Dr. Heinrich Celebrating

Alumni were a testimony to the worth of a school, and Dr. Heinrich promised that he would honor the first St. Johns graduate elected to Phi Beta Kappa. True to his word in 1965 when he learned that Robert Simpson '61 had made it, he shouted for joy, declared it "Robert Simpson Day," and dismissed everyone from classes.

Bob Simpson seemed to represent the Renaissance man for that 13th year of St. Johns. He had done all the right things: Student Council, Honor Court, *Chalice* staff, soccer team, Cum Laude, and had even been selected to be a page in the House of Representatives in Washington. In college he had been in two honor societies, spent his junior year in France, and on graduation had been accepted in law school. Students would find his act a hard one to follow, but an inspiration at the same time. Faculty would smile and know that teaching really was all worth while.

St. Johns did not take a day off lightly. Only a catastrophe or a celebration could earn one. Every hour at school was learning time. A family once applied to St. Johns from overseas, had the children tested, and arrived in Orange Park just as Dr. Heinrich was leaving town. Without an interview he would not allow them to start. "I guess a few days out of school won't make any difference," the mother said casually on the phone. "Oh yes, it will," he replied sternly, "but we can't help that." He always had policy and priority firmly in mind.

One of the rare official days off had come to the students compliments of hurricane "Dora" in September 1964. She was one of the worst storms in Florida history, tearing up the coast and down the river and knocking out electrical power over several counties. Some businesses had to shut down for as much as a week, but St. Johns had an auxiliary power generator, which Dr. Heinrich had insisted from the start would be invaluable. In just two days, the Spartans were back at school as usual while other students had to wait for the Jacksonville Electric Authority.

Year after year the faculty and administration studied ways to make those days in school more meaningful. During vacations they attended workshops and graduate schools. Teachers would return in the fall full of enthusiasm and information. In the summer of 1965, Myrtle O'Shea attended an advanced placement seminar at Vanderbilt and while there had learned that one of her own students had received a top rating on his AP Latin exam. Mike Anchors was the first junior allowed to take an AP course at St. Johns and the first to score a "5." Teaching students to get there sooner and better was the St. Johns way.

Dot Heinrich felt that reading was one of the keys to such accomplishment. Early in her days of teaching she began perfecting reading techniques. In 1961 she read in *Time* that Evelyn Wood had developed a method which would teach people to read 1,000 words per minute. This bore investigation. Skeptics warned it was a gimmick — not reading, just skimming. Others felt it could bring to readers what the jet engine had brought to aviation.

When the Reading Dynamics Institute of Atlanta offered a class in Jacksonville, the faculty voted to send Mrs. Heinrich. She worked, and it worked. Later, the institute ran a workshop at St. Johns, and over the years Mrs. Heinrich adapted many of the Evelyn Wood skills to her own courses. After the Heinrichs retired, Mrs. Heinrich brought her skills to the public by establishing a program for non-reading adults.

In the fall of 1965 Dr. Heinrich saw one of his special interests take wings with the construction of a newer, larger laboratory at St. Johns. It was named in honor of Carl Swisher, who donated funds for its construction. Swisher, the principal benefactor for Jacksonville University, had set out to raise the educational level of the citizens of Jacksonville and had taken a special interest in St. Johns. The building contained a lecture room, a well-equipped lab, a collection

room, storage space for chemicals, and, as a safety feature, an extension telephone. Included in the same building was an elaborate art room.



Dr. Heinrich with teachers in the new lab

The focus on fine art had taken a back seat while the basic academic disciplines developed strength. Art teachers had instructed in the classroom and had done well within limits. Now aided by a kiln, sinks, natural lighting, and large work tables, young hands could reach for greater projects.

And young feet would soon likewise be greatness bound. For several years St. Johns had been competing in soccer and getting better, but it was not until a young man from North Carolina arrived on faculty that real winning came in sight. R.C. Nichols — most students thought his first name was "Coach" — came to St. Johns in 1964 and for some 20 years would earn fame for his talent as a coach, his sense of fair play, and his indomitable teams. He would bring St. Johns to athletic fame and would help make soccer one of the most popular sports in the Southeast. Along the way he would befriend countless numbers of searching teenagers, as he patiently taught them health and driver's education, and conducted what many would consider their most valuable class — a seminar in psychology.

In Nichols' first year as coach, the Spartans finally beat Bolles, then they tied and beat Savannah. They were learning the taste of victory.

Coach had a special touch with the little people, too. He kept them fit and in line at the same time. If the second graders did not put enough zest into their daily run, he sent them to try again. One day two little boys came back with such force that they collided and wound up taking a trip to the doctor for stitches. In five or six years the same little boys proved they had developed first-rate zest as soccer stars. Indeed, Randy Brown and Russell Hutchins learned to control the ball and avoid collisions, too.

That fall the seniors created their own collision course. They were each assigned to write a miracle play based on the Bible. The plays, like their medieval ancestors, would use contemporary language to amuse and instruct the illiterate masses. The project delighted everyone, and the class, with appropriate costumes and props, presented their work to the whole school.

The press was alerted, and George Harmon, religion editor for the *Jacksonville Journal*, arrived with a photographer to gather material for an article which he entitled "Teen-agers Dig Their Bible Study."

Unfortunately, what began as a successful learning tool was viewed as a weapon by one of the fundamentalist religious groups in Jacksonville. The spokesman for the group, "boiling over with righteous indignation," wrote condemning the plays as "sacrilege and profanation of the Holy Scriptures." He suggested that St. Johns was preparing teen-agers for the "wholehearted reception of Communism." Dr. Heinrich wrote back apologizing for the offense and insisting that the plays were simply Bible stories translated into modern language. It was "a way to make young people understand and appreciate the Word of God at an age when losses to the church are highest," he continued. "I personally teach Sunday School and am active in church administration...and believe that God's Word can be carried to the point where denominational limitations can be overcome."

No reply came. Finally Dr. Heinrich, still worried about the misunderstanding, wrote a second letter inviting the man to see the school's Christian spirit at the Christmas program. Again no reply. But despite the indignant protests, St. Johns' chalice even today stands firm against the hammer and sickle.

Just before Christmas a small newspaper sensation occurred at the school. In December 1965 the first commercially printed *Saints' Scroll* appeared. For eight years the students, aided by sponsors and anyone with even a remote knowledge of the typewriter, had laboriously produced the school paper. Gradually they learned more about newspapers,

and one summer Editor Jean Mallory went to a journalism workshop at the University of Florida. She came home determined to produce a printed paper. It took some doing to convince Dr. Heinrich of the advantages to the school image, but he finally agreed to print one issue as a Christmas present. It took even more doing to raise the funds from friends, faculty, and students to print the remaining issues, but she did that too. Years later when Jean Mallory Middleton returned to St. Johns as director of development, she attended another workshop and came home to convince the administration to update another school tradition — this time the school emblem.

Despite its slick appearance, the first printed paper had a major problem — a student editorial urging youthful involvement in idealist movements such as the Peace Corps and Vista. It was like waving a red flag in front of the conservative headmaster. This time it was the sponsor who had to do the persuading. Eventually, they resolved the disagreement by stapling to each copy a statement that the expressions of personal opinion did not reflect the views of the administration. And at the end of 1967, the newspaper received an award for the most improved school paper in the area.

The independent school which finances its own publications has the right to determine the image its publications present, yet in a democracy, students are taught freedom of the press. The issue would reoccur in the 1972 *Afterthought* over a pair of articles on student rights and responsibilities and again in 1990 with questionable language in an Upper Division short story. It is a dragon that regularly rears its head and each time requires kid gloves and cool heads.

That same year a Lower Division teacher resigned over a disagreement with the administration. The students liked the replacement, Sandra Braze, whose father had been a clown, but they missed their old teacher. To explain the situation Dr. Heinrich decided to treat them maturely and wrote an open letter to the class asking for their cooperation. And he got it. Perhaps the daughter of the clown also helped them to forget their old loyalty.

Just as the 14th year of St. Johns was coming to an end, in the middle of final exams, the seniors' pet cat, Hester Prynne, gave birth to three white kittens whom the students named Pearl, Lambert, and Emily, and a black one whom they named Kurtz, assuming he had a heart as well as skin of darkness.

In the summer of 1967 Jean McGehee, known to seniors as "Momma Jean," left St. Johns to teach nearer to her husband's place of work. Five classes of seniors would remember her special touch with literature and drama; others would recall that she persuaded Dr. Heinrich to build a stage in the chapel. And some would just remember that they always gave her a birthday party.

At the end of the year Dr. Heinrich declared that this had been the best year ever. And the best is usually on the edge of a plateau.

7. Champions, 1967-1969

Chapter VII

Champions 1967-69

From the start the year looked different. At the end of the concourse a \$250,000 gym was under construction — a massive, multipurpose building of brick and cypress with more space for sports than the whole school building had for academics in 1953. It was 94' by 144' in dimension with a stage, a concrete basketball court — the flooring would be added later — and seating capacity of 1000. Windows on the east and west sides would supply natural lighting and ventilation, and occasionally a little extra heat and cold.

A donation of \$50,000 made possible the big event. Carl Swisher was again the benefactor. Other contributions, including one from Jessie Ball Du Pont, amounted to \$26,000. Phase I included the main structure only. Later would come the dressing rooms, bleachers, curtains for the stage, and other fineries — step by step in typical Spartan manner. They intended to call it a "gymnatorium" to indicate its multi-purpose capacity. While the name did not stick, the use did: it would house meetings, movies, and magic show's, in addition to P.E. Down the river Episcopal High School built a chapel, a cafeteria, and an auditorium. The new gym was finished in November, and at the opening ceremony a large seal of St. John the Evangelist, a coiled serpent in a chalice, was placed in position over the main doors. The symbol had been suggested in the early days of the school by Mike Snyder '56 when Dr. Heinrich challenged the students to design a school emblem. According to legend, the serpent drank a draft of poison from the chalice to prevent harm to the saint. Thus the symbol came to represent goodness despite a threatening appearance. The emblem, like the new gym, would stand for the bold optimism which was part of the Spartan vision.



Putting the seal on the gym

Soon afterwards, the Student Council bought a pair of palm trees for either side of the gym entrance. Most gardeners will tell you that planting palms is risky business. A large number die within months. These survived — a good omen like the chalice.

When the gym was dedicated in September 1968, the address was delivered by Gert Schmidt, a long time friend of the school. He urged the students to use the gym and to feel at home in it. "Learning is great, but applying it with the help of a strong and sound body is even greater," he advised. And they listened, especially the soccer team.

At the north end of the campus in the fall of 1967, the soccer field had new turf and a sprinkler system with plans for a grandstand and a scoreboard. Now the Spartans had a field for play and one for practice. It was another dream come true and an inspiration to the team. No longer would they have to fight the field as well as the foe.

The cheerleaders determined to do their part with pep rallies. At the first rally of the year they celebrated Coach Nichols' birthday, and the girls presented him with "Sparty," a large stuffed soccer player with a big red heart embroidered under his team uniform. "Sparty" would appear off and on for years at pep rallies and games until, in the school fire of 1976, he was smoked and soaked beyond repair. Meanwhile his popularity soared, and his picture even appeared in the 1968 yearbook. Newcomers to St. Johns sometimes questioned the term "Spartans" for a school named after a saint.

As the team got on the athletic warpath, the school paper noted the similarities between the Spartans and their predecessors — and the differences. The Spartans in ancient Greece used to take their seven-year-old children away from their mothers and entrust them to teachers, who would instill in them first the fundamentals of battle and then in the arts and music. "The St. Johns children are so bright that they can begin at age six, and by contrast, arts are considered greater than war (soccer). We strive for intelligent athletes," the article said, ending with a quote from a Spartan mother to her son at the time of the Peloponnesian War: "Bring back your shield or come back on it." Coach Nichols chose different words for his "intelligent athletes," but his words worked, too.

"We were a bridesmaid last year," he said. "This year we're going to be the bride." The year before the Spartans had finished second with a 9-2-1 record, losing to Savannah in a play-off. This year 45 determined boys tried out for the team, a remarkable turnout with only 60 boys in grades 9-12. From their numbers Coach chose a team of 24. The school bought new uniforms-previous team members had to buy their own — and the Spartans were ready to meet the "enemy."

The new playing field proved a big advantage. Many considered it the finest in the Tri-State Soccer League, which consisted of Savannah Country Day, Augusta Prep, Aiken (S.C.) High School, Porter Gaud (Charleston), Bolles, and St. Johns. The team went to work armed with hustle, dedication, and more of Coach's famous mottos: "Only perfect practice makes perfect," "A good loser is still a loser," and perhaps most important, "The winning tradition is just like a habit."



Tri-State Champs



Johns Abbott

The winning tradition became a strong habit that year. Goalie John Decker allowed score in only two games. Then Johnny McClow's fifth and sixth goals of the year gave the Spartans a win over Porter Gaud on March 1, 1968, an undefeated season, and the Tri-State Championship.

In 1969 the Spartans claimed the Tri-State Championship again. At the season's end they had racked up 28 consecutive victories. With Jim Ising and Johnny McClow as co-captains and Hank Osborne, John Abbott, Gary Adams,

and Joe Roschuni as top scorers, they defeated Episcopal on the Eagles' home field in their last game. When Coach Nichols said he thought they might lose a game that year, they determined to prove him wrong. After all, he was right about almost everything else.

The entire St. Johns population pulled together, held their breath, and prayed as the Spartans beat first one team and then another. Parents helped too: they left work early, cut short afternoon engagements, and brought along toddlers, grandmothers, and pets to support the effort. John Abbott, Sr., was above all others the first in the field. Slim and trim in his referee's uniform at games, and calling out in his bold New England accent, he started in 1967 working out with the team and stayed on foot with them for nearly two decades.

In addition to seeking the championship, Coach Nichols wanted to encourage others to play soccer. Like Dr. Heinrich, he believed that it was the ideal sport. It was less expensive than football, but the teams got the experience of first rate competition, training, and travel. Since the Tri-State teams usually stayed with their opponents' families when they were out of town, the trips often produced lasting friendships. The St. Johns soccer story is another example of the advantages that a school and a man with a dream can bring to a community. The victory stimulated interest all over North Florida. Other leagues were started, and although no one would have guessed it then, one day teams would come all the way from Europe just to play soccer at St. Johns.

Athletic contests were not the only ones to interest the Spartans. In the fall of 1967 when the *Chalice* held its annual week to sell yearbooks, the editors announced a beauty contest. The Upper Division boys were invited to dress in ladies' finery and compete for the title of "Miss Chalice." A school reporter noted that "in an unsurpassable trial of elegance and pulchritude Miss 'Minnie Mae' (Walt) West won." Curiously, only the real leaders of the school felt themselves secure enough to take up the challenge. Meanwhile the smiles and laughter brought a healthy break in the routine and a lasting tradition.

Another kind of contest continued to take place at St. Johns. It was basically a game of wits against time, known as "testing." An official testing period can last anywhere from 40 minutes to a week and can require the participation of anyone: state-wide tests for twelfth and ninth grades, Kuhlman-Anderson I.Q. tests, diagnostic reading and vocabulary tests, PSAT, NMSQT, and CEEB, and finally spring testing for all. Tests come in the same category as death and taxes, only more so. The rules are invariable: use a #2 pencil — bring a spare in case one breaks — do not start until you hear "Begin," work furiously until you hear "stop," no rest or restroom for the weary, only the brilliant finish in the time allotted, and even they emerge with a dull ache in the neck and shoulders. An awesome hush settles over whole wings of the school; little testing signs flutter on the classroom doors. When it is over, students feel giddy, relieved, and a bit scared: it will be six weeks before results are back, and by then the entire future may be settled.

The future is always on the students' minds, and the end of the sixties saw many issues come to the fore which would not soon be resolved. One of these was women's lib. Many of the firsts at St. Johns reflected major happenings in society. Thus when the student body elected Diane McRae as the first female chairman of the Honor Court, it was right in step with the times. The St. Johns girls had headed publications off and on since the beginning, so this was not too unusual. In the field of literature women had been making a mark for over a century. In the legislative and judicial worlds women had made only rare appearances, particularly in the United States. Once these top leadership positions at St. Johns were open to women, some very fine female talent emerged, and, as in the case of national leadership, it was to the advantage of all.

Private schools had to undergo a similar revolution. Originally in most of the South, only single sex schools existed, like Bolles and Bartram. When coeducational schools first appeared, not many parents would pay to send daughters to school with boys. At St. Johns of the 26 original students only nine were girls; of the first seven graduates only two were girls. Boys needed a better education because THEY would have to earn a living; GIRLS would probably just get married. Then women and their parents began to demand an education to prepare them for better positions. By the end of the sixties St. Johns had an equal number of boys and girls, and many single sex schools were turning coed.

Meanwhile a few remnants of the less-than-liberated woman lingered on. In May 1968 as the St. Johns girls were eliminated from their tennis tournament, they were offered a consolation prize of caddying for the boys' golf team. But the girls got even by selecting a boy, Walt West, as the mascot of their Girls' Club.

In many areas, however, equality reigned. All of the seniors in the spring of 1968 were granted a new privilege called "Senior Week." It was to take place just after midyear exams. The seniors were told to go out in the world and explore a job of their choice. It was not just senior time out for good behavior. They had to find an employer who would allow them to spend five days as an apprentice and report their experience to the school. Thus a week at Marineland would be learning lab routines not just watching fish. Occasionally students made poor choices. One boy found he did not have the stomach for observing veterinary surgery. Students could also opt for a research paper or be instructed to stay at school for extra help.

The practice continues. Each year the results differ. Sometimes students have trouble finding a place; many offices do not want a 17-year-old intern. Occasionally the job has too little guidance, and the student winds up wasting time. The freedom to make or break the experience was to remain in the hands of the student — a right Dr. Heinrich promised them at Senior Presentation.

The new gym provided an opportunity for another senior's choice. The invitation to the 13th annual commencement stated that the ceremony would take place on the school campus. The class of '68 had found the gym a source of pride despite the inconvenience of an unpaved parking lot and no air conditioning. They also knew that it would be easier to rehearse at school rather than driving to Prudential to practice walking, sitting, and shaking hands.

What influenced them even more was the fact that Dr. Heinrich wanted it. There has always been a bond between students, faculty, and administration in the desire to please. "He smiled!" "They liked it!" Small in numbers, humble in origins, cautious in operations, noble in aspirations, St. Johns is an entity.

Nevertheless, even after graduation in the beautiful new gym, Dr. Heinrich confessed he felt somewhat disappointed. This had not been the best year in history. After a large spread in the paper about the soccer championship, he had expected an avalanche of applications from athletically minded people. But it had not come. When spring testing results showed how much the students had grown that year, he had anticipated friends of patrons to enroll their children. But the next year's first grade did not reflect contacts with new families, instead it was mostly younger brothers and sisters of those already enrolled. This was a good show of confidence from patrons, but he could see that public relations needed strengthening.

The school also had to meet competition for students and faculty from more heavily endowed schools. Moreover, St. Johns faced two additional handicaps: location and athletic offerings. Both Bolles and Episcopal were closer to the large residential areas in Jacksonville, and both played football — a more glamorous and popular sport than soccer. The *Jacksonville Journal* of January 28, 1968, referred to St. Johns as "pioneers in the field of popularizing soccer." Perhaps it was the "pioneer" principle which Dr. Heinrich would ponder most. Was it sometimes necessary to go with the majority?

Ultimately these were problems the board would have to face. Earlier in the year in an open letter to the students, George Baldwin, president, outlined the purpose of the board. Previously it had acted like a combination silent partner and benevolent godfather. The members had made decisions and donations, met and formed committees, and evaluated progress, but they had kept a low profile. A new face for trustees would emerge in the seventies.

Baldwin told the students that the school was a non-profit corporation operated by the trustees. Their goal, he said, was to provide the public with well educated men and women. He added that the president's duties were to see that the school operated properly and that the assets were safeguarded correctly. The article came at a time when the administration was telling the students that the additions to the plant were a financial gamble and was asking parents to consider donations.

Many members of the board thought that the school needed to advertise in local papers. Other schools were already doing it. Dr. Heinrich was old-fashioned. He thought both advertising and fund-raising were unethical in the academic world. Although the school now needed money to pay off the gym, he preferred to look for contributions from patrons. He would write letters and hope for benefactors. But the next year the board overruled him, and the first notice of dates for admissions testing at St. Johns appeared in the *Times Union* in January 1969. By May the new president, Bill Courtney, announced that the ads had brought good results. And the policy continued.



Rod Fisher

About that time the county paved Doctors Lake Drive. Until then the dirt road had been subject to the whims of nature and county maintenance. But Dr. Heinrich, among others, kept after them until he got a much improved access to his school. Once the road was widened and resurfaced, the school buses no longer had to creep and bump along their last two miles.

