

99 YEARS

...and counting

by Mary Ellen Collins

Shorecrest has a momentous occasion on the horizon. 2023 will be the School's centennial, marking 100 years of delivering quality education in Tampa Bay.

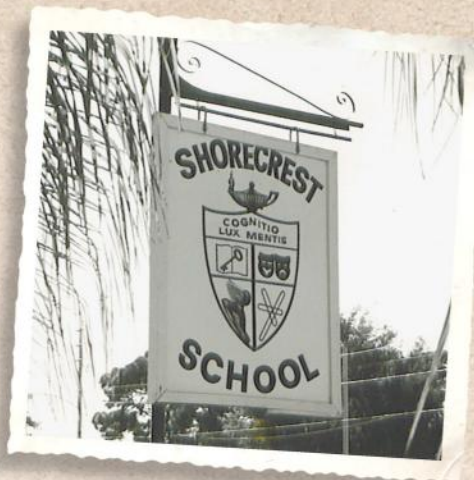
"I can count on one hand how many institutions in this area have reached a centenary," says Charles (Chas) Reynolds '81, Emeritus Trustee and Centennial Committee Chair. "Shorecrest is a model of something that has stood the test of time ... it's remarkable to me that it has continued on an upward trajectory for 100 years. That's worth celebrating."

Members of the community agree on what has allowed the School to survive and thrive. They point to leaders' thoughtful decision-making and commitment that enabled them to overcome challenges and chart a



successful course. They praise a dedicated faculty that mentors, motivates and truly cares about preparing students for success. All of their views lead to one universal opinion: Shorecrest is a special place.

There will be opportunities to review a comprehensive timeline of Shorecrest's history during the centennial year. However, as plans for the celebration take shape, it's not too early to highlight some milestones, learn a few new facts, enjoy the perspectives of friends and colleagues, and reflect on the people and decisions that have brought the School to where it is today.



Above: Shorecrest was founded in 1923 as the Shorecrest Outdoor School, a waterfront school for seasonal visitors. Left: The Shorecrest Outdoor School was renamed Shorecrest School in 1967.

1923 to 1967

■ Florence Stern founded the Shorecrest Outdoor School in 1923 on land between 12th and 13th Avenues NE, which was owned by Sophia Daily. The School originally served visitors to St. Petersburg, a town of about 600 residents.

■ Emma Vinal bought the School in 1927, became the Headmistress, and with the assistance of her daughter, Carleen, transitioned the School into a full-time institution.

■ After Emma Vinal's death in 1948, Carleen Haskell succeeded her mother and became Shorecrest's third Headmistress.

■ The School earned its initial accreditation by the Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) for grades K-6 in 1955.

■ St. Petersburg's development boom in the mid '60s led to an offer for Daily to sell the School's waterfront land. Haskell and her son, Bruce, a teacher, sought new funding and a new location. Developer Bob Crisp donated six acres and Daily provided the funding to build the campus.

1967 to 1989

■ In the fall of 1967 the renamed Shorecrest School, located in its current 1st Street North location, welcomed its first students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

■ In the early '70s, a group of parents who wanted an alternative to public schools for their older children encouraged the Haskells to add a high school. The Haskells agreed, and also decided to transition the proprietary school into a not-for-profit independent school governed by a Board of Trustees. Crisp donated more land to support the physical expansion. Bruce Haskell moved from teaching full-time to become the Headmaster.

“Bruce Haskell was an incredibly dynamic person from my youth,” says Reynolds. “He was the face of the place – he even filled in for our bus driver a few times when I was in elementary school! He was a big, youthful guy, extremely friendly, but there was no doubt among the student population who was in charge. He was in charge, and you respected him.”



■ 40 students entered into the first ninth grade class in 1972, around the same time the School was renamed Shorecrest Preparatory School.

“We kept being reminded that being in the first class was a big deal,” says Sue Rowe '76. “At an assembly before we left for the summer every year, Mr. Haskell would say, ‘You’re representing Shorecrest in everything you do, so remember that!’”

■ That first high school class graduated in 1976.

Above: Former Headmaster Bruce Haskell as pictured in the 1969-70 yearbook.

“As I looked out over the first graduating class of 1976 Commencement, it was the first time I knew the school faculty, staff and community could see the fruits of their labor – namely, that Shorecrest was now widely-known as a quality educational institution,” says Haskell.

