

# Hyde Park History

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PHOTO / HYDE PARK HERALD

Ward Miller (right) at the Jackson Park Women's Garden in August

## A Conversation with Ward Miller

I was on the phone recently with Ward Miller, the executive director of the nonprofit group Preservation Chicago, to talk about some of the preservation issues facing the South Side.

My first question was prompted by the recent teardowns. What other buildings are endangered? Miller's response was quick: "Local churches." He noted rumors about a local church that is said to be up for sale even though it is rated "orange" on the city's preservation scale. And he bemoaned the loss of an old taxi garage at 56th and Stony Island. "There are lots of possible uses for it," he said, including an art gallery.

What is the best approach to saving buildings? In Miller's view, landmark districts are the answer. "Districts encourage reinvestment," he says, citing three possible local examples. "One is the area around the university campus. Woodlawn Ave. would be its spine. It would include Wright's Robie House, of course, but also the many other classic residential buildings on the surrounding streets."

A second potential district is Hyde Park Center, the area between 53rd and 55th streets that is known for its frame worker cottages. A third district could be the campus itself. Woodlawn has many more possibilities.

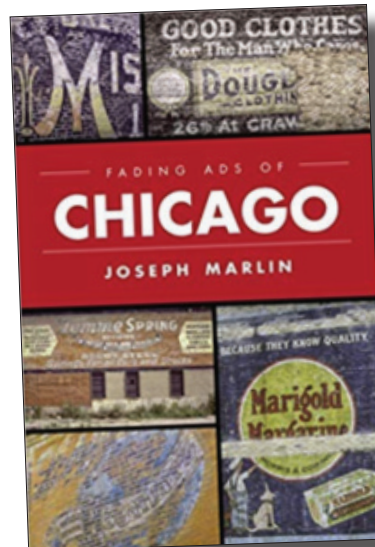
Miller notes that creating landmark districts is a way to involve the community in creating master plans and guidelines for new construction. It is a way to moderate growth in areas like the south side of the Midway and to protect buildings like Woodlawn's neoclassical Washington Park National Bank, which also faces demolition.

Finally, Miller is still not reconciled to the effects of the Obama Presidential Center on Jackson Park. "I'm not opposed to the Obama center itself. But the current plans are very heavy-handed. The center will eat up 20-plus acres of parkland in an historic Olmsted park and affect the landscape designs of people like Alfred Caldwell. And it will turn south Lake Shore Drive into a major highway.

"It sets a dangerous precedent that could open up every park system in the U.S. to development."

—*Ruth Knack*

## Walls to Watch



HPHS board member Joe Marlin is finding a good audience for his new book, *Fading Ads of Chicago*, published by the History Press. Marlin has photographed many of the advertisements that once dotted the Chicago brick walls of buildings throughout the metro area. About 150 color photos appear in the book.

While most of the ads have disappeared, he notes, others have lasted more than a century, thanks in part to the lead paint used at the time. Many of them are visible from expressways. Others can be seen close up—e.g., on the former Auto Row at 15th and Michigan. Some offer cures for rheumatism and other ailments.

# Welcome to the Point: The David Wallach Fountain

By *Robert A. Sideman*

Visitors to Promontory Point are greeted by a longtime favorite, the stone and bronze David Wallach Fountain. But not many know its story.

It begins with David Wallach's birth in eastern Germany in 1832 to Hirsch and Rena Wallach. By the time Wallach was in his teens, a sizable number of young, unattached, Jewish men were immigrating to the U.S. They typically started out as itinerant peddlers, some eventually opening stores of their own.

David Wallach came over in 1850, but the first that is known of him is seven years later, when he settled in Rockford and began to manage a clothing store opened by his brother. In 1866, he moved to Chicago, where he and several others formed Cahn, Wampold & Co., which manufactured men's clothing and sold it to retailers across the country. The firm was a progressive one, with a union shop. It was located in the garment district near South Wacker Drive. Wallach remained a partner until his retirement in 1891, a departure that was noted in the *Chicago Tribune*.

Wallach died in June 1894. He was survived by his wife, who died later that year, and a son. The considerable estate that he left behind went mainly to family, with gifts to a number of Jewish institutions.

