

# PDS SPIRIT

— SPRING 2011 —



38 YEARS. THREE HEADS AND ONE MISSION PDS AND ITS HEADMASTER

PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL'S 2011

# DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS LUNCHEON



Friday, April 1 • 11:30 a.m. • Honoree: Hampton Sides '74  
Milestone Reunions for the Classes of 1961 and 1986

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## IN THIS ISSUE OF *PDS SPIRIT*



PDS has been blessed with a long history of strong leadership. In this issue, we explore the role of headmaster. This year marks a significant milestone in the history of the school—a decade under the leadership of Lee Burns. We mark that occasion by pausing to look back on the PDS' transition from a school that excelled in the last century to a school that is leading the way in the 21st century.

We also look back at the legacy of the two previous headmasters, Jack Stanford (1972-1979), and Dr. Len Sumner (1979-2000) in a feature article by Jamie Baker.

Grace and peace,

Winston Baccus  
Director of Communications

Headmaster  
Lee Burns

Assistant Headmaster  
for Teaching and Learning  
Susan Droke

Principal of Elementary  
Mark Fruitt

Head of Early Childhood  
Debbie Isom

Director of Operations and  
Athletics  
Dennis Smith

Chief Financial Officer  
Jill Kauffman

Chief Advancement Officer  
Steve Hearn

Chief Information Officer  
Cathy Kyle

Director of Communications  
Winston Baccus

Photography  
Jim Kiihnl, Lisa Buser, Chase  
Gustafson





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AND ONE MISSION**



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HEADMASTER**

# PDS SPIRIT

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# MINI-FEATURES

Have some news for a future issue of *PDS Spirit*?  
Send it to [info@pdsmemphis.org](mailto:info@pdsmemphis.org)

## BOYSPEAK

What would you do if you were Headmaster for a day?

Undoubtedly, the Headmaster position is filled with its share of responsibility and power. But we wondered what the students of PDS thought about the top position at the school. So for this issue, we asked the students: what would you do if you were the Headmaster of PDS for a day?



*I would give all the teachers a day off and let the substitutes teach. – Tre J., 3rd Grade*

*I would sleep in my office. – Patrick C., JK*

*I would let us all have recess for one hour and have a tour of England. – Alexander M., 6th Grade*

*I would give the teachers a day off. The students would get a dress down day. Lunch would be Corky's barbecue. – Jack B., 3rd Grade*

*I would help people out by giving them good advice. – Will J., JK*

Look for more answers from PDS boys on subsequent pages.

## View 1950-1997 Yearbooks Online

From the PDS archives we have painstakingly scanned in nearly 50 years of yearbooks from PDS' past. Check out PDS' amazing history in these volumes in these online flipbooks anytime. Visit [pdsmemphis.org/alumni](http://pdsmemphis.org/alumni) to see them all now.





# SOURCES OF PRIDE



Don Batchelor and John Colcolough

## PDS Honors Former and New Board Chair

Current and former PDS trustees, as well as school administrators and friends, gathered recently at a special surprise dinner to honor former PDS Chairman of the Board

John Colcolough. Mr. Colcolough completed four years of service as Chairman of the Board on July 31, 2010.

“John Colcolough has played a vital role in strengthening PDS and positioning the school for an exciting and rapidly changing future,” says Lee Burns, PDS Headmaster. “During John’s tenure as Board Chair, the school raised over \$16 million in gifts to support the capital campaign, constructed key new facilities including the Norma T. Wilson Early Childhood Center, and introduced new initiatives such as the Crain Center for Global Curriculum and the Martin Institute for Teaching Excellence. We will miss John’s leadership, vision, wisdom, and expertise.”

PDS’ new Board Chair is PDS alumnus Don Batchelor ’66. “I am humbled and honored to serve as Board Chair for PDS,” says Mr. Batchelor. He adds, “It is my good fortune to inherit the wonderful legacy provided by John Colcolough’s leadership. We are blessed to be able to work with an amazingly talented group of trustees to continue to capitalize on the great foundation and years of academic excellence that the Lord has blessed us with at PDS.”

## BBMM Speaker Series

The *Building Boys, Making Men* Speaker Series is a quarterly event for parents that feature respected authors and speakers discussing topics relevant to raising children in today’s culture. This year has been exceptional thus far, hearing from nationally known author Dr. Jim Taylor who discussed “Positive Pushing” with your kids. Dr. Tim Kimmel, who talked to a crowd of 300 parents about “Raising Kids for True Greatness,” led our November event.

Our Speaker Series will wrap up in April with a mothers-only event with Dr. Meg Meeker. She will be discussing “Being a Content Mother While Raising Boys.” These events are open to the public and provide a great way for PDS to be a resource for parents in our city.

## Martin Institute Fall Conference

This past fall, the Martin Institute for Teaching Excellence hosted the 2010 Fall Conference at PDS. With more than 155 attendees from seven different states, Canada, England, as well as countless virtual participants, the two-day conference included two keynote speakers, 36 presentations, music from the PDS students, lunch on the patio, cupcakes, rock wall climbs, door prizes and more.

“I heard nothing but positive feedback from the attendees,” Executive Director Dr. Clif Mims said, “with comments primarily focusing on the high quality of the workshops and the wonderful hospitality.”



More than 155 attendees from seven different states made their way to the Martin Institute’s 2010 Fall Conference.

In addition to the conference, the Institute also hosted a fall workshop focusing on literacy development in preschool. The three-hour session, “Come On! Let’s Write,” guided attendees through the four areas of literacy development (listening, speaking, writing and reading).

Facilitators Laura Dearman, JK teacher at PDS, and Melody Tannehill of Hutchison School provided practical strategies and concrete examples for fostering reading and writing in preschool children. In attendance was a capacity crowd of 28 educators representing eight different public and private schools from the greater Memphis area.

Again, Mims said that feedback was positive, as well as swift. “Within thirty minutes of the workshop’s conclusion I had already received two emails from attendees,” he said, “and one voice mail from a principal who had teachers in attendance. All wanted to praise the quality of the workshop and thank the Martin Institute and PDS for hosting the event.”

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# 38 Years, Three Heads and One Mission

The current Headmaster of PDS and the two former Headmasters talk about their differences, education and their legacies at Presbyterian Day School.

Written by Jamie Baker

Which comes first: the great leader or the great organization? The chicken or egg conundrum applies. Great organizations demand and attract great leaders; great leaders create demanding and magnetic organizations. PDS has had the great fortune of a long history of visionary, courageous leaders who have embodied and sown into the school culture and traditions that which the institution strives for: *Excellence*.

On a recent afternoon, I had the great honor to chat via Skype with three consecutive Headmasters of PDS: Jack Sanford (1972-1979), Len Sumner (1979-2000) and Lee Burns (2000-present). Collectively they represent over 115 years of education leadership.

Our discussion was frank and lively, alternating between seriousness regarding the work and lightheartedness that comes from the stories one accumulates as he works with the hundreds of people it takes to make a school successful. Palpable, even through the ether of technology, was the great respect and admiration each of these men has for one another as education leaders and as colleagues. And, I was moved by the great respect, admiration and love each has for PDS.