■ In the '70s the Upper School received FCIS and SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accreditation.

■ Janet Root, the namesake of the Theatre and numerous prestigious community awards, joined Shorecrest as a parent and volunteer in 1978. A legendary champion for students and the arts, Root served as Arts and Humanities Chair, became the School's only Lifetime Trustee, and the first-ever Honorary Alumna in 2016.

■ In the early '80s Lower School Principal Mary Booker responded to the needs of parents by starting an Extended Day Program; and subsequently added an Early Childhood program for 4-year-olds, which expanded to include 3-year-olds.

■ Bruce Haskell stepped down as Headmaster in 1985, replaced by John (Jack) Ordeman, who stayed for four years.

“As I look back over my twenty years at Shorecrest, I am proudest of the great people of the School – students, faculty, staff, and parents,” says Haskell. “I am also very proud of the role my mother and grandmother played in the School's growth. I know that because of the efforts of these individuals, the school is now considered a community legacy.”

1989 to 2005

■ Having started her Shorecrest career as a fifth grade teacher in 1972, Mary Booker became Head of School in 1989, after a national search.

“I feel like when I took over the School was on the brink and ready to move, so my vision was to work strategically to take the steps to make that happen,” says Booker. “Aside from continuing to focus on developing our outstanding academic programs and ensuring that we could attract excellent teachers, we clearly needed to redesign our physical campus.”



■ From 1990 to 1995 Booker oversaw a five-year effort that included developing the Middle School/ Upper School arts quad; creating a new Middle School campus; building an Upper School science and technology center and a new fifth and sixth grade building; refurbishing the gymnasium; acquiring portable classroom buildings; and installing a campus-wide computer network.

■ Booker's belief in the importance of arts and cultural education included creating an Arts and Humanities Department in the Upper School in 1990; and later, the Raymund Arts and Media Center, which opened in 2002.

“I think it was symbolically transformational that the cultural hub is located where the football field was,” says Richard Beaton,

former Dean of Faculty. “It reinforced that we were becoming more cerebral and academic. It seemed like we were putting our money where our mouths were.”

■ Booker restructured the Lower & Middle School grade levels, forming more age appropriate separate groups for three and four-year-olds, Kindergarteners through fourth graders, fifth and sixth graders, and seventh and eighth graders.

■ She created Shorecrest’s first Admissions Office in 1989.

“Mary recognized the need to hire a Director of Admissions to handle the number of inquiries and

create a formal enrollment process,” says Diana Craig, the first Director of Admissions.

“Until that time, students were enrolled if there was space available.

We created an information brochure, scheduled family tours, and developed a process that included an application form, student classroom visit, and an admissions test. This put us on more equal footing with other top private schools in Florida.”

■ After completing a 34-year tenure as teacher, principal, and Head of School, Booker retired in 2005.



Above: Mike Murphy served as Headmaster from 2005-2020.

2005 to Present

■ Mike Murphy, former Headmaster at Pace Academy in Atlanta, became Head of School in 2005.

“I liked the people, the environment and the opportunities,” says Murphy. “It was important for me that the school had arts and athletics as well as academic standing, and that there was an interest in becoming a more progressive academic institution. There was also an unbelievable opportunity for the physical development of the campus.”

■ Successful fundraising efforts changed the face of the campus significantly with the addition of Landy Hall in 2008, the Middle School Arts and Sciences building in 2009, the Shorecrest Athletic Center in 2011, and Charger Commons in 2019.

“Fundraising is the lifeblood of an independent school. Mike’s tenure added more resources and talent to this vital function within the administration and within the Board,” says alumni parent and Emeritus Trustee Marshall Craig. “The shift in name from ‘Development’ to ‘Advancement’ sounds subtle but is significant. Growing the annual fund and building endowment are critical to reducing reliance on tuition income as well as increasing scholarship support and maintaining facilities. To marry these needs and at the same time mount capital campaigns required remarkable leadership and resilience on Mike’s part.”

■ New specialized tracks added to the Upper School curriculum included The Global Scholars Initiative, launched in 2011; the Peck Center for Medical Sciences, launched in 2016; and the STEAM Signature Program, added in 2020.