The new road became the source of many jokes. Since the majority of the students commuted by bus, and since commuters spent anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours on their buses, a spirit of "bus pride" naturally arose. Most of the buses were driven by male faculty members, and keeping the buses clean was a group effort — so was earning a track record. After rehearsal for the Christmas program in 1968, a major feat in the history of school transportation took place. Two St. Johns buses were proceeding west on Kingsley Avenue when the one driven by science teacher Fisher eased onto Doctors Lake Drive ahead of the one driven by Latin teacher Swalm. Because buses could not pass on Doctors Lake Drive, Mr. Fisher thought he had won. Up and over the railroad tracks he steamed and around the circle to the front of the school with the riders shouting victory. Meanwhile in hot pursuit, Mr. Swalm took the wrong but shorter way to the left and steered his mighty yellow monster around the circle. Nose to nose they arrived simultaneously only to discover Dean Edmonds, who viewed the photo finish with less than delight and was waiting impatiently with a stern lecture on setting examples. From that day on, drag racing buses became ancient history.

Later when a paved path was built along the side of Doctors Lake Drive, the Florida Striders asked the town to name the trail in honor of Dr. Heinrich to recognize the time and effort he spent after he retired to get safe lanes for runners and bikers. He was a trail blazer in more than one sense of the word as were many of his teachers.

Rod Fisher came to St. Johns in 1967 in his first year out of Catawba College in North Carolina, and his teaching career there would become his life work — and a work of art. He brought knowledge and "knot-head" humor, leadership, two daughters, and years of devotion. Also that year came Marge Fulton, an experienced teacher, who took over ninth and tenth grade English. Here she would stay for eight years with gentle ways, high ideals (and highly structured kits), and an ever ready camera for *Chalice* shots, and like others before, she was a teacher and parent with two sons who earned St. Johns diplomas.

The next year to "lead them in their righteous ways" came the guitar-playing Chaplain H.L. Biemiller who wanted his chapel programs and convocations announced by a series of flags — like Shakespeare and the Globe. Somehow the flags did not last, but the role of chaplain did. Biemiller and others after him would serve as God's man on campus, a friend, an example, and a counselor. There was one who rode a motorcycle, one who read from the "Book of Job," one they would all remember as "Father," and one who also ministered to the prisoners at Raiford.

Another addition to the staff in 1968 was Lenora Webster who came to Lower Division to teach fifth grade and music, moved away, and later returned to teach again. Then for many years while teaching elsewhere, she helped St. Johns students as a tutor and advisor, and befriended almost every St. Johns project and person. More than once a teacher came back after circumstances changed. Saints and Spartans make lasting friends.

In all organizations there are times when the right person for the job is not available. At one such time, the seniors liked to boast that they had "wiped out four English teachers in two years." It was not a very amusing thought for the administration or the new teacher, but there seems to be a pattern in following the path of successful people. Frequently a few potentially good ones have to fall by the wayside.

There would be lots of this in the next few years. When Myrtle O'Shea left after 11 years, she told her students that she wanted to revel in things that she had only had time to dream about. So the dynamic little lady moved on and left some big shoes to be filled. The same year Dina Wiesenfeld left after nine years of teaching science and religion to teach at Florida Junior College. St. Johns proved fertile ground for incorporating previous skills and for stimulating future growth.

Then in January 1969 the board announced that the Heinrichs would retire at the end of the following year. What would the future bring? They had envisioned the school, had founded it, and had nurtured it for 16 years. It would take some doing to carry on without them, but the time had come. The board would appoint a committee to conduct a search for a successor — no easy task. Thomas Jefferson is reputed to have said when he took Ben Franklin's job as U.S. Ambassador to France, "No one can replace him... I am only his successor." Many felt Dr. Heinrich would be just this hard to follow.

That same year Helen Palmer announced her plans to retire. Not only founders but founding faculty would need successors.

The school had to face the loss of friends and faculty in other ways also. In the summer of 1967, Bill Hall '64 had died at the Savannah International Raceway. He was the first St. Johns graduate to die. Many students still remembered him, and with his death they would realize that the students of yesterday were today's men and women and were meeting the fortunes and misfortunes of the world.

Eighteen months later another death would shock the school. Over Christmas vacation on January 3, 1969, Captain Borries died after a brief illness. In addition to his outstanding record in athletics at the Naval Academy, "Buzz" Borries had been a fighter pilot during World War II and had been awarded the Bronze Star. He brought that heroic image to the classroom and to the sports arena. Besides the award given in his honor, Dr. Heinrich announced that phase II of the gym, which would include the basketball facilities, flooring, and lighting, would be dedicated to his memory.

Among the many contributors to the memorial was the Orange Park Women's Club. The club had used the St. Johns gym in February 1969 for their annual Orange Stocking Review and in return gave Dr. Heinrich a check specifically designated for the Borries Memorial.

The 37 seniors of the class of '69 made up the largest graduating class St. Johns would see until 1985. In his commencement address, the Reverend Dr. James Cleland, Dean of the Chapel of Duke University, advised the graduates to invest their St. Johns education like the wise man in the biblical parable of the talents. At the end of the evening, they would set out with their investment and their advice to a world where the Soviets had overthrown the Czech rebellion, Nixon and Humphrey were battling for the United States Presidency, and the Queen of England had honored a rock group known as the Beatles. Their days in the world would demand every strength these Spartan Champions had learned.

8. The End of a Road, 1969-70

Chapter VIII The End of a Road 1969-1970

Just as a good writer plans the end of a book, so the Heinrichs plotted their last chapter in the St. Johns story. With the usual thoroughness they decided on a date, helped interview and select a successor, and worked out details for a smooth change of command. In the meanwhile a full school year had to take place before they would leave "to drift intellectually in Europe." Taking a long absence was another of their wise decisions. They wanted the new administration to have a chance to stretch its wings and fly its own course without interference.



Edwin P. and Dorothea B. Heinrich

It was a year for turnovers, and the school reflected the trends of the nation — a mobile society. Teachers, like most of America, were on the move. A large change in faculty no longer meant dissatisfaction but more likely a change in lifestyle. Thus the largest turnover in faculty ever at the start of the seventeenth year was news but not trouble.

No less mobile was the student population that year. A bus from Palatka would be bringing 43 new students every day, raising St. Johns' enrollment to a record 325. For some time, parents in Putnam County had wanted a private school for their children. St. Johns knew that in time they would have one. Then the Palatka students would leave St. Johns to support it. Meanwhile, St. Johns would open its doors to encourage qualified students and further the cause of independent education.

The Heinrichs were just back from a trip to Europe when they began their last year at St. Johns. If that seemed unusual since they were planning to spend the next few years abroad, it was again in keeping with their beliefs. They knew the educational advantages of travel, and they wanted to point the way to future headmasters. Thus the summer of 1969, accompanied by two graduates and a rising senior, they toured "The Seven Cities of Splendor."

On November 5, 1969, St. Johns was saddened by the death of Nell Murphy, a long time friend and associate of the school. She had taught Latin at St. Johns from 1954 until 1957 and was then given the title of "Dean Emerita." "She was a lady with a stiff back and a smile...a great gal," Dr. Heinrich commented. "Her strength," he said, "came in part from the many trials which she had endured." She was widowed twice, and when her son, a Navy pilot, was killed in a plane crash, she gave the school the flag which had covered his coffin. This same flag was lowered to half-staff to honor her memory.

That same week the board reported that over a score of interested candidates were being considered by the selection committee for the position of headmaster. It was a hard job. Most of all the trustees wanted to have the school's future be an extension of its past.

Schools throughout the country were facing problems: words like "integration," "campus riots," and "anti-war protests," made most educators shudder with fear for the future. St. Johns trustees, however, could not afford to shudder, and instead they shouldered the responsibility. By the end of the winter they made a selection.

In February, Bill Courtney, president of the board, announced the appointment of Patrick Mackin as the new headmaster. Mr. Mackin had been the Headmaster of Keith Country Day School in Rockford, Illinois, where his wife Patricia had worked as a substitute teacher. The Mackins had five children who would enter St. Johns the next year: Rose Ellen, Lelia, Patrick, Amy, and William.



Bill Courtney at alumni party

Mr. Mackin had earned a B.A. in English in 1951 at Seton Hall University, and an M.Ed. in educational administration the following year. He had done graduate work at the University of Maryland and was a doctoral candidate at Rutgers. Before coming to St. Johns he had worked in secondary education for 17 years as teacher, coach, and assistant headmaster. He had lived in Brazil as the national director of a student exchange program, and in 1963 he had been appointed as the head of the English department at the American School at Rio de Janeiro.

The prospective headmaster arrived on campus on March 20, 1970, to meet the faculty and students. He had visited the area twice before to be interviewed by the trustees. With the azaleas and dogwoods just starting to bloom, St. Johns was a beautiful sight for a visitor from the snowbound North.

Although carrying on without the Heinrichs would be a trip into uncharted waters, it would also be an exciting new venture. A new headmaster would bring new ideas, new curriculum, and other new faces. The students were also looking forward to having the headmaster's children in school.

Spirits ran high on campus that year. St. Johns had won the Tri-State Conference soccer championship for two consecutive years. They needed a third win to gain permanent possession of the trophy. Then a complication arose. The original Tri-State Conference had consisted of schools from South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. As new schools were built and existing ones took up soccer, a new league was needed. The North Florida League was comprised of all local schools: Episcopal, Bishop Kenney, Bolles, Raines, Fletcher, and St. Johns. In the end the other area coaches agreed that in order for St. Johns to try for the championship they could belong to both leagues.

Consequently, the Spartans had to play an 18 game season. The busy schedule required effort from many "booters" and even more "rooters." One by one the big teams fell to the Spartans. Finally, on January 24, 1970, St. Johns clinched the third conference championship and took permanent possession of the trophy.

The Spartans went on to win the North Florida League championship also. Six team members were chosen for the North Florida All-Conference team: John Abbott, Garry Adams, Hank Osborne, Jimmy Lanier, Bill Meldrum, and Warren Tisdale; and Coach Nichols was chosen Coach of the All-Star Squad by his fellow coaches.

It was a record year. The team had a perfect season, 18-0, and extended the three-year winning streak to 47. They broke all previous scoring records and even had one team member, Hank Osborne, featured in *Sports Illustrated* for his outstanding performance. Although Hank was only a ninth grader that year, he scored 43 points in the 1970 season. He was a natural athlete and a superior soccer player. In addition, he was "home-grown," having been at St. Johns since the first grade.

In all, 45 boys had worn Spartan jerseys over the three year period. Three pairs of captains had led the teams: in 1968 Johnny McCLOW and John Decker, in 1969 Joe Roschuni and Jim Lanier, and in 1970 John Abbott and Warren Tisdale. For the offense the top men had been Joe Matthews in 1968, Joe Roschuni in 1969, and Hank Osborne in 1970. Leading defensive players for those years had been Jim Perryman, Jim Ising, and Warren Tisdale. For two years, 1968 and 1969, John Decker had defended St. Johns' goal, and in 1970 Terry Minx had carried on the tradition.

No less dedicated and hard working, three squads of cheerleaders had smiled and shouted to encourage every aspect of the game. Three strong girls had captained these squads: Susan Hunting '68, Bonnie Trimble '69, and Janna Allgood '70. The girls had gone to camp to learn new routines, sold cookies to pay for their trips, and bought their own uniforms. It had taken sacrifice, endurance, and lots of homework on the bus. They were far more than pretty girls in pleated skirts.



Coach

The season ended officially with the annual Soccer Banquet. In years past it had taken place at someone's home, but this year in honor of the victory, they feasted at the Monda Yacht Club. John Abbott, Sr., addressed the group in a speech which is reputed to have covered every detail of the year from statistics to silly business. Then he recognized the team members and presented a signed soccer ball and an inscribed silver cup to "Coach." Unforgettable: the time, the team, and the teacher.

The remainder of the year was filled with recollections of two other memorable teachers: the headmaster and his wife. The annual Headmaster's Day in April was a celebration of unusually high quality and meaning. The students and teachers wanted to offer a special tribute. On the program were Psalms set to music, a scene from the senior class play, a mock quiz program ("It's Epidemic"), and the grand launching of a set of self- destructing, smoke-tracing rockets.

The Heinrichs' dream was now a 17-year success story. *The Saints' Scroll*, *Chalice* and the *Times Union* took the occasion of their retirement to honor them and to recognize their achievements.

The school paper published an eight-page issue dedicated to the Heinrichs and recognizing their devotion to the school. What some students found most interesting was the story of their past, the facts about the founding of the school, and the personal touches which these founding figures revealed in interviews. Dr. Heinrich told the student reporters about ski trips he used to conduct for students, a book he had published, an invention he patented, and a movie he produced. He also told about a National Science Teachers' Award he received in 1953 which would have opened doors to research positions in government, industry, or universities. "But," he said, "I felt called to work with people rather than with things, and one makes a mistake if one lets himself be distracted from his true calling by the dollar sign."

Mrs. Heinrich said that she had done everything at St. Johns but drive a bus. In addition to her career in reading skills, she told the reporter she had once written a book on handwriting. In the future she might get another degree, should get the family photo albums up to date, and hoped to learn German in self defense. "Dr. Heinrich will be rocking on our front porch, and I will be rocking him," she laughed. No one was surprised that they actually never rocked chairs because they were much too busy to act like traditional retirees.

The school yearbook was also dedicated to the Heinrichs "who for 17 years have been building a dream...a dream to provide high quality education and a well-rounded background for students."

In the *Florida Times Union* of May 17, 1970, Ron Sercomb chose to share with his readers some of the wisdom the retiring headmaster had gained in a lifetime of developing creative minds. "There should be less formal education in terms of years," Dr. Heinrich told Sercomb, "but at least as much education in terms of content. Acceleration in education may be the answer to the problem... We are wasting a lot of time in school, a program of faster learning is entirely possible. Through psychological tests and guidance programs, we — the educators — can readily help students decide what they want to do after graduation...the pace of the world is ever accelerating and it is high time the pace of education be stepped up...Perhaps we should fight affluence as well as poverty because affluence is not contributing toward ambition, determination, and purposeful careers." There it was: the history of St. Johns and its goals, living and breathing. Some had not agreed with Edwin Heinrich, but many had. As one of Dr. Heinrich's colleagues said, "When you've been up there far enough and long enough you get a clear view of the weather."

Among the many friends and admirers who gathered to bid farewell to the Heinrichs at that time were the St. Johns alumni. At a farewell luncheon they presented their departing headmaster and his wife a sketch of the school which showed the facade of the main building with the great oak tree in full foliage — a representation, they said, of the power and strength the school had been in their lives.

Now that the Heinrichs were leaving, the alumni were coming to realize that they had a new responsibility. They must help keep the school going and maintain its standards. At the luncheon Mike Snyder '56 was elected president and Claudette Helmick '57, vice-president. Claudette's son was already attending St. Johns, and in time both of the new officers would have daughters there. Mike and Claudette formed a nucleus of alumni who would serve the school on the Parent-Teacher League, Dads' Club, and board of trustees in addition to their status as alumni.

Thirty-five St. Johns seniors were graduated on June 2, 1970. The 15th annual commencement took place in the gym with Dr. Heinrich presenting diplomas for the last time. The guest speaker was Dr. Robert McCan, president of Dag Hammarskjold College, a school which was to open in the fall of 1970 in New Jersey, another beginning. The last weeks of school were filled with traditional farewell festivities for the seniors and the unusual phenomenon of goodbyes for the headmaster and his wife. This commencement marked a major change and a new beginning for all the St. Johns family.

In his annual report to the board, Dr. Heinrich refrained from suggesting ideas for further development. This was his successor's privilege. He closed by expressing his "fervent hope that the board (would) extend the same understanding to the new headmaster as they did to the old one, and give him with his responsibilities the necessary authority to carry them out."

Fine weather for drifting intellectually was just around the corner for the Heinrichs. Meanwhile Mr. Mackin and his faculty and board had their work cut out for them.

9. A Different Drummer, 1970-71

Chapter IX A Different Drummer 1970-71

The first days of the school year have a special look. Workmen in jeans and hard hats are pushing to finish summer projects — a new wing, a new building, a renovated classroom. Construction material and heavy equipment not usually part of the academic scene linger in the August heat. Here and there a teacher dressed in shorts and a tee shirt is checking boxes of books and lists of students or decorating a bulletin board. Even in the front office things are casual.

Only a handful of students stroll down the concourse. A tall sunburned boy has just sweated out his summer school re-exam, and a pretty little girl in a pink dress waits with her parents for an entrance interview. In *The Saints' Scroll* office editors are rushing to meet a deadline for the opening day issue, typing articles and pouring over pictures. Sitting on the wall the Girls' Club is planning refreshments for orientation and getting a few last rays of sun. The Student Council and Honor Court officers are revising handbooks and preparing presentations for the student body. The wheels have started to turn.

The new faculty is the first wave ashore, arriving a few days early to learn the ropes. Some will stay at St. Johns for an entire career of teaching. Others will move on after a year or two. Some will leave indelible marks, others hardly a trace. One thing is certain: there is no predicting. Appearances are deceptive.

Most of the students get their first view of the next nine months when they come to buy books. It is a long, hot day of standing in line with parents and check books — for some a reunion, for others an orientation, and for all a little punch and cookies.

Inside the main door students and faculty alike soon become accustomed to another integral part of the St. Johns scene: the secretary — a combination Defender of the Faith, Godmother, and Girl Friday. She sits at her desk eternally typing, incessantly interrupted, and fearlessly protecting the good name of the school, its people, and its possessions. She takes messages, administers advice, scolds the wayward, and keeps enough confidential information in her head to burden the CIA. As the school grew larger, there were undersecretaries and office administrators and a secretary just for the headmaster, but for many years there was only "The" secretary.

For many, many years "The" secretary was Miss Parrish. Fiorine Parrish met Dr. Heinrich when they both served on the board of directors of the Community Center in Orange Park. She began work as the school secretary for two hours a day in May 1955. She later told students that she started staying late because she felt sorry for Dr. Heinrich when he had to serve as janitor after he completed his duties as headmaster. That year 77 students and nine teachers filled the old Moosehaven building with the office on the second floor. Her office, specifically, was one corner of Dr. Heinrich's desk. The faculty shared the office with them at break time. The only telephone sat simply and frugally in the middle of the headmaster's desk. The next year Miss Parrish moved her office to the store room and brought a bucket of blue paint and a roller to brighten things up. For a long time she served as bookkeeper and alumni secretary — when none was available — and was a part of every office operation for 17 years. Then one day in the spring of 1970, she turned in her keys, resigned, and got married.



Miss Parrish



Gail Green and Bev Kadel



Theresa Burdeshaw, Dot Wilson and Jeannette Savilonis

Theresa Burdeshaw was next in this vital role and brought with her one of the strongest stabilizing effects which the school would see during its years of change. Jeannette Savilonis followed Theresa and is still there, up front and on top of every happening — amazing women all three.

Among the newcomers in 1970 was Weems Watkins, a bundle of creative science projects and kindly persuasive methods, who would teach fifth and sixth graders for 20 years. Edith Cowles also joined the faculty in the English

department, and for several years she "babied" the juniors and seniors through some of the most mature literature they would ever see. Redheaded Janice Browning from Palatka took over from Mrs. Heinrich as the director of testing and reading consultant and had the distinction of being the first female teacher at St. Johns to drive a bus.

School opened with an assembly in the chapel where most of the students met Patrick Mackin for the first time. Here was a small, sandy-haired man with a rather soft voice who spoke to them on leadership, freedom, and responsibility. It was a change from the dynamic, authoritative leader they had always known, and they wondered what the year would bring.

First, it brought change in their daily life. The school schedule was divided into more periods to add flexibility, and the day was lengthened by 15 minutes. Next, there were changes in administration: vacant posts were filled, and new ones were created to delegate some of the responsibility previously held by the headmaster. More student opinion was invited as the president of the Student Council became a member of the Administrative Council. In the gym, heaters were installed so the P.E. department no longer had to rely on warm bodies to fend off the cold, and Pepsi Cola gave the school an electric scoreboard to keep track of the newly formed basketball team.

The Spartans' first basketball game made history of an unexpected kind. Mr. Mackin had had some coaching experience and decided to help Coach Nichols by working with the Upper Division boys on basketball. He felt it was time to put St. Johns' beautiful gym to better use. The only problem was that there were not enough Upper Division boys to man a soccer team and a basketball team in the same season. As a result the same boys played both sports, and on this memorable occasion they played both sports on the SAME day. The team won its soccer game late in the afternoon and by evening was dressed out and ready for the first go at basketball — way out in Callahan. The game was such an overwhelming defeat that few people even want to remember the score: 70-0 in Callahan's favor. A national sports magazine is reputed to have picked up the story, but even that clipping defies discovery. Nevertheless, as the bard said, "All's well that ends well." The team that once moved "like an arthritic turtle" eventually came to life and even at basketball won championships — but not right away.

While the Spartans were learning to march to a different drummer, the founders were off finding Europe. Dr. and Mrs. Heinrich sailed to Antwerp, bought a Volkswagen Camper to drive through Germany, and wrote back carefully detailed letters which said that retirement was the greatest state in life.