Each man exemplifies the ideal of a humble servant, intent on demanding of PDS the best it can be, demanding excellence. Each Headmaster spoke from a deep commitment to serving PDS with a sense of honor and duty to its history and a sense of stewardship for its future. Thirty-eight years of PDS wisdom covers a lot of ground.





# JACK, LEN AND LEE

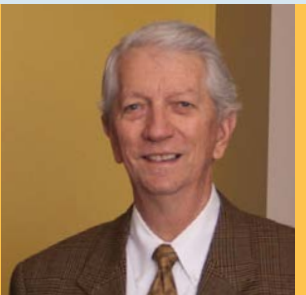
## 38 YEARS OF SERVICE

7  
YEARS



**JACK STANFORD**  
1972-1979

21  
YEARS



**LEN SUMNER**  
1979-2000

10  
YEARS



**LEE BURNS**  
2000-PRESENT

### HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE BACK ON THE CAMPUS OF PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL?

■ **Jack Stanford:** I like coming back, being a part of PDS again and seeing everything that has been added. The quality that has been added to the school is amazing. I really liked what Len did when he was here. He is a very strong academician. And, now, Lee has come in and made a good school even better. The facilities are truly outstanding. I have seen a lot of schools, and I do not think there is a school in the country that has facilities that are comparable for elementary age boys.

■ **Len Sumner:** PDS has changed a lot, especially the facilities. I spent many years here and some of these areas I don't even recognize any more. One sees quality all over the school, and I think it is just wonderful. Boys here are very lucky.

■ **Lee Burns:** Jack and Len are giants in the field of education. They have tremendous reputations and legacies as great leaders, not just at PDS but in the southern United States. It is a great honor and joy to be able to share a school with them. I think we all stand on the shoulders of the people who have gone before us, and I stand on both their shoulders. PDS is the school it is today because of the two of them.

### ABOUT PDS, WHAT STRIKES YOU AS THE SAME AND AS DIFFERENT?

■ **Jack Stanford:** What is the same about PDS is watching the little boys walk down the hall just now, like they have done for decades before. Lots of energy, lots of looking up and waving their hands, lots of smiles on their faces. All of that is the same. They had the same energy then that they have now. What's different is the program which is just so much bigger and broader. A boy can get so much more from being at PDS today. PDS was a happy place then, and it is a happy place now.

■ **Len Sumner:** The learning environment at PDS is marvelous. I have been over here several times since Lee has been here and I just about get lost every time. Yes, I agree with Jack that the energy and enthusiasm of the boys has not changed.

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But, as leaders we also work at that. I started this thing called Happy-grams when I was here. And, I used to give them to the boys but also to the teachers as well, and they liked it. It is human nature that when things go well, we say nothing. When things don't go so well, we complain about it. So, people need to know the good side of things and be reminded of how much we care for them and value them, boys and teachers alike.

**Lee Burns:** Len, you will be happy to know it is still a really big deal to get a Happy-gram. And, I, too, think that one of the things that is the same is that PDS is a nurturing, loving school. Boys are known, nurtured and loved. PDS still has a strong Christian emphasis, which has been a part of our mission from the beginning. The ethos of the school has been consistent from then to now in that PDS is a happy place that celebrates boys.

#### WHAT WERE THE KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF YOUR ERA?

**Jack Stanford:** In 1972, the building where Lee's office is was brand new. I was the first Head of School that occupied that area. The church did not want us to raise any money, but the reality was that they were about \$250,000 short on that campaign. So, we talked about it, and as the school community, we set to work to raise money to make up that difference. This was really a great opportunity because it gave parents who were not members of the Second Presbyterian Church to get excited about what we were doing and commit to how we were growing back then. We were so proud that we, as the school, were able to raise that shortfall in just a short period of time. I know this seems pale in comparison to the present campaign, which is \$26 million, but we were excited to be able to be partners in the school's growth.

**Len Sumner:** Jack paved a really smooth way for me. My great opportunity was just to be here. I believe I upped the level of academics at PDS. Not that it wasn't good, because it was, but I improved it considerably, which is more than just a little bit ironic. When I was in school, I was a terrible student. I just wasn't interested in academics. It was just miraculous that I was able to come to PDS and follow a guy like Jack and to be followed by a

guy like Lee Burns. PDS is a wonderful place. We had a lot of wonderful teachers who cared a lot about the boys and helped them to be and feel successful. PDS is a place that certainly has heart.

**Lee Burns:** As is often the case, my great challenge is my great opportunity. The world has changed so much in the last 10 years that it is important we make sure that PDS stays relevant in providing a tremendous academic education. The PDS tradition has always been to prepare boys for excellence in leadership in the world that they are entering. We must continue to evolve in order to continue our tradition of preparing boys for excellence. Everything we do, we must do in a way that is consistent with the heart of the school, the mission, the culture and the ethos of love and care, and treating boys, teachers and families with warmth and respect.

#### HEADMASTERS SHARE A UNIQUE BOND BECAUSE OF THE VERY UNIQUE PURVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES THEY HOLD IN THE SCHOOL. WHAT WORDS OF WISDOM DID YOUR PREDECESSOR GIVE TO YOU UPON BECOMING HEADMASTER OF PDS?

**Jack Stanford:** I followed a man named Colonel Devany, and they called him "Colonel Devany." As you can imagine, I inherited a strict discipline culture, and that is not my style. I am more of a hugger. During my years, the school environment was much more relaxed.

**Len Sumner:** Jack left me a lot to be thankful for in the running and overall environment of the school. Everybody knows that Jack has been a great friend to me, long since our days together back at Baylor in Chattanooga. He handed over a well-running school and culture, and it was my goal to make it a little better place every year.

**Lee Burns:** Len certainly reminded me that PDS is a place of relationships. I have always been impressed how Len knew all the names of all the boys and would shake their hands as they arrived for school in the morning. And, the relationships that we have among our faculty and staff and with parents are all so critical to creating a loving and nurturing school.

### BOYSPEAK

What would you do if you were headmaster for a day?

*I would drink hot cocoa. – Harrison S., JK*

*I would create a dance-off – student vs. faculty. – Taylor B., 6th Grade*

## DOES THE SHIFT IN EDUCATION THAT HAS OCCURRED IN THE 21ST CENTURY AMAZE YOU? HAS THERE BEEN A PARADIGM SHIFT LIKE IT IN YOUR TIME?

■ **Jack Stanford:** One of the things that I have noticed in my career is that schools have always been slow to change. That is one of the great differences between a business and a school because, sometimes, a business has to change overnight just to survive. Schools have been slow. In my years, we were particularly slow. When I came to PDS, about the only change I made was to set out to find the very best teachers I could find. Now, education is radically different. We didn't worry about how little boys learned back in the day. We just taught them. The science of learning is so much fuller and more available to us. Adapting this school to modern learning is one of the great things that Lee has done. Changes take place much more rapidly today. They have to.

■ **Len Sumner:** Change goes a lot quicker now, and you have to be a much more adaptable leader. The pace of our world is frenetic.