■ Shorecrest was recognized as an Apple Distinguished School three times: in 2016-2018, 2018-2021 and 2021-2024. This designation is awarded to programs that demonstrate innovation, leadership, educational excellence, and a clear vision of exemplary learning environments.

■ In 2018 Murphy hired Roderick Avery Fludd as the School's first Director of Diversity & Inclusion. Shorecrest is the only school in the Tampa Bay Area to have a full-time position devoted to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

“Shorecrest had for years made efforts to broaden diversity of faculty, families and students,” says Murphy. “One trustee on the strategic planning committee, Marc Jacobson, united people around the idea of making diversity a major area of focus. It was my belief that without a designated leader to support educational programs for all community members and to assist in the recruitment of faculty and students, the School would continue to take two steps forward one step back. The Board approved a strategic plan that had diversity as a pillar

and had the hiring of a Director of Diversity & Inclusion as a key initiative.”

■ Mike Murphy retired in 2020 and Nancy Spencer became Shorecrest's eighth Head of School.

“I was looking for a day school opportunity with a very strong sense of community in an interesting city, and I was struck by the authenticity of the people and the place,” says Spencer. “Shorecrest was not pretentious or precious. The welcoming nature of the faculty, staff and students appealed to me, and it was so clear how much the trustees cared about the School.”



■ Since the initial state shutdown in March 2020, the School has not had to close during the pandemic. Spencer spent her first year focusing on health and safety,

the education of the students, and the mental and physical health of the faculty and the students.

“We intentionally paused self-study, strategic planning, and accreditation work over the 2020-2021 school year in order to focus on the day-to-day needs of students and teachers in the face of COVID-related pressures,” says Spencer. “This year we have been able to begin that work in earnest – articulating our vision for the future of the

School. It's a wonderful position to be in. Shorecrest's roots and foundation are authentic and solid, due to the work of generations of individuals and families. Now it's our job to determine the best way to develop and deploy the resources necessary to start our next 100 years!"

Today, Shorecrest takes pride in offering a PK3-12 educational experience defined by a commitment to excellence and innovation, where students thrive in a variety of unique learning environments on a 28-acre campus in a vibrant city. With a strong foundation and an exciting vision for the future, the School now has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to plan its next steps while preparing for a community-wide celebration of a successful first century.

"Like 1876 and 1976 have been years of national pride, 1923 should instill the same source of pride for our students, teachers and families," says Ron Heller, Upper School History Teacher and Student Support Teacher. "From our humble beginnings, where we were a facilitator of education for children of Northerners sojourning ... in a growing burg, to a bastion of learning in a major southern metropolis today, let your hearts swell with pride for our collective accomplishments over these 100 years."

The centennial celebrations will span two school years.



100 Years... Here We Come!

Dear Shorecrest Community,

To have been established 100 years ago in a nation as young as America, and at a



time when Florida was so underdeveloped, is a historic accomplishment. Yet, in 2023 Shorecrest will celebrate this very milestone. Founded in 1923 as a quality elementary alternative for the children of northern visitors, Shorecrest has endured a century of change.

From its beginnings in downtown St. Petersburg, to its move in the 1960s to its present campus, to its first graduating high school class in 1976, this school has survived, changed, and prospered. How could we not recognize and mark this amazing accomplishment?

Beginning next school year, our community will begin a series of events celebrating this special time and culminating with ceremonies for the "official" recognition in the fall of 2023. This will be a tremendous and joyful undertaking with many opportunities to honor our past accomplishments, students, faculty, families, and our century of growth within the Tampa Bay Area. Please consider this an open invitation to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime moment by getting involved in our Centennial Committee. We plan to call on the full array of skills in the Shorecrest community to help us celebrate what is sure to be the most unique and special milestone in the history of the School. I look forward to working with all of you throughout our journey to our centennial year.

Charles (Chas) Reynolds '81
Centennial Committee Chair

To get involved with the Centennial Planning Committee, email centennial@shorecrest.org.

