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## A Letter from the Headmaster



A few weeks back I spent some time with our Young Knights. On this occasion I was sharing my violin with the boys. I demonstrated the high and low notes that the instrument produces. We laughed at the silly sounds the violin can make, and I asked for their favorites. "The Wheels on the Bus" was by far the most popular request.

These Young Knights are poised to develop in wisdom and stature and favor with both God and man this year. It is amazing to see our mission statement come alive throughout the school. Our youngest boys are learning each of our seven virtues in age appropriate ways. From learning to take turns to showing empathy, the boys are being led by teachers who glorify God each day in the work they do with our youngest learners.

Fast forward to sixth grade, our boys are learning to be leaders to these youngest students. We teach the boys that they are a constant example to the younger boys. It is a big responsibility, but it is one that the boys take to heart and strive to do their best.

The ten year path from Young Knight to the sixth grade is filled with many milestones, and our true mission can be found at each step along the way.

Sincerely,

Steve Hancock Headmaster



### **New website!**

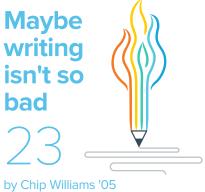
Along with our updated viewbook, we launched a new version of our inhouse developed website: pdsmemphis.org



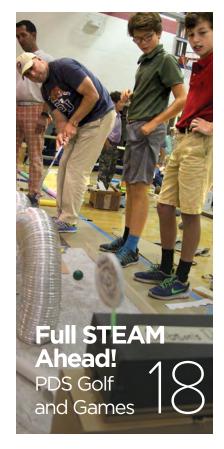
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# Jeb Losch '16 Represents PDS at State Geography Bee



**Q:** Asia's largest expanse of taiga, a type of forest, lies just south of the tundra in which country?

**Q:** Name the country off the southwest coast of India that is made up of a cluster of almost two dozen atolls.

The above are a sample of questions answered by PDS students in the first annual school Geography Bee.

The National Geographic Bee is an annual competition organized by the National Geographic Society, designed to inspire and reward students' curiosity about the world. Each year, thousands of schools across the United States participate in the National Geographic Bee, competing for college scholarships and the glory of being the National Geographic

Bee Champion.

PDS participated in the National Geographic Bee competition for the first time in 2016. Early morning practices, complete with international foods, helped prepare students. Fifth and sixth grade boys were given a preliminary test, and twenty one students competed on January 27th for the title of PDS Geography Bee champion. Ashley Park '16 and Jeb Losch '16 competed in the final round, with Jeb being named the 2016 Bee champion.

"I was very excited for PDS to have the Bee because I have always loved studying geography", says Jeb. The prep sessions included sample questions, games, apps, and current events. Mrs. Darilyn Christenbury, Geography Bee sponsor, planned each session to cover specific areas of the competition, including U.S. National Parks, rivers and mountain ranges of the world, natural resources, and cities of the world.

"One character trait I learned while I was studying for the Bee was to never give up," recalls Jeb. "Geography is a very broad subject that covers the whole entire world, which is enormous! At times while I was studying, I would feel overwhelmed because there was so much to learn and get in my brain." Jeb came up with a strategy to narrow his focus. "Eventually, I learned that it is best to stick to one

#### SCHOOL NEWS

topic every night or so and go from there. Studying was sometimes tough, but I was encouraged by my family members and Mrs. Christenbury. Learning more and more about geography was fun."

After being named PDS champion, Jeb took a seventy question online test and was one of 100 students to qualify for the state Bee. Held in Nashville on April 1, 2016, the Tennessee Geography Bee included students in fourth through eighth grades. "The state bee took it to a whole new level," says Jeb. "There were people who studied 24/7 or were cramming in information right before the competition. I am really thankful that I got to that point. I would encourage fourth, fifth and sixth graders to definitely give it a

shot. It is a great experience, and it gives you a better understanding of the world."

This year, interested sixth grade students may choose the Geography Bee preparation class as an elective. The 2017 PDS Geography Bee will be held in January 2017.

Jeb offers these words of advice for future Bee participants: "Try your best, don't get discouraged, enjoy the learning, and don't stress too much. In the end, my experience was a blast."

Answers: Russia, the Maldives







## Millar and McGreger Retire

The single best asset PDS has is its teachers. At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, two of our best chose to retire after teaching at PDS for a combined 51 years of service.