Quality of life was a subject very much in the minds of much of St. Johns that spring when Mr. Mackin asked the school to take part in a project called QUESTA — Questionnaire for Students, Teachers, and Administrators. It consisted of a long series of questions to identify strengths, monitor progress, and suggest improvements. For days students pondered over questions on everything from drugs to deities. Even the maintenance staff took part. Parents, friends, and local publications expressed interest, but the results were so long coming back that before they were all in, there was a new headmaster, and the rest of QUESTA never came to light.

One thing QUESTA might have revealed was the good times the seniors were having at the cookouts which took place regularly at the "Senior Shack" with Headmaster Mackin as chef. Another thing it would have registered was the disappointment of the whole school when, after four years and 61 straight victories, the undefeated Spartan soccer team finally fell.

It was February 13, 1971. The team had gone to Orlando to play in the Rollins College Invitational Soccer tournament. They were paired against Bishop Kenny whom they had already beaten once that year. The Kenny Crusaders scored two goals early in the first quarter. In the second quarter Pete Martens kicked one in to make the score 2-1. As *The Saints' Scroll* told it, "The hustle of Robert Pavelka, Dan Steinmetz, and Wallace Bennett kept the Crusaders hopping and the Spartans hoping, but the ball never found its way into the nets."



Cheerleaders

"After the first half, we sort of knew that it was going to happen," remembers Owene Weber, one of the cheerleaders. "We began to get numb. When it did happen, we just stared in disbelief. We were away from home. There were only a few parents there. It was mostly just us — Coach, the team, and the cheerleaders. Some of us cried." They were like babes in the woods, all lost.

They rallied, however, and five days later in Jacksonville, they beat Kenny. Despite the one loss, the Spartans won the league championship again that year. Best of all, they learned they could survive a setback.

Along with all the new happenings at St. Johns, there was still much of the old recurring. Scholars won awards, seniors were presented. Saints praised the Lord at Christmas, parents came to see projects, the yearbook was dedicated to "Coach," and when exams were over, the class of 1971 was graduated. This was the last commencement held in the gym, and Helen West, a senior, remembers that the graduates, like the hydrangeas on stage, were wilting fast in the heat.



Graduation in the gym

There is a postscript to the year of 1970-71. Almost as soon as school was over, the administration decided to hold a summer camp. A handful of teachers were hired to do crafts and sports after classes were over, and most of the summer school students elected to stay and play. In the mornings a group of older students under the supervision of two teachers ran games on the playground and in the gym, and arrangements were made to swim after lunch at the Camp Johnston pool — a bumpy bus ride down the road. It was a shoestring enterprise, just as the school itself had begun, but somehow St. Johns' first summer camp did not "make it." Perhaps it lacked the Heinrich touch.

10. A Turning Point, 1971-72

Chapter X

A Turning Point 1971-72

Because of the strength of the school and the wisdom of its leaders, St. Johns survived the shock of this year's events, and it survived gracefully. When the headmaster resigned at Christmas, the patrons and students were informed, a successor was appointed, and the work went on. The institution proved greater than its members.

The year began with a drop in enrollment from 317 to 304. Because of increased competition, for several years the administration had expected a decrease, especially in the Upper Division, but at this time it was particularly unsettling. The loss of income from tuition would mean some tightening of belts. The Heinrichs and the early school family had understood frugality, but new people might find it harder to handle.

By contrast, applications to the Lower Division had increased to such an extent that the school decided to add a second section of sixth graders. The question was where to put 21 bouncing 11 year-olds. Expansion of the Lower Division wing could not take place until there was a demand for two sections at several grade levels. A temporary structure was the only answer. It arrived on campus in the form of a shiney, aluminum trailer rented for a year and situated at the end of the Lower Division concourse.



The trailer

A brave new sixth grade teacher, Gwen Redman, moved into the mobile classroom with her students, and there followed a rare and unforgettable educational experience.

The newly expanded sixth grade gained new privileges that year. For the first time they were allowed to elect nonvoting representatives to the Student Council. From this step would grow an entirely new concept: a Lower Division student governing body. The Little Saints were coming of age.

Expansions also began in the athletic department. The athletic committee of the board, headed by John Abbott, together with Coach Nichols and Mr. Mackin, set out to get more students involved in team sports. Previously boys' soccer had dominated the scene. The committee decided that the school would never succeed in other sports unless it would limit soccer to the fall season and leave winter free for basketball and other sports.

In October Mr. Mackin started a cross country team to offer the boys a chance to compete in an individual sport. They trained on a 2 1/2 mile course, mapped out on campus and the surrounding vicinity, and took part in six area meets. Meanwhile the girls coached by Dot Stewart formed a three-team league of Bartram, Episcopal, and St. Johns in soccer and later Softball.



Coach's crew

Another group of girls gained fame as "Coach's Crew." Nine girls from grades 10-12 were chosen to help with score keeping, statistics, and equipment. In addition to fun and prestige, the girls had the enviable privilege of wearing "hot pants," the latest thing in short shorts.

A cultural first took place in November, when the entire Upper Division went to a performance given for St. Johns at the Friday Musicale by Carol Rosenberger, an internationally known concert pianist. The seniors' English teacher Edith Cowles had known Miss Rosenberger for many years and arranged for her to play for the school while she was in Florida on tour. The artist offered the students an example of courage, too. She had been crippled in the shoulders, arms, and hands by polio in 1955, and her concert tour marked a brave comeback.

The Christmas program of 1971 represented another first. The entire student body had always marched into the church singing "Adeste Fideles" and out with "Joy to the World," and stood (and swooned occasionally) while "swords were beaten into plow shares" and groups struggled to end "Dona Nobis Pacem" together. For several years, inevitably and in keeping with the times, students had grumbled about the rigid format. The new administration listened, opted for a Lower Division chorus aided by Upper Division volunteers, and moved the service to a different church.

The change, while it broke with tradition, offered the opportunity for invention and diversity out of which would grow new programs every year. The school would learn to cope with the conflict between innovation and tradition — pride in the past, pain in progress.

On Hobo Day things went as usual. After the rehearsal at the church, the classrooms were wet down and wiped up, and young and old retired to the outdoors to take part, either verbally or physically, in a tug of war. At the end of the day the entire school was summoned to the concourse where the president of the board, William McQuaid, announced the resignation of Patrick Mackin as headmaster and the appointment of Bert Homan as his replacement.

The whole school was shocked. A midyear shift of office was unprecedented. Some, out of allegiance to the former headmaster, found the situation intolerable. Others, offended by the way it was done, could not bring themselves to continue with the school. Still others agreed with the decision.

In a letter to the patrons, Mr. McQuaid made the announcement official:

Irreconcilable differences regarding the concept and operation of St. Johns Country Day School are the basis for this resignation. Mr. Mackin had been honest and loyal in his perception of St. Johns, and it is deeply regretted by all concerned that the differences could not be resolved.

Mr. Mackin was relieved of his duties on December 31, 1971. Mr. Homan assumed the position of headmaster on January 1, 1972. Mr. McQuaid closed his letter by saying, "I know you will give Mr. Homan the same loyalty and cooperation you have so amply exhibited to our fine school in the past."

Bert Homan was a logical choice for the position. He had been on faculty since 1966. His wife had taught third grade since 1969, and their son had been graduated from St. Johns in 1967: they were a St. Johns family. Mr. Homan had retired from the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander in 1966. He had earned a B.A. in social studies from Nebraska Wesleyan University and an M.A.T. in history from Jacksonville University. Under his leadership the history department had grown, and interest and scores showed marked improvements. He had handled publicity for the school successfully and had led the "It's Academic" and "High Q" teams to an accomplished status. He was a friend of faculty, students, and parents. At a time like this, the school needed to be in the hands of one of its own.

The Christmas program took place the next day as planned, although most of the faculty and many of the students were disturbed by the news. Christmas seemed an awkward occasion for such a break, yet it actually worked as a cushion. Talk died down; the joy of the season healed some of the hurt; and a new year ushered in a new administration.

Over the holidays the annual alumni-varsity soccer game was held on the North Field as usual, and a change of command did little to diminish the spirit of the game.

New faces appeared on campus in January as some reorganization took place following the resignation of four teachers. But midterm exams were only two weeks away. Students had to get back to work quickly.

Still, the school felt the pain of its loss, undoubtedly longest in the case of Jan Francis. She had come to St. Johns in 1956 to teach first grade. In 1960 she had moved into the Upper Division to teach math and later become head of the department. In recognition of her role at St. Johns, Jerry Johnson, one of the seniors, wrote, "Her constant diligence and cheerful outlook created an atmosphere both conducive to learning and supportive of high moral character. The service she has rendered to St. Johns cannot always be seen or felt...but it will be built upon for years to come."



Bill McQuaid with Bert Homan

In January at a meeting of the patrons, Mr. McQuaid formally introduced the new faculty and headmaster. Mr. Homan spoke to the group, explaining some of his views on education and his plans for the remainder of the school year. Then the patrons were invited to tour the newly-completed dressing rooms. The addition to the gym complex provided a continuity not only to the building program but also to the school philosophy. Things begun in the past would persevere into the future.

Down the hall and around the corner, the Upper Division discovered the addition of student lockers. Until now students had kept their lunches and jackets in homeroom or in hand, and they were at first pleased by the new storage

space. The lockers, bought at Navy surplus and painted bright blue, were somewhat battered and bent with age and became the subject of much humor — "the derelicts" someone called them. But they served until better ones could be bought, and they also represented the new administration's awareness of the students' need for privacy — a good sign, even secondhand.

In March a group of St. Johns history students took part in a youth political convention along with 2,000 other students at the Jacksonville Civic Auditorium where they cast a vote for Richard Nixon and met Shirley Chisolm among other candidates appearing in person.

In April, in a less democratic process, the Latin classes held a slave auction. It was a smooth spring with all the customary occurrences and some occasional accommodations.

Then suddenly exams were over, and it was time for graduation. The 23 members of the class of '72 had the privilege of receiving diplomas in the Garden Club of Jacksonville, and everyone agreed the move from the school gym was a major improvement. In addition to being a beautiful building with a lovely garden for a reception, the Garden Club was air conditioned. Mr. Homan had led the school through stormy waters, but things were calm and very cool for the moment.

11. Much Anew About Campus, 1972-73

Chapter XI

Much Anew About Campus 1972-73

When Bert Homart began his first full year as headmaster in September 1972, there were 92 new students and an enrollment of 354, the highest yet. There were six new teachers, too. Among them were two strong leaders who would become 20-year faculty members and powerful advocates of quality education and discipline: Ann Carter and Mike McMillan. Everywhere there were new ideas to think about and new ways of doing things.



Ann Carter

To accommodate the newcomers some remodeling and moving had to take place. At one end of the Upper Division concourse, two old shower rooms were converted into classrooms, while two rooms at the other end became sixth grade territory. Gone forever, but not much missed, was the famous trailer. It would soon be time for a new wing in the Lower Division. Moreover, the school would need a new bus, new equipment, and even a new roof before the SACS/FCIS evaluation committee came to visit the next year.

Gone also was an abundance of weeds and vines growing rampant around the school building and in the parking lot. Originally Dr. Heinrich had intended for the natural setting of the campus to remain untouched. It was a beautiful concept, but unchecked Florida foliage tends to blanket everything and make cozy homes for snakes. The summer "landscaping" created a surprise for those who had left the campus "au nature" in June, but it turned out to be a good beginning for the increased parking which the growing school would need.

The first issue of the school paper announced its good news: Mr. Homan and the board had decided to return to the policy of a fully financed newspaper. The previous headmaster had requested that *The Saints' Scroll* provide a large part of its own funding. The staff and advisor had been grateful to patrons and donors who had kept them going, but they were relieved not to have to ask for money. The uncertainties and discouragements of the previous year and a half had taught everyone involved a lesson.

Most of the students and teachers on campus that year would remember another innovation: a series of traveling shows that performed from time to time on stage in the chapel. Acquiring enriching programs for a whole school is no easy task, and rarely do all students see the same value in an event. Although some students are more than glad to get out of class, others would prefer to keep working. Teachers also view the interruption with mixed emotions — especially the collecting of \$.25 per student. The first in the series was a production by Hodges' Marionettes. While the first graders watched in wonder, some seniors wondered just what they were watching. The fabric of daily life in a school is sometimes a patchwork.

The class of '73 took as much pride in starting traditions as it did in continuing them. Mike Steinmetz became the first senior boy to sport a full grown moustache, and the entire class cheerfully carried on the custom of luaus at Hill 13 — a secret rendezvous at the beach established years before.

The first Homecoming was one new tradition which started in the face of considerable opposition. The Student Council conceived the idea to celebrate the 100th victory of Coach Nichols' Spartan soccer teams and to boost school spirit. No one had any real problem with the game, but acquiring royalty was something else. Back in 1960 the J-Club had elected a queen for a Christmas dance, but the only thing close to that in 1972 was St. Johns' beloved spoof "Miss Chalice." In the end everyone rallied and supported the event, St. Johns elected a monarch, and Mrs. Homan made a glittery crown for her.

The day began with the sun shining on a JV victory over the Valwood Valiants of Valdosta, followed by balloon races and relays for the Lower Division. At noon the junior mothers served lunch. Then at half-time in the varsity game, Mr. Homan crowned Bon Barnett queen for the day. It was the largest turnout to date for a St. Johns sports event. The Spartans scored a 13-1 victory, and most of the big and little Spartans put on their best clothes and danced away the evening in the gym.

Clothes became a major part of school life during the seventies. Despite warnings, frowns, and censure of all kinds, for several years the miniskirt remained a St. Johns tradition. The Girls' Club even had the audacity to put on a fashion show of mostly minis, with high styles furnished by a local department store. The first show was held in the chapel, but later ones took place in the homes of members and any other spot the girls could sell tickets to mothers, grannies, and aunts to watch them walk around like fashion models. But it was not just trying on pretty clothes; at least one former Girls' Club president, Mary Farshing, went into fashion merchandising after college. Learning experiences wear diverse robes.



Junior Classical League

Robes were big for the next few years, specifically togas, as the new Latin teacher, Mike Craven, introduced the Junior Classical League to St. Johns. The club grew to be one of the most celebrated organizations at school with a membership well over 100. They hosted local, state, and national forums and journeyed all the way to Kennebunkport to win prizes. They raced chariots, delivered orations, translated poems, and did everything Roman short of feeding Christians to lions.

Chariots were not the only rolling stock on campus. In the fall of '72 *The Saints' Scroll* opened a portable book store — literally a pair of hinged bookcases on wheels operated by an industrious sophomore, Kerry Reis, who sold paperbacks ranging from classics to comics.

Inventions and repetitions were everywhere. January brought exams. February featured the Sadie Hawkins Day dance. In the spring the art and music teacher Jerry Sears won the coveted and comical "April Fool" award, the seniors donned costumes and powdered wigs for their presentation of *Tom Jones*, and the juniors (the Rothschilds of St. Johns) made financial history by being \$300.00 in the black. The French students brought home "bons" from the Congress, and the Lower Division entered the spelling bee and wrote essays for the D.A.R.

St. Johns students were being seen everywhere, and they were being heard, especially on their own campus. In fact, the seventies might well be called the years of student voice. Dale Redman and Jerry Johnson of the class of '72 were elected to be the first students to speak for their classmates at a St. Johns graduation. The tradition would hold.

Student voices were being heard everywhere. When St. Johns moved to a fall soccer season, both players and fans were disappointed because the team could no longer compete against the larger, more challenging teams who still played in the winter. "These factors indicate that the importance of soccer at St. Johns has greatly decreased this year along with the chances of future varsity soccer teams becoming the champions that they once were," complained senior Don Meldrum, a soccer player.



Barrett Brown and Girls' Club

Students expressed opinion in the academic area also. An unsigned article appeared in *The Saints' Scroll* in December 1972 entitled "St. Johns Getting Soft?" The writer noted that in 1969 only 50 of the 320 students made honor roll whereas in 1972 the honor roll showed 117 out of 350, a 50% increase. "I'm tired of being babied, coddled, and spoiled... of having my grades curved... receiving free points and teachers' little tricks." Usually the students voiced complaints against teachers for low grades. This was news, a kind of man-bites-dog comment which provided food for thought to even the sternest teacher.

The Spartans cared and dared to speak out. They were proud of their heritage of hard work, and they intended to uphold the tradition. They liked to start new ones, and they occasionally liked to change old ones; but they wanted all traditions honorable, in the Spartan spirit.

About that time on Moody Road behind the North Field the county schools were starting a tradition which would place several demands on St. Johns. A new middle school was going up. It appeared that the only real way to insure privacy was to build a fence around the field, and the best way to meet the competition was to change the original Upper Division-Lower Division plan to a tri-level plan by adding a Middle Division. The fence worked; the tri-level plan lasted only a short time.

In a large county school system the concept of three divisions helps both logistically and psychologically. Each can have its own campus and its own focus. It can cause problems in a smaller school.

At St. Johns, Mr. Homan decided to begin the middle school concept in January 1973. Some found the midyear shift unsettling; for others it was little more than a difference in design and designation.

The experiment first brought changes in administration. Each division had to have its head and assistant which meant some shuffling around of faculty members, based on the number of years at St. Johns, academic degrees, and courses taught.

The students also experienced some changes. The fifth graders suddenly discovered themselves the "seniors" of the Lower Division. They also earned new privileges such as the right to run the safety patrol. In the Middle Division, the sixth graders, who had always been the "top dogs" in Lower Division, were not quite sure of their identity as the bottom of the middle, but they also gained new rights. They could attend all the dances, and the girls could belong to the Girls' Club.

For the seventh graders, being the middle of the middle was not a lot different from being the bottom of the Upper. As a group, seventh graders usually talk so much, have so much fun, and get into so much trouble that everyone else always knows where they are and often wishes they were anywhere else.

For the eighth graders being top of the middle meant little more than a terminology. They had neither place nor privilege to match their nominal title.

Meanwhile, the school's really top privileged class, the 23 seniors, were about to be replaced by the juniors and to find themselves very low on the ladder at college. Sunburned, as usual from Class Day at the beach, and dressed to the nines in white gowns and dinner jackets, the class of '73 was graduated at the Garden Club.

It was time to look to summer school and that new roof before the 20th year began. Maybe the students were speaking out because the school had come of age — it had been old enough to vote for an entire year. In the words of their senior English teacher, "You've come a long way, Baby."



Senior Presentation

12. Additions and Accommodations, 1973-74

Chapter XII

Additions and Accommodations 1973-74

When school started in 1973, paper work and paint were everywhere. The evaluators were coming, and the school was getting dressed up for company. During the summer, construction had begun on a new wing for the Lower Division. It was not completed until a few weeks after the opening of school, but the little people did not really mind. On those warm September afternoons they enjoyed watching the hammers and saws when they lost interest in reading and writing.

When the fifth and sixth graders moved in, the luxury of their new accommodations made them an enviable group. They had more space, new desks, the first carpeted classrooms, and a brand new pair of restrooms. The wing also contained a large unfinished area which would be used for everything from play on rainy days to barn dances on starry nights and then eventually be developed into four more rooms.

Over the summer the exterior of almost the entire school was repainted following the color scheme devised by Dr. Heinrich according to the little counting blocks used by the Lower Division. These same colors and shapes had also appeared on the totem poles once located outside the Upper Division wing. Learning is everywhere; only looking needs guidance.

One thing nearly everyone was learning and looking at that year was art. The new teacher, Shirley Purrington, had the soccer players doing needlepoint, the Middle Division making wall hangings, and the Lower Division hooking rugs — and all of them proud of their colorful creations.

Coach Nichols found himself with two new assistants in P.E., Julie Olsen and Cliff Powers, and a new role as guidance counselor. Actually most of the students already knew him as their counselor on the field and in the gym. Now he had a title.

There was another person on campus with a title — "Mr." Annie Tolar, St. Johns' very special maintenance person. Annie was a strong and skilled woman who thoroughly enjoyed the outdoors and knew almost everything about equipment, earth, and earthlings — from boys and girls to bats and polecats. She had very short white hair, a muscular build, and always wore a man's shirt and trousers. Because of her appearance, some of the little children called her "Mr. Tolar," but she did not mind. "For I love them all," she often said.

Just as loving was Mary Reese, hired by the Student Council to cook, clean, count money, and keep everyone cheerful in the food store. You could always find her after school sweeping out the classrooms and laughing all the way.

Mary and Annie became a part of the learning experience. Years later after they had left and moved on to other jobs, students would occasionally run into one of them in the grocery store, and the next day you would hear, "Guess who I saw?"

So another year began as familiar and as different as each school term can be, with the school newspaper reflecting the trends and turns week by week, and the yearbook a mirror of the times overall.