■ **Lee Burns:** Technology certainly has made the world a more interconnected place, and it has certainly accelerated the pace of change. For PDS to produce the best possible education, we have needed to change, and to make some changes quickly. The paradox is, though, that we are changing to remain the same, to safeguard our tradition of excellence. PDS is a unique blend of tradition and innovation. We try to carefully read the literature and the science of learning. We try our best to be careful and thoughtful. We aim to act with purpose and intention in providing the best that we can to prepare boys to be well-educated for success in the world of the 21st century. To be on the leading edge in a world that is changing, school must also change.

## WHEN YOU ARE DOING THE WORK, ARE YOU CONSCIOUS OF LEAVING A LEGACY?

■ **Jack Stanford:** No, you are not thinking of a legacy. You are thinking about watching the students grow and learn. You are thinking about working with your colleagues. You are thinking about making a good school even better before you leave.

■ **Lee Burns:** PDS has an institutional legacy, and I am very aware of the legacy of the school throughout its history and feel very responsible for making the institution stronger so its legacy continues. And, I am thinking of the collective work and effort that goes into doing that because a school is so much bigger than any one leader. I am constantly thinking, "Am I being a good steward of this institution?"

■ **Len Sumner:** One never knows what you are going to do in life. You have to do the best job you can every day. You never know how God is going to lead you down unknown paths. In doing the work of leading a school, I am thinking about how one never knows. You never know what any one student will do in their life, and you are aware of how important, even beyond your ability to know, you are to one child, one boy who might be like me, not too interested in academics but with gifts nonetheless.

In the end of our interview, Jack Stanford teased, as if it were a set-up for a bad joke, "So, are you going to ask if three heads are better than one?" Before I could respond, in other words, beating me to the punch, he offered an answer. "Because if you did ask," he said, "I was going to tell you that the answer is 'No' — one outstanding Head at a time is the ticket to success." The conclusion of my hour learning about these men and their work at PDS is that leading a school takes a team, even an army of folks, dedicated to the mission of the school. It takes a selfless leader willing to challenge and support his people. And, it takes heart. Oh, and, a good sense of humor also helps.

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## BOYSPEAK

*I would give out candy for people that do good in school. – Cannon H., 3rd Grade*

*I would take a trip to Boston and watch the Celtics play. – Max S., 6th Grade*

What would you do if you were headmaster for a day?



# CATCHING FLIGHT

## The Ultimate Field Guide for Growing Boys into Men



*Flight Plan: Your Mission to Become a Man* is a new book written by Headmaster Lee Burns and Chaplain Braxton Brady. Teenage boys are faced with navigating the turbulent journey to manhood, often without an inkling of what that really means or any direction of how to get there.

*Flight Plan* offers a vision of Godly manhood and a complete and honest guide into the adventures ahead

with the aim of offering them a vision and definition of manhood before they get there, a framework for considering the challenges of adolescence and tools and strategies for making healthy and appropriate choices during those years.

“We hope they see the connection between the long-term vision of manhood and the short-term teenage choices. We believe that connection is vital,” says Brady.

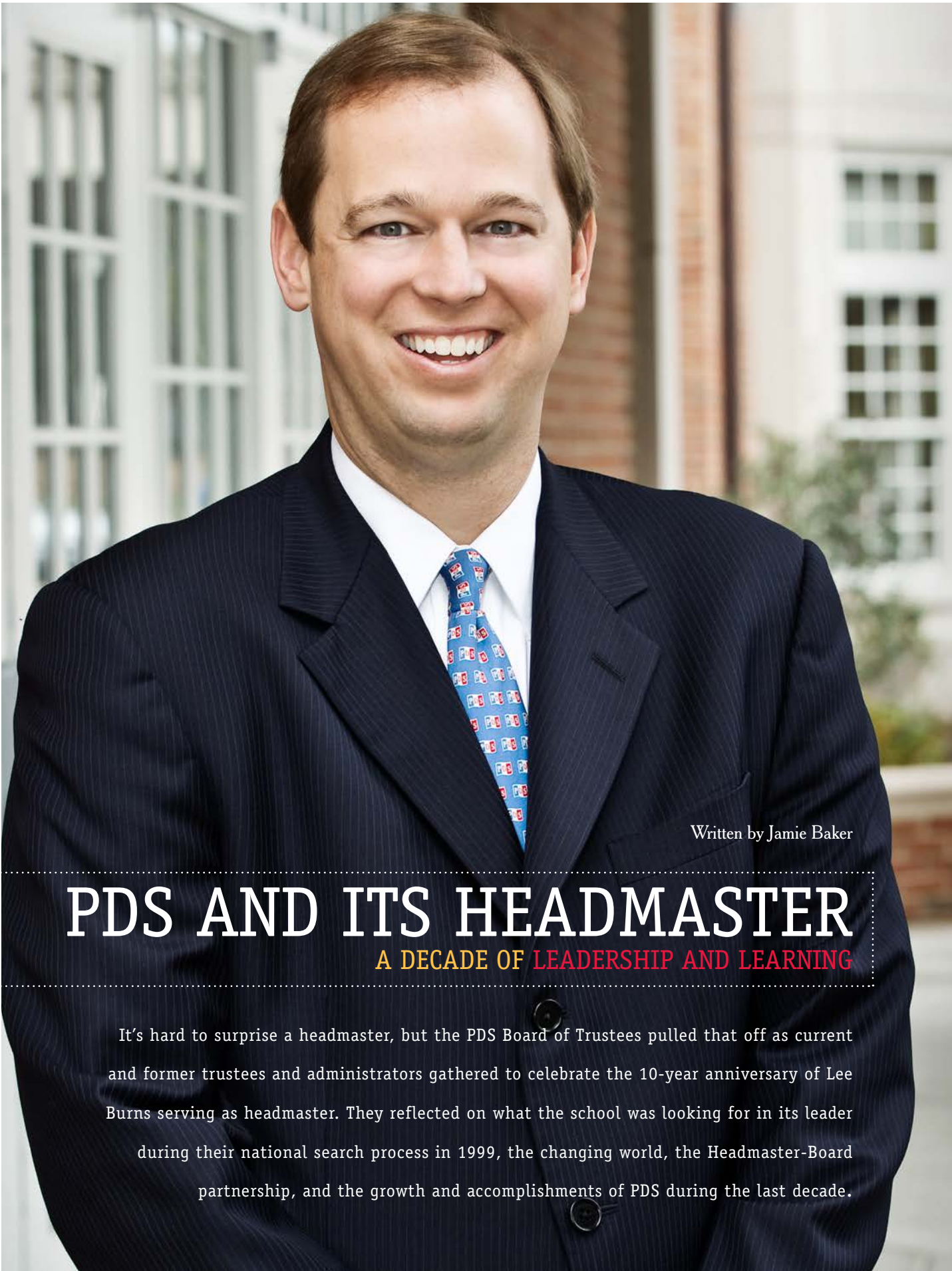
The book is currently in its second printing with all proceeds going back to the school, and a video-based

version of the curriculum was recently completed. The book is currently being sold locally in bookstores and nationally through Amazon. Braxton and Lee are currently doing radio and television interviews around the country.