But the bequest of particular interest to Hyde Parkers is the one Wallach made to the city of Chicago, to take effect a year after the death of his wife. This gift was for a fountain "for man and beast," to be located somewhere between 22nd and 39th streets east of Michigan Avenue. The Wallach family lived at 3332 S. Vernon Avenue (now part of the Lake Meadows development), so clearly his intent was to benefit those who lived nearby. The affluent, closely knit neighborhood was anchored by Michael Reese Hospital a few blocks away.

What Wallach probably had in mind was a glorified watering trough. What he got was something far grander.

In 1894, automobiles were just beginning to appear in Chicago. Meanwhile, horses, and their care,



PHOTO/CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT, CIRCA 1940.  
COURTESY BARBARA MAYERS

remained a matter of daily concern. At about the same time as Wallach's bequest, two watering troughs were donated by Charles Yerkes, the benefactor of the Williams Bay, Wisconsin, observatory that bears his name. Both were installed in 1896 upon the completion of Sheridan Road through the North Shore, one in Evanston at Sheridan and Clark and the other in Highland Park at Forest Avenue. The road was intended as a pleasure drive for "city equestrians, charioteers, and bicyclists."

As for Wallach's fountain, a bank account devoted to that purpose was opened by the estate, but no other action was taken. Eventually, in 1914, Wallach's sister in New York wrote to Chicago Mayor Carter Harrison, Jr., demanding action. The mayor's response was to designate the intersection of 35th Street, Cottage Grove, and what was then Vincennes Avenue as the location of the fountain. But nothing happened.

One reason for the extended delay was that automobiles were rapidly replacing horses as the preferred means of transportation, especially among the wealthy. Another reason was the changing character of Wallach's old neighborhood, with many of those he intended to benefit no longer living there. Yet another reason was that Wallach apparently never spoke with anyone in local government about his bequest. As a result, no city official felt sufficiently invested in the project to take it on. Apparently, his sister's plea was not enough. In Chicagoese, the fountain needed a "sponsor" to push it through to completion. Instead, prefiguring Abner Mikva by decades, it became the Fountain That Nobody Sent.

Years passed, then decades. By the 1930s, Wallach's son and daughter-in-law were living at 1765 E. 55th Street along with his grandson and his wife. It is not difficult to imagine the Wallach family looking out of their windows, watching Promontory Point turn into the handsome place it is, and deciding that here was the spot for the fountain. In 1937, as the Point was being completed, the heirs took the matter to court. They



were joined by the city, all parties seeking a resolution.

The result was a ruling providing that the fountain would be known as “The David Wallach Fountain” and that it would be owned and maintained by the Chicago Park District. Another provision provided that the fountain’s design would be determined by a committee that included Wallach family members, subject to final approval by the park district, and that the “man and beast” provision would be carried out liberally and artistically.

A final provision specified that, if the fountain cost less than the amount of Wallach’s bequest, the balance would go to a favorite cause of his, the Chicago Orphan Asylum, now the Chicago Child Care Society, in Hyde Park.

Five proposals were submitted. One was from Emory P. Seidel, the sculptor who designed the medallion on the face of the Louis Sullivan monument in Graceland Cemetery. Three proposals came from the Charles G. Blake Company, designers and builders of cemetery monuments, notably the distinctive Art Deco Holmes mausoleum at Graceland. The winning proposal was submitted by Frederick Hibbard and Elisabeth Haseltine Hibbard, husband and wife, for a stone fountain designed by Frederick and a bronze sculpture on top of it designed by Elisabeth.

Frederick C. Hibbard (1881-1950) came to Chicago from Missouri. He studied with Lorado Taft at the School of the Art Institute and went on to a national practice that ranged from Confederate monuments at



PHOTO / WIKIPEDIA

Shiloh and Vicksburg to a statue of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln in Racine, Wisconsin. In Chicago, Hibbard’s work ranges from the conventional, such as his statue of Mayor Carter Harrison, Sr., in Union Park at Washington and Ashland to the more modern pair of eagles flanking the entrance to Congress Plaza on the east side of Michigan Avenue. For the Wallach project, Hibbard actually created four fountains, three for humans and one for birds and dogs.

The fountain itself is carved from Dakota Mahogany granite that was quarried near St. Cloud, Minnesota. A visiting geologist pronounced it an unimaginable

1.9 billion years old, “containing feldspar, biolite, hornblende, and mica.” The fountain features two modernist decorative schemes. One is a carved leaf and bud design that is repeated around the fountain at the level of the inscription. The other is a series of identical Art Deco panels on the chamfered corners of each drinking fountain, also featuring leaves and buds.

