

# RANDOLPH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HISTORY

*"Parents and Teachers Together Mold Tomorrows".  
Randolph PTA Slogan... 1967*



*"The school should be made to fit the child, not the child the school."  
Randolph PTA slogan...1946*

In preparation for Randolph Elementary's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration in 2002 the ZENITH General Intellectual Ability Students spent the year researching the history of the school. Former and present employees were interviewed, old scrapbooks were examined, and newspaper articles and official documents were studied to obtain an accurate history of the elementary school. The biggest conclusions drawn were that this school has always valued excellence and student success. Each child is important at this school. the military community has been most involved in the many accomplishments of the school and all of its students. The dedicated staff has also been a major influence on past and present students.

Enjoy reading the fifty years of history of Randolph Elementary School.

*ZENITH GIA Students, 2000*

## **Randolph Elementary School's History**

**Randolph Elementary School has a wonderfully rich and unique history since its beginning in 1932. It was the first school to be established on a military reservation and was the only one for quite some time. The base chaplain, Chaplain Mc Murray, with the help of the Commanding Officer, Colonel Brooks, led a group of people to Austin and met with the governor to get permission to start the base school. Shortly after they met, a special Act of the Legislature created an Independent School District within the bounds of the base. That meant that the students at the Post school would have an accredited school to attend and could participate in the State per-capita funds.**

**The original building was Facility No. 584 and was a one-story rectangular Spanish Colonial Revival style building. It was completed in 1933 for a cost of \$30,855 and was designed by Eikenroht and Cocke, a San Antonio architectural firm. It was built so that it fit in with the Randolph Field Historical District. The school, Post Children's School, was planned and built in support of the 1930's and 1940's Air Corps flying training mission at Randolph Field.**

**The first principal appointed by Chaplain Mc Murray was Mr. Johnson. He was principal from 1932 to 1937. During that time Mr. Johnson taught the fourth and fifth grades from nine to twelve and took care of other duties in the afternoon. Miss Mary Lee Clark taught kindergarten in the morning and English in the afternoon to fourth and fifth graders. Miss Norma Shaw taught second and third graders all day long. Miss Cecilia Kelly (Burcham) taught first graders till noon and then they went home. From noon on, she taught reading to the fourth and fifth graders alternating with Miss Clark. Silas, nicknamed "Silence" because he was so quiet, was the school janitor. In July of 1937 Mr. Johnson died and Miss Lucille Hodges took over as**

principal. In December of 1937 Miss Hodges passed away and in January of 1938 Mrs. Burcham became the principal.

In the late thirties there were special places for teachers to live on base. Housing was provided for them by the base. Every state in the Union had a representative student at Randolph Field including Panama, the Philippines, and Hawaii.

The second year of the school there were only five staff members: Mr. Johnson, the principal, Miss Lucille Hodges, Miss Burcham, Miss Pope, and Miss Jennings. Silas was a wonderful individual who helped out at the school. The children called him "Silence" as they were confused about the pronunciation of his name and he was a very quiet man. Most of the school children attended school in a building in what was the old base library building. Shortly after the school opened, the fifth and sixth graders were housed in Bldg. T-108, a temporary building. The buildings were "badly scattered, and in need of repair. In glancing back over the six years that I've taught at Randolph, I realize that our school had come a long way, so to speak," said Beth Jeffrey in 1954 in the *Randolph Rocket*, the school paper for that year.

The Parent Teacher Association started in 1933-1934 and wrote their charter in 1934-1935. They became very active in the development of the school and its mission. One of their causes was to get books for a school library. Students brought books they no longer wanted to help fill the school library which was in Miss Kelly's room. "In a short time we had two shelves under the windows of my classroom filled!" reported Miss Kelly.

At another time a doughnut sale was held to help raise funds for the school. The PTA, during the early years, sponsored many different special programs that helped parents learn to be better parents and to help them help their children. Topics ranged from health issues, behavioral issues, to increasing the child's intelligence.

In the mid-forties parents had to pay for their children's

**schooling. The tuition for students was \$20.00 per child for enlisted persons and \$40.00 for children of officers or civilians' children. Throughout the thirties and forties there were numerous musicals and plays performed by the students for the parents of the school. Everyone was involved.**

**From the beginning of the school each individual child's needs were important to the teachers of the school. The PTA programs reflected that and the theme for the school in 1946-1947 was "The school should be made to fit the child, not the child the school." Even today we are still working toward differentiating instruction and curriculum for our students to meet their individual needs. The whole community has worked toward the education of the military children that have attended this school.**

**In 1949 the base school was located in annexes. There were a large number of students enrolled and a permanent facility was needed. " In 1950 the elementary met in an Air Force Building, adjacent to the chapel area. It was a wooden, temporary-type building. Kindergarten met in a separate building, close to the present location," stated Mr. Claude H. Hearn, Jr., superintendent from 1950-1988. Mr. Hearn at that time was the principal of the school and Olan Petty was the prior Superintendent/Principal of the school.**

**In late 1950, General Lacey, a new ATC Commander went to Mr. Hearn and told him that the 3510<sup>th</sup> Headquarters needed the building in which the school was housed. Mr. Hearn asked him, "Where am I going?"**

**General Lacey replied, "Into the three WAC's (Women Army Corps) buildings." The Air Force helped the school to move everything into this space.**

**In 1950, Mr. Hearn went to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and told them that he was interested in talking to someone about getting funds under Public Law 874 and Public**