Another kind of mirror also showed up that year and caused no little stir among the students. It was an attempt to keep the students from writing on the walls of the locker rooms. Ever since the days when man lived in caves, he has had an irresistible urge to decorate his dwelling or any other bare surface. It is a long way, however, from prehistoric etchings to locker room graffiti, and authorities view the latter in a different light from the former. When initials began appearing, and decoration turned to destruction, the administration decided to install a one way mirror to discourage vandalism. An angry letter to the editor of *The Saints' Scroll* called it "a revocation of the administration's trust in the students." In time the mirror was removed, and the behavior improved.

Meanwhile several old favorites continued to add vitality to school life. Among them was Hat Day. About once a month a peculiar array of head coverings would appear on a large number of students and occasionally teachers.

Sometimes they caused distraction, but not much. At other times students would lose interest in the entire phenomenon. Newcomers usually asked what was happening. The reply would be something about the need of students to express their individuality.

In November 1973 a walking statement of individuality arrived on campus, a redheaded German boy named Thomas Erne. Thomas had completed 12 of the 13 years of study required in Germany for a secondary certificate, and he had some definite plans for his year in America. He wanted to "analyze the American society, the character of people...and the influence that America plays in world politics, history, and art." He moved in with Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Scales and their seven children in Orange Park, and though he was not the first foreign student at St. Johns, he certainly was among the most colorful. He stayed through the school year, and played soccer, the piano, and the "good sport" at every kind of activity in and out of school. When he did return to Germany, he left many friends behind and many invitations to visit Germany.

In December some of the older students suggested that the school make its joyful Christmas celebration a return to the "traditional" program. Actually, after 20 years of revisions no one, except perhaps the Heinrichs, could remember what was "original." Many found the idea of the "good old days" a comfortable feeling with all the changes in life. Mrs. Homan pulled out an old file with the familiar words and made a red paper cover for each student folder, and almost everyone felt a sense of security.

One of the surest measures of change at St. Johns for many years was the "Scroll Poll." Every few weeks at the crossroads a newspaper reporter would appear, pencil in hand, seeking opinions on current events. In 1973 politics and petroleum kept the pollsters working for weeks, and just to prove how alert the students were, some even predicted \$.75 a gallon gasoline and a 50 mph speed limit in the near future. Both of which came and then some.

Traditionally the alumni-varsity soccer game was held on the day after Christmas. Recent graduates were home on vacation, and spectators and players alike enjoyed the gathering. In any repeated event, however, a day comes for decisions, and it can become a big deal. Questions would arise on who could play, when to play, who would organize, and even which sport.

That fall the administration announced that the alumni association would have to organize its own game, something the Heinrichs and later the alumni secretary had done. The first was a rather unexciting basketball game after Christmas 1973. But spirits rallied, and within a few years a solution came with the creation of a new role to be known as the director of development who would head publicity, fund-raising, *and* alumni activities among many other functions.

After Christmas '73, the accreditation committee came, peered, praised, and departed. The headmaster smiled and heaved a sigh of relief. And suddenly it was spring.

Springtime at St. Johns often appears to mean time to open the door and spring out into the wide, wide world. The evaluation committee had recommended that the students get more involved in the community, and in the next few years almost anyone who could gather two or three together with a driver and a destination could get a permission slip.

Two students, one from the Upper Division and the other from the Middle, were already out in the public eye. Senior Howard Gayle was commuting to the University of Florida to take a math course, while eighth grader Don Christoffers, one dark night, managed to photograph a picture of the comet Kohoutek, a feat which both *Aviation Weekly* and *The Florida Times Union* had claimed was nearly impossible.

Other outings came in the form of competition in various extracurricular and academic organizations with alphabet soup titles like FSPA, JCL, NFL, and Le CCF. They brought home awards to decorate bulletin boards and college applications and at the same time spread the good word of the good school.



En route

But trips were not confined to the older students and competitions. Thirty-eight fifth and sixth graders stormed Williamsburg and Jamestown that spring, while 18 oceanography, biology, and chemistry students explored the Florida Keys, all under the watchful eyes of teachers and in the worthy name of education.

Some field trips involved both young and old. At Mrs. Homan's suggestion a happy journey to the zoo was planned for grades one and 12 — together. This was a NEW experience. Seniors had always felt themselves 11 years removed from the little people, but a day out is a day out, and they consented. Beth Nalle's account of the original zooing tells it all:

Won't you walk a little faster said a senior to his charge.
 There's a tiger right behind us and he's looming very large.
 See how eagerly the darlings from the first grade now advance.
 They are going with the seniors for a trip that will entrance.
 Can I, will you, gimme, gotch ya', are we almost there?
 Do I hafta', I don't wanna', Hey, quit pulling on my hair!
 You really have no notion how delightful was the scene.
 Little kids were tossing spiders, senior girls were turning green...

Meanwhile Chris Fulton noted in *The Saints' Scroll* that there were others around the countryside also making very fast trips — it was the year of the stalker! It was also the year that Hank Aaron broke his home run record by hitting his 715th on April 8, 1974.

Back home, the year wound up with a Headmaster's Day to remember: a Spanish fiesta with a market, a Mexican hat dance, a bull fight, and a cafe directed by a "Bruja" with a pinata.

On June 4, 1974, 16 seniors were graduated at the Garden Club, the smallest class in 11 years. Some wondered if the Upper Division would survive, or if the school would ultimately become just an elementary school or perhaps cut back to junior high like Southside Country Day. How wrong they were.

13. We Can Hear You, Dr. Homan, 1974-75

Chapter XIII

We Can Hear You, Dr. Homan 1974-75

Bert Homan really wanted St. Johns to open a kindergarten in 1974, and he wanted his wife to run it. But St. Johns was not ready for a preschool. Instead, Betty Homan opened her own school in 1975, and her husband joined her there the next year.



Dr. Homan with quiz team

St. Johns enjoyed unprecedented growth after Bert Homan took over at Christmas 1971, and it continued to expand all during his years as head™ master. Meanwhile the headmaster himself went back to school weekends and summers and persevered until he had completed a Ph.D. in education at Nova University in May 1975.

A major expansion to the school plant was the completion of the Lower Division wing. In 1974 the first and second grades moved down the hall and around the corner into four big, beautiful new rooms. Here brightly colored desks and added space would inspire creative learning and play. And at the end of the day the children could line up to board the buses just outside the new entrance to their own wing.

The room where the first grade had originally been became a new teachers' lounge. By comparison with the old lounge — a tiny space full of secondhand wicker chairs — this was real luxury, with new furniture and more room to work and socialize. Meanwhile, the seniors inherited the "leftovers" for their room. They, too, could work and socialize in style.

In the new Lower Division library the Little Saints would have their own bookshelves with chairs and tables just their size. They also had a sliding glass door which would let them listen to stories while the older students worked in the main library.

The new librarian, Denise Dennison, was also up to date. She called herself a "media specialist," and she had a "media storage room" where she could keep the audio-visual equipment which had recently been added to the school.

Three well-qualified new teachers that year would help see Dr. Homan through his time as headmaster. Two had already proved their worth as substitutes the year before: Carol Hart and Cynthia Landry. In the Lower Division, Jim Edwards, a young man just finishing graduate studies in Gainesville, would teach fifth grade. Little did anyone realize how long and strong a stay these three would have at St. Johns.

The sports program looked good, too. Cliff Powers' specialty in baseball brought renewed interest to spring sports. The administration agreed when Powers suggested a new baseball field, and this year everyone could take pride in the Spartans' diamond with Carolina clay base paths and an adjoining dugout.

The girls had their own diamond that year, too, for their varsity Softball games. And for the first time a varsity girls' basketball team, coached by Julie Olson, was added to the Spartanettes' athletic program.

The school now had nearly a dozen teams between varsity and JV — too many for a thrifty administration to treat to a formal athletic banquet. When it came time for awards, a group of girls decided to put on a feast at the school. Spartans were good at coping as well as clapping.

While the varsity victories always make headlines, the younger teams (JVs, seventh and eighth grades, even fifth and sixth grades) often fail to get the applause. Statistics are not always correct or even recorded. Occasionally, the school paper has to give space to an unexpected item such as death or disaster, and the "sensational" victory by a lesser team over another lesser team goes unnoticed. Then, all that truly matters is the proverbial "how you played the game."

Some of the students were playing another kind of game, one called forensics. As a teacher, Dr. Homan had encouraged his students to participate in interscholastic debate and oral interpretation. At his suggestion a Debate Club was formed in 1973. By the fall of 1974 four members were winning state recognition with a reading from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Senior Jimmy Townsend was earning a reputation as an extemporaneous speaker while other students were reading and debating for prizes.

A new speech class reflected other verbal interests. Under the direction of Marge Fulton, the class wrote and performed skits which delighted the whole school. Everyone wanted to take speech after watching "The Human Machine" and the antics of Ravenel Ball as the missing Mrs. Van Wagenen.

It was a year to try new roles, especially among the seniors. Cathleen Weber was earning academic credit as a student intern at the Jacksonville Children's Museum; Tyla Wells was writing for local publications under the pen name "Renaissance"; and Reed Sourbeer began appearing on campus and at speaking competitions dressed as a gentleman scholar and spouting wry phrases of wit and wisdom.

The 22nd Headmaster's Day was another day of innovations with a horse show, an aerobic dance group, and even a kite flying contest. (Rod Fisher swears that the sun always shines on Headmaster's Day — a phenomenon which the founders might also attribute to divine intervention, and for which the outdoor participants and onlooking parents are regularly grateful.)

The parents and the alumni were two groups which Dr. Homan always felt could develop into strong arms of support for the school. He encouraged both by inviting them to the school as participants in various events. The Parent-Teacher League would not come into its own until later, but Dr. Homan established a solid relationship with the alumni. In their honor he decided the school should hold a cocktail party during Homecoming weekend, a special welcome home apart from the team-and-queen celebration. The response was good.

When the news broke that the Homans would leave St. Johns, a great deal of attention was paid to the academic achievements which they both had made while still teaching and to the faithful service they had given the school. Friends and students saw this departure as an ambitious academic step, and they wished the couple a bon voyage.

In 1975 St. Johns would also say goodbye to Marge Fulton and Carol Van Wagenen, a pair of teachers who had brightened and enlightened all of St. Johns for many years.

The class of '75 had the singular honor of having the founding headmaster, Edwin P. Heinrich, deliver the commencement address. In a changing world he could offer them as much stability in outlook on life as they might ever see — a unique person addressing a class which liked to claim uniqueness as its tradition.



Marge Fulton



Carol Van Wagenen

14. Transitions, 1975-76

Chapter XIV

Transitions 1975-76

A year of transition began in September 1975. At the end of the school year, Dr. Homan would leave. The board formed a search committee, headed by John Abbott, and drew up a set of qualifications for the man they hoped to find. They were looking for a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian. There was no suggestion that a woman might be considered, nor is there any record that one applied.

To insure continuity in the transition, the long range planning committee wrote a five-year plan of goals for St. Johns. The school was to continue its college preparatory curriculum with high standards of entry and readmission. It was to maintain a judicious student-teacher ratio, to retain a closeness between Upper and Lower Divisions, and to reemphasize religion. The enrollment was to expand to no more than 500, which would mean two sections at each grade level with approximately 21 students per class. The next building on campus would be a learning center, which would contain a new library, reception hall, and a music facility. Finally, a fund-raising campaign was to be conducted "in a discreet manner" and "keeping a low profile."

Among the key people to see the school through its new leadership were Rod Fisher, director of operations, and Theresa Burdeshaw, who now held the position of comptroller. In addition there were two competent secretaries, Jeannette Savilonis and, new that year, Dot Wilson, who could handle messages, visitors, lunch money, the copy machine, and the absentee list — all with a smile and a good word. These people made up a strong team which any departing headmaster would regret leaving and which any new headmaster would feel fortunate to inherit. A new administrative position was also created that year as part of the transition: Owen Hoover came to St. Johns as director of instruction.

As always, a strong faculty would supply St. Johns with its greatest stability. Only two new teachers joined the staff in 1975, Mary Virginia Jones in the French department and Sandra Pocklington in the second grade. Like many others, they would make teaching at St. Johns a permanent profession.



Mary Virginia Fisher

School opened with 420 students, the same enrollment as the previous year, divided into three sections of ninth grade, one of eleventh, and two of every other grade. Over the summer, 28 St. Johns Latin students had won a second place at the National Latin Forum in Muncie, Indiana. Six students had been elected to Who's Who of American High School Students. And three prospective headmasters had been interviewed by the selection committee.

Keeping in step with the rest of the country as America celebrated its 200th birthday, *The Saints Scroll* added "Bicentennial Minutes" as a regular feature, and staff writers stayed busy most of the year with their history books. The *Chalice* continued the patriotic theme and added a touch of equal rights, as well. "Miss Chalice" became "Mr. and Mrs. Chalice," dressed as historical characters, and Tia Apperson and Drew Barry, disguised as George and Martha Washington, won the vote. When the yearbook came out in the spring, the *Chalice* staff dedicated its bicentennial issue to Dr. Human as headmaster, history teacher, and a man of patriotism.



Bicentennial group

One of the biggest events of the fall for the past three years had been Homecoming. But there was a problem: the crowning of a queen at half time meant the awkward pairing of sweaty, soccer-playing escorts with the spiffy, dressed-up girls of the court. As a solution the Student Council voted to hold the 1975 crowning ceremony in the evening at a homecoming dance. And, because the students felt that the gym was too large for the hundred or so who would attend, they raised the price of tickets and rented the Wilmington Room of the Seaboard Coastline building.

That night and at other school dances the music was provided by the Perennial Tears Band (often miscalled by chaperones the Parental Tears) which included three St. Johns students. One of the members, Walter Parks, after graduating from St. Johns, organized his own band which is still performing in the Jacksonville area under the name of "The Wing Tips." Just another example of the fact that St. Johns is a good place to start.

Finding the right opponent for the Homecoming game also took a few years. At first the Spartans played one of the teams in their soccer league. Then for a while they played a group of graduates, making the alumni gathering and Homecoming one tradition. When some complained that matching the "Old Masters" against the "Young Whippersnappers" made a brutal battle, the school divided the two traditions; varsity Homecoming game in the fall, alumni at Christmas.

The idea of a spirit week had become a tradition in the early days to spur on interest in the most important game of the season. On "Blue and White Day" the cheerleaders gave a prize at flag raising for wearing school colors. Dr. Homan once came very close to winning, but he was out-clothed by Jimmy Lyerly who had managed to crawl inside seven blue and white sweaters.

Mornings at St. Johns did not always begin with such merriment. One chapel program that fall featured a sobering group of visitors: three murderers and an armed robber. As part of an awareness program called "Operation Teenager," specially screened prisoners were chosen to tell their stories to area schools. Students found it a fearful but enlightening

experience to hear a fellow human being say, "I murdered my wife in a fit of rage." The men concluded their presentations by answering student questions. Learning comes in various roles.

St. Johns students were more accustomed to being recognized for achievement. One especially successful tradition began when the P.E. department decided to commend boys and girls with "hustle," a quality, according to Coach Nichols, as important as skill or talent. When *The Saints' Scroll* began to feature the "Hustlers of the Month," it explained that the honor was given not to top athletes, but rather to the students who gave their best every day. From time to time the paper would repeat the explanation of a Spartan "hustler" to keep newcomers from misconstruing the colorful title.

In any school year traditions continue with variations on the theme marked by the passing of time. Fall means Senior Presentation, followed by the Christmas program. Both events require special dress. The school-to-home letter of November 1975 contained the following notice: "Coats and ties for boys, church dresses for girls. NO PANTSUITS-NO SLACKS FOR GIRLS - NO TENNIS SHOES."

Suddenly, it was January, and the search committee announced it had unanimously chosen Stephen F. Russey as headmaster. The selection committee had begun its search at a formal meeting on August 12, 1975, and had met more than 20 times in the six months that followed to consider over 70 candidates.

Mr. Russey would begin his duties officially on July 1, 1976. His educational background included graduation with honors from Andover, a B.A. in English from Bowdoin College, and an M.A. in English from the University of Rhode Island. He began his teaching career in 1963 teaching English at Pawling School, Pawling, N.Y. In 1967 he took a position at Rocky Hill School, East Greenwich, Rhode Island, where he became chairman of the English department, and later director of studies, college placement officer, and assistant headmaster. Mr. Russey and his wife, Claudia, had one son, David, aged 3 1/2, and were expecting a baby in May of 1976. It was going to be a big year for the Russeys in many ways and for the school.



Steve Russey and David

Students and faculty had an opportunity to begin getting to know the Russeys the last week in March, when they visited the campus. Mr. Russey also met with the board to begin plans for the 1976-77 year and addressed the patrons. What the future would hold must have been in the minds of many as they encountered the newcomers, a bright young couple from the North getting their first taste of Southern living on a hot, wet spring afternoon.

The future would reveal not only a successful headmaster but an accomplished headmaster's wife in this new couple. Claudia Russey knew from the start it was a good move because "there were Southern gentlemen on the board like Bill Courtney who reminded her of her father." The students and faculty would find it a good move, too, when Mrs. Russey became a strong member of the French department and began guiding Southern voices in the Gallic tradition.

Now that the future was settled, it was time to get back to the present. Student Council elections were coming up — this year in a campaign with a difference in strategy and results. Tenth grader Cliff Cole decided to solicit votes by telephone and later reported that he had talked to almost half the Upper Division. He won a clear victory over three 11th grade candidates to clinch the presidency for 1976-77. Cliff would be the first junior to head the student government, and his administration would be the first without any seniors. The seniors were somewhat shocked, but they could not help admiring Cliff's initiative.

The year ended, like most, with a flurry of ball games and field trips — including a spectacular outing to Disney World called "Grad Night." The 26 St. Johns seniors joined 18,000 others from around the state for a full night of sight-seeing and chaperone wearying.

Then it was time for graduation. Along with the departing seniors and the retiring headmaster, Betty Osborne would be leaving St. Johns after 16 years. The school had been enriched by her long career in the Lower Division and would miss her.

Looking back on his years at St. Johns, Bert Homan could see what a community the school had become and how much change had become a part of its life. Holding it all together had been a full time job. In a farewell tribute to its third headmaster, the board expressed appreciation for his untiring efforts and wished him well in his new undertaking:

"Dr. Homan, ECCE QUAM BONUM !"

15. Fire, 1976-77

Chapter XV

Fire 1976-77

Language plays funny tricks. The first issue of *The Saints' Scroll* in September 1976 carried the following headline: "New HM Sparks SJ's 23rd." Actually it was the 24th year — the editors had miscalculated. The sparks, however, turned out to be real. And the recovery sparked by the "New HM" turned out to be even more important than the sparks or the fire.

The first week of school in an interview, the "New HM" defined what he hoped to find in a student: commitment. Steve Russey planned to give privileges, but he expected responsibilities. Student homework, he noted, was good career preparation since good professionals, like good students, bring work home regularly to prepare for the next day.

Homework was a familiar responsibility at St. Johns, but most of the students — particularly seniors — had a new privilege in mind that fall. They wanted "open campus," the right to come and go as they pleased throughout the school day. This was not something they would get right away, but almost immediately, and quite unexpectedly, the whole school got a day off.

On Thursday, October 14, about 7:00 P.M., one of the school's neighbors saw flames and smoke coming from St. Johns and called the Orange Park Fire Department. Faulty wiring had started the blaze which the firemen managed to quell in about two hours, but it was weeks before the classrooms could be used. Within the hour, members of the board notified the faculty and asked them to come the next morning in work clothes: they would save what they could and throw out the rest. Students learned from radio, television and "word-of-mouth." Years later most of St. Johns could still remember where they were when they heard the news and who told them. What followed is a beautiful story of leadership, devotion, and determination.

The fire began in room 16 and spread through the air return ducts as far as room 20 on the east wing and into the offices and the girls' restroom on that side of the main building. It left in its wake a mess of charred books, desks, and equipment. In the rooms most badly burned, everything was lost, and a thick sludge of water and debris covered the floors. In other rooms and especially in the library, the odor from smoldering insulation lingered. (Several thousand good books can absorb a lot of smoke.)

By the time the faculty assembled Friday morning, Mr. Russey and the administration had formed a plan for classes to resume on Monday, by using the labs, the gym, the typing room, and a corner of the library. Soon other help arrived. Trustees, alumni, friends, parents, students, and even neighbors began showing up to lend a hand. Some dragged desks, chairs, and file cabinets out on the grass and set up scrubbing operations. Others took inventory. The library books had to be catalogued and moved to the gym for storage until the space could be painted and refurbished. Most of the books in the classrooms had to be thrown away because of the smell. At noon one of the mothers, Carolyn Smith, and a group of girls served lunch in the chapel for the cleanup crew.



Clean up crew



Inventory

The work continued all weekend. The soccer team came late Saturday afternoon after a hard-fought victory to apply their muscles to book-moving. Some parents took on extra tasks in the office. Everywhere there were people pitching in. It would be impossible to name them all. You discover many friends in time of need. You also discover how much you love an institution when it has been threatened.

The aftermath of a fire can be ugly. Beyond the pain of loss, destruction, and waste, there remains the burden of cleaning and the expense of replacement. The unsightly appearance of wet ashes, twisted wire, and broken wood can look very final. By the time St. Johns opened on Monday, however, workers had cleaned and safely boarded up the worst of it. Students and faculty could assemble on the concourse, and it was school as usual.