Clearly, the Hibbards were making a gesture toward the original landscaping of the site. But the leaf and bud theme also makes a bow to families and children; the granite stopes thoughtfully allow four young children to be able to drink at once.

The Wallach Fountain has two offspring: Frederick Hibbard designed a fountain in 1945 for Ogden Park at 65th and Racine, and another two years later at Trumbull Park at 104th and Oglesby. Both fountains are of the same granite as the Wallach Fountain but considerably more modest in their designs.

Like her husband, Elisabeth Haseltine (1894-1950) studied with Lorado Taft, eventually becoming his assistant. The couple’s joint studio at 930 E. 60th Street was practically in the shadow of Taft’s Midway Studios. Haseltine graduated from the University of Chicago in 1917 and later became an assistant professor of art at the university.

Haseltine specialized in sculpture of small animals and exhibited with many groups, including several women’s art organizations. For the Wallach Fountain, she created a clay model of the fawn and sent it to be cast in bronze by the Gorham Manufacturing Company of Rhode Island, best known for its use of silver. (This was Gorham’s second appearance in Hyde Park. For the Columbian Exposition of 1893, the firm created a life-size statue of Christopher Columbus, intended to draw attention to its work. The statue was made of 30,000 ounces of sterling silver, at the time the largest silver casting ever.) The fawn for the Wallach Fountain, resting on a bed of bronze leaves and branches, was modeled after a doe that Haseltine studied carefully at the Lincoln Park Zoo.

Once the Hibbards were chosen, the clay model they created became the center of a brief publicity campaign—newspaper photos and articles—culminating in the dedication of the fountain on December 21, 1939 (why a fountain in Chicago would be dedicated in December is a fair question). The dedication ceremony included the presentation of the fountain by a representative of the Wallach estate and formal acceptance by a park district commissioner.

The fountain has had its difficult moments. In 1981, the bronze fawn was stolen. It was recovered shortly after in a West Side warehouse. Upon its return it was securely fastened, this time with bronze bolts and epoxy glue. ▶④

◀🕒 Age also took its toll. By the early 21st century, leaks and other problems appeared. Its saviors were two sisters, who wanted to honor their late parents, Dr. Robert and Elizabeth Wissler. The sisters, Barbara Mayers and Mary Graham, grew up in Hyde Park and spent many pleasant hours at the Point. They generously donated funds for restoration of the fountain, which was completed in 2016.

Today, in its 80th year, the Wallach Fountain continues to bubble merrily along, admired by bikers and bridesmaids, lovers and law students, collies and Chihuahuas. The art critic of the Chicago Tribune, reviewed the fountain during its first season in words that could be written today:

“The fountain is in a perfect setting, against a background of shrubbery and trees. The simplicity of the base is crowned by the tranquil yet alert body of the wide-eyed fawn, which is curled up the better to dream in comfort. The fountain is one of those perfect things that Chicago is the richer for having.”



Astrid Fuller mural at the SSA

## Good News and Bad

**In August**, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks voted unanimously to grant preliminary landmark status to the 22-story Promontory Apartments at 5530 Lake Shore Drive. The high rise, designed by architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in cooperation with Pace Associates, was completed in 1946. At about the same time, Mies was creating a master plan for IIT. The building has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1996.

**Earlier this year**, members of the Promontory Point Conservancy unveiled a plaque to commemorate the inclusion of the Point on the National Register of Historic Places. Read about the event at [PromontoryPoint.org](http://PromontoryPoint.org).

**The bad news** is the number of teardowns that have taken place this year in Hyde Park and surrounding

neighborhoods. The buildings lost include a number of distinguished houses on streets surrounding the University of Chicago campus. On the south side of the Midway, several mid-century modern university buildings are being replaced by far larger structures, inevitably changing the character of the street. One example is the three-story Charles Stewart Mott industrial research center (Schmidt, Garden & Erikson), which is being replaced by the eight-story Rubenstein Forum.

**A loss of another kind** is Astrid Fuller's 1984 mural in the stairwell of architect Mies van der Rohe's School of Social Service Administration. The fanciful painting, which traces the history of the social work profession was removed in mid-September. University officials said it was being removed in part to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus, the famous German design school.