**Law 815. TEA put him in touch with Dr. Skipping, a federal employee of the U. S. Department of Education. He looked at the information about the Randolph Post School and found out that the school was qualified under both laws to get funding as a part of the military impact aid funds. A little while later Dr. Skipping came down and helped Mr. Hearn file the application, signed by General McDaniel, the Base Commander. The funding for this school was at that time approved for the military base only. It is operated like all other districts except that it has no taxable property for revenue (property taxes). Federal property is not taxable.**

**Over time the school had looked into being a part of the DOD (Department of Defense) school system but Mr. Hearn was advised that the school could never do that since P.L. 874 existed.**

**From 1950-1952 the school got some money from the base financial officer for the operation of the school. The original furniture was provided by the military. The school had no intercom system and no school bells. It was up to the teachers and students to keep up with the time.**

**This was about the time that the Wherry housing project was beginning. Once the permanent funding was approved, Mr. Hearn estimated the number of students that would be in school based on the number of houses that were here and were to be built. This gave him an idea of how many classrooms to build.**

**The architecture of the building had to be Spanish Colonial like the rest of the bases structures. The Base Commander dictated the style and the location of the new school. Mr. Harvey Smith was selected as the architect. There was not a formal ceremony for the new building as the faculty and staff were too busy moving in. “At the first PTA meeting following the opening of the school, many positive comments were made and everyone was extremely pleased with**

the new facility,” stated Mr. Hearn.

The actual construction of the building took about a year and a half. The school was ready for the students in September of 1952. It was not air-conditioned yet and was built to have three wings so that there would be a cross-ventilation between the three wings. Each of the wings has a “crawl-space under it and that’s where there are utility lines for sewage, heating, and water.

There was not a separate cafeteria or auditorium as a part of the original building. The students brought cold lunches and ate them in shifts as the space was not large enough for all students to eat at one time. The cafeteria and auditorium was in the main hall directly to the left as you entered the front entrance. The auditorium was where the Xerox room, Conference and Music rooms are now located. The kitchen was at the north end of the building in what is now room 31. A separate cafeteria was not built until the mid-fifties.

At that time the school was not allowed to have a flag outside in the front of the school. This is because there was a flag in front of the Taj Majal and this was the main building seen as you enter the base. The base did not want to distract from that flag and building.

When the school in this location opened there were fourteen teachers teaching kindergarten through seventh grade. Each grade level had its own classrooms together. Several grades (Kinder through fourth) had two separate classrooms within each grade level. There were approximately 375 total students including the nursery school. Between kindergarten and seventh grade there were approximately 310 students. Nursery and kindergarten students were in a separate building at the east end of the playground.

In the forties and fifties school started at 8:30 and stopped at 3:30. The students arrived at school on base buses. The students had art, music, and physical education every day. Each day began with the Pledge of Allegiance and the

**National Anthem. In the late thirties and forties there was a summer school that provided arts and crafts, sports, and various other activities. Many of the activities were held at the school.**

**This school has always purchased the latest in technology, materials, equipment or resources to help the students be the best they could be. From the first loudspeaker, to radio-phonographs, to filmstrip projectors, ceramic kilns, motion picture machines, tachistoscopes, the Electric Arithmetic Board, bioscopes, overhead projectors, desk top computers, laptops...if it was new and of quality, the school found a way to provide it for children to learn more efficiently and effectively. The district has always had its eyes on the future and what students need to know how to do when they grow up.**

**The school has always provided the students time and the transportation to various places on field trips. From the earliest years students have taken trips to places that would help them learn more about their world. The school yearbooks or scrapbooks have numerous pictures of places that students have traveled to in order to see and learn about new things.**

**In the 1959-1960 school year the school officially changed its name from the Randolph Field Post School, or the Children's Post School to the Randolph Public School.**

**Over the years one of the biggest changes that happened was when the new high school was built and the students in grades seven through twelve moved over to the new building. That gave the elementary building more room for more students that were coming to the base.**

**The sixties brought great physical change to the elementary school building and grounds. The garage with storage areas was built at the east end of the school for additional storage. The elementary school's enrollment was around 700 to 800 students during this time. In 1966-1967 the**

theme for the school scrapbook was “Parents and Teachers Together Mold Tomorrows”. It was obvious that parents were still as involved as ever in the school just as they are today.

Safety and care of the child were also still valued. Students and teachers were given immunizations provided by the base medical group. Students celebrated holidays in a lot of different ways. There were many parades, contests, and celebrations for special events. The teachers participated in a professional group, TSTA (Texas State Teachers’ Association) and Randolph was very active as Mr. Claude Hearn, Jr, the superintendent, was the state president in 1969.

Students were still entering and winning contests. Some that always seem to be present are the Dental Health and Fire Prevention contests. Sometimes they were poster contests and other times they were slogan contests. The school was shown in many papers with students getting prizes for winning these contests. Another popular contest in the sixties was KLRN’s “Who Knows the Answer?”. Many Randolph students won this contest also. Many students were winners at the Texas Reader’s Club Awards. There has never been a time when Randolph Elementary students were not recognized for accomplishments.

Students that have attended Randolph have had many chances to do special things after school. From the early years and especially from the seventies on there have been different ways that children have had to learn more about something or to participate in activities after school. Some clubs have been the Safety Club, Ecology Club, Art or Drama Club, Choir, Guitar, Creative Writing Club, Student Council, Origami Club (ROCK), HOST (Helping Other Students Together), Young Astronauts, and many more that have come and gone over the years. Again, Randolph Elementary has shown that it wants to address the individual child’s interests and as was the theme for the school in 1946-1947, “The school should be made to fit the child, not the child the school.”

## ZENITH GIA Students, 2002