*“The journey from a boy to a man is one of the most difficult transitions ever. Lee and Braxton have addressed the precise steps to authentic manhood in their book, Flight Plan. If you have a son, you need this book.”* – C. Kemmons Wilson

Get a preview of the video-based version of the *Flight Plan* curriculum on the Flight Plan website: [theflightplanbook.com](http://theflightplanbook.com).





Written by Jamie Baker

# PDS AND ITS HEADMASTER

## A DECADE OF LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

It's hard to surprise a headmaster, but the PDS Board of Trustees pulled that off as current and former trustees and administrators gathered to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Lee Burns serving as headmaster. They reflected on what the school was looking for in its leader during their national search process in 1999, the changing world, the Headmaster-Board partnership, and the growth and accomplishments of PDS during the last decade.



## A HEADMASTER FOR THE TIMES

In the late 1990s, PDS Headmaster Dr. Len Sumner announced his decision to retire in 2000 following a very distinguished 21-year career during which the school enjoyed great stability and academic strengthening that comes from having consistent and excellent leadership in place for over two decades.

At the end of the 20th century, however, a new world was afoot: one that was being driven by technology at a pace faster than most of us could understand. Somewhere about this time, people established email accounts, ordered books from Amazon, Googled something for the first time, and wondered if Y2K would matter. Wilson Orr, chairman of the Headmaster Search Committee and later Chair of the PDS Board, remembers those days. “It was the height of the technology bubble, the internet was just becoming widely used, and the potential for the use of technology was just being taken seriously in education. As a board charged with finding the next leader for the school, we had to make some directional decisions about our institutional responsibility and our institutional response to what was happening in the world.

We agreed that the next PDS leader would have to be able to thread the needle by understanding the heritage, culture, and tradition of the school while recognizing the call of the world, foreseeing the impact on elementary education. In short, we decided that we needed someone who could adapt to us, honoring the PDS culture, but someone visionary who could put us at the edge of the changes in the world.”

The school had its great historical success and commitment to excellence as guiding factors in their search. It also had a clearly defined and time-honored mission: to strive to glorify God by developing boys in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man. Wilson Orr remembers, “We were introduced to Lee Burns through our advisers. We had already entrusted our path and our decision to God, so we paid attention to this exceptional, albeit young (30-year-old) candidate who came our way. A number of things stood out about Lee in contrast to the many high-quality candidates we considered. Lee was an immensely talented person, a graduate of a boys’ high school, educated at both Dartmouth and Harvard. His short career was full of outstanding performance and achievements. We found out that Lee had education in his blood -- his grandfather, Major Burns, was a legendary educator at the McCallie School in Chattanooga and had a huge influence on Lee’s life. Lee was the type of person that could be successful at anything that he

choose to do in life because he is a hard worker, agile learner, and a team leader. He showed creativity, innate character, and moxie. And his writings laid out an astute, carefully coordinated vision of education for the 21st century. As we got to know Lee, we came to the realization that he had been preparing, whether he realized it or not, his whole life for a career in education, and that for Lee, education was a calling.”

## A HEADMASTER FOR THE BOYS

As Chair of the PDS Board at the time of the leadership transition of the school, Larry Jensen helped to vet Lee Burns the Candidate. “We talked to people very honestly about Lee and asked specifically if he was capable of handling a position of the magnitude of PDS Headmaster. The answers back from his colleagues and former bosses all said, without exception, that Lee Burns could handle the job, was prepared and ready for it. But, really, the tipping point for our work and what put an exclamation point on Lee’s candidacy was what we saw for ourselves when we talked to the students at Lee’s previous school. These boys looked up to Lee as leader, friend, confidant, and teacher. We witnessed that Lee garnered from his students great respect that was grounded, foundational and healthy. We considered this astonishing, and this personal connection with the students mattered a lot to us. This relationship and care of the students, their well-being, and their paths in life, validated in our minds that Lee was the right person for the PDS headship. We wanted, in addition to a visionary educator, a man who would model Godly manhood and develop positive, encouraging, supportive and challenging relationships with the boys of PDS.”

Despite the many administrative duties of his position, Burns makes a priority of connecting with the boys. Nearly every morning, he shakes the hands of the boys as they start the day. He teaches a 6th grade class on global issues and is one of the leaders of the 6th grade seminar focused on the journey to manhood. Boys come to his office for their birthdays; others come for a word of wisdom or encouragement. He pops in and out of classes. One year, he taught a class for a day in every grade level of the school.

“It’s such a joy and blessing to be surrounded by the smiles and laughter of over 600 wonderful boys,” says Burns. “I am inspired by their thoughtful ideas, their remarkable achievements and their tender character and faith. Mentoring and guiding boys is why I got into the school business, and my favorite thing is to spend time with them.”



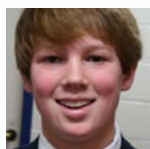
## TELL ME ABOUT MR. BURNS



*“Mr. Burns is the leader of the school. He is a man to look up to and leads a life of Christ. He leads by example. He is always doing something*

*to help the school and improve our experience at PDS. But, the main thing that I like about Mr. Burns is that he always makes time for the students, to just be with us and help us out.”*

**– Alex Hyde ’11**



*“Throughout the seven years I have been at PDS, I have thought of Mr. Burns as “the boss” of all the school. Every time I talk with him, it feels*

*like he truly cares about what I am saying. Mr. Burns is an amazing man and I would like to grow up and have the same qualities as him.”*

**– Evan Smith ’11**



*“Mr. Burns operates this school with courage, thought, and manages to make every crucial move in a Godly manner. Without a doubt in my mind,*

*our headmaster shares a special relationship with each and every one of the boys here, as he is not only our leader, but also our friend.”*

**– Carter Braswell ’11**



*“The thing I like about Mr. Burns is that he is always greeting you with a firm handshake and a warm smile. His willingness to work with anyone is great.*

*He does everything to the best of his ability.”*

**– Mathon Parker ’12**

## A HEADMASTER FOR THE SCHOOL

Jensen speaks of the board’s responsibility of holding the future of the institution in trust. “The story of Lee Burns is in many ways the story of the boldness of the PDS board. We valued our rich heritage and success as an institution, but we recognized that it was a brave new world that calls us to act bravely in response to it. We were not seeking someone to just guard the status quo and the past success.

We wanted someone to take the idea of living excellence, model it in how he lived and how he led, and spread the idea that excellence is like a rolling stone, moving and changing all the time.

We actively sought a lead learner for the institution who would help develop the capacity of all of the faculty and staff to learn, grow, and try new things all the time in order to stay at the forefront of education. We, as a board, fully understood, and felt a sense of responsibility and urgency, about the idea of responding to the changes lest we become a dinosaur, irrelevant and unsustainable as an institution in these times. The objective was to preserve and celebrate our traditions and move forward by reinterpreting the wonderful mission and call we had as an institution to fit the day.”