## Notes

**Nancy Hays exhibit** Planning (and fundraising) are under way on two fronts: to organize the archives of the longtime Hyde Park photographer at the Regenstein Library and to prepare an exhibit of her work at HPHS. Hays, who died in 2007, was a founder of Friends of the Parks and the Jackson Park Advisory Council. The Nancy Hays exhibit will be at the Historical Society until December 31.



Nancy Hays photograph

**Two useful outlets** One is the nonprofit Creative Chicago Reuse Exchange (CCRx). It provides supplies for teachers in all grades, according to its founder Barbara Koenen, a Hyde Parker. Volunteers wanted. See the website: [www.creativechirx.org](http://www.creativechirx.org). A second outlet is the Special Collections Research Center at the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library. Among the U of C-related items it is looking for: posters, photos, T-shirts--and even your lecture notes. Find out more at [universityarchives@lib.uchicago.edu](mailto:universityarchives@lib.uchicago.edu).



**Barbara Flynn Currie** The 10-term state representative and long-time house majority leader retired from the legislature earlier this year. She notes that both she and Rep. Carol Moseley Braun benefited from the “bullet voting” in effect in Illinois when she started out. Currie has long been a supporter of HPHS; she recently donated to the archives a large collection of materials from her campaigns and her time in office.

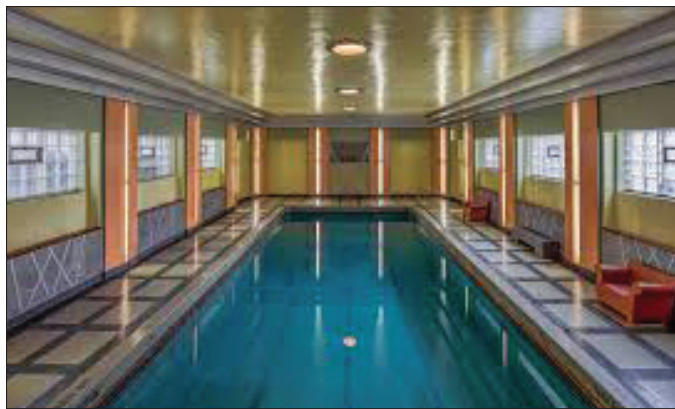
**Prize winner** Hyde Park novelist Sara Paretsky is the winner of the Sue Grafton Memorial Award given by G.P. Putnam Sons for the best mystery featuring a female protagonist. The book is *Shell Game*, published in 2018 by William Morrow, and the protagonist is V.I. Warshawski.

## Page Turners

The book club cosponsored by HPHS and the Chicago Hyde Park Village continues to draw good size audiences to its monthly meetings on a wide range of topics. In many cases, discussions are led by the authors themselves.

Such was the case on May 20, when *Chicago by the Book: 101 Publications that Shaped the City and Its Image* was introduced by editor Susan Rossen, and contributor Neil Harris. The book is a product of the Caxton Club, which has been part of Chicago’s publishing life since 1895.

Harris noted that at least 40 of the 101 books on the list had a Hyde Park connection. The authors of



The Powhatan pool

PHOTO / JAMES CAULFIELD, OPEN HOUSE CHICAGO

the concise, 600-word entries come from a wide range of fields, and their topics range from serious history to a review of a magazine called *Weird Tales*.

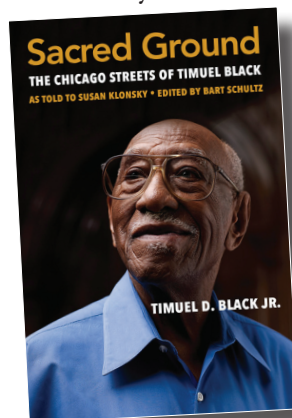
At an earlier book club session, members were invited to talk about their favorite books about Chicago. My choice was the beautifully illustrated *Art*

*Deco in Chicago: Designing Modern America*, edited by architectural historian Robert Bruegmann.

Hyde Park and environs get good coverage in this impressive tome. Places and periods include the Century of Progress International Exposition, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Midway Gardens, St. Thomas the Apostle, the Ritz Garage on 55th Street, the Powhatan and Narragansett apartments in Indian Village, and the 47th Street Lake Shore Drive overpass. Lots of lesser known places pop up as well. An essay by Teri J. Edelstein introduces the text. **RK**

## Tim Black in Print (and in Person)

The publication of Tim Black’s latest book, which roughly coincided with the celebration of his 100th birthday, turns out to be a gift to us all. The book



is *Sacred Ground: The Chicago Streets of Timuel Black*. It will be particularly meaningful to South Siders, who are familiar with the places and the people Black talks about (he tells his story to writer Susan Klonsky).