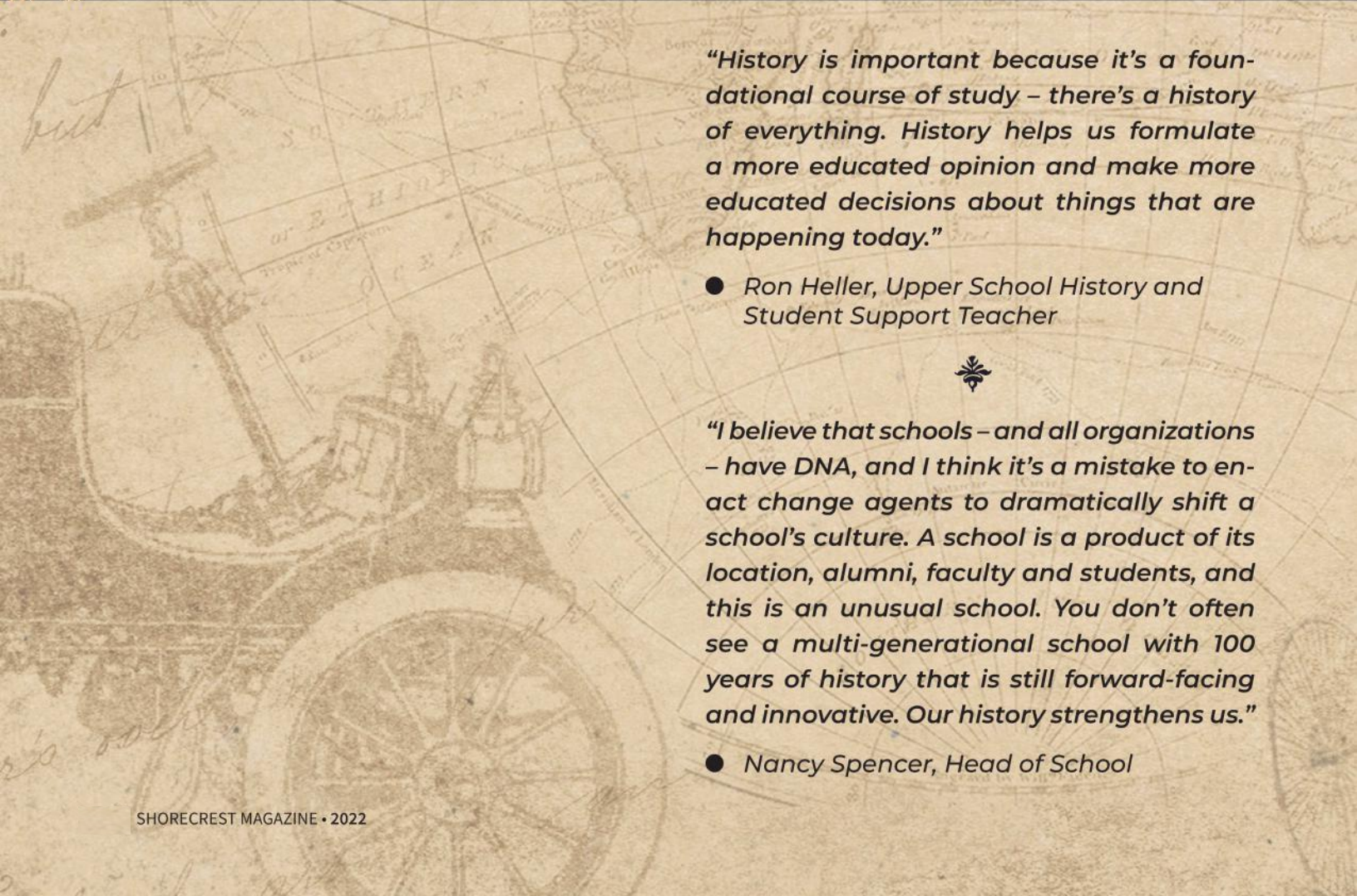


In Their Words

by Mary Ellen Collins

A large part of Shorecrest's success lies in everyone's willingness and ability to evolve – to move with the times and pivot when necessary in order to fulfill the mission in a constantly changing world. However, that continued forward trajectory doesn't diminish the importance of the past.

In fact, the past is a strong determinant of the future. Members of the Shorecrest community share varying perspectives on the critical nature of studying history as a discipline, and how that relates to understanding and appreciating the history of the School.



"History is important because it's a foundational course of study – there's a history of everything. History helps us formulate a more educated opinion and make more educated decisions about things that are happening today."

- Ron Heller, Upper School History and Student Support Teacher



"I believe that schools – and all organizations – have DNA, and I think it's a mistake to enact change agents to dramatically shift a school's culture. A school is a product of its location, alumni, faculty and students, and this is an unusual school. You don't often see a multi-generational school with 100 years of history that is still forward-facing and innovative. Our history strengthens us."