What brought success out of potential disaster was skillful handling. Mr. Russey may have felt disheartened in his first year as headmaster to discover nearly half the school burned down, but he never showed it. He urged the faculty to carry on as usual, and they set the pace for the students. It sounds easier than it was, but in the end it worked.

Construction was underway almost immediately. Since St. Johns had been building ever since its beginning, the appearance of workmen and the sounds of hammer and saw were neither new nor distracting. Every bang and buzz brought reassurance. One of the great sustaining factors in the life of a school, and particularly in troubled times, is the recurrence of rituals. Only two weeks after the fire, the Lower Division parade of ghosties and ghoulies for Halloween proved that the old Spartan spirits were back. Soon afterwards came Homecoming and a dance at which Mr. Fisher and Mr. Russey won the first two prizes — in what some people called a "fixed raffle." In November at Senior Presentation, the class of '77 was told that they must choose between being "settlers" and "pioneers," and they were glad they had six months longer to contemplate. For Christmas, *The Saints' Scroll* gave the Lower Division a full page for their letters to Santa, and then, as usual, everyone went home for a two weeks' vacation.

Meanwhile politics and athletics kept student interest heated up as the winter cold approached. On the national scene Jimmy Carter was busy beating Gerald Ford. At home the athletic department and the soccer team were trying to adjust to a new schedule. The team still wanted to play in the winter league. Coach argued, the team grumbled, the alums wrote letters, and soccer stayed right where it was. A future with championship basketball AND championship soccer was lurking in the wings, and the administration wanted both.

After all, there had been a time when girls' athletics were low key, but in 1976 the girls' volleyball team made history. They were runners-up for their district and placed the first female trophy in the middle of a previously all male collection in the St. Johns trophy case.

With the new year came a new position in the administration. After seven years on the board and three as its president, John Abbott became St. Johns' first director of development. His initial duty was to start a fund raising-campaign with a letter to patrons, alumni, trustees, and friends of the school. St. Johns had always operated on a balanced budget based on tuition income. Over the years the school had received donations and gifts which had helped the school grow, but the fire had changed the picture.

The damage could have been much more extensive. The school had good insurance, but even the best policy will not cover everything. They would need funds beyond insurance to replace all they had lost. If they could raise extra money, they could rebuild and even expand a little.

Unfortunately, the campaign only brought in about half as much as they needed, but it was a good beginning, and the school knew about encouraging starts. Experience had proved that patience and perseverance worked.

From the founding of the school no one person had been more patient, more persevering, and more financially benevolent than Connor Brown. He served on the board and had been president, his three daughters had graduated from St. Johns, and he had two grandchildren in the student body. Again and again the Browns had made generous donations to the school. Then November 21, 1976, Connor Brown died. On Sunday, February 13, 1977, the school dedicated a garden at the north end of the quadrangle to his memory. Following the ceremonies the visitors were invited to view the classrooms and offices which had been rebuilt after the fire. Thus St. Johns commemorated on the same day the man who had helped to build the school and its rebuilding.

St. Johns was home again. The winter of their discontent was over. "Sweet adversity," commented Edith Cowles.

Almost as soon as the school was back to normal, spring fever hit. This year it produced one of the most bizarre events in the annals of St. Johns: the tonsuring of Douglas McQuaid. Doug was a junior who usually wore his hair as long as school rules permitted — and often longer. On a dare he agreed to let Larry Weber, a senior, shave his head if Larry could collect as much as \$50 from fellow students. Funds raised, deed done. It took place one day after school in a neighboring back yard with about 30 doubtful students looking on. Doug proved a super sport, and in all good time his hair grew out. For a while, however, it looked as if St. Johns had one POW on campus.



Doug McQuaid... "after"

St. Johns was good at dressing up, and almost everyone participated in the *Scroll's* April Fools' Day contest. (In fact, that year it was such a foolish festival that it took place on March 1.)

Spring is also election time at St. Johns. Cliff Cole again made history in 1977, this time as the first "write-in" to defeat an announced candidate and the first student to serve a second term as president.

It became a spring of firsts. The math department announced the school was shopping for a computer. Everyone except a few math whizzes thought computers were a lot of complicated, fancy equipment. Who would ever have guessed that in 10 years there would be an electronic Apple for every teacher and class — even the first grade.

There were disappointments, too. Mr. Abbott had been corresponding with the headmaster of Malvern College in England. He had hoped to get a British soccer team to come for an exchange visit with St. Johns. Malvern could not raise funds for the trip, but they promised to tell other schools in their area about St. Johns' idea. Most people thought international soccer trips were about as probable and practical as computers. But John Abbott was not the first at St. Johns to pioneer and eventually to show the skeptics.



First computer

Meanwhile, it was time for Headmaster's Day again. It begins one day, usually just after Christmas. Teachers start racking their brains for a project (or shuddering at the thought of it), and a student writes an editorial asking why St. Johns has to come to school on Sunday. Whether it is a long term work or a last minute effort, something worthwhile always emerges from the event. This year several history students converted the old brick incinerator into a medieval castle, and the language clubs got together with a European cafe that offered everything from burritos to bonbons to sell the hungry guests.

Perhaps the school got along so well in the cleanup and reconstruction after the fire because it had almost 25 years experience preparing for and repairing after Headmaster's Day. St. Johns is full of people who know how to put up, take down, and keep up — all at the same time. And they all know that after Headmaster's Day, there is only a month to go. In June, the members of the class of '77 found themselves at the Garden Club ready to be told noble things and given their diplomas. This was the second time in three years that St. Johns had graduated only 16 seniors. Changes in administration, increased competition, shifts in population, and other causes had made it hard for the school to hold its upperclassmen. But the fire and the recovery marked a turning point. Every class thereafter would be larger.

16. New Directions, 1977-79

Chapter XVI

New Directions 1977-78

The fire at St Johns could have proven disastrous for the school and the new headmaster. Instead, it had a positive effect on everyone. It served as a break with the past and opened the way for a new leadership. It also bonded the school family. Now, as they began the 25th year of operation, they were ready to move out together in new directions.

New faculty members would bring new ideas on the courts as well as in the classrooms. Many of the students and their parents had known Joyce Tabor as a tennis pro in Orange Park. They would welcome her now as a coach at St. Johns. Even more would remember Bill Meldrum '72 — one of the family of five Meldrums, all St. Johns graduates — who was returning to teach math and physics and to coach JV soccer. In fifth grade came Sara Harvey who, like many before her, would remain on faculty for over a decade as part of the continuing strength of the school.



Sara Harvey and Weems Walkins



Uniforms

A new dress code suggested by Mr. Russey would also modify things around school that fall. In the early days the school had an optional uniform for girls and what Dr. Heinrich called "the rule of good taste" for everyone. During the sixties miniskirts and hippie hairdos had become *almost* uniform. This year's new rule was called "Monday dress." When the word went out for "Monday dress" in Upper Division, it meant shirts and ties for boys and dresses for girls, as students had always worn for Christmas programs. In the Lower Division it meant an all new uniform of navy blue and white. The rule would apply the first day of every week and on special occasions. A new tradition had begun, and it was good. Students liked the chance to dress up for each other, and the Lower Division got something all its own.

Up on the North Field another tradition was now 19 years old — soccer. To remind old-timers of the past and to impress the uninformed, Mr. Abbott got together a little soccer trivia which the school paper published. He began by citing the Spartan's first year record of one win and two losses. He also noted several winning streaks and concluded with the fact that the teams had scored an illustrious total of 863 points and given up 255. Winning at soccer was old hat, and Spartans liked hats.

Still hanging in there in 1977, about halfway to the North Field, was another good old traditional spot, this one for not so athletic purposes — the Senior Shack. Most people knew that seniors, and sometimes juniors, went there to smoke. The 1958 issue of *The Saints' Scroll* noted among things seen around campus, "smoke curling up from the Senior Shack at noontime." The Student Handbook issued in the fall of 1963 stated: "juniors and seniors are permitted to smoke in the Shack (the only place)." Then in December, 1963 Dr. Heinrich happened to be in downtown Jacksonville when the old Roosevelt Hotel burned down. After he realized how many people had died of smoke inhalation, he quit smoking and instructed his students to do the same. Shortly thereafter all America became cancer conscious, and all smoking habits changed. Nevertheless students continued to sneak a puff, and the faculty generally ignored it. Mr. Russey, however, felt that it was time to face the principle involved. If the current handbook said "no smoking," the school should enforce the rule. Protest followed, but the rule remained.

To recognize the seniors' status and maturity, Mr. Russey offered them the "open campus" privilege they had asked for the year before. This time some parents protested, but that rule remained, too. Mr. Russey was proving fair but firm. He also gave the seniors an extension to their territory at the end of the Upper Division concourse. They could decorate their senior room as they pleased (or let it deteriorate to a degree); they could set the world on fire with their dreams, gripes, or music — but they could not smoke.

Mr. Russey also introduced an all new advisor/advisee system at St. Johns in 1977. Every student was to have one teacher to see at regular intervals as a personal and academic counselor. Like other innovations, the advisor system aroused criticism. Some called it "a forced rap session;" busy teachers might have preferred the time for planning and grading, but they all knew it was a concrete step towards guidance and communication — two valuable commodities.

Saturday school, both academic and disciplinary, proved another effective addition to help students keep on the right track. Parents never liked to have their Saturdays interrupted by extra trips to school, and after one or two trips they

usually decided to prevent the recurrence. Parent cooperation would come to play an increasingly important part as school grew.

To help young people realize their fullest potential the school always tried to support the arts. Before the end of the first year in 1954, Dr. Heinrich invited local artists to show their work in the school building. Over the years St. Johns had bought or been given important paintings by local and national artists. Musicians and dramatists were often invited to perform for the students and faculty. In the fall of 1977, pianist Carol Rosenberger gave a benefit concert for the school at the Civic Auditorium. Her return visit created a special feeling between the students and the artist: she was a beautiful and talented woman, and she was their friend.

Again in December the school had a visit from an acknowledged artist, another beautiful and talented woman. Susan Bartles, a published poet and faculty member from Winthrop College, came to St. Johns to read to the students and to talk with them about poetry — hers and theirs. She was the first poet some students had ever met. "My entire impression of poetry changed instantly when I met her," wrote Nick Weber. "She was not a little old lady, but a charming and beautiful young woman with a brilliant mind to match."

Literary endeavors at St. Johns could be humorous, too. They did not always involve beauty, as the crazy annual contest to sell yearbooks reminded everyone. In 1977 the "Miss Chalice" contest was expanded to include three misses: one for grades 1-3, another for 4-6, and a third for 7-12. More and more the Little Saints were becoming part of the spectacle, not just spectators.

The rising prominence of the Lower Division marked a major change in school life. A look at the records of the fifties and sixties clearly shows a focus on older students. They were the leaders, the winners of the more important awards, the owners of the louder voices. The change began when the sixth graders gained a place on the Student Council. Then as the school grew in numbers, the Lower Division took on more responsibilities, particularly in musical and dramatic productions. Staging and scheduling a Christmas program with 400 students was different from directing a live Nativity scene with 35. As a result the Lower Division began to take over many of the performances, and their music classes could serve as rehearsal time. Their voices really mattered.

Other horizons were also expanding. In November 1977 the Spanish classes set out for a week in Mexico. The Heinrichs had taken students to Europe several summers, and Spartans had toured and field-tripped to everything from movies to monuments. This was the first time, however, that a group had left the country during the school year. In addition to the fun of exploring a new culture — and of missing regular classes — there was the added appeal of taking a non-summer vacation.

As exciting as trips and new ideas might be, no one at St. Johns ever forgets basics for long, beginning with reading. There are courses, teachers, and texts just for that purpose. Then every so often the Readak man comes, a specialist hired by the school to offer extra help in skill mastery. While students learn power reading, teachers wrestle with scheduling — just ask Mr. Fisher.

One trip in 1977 proved less than exciting when the soccer team set out for Charleston where they lost two games and learned a hard lesson. On overnight athletic trips, the tendency for students to sneak beer into the motel rooms had become increasingly frequent. The problem came to a head when several soccer players, cheerleaders, and team supporters admitted to Coach Nichols that they had been drinking on the trip to Charleston. As a result Mr. Russey suspended them from school for two days and dismissed them from the team for the season. No one was very happy, but everyone — students, their embarrassed parents, and Coach — had to admit the justice of the penalty.

Making an open case of the episode brought about several results. While it could not insure that students would never drink again on trips, it would discourage the practice. The positive support of the administration would also encourage faculty and chaperones in their authority on trips. The problem reflected the national trend, too, as both CBS and ABC had featured specials on teen-age drinking just weeks before.

To keep up with the times the "Scroll Poll" ran its own survey and discovered the soccer group was not alone in experience. Having only eight first-string players left on the team, varsity soccer ended the season with a dreary 3-9 score. "Crime and punishment," murmured junior Reed Grimm.

For the first time St. Johns began to think seriously about success in other areas of sport. Basketball season for boys and girls was ready to begin with more hopeful prospects, and the art teacher Rondo Pfoutz — he claimed his name was made up of all leftover letters — started a track team with 11 boys and a GIRL: Lynn Bagwell.



Cross country team

In November, as usual, Senior Presentation took place. One of the advantages of this time-honored ceremony was that the student body would learn the real names of people it had previously only known as "Dreenie," "Mimi," "Jody," and "Korky." This particular service was held in a Presbyterian church with a Baptist minister as speaker. Not only was it a statement of the school's interdenominational faith, it also provided a balcony for wiggly viewers.

Meanwhile, Homecoming was still having growing pains and in 1977 almost met its demise. It was touch and go until the Girls' Club and the alumni agreed to join the Student Council and help foot the bill. That evening in the gym, a dance for alumni and students took place, and Mimi Ginter, whose name turned out to be Myrna Maria, was crowned queen. Music was provided by the group "Sybyl" among whom was St. Johns own Doug McQuaid, whose hair had since lengthened considerably.

The three weeks between Thanksgiving holidays and Christmas vacation is exciting and busy. Everyone likes hearing the sounds of joyful music coming from Christmas program rehearsals. This year for the first time the program took place in the gym. As a result there were no long bus rides to the church, no standing outside to line up, and no mad shuffle of coats, books, and gifts afterwards. Over 1100 people attended the program. St. Johns was acquiring a very large family, and, like all families, they liked celebrating Christmas at home.

Two days after Christmas on December 27, 1977, Edwin Paul Heinrich died. He was survived by his wife, Dorothea, his son, Edwin, Jr., his daughter, Sue, five grandchildren, and countless friends and admirers. He had known for some time that he had a terminal, inoperable cancer. He approached death as he had life — firm in the conviction that "all things work together for good for those who love the Lord." Recalling his last months, Sue Heinrich Bingaman wrote, "He maintained his sense of humor and reached out to minister to others in need. He took care of all financial and funeral arrangements, careful to leave his house in order. He found victory in the slightest overcoming of pain and gloried in [what he called] reading his own obituaries as people learned of his illness and wrote to him."

Several years before Dr. Heinrich died, the Heinrichs had sold their big house on Plainfield Avenue and moved into a smaller, more modern one off Doctors Lake Drive. Students and faculty often dropped in to visit after school to share news with their old friends. Among the Heinrichs' many visitors was Steve Russey who felt that his friendship with the founding headmaster provided him with wisdom and courage. "I would go to cheer him up," Mr. Russey says, "and even in his last days, he would cheer me. I always came away a better man for the visit."

The memorial service for Edwin P. Heinrich was a triumphant event just as he hoped it would be. Long before he died, he wrote specific instructions for the service as a statement of his faith. Trinity Lutheran Church in Jacksonville was filled; his friends sang "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past," and his daughter read Psalm 121. A great man had gone on to his God and not as a stranger.

Newspapers noted his accomplishments and paid tribute to him as a leader, an educator, and a scholar, but Sue's remembrance seems to capture his spirit best. "Two days later," she writes, "we buried Dad's ashes in a private interment service, and we knew that only those few remains were buried. His great strength and spirit lives on in each of us. And I knew then that he was right — it *was* a glorious experience! His was a good death, and he had well prepared himself and us for it. He gave us all the best of himself as he left us."

Dot Heinrich had prepared for the future, also. She had been Ed Heinrich's wife and partner since 1940. Together they had taught, traveled, worshipped, reared a family, founded a school, and retired. After their retirement she had continued to share his activities: at school, among their many friends, and in the community. Even before his death she

was working with the board to plan a suitable memorial for Dr. Heinrich. After he died, she continued her work with the school and community, and then gradually made a new life for herself. She took up new hobbies, earned a graduate degree at Jacksonville University, traveled to all parts of the world, and built a getaway cottage in the mountains of North Carolina. Still she made time to serve as a trustee emerita at St. Johns. Undoubtedly part of the greatness of Edwin Heinrich was due to the greatness of Dorothea Heinrich and to the strength they both brought to their relationship and drew from it.

The first issue of *The Saints Scroll* in the new year was dedicated to Dr. Heinrich with a centerfold picturing the past and present and a long article on the history of the school. The Heinrichs had lived to see the dream they shared 25 years old and thriving.

January 1978 began with the arrival of the first computer on campus. It was instantly so much in demand that another had to be bought. Within weeks a computer club was formed, and what many had dismissed as a popular toy became a tool of increasing value.

Updating was the topic of conversation among the juniors that January as the class began to negotiate with Josten's, the ring-maker. The original rings were designed in the fifties, and many of the juniors wanted a design for the seventies. Others held on faithfully to tradition. In the end it was decided they could have either style. Even the compromise decision was an update.

Later in the spring the juniors again surprised everyone by winning Student Council elections. The faculty and especially the seniors wondered about "such a young group," but the students had chosen their officers, and people — even young people — have a funny way of living up to high expectations.

Some students set their own goals. Vicki Jones had lived with cystic fibrosis for several years when she came to St. Johns as a fourth grader. From the beginning everyone liked her. She was thoughtful, industrious, and brave. In 1977 Vicki's older sister died of the same disease. That year Vicki transferred to Lee High School as a tenth grader, but she kept in touch with her old friends. By Christmas Vicki was spending time in the hospital regularly. Early in 1978 several of her St. Johns friends, led by Bob Dews, entered a WIVY contest and won a dance-a-thon to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. On May 12, 1978, Vicki's birthday, over 150 students turned out for the disco dance. Vicki died the next day.

Memories of strong people fill the history of St. Johns. Certainly everyone who has ever attended a St. Johns graduation remembers Dora Helen Skypek, for whom one of the most prestigious awards is given. It was appropriate that at graduation 1978, Dr. Skypek, who was by that time a professor at Emory University, should be the first woman and the first former teacher to make a St. Johns commencement address.

The next day the class of '78 was history, and the '79ers were ready and willing to take their places as Spartan seniors.

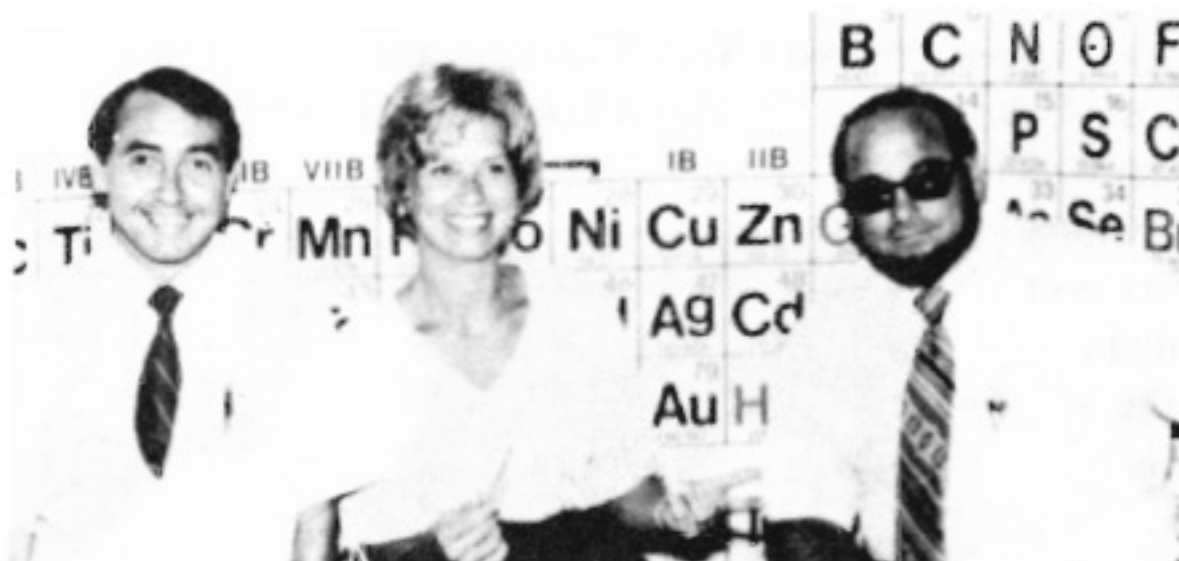


Dr. Skypek at commencement

17. International Interests, 1978-79

Chapter XVII International Interests 1978-79

"The British are coming!" The cry rang throughout the school. It had been a long time since anything had stirred excitement like this. The administration was immediately busy preparing an agenda for 26 soccer players and their chaperones from Chesterfield School in Derbyshire. Meanwhile the students were hoping to introduce the lads to local cultural meccas like the mall and Burger King. It was the first visit to America for all of the young Englishmen and a first encounter with the British for most of the Spartans — but not the last. In fact, international visitors and visits would become almost commonplace at St. Johns in the decade to come.