Black starts out with his family’s arrival from the South in 1919, the year of the infamous race riot. He continues to the present with stories of politicians, musicians, teaching colleagues, and others that he befriended over the years—from Martin Luther King, Jr., to Harold Washington. Most of the anecdotes are local but some take us far afield, to the battlefields of World War II. His account of helping to free the prisoners of a Nazi death camp is particularly moving. His frank advice to the next generation is invaluable. **RK**



Check out the elegant new sign on the door of the historical society.

PHOTO / MICHAL SAFAR

# The Faulkner School— Far More than a Finishing School

By *Frances S. Vandervoort*

Peep, peep, peep cried the baby chicks as they skittered along the hallway, followed by an enchanted ninth-grader. It was my first day at Faulkner, and I had no experience at all with teenagers. But I was determined to give the students the hands-on experience I felt they needed.

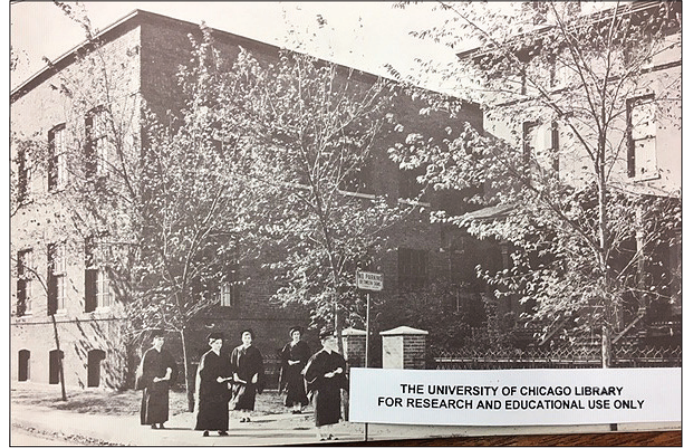
The Faulkner School for Girls was founded in 1909 by the Faulkner family, vigorous Presbyterians who moved to Chicago from the East. After settling in the Kenwood neighborhood, Samuel Faulkner set out to raise funds for the first school building on the northwest corner of Dorchester and 48th Street. Faulkner was followed in 1917 by the Harvard School for Boys at 4731 S. Ellis Ave. and a year later by the St. George School for Girls. The two schools merged in 1962 while Faulkner remained independent.

Until the late 1950s, Faulkner occupied a fine red brick building designed by local architect Solon Beman (known among other things for the nearby Blackstone Library and the community of Pullman). In 1959, for reasons both financial and cultural, school officials decided to relocate to South Shore, almost directly across the street from the South Shore Country Club. (In 1962, the original building became the home of the newly established Ancona Montessori School.)

It was at around this time that Faulkner acquired its reputation as a “finishing school”—which it never was. In fact, the primary goal of its outstanding staff was to prepare its young students for college.

The years following the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., were in many ways times of national turmoil. I joined the faculty as a science teacher in 1969 during those troubling times. Local public schools were closed to me because of my lack of practice teaching, so I jumped at the opportunity to teach at Faulkner.

Suddenly, I was faced with planning lessons for an eighth-grade basic science class, freshman biology, and advanced placement biology. Fortunately, the classes



“Old” Faulkner around 1910

were small—usually no more than a dozen students. I soon learned that lab equipment was at

a minimum—a few beakers, balances, and other measuring equipment, books, blackboard, and chalk. As teachers all learn to do, I improvised.

I had done graduate research in the animal behavior laboratory at the University of Chicago, studying the behavior of a variety of creatures—including chickens. I learned that baby chicks just out of the shell will adopt as parents anything they can follow within the first few hours after hatching. In this case, the objects followed were teenage girls, who squealed in delight as they opened the light-proof boxes containing the chicks.

I invited several figures from various scientific fields to speak to the students. Harry Volkman, the popular radio and television meteorologist talked about weather patterns in the Chicago area.

Another guest was Dr. George Beadle, retired president of the University of Chicago—and a Nobel Prize winner. Beadle, who grew up on a farm in Nebraska, spent his retirement years investigating the biological and cultural history of corn and grew unusual varieties on the few empty patches of land that still existed on campus in the 1970s. He arrived at Faulkner with several flower pots full of green corn shoots and described his work as “a-maise-ingly corny.”