Dabney Millar retired after spending a total of 28 years teaching — 26 years with third-grade boys and two years with Senior Kindergarten. Betty McGreger joined PDS in 1992 and spent 23 years as Senior Kindergarten teacher.

# Faculty Packages Meals for Mid-South Food Bank

Presbyterian Day School faculty and staff packaged 24,840 meals for those in need in the Memphis community during inservice in August.

Hunger fact: 23.4% of Mid-South children are food insecure. That is 122,870 children who do not know if they will eat today.





#### THE SOONER, THE BETTER:

# Young Knights are ripe for learning

**ONSTANT MOVEMENT. TEMPER TANTRUMS.** 

DOZENS OF "WHY" QUESTIONS.

OVERTURNED CONTAINERS OF TOYS.

If any of these things sound familiar, you might live with a toddler. It's tempting to label this stage "the terrible twos," but at PDS, we couldn't disagree more. The toddler years are a time when a child's brain absorbs information at astoundingly high rates and makes sense of the world in the most imaginative ways. That's why, in 2015, we launched our Young Knights program — to enable young boys to reach their ultimate potential during this critical learning period.

At the heart of the Young Knights program is our knowledge and understanding of 2-year-old boys and how they learn best. This engaging, play-based program addresses the cognitive, social, emotional, language, motor, and moral development of each boy while instilling in him a love of learning. Additionally, the program responds to the needs of single-parent households and families with two working parents by offering a place where their toddlers will be nurtured and intellectually challenged.

"Children need to be in the company of children their own age in order to make the most significant gains socially," Early Childhood Head Debbie Isom said. "It's important for them to begin expanding boundaries and forming significant attachments beyond the home."

#### Show me the research

Healthy brain development is maximized by rich early childhood experiences. A stimulating environment during the first few years of a child's life allows for a greater number of connections to be made in the brain. According to University of Washington neuroscience professor Eric H. Chudler, people are born with the majority of the neurons that they will have in their lifetime. After birth, the brain continues to grow, and by the age of 2, it is about 80 percent of its adult size.



The importance of playtime. Research shows strong links between creative play and language, physical, social/emotional, and cognitive development.

THE SOONER, THE BETTER:
YOUNG KNIGHTS ARE RIPE FOR LEARNING

# A day in the life of a Young Knight

The class day is divided into short, meaningful segments designed to make the most of a 2-year-old's attention span. Because the boys are adjusting to being in school for the first time, PDS offers flexible start times and half- and full-day schedules. Our maximum class size is 14, with two teachers in each classroom and a shared assistant.

- 7:20 to 8:00 a.m. (optional)Early Room activities
- 8:00 to 8:30 a.m.Free play and table activities
- 8:30 a.m.
   Morning Meeting: calendar, weather, devotion, and prayer followed by snacks
- 9:15 a.m.Recess
- 10:00 a.m.
   Carpet time: stories, songs, and discussions of the weekly theme
- 10:15 a.m.
   Center time: Four learning centers and one-on-one teacher time
- 10:45 a.m.
   Discovery time: science experiments and/or cooking activities
- 11:30 a.m.Say goodbye to half-day students while full-day students have lunch
- 12:15 p.m.Nap time
- 1:45 to 2:10 p.m.Enrichment activities



Zero to Three, a resource for the healthy development of babies and young children, states that between birth and age 3, the brain produces about 700 new neural connections per second. That means trillions of connections are made in the first months of life! To foster healthy neural connections, a rich learning environment is paramount. The more opportunities for stimulation and social interaction in the early years, the better.

#### The teachers work magic

All four Young Knights teachers hold education degrees. The instruction they provide and the patience they exhibit make them champions in the classroom. They are beloved by the boys and their parents alike.

"The challenge with 2-year-old boys is recognizing what frustrates them and helping them learn more advanced ways of expressing that frustration," teacher Lacey Ledlow said. "We have to teach them how to use words and react in acceptable ways when working through conflict."

Being in an all-boy environment is especially helpful for the students. In general, boys like to move around while learning and enjoy hands-on projects. Also, they are often motivated by competitive learning opportunities. The Young Knights program, and the whole of PDS, takes boys' learning affinities and weaves them into every aspect of the curriculum.

"As a mom of a 3-year-old girl, I have definitely noticed some differences in the way my boys learn and the way my daughter learns," teacher Sophie Edwards said. "She could sit and read stories all day, but that's not going to happen in a classroom of boys. I have found that they do some of their best learning in short, five-minute center rotations where they can engage with one another and an activity for an amount of time that is manageable for them. It is so much fun to watch them interact!"