“The last ten years,” Jensen explains, “have been ones of growth and flourishing, with Headmaster Burns leading the school in a forward and relevant direction, without letting go of anything that is essential to PDS’s character and values as an institution. Lee is comfortable asking the right questions, learning what he needs to learn, asking for help, taking advice, making decisions, executing. His curious and disciplined sense of inquiry and leadership has created a whole school, from the boardroom to the classroom, that questions, researches, learns, experiments, works as a team, and devotes itself to the dynamic learning and growth of boys and teachers alike.”

Pastor Sandy Willson has served Second Presbyterian Church for over 16 years. He and Headmaster Burns have developed and enjoyed a tremendous working partnership founded on mutual trust and respect that honors the school as a ministry of the church, and the church as a great source of inspiration and wisdom for the school. Their working relationship stems from one shared central and guiding idea -- it’s the Lord’s school. What’s best for boys in striving to grow in the wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man focuses their energies. Willson shares his commemorations of Mr. Burns’ ten years at PDS. “On this tenth anniversary of Lee Burns’ leadership at PDS, I continue to express my great respect and profound gratitude for his outstanding service to the Lord, this community, and to Second Presbyterian Church. PDS, from its inception, has been a school focused on academic excellence and spiritual development, but under Lee’s guidance, we have seen new heights of attainment of which we had only dreamed. As Senior

Minister of Second Presbyterian Church, I also express my thanks to Lee for the wonderful, mutually beneficial relationship of church and school, which is in many ways attributable to Lee's own love for the Church of Christ and his commitment to collaboration and humble service. May God be pleased to grant us many more decades like the most recent one at PDS."

What a decade it has been at PDS! Learning builds upon the basic foundational skills to emphasize critical and creative thinking. Classrooms include more collaboration, active learning and projects, as well as SmartBoards and laptops for every boy. The curriculum and assessments are aligned with 21st century skills and include more of a global focus. Nearly every teacher has studied at Harvard to receive training in designing and implementing a classroom and curriculum that are both rigorous and relevant for today's world. An instrumental music program has been established, and 30 after-school enrichment programs are now offered. Almost \$20 million in new facilities have been added. Enrollment has reached the highest level in the school's history. The school launched its nationally acclaimed *Building Boys, Making Men* program to give boys a vision of Godly manhood, and The Crain Center for Global Curriculum provides PDS boys global skills and perspectives. The Martin Institute for Teaching Excellence was established to train teachers and share PDS experience and expertise with other public and private school teachers. PDS boys are consistently and significantly outperforming their peers at the nation's leading independent schools in every subject.

PDS teachers note the excellence, reputation and leadership the school has achieved. Susan Love, 4th-grade teacher, explains, "PDS is on the cutting edge. Every conference I attend reminds me of the blessings we enjoy at PDS. I find my students to be more confident, active learners because of the shifts we have made in our approach to teaching. On more than one occasion, I have insisted that Mr. Burns come see right away what my boys were doing and learning, and he comes. Mr. Burns makes it clear that he is all about the boys and their learning. He relishes their creativity and appreciates a teacher creating a challenging culture of thinking in her classroom."

Merideth Arnold, Pre-K teacher, adds, "I have realized that my teaching has shifted from primarily being concerned with imparting material and facts to making sure that my boys are able to apply this information to their daily lives and relate it to the world around them. Over the last few years, I see more clearly the value in helping the boys become good thinkers, questioners, and listeners and preparing them to function comfortably in an increasingly global and diverse community."

Shari Caruthers, Junior Kindergarten teacher, shares this about Mr. Burns: "He is a forward-thinking headmaster with his eye on the future of the young boys we serve. He has a progressive path with the best interest and heart of the boys at the center of what he does as a leader. He is a leader that strives to make his faculty feel supported and appreciated every day."

Burns raves about the PDS teachers, whom he calls the heart and soul of the school. "I am amazed at the talent, dedication and hard work of the teachers. They are the key ingredients of our success, and I must assure that they are challenged, growing professionally, encouraged, supported and happy."

He calls the administrative team the most talented and dedicated group of educators he's ever been around. When they meet on Monday mornings, they bring 182 years of educational experience and expertise. "We have a great sense of team and trust. We read and reflect together. We learn from one another. We pray together by name for every boy and employee in the school." He vests leadership and authority in them and teachers in a model of collaborative, distributed leadership.

He lauds the Board of Trustees as being sophisticated and forward thinking with a disciplined focus on vision, strategy and resources. "They are savvy and smart, great thinking partners with a broad range of expertise and experiences. It's an honor to partner with them."

"From teachers to trustees to administrators, I've tried to surround myself with people who are smarter than I am. I've grown so much and learned so much from them."

## A HEADMASTER FOR THE FUTURE

Over the course of his ten years at PDS, all agree that it has been a delight to see Headmaster Burns grow, mature, and season as man and as a leader. John Cocolough, former PDS Board Chair, encapsulates the journey. "Lee came to PDS as a 31-year-old, married guy, taking on a new challenge and role as educational leader. Just the innate maturity that one gleans from one's experience over a decade, especially the passage from your 30s to 40s, exists. But, look what else has occurred -- Lee went from a spousal relationship to one that now encompasses three young children; he is a busy leader, husband, father, and faithful servant; he has moved through significant life events including the death of his dad, the birth of his kids, loss of his wife's mother. Aside from managing a multi-million dollar capital campaign, an exciting reinvigoration of the faculty through the wonderful training they take part in at Project Zero at Harvard,

Lee and his team continue to guide the strategic direction and the way we do education at PDS with great enthusiasm and leadership. He established the *Building Boys Making Men* program, and shares the expertise of PDS across the world through the Martin Institute, presentations at the national and international education conferences, and publishing what PDS is his learning on his blog and the national industry publication, *Independent School*. Yes, Lee has grown by leaps and bounds, and he was already starting from an accomplished and high level of personal knowledge and achievement.”

PDS has become a leading institution in modeling and innovating 21st century education. Headmaster Burns will tell you that he stands on the shoulders of giants in educational research and leadership. But what he is reluctant to share, because of his humility and team deference, is the fact that PDS, and he himself, are emerging giants in the school world as other schools attempt to steer their course along the strategic direction that Lee has instilled at PDS. Schools from across the country, nearly 100 in the last two years, visit PDS to see how it is implementing 21st century skills into the curriculum. Greg O’Melia, Headmaster of the prestigious Buckley School in Manhattan, attests to Headmaster Burns’ influence on other schools and other school leaders. “The first thing that comes to mind about Lee Burns is that he is a thinker and he always makes his colleagues think. Lee is seen as a leader among Heads of School who are just considering or beginning their work of adapting to a changed world. Lee is seen as a thought leader, especially in the field of technology, 21st century curriculum, and 21st century skills. Other leaders, like me, turn to Lee and

“The first thing that comes to mind about Lee Burns is that he is a **thinker** and he always makes his colleagues think.”

PDS because of the wealth of experience they have developed.”