Rod Fisher, Carol Hart and Mike McMillan

The year would be well underway before the Spartans welcomed the famous Chester-fielders, but the first week back at school the students were excited to find an old friend come home. "Welcome back, Mr. Mac," was the byword. Mike McMillan had returned to St. Johns' science department after teaching for two years at Orange Park High School. Mr. "Mac" had been a strict-but-just disciplinarian respected by students and faculty. He was also a first rate teacher. His return made the school seem more complete.

In both divisions students also saw new teachers. Jim Schad took over junior-senior English while Carolyn Sellars directed little people-learning in the first grade. That year the school would share a music teacher with St. Marks, and seventh and eighth graders would learn math with a "down-under" accent from a New Zealander.



Mr. Russey and administrative council

Some of the students had a less-than-familiar accent, too. In the Upper Division were four boys born and educated outside the United States. They included a Jamaican, Michael Ottey, a Finn, Adel Hattab, and two Vietnamese brothers, Peter and Mark Franklin. The Franklins had been adopted and brought to America by a Catholic priest stationed with the Navy at NAS Jacksonville — affectionately known as the "unwed Father."

For all the foreign touches, St. Johns remained pure American when it came to fitness. Over the summer major remodeling took place in the gym. A lobby was constructed just inside the entrance with a big trophy case to show off Spartan athletic accomplishments. Adjacent to the lobby, restroom facilities were added and a large classroom for health and music classes. For years Lower Division music had taken place in the art room next door to the science lab while Upper Division students muttered about "looney tunes" under their breath as they took tests. Now the Upper Division could take tests in quiet, and the Little Saints could sing without censure.

Inside the gym proper, new fold-out bleachers would provide seating for up to 250 spectators. Above the lobby an upper floor was installed to house the new Universal weight machine bought at the suggestion of alumni at college, who recommended it as "the latest in fitness training."

P.E. was not the only department to add hi-tech equipment in the fall of 1978. The school could now boast its first video tape recorder. Although many conservative thinkers wondered how useful it would prove, like the computer it showed them.

On the Upper Division concourse many students and teachers smiled when 20 brand new lockers arrived. Some people remembered pre-locker days, and others could recall the big blue ones from NAS. Newcomers could hardly appreciate the luxury.

What the older students wanted more than places for their books was spaces for their cars — a commodity old-timers really would have considered luxurious. When the school was located in the heart of Orange Park, students were not allowed to drive. Now, almost all upperclassmen drove their own cars or whatever family vehicle they could finagle. Riding the bus after the tenth grade could mean a painful loss of status. By the end of the seventies the student parking lot was always full and usually overflowing. With only 100 students of driving age, they should fit into about 20 cars, but by the time you added a few siblings and neighbors in each, the number was closer to 40. Obviously, space had to be made since there was no street or public lot available. Within a year the administration announced plans first to patch the old area and then to pave a new one. Student requests once again surprised everyone by being reasonable and worthwhile.



Chesterfield team

On October 18, 1978, the Chesterfield soccer team finally arrived — a bevy of British beauty complete with ancestral Anglican accents. The lads visited classes, chatted nattily, and captured the hearts of half the St. Johns females. The first soccer game took place on an unusually warm afternoon, and the Chesterfielders succumbed to the combination of heat and Big Blue power. Once they had gotten used to the weather and had played several teams around the state, they came back to beat their hosts properly. The scores, however, made little difference; it was the encounter that mattered. Both schools benefited from the cultural exchange, as did local merchants. The visit was also good publicity for St. Johns and opened the way for a trip to England the next year.

Another great achievement of the year was the establishment of the Parent-Teacher League. Early in 1979 a 14 member steering committee was formed with Rosalie Snyder as the chairman. During its first year the committee organized room-mothers at each grade level and involved an additional 50 parents in their projects. They sponsored a play by the Performing Arts Repertory Theater, organized uniform purchasing, published a bimonthly newsletter, held a book fair, and introduced a trial hot lunch program.

When the school was small, every parent was a vital part of each happening. As the school grew, it was not always possible for all parents to share in the school life. The new parents did not know as much about the school, and the school did not know which parents might become involved. The Parent-Teacher League provided ways for parents to contribute to their children's education beyond tuition. Typical of St. Johns' institutions, the Parent-Teacher League began small and waxed indispensable.

Other institutions had outlived their usefulness. More than 30 years had passed since the school bought its first bus, the ornery secondhand "Gertrude." Over a period of years the school owned 14 buses, sometimes referred to as "Dr. Heinrich's G-string": Gigi, Gwen, Geraldine, Georgia, Gina, Ginger, Grace, Gretchen, Glory, Genevieve, Gladys, Gail, and Gertrudes I and II. Each bus which was added to St. Johns' fleet meant more students but hours of expensive maintenance. Most of the other independent schools were experiencing the same difficulty. When a professional transportation company opened in Jacksonville, St. Johns gladly abandoned the bus business. Times were changing.

For the seniors that year the times were not changing fast enough. One fine May morning they decided to take a "skip day" to relieve the pressure of the coming exams and graduation. They were duly discovered and sent sulking back to school where they received fair and just punishment but were still allowed to graduate. Years later they would boast of their sad day, but those who followed would recall and resist.

Headmaster's Day, however, remained the same. Along with the display of student work in May 1979 were two special events: the dedication of the gym to the memory of Connor Brown and the ground breaking for the Heinrich Memorial Library. When the school was first built, it had a library, and then it added a gym; hereafter, these facilities would be known as the Heinrich Library and the Brown Gym. The names of great men would remind students of their great contributions.



Connor Brown

Construction on the new library would begin in June and be completed by September. The original library was built in 1957 and enlarged in 1974 to hold 8,500 volumes. By moving the north wall of the administration building 20 feet into the quadrangle, the school could have a library more than twice the size of the original with shelf space for 20,000 books. The building would cost approximately \$100,000 and would be funded by the Heinrich Memorial Library Fund and the Annual Fund. The countless people whose lives Dr. Heinrich had touched responded to the call and made possible a fitting memorial for the founding headmaster. With Mr. Russey and president of the board Downing Nightingale, Jr., standing by, Mrs. Heinrich performed the honors by digging up the first spadeful of earth towards the new project.

When the funds began arriving for the Heinrich Library, a donation was sent in by Dr. Marianne McEuen in memory of Tippy Tucker. Dr. McEuen was a member of the board, and Tippy was a large black labrador retriever who for many years unofficially attended St. Johns. The following letter accompanied the donation:

The faculty, students, and alumni will be saddened to learn of the death of Tippy Tucker who attended St. Johns faithfully and with great regularity for most of his 14 years. Tippy died November 16, 1978, having been arthritic and in poor health for several months.

The dog of a former board president, Holmes Tucker and his wife Pinkey, Tippy successfully navigated the traffic of Doctors Lake Drive on a daily basis for many years to join the activities of the school. He participated in many soccer games and was expert at nose dribbling, a feat not accomplished by other team members. After 12 years he was graduated and pictured appropriately in the yearbook with other members of the senior class ('75).

Enclosed is a donation for the Heinrich Library in Tippy's memory. It is particularly appropriate that the donation be for Dr. Heinrich's memorial since Tippy, in his early years of class attendance, book chewing, and sandwich snatching, probably caused Dr. Heinrich more consternation than all his other students put together.



Tippy and friends

Graduation 1979 was held as usual at the Garden Club, with the stage decorated with blue hydrangeas most of which came from St. Johns' own front campus. Among the familiar awards was a new one: the Edwin Paul Heinrich Award presented to senior Lee Wilson. The citation reads as follows:

Just as there is a spirit in any given era, so is there a spirit in any given man. The spirit of Edwin Paul Heinrich embodied a feeling for life that was true half a century ago, is still true today, and will be forever. The spirit is dedicated to personal integrity, community responsibility, the development of the individual self, and the spirit of excellence. It has in addition a touch of godliness, a talent for leadership, an ingenuity in accommodation, a rapport with one's fellow man, and a sense of humor. Such a man does not come often.

School does not shut down after graduation, contrary to what the seniors may think. After all the grades and records of the past year are completed, there remain those who have left undone certain aspects of winter school. Summer school and construction usually start at the same time. Again this year the YMCA held its summer camp at St. Johns. On the playground, in the chapel, and out by the Brown Gym groups of suntanned teenagers could be seen directing an army of little people in tee shirts.

The opening of the campus to use by other organizations has been part of Steve Russey's belief that the school owes a debt to the community. In this way, as in many others, he resembles Dr. Heinrich. Thus the Florida Striders and many other organizations hold their annual picnics on campus, the "Y" uses the gym for basketball practice and summer camp, and various churches have held sunrise services in the chapel at Easter.

The campus is never more beautiful than in summer, at ease yet still very active, the great oaks shading out the heat of the sun and faithfully providing a lush green background for learning and moving on.

18. A Legacy of Integrity, 1979-80

Chapter XVIII A Legacy of Integrity 1979-80

The senior class wills appear each year in the last issue of *The Saints' Scroll*. Traditionally, they are unedited documents of obscure wording. At the same time they are often honest statements of gratitude and good sense. To an outsider they are puzzling and even boring; they can be so cautiously worded that they make even friends feel like foreigners. They can also take up so much space in the paper that editors have to omit coverage of spring sports and Headmaster's Day.

Why does the school continue to print these lengthy legacies of smiles and secrets? The answer is simple: tradition. They also represent one of the school's parting gifts to the seniors, and they are witness to a belief in the maturity, free speech, and individuality of the students at St. Johns. To interpret these wordy wills one must wade carefully. Among the verbiage penned by the class of '80 was a postscript by Charlie Ellmaker, the retiring Student Council president, "A word of advice: when the traditions are gone, the school will be also."

Traditions begin, sustain, and end each year at St. Johns. New ones spring up, outgrown ones disappear, lasting ones carry on as variations on a theme. The opening of school proves the point: orientation for new teachers, preplanning for returning teachers, new student orientation, book and schedule acquisition, opening assemblies, and, in all good time, Open House for parents.

Change, too, has its place. Familiar faces show up in new positions, and new faces appear in old roles. In the fall of 1979 Jim Edwards moved from classroom teaching to head of the Lower Division and continued as registrar and director of testing. Cheryl Townsend came in to teach seventh and eighth graders both English and math. New curriculum included art appreciation, music appreciation, and an elective in journalism.

A dedication service for the Heinrich Library would have started the year well, but nothing in a building contract insures on-time completion. Thus, the unfinished structure was open for inspection with a promise of future usefulness. In time the workmen finished, students and books moved in, and the ceremony was saved for Alumni Day — a fitting occasion since Dr. Heinrich was better known to alumni than to students who had come along after his retirement.

The school was outgrowing and growing out in all directions. With a record enrollment of 469, there were 30 seniors, 10 more than the year before. The magic enrollment of 500 was in sight. The faculty had grown from three in 1953 to 43 in 1979. The plant was beginning to sprawl all over the center of the campus. At the suggestion of the FCIS, the rooms of grades 1-3 were expanded by moving the west walls several feet into the playground. Two new classrooms were constructed on the second floor of the gym. The school now had 28 classrooms each capable of holding 20 students, which would make possible a maximum enrollment of 560. Long range had suddenly become very short. This development would mean pride in accomplishment and growing pains.



Cum Laude Society



St. Johns at Chesterfield

Very little pain, however, came from planning the return visit to Chesterfield — except for those who did not get to go. With his typical energy, Mr. Abbott organized the raffle of a new Datsun 210 to raise money to help finance the trip for the soccer team. Theoretically, if every student sold 10 tickets at \$2.00 each, the project would raise \$10,000.00. It was not quite that successful, but the students went to work, and a prize was offered to the student who sold the most tickets. In the end sixth grader Virginia Hall won the prize; the mother of math teacher Carol Hart won the car; and late in March the Yanks went over there.

The athletic department changed in many ways that year. After 15 successful seasons, Coach Nichols turned over varsity soccer to one of his own proteges, Bill Meldrum '72. Under Nichols the Spartans had compiled a remarkable record: 161 games won, 34 lost, 4 tied; three times champions of the Tri-State Soccer League, twice winners of both the North Florida Conference and the Georgia-Florida Athletic Association Cup. When Coach Meldrum took over soccer, Coach Nichols stayed on as athletic director and varsity basketball and baseball coach.

The previous year Meldrum coached JV soccer in its most impressive season. The team worked hard for its new coach and finished first in the district and second in the state. Nick praised the team, saying they had more balance than in years past and that individualism was at a minimum. It had been a smooth transition.

Spartans were also doing well in other sports. Cross country had grown from a fledgling four to a team of 20 including four girls. Requests from students and the athletic department lead to the building of the school's first track — nothing fancy, but a good, regulation length expanse with a solid clay surface. A real first since no other school in the conference had one.

The tennis team was still fighting to make a name for itself. They played 13 scheduled matches and lost as many as they won. Most of the team was new to competitive tennis, and they had to learn it was different from the "back yard" tennis they had grown up with.

Basketball season became a family affair at St. Johns that year with Alan Kissell training the JV boys and his wife, Barbie, coaching the girls. It would be a while before the school could boast a power team like soccer every season, but the administration could foresee that they would need successful teams in many sports to meet the needs of the fitness-minded youth of the eighties.

In November the Drama Club presented a joint student-faculty production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* under the direction of librarian Helen Goldschmidt and senior Chris Wood. Although *The Saints' Scroll* stated that the approach was new, many old Saints would remember combination productions in the fifties and sixties. New or renewed, the concept was good and engendered respect and cooperation on both sides. In her senior will Chris left to Mrs. Goldschmidt "a broken leg for the fall."

Stars highlighted other traditions as well: spooks and spirits at the Halloween parade, the seniors at Presentation, and the senior girls at the Homecoming Dance, where one of the Timby twins was crowned — no one was ever sure which.

The last big event of 1979 was the formal dedication of the Edwin P. Heinrich Memorial Library held on December 22. "We gather to dedicate the enlarged and improved library facilities to the memory of Dr. Heinrich, the founding headmaster, and to the present honor of Dorothea who is with us here today," said William M. Courtney, Trustee Emeritus, in his dedication address. "We are grateful for the vision they possessed ... We owe gratitude to the Almighty that they had the necessary personal qualities of character to bring the vision alive in brick, wood, and spirit."

It was a day to recall the "strong and colorful" man whose personality is "indelibly impressed" upon the school. Two other participants in the ceremony were seniors Darrell Scales and Louise Weber, who could remember Dr. Heinrich as their special friend when they were first graders in 1968. A portrait of Dr. Heinrich and a plaque commemorating the occasion were placed in the library. More than 100 members of the St. Johns family came to share the ceremony, and many stayed to enjoy the traditional alumni soccer match which followed.

At St. Johns, Christmas with its blessings, including rest for the weary, is followed dependably by exams and Senior Week. And suddenly spring arrives with a mass exodus in the form of field trips related to every area of scholastic endeavour.

Most exciting and farthest afield was the trip to Chesterfield. Fifteen soccer players plus Mr. Abbott and Coach Kissell left on March 20 for a return engagement with the team which had spent 12 days as guests of St. Johns in 1978. They stayed in the homes of players, many of whom they already knew. They played five soccer games and attended two professional matches. Then they spent two days touring London, Stratford, York, and even a coal mine. They all returned safely although it was rumored that several left their hearts behind. In his will Danny Moffitt left Mike Pickett a large box of stationery to write to his English girlfriends.

Other springtime expeditions saw eighth graders mountain climbing at Tuxedo, N.C., and science classes snorkeling at Crystal River, while fifth graders again flew to Virginia to leave their mark on Williamsburg, Yorktown, and Jamestown.

Questing for honors and showing their skills, the publications and foreign language groups had been tripping for many years. As usual they came, saw, conquered, and returned trailing clouds of glory.

Closer to home, the American government classes were learning about local politics. Alumnus Jerry Johnson '72 as president of the Young Democrats of Clay County invited the juniors and seniors to help drive voters to the polls for the primary.

Others were interested in national and international affairs. Many were watching and writing about the campaign for President between Reagan and Carter. One St. Johns student interviewed an Armenian studying in Jacksonville about the Ayatollah Khomeini. Another wrote on the proposed U.S. boycott of the Olympics. Others expressed concern over the Cuban refugees pouring into Miami. Many students who often seem fun loving and carefree actually go through life with one eye on a bigger picture.



Mrs. Chappell and Scroll staff

Just as the seniors began to empty their lockers for the last time, a veteran teacher announced her retirement. After 21 years at St. Johns, Rabun Chappell was leaving to play Tennis (with a capital "T"), to read things beyond seventh and eighth grade book reports, and to right the wrongs of the world which she had been too busy to tackle. No one could seriously think about English at St. Johns without "Miz" Chappell, or *The Saints' Scroll*, or faculty meetings, or spectator sports, or Headmaster's Day projects. But she would stay on in memory and come back to visit, and the school would keep going.

The school had become a haven and a training ground for strong people, yet it had become so strong that it could survive losses, adapt to replacements, and adjust to new ideas. In the past there had been Dora Helen Skypek and Helen Palmer, Captain Borries and Dr. Heinrich...and others who had been at school 10, 15 and 20 years. St. Johns had also survived an abrupt change in administration and the great fire of 1976, but the life and spirit of the school continued.

While students can reckon with retirement, they often find teacher turnover disturbing when it happens for other reasons. It is hard for young people to realize the financial sacrifice a male teacher and his family make. It is different for a woman if hers is the second salary in a family, but the single woman knows what she must give up when she agrees to work for teacher's pay. Teaching salaries remain absurdly low by comparison with those in the business world. Moreover, a small school like St. Johns can rarely match what the public school system offers in pay or benefits.

Why then do so many stay at St. Johns? For love, loyalty, belief in ideals, traditions, students, parent support, administration support, a strong and wise board, pride in belonging to a group made up of a few, good people — a legacy of integrity.

The year draws to a close quickly. After months of waiting there is always a rush to get the last things done: grad night, exams, the prom, baccalaureate services on a hot Sunday afternoon, class day at the beach, rehearsal, and finally THE night. The white dresses and dinner jackets come out, pictures are taken by the hundreds, and when the speeches and diplomas are done and "we raise our hymn" to St. Johns, another class is history. Among the many honors recognized on June 3, 1980, was the 500th graduate, Michael Weise.

In his last will and testament, Darrell Scales left the school his thanks for 12 years of memories and for the first chapter of his life. Twenty-five classes had now graduated, but the St. Johns story was a long way from told.

19. The State of the Art, June 6, 1990

Chapter XIX

The State of the Art June 6, 1990

If you have not been at St. Johns for a while, when you come back, you will discover all manner of changes alongside the familiar customs you once knew. First, you may notice that St. Johns is not "out there" anymore. Doctors Lake Drive has been developed all the way to the end, leaving the school a 26-acre cultural island in the midst of a thriving residential section. In recent years the county has put up a caution light and designated a speed zone at the approach to the school, and the railroad has installed level crossing bars at the tracks. Sturdy brick pillars and heavy wrought iron gates mark the entrance, and a notice board reminds everyone that the Spartans are playing in a basketball championship or that the Lower Division needs Publix receipts to help buy computers.



Mrs. Brown at dedication



Brown Fine Arts Center

Up the hill and over the tracks you will find yourself surrounded by large trees, leafy paths, and lush greenery, all carefully tended and preserved in a natural state. Around the paved drive you can see the chapel with its giant oak and

hydrangeas and the facade of the original building, virtually unchanged. To the left you will recognize the same old Lower Division playground, but to the right you may be surprised by an impressive new building with a display case in front featuring some equally impressive student art. This is the 4,400 square foot Claude Nolan Brown Fine Arts Center completed in 1984.

Down the road past the gym, students and faculty now park in two large asphalt lots. On beyond is the Kindergarten with its own building, playground, and paved tricycle path — a very new dimension for the St. Johns image.

Beyond the Kindergarten the road leads to eight acres of playing fields: two for soccer, one each for baseball and softball, and a regulation track. Around the campus runs a fitness course, and behind the tennis courts students practice on a concrete outdoor basketball court as large as the gym floor. It is a big, beautiful school gradually spreading out over the whole campus.

The population as well as the plant has flourished. There are approximately 550 students, K-12, and 50 faculty members who have an average of 18 years of teaching experience and 13 years tenure at St. Johns (a rarity in any profession).