#### The proof is in the parent (satisfaction)

"My kids all had an 'All About Me' day at Parents' Day Out, but during the 'All About Me' unit in Young Knights, the teachers took a comment about pets and stretched it into an entire activity," parent Emily Bowie said. "All the boys made pet turtles during school and took them on a walk. It was precious, creative, and age-appropriate all at the same time."

With small class sizes, the Young Knights program allows for a lot of customization and the tailoring of lessons and teaching methods to meet individual needs. Whether he is bold or hesitant, enjoys being more active or playing quietly, our teachers have the resources and expertise to meet each student where he is most comfortable.

"Our son is pretty shy, and we loved the idea that if he started at PDS in Young Knights, he would have

an entire decade in the same school," parent Liz Glotzbach said. "It's only October, but our child has grown so much. He is more confident and has never been so excited to go anywhere."

The toddler years are a time when a child's brain absorbs information at astoundingly high rates and makes sense of the world in the most imaginative ways.

#### Well on their way

Over the course of the program, our Young Knights not only learn how to buckle their seatbelts and use the potty, but they also experience expanded vocabularies and growing friendships. When they leave the classroom as 3-year-olds, they exhibit more mature self-control and listening skills, which are so important to future school success.

"Watching a student transform from a toddler to a young boy is a fascinating process," Ledlow said. "The growth they exude in this one school year is inspirational and keeps me coming back to do it again each year."

Although we can't guarantee there won't be anymore overturned toy containers, we can promise that our Young Knights will mature into eager prekindergartners who are ready for a lifetime of learning. The journey is worth it.



# Red Rover, Red Rover, Send All the Boys Over!

At Presbyterian Day School, we choose to know boys. Boys aren't just loud, squirmy, messy, and sometimes smelly; they are energetic, curious, and competitive.



In a game of Red Rover, two teams line up on opposite sides. Hands are linked together. Individual team members run back and forth trying to capture players for their team. At first glance, the game seems simple. Anyone who has ever experienced this game, however, knows that it is not quite that easy.

The game begins with debate. The players huddle together in conversation. Whom should the team choose to call? For a team to be successful, they must understand the design of the game. In the same way, for a school to be successful, it must understand the design of its students.

Parents making decisions about schools are going to experience feelings of uncertainty. In fact, they might feel caught in a game of Red Rover. Coed vs. single-sex? All involved, including psychologists, have various opinions, and most are more than

willing to share their thoughts or engage in debate. In the book Why Gender Matters, Dr. Leonard Sax discusses gender differences and explains that girls and boys enter the classroom with different needs, abilities, and goals. Most experts, including Dr. Sax, agree that boys are in crisis. The trouble is that most schools are not designed with boys in mind. Instead, they celebrate students who can sit still, listen carefully, respond verbally, and multitask — and girls are usually the ones who fit that description. It should be no surprise then that females now surpass males in college enrollment. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 11.7 million females will attend college in fall 2016, compared with 8.8 million males. Many advocates of single-sex education feel that brain-based differences should not only be acknowledged





and accepted, but also used to enhance student success among both genders.

At PDS, we choose to know boys. Boys aren't just loud, squirmy, messy, and sometimes smelly; they are energetic, curious, and competitive. Ask any boy at any school, "What is your favorite part of the school day?" Inevitably, the answer is recess or P.E. This is not surprising. In fact, brain research, as explained in Boys and Girls Learn Differently by Michael Gurian, reveals that in addition to having higher rates of metabolism, boys' brains secrete less serotonin than girls'. This makes boys more impulsive and fidgety. Gurian says that boys need movement to not only relieve impulsive behavior but also to stimulate their brains.

Because we intentionally seek to be a boys' school, research of this nature drives both our school schedule and classroom design. Elementary boys attend P.E. on a daily basis, and opportunities for unstructured recess exist for all grade levels. Classroom spaces are designed with flexible seating arrangements, allowing students to get up and move around rather than always sitting in desks. It is common to see boys standing at their desks, working in classroom nooks, or sitting in bouncy chairs.

In 2009, a study was commissioned by the International Boys School Coalition to identify successful teaching practices for boys in schools across six countries. The study revealed that boys often experience successful learning outcomes when the lesson includes an element of surprise, a hands-on activity, a moment of competition, or an opportunity to role-play. This supports what we see in action every day at PDS. Our boys are much more excited to engage in learning activities when competition is involved.