Headmaster Burns holds leadership roles that include membership in the Country Day Heads Association, Visionary Heads group, and serving as the vice-president of the Elementary School Heads Association (ESHA), a national association of about 250 current and retired headmasters. Claudia Daggett, Executive Director of ESHA, values Headmaster Burns’ thought leadership. “He is unfailingly positive in his outlook, creative in his approach to problem solving, strategic in his thinking, and generous with his time. This makes him a great ‘go-to’ guy within the ESHA leadership and a wonderful model for his colleagues. He inspires me, and others, to try

to look at issues from a different angle or elevation and to consider new tools to address them. In addition, Lee contributes to the work of all heads by sharing his ideas and beliefs. He has made important contributions to discussions about the nature of headship, private-public school partnerships, and technology in education, to name just a few topics. He writes a first-rate head’s blog, of which I am a devoted reader.” His blog was just selected as one of the country’s top 100 educational blogs, and he and PDS Chaplain Braxton Brady recently published a book on a boy’s journey to manhood.

There is always the future, the horizon that pulls us forth. As the future for boys is made secure by a sure and firm foundation of learning, skills development, values development, and spiritual development, the future for PDS is made secure by the same path. Don Batchelor ’66, current Board Chair, speaks to where the school is headed. “I am 100 percent on board with the direction we are taking at PDS which includes the academic expertise and excellence that has been and always will be PDS, as well as the strong commitment to Biblical principles and the Gospel, and always questioning what boys need to be prepared for more schooling and for life. All of these elements are part of the fabric of the school and they are woven together, as they should be. I know the future will bring more questions and more learning for us as an institution, but, with a mind as curious as Lee’s, a team as inspired and dedicated as the faculty and staff at PDS, bolstered by the competence and confidence they have developed in recent years learning and implementing new things, what I know is that we are up to any challenge.

“PDS has a forward-thinking culture. When the accreditation evaluation team was at PDS last spring, their observation of PDS was that, for a lot of successful institutions with decades of success under their belt, change and growth do not come easy. Yet, for PDS, change and growth are part of the culture. And, it is not change for change’s sake; it is change for the sake of improvement. The faculty at PDS actually gets excited about adopting a new methodology, hearing of a new way to apply technology, taking on a new challenge. It has been amazing to be a part of this culture. Every time I go to PDS, I get an idea that I bring over to my work. In an off-site event next month, I will be taking my department through the article that Lee Burns has just published in *Independent School*, and its teachings will be part of our strategic dialogue and planning. For a school to look outside the world of education for ideas and sources of information is one thing which PDS does. For a business to look to how a school thinks, how a school is managed, how a school implements with learning support, means that school has reached a whole new pinnacle.”



## A SCHOOL THAT LEARNS

Oh, the places that you'll go. What is likely next is to spread far and wide the expertise PDS has developed in its culture of learning, its student-centric decision-making, its integration of technology and 21st century global and skills-focused learning. Think of the impact that is possible on boys and education around the world through outreach like the Martin Institute and online learning. Barbara Hyde, PDS parent and education reform activist, is enthusiastic about what's happening at PDS. "Education is essential to the future of all our children, our city and our country. The work that PDS is doing with 21st century skills, technology, communicating with parents, and challenging teachers to learn, experiment and grow is instructive for other schools. Consistently and diligently putting children's needs in the center of every decision as well as having high standards for children to reach their fullest potential is education done well. Visionary leadership is essential to this work. Professional growth and learning is also essential to this work. I love that PDS shares its lessons learned with other schools and other school leaders."

And, really, none of this is a surprise as Headmaster Burns shares, quite openly, his ideas and visions of the future. "I work at challenging everyone at PDS — students, teachers, parents, staff, board alike — to partake in the idea that it is a good thing, and a necessary thing, to be tinkering, to be dreaming, to take chances, to activate possibilities."

"We live in an exciting era for education" says Burns. "We live in a dynamic, digital, interconnected global community that demands new skills and perspectives. Increasingly, one of the roles of a headmaster is to attempt to make sense of that world and help the school build a curriculum that is relevant for it. In this changing world, one of my roles at PDS is to be an agitator. It is to pose provocative questions that stir us up, that push us to think and dream and dare beyond our comforts and customs. It is to present us with data and stories, trends and research, articles and books for us to read and debate."

Burns' professional reading list includes not just the standard educational journals and books, but CEO's of multinational corporations, software designers, bloggers from around the world, brain researchers, creativity experts and educational thought leaders from places like Harvard and Stanford. "I need to be learning at a more rapid rate than our boys," he says. "I try to assure that PDS, in the words of author and Stanford professor Dr. Carol Dweck, has a growth mindset: that we have intentional processes and structures that force us to be in a continuous learning posture."



Headmaster Burns with his family; his wife Sarah, daughter Betsy, son Arthur '17, and baby Preston.

The upcoming years are full of great challenges and opportunities for independent schools. "Schools are in the early stages of a radical disruption and reinvention, and it is those schools that are true learning organizations, that are mission-driven yet flexible, that will rise to meet the challenges of financial sustainability, virtual and adaptive learning, global competitiveness, and relevance."

A decade since his arrival at PDS, he is as energized, committed and passionate about PDS as ever. He just enthusiastically accepted a long-term contract extension from the Board of Trustees. "I love PDS. I believe in PDS. Aside from my faith and family, I count the opportunity to serve at PDS as the greatest blessing in my life."

For ten years, Headmaster Burns has served PDS, and the Lord only knows what the next ten years will bring. What we do know, and what we celebrate, is that Headmaster Burns' leadership will continue to be based upon trust, partnership, reflection, and learning for the continued success of boys and of PDS, for the glory of God.

# ALUMNI NEWS



**Top: Dr. Ben Gibson '85** talks drugs and alcohol with a few 6th-grade boys.

**Middle: Adam Bomar '01** talked about being a paramedic and 4th-grader William Quinlan tries on a fireman suit and hat.

**Bottom: Britt Colcolough '06** returned to PDS to talk about peer pressure with some 6th-grade boys.



## Speakers Every One

PDS alum **Dr. Ben Gibson '85** returned to PDS to talk to 6th grade boys about the effects of drugs and alcohol on the body while **Britt Colcolough '06**, a high school junior at MUS, spoke about resisting the peer pressure to try drugs and alcohol. PDS thanks these alums for coming back to PDS and impacting lives of boys at PDS.

**Adam Bomar '01** visited PDS and spoke to 4th graders about the importance of wearing seat belts and enlightened the boys on what it's like to be training to be a paramedic. Adam says that he has wanted to be a paramedic since he was in kindergarten at PDS and is fulfilling his dream. We need more servant leaders like Adam.

## Intern University

**Ryan Spicer Freebing '99** interned during the summer in advertising and marketing with White Thompson Advertising in Nashville, TN. White Thompson has worked on the 2014 NCAA Women's Final Four; TDOT "Clear the Air Tennessee;" Martha Stewart's Endorsement Campaign; Nashville MTA (Music City Central Grand Opening); Singer Sewing Machine's advertising & packaging; Tennessee's "Civil War Celebrates 150 Years"; and, the Governor's Conference on Tourism in Tennessee. Ryan graduated from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in December 2009 with a Bachelors degree in marketing & advertising.

