

Centennial Elementary School teacher Sue Evans attended schools in several buildings while gaining an education in the Wapakoneta City Schools District, but she loved teaching students at Centennial Elementary School. She can often remember their name as well as their table and chair.

Photo provided



Teaching in home district

By MEGAN VEIT
News Correspondent

A Wapakoneta City School student, who spent her teaching career in her home school district, is quick to say she "lived in the same house, but I went to a lot of different schools."

Before graduating from the new Wapakoneta High School, now the Wapakoneta Middle School, Sue Evans attended elementary schools in Uniopolis, St. Johns and Wapakoneta.

While teaching for 25 years at Centennial Elementary in Wapakoneta, Evans watched each school from her childhood shut its doors.

Two have found new ways of existing. United Local now serves as home of the Famous Old Time Music Company. Blume became an apartment complex.

Her former teaching

grounds will not be converted.

To visit the school before its destruction, Evans attended the public auction on June 19. Evans said she loves auctions and their social atmosphere, but this one was different.

"I felt as though the crowd was a little sad," Evans said.

Evans settled into a classroom and watched as other teachers and community members bid on the furnishings. Evans recalled that one woman decided to purchase tables for her future daycare.

"It makes you feel good that all that's going to be used," Evans said.

She first learned of

plans for the new school through friends she made while teaching at Centennial.

There was "a little bit of sadness" in the conversation, but she and her friends started looking forward to the new possibilities the school would bring.

"I hope to visit Wapakoneta Elementary School in the next two weeks," Evans

said. She intends to help a friend move into her new classroom and get her first glimpse of Wapak's newest school.

Each room at Wapakoneta Elementary School

is equipped with a projector and a microphone system. Many have smart boards. The school has multiple computer labs. Evans remembers when these changes started taking place.

"I didn't know anything about it," Evans said of the first computer brought into her classroom.

Luckily, a savvy student was able to help her make the adjustment, booting it up and shutting it down. It's moments like these, when students and teacher work together, that Evans most enjoyed.

Another new adventure for Evans and her students came at the end of a nutrition unit. Evans worked with the cafeteria and a friend to bring in breakfast for her students. Among the miniature donuts, juice and milk were individual boxes of a new cereal.

"They got to try Captain Crunch before it was

ever on the market," Evans said.

Evans began her career at Centennial in 1973.

"I graduated on a Friday and started teaching on a Monday," Evans said.

The quick turnaround was a pattern with Evans in those days. After a year of college, she took time off to start her family. When it came back to school, she set herself to work double time.

Evans earned her bachelor's degree in education from The Ohio State University in 2 1/2 years while staying at home with her children.

After her graduation in St. John's Arena, Evans had a weekend before heading to her first first-grade classroom.

"My first day was a success," Evans said.

With a light laugh, she described the day.

She took attendance, got children to the restroom, got them to lunch, got them back to the restroom and back to the classroom — not to mention teaching. Not bad for a new teacher with the largest class she will ever have — 35 students.

"In later years, a lot of

parents helped," Evans said.

While parents kept students and classroom attendance more organized, an expanded staff gave Evans more time to dedicate to her teaching.

When she started, along with teaching first grade she was teaching her class physical education, supervising the cafeteria and holding the occasional recess duties.

That extra time was helpful when challenges came up in the classroom, like the year Evans had Megumi Onodua, a Japanese student that had yet to learn English. Evans and Onodua communicated through hand gestures and pictures.

Evans was invited over to Onodua's house for a doll festival, a cultural experience that the school later got to enjoy.

Evans still sees her students around town, though they've changed a bit since first grade.

While she may not recognize the face, or the man that now stands taller than 6-foot tall, she can usually place their name to their class, down to the table and exact chair.

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—Sue Evans

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"I couldn't keep a straight face," Musser said.

Her game was up when they asked which officer had pulled her over.

"I said I was crying so hard I didn't know who they were," Musser said.

No one was buying it, and the teasing continued.

Musser decided that it was best to leave while still having fun. Her final day was Dec. 31, 2007.

More than anything, Musser enjoyed the times spent with students.

"I really liked the little

guys," Musser said.

She said she shares the sadness of many others in the community and hopes the school grounds are put to good use.

Her daughters, Lori and Darlene, continue their family's tradition of focusing on education. Both are teachers.

"I decided really quickly, it was time. I thought I'd see my grandkids more," Musser said.

It is yet to be seen if any grandchildren will follow in their family's footsteps and dedicate their careers to education.





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