Step into a first-grade classroom during a game of Sparkle (a spelling game), and you will see boys light up as they practice their spelling skills. An all-boys setting allows the students to try out new roles and experiences without the worry of girls being present. In fifth and sixth grade, Mr. Hatcher invites boys to bring history to life by acting out scenes from America's past. Walk into the lunchroom, and you might find a sixth-grader standing on a table reciting Teddy

Roosevelt's

"The Man in the Arena." We completely agree that boys learn best by being active and experiencing hands-on learning. Learning about plants? We're going to grow them. Studying electricity? Let's construct a circuit.

Abigail James, author of *Teaching the Male Brain*, cautions that boys might give up on school if they cannot find ways to be successful. In a coed setting, it can be overwhelming for boys to compete with girls' early acquisition of verbal skills. Girls will read earlier, and often that advantage continues through high school. As a result, boys struggling to keep up can begin to think that reading is not for them. It is important for us to push back on this mindset by helping our boys experience an adventurous reading life.

PDS teachers encourage boys to choose high-interest books within a comfortable reading range. We intentionally teach reading in small-group settings and introduce our students to books featuring strong male characters. Although boys often prefer nonfiction, we encourage them to engage with all types of reading genres. A quick glance at a PDS boy's reading log might reveal time spent reading the sports section of the newspaper, a fantasy book by J.R.R. Tolkien, or a historical graphic novel. Our reading workshop approach accepts that boys develop on a different timetable than girls and allows them to build an authentic reading life.

There is no debate that the single-sex environment at PDS provides unique learning opportunities that are specifically geared to meet boys' needs. While we spend time studying effective pedagogical strategies, we also know that the relationships we develop with our students are often the backbone of their school experience. Michael Reichert and Richard Hawley explore the importance of relational teaching in their recent book, I Can Learn from You: Boys as Relational Learners. Reichert and Hawley share several studies that indicate relationship as one of the most important aspects of a boy's educational experience. Boys appreciate teachers who get to know them, and they will often find motivation to overcome academic challenges when engaged in a positive teacher-student relationship. PDS boys are lucky to be impacted not only by teachers but also by coaches, mentors, and administrators.

Each step in the journey at PDS is a strategic decision to bring out the best in our boys. We invite all boys to join us in the journey — Red Rover, Red Rover, send ALL the boys over!



Sixth-grader Zachary Michael recites Theodore Roosevelts' "The Man in the Arena" during lunch.

"It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat." -

**Theodore Roosevelt** 



Elementary boys attend P.E. on a daily basis, and opportunities for unstructured recess exist for all grade levels.



## **Scott Anderson '86**

**Outgoing Alumni Association Board Chair** 

A heartfelt thanks goes to **Scott Anderson '86**, outgoing Chair of the PDS Alumni Association Board. As an Alumni Association Board member, Scott initiated the first PDS Golf Tournament and helped to strengthen the Alumni Board. Scott and his wife Erika have 2 boys, Charlie '16 and Mac '18. We asked Scott a little bit about himself and his memories of PDS as well as some of this thoughts regarding the Alumni Association Board.

After leaving PDS, Scott graduated from Memphis University School in 1992, and then Southern Methodist University in 1997. Currently with Wunderlich Securities, Scott also was a Vice President in the Private Client Group at Morgan Keegan.

# Share some of your favorite memories from your PDS days.

I remember Mrs. Virgin in 1st grade, Len Sumner the headmaster, Superman stamps, ice cream trips to Swenson's, being on the 6th grade student council, picking up NY Jets Running back Freeman McNeil from the airport in a limo, sports banquet with my dad, the St. Louis trip with my dad, and seeing how fast you can do math calculations/quizzes.

PDS provided me a wonderful, nurturing elementary school education. Perhaps more importantly, it provided a solid foundation of principals and a belief in my abilities to set and achieve numerous personal goals that I utilize today.

# What did you most enjoy about being the Chair of the PDS Alumni Association Board?

I enjoyed participating in creative activities to get our alumni involved with PDS which, as an elementary school, is tough to do. I also enjoyed seeing firsthand the hard work and great care the board of trustees takes in planning for the near future and beyond. Finally, as a parent of Charlie '16 and Mac '18, seeing firsthand that they benefit from the numerous and diverse programs beyond the fantastic, Christian based education makes me proud. To see the success of the programs that help build my children into fine young men is so rewarding.

