

SOUTHLAKE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

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30TH
ANNIVERSARY



1994 - 2024

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CHRISTIAN
A C A D E M Y

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2024-2025



*The 30th Anniversary
of SouthLake Christian
Academy*

CELEBRATING A MILESTONE



The Eagles
1994-2024



Founded in 1994, SouthLake Christian Academy began as a humble institution with a vision to provide a quality Christian education and foster an environment of learning and growth both spiritually and academically. Over the years, it has evolved, adapting to changes in the educational landscape while staying true to its core values: Respect, Integrity, Kindness, and Joy while pursuing academic excellence, community engagement, and personal development. The school has grown not only in size but in the impact it has had on generations of students.

The anniversary serves as a reminder of the hard work and dedication that has gone into building the school's reputation, from its early beginnings to its current standing as a pillar of the community all while facing challenging times. It's a time to reflect on the achievements - be it in academics, extracurricular activities, sports, or the arts—that have made the school a place where students thrive.

As we embark on the 30th anniversary of SouthLake Christian Academy's existence, this is more than just a year of reflection - it's a vibrant celebration of the legacy, growth, and accomplishments that have shaped the school into what it is today. This special

occasion brings together students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the local community to honor the journey of the school and the countless individuals who have contributed to its success.

HERE IS OUR STORY...

The idea for the school emerged after Dr. Debbie Hix, a young mother of two, and her late husband Stephen attended a Christmas event at a local public school. (Dr. Hix noticed Jesus was absent from the program, not even mentioned as a baby.) She wondered how Christ could be part of education if He wasn't included in Christmas celebrations. This sparked a God-given mission to create a Christian school where faith came first. With determination and divine inspiration, Dr. Hix prayed and worked tirelessly to establish a faith-based school in the Lake Norman area. This calling drove Dr. Hix and her husband Steve to seek the best education that aligned with their core values and ensured consistent learning



for children. They wanted students to learn without limitations, preparing them for the real world, while serving families in the community who shared their beliefs. Their goal was to provide an education where Christ was central to everything.

Dr. Hix and two other visionaries began establishing SouthLake Christian Academy. Initially, there was a plan for churches around the lake, including EastLake, NorthLake, and WestLake, but SouthLake emerged first. They explored curricula and crafted a school vision then set out to enlist teachers and students. Meeting families at homes and local spots, Dr. Hix shared her beliefs and goals, urging them to join the SouthLake Christian community. "Our families needed great faith to commit; it created financial uncertainty," Dr. Hix said.



In August 1994, the school opened its doors to just 23 students in grades K-4, with 3 teachers and Debbie Hix as the volunteer principal. For the first six weeks, classes were held at First Baptist Church in Huntersville. The school lacked many amenities - a playground, lunch program, library, and gym. Yet, Dr. Hix recalled, "It was a special time of daily reliance on God for even the smallest details."

As community demand grew, mobile units from a Catholic school were brought in to accommodate the expanding



PARENT TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

student body. Families camped out, hoping to secure kindergarten spots for their children. The strong desire for Christian education was the main driver of growth, as no other Christian schools were available then. Space was tight; high school literature classes were taught in a school bus, while PE classes and pep rallies took place in the First Building. People made sacrifices, committed to the school's mission.

In 1996, the newly formed PTF spearheaded fundraising efforts like golf tournaments, decorative tables, and book fairs. These initiatives helped SouthLake Christian grow and build a strong community and within two years, the student population expanded from 23 students and three teachers in K-4 to 110 students, eight full-time

and four part-time teachers in K-7. A full-time headmaster joined in spring 1996. The school's vision was to "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." Dr. Hix remarked, "Seeing how God impacted students' lives daily was powerful, especially watching God's call for my vision come true." The next five years brought exciting changes to SouthLake Christian. In 1995-1996, they held their first Fall Festival and book fair. The 1996-1997 school year saw four new classrooms for grades 5-7, a new playground, a headmaster hire, a physical education program, and the school's first yearbook. SouthLake Christian grew rapidly each year. In 1997-1998, they fielded their first soccer and basketball teams. Academically, they graduated an 8th grade class with Congresswoman Sue Myrick as speaker and added a second Kindergarten class.

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THE WILCOX CENTER

2001

Named after Pastor Bob Wilcox, a PCA Pastor who greatly influenced the community, the Wilcox Center became the new upper school home.



From 1998 to 2000, SouthLake Christian added second 1st and 2nd grade classes, hired an athletic director, introduced volleyball and cheerleading, bought a bus for student transport, and started a lunch program. The first annual golf tournament at Birkdale Golf Club in 1999 raised \$60,000 for school programs. As the school expanded into upper grades, a new building became necessary. In 2000, with the addition of 10th and

eventually 11th grade, construction began on the Wilcox building, completed for the August 2001 school year. Named after Pastor Bob Wilcox, a PCA Pastor who greatly influenced the community, the Wilcox Center became the new upper school home. It featured a gym, library, computer and science lab, classrooms, and offices. Golf and baseball joined the athletic program, and cheerleaders held the school's first pep rally in the worship center.

SouthLake Christian expanded its facilities in 2002 to keep up with growing demand for Christian education. The school added new buildings and renovated existing ones to create more

space.

The Lower School grew by adding another Kindergarten and First Grade class to serve the increasing number of families in the community.



2001 Eagles



THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS

In 2003, the school marked a milestone with its inaugural graduating class of 10 students. The Lower School grew, now offering three classes per grade level up to 2nd grade. An arts curriculum was initiated, establishing an orchestra and choral groups for both Lower and Upper School students.