**Breton Stewart Freebing '01** attended Bouchereau Lingua International in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, one of the most picturesque and historical cities in the world, for a five-week intensive french language program over the summer. Bret was also a City of Austin Aquatics Department Red-Cross certified outdoor pool lifeguard. Bret is a University of Tennessee-Knoxville senior with a psychology major and a French minor.

## **Daren Thomson Freebing '02**

worked this summer as a financial intern with UBS Financial Services, Inc, in Austin-West, Texas. He also be worked part-time for Achieve-Technology, Inc., a school management systems provider, which automates and simplifies school administrators' and faculty tasks for its clients components. Daren is a junior at DePaul University in Chicago, majoring in accounting and finance.

## Into the Workforce

**Sam Sawyer '99** writes to PDS that he is working at Rogers Healy and Associates, a residential Real Estate Firm in Dallas.

**Rick Clark '66** writes that he lives in Santa Monica, California, where he is owner of Rick Clark Productions and is a Music Supervisor/Music Producer where he recently worked with Jason Reitman as a Music Supervisor on the George Clooney film *Up in the Air*.

## School Kudos

Congratulations to **Jeffrey Webb '01** for being one of approximately 50 students



selected at the University of Virginia to Live on the Lawn. This is quite an honor!

This past summer **Charles Belina '06** (currently a junior in high school) took a class at the University of Memphis in Microbiology (lecture and lab) and received an "A" in both. He also took a course at Stanford University in Philosophy, via their EPGY program. Following in Charles' footsteps, high school sophomore **James Belina '07** took a class in Logic at the University of Memphis over the summer. He is now only the second rising high school sophomore to be accepted as a concurrent student. Out of a class of 31 students, James received the highest grade (A+). We are proud of these PDS Alums!

Congratulations to **Howard Choi '05**, **Clint Montgomery '05**, and **J.P. Wheeler '05** for being named as 2011 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists. Congratulations also to

**James Akers '05**, **Cale Carson '05**, **Elliott Collins '05**, and **William Cross '05** who have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as commended students.

### **PDS** Sports Stars

**Henry Dickinson '05** has committed to the University of Illinois to play football.

**Rob Dickinson '05** has committed to Amherst College, where he will play lacrosse. **Whit Thornton '05** has accepted an appointment to The United States Military Academy at West Point and will play basketball there. We wish these alums continued success as they represent their schools in athletics.

**John Stokes '01** has been referred to as "the Mother Teresa of football." He is a star on and off the field. He was accepted into the Vanderbilt School of Medicine as a sophomore, and is scheduled to start school in the fall. He and his brother **Will '03** spent

four weeks in South Africa working on AIDS relief through the United States Agency for International Development.

### **PDS** Alumni Dads

Class of 2011 pictured with their Dads who are PDS Alumni on the annual 6th Grade trip to St. Louis are:

McCall Knowlton, Geoff Knowlton '84; Watson Isbell, Wyatt Isbell '77; Battle Boyd, Hal Boyd; Trent Scull, Trent Scull '80; Max Scott, Tommy Scott '71; Jack Crosby, Glenn Crosby '71; George Crews, John Crews '78; Zachary Klinke, Russell Klinke '73; Harrison Tabor, Owen Tabor '79; Cole Wilder, Jim Wilder '76; Charlie Wiener, Russel Wiener; Alex Hyde, Pitt Hyde '55; Lamar Mallory, Bob Mallory '76; Hill Fulmer, Arthur Fulmer '73; Mackey Alexander, Albert Alexander '78; Robert Crump, Rob Crump '79; Henry George, Clayton George '73.



Above: The Class of 2011 with their dads who are PDS Alumni, on the 6th grade father-son trip to St. Louis.

### **PDS** We want to hear from you!

If you have alumni news or updates for the *PDS Spirit*, please send your information to PDS Alumni, 4025 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, TN 38111 or [alumni@pdsmemphis.org](mailto:alumni@pdsmemphis.org).

If you would like to help compile updated information for PDS Alumni Class Notes, please contact Cynthia Cross, Alumni Director, at 901-842-4691 or [ccross@pdsmemphis.org](mailto:ccross@pdsmemphis.org).



## CLASS OF 2001 REUNITES

PDS Alumni from the Class of 2001 celebrated their 10 year reunion with a gathering over the Christmas holidays at Fox & Hound. They enjoyed seeing each other and talking about what the future holds for them as they graduate from college this spring. Several will be applying the graduate schools while others are going right into the work force before furthering their education.

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Jeffrey Webb has been hired by Google and will be working for them in Boston. Andrew Jehl has been hired by a medical technology company in Madison, WI. Ben Waller is hoping to go overseas next year. Paul Kennedy is an international business major at Miss State. Miles DeBardleben wants to work out west before med school. John Catmur is applying to law school. John Stokes has been accepted to Vanderbilt University Medical School and may explore pro football opportunities.

**Below: Ben Waller, Ben Stallworth, Adam Bomar, Miles DeBardleben, Drew Hammond and John Catmur**



Jeffrey Webb, Lee Burns and Lee Moore



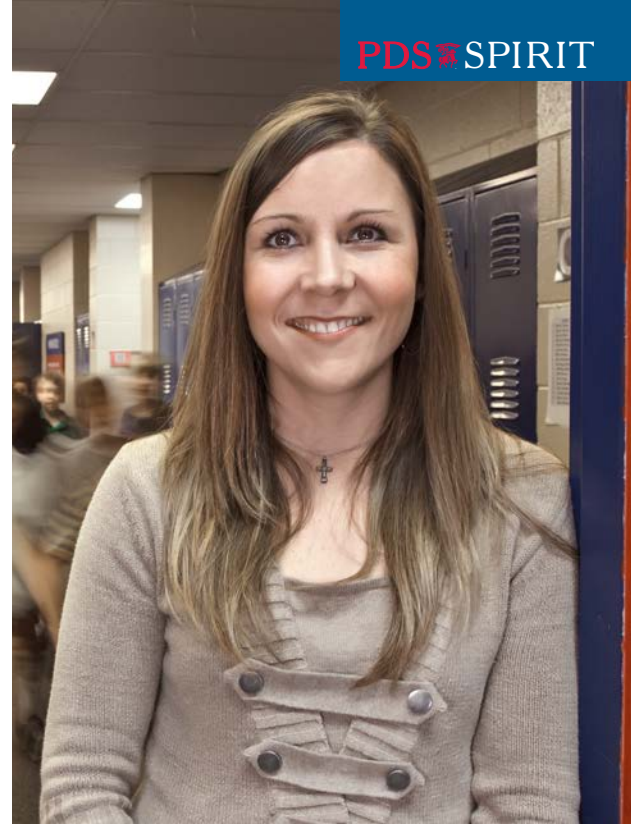
Reid Higginbotham and Andrew Jehl



# TEACHER FEATURE:

## Kim Trefz, 5th-Grade English Teacher

An English teacher in her fifth year at PDS and her 11th year of teaching, Kim Trefz pushes her 5th graders to apply grammar concepts as they write extensively on a range of interesting topics and projects that also develop their critical and creative thinking skills. Her class—and the high expectations—aren't like 5th-grade English classes from a generation ago, but her boys write at such exceptional levels that an ERB staff consultant in New York, in reviewing the writing scores of PDS 5th graders, said that she needs to clone herself and teach English at other independent schools around the country. So, a couple of 4th graders interviewed her about 5th-grade English.



