

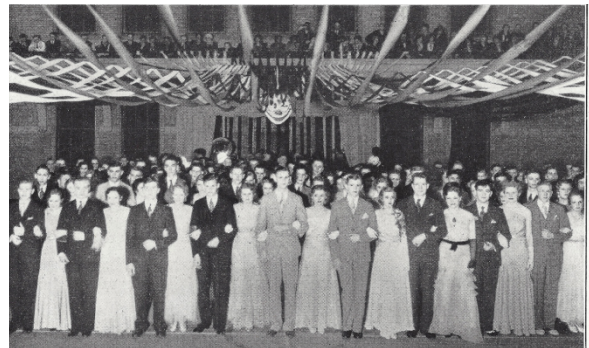
Prom Through the Decades
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Prom is one of the biggest events for juniors and seniors in high school. Throughout the years the styles of dresses, dances, and themes have changed to fit the current trends. We can see this history of the dance reflected in the decades of tradition at Grand Forks Central High School. From the scheduled dances of the early 20th century, to MORPs, and the relocation of the dance following the flood of '97, prom at Central has changed drastically since 1903.



One of Central's first recorded proms was in 1923. That year there were separate proms for both the Junior and Senior classes, both of which were fundraised for. The Junior prom was held in June and decorated in violet and silver with lilacs. The prom was planned at that time by the Social Committee and included a banquet with 18 planned dances. It was also only 2 hours long. The juniors referred to it as a "landmark in the lives of those who attend." The senior prom was held that year at the Hotel Dacotah and had yet to occur as the yearbook was being published. It was planned for the weekend after graduation. Prom dresses in the 20's were long and beaded, mimicking the popular flapper girl style of the time period. There are no photos available of this prom as none were included in the yearbook. Instead a write up was included.

In 1932 the prom was called the Junior promenade and held in the school gymnasium on April 29th. Decorations included a colored canopy and orange moon. They had live entertainment with Bill Lee and His Dacotah Entertainers. They had a grand march where 80 couples paraded their formal wear in front of onlookers. This looks to be the start of one of Central's prom traditions: the grand march. The dance also had prizes to give away and acts that were performed during the dance like dressing in period colonial costumes. The dance closed with the last song, "Home Sweet Home," at 11:30. By the 30's proms were significantly longer than they were in the 20's. Girls wore elegant, long, evening dresses.



In 1947 the prom was held on Valentine's day and had the theme *This Heart of Mine*. Decorations included red and white streamers with a huge scalloped-edged heart. The Kampus Kings performed for the 100 couples. Previously the prom was organized by a male prom manager that directed various committees and oversaw the dance, but in 1947 for the first time a female student was provided with the title of "honorary prom manager." This was the first time a woman had been provided with a position of authority in the student organizations as boys had traditionally always been class presidents. In 1947 the grand march took place 30 minutes after the

prom began and was lead not by a King or Queen, but by the prom manager and class president. There was also a scheduled program where students and groups sang and acted in various numbers. The style of the 40's for prom dresses included long gowns with full, poofy sleeves.

In 1959 the Junior class put on the *Deep Purple* prom for the seniors. It was held on February 7th and decorated in shades of purple with two chandeliers. By the 50's prom decorations were becoming more elaborate and themed. *Deep Purple* included a backdrop of a city at night and a white picket fence. Girls from the Valley Junior High School served punch and worked the coat check. There was a Master of Ceremonies that conducted the program of acts. The yearbooks started to acknowledge the chaperones of the dance in the yearbook. In the 50's girls wore tea length dresses with full skirts and the occasional ruffle. Some of the dresses had a fitted bodice with a tulle skirt. Girls exposed their shoulders more and shawls were in vogue.



By 1967 the yearbook started to move away from full descriptions of prom, focusing more on photos of the dance itself. The theme was *Rapture in the Deep*, a sort of underwater mermaid theme. Decorations included blues, greens, fishnets, treasure chests, a dragon, fountains, and clam shells. The yearbook described the dance as an "aquatic paradise." This year the juniors and seniors shared a prom. The band Nite Caps performed continuing the tradition of live music and entertainment. This year also both a male and female student lead the direction of the prom by co-chairing the committee. Women were starting to get more and more involved in the design and planning of the actual dance itself. The style of dresses in the 60's included raised waistlines, slim skirts, and empire waists.

RAPTURE IN THE DEEP



The theme of the 1972 prom was *As Time Goes On*. A castle effect was established through the decorations of streamers, pastel flowers, and a wishing pool of pennies. The yearbook from this year provides plenty of pictures of the decorations and some of the actual dance. Again the prom was Junior, Senior inclusive and held on April 29th with the grand march taking place at 10. A favorite band, Podipto, played for the couples as live music. All of the girls were given a sprig of baby's breath. This year the dance was chaired by three students, two of which were girls. Prom dresses were long with full-length sleeves and included some floral prints.



The 1985 yearbook included no descriptions of the dance but the theme, *You're the Inspiration*. There are lots of pictures of couples posing and dancing with their dates as well as a scandalous pair kissing. Girls wear their corsages and boys sport their boutonnieres. The style of prom dresses in the 80's was crimped hair and poofy, full, off the shoulder sleeves. The skirts were also full and large to match the sleeves.



Prom in 1997 was a special event for students in the wake of the blizzard and flood of '97. The prom was rescheduled twice, once for the blizzard and once for the flood, before finally being set for June 25th. Central joined forces with Red River High School and Community High School for the night. Prom was held at the Grand Forks Air Base in the Three Bay Hangar. As they entered the dance the couples passed under the raised swords of the Color Guard. The popular band Soul Asylum performed live at the dance and there was a large media presence. There was a set time period where media was allowed on the dance floor to take pictures and reporters were waiting to hear from the students. Following the dance there was a post prom where students played games. The theme *A Night to Remember* summed up the unique experience for all who attended. Girls wore dresses with tighter, lower waists and halter tops.



Prom as we know it today follows many of the traditions outlined and created in the decades at Grand Forks Central. Prom committee helps to choose a theme that distinguishes itself through the decorations at the grand march and dance. Prom starts with the grand march where couples, starting with the prom king and queen, walk around the decorated gym in front of an audience of family and community members. Then it's off to the dance at either the school or the Alerus center for a fun night with DJ'd music. As tradition from the 90's there is a post prom for students following the dance. Girls wear elaborate floor length and short dresses with sequins and floral patterns.

As time has progressed throughout the decades, prom at Central has changed and refined itself to what we have today.

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