SouthLake's Eagles football team debuted in the Pioneer Football League, playing 8-man football in 2004. They ended their first regular season with a 5-2 record. This year marked several milestones: the inaugural football season, a victory in their first game, and SouthLake's first national athletic recognition. The Eagles secured 2nd place in the NACA Division III championships. The team held practices on a field owned by church member Frances Hampton.



That same year, SouthLake Christian expanded its bus fleet by two yellow school buses. This allowed them to provide daily transport for students from Mooresville, Huntersville, and the Cornelius Peninsula area. The school also broadened its high school curriculum, offering students roles as



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

teacher, library, or office assistants. Students choosing these positions had to give up a study hall period. SouthLake Christian Academy has maintained its commitment to missions' outreach as a vital aspect of student life. Lower school students continued their grade-level ministry projects, reaching out to those in need within the community. Activities ranged from singing and visiting with residents at a local nursing home, to writing Bible verses on food destined for a local food pantry, to filling stockings with toiletries and Bible verses for local homeless men. SouthLake Christian also broadened its outreach this year beyond local borders, extending all the way to Peru. Several faculty members visited Peru in 2003 to train Bible teachers for public schools, while students raised

funds for Bible flannelgraphs. The Senior class embarked on a mission trip to help construct a dormitory for street boys.

The upper school saw grades 7 and 8 double in size in 2005 with a graduating class that was the largest in the school's history. Expansion plans were unveiled for both the school and church, including a lower school building and gym addition. Despite these changes, SouthLake Christian remained dedicated to its original mission: educating students in mind and body.



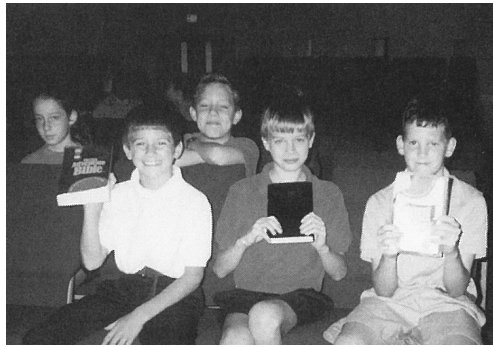
FRANCES KILLIAN HAMPTON



God blessed SouthLake Christian's ministry with spiritual and numerical growth, leading to the construction of a new facility in 2006. Frances Killian Hampton played a crucial role in developing SouthLake Church and its educational ministry, hosting the initial Bible studies that formed the church in her home. The Lower School building was dedicated to her and named Hampton Hall in her honor.

The following year, SouthLake Christian celebrated its first "lifers"-students enrolled since kindergarten. Only three students achieved this milestone at graduation in 2007: twins Emily and Leila Falls, and Samantha Cernuto.

Congratulations, Emily, Leila, and Samantha: First SouthLake students to attend Kindergarten through Twelfth!



SouthLake Christian's mission has not changed as the school stayed faithful despite obstacles that our community had to overcome.

More recent years have seen significant progress in the athletic department. Not only were records broken, teams advanced to state championships, but preparations began to break ground on a new athletic field house in 2010. Many Eagles received All-Conference and All-State recognition. The varsity volleyball team secured the first NCISAA state title in SouthLake athletics history at the 2010 NCISAA state championship. That same year, the football team reached the state semifinals, and four

varsity women's tennis players earned All-Conference titles. In a span of two years, an impressive 85% of students participated in sports, represented by 14 sports and 34 teams, amassing 35 individual and team championships. SouthLake Christian's mission has not changed as the school has stayed faithful despite obstacles that our community had to overcome. Dr. Debbie Hix proclaimed that one of her biggest accomplishments was preparing students for lives of meaning and service. "Although SouthLake's core values have stayed consistent, the methods of teaching those values have changed" replied Dr. Hix.





From humble beginnings to lasting legacy—SouthLake Christian Academy’s journey continues to inspire future generations.

A TIME FOR CELEBRATION

The anniversary celebrations are often filled with joy, pride, and excitement. From special assemblies and alumni gatherings to music performances and theatrical productions, each event is an opportunity to showcase the talent and creativity that thrive within the school. Students might participate in art exhibits, science fairs, and sporting events, while faculty members and former staff may share stories about the school’s history and growth.

A highlight of many anniversary celebrations is the gathering of alumni, who return to the campus to reconnect with former teachers, friends, and mentors. These reunions spark fond memories of the years spent at SouthLake Christian and remind everyone of the school’s deep connection to the lives of those who have passed through its halls.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

While the anniversary is a moment to celebrate the past, it’s also a time to look forward. With each passing year, SouthLake Christian Academy continues to innovate and adapt, incorporating new technologies, educational practices, and facilities to better serve its students. The anniversary offers a chance to renew the school’s commitment to providing an inclusive, forward-thinking education that prepares students for the challenges of the future.

GRATITUDE AND COMMUNITY

At the heart of every anniversary celebration is gratitude—for the dedicated teachers who inspire, the students who learn, grow, and challenge themselves, the parents who support the school, and the broader community that makes the school a home away from home. The anniversary is a time to express thanks to all who have played a role in making SouthLake Christian Academy the vibrant, dynamic institution it is today.

SouthLake Christian Academy’s anniversary is not just about the passage of time - it’s about the people, the experiences, and the shared commitment to excellence that continue to shape its future. Whether through joyful celebration or quiet reflection, the anniversary is a time for everyone to come together in appreciation and excitement for what’s yet to come.

THINKING
FOR THE NEXT
30
YEARS