## **Alumni Notes**

#### Have news for a future issue? Send it to alumni@pdsmemphis.org



Dr. Erik Hess '87 of the Mayo Clinic, has been lauded for his ER-decision making aid for patients called

the Chest Pain Choice. This aid includes information on the diagnosis and displays a patient's 45 day risk of a heart attack and options for care. Dr. Hess has a B.A. in Philosophy from Wheaton College and MD from the University of Alabama School of Medicine.



Congratulations to
Austin Pretsch '07 for
being named Student
Body President at
Furman University!

PDS alumnus Cameron Kinley '11



is a standout football player at Lausanne. As he enters his senior season, he has had multiple college

football offers from the following schools: Navy, Army, Stetson, Air Force, Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Southeast Missouri, Penn, UT Martin, Morehead St., Harding, Columbia, and Cornell. William Douglas '11 has accepted a scholarship from SMU

in college basketball.
William had multiple
offers from colleges
such as Memphis,

Ole Miss, Notre Dame, Michigan, TCU, St. Louis, and several others. Douglas, a senior at Christian Brothers High School, was a finalist for last year's Division 2-AA Mr. Basketball award.

Toby Baker '06 is the starting punter for the University of Arkansas. He is a nominee for the Ray Guy Award which is given to the nation's best punter. He's averaging 47.8 yards per punt — 4th in the country and 1st in the SEC!

Two Presbyterian Day School alumni from our 2010 class finished the school year at the top of Memphis University School's 2016 graduating class. Patton Orr '10 finished as valedictorian and Saatvik Mohan '10 finished as the salutatorian.

Congratulations to eight PDS alums from Presbyterian Day School's class of 2010 who received athletic scholarships this past spring:

Owen Galvin '10 Basketball, Rhodes College Max Murray '10 Baseball, Sewanee David Nelson '10 Football, Lafayette College Trammel Robinson '10 Lacrosse, Lynchburg College Parker Sexton '10 Golf, University of Texas David Watkins '10 Football, Birmingham Southern Louis Martin '10 Golf. Millsaps Drew Crain '10 Lacrosse, Sewanee

Macon Orr '11 returned as guest speaker for chapel on August



26. He talked about being a "True Friend" one of PDS's Seven Virtues of Manhood. Macon is also an Eagle Scout. Only five percent of scouts attain Eagle Scout status.



#### **2016-2017 Alumni Board**

David Work '67, chairman, Hunter Adams '00, Scott Anderson '86, Eric Beaty '95, Clay Chapman '97, George Coors '03, Johnny Dillon '03, Oliver Doughtie '86, Jay Edwards '01, Kent Francis '02, Philip Freeburg '75, John Hammons '99, Harrison Hunt '01, Owen Mercer '02, Buddy Morrison '03, Russell Nenon '00, Rob Park '99, Jim Rainer '71, Jimbo Rainer '99, William Ware '01



## **David Work '67**

Alumni Association Board Chair

As Presbyterian Day School continues to reconnect with it's alumni, we appreciate the dedication and leadership of the PDS Alumni Association Board. We are proud to announce that David Work '67 has accepted the invitation to Chair the 2016-2017 Alumni Association Board. David has served on the Alumni Board for the last 2 years and has been instrumental in the successful expansion of the PDS Golf Tournament as well as providing support for other alumni and school events. We recently caught up with David and asked him a few questions about himself, memories at PDS, and goals as Chair of the Alumni Association Board.

# Share some of your favorite memories from your PDS days.

Proverbs 6:6, Indoor Field Days, acing a 3rd grade spelling test only to have points deducted for misspelling my name. Under my name, the teacher, Mrs. Bartlett wrote, "haste makes waste."

While not a favorite memory, a vivid memory is of November 22, 1963 and going to chapel to learn of President Kennedy's assassination and leaving school early with Dr. Shed Caffey, who was picking up our carpool of 5 boys in his Volkswagen Beetle.

PDS provided a solid learning foundation that helped both my school and work career. Also, developing positive friendship skills at PDS has been a life-long benefit.

# What are your goals as incoming PDS Alumni director?

To work with fellow alumni board members to clarify the mission of the Alumni Association and to improve awareness of the great work that is currently accomplished at PDS through more engagement with the school by fellow alumni.



# Holly Lindsey Senior Kindergarten

HOLLY LINDSEY JOINED PDS IN 2004 as our first director of the Child Development Center. Upon receiving her Masters in Elementary Education from The University of Memphis, Mrs. Lindsey began teaching SK. Holly and her husband Tyler have two sons, Cole, age 7 and Austin, age 3, and a daughter, Taylor, age 3.