Stephen F. Russey has been headmaster since 1976. He has literally endured the ordeals of fire and water — twice in fact: once in his first year and again in December 1989 when the senior patio burned. He has led St. Johns well and has also provided leadership throughout the state as president of FCIS, 1987-88. He now has two assistant headmasters: Rod Fisher, for Upper Division, and Jim Edwards, for Lower Division. St. Johns also has a Middle School coordinator: Dick Jones, and a full-time director of development: Jean Middleton.

The school owes much of its stability to a consistently strong board of trustees which has refused to make rash decisions. As in the past, the 1989-90 board consists of a large number of parents with particular interest in the school's well being. In addition, over one-third of the members are trustees emeriti who provide an unusual continuum to the policy making.

The day begins early at St. Johns and runs late. Before and after school the Extended Day Program offers an opportunity for parents and faculty to leave children at supervised play at the Kindergarten. After school two days a week in the main classrooms and the gym, the Extended Enrichment Program gives students and faculty a chance to pursue everything from karate to cooking, with drivers education and SAT prep courses of special interest to the Upper Division students.

When the Kindergarten classes begin at 8:30 A.M., two groups of 16 five-year-olds get to work quickly under the direction of two full-time teachers, Barbara Tedder and Maureen Onstott, and an aide, Betty West, all of whom have been with the school since the Kindergarten opened in 1984. Dr. Heinrich originally set aside the area of the campus now occupied by the Kindergarten as a wild life sanctuary. It is much tamer now as the smallest Saints start their quest for knowledge. The Kindergarten operates under the direction of the Lower Division with a curriculum tailored to prepare students for St. Johns' first grade. Nevertheless, it maintains a separate identity with its own facilities which include a kitchen and picnic tables for outdoor lunches, a wide range of wheel and sandbox toys, and — for the thoroughly modern mite — two computers. Three times a week you can see all 32 walking in almost-orderly lines to the main school for library, art, and music.



Kindergarten



Maureen Onstott



Barbara Tedder

The story goes that when the prefabricated Kindergarten building was being delivered, the truck bottomed out on the railroad tracks, and the driver casually ambled into the main building to phone his boss. When the driver finished his call, Mr. Russey advised him that the building belonged to the company until it was in place, and that within 15 minutes they could expect the arrival of the afternoon AmTrak. Inspiration coupled with perspiration got the job done. Like many St. Johns traditions, the train tracks were there from the start and demand to be honored.

When the smallest Saints leave Kindergarten, most of them will go on to first grade in the rooms at the beginning of the Lower Division concourse. Like the Kindergarteners, these Little Saints have their own modern kitchen and a lab, too, plus a covered walkway to the gym.

Daily life in Lower Division has changed, too. A whole set of traditions has emerged out of old customs and new needs. They now have a Halloween parade plus a pumpkin carving contest. They gather food for the needy and then enjoy their own Thanksgiving feast. They hunt Easter eggs with the Storytellers, and at the end of the year, the fifth grade holds a party for their betters, the noble sixth graders.

Patrols at the tracks and on the circle have been chosen from the sixth grade since the school moved to Doctors Lake, but now half come from returning students and the other half from newcomers. It can be a rough blow to come to a new school and discover all the honors taken.

Consideration and thoughtfulness abound. At the start of school all newcomers at St. Johns are assigned returning students to help them learn the ropes. In February, brotherhood month, Lower Division students have special activities

with their "big brothers" and "sisters." Every first grader also has a senior, and the two classes make an annual expedition to Silver Springs.

For years fund-raising was an Upper Division exclusive, then the Lower Division discovered they could get in the act. (Any returning Spartan will remember that the little people were the ones who always bought those tee shirts even when they came in orange and size XL only.) Each year, with the money they make from a fundraiser and bake sales, the Student Government has several student art works framed and buys one professional work to add to the school's art collection.



For the art collection

Although there is no art museum in Clay County, St. Johns has been accumulating an impressive collection of paintings and pottery which is displayed in the administrative building. Like the founding headmaster, Mr. Russey believes that if students live with original works they develop an appreciation that will remain with them all their lives.

The Lower Division Student Government was founded in 1980 to begin teaching the Little Saints to be leaders and to get involved in the workings of their school. It is a very special organization, not just a watered down copy of the Upper Division Student Council. The members come from grades four, five, and six with a liaison from grade three. They have rules and by-laws but no formal constitution, and they elect officers each year complete with campaign speeches. They also impose a cash fine for talking in meetings.

As the sixth graders come to the end of the year, they begin getting ready for their new places in the Middle School. One day in the spring they visit the seventh grade to look at life on the other side of the quad. From Headmaster's Day on, the sixth graders are allowed both Upper Division snacks and "Monday dress." Privilege breeds pride. Good things have taken place in the Lower Division and lots of them.



Dick Jones

The Middle School began at St. Johns in 1986. The idea was tried in the seventies but only briefly. It works better now because the coordinator, Dick Jones, is a middle school specialist with years of experience in the field. It is organized as a smaller unit within the Upper Division. All the seventh and eighth grade classes are held in rooms 16-20, and gradually the school is acquiring a faculty to teach in the Middle School exclusively. (The physical plant at St. Johns precludes the inclusion of the sixth grade.)

This new program bridges the gap between Lower Division and Upper Division. It provides unity and identity to students and increased awareness to the faculty. It also offers the parents the moral support of a faculty whose goal is to teach and understand just that age group. Got a problem? Go ask Mr. Jones.

Like the Lower Division, the Middle School is building traditions. They have athletic teams, dances, chapel programs, clubs, curriculum, and disciplinary policies. Then once a year, they get out early and take a festive trip to the Alhambra Dinner Theatre for a matinee and a meal.

After students complete Middle School at St. Johns, they really have to come to grips with that "demanding curriculum" which the school philosophy claims and those "eternal verities." Here they discover that each department has worked out a sequential but flexible pattern to lead them from Kindergarten through twelfth grade and into the college world by means of those "verities."

At the same time each department must interact with every other department. Most have at least five members, many of whom teach in two or more disciplines. All offer electives, and almost every required course is now offered at both standard and honors level.

No one innovation has cut across all disciplines so thoroughly as the computer with its capacity to update techniques and yet include basics. The school now has a computer science coordinator, Sue Kipen, who has computerized practically everything: the business offices, all the filing systems including report cards and college placement, and most of the students and faculty. Formal instruction in word processing begins in fourth grade, continues with a lab course in seventh, and goes on to offer BASIC and Pascal in 10-12. More than half the faculty claims "computer literacy." This is definitely the nineties.



Sue Kipen

Even in the English department, computers have updated techniques: SAT preparation, vocabulary building, and sentence structuring, to name only a few. Otherwise the English curriculum continues to be an intense experience in reading and critical writing beginning with sentences about "my dog Spot" in Kindergarten and ending with preparation sessions for the complexities of the APE exam (which have become so demanding that Department Head Joe Warner often holds weekend help sessions to get students ready for the big test).

No department has felt the impact of technology like math. Almost all the students in the Upper Division have a Casio graphing calculator with which they not only manipulate numbers but pose problems and solve them. Technology

is becoming pervasive. Carol Hart, head of the department, claims that students who used to shoot baskets in the gym at lunch now tax each others' brains with calculator one-upmanship and come back to class to teach the teacher something new. St. Johns students of the nineties will take a minimum of four years of math with the possibility of going all the way to AP calculus or probability and statistics.

Modern technology has sent the science department into the lab. To meet the demands, both the chemistry and the biology labs have been enlarged and the number of labs per course has increased regularly along with emphasis on notetaking and lab writeups. To help younger students prepare for scientific study, Department Head Mike McMillan and some of the older students often instruct in the Lower Division lab. With the addition of a greenhouse, botany has become a favorite, and anatomy and physiology are now offered as electives. When the fine Arts Center was completed, the old art room was made into a new physical science lab making that part of the schools a complete science wing—an addition which have delighted the school's first science teacher, Dr. Heinrich.



Flag raising festivities

The foreign language department at St. Johns specializes in a living laboratory made up of teachers and students who experiment in a foreign tongue. Even the Latin teacher, Leslie Perkins, has had conversational experience in a special course at the Vatican. The study of foreign language begins with Spanish and French for the Lower Division, continues with Latin and mythology in the seventh grade, and extends to fourth and fifth year offerings with the opportunity for the study of a second foreign language as an elective. The French students have toured France with Department Head Mary Virginia Fisher and Claudia Russey, and the school has had return visits from College la Coliniere in Nantes, Jacksonville's sister city. Pat Fernandez' Spanish students have exchanged visits with the Costa Ricans. Unlike other departments no computers are necessary here.

The social studies department has become one of the most diverse at the school not only because of its offerings — some dozen courses of required and elective subjects — but also because of the faculty blend. It has full-time teachers, part-time teachers, teachers from Middle Division, a Lower Division teacher who teaches an elective, and a chaplain who teaches comparative religion and problems in ethics and morals. Department Head Cynthia Landry urges students to make their own history by working in the community service club founded by junior Cheryl Lamoureux. Once again the scope of the school is reflected in the curriculum.

The five academic disciplines may have updated, modernized, and expanded, but no area of learning at St. Johns has exploded like the fine arts. Even as late as 1980, music was generally considered something the Lower Division did. The whole school sang at Christmas, and every year there was a little flock of song birds which gathered to perform at Headmaster's Day. Then Anita Snell came to St. Johns and began the artistic avalanche. The first year she had five seventh-grade girls who studied and rehearsed all year and managed to be selected to take part in state chorus. They came home fired with enthusiasm; the next year the number grew to 14. Today the hard work of earlier years has paid off: the St. Johns choruses are so strong and so popular that "kids will die to get to go to state chorus."



"St. Johns on Broadway"



Bill Peters and Anita Snell



Spartans in Hamburg

Her third year at St. Johns, Mrs. Snell produced the first "St. Johns on Broadway," a musical extravaganza which created a spirit never before sparked at the school. Every willing body was made a star; every known resource was tapped — and some heretofore unknown. The concept has been so successful that it has become a major event in the school life. Every other year the school presents a major musical show, among which have been *Charlie Brown*, *Cats*, *Oklahoma*, and *The Sound of Music*. The funds generated by the shows cover the cost of the next production and provide luxuries which only extra cash can make available. The enthusiasm and interest is so great that for three weeks each year the campus might be mistaken for an arts school.

Music teachers from earlier days will recall full school productions at Christmas and class performances regularly since the start. Why was this different? The answer is probably what psychologists call "chemistry:" the size: 500 people; the spectacle: audio and visual; and most of all the expertise: Mrs. Snell had produced enormous shows many times before and knew how to generate the enthusiasm, cooperation, and the drive to perfect. She believes in miracles, and at St. Johns they seem to happen with each production.

Then along came a second musician, Bill Peters, an organist and choirmaster at a local church. He organized and trained yet another chorus and added enthusiasm and skill to the musical momentum already in progress. To date there are three Lower Division choruses of 40 students each and the exclusive St. Johns Singers who take chorus for academic credit and meet at 7:30 A.M. in order to fit it into their day. In the coming year the school will also have a Middle School Choir.



Mr. Russey at the Berlin Wall

In 1989 following the lead of the international soccer trips, St. Johns invited a chorus from the Gymnasium Hochrad in Hamburg, Germany, to visit, and in 1990, 24 St. Johns Singers and chaperones returned the visit, touring cities such as Munich and Berehetesgarten, and the newly opened East Berlin, and giving performances in West Berlin and Hamburg. While the Singers were falling in love with Germany and with each other and playing in the spring snow, Mr Russey took time to write the name "St. Johns" on a portion of the recently demolished Wall. It is hard to imagine St. Johns students singing in that same Berlin from which young Ed Heinrich had come 52 years earlier to find a free world and found a school.

Everywhere there is music at St. Johns, and much of it in a new key. The annual Christmas programs now takes the form of a service of lessons and carols with every group in the school represented, Lower Division through administration, and music provided by all the choruses. Instrumental music is now taught by members of the symphony who come to the school to give lessons. The Lower Division takes music twice a week, and the Upper Division has offerings in music history, theory, and theatre, which includes puppetry and mime.



St. Johns Singers

The musical influence has spread to places as unlikely as the math department where Dick Sirch and his students have taken charge of stage lighting. When one of the crew, Todd Williams '85, graduated, he passed his job on to his brother Brad. Involvement has become the thing to do. It's all in the family now. The musical productions have become so large that everyone can have a part and share in the glory, and anyone not involved just has not tried to be.

The art story is much the same as the music. There are two full time teachers, Mary Ann Petska and Ann Andreu. They teach in two enormous new rooms, with an office, a patio, two wheels, three kilns, a large slide library, in addition to sinks, cupboards, and dozens of large work tables. The curriculum includes drawing, painting, and clay for the very young; crafts for fifth and sixth graders; and elective courses in ceramics, studio art, painting, art history, drawing, and AP studio art and AP art history. Students display work all over the school, at the Cummer Gallery, in the Florida Theatre, in nursing homes, and children's hospitals. They regularly take awards at art shows, and, of course, they design the sets for all the school's musical shows along with Mr. Sirch's drafting students.

Early in the eighties as the arts programs were blossoming, the fine arts department decided to hold a week in the spring called "St. Johns Celebrates the Arts." They would present the symphony, artists and their works, dramatic readings, and even home-grown performers. Soon a week was not enough; they needed a month. This year "Arts 90" covered the entire spring featuring workshops in rug-hooking, print-making, and communications, musicians from jazz to Medieval, Ivy League chorusters, first grade Suzuki players, and a hands-on puppet show. The goal is to make such a blitz of art that no one will ever forget it. It works, and one might safely say it all began with the Christmas singers who dripped wax on Grace Church's carpet and the six artists Dr. Heinrich invited to exhibit in the old rented school house.





Teams and more teams

With the emphasis on fine arts so all-encompassing, it seems hard to believe that a nearly equal explosion could take place in P.E. and athletics. Yet it is true. More students are participating; more teachers, parents, and professionals are coaching; and more teams and techniques are available than ever before. Again there is a man with vision behind it all. Steve Russey saw the need for expansion and hired Ron Pompeo to direct the new program. The school now has four full time P.E. teachers who operate a program in K-12 designed to add strength to every Spartan every day.

Today in Orange Park, as in most of America, a wide range of community-sponsored youth sports is available, such as soccer, baseball, T-ball, karate, and aerobic dance. As a result children are far more interested and adept in athletics. At St. Johns the P.E. curriculum begins in the Lower Division where students learn throwing, hitting, eye-hand coordination, and basic competition skills. The Middle School concentrates on games: not just playing, but learning the rules and techniques so they can be intelligent spectators and coaches later. The Upper Division selects electives from aerobics and weight training to tennis and golf with the emphasis on learning life-long activities.

Then these skilled students put their training to use in what early Spartans might call "an incredible number" of interscholastic teams competing in three full seasonal schedules. Girls' teams, led by Head Coach Linda Guswiler and a number of academic faculty and parent coaches, have become as important and successful as the boys'. In some sports there are offerings for both sexes at three different levels: Middle School, JV, and varsity. In the fall Spartans play soccer and volleyball and run cross country. In winter they concentrate on basketball, and they have been so successful that in 1990 Channel 4 T.V. presented a profile featuring John Fitzpatrick and other members of the varsity team. In the spring they become involved in baseball, softball, tennis, golf, and track. The teams have won championships in almost every sport, and the team members receive their awards at three athletic banquets, one at the close of each season. In addition there are two spirit groups: the cheerleaders, now called "The Spirit of St. Johns," and the "Spartanettes," a dance group which provides half-time entertainment. These peppy girls have a job that is even more important than earlier groups now that almost everyone at St. Johns plays something; some days not many Spartans are left on the bench to yell.

For years the school gym loomed huge and almost oversized for the small school population. Now when six teams need to practice and play basketball in the same season, space can be hard to find even with the outdoor practice area. The gym, itself, is not always available because it is often used by other programs such as "St. Johns on Broadway" or

the Parent-Teacher League auction. In time the gym may not have to be shared with the arts and the fund-raisers; there is an auditorium in the long range plans.



"Camelot"

The Parent-Teacher League is one group which will be around and active in whatever new project the school begins. Founded in 1980 to promote and coordinate volunteer service, they now have almost 98% participation. In addition to the usual room-mothering, and picture-ladying, the Parent-Teacher League has held sales, sponsored and supported family picnics and garden days, and most spectacularly they have to date produced four enormous auctions which have averaged \$40,000 each in profit. These funds also have gone for extras like a pair of handsome mini vans to drive small teams. The auctions have fostered goodwill throughout the entire school. In particular they have given fathers an opportunity to feel ownership in the school — beyond writing checks. Along with the hardworking group of mothers, the St. Johnsfathers have constructed, transported, and obtained corporate funds and gifts without which the "Soiree," "Mardi Gras," "Camelot" and "Orient" auctions would have had a hard time succeeding. And there has been other help as well. At these gala occasions you can see the head of a corporation, the head of a department, or even the head of maintenance running lotteries, taking tickets, and donating their valuable extra time. And you can buy some unique items such as the skill and disc jockey equipment of math teacher Grover Howard for your next fifties party.



Claudia and Steve Russey

In addition to raising money, the parents of St. Johns have donated another service to the school: a pledge "that all gatherings of school-aged students in their homes will be supervised by adults and free of drugs and alcohol." They realize that only with this sort of cooperation at home can the school do its job for the students.

Then one day the job is done, and the school year comes to a close for the last time — at least for one group: the seniors. Graduation takes place in the Florida Theatre now, but the new surroundings have done little to alter the traditional ceremony. To a stage banked with blue hydrangeas, "many a rose-lipt maiden and many a light foot lad" processes each year in long white gowns and dinner jackets.



Thanksgiving feast



Go Blue!

Among the 34 graduating seniors on June 6, 1990, there were eight students who had been at St. Johns since first grade, six faculty children, seven Cum Laude members, and nine with National Merit recognition. In his opening remarks to this thirty-fifth graduating class, Mr. Russey noted that more than 800 St. Johns graduates had preceded them. "The traditional awards," he said, "would attest to the students' efforts, talents, and contributions to the school." The two highest awards, the Dora Helen Skypek and Edwin Paul Heinrich Awards, were given to a pair of students whom *The Saints' Scroll* had named "academic hustlers" in the September issue: Karen Bruner and Sean McMillan. Student speakers Karen Bruner and Chris Rish claimed "unity" and "non-conformity" for their class traits. Judge Elzie Sanders urged the class to remember the recent changes in the communist bloc countries (which many students had recently seen in person) and to maintain an active participation in the democratic process. Then it was time for the diplomas, the hymn, and the applause. But as Claudia Russey, wife of the head-master and mother of one of the graduates, noted many years ago, "Just when you think things are quiet, something always pops up."

To prove the claims of their class speakers, the graduates had to have the last word. With one accord they raised cards which together spelled out their senior spoof:

U CANT TOUCH THIS. SO LONG. CLASS OF 1990.



The Class of 1990

Conclusion

Conclusion

Where will the wisdom gained in 35 years of experience lead St. Johns in future days? Will the vision of Dot and Ed Heinrich — the dream they saw begin to come true in 1953 — carry on safely through the nineties and into the 21st century? Will the strength of this successful and prosperous institution last as long as its days?



Mary Nell Simmons and Lynn Ross with Pre-K



Palatka bound

The first sign of carrying on has already arrived on campus — the little building which will house the new Pre-Kindergarten. like so much at St. Johns, it reaches back into the past. On the property which belonged to Hilda Russell McCrory in the fifties, there was a small white frame cottage on the south side of the railroad tracks which the family used as a weekend camp when they came out to the country to check on their vegetable garden (about where the main buildings at St. Johns are now located). When Judd Sapp, a St. Johns parent, bought the property in 1989, he offered the cottage to the school. It has since been moved over the tracks and placed beside the Kindergarten. Here in the fall of 1990, 16 four-year-olds made tracks on their way to becoming full-fledged Spartans.

Although the Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten were never part of the Heinrichs' "Pioneer School," they clearly fit the idea of the "educational expressway" which the Heinrichs always advocated. As Dr. Heinrich told the press back in the sixties, the sooner you begin the process, the further you can go. The two year jump on the former system is bound to make its mark on the St. Johns expressway. It will also serve as another feeder for the Lower Division and thereby add assurance to the ongoing life of the school.

Another sign of continued success is also in the making — a swimming pool. The *35th Anniversary Campaign* is designated specifically for a swimming complex which will provide a regular program of water sports for students and will make available for the entire school family and the community. With the building for the complex, the school offer and individual swimming, life saving, water polo, and even canoeing. It will also make summer camp a highly desirable feature of St. Johns. Here again is an addition with vision: an appeal to all ages — especially the water-loving Florida teenager.



Groundbreaking for the pool

What will the future bring? Perhaps an auditorium, a new gym, a dock on the river, larger labs, or grander classrooms — all dreams. But at St. Johns dreams come true. They never come until they are really needed. They are always infinitely practical and multi-purposed. They are planned in advance and paid for in cash. And when they arrive, Spartans are proud of their appearance and advised to handle with care.