### What makes a good writer?

Being a good writer involves having clear awareness of audience and purpose as interesting, organized ideas are constructed for the reader to easily follow. Additionally, creating voice is challenging but necessary for good writing because it allows the reader to see the writer's personality and to make an emotional connection to the content. Finding the right words to convey a message takes a piece of writing to a different level with description, specificity, and imagery. I feel that combining these traits helps a writer be an effective communicator.

### What are some of the topics and projects you use in your class?

In 5th grade, we are building 21st century skills through project-based learning since it lends itself to relevant real-world topics that are meaningful and purposeful to the students. The projects in English have involved solving civil rights issues that still exist; in social studies, the focus has been on the American Revolution and taking on the role of people of that era to gain a new perspective; the boys have completed a design challenge in math using geometric figures to construct buildings; a novel study

in reading involved the boys using Twitter and EtherPads to globally connect with countries around the world to discuss the themes of homelessness and illiteracy.

### How do you gauge the success of learning English through project-based learning?

Through the collaborative process of project-based learning, the students are responsible for their own learning and decision-making as they research the answers to a guiding question. They think critically for possible outcomes and problem-solve in order to come up with an end product. It is proven to be more effective than traditional teaching because it increases motivation and engagement in learning and improves student retention of knowledge over time. Project-based learning allows the students to see relevance in what they are learning as grade-level English standards are incorporated throughout. The pursuit of inquiry results from hands-on learning and having to show what you know. In the end, the students present their findings to their peers as they demonstrate an understanding of the whole problem-solving process. This supports the old Chinese proverb: "Tell me

and I forget; show me and I may remember, but involve me and I understand."

### What should boys expect in 5th-grade English?

A lot of technology is used for research and presenting information, we are implementing project-based learning, and teaching cross-curriculum. Just because I am an English teacher, it doesn't mean that my students aren't researching and reflecting on a current global topic that traditionally would be covered in social studies. This allows relevant connections to be made to all learning. This holds true for writing across the curriculum as well.

### What is your favorite thing about PDS?

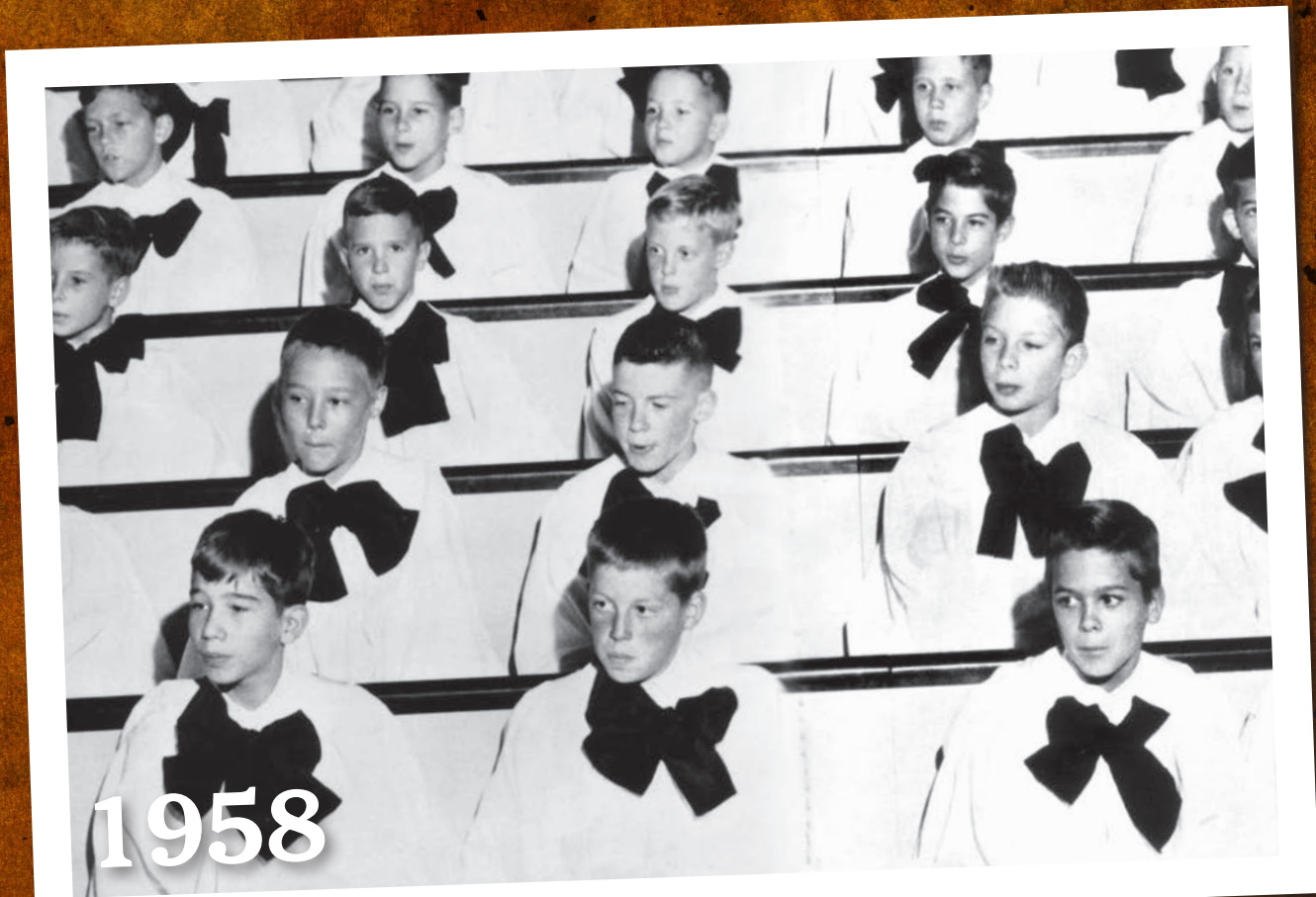
Aside from the wonderful opportunities we teachers are given to grow professionally and spiritually, I love how each day brings a new and exciting adventure in the classroom.

### What do you enjoy doing outside of PDS?

I enjoy spending time with my two boys, Lawson and Carter, as well as gardening, running, and reading in my spare time.



# THEN AND NOW





# WHY WE { BELIEVE } IN PDS

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN OVER 1,000 PDS ALUMNI, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE ALREADY MADE GIFTS TO SUPPORT THE BOYS AND PROGRAMS OF PDS.



"We are pleased every year with the godliness of the men and women of PDS and can trust the character and values they modeled for our son."

*Chantal and Jeff Johnson, Memphis, TN, Parents of Avery '09*



"PDS's emphasis on educating boys with a global perspective will have a great and important impact on their worldview."

*Brent Blankenship '95, New York, NY*



"We support the Annual Fund, because this is the school that our sons will be in the longest of all the schools they will attend."

*Elizabeth and Ben Daniel, '80, Memphis, TN, Parents of Benjamin '10 and Webb '16*



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