#### How did you get interested in teaching?

My family has deep roots in the education field. I have been surrounded by outstanding teachers my entire life. I can remember almost all of my teachers, and I can tell you exactly which teachers left impressions on me and why. When a position became available in Senior Kindergarten at PDS, I applied, and thirteen years later I still love every moment of it!

#### Why do you teach?

Elementary school and middle school were difficult for me. There were times that I did not enjoy school and would do anything to avoid going. I teach because I want children to love school, to always find learning and knowledge exciting and full of endless road maps. I truly believe God called me to teach and has laid out this path for me. Teaching is an endless adventure, and it is always changing. I still get excited to learn new teaching techniques and styles. Most importantly I think teaching is FUN!

It is also important to me to have the freedom to speak openly about being a Christian and to be able to share my faith with each one of my students. I believe PDS also helps me grow in my faith by allowing me to pray openly for our students, our parents, our school, and our colleagues.

# What do you enjoy doing when you are not teaching at PDS?

I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. We love being outdoors and traveling. On most school breaks, you can find me on the beach creating lifelong memories. I love reading all genres of literature. I love cooking and trying new recipes. When not cooking, I am out looking for the best cheeseburger in Memphis!!

What do you want a student to get from having had you as a teacher?

I want my students to learn how to collaborate, be problem solvers, and listen to others. I want my students to know they are intelligent and capable and to never doubt themselves. I want my students to get a well-rounded education, but I want them to know that listening, respecting, and caring for each other on a personal level is so important. I want them to walk away from Senior Kindergarten feeling like they have enough confidence to conquer the world.

What is the most important life lesson you want each student to leave with?

I want students to never stop dreaming, just keep dreaming bigger. Enjoy the lessons God is teaching you today and walk through them with grace. Life is not about the lessons we teach from a book, but the lessons we choose to teach others in our lives. Find out where your heart is and go for it. Never stop looking for opportunities to learn!



# **Full STEAM Ahead!**

An October surprise for 1st-6th grade boys: PDS Golf and Games.

hat does the future of K-12 education look like? How can we prepare students for their future and not our past? According to the Department of Education, the number of jobs that require STEAM (Science, Technology, Education, Art, and Math) skills is growing at an increasing rate.

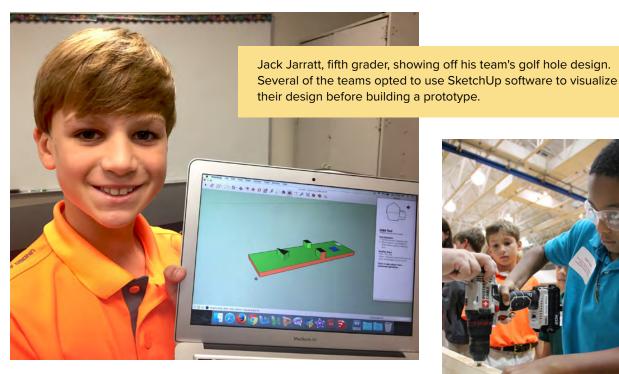
On October 3 and 4, the two-days leading into Fall Break, we had our first-ever STEAM experience. In partnership with Golf and Games Family Park, the elementary division spent two school days using STEAM skills to build carnival games and a miniature golf course.

Using our EDGE Design
Thinking process, boys
worked in teams to
brainstorm, research,
design, prototype, and build
the games. We even gave
them access to hammers
and saws, because what
boy doesn't like working
with tools?



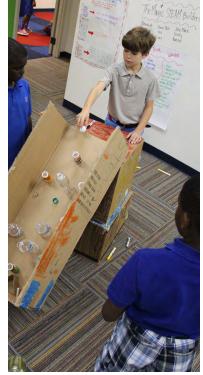














A handful of pictures just isn't enough to capture the energy and arriv capture the energy and excitement of the project. View a short video we produced about the experience online: pdsmemphis.org/steam16.



8:1

Student to Teacher ratio



1:1

**laptop program** in SK through 6th grade





Satisfied Parents: attrition rate 75% below national average



74% of Faculty hold Advanced Degrees









organized sports for 4th-6th grades





Daily
Physical Education
in 1st-6th Grades













Class of 2010 Alumni are National Merit Semifinalists







Our **customized math** program helps boys excel at their own pace





Alumnus Chip Williams '05 reflects on lessons learned in Mrs. McCall's second-grade class.