In the Heinrichs' dream the school would be no larger than 500 students. It is over that now but still not a big school by comparison with many. Yet with the enormous expansion of facilities, offerings, and outreach it is curiously big in scope because it constantly listens to men and women with vision and pioneering ideas. As St. Johns heads toward a new century, it continues in the Heinrichs' footsteps: advancing judiciously and steadily toward the future, ever careful of the strength it will need to ensure the proper guidance for the words and deeds of its children.



Honors and Honorable People

HONORS AND HONORABLE PEOPLE GUESTS AT "MIRA RIO," APRIL 4, 1953

Margo Tisdelle
Helen Brown Adams
Hazel Dunlap
Ramona Archibald
Candy Bisbee
Fricka Masee
Mary Boiling Thomas
Virginia Howe

Virginia Simonson
Minerva and Raymond Mason
Ann and Gardiner Gillette
Marian Gilliland
Alice Ulmer
Doris Beal
Kitty Harris

FIRST BOARD OF TRUSTEES- 1953

Raymond Mason, President

E. Jay Becker, Vice President

Mrs. Thomas B. Adams, Secretary

Edwin P. Heinrich, Treasurer

Downing Nightingale, Assistant Treasurer

Mrs. Kenneth Archibald

Gardner T. Gillette

Mrs. Edwin P. Heinrich

Mrs. Philip G. Howe

Raye W. Richardson, Jr

CHARTER STUDENTS-September 14, 1953

(Asterisk indicates graduation from St. Johns.)

Grade 1 — Duke Brownfield

Billy Haynes*

Tiny Hughes

Rob Thomas*

Grade 2 — Gail Mallory*

Grade 3 — Win Heinrich *

Jimmy Windham

Grade 4 — Raleigh Haynes*

Grade 5 — Jim Bruda

Ned Croft

Craig Harris*

Bobby McCarthy

Nick Unger

Grade 6 — no students until second week of school

Grade 7 — Betsy Croft *

Richard Grant

Dimmy Haynes

Sue Heinrich *

David Johnson

Grade 8 — Carolyn Adams

Field Archibald

Emma Gray Hillyer

Robert Jackson

Peggy Shad

Sam White

Grade 9 — Sheila Croft *

Grade 10 — Jon McLeod *

STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

1956 — Jon McLeod	1969-Kurt Mori	1982 — Teresa Timby
1957 — Kemp Riechmann	1970-John Abbott	1983-Chul Sung Kim
1958 — Todd Walter	1971 — Skip Nail	1984 — Vanessa Bowles
1959 — Danny Eckard	1972 — Jerry Johnson	1985 — Drake Buckman
1960 — Goodwill Murray	1973 — Richard Stoudemire	1986 — Mike Meiners
1961 — Allen Blount	1974 — David Scales	1987 — Charley Snell
1962 — Vernon Grizzard	1975 — Lee Norville	1988 — Joe Tappe
1963 — Bill Van Nortwick	1976 — Bobby Carter	1989 — Jimmy Leano
1964 — Paul Davidson	1977 — Cliff Cole	1990 — Karen Duffy
1965 — Marty Lloyd	1978 — Cliff Cole	
1966 — John Simpson	1979 — John Hamilton	
1967 — Steve Nauman	1980 — Charlie Ellmaker	
1968 — Steve Harris	1981 — Ben Burbridge	

LOWER DIVISION STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENTS

1981 — Tony Acosta Rua

1982 — Charlie Snell

1983 — Jack Murphy

1984 — Calvin Paris

1985 — Maggie Johnson

1986 — Kevin McLain

1987 — Christina Leano

1988 — Tricia Andrews

1989 — Leighton Braddock

1990 — Tim Tippin

**HONOR COURT
CHIEF JUSTICES/CHAIRMEN**

1959 — Harold Murray	1969 — Helen Newton	1979 — Candy Hutchins
1960 — Ross Taylor	1970 — Warren Tisdale	1980 — Rhoda Holt
1961 — Bob Simpson	1971 — Robert Ellis	1981 — Bobby Hoff
1962 — Bill Van Nortwick	1972 — Wick Van Wagenen	1982 — Ben Bishop
1963 — Paul Davidson	1973 — Mark Geyer	1983 — Ben Bishop
1964 — Marty Lloyd	1974 — Mary Anna Bennett	1984 — Paul Ballowe
1965 — Jim Francis	1975 — Mary Anna Bennett	1985 — Kathy Smith
1966 — Mike Anchors	1976 — Lillian Powell	1986 — Ami Patel
1967 — Clinton Dawkins	1977 — Jennie Smith	1987 — Ashley Watson
1968 — Diane McRae	1978 — Vicki Holt	1988 — Susan Elliott 1990 — Margie McKellar

BEST ALL AROUND STUDENTS

UPPER DIVISION

1957 — Larry Ponder
 1958 — Bob Montgomery
 1959 — Jack Vroom
 1960 — Ross Taylor
 1961 — Joe Canipelli
 1962 — Bill Van Nortwick
 1963 — Bill Van Nortwick
 1964 — name not available
 1965 — Jim Francis
 1966 — Wayne Middleton
 1967 — Steve Nauman
 1968 — Michael Kuhling
 1969 — Bonnie Trimble
 1970 — Garry Adams
 1971 — Jerry Johnson
 1972 — Jerry Johnson
 1973 — Donald Meldrum
 1974 — Margaret Kornweibel
 1975 — name not available
 1976 — Lillian Powell
 1977 — Hugh Miller
 Jennie Smith
 1978 — Paula Holt
 Mike Ribadeneyra
 1979 — Candy Hutchins
 Bobby Steeg
 1980 — Rhoda Holt
 Mickey McGuire
 1981 — Kevin Hargnett
 Teresa Timby
 1982 — SpookHill
 Corey Winegeart
 1983 — Denise Aboud
 Mike Ribadeneyra
 1984 — Paul Ballowe
 Katy Crum
 1985 — Robert Singer
 Kathy Smith
 1986 — Tiffany Ramos
 Joel Tolbert

MIDDLE

Deborah Wahl
 Lee Wilson

LOWER DIVISION

Jim Francis
 Debra Doerflinger
 Billy Haynes
 Jon Wiesenfeld
 James Alford
 George Geeslin
 Bonnie Trimble
 name not available
 Jet Thompson
 Dale Redman
 Hank Osborne
 Howard Gayle
 David McQuaid
 Linda Seaton
 name not available
 Lee Wilson
 Vicki Jones
 Ned Weed
 Spook Hill
 Carol Copeland
 Charlie Hoff
 Kelley Lewis
 Heather Cavanaugh
 Beth Burgess
 Robert Singer
 Frederick Blecha
 Jennifer Gifford
 Tony Acosta — Rua
 Kim Sladek
 Beth Scanlon
 Chad Tucker
 Zeina Antar
 Jason Harvey
 Jeff Castor
 Jennifer Middleton
 Chris Barker
 Maggie Johnson
 Andrea Grantham
 Kevin Middleton

GIRLS' ATHLETIC AWARD

1977 — Robin O'Leary

1978 — Adrienne Barry

1979 — Paula Holt, Candy Hutchins

1980 — Louise Weber

1981 — Corey Winegeart

1982 — Corey Winegeart

1983 — Lane Miller

1984 — Lane Miller

1985 — Suzanne Hasbani

1986 — Cheri Nelson

1987 — Jennifer Baugh

1988 — Jennifer Baugh

1989 — Kristin Robinson

1990 — Traci Onstott — Peacock

CAPTAIN BORRIES CUP

1969 — Wayne Smith
1970 — Garry Adams
1971 — Tom Fiddelke
1972 — Bill Meldrum
1973 — Mike Steinmetz
1974 — Alan Phillips
1975 — Chris Fulton
1976 — Larry Weber
1977 — Jim Hutchens
1978 — Bruce Hill
1979 — Mickey McGuire

1980 — Mike Weise
1981 — Danny McCarthy
1982 — Phil Nelson
1983 — Spook Hill
1984 — Mike Ribadeneyra
1985 — Robert Burge, Robert Singer
1986 — Todd Zehner
1987 — Russ Cambron
1988 — Russell Sellars
1989 — Michael Murray
1990 — John Fitzpatrick

DORA HELEN SKYPEK AWARD

1959 — Sue Heinrich	1969 — Janna Allgood	1980 — Christine Wood
1960 — Craig Harris	1970 — Helen West	1981 — Teresa Timby
1961 — Dale Pierson	1971 — Lynn Van Wagenen	1982 — Jennifer Parker
1962 — Leslie Pilgrim	1972 — Peggy Sheffield	1983 — Laura Perry
1963 — Cindy Archibald	1973 — Annette Tisdale	1984 — Karla Beany
1964 — no name available	1974 — Margaret Kornwebel	1985 — Aaron Goldschmidt
1965 — Jean Mallory	1975 — Sally Sharp	1986 — Ami Patel
1966 — Harriet Robins	1976 — Kim Home	1987 — Ashley Watson
1967 — Laura Emerson	1977 — Vickie Holt	1988 — Beth Scanlon
1968 — Helen Newton	1978 — Liz Ribadeneyra	1989 — Sara DiGiusto
Bonnie Trimble	1979 — Meredith Tobin	1990 — Karen Bruner

EDWIN PAUL HEINRICH AWARD

1979 — Lee Wilson
1980 — Darrell Scales
1981 — Meredith Tobin
1982 — Teresa Timby
1983 — William Darm
1984 — Vanessa Bowles

1985 — Catherine Crum
1986 — Melanie Javier
1987 — Jennifer Castor
1988 — Eric Jansson
1989 — Jason Harvey
1990 — Sean McMillan

PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1953 — 55 — Raymond Mason	1972 — 74 — R. Holmes Tucker
1955 — 57 — Downing Nightingale	1974 — 77 — John Abbott
1957 — 59 — Gardner Gillette	1977 — 79 — Downing Nightingale, Jr.
1959 — 62 — Connor Brown	1979 — 81 — George C. Brown, Jr.
1962 — 64 — Hal H. Harris, Jr.	1981 — 83 — Marianne McEuen, M.D.
1964 — 65 — Stephen P. Kaptain, Minerva Mason	1983 — 85 — Robert C. Nichols
1965 — 66 — Minerva Mason	1985 — 87 — W.Raleigh Thompson, M.D.
1966 — 68 — George Baldwin	1987 — 89 — Robert J. Head, Jr.
1968 — 70 — William M. Courtney	1989 — 90 — Richard Brooke, Jr.
1970 — 72 — William McQuaid	

THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHNS — COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS

1956 — Laurence F. Lee, Sr.	1974 — Dr. John Gunning
1957 — The Rt. Rev. Roger W. Blanchard	1975 — Dr. Edwin P. Heinrich
1958 — Dr. Edwin R. Hartz	1976 — The Hon. Hans G. Tanzler, Jr.
1959 — Dr. Franklin A. Johnson	1977 — The Hon. Robert L. Shevin
1960 — Dr. Frank G. Slaughter	1978 — Dr. Dora Helen Skypek
1961 — The Hon. Thomas B. Adams, Jr.	1979 — Dr. Melvin P. Reid
1962 — The Rev. Dr. James T. Cleland	1980 — The Hon. Susan Black
1963 — Charles W. Campbell	1981 — RADM David L. Harlow
1964 — Harold R. Clark	1982 — VADM Joseph Moorner
1965 — Dr. Robert H. Spiro	1983 — Dr. Frances B. Kinne
1966 — Prime F. Osborn, III	1984 — The Hon. Ed Austin
1967 — The Hon. John E. Mathews, Jr.	1985 — Ms. Deborah Gianoulis
1968 — The Hon. Marion W. Gooding	1986 — Hugh H. Jones
1969 — The Rev. Professor James T. Cleland	1987 — Charles J. O'Malley
1970 — Dr. Robert L. McCan	1988 — The Hon. Ander Crenshaw
1971 — Dr. Thomas Carpenter	1989 — Roger Nierenberg
1972 — Dr. Robert H. Spiro	1990 — The Hon. Elzie S. Sanders
1973 — Dr. Abraham Fischler	

EDITORS

THE SAINTS' SCROLL

1958 — Judy Anderson
 1959 — Sue Heinrich
 1960 — MaryJoCotney
 1961 — Pat Patterson
 1962 — Sheila Beakes
 1963 — Leslie Pilgrim
 1964 — BobDuss
 1965 — RillaBuckman
 1966 — Jean Mallory
 1967 — Gil Rosehuni
 1968 — Laura Emerson, Mike Kuhling
 1969 — Helen Newton, Bonnie Trimble
 1970 — John Shea
 1971 — Helen West, Serena Lurie, Charlie Mann —
 1972 — Paula Norville
 1973 — Owene Weber
 1974 — Tim Watson
 1975 — Cathleen Weber
 1976 — Jimmy Gilley
 1977 — Vicki Holt
 1978 — Cliff Cole, Vicki Holt
 1979 — Paula Holt, Reed Grimm
 1980 — Darrell Scales
 1981 — Berry Haynes, Meredith Tobin
 1982 — Stephen Pratt
 1983 — Stephen Pratt
 1984 — Vanessa Bowles
 1985 — Katy Crum
 1986 — Melanie Javier
 1987 — Hanif Vanjaria
 1988 — Steven Heulett
 1989 — Sara DiGiusto
 1990 — Karen Bruner

AFTERTHOUGHT

Jeanne Eckard
 Sharon Gunter
 Gail Mallory
 Penny Millen
 Susan Canipelli
 Louise Martin
 Steve Harris
 Helen Newton

 same persons
 Ginger Belcher
 Dale Pacetti
 Howard Gayle
 Reed Sourbeer
 Dan Scales, Lance Aeree
 Jimmy Carter
 Charlie Ellmaker, Darrell Scales
 Charlie Ellmaker, Darrell Scales
 Charlie Ellmaker, Darrell Scales
 Jennifer Parker, Meredith Tobin
 Jennifer Parker
 Bill Darm
 Katy Crum
 Christopher Millward
 Christopher Millward
 Christopher Wilson
 Jacqueline Millward
 Jacqueline Millward
 Mike Pocklington, Steve Hiday

CHALICE

1961 — Craig Harris
1962 — Dale Pierson
1963 — Brenda Fagan
1964 — Cindy Archibald
1965 — Jim Francis
1966 — Harriet Robins
1967 — Tish Kirill
1968 — Winfield Rogers
1969 — Mandy Graves
1970 — Lucy Goedert
1971 — Scott Simpson
1972 — Lynn Van Wagenen
1973 — David Harden
1974 — Jonathan Brown
1975 — Robin Hagel, Margaret Kornwebel

1976 — Robyn Lee
1977 — Jennie Smith, Liz Hartshorn
1978 — Kim Savilonis, Mimi Ginter
1979 — Bobby Steeg
1980 — Mickey McGuire, Mary Timby
1981 — Jennifer Caton, Mary Middleton
1982 — Beth Wilson
1983 — Chul Sung Kim
1984 — Karla Beany
1985 — Beth Burgess
1986 — Jenni Raney
1987 — Becky Radwan
1988 — Susan Elliott, Beth Scanlon
1989 — Joe Tappe, Jeff Jacobs
1990 — Jennifer Middleton, J.J. Cogdill

About the Author and Editor

Owene Weber has been closely associated with St. Johns since 1969. She taught English and French for 13 years, her five children are graduates, and she has three grandchildren in the school. She is currently teaching British literature and composition at the University of Florida where she is a doctoral candidate in English. She has published articles on Frank O'Connor, May Sarton, and Irish myth. She and her husband Larry live on Fleming Island, south of Orange Park.

Helen West Van Wagenen was graduated from St. Johns in 1971, having served as an editor of *The Saints' Scoli* during her senior year. After her marriage to Wick Van Wagenen ('72), she was editor of the employee newspaper at Prudential. The Van Wagenens have two daughters at St. Johns, Hilary, ('98), and Haley, ('03), and a son, Hunter, still too young for school. They live in Orange Park.



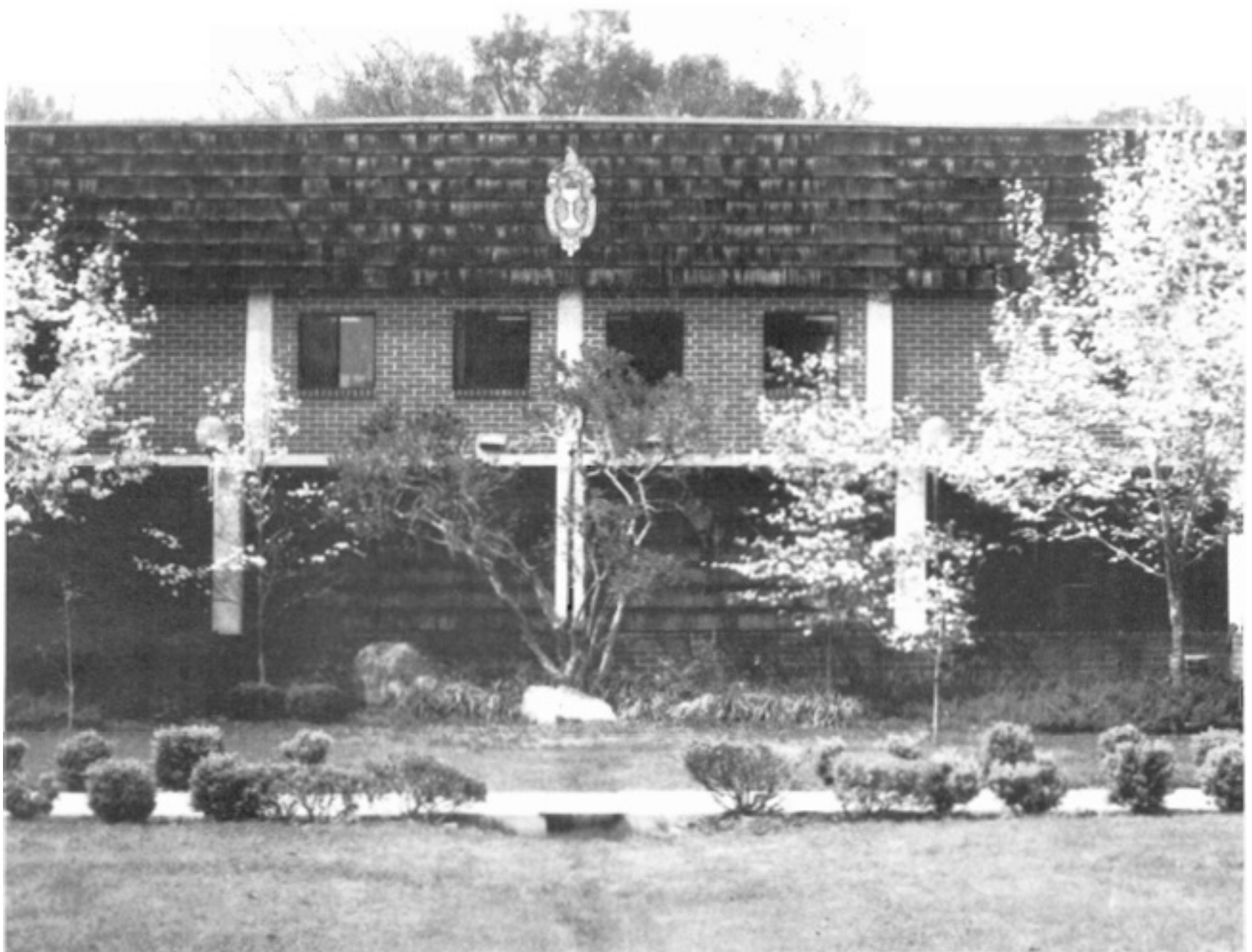
Helen Van Wagenen and Owene Weber

Sources and Credits

Because of my informal approach» I felt no need for strict documentation. I have made extensive use of the school newspapers, yearbooks, board minutes, alumni bulletins, scrapbooks, files, and letters. I have also held numerous personal interviews with persons associated with the school. For information on Edwin P. Heinrich's early life I am grateful to Hilda Heinrich. For facts on his later life and career I am grateful to Dorothea Heinrich and Sue Heinrich Bingaman. For information on the first parent meetings and the founding of the school I am indebted to Helen Francis Adams, Ramona Archibald, Minerva Mason, and William M. Courtney, Sr.

In addition I have used information from *The Legacy of McDonogh, 1939 — 41*, yearbooks of McDonogh School, McDonogh Md. Information on the Hand School and population statistics for the town of Orange Park derive from Arch Fredric Blakey's *Parade of Memories: a History of Clay County, Florida*. Facts concerning the development of Drs. Lake Drive were found in the public records of the Clay County Court House. Where I have quoted articles about the school and educational trends from the *Florida Times Union* and the *Jacksonville Journal* and the *Wall Street Journal*, I have stated the source.

Many photographs used in the book are the personal property of patrons, alumni, faculty, and students; the remainder derive from the *Chalice* and its photography files.



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