- Nancy Spencer, Head of School

“With eight and nine-year-olds, we talk about history through the lens of change-makers like Greta Thunberg and Malala Yousafai and Jackie Robinson. History is very cyclical and there’s a lot to unpack from why people made certain choices and decisions, what propelled them forward, or what held them back. We get to learn from things that were done well and things that may not have worked so well. The students get to see that it’s all relevant.”

- *Khana Rebman '05, Third Grade Teacher and Lower School DEI Coordinator*



“The challenge, the pleasure and the usefulness of an historian’s work lies in the unpacking of history. A dry, rote-learned succession of dates and events is not interesting. What is interesting is how personalities, beliefs and actions, each playing off the other, can create a successful institution. In the case of Shorecrest’s success, certain threads have connected over the years. There have been a series of committed, involved board members, each year’s board eliding into the next, providing new skills but maintaining consistent values. Our boards have been complemented by a sequence of capable Heads of School who possessed the rare ability to lead and listen as they kept a vision of the School’s future in mind.”

- *Marshall Craig, Alumni Parent and Emeritus Trustee*



“I believe that all successful institutions are based on the sacrifices and efforts of those who have participated in the institution since the beginning. I also believe it is im-

portant to continue to honor those people as the institution grows and flourishes. Shorecrest is where it is today because of the dedication and commitment to academic excellence of the faculty, staff, students, parents, trustees and benefactors who have been in the School since its founding in 1923.”

- *Mary Booker, Former Head of School*



“The centennial gives Shorecrest an opportunity to honor its past accomplishments, revisit how the School has changed and prospered, and sets the stage for the future. The Shorecrest Alumni Association is made up of almost 2,800 members. Our alumni are one of our greatest assets as they have played a significant role in building the School’s culture and are the product of an exceptional Shorecrest education.”

- *Stacy Alexander, Director of Alumni and Community Engagement*



“History helps us understand why and how things happened the way they did. We have to be able to look back at uncomfortable times and make responsible changes.”

- *Sue Rowe '76, Former Lower School Art Teacher*



“History gives continuity. If we think of community as a concept that has endured, it has broadened in terms of who it includes. The Global Scholars Initiative is targeted at students who have an active interest in the broader world in which we live and is intended to provide a framework for better

understanding that world. It encourages students to look beyond their immediate community, beyond their immediate nation, and to see themselves as citizens of the world with the ability to effect positive change. But to understand “change,” one has to know what came before. So knowing the history of something - one’s family, one’s country, one’s school - is critical for the lessons it can teach, the trends it can identify, and the possible next steps to take.”

- *Richard Beaton,
Former Dean of Faculty*



“History tells a story and paints a full picture. I pulled some artifacts in the school archives to get ready for the centennial and stumbled across things like an old program for a fourth grade class music concert. This has been a school for 100 years, and the students who came before us were learning, and doing theatre and the arts – they were just like us.”

- *Jonathan Currie '21*



“History is not a series of isolated events, rather it’s a complex web of causes, effects, continuities and changes. It can sometimes feel as though historical events have little to no bearing on our daily lives, particularly if they happened a long time ago or if we’ve changed dramatically since that period of time. This is especially true of local history which tends to be forgotten about entirely as neighborhoods change, buildings get torn down

and replaced, etc. With these changes often comes a break in connections and communities. Schools are one of the few exceptions to this rule because while the physical buildings might change and students come and go, the traditions of the school continue to be passed down.”

- *Kayla Brazee,
Upper School History Teacher*



Connecting History to the Present

Shorecrest alumnus, collector and historian David B. Haas '81 made a generous gift of artifacts of historical significance to the School in December 2021. Signed presidential artifacts – including documents from Abraham Lincoln and James Madison – round out the collection. Head of School Nancy Spencer and Director of Advancement Michael Gillis gratefully accepted the contribution on behalf of the School. Various parts of this extensive catalog will debut and be on display during the centennial celebrations in 2023.

Contribute to the Archives

If you have historical materials, including pieces of Shorecrest memorabilia, that you would like to contribute or lend to the Shorecrest archives, please contact Ron Heller, Chair of the Centennial Archives Committee, at rheller@shorecrest.org.