# Maybe writing isn't so bad



Originally printed in the August 24, 2016 edition of *The Daily Helmsman*. Reprinted with permission.

stood up from my desk and walked toward the far corner of the room where a silver, hand-operated pencil sharper was mounted against the wall.

Mrs. McCall, my second grade teacher at Presbyterian Day School, just announced it was time for my least favorite part of the day — journal time.

Every day she would assign a topic to write about in our journal, and she would grade it. I despised this time. I didn't want to write; I didn't like to write, and I could not understand why this lady forced me on a daily basis to write about some topic that I didn't care about. Plus, it had to be a full sheet of notebook paper long, and my hand would always cramp up.

Reluctantly, I inserted my pencil and turned the silver sharpener a few times until my point was just how I wanted it.





Sharon McCall retired in 2012 after 23 years of teaching second grade at Presbyterian Day School.

As I made my way back toward my desk, I looked at the board to see what the day's topic was.

'Free' was written in white chalk where the daily topic would normally be. Everybody was confused. What's free?

Mrs. McCall proceeded to explain that on free topic days, we could write about whatever we wanted to whatever was on our mind.

As much as I didn't like writing, I thought to myself that I could write about the only thing that was ever on my mind: sports, and more specifically, the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.

I went to work writing everything I could possibly think of that pertained to the Olympic Games.



The bus was packed - so packed that I couldn't get a seat so I had to stand and clutch on to a yellow PVC pipe that hung above my head, hoping that it was sturdy enough to withstand my entire body weight being tossed around by the bus that

was being driven by a man who appeared to be in quite a hurry.

One thing they didn't warn us about Rio de Janeiro was the driving. Clearly these people have places to be, and they're all running five minutes late.

It was the night of the opening ceremony, and I think most of the 14 University of Memphis students were a little disappointed that we weren't able to be there for the extravagant celebration of the world's games.

We all had already been to the venues where we were going to be spending the next two weeks covering a variety of sports.

In some ways I felt lucky. I was getting to cover basketball, a sport that I had already spent several years covering and a lifetime watching. But at the time, I was mildly disappointed that I wasn't going to be able to see Usain Bolt run the 100-meter dash or Michael Phelps swim the breaststroke or Simone Biles perform moves on a mat that only she can do - the more traditional Olympic sports.

Nevertheless, I got basketball, and I couldn't have been much happier about it - even if it wasn't what one would normally consider a traditional Olympic sport.



It's the day before the opening ceremony, and I'm on my way to a training session for France where the press are allowed to speak with players.

Before the session begins, I spend time on a computer in the press operations room researching every basketball player France brought



with them to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, looking for an angle that no one else would have.

After going through many of the well-known players and not finding anything, I came across a player named Kim Tillie.

Tillie had a family that I found to be very interesting. His brother was also at the Olympic Games as a part of France's men's volleyball team that was coached by Tillie's father. Upon further digging, I discovered that Tillie's mother was a captain for the Dutch women's volleyball team, and his uncle was an Olympic water polo player for France during the same time his father went to the Olympics as a volleyball player for France.

One family had two generations of brothers going to the Olympic Games together - not something you see every day.

I decided that's what I was going to talk with Tillie about, and that's what I wanted to write about that evening.

Tillie seemed a bit surprised when I began to ask about his family, but he was very open to talking about his incredibly athletic family. He gave me enough to write my first news article as a member of the Olympic News Service that night.

#### 00000

I was still clutching onto the PVC pipe, hoping not to get thrown into the lap of another person on the bus at the next red light.

We were on our way to Copacabana Beach after a failed attempt to visit the Christ the Redeemer statue, but we did end up with a nice consolation prize in getting to go to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain which overlooks Rio. The view was stunning.

As we got close to our restaurant, I felt a vibrate in my left pocket coming from my work phone which we were given to stay in touch with our sports writers, who were our bosses during the Olympic Games. I decided to take one hand off the pipe and check my phone just in case my sports writer was telling me something important about our first day of games the next day.

When I pulled my phone out of my pocket, I saw a text from my sports writer saying that the story I wrote about Kim Tillie and his family had been picked up by olympic.org and was on the front page.

I couldn't believe it. Something I wrote had gotten picked up by the official website for the Olympic Games.

At that moment, I just stopped and reflected on the fact that writing got me to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to watch the Olympics - something that wasn't even in my wildest dreams as a kid.