A few months later, on April 22, 1970, Earth Day came to Faulkner with a bang. Guest speakers described water and air pollution in Chicago and beyond. Students sang environmental ditties from the popular musical “Hair” and were thrilled to see themselves on the evening television news.

Faulkner produced its share of fine graduates, including author and actress Emily Kimbrough and national golf champion Carol Mann. Kimbrough, who was born in Indiana, moved to Chicago with her





Groundbreaking for new school, 1958. Mayor Richard J. Daley, with spade in center; Principal Marion Davis at right in plaid jacket with spade.

family in 1899, when she was 12. After college, she and her Bryn Mawr classmate Cornelia Otis Skinner took a grand tour of Europe. Her account of their travels, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, became a popular film in 1944. Carol Mann graduated from the “old” Faulkner School in Kenwood in 1959—the last class. She ended up winning 38 Ladies Professional Golf Association Events and became a member of the LPGA Hall of Fame.

Marion Davis became the principal of Faulkner in 1953 after the death of Elizabeth Faulkner, daughter of the school’s founder. Davis was strong, dedicated, and smart. She led the move to a new location at a difficult time when the school was facing declining attendance, retirement of senior teachers, and changing neighborhood demographics. Sadly, when the school was on its last legs in 1972, she was abruptly fired.

Toward the end, in an effort to broaden its base, Faulkner decided to admit boys. It also added two male teachers. None of this was enough, however, to counter the demographic and cultural changes that were under way.

A sense of foreboding was in the air during my last year at Faulkner, 1971-72. Only six students graduated that June and fewer than 30 were registered in the high school the following fall. The lower grades were only slightly better off.

Teachers left for summer vacation not knowing what the next academic year would bring. In September 1972, eight of us were invited to a special meeting at the school, only to be told by the chairman of the board of trustees that our positions were to be eliminated.

The school limped along for one more year. The high school closed completely in June 1973. The lower grades lingered for some years with a new set of administrators and teachers, closing finally in 2011. Shortly after, the building was demolished.

Today, all that remains of this noble effort in private education is a vacant lot, surrounded by broken wire fencing and serving as a parking lot for neighborhood cars.

Faulkner left profound memories for those who taught and studied there. The school is gone, but its memories remain.

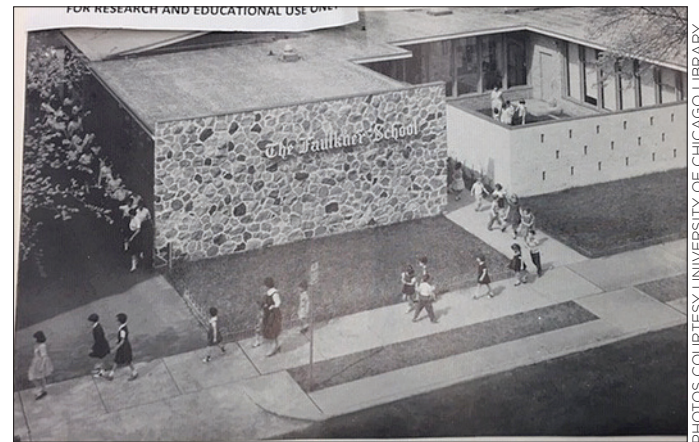
## We remember

**Abbie Kleppa** attended Faulkner for only three years, but the school had a profound effect on her. As a third-grader, she and several of her classmates were behind in reading. The turning point was when a kindergarten teacher took time to teach phonics to the small group. “Every step of the way, when students needed something more, the Faulkner teachers carved out a way to address the need,” she says.

**Susan Kasik** was in one of the first science classes I taught at Faulkner. She recalls “small classes with a combination of scholastic excellence and lots of camaraderie.”

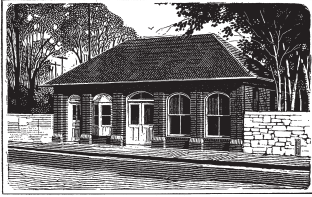
**Annette Meyer Ruff**, who edited the school yearbook, has good and bad memories. On the plus side: “teachers who were fighting to bring Faulkner into the current decade.”

*A longer version of this article can be found on the HPHS website: [hydeparkhistory.org](http://hydeparkhistory.org).*



New Faulkner school shortly after opening in 1959

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Telephone: **773-493-1893**

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