#### 00000

Mrs. McCall came around after a several minutes to read everyone's journal entry for the day. She picked mine up and wrote on my paper, 'GO USA! This is your best journal yet!'

"Maybe this writing thing isn't so bad after all," I remember thinking to myself.





resbyterian Day School strives to glorify God by developing boys in wisdom, stature, and favor with both God and man. Our mission, to educate the future leaders of Memphis and the world, is a lofty one. It is a mission grounded in faith and forged over decades by dedicated boys, families, and faculty. PDS is known across the country for our innovative academics, intentional character education, and commitment to helping boys in all areas of their lives.

This aim for excellence comes at a cost. I am thankful for the families of our 600 boys as they have made a commitment to this school and their sons. Each year our faculty, family, and friends make sacrificial gifts to the school. These funds help us to provide a world-class education to our impressionable boys. Without your help, our school would not be the shining star that it has become.

Thank you for your generosity. The boys of PDS benefit each and every day from the gifts you have given.

Sincerely,

Steven E. Hancock

Presbyterian Day School, Headmaster

Sten E. Hancol

#### THE CORNERSTONE SOCIETY

The Cornerstone
Society recognizes all
Annual Fund gifts of \$1000
or more. The Cornerstone
Society shares belief in
the importance of our
mission "to glorify God by
developing boys in wisdom
and stature and favor with
God and man."

#### HEADMASTER'S SOCIETY

The Headmaster's Society recognizes individuals who make annual financial commitments in excess of \$20,000. This society is in recognition of and thanks to the 12 headmasters in the 67-year history of PDS: Miss Maribelle Wheeler (1949-1951), Col. Ross McCain Lynn (1951-1955), Mr. Henry B. Roney, Jr. (1955-1960), Mr. James Day Lynch (1960-1963), Mr. Robert Carey Goodman (1963-1965), Mr. Marquis Lorenzo Pinkston (1965-1967), Mrs. Martha Hopper (1967-1968), Col. Earl H. Devanny, Jr. (1968-1972), Mr. Jack B. Stanford (1972-1979), Dr. Len Sumner (1979-2000), Mr. A. Lee Burns (2000-2014), and

Community Foundation of Greater Memphis

#### ROBERT J. HUSSEY SOCIETY

Mr. Steven E. Hancock (2014-present).

The Robert J. Hussey Society recognizes individuals who make annual financial commitments between \$10,000 and \$19,999. This society is in memory of Mr. Robert J. Hussey, one of the founders of PDS, for his tireless dedication and leadership in the formation of PDS. Mr. Hussey was one of the members of the original Board of Trustees and chairman of the board when the school opened in 1949.

#### Anonymous

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#### ANTHONY W. DICK SOCIETY

The Anthony W. Dick Society recognizes individuals who make annual financial commitments between \$7,500 and \$9,999. Dr. Dick became the pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in the summer of 1947, expressing the desire that the church provide Christian elementary education with a day school. The giving society in his name is in memory of his commitment through his storied tenure to the boys of PDS.

Anonymous

#### LEN SUMNER SOCIETY

The Len Sumner Society recognizes individuals who make annual financial commitments between \$5,000 and \$7,499. Dr. Sumner was the Headmaster of the school from 1979-2000. During his tenure, the facilities we use today were constructed, computers were introduced into the classroom and programs such as enrichment, aftercare, and after-school tutoring were established. Dr. Sumner also served as president of the Memphis Association of Independent Schools and the Tennessee Association of Independent Schools.

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#### **LEE BURNS SOCIETY**

The Lee Burns Society recognizes individuals who make annual financial commitments between \$2,500 and \$4,999. Lee Burns was the headmaster of the school from 2001-2014. Under his leadership, many of the current state-of-the-art facilities were built, including the Early Childhood Building, and technology was expanded across the campus.

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#### FRANK NORFLEET SOCIETY

The Frank Norfleet Society recognizes individuals who make annual financial commitments between \$1,000 and \$2,499. Mr. Norfleet was responsible for creating the PDS Annual Fund as it was his idea to have an annual fund drive supplemental to the budget. Mr. Norfleet has been a major contributor to the fund for many years.

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#### **ROSS LYNN CLUB**

The Ross Lynn Club recognizes individuals who make annual financial commitments between \$500 and \$999. Colonel Ross Lynn was the first Headmaster of PDS and is credited with establishing the high academic and moral standards of PDS. Colonel Lynn was also responsible for commissioning the design of the original PDS crest and establishing the motto.

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