

Changing Dimensions

1997 - 1998

This year was a year of growth, spirit, and development for Harrison High School. Before the school opened on August 26, 1991, the Marietta Daily Journal headlined, "New High School will be Largest in State." In 1997, Harrison became the largest school in Georgia with 2,840 students occupying the seven-acre school building and the surrounding trailers. Teachers faced many challenges during the first years of the school, including the difficulties of starting from scratch by ordering new materials, rewriting the curriculum, and even redefining rules such as whether to allow food and drinks in class. Although Harrison underwent a variety of changes, the fundamental goal of always seeking to help students learn and to do their best remained.

To recognize academic success, the "Hoya of the Week" program became a new installation for Harrison High School as a part of its new emphasis on character education. Each week the PTSA would recognize a member of the student body for practicing random acts of kindness.

The newly implemented Alcohol and Drug Awareness Conference raised student awareness of the effects of alcohol and drugs as well as promoted and built a stronger Harrison community. Mr. Herman Wood, one of the leaders of this year's ADC staff, elaborated on this goal, saying, "We don't need it more than any other high school. Drugs and alcohol are problems in our community, and the school is a part of the community." The effectiveness of the program directly came as a result of new technologies, dramatic footage, and guest speakers. Overall, the Alcohol and Drug Awareness Conference gave students a chance to reflect on the decisions forced upon teenagers, personally as well as in the community.

When not demonstrating their outstanding character, Hoyas spent the school year showing their unmatched spirit and dedication to athletic success. The first annual Hoya football caravan was just one example of the new activities which increased spirit and student participation. Over 100 cars and 200 students participated in Harrison's first ever caravan to McEachern High School. Enormous levels of spirit throughout the school year were evident through Harrison's Spirit Week and pep rallies. During this school year, the senior class raised more money than any other class and earned the privilege of sliming Jim, the student's favorite custodian. All of the money raised went to defray the cremation expenses of Hoya I, Harrison's beloved bulldog mascot.

Harrison strived to build its community during the school year by encouraging diversity studies. One way of promoting this was by adding foreign exchange students to the Harrison family. Foreign students at Harrison in the 1997-1998 school year came from Germany, Slovakia, Russia, and Japan. Foreign language studies increased this year as over 75 percent of the student body studied at least one language. Students who undertook the challenge of learning these languages were rewarded when Spanish teacher Mrs. Marie Bruner traveled with 13 students to Mexico for the summer of 1997. Together, they visited ancient Aztec ruins such as The Moon and The Stars.

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With technology becoming increasingly important in the workplace, certain Harrison students demonstrated their passion for technology and web development throughout the year. Freshman Bradford Cox designed, updated, and maintained sites for independent companies, a music magazine, and his own page from which he sold his own font creations. Tracy Lewis, a senior, specialized in web page design. Her excellence in technology even earned her \$700 for designing a flea market web page.

Although tremendous growth in the student body placed a strain on the high school, students strived to demonstrate character and excellence in every possible way. The efforts of the students throughout the school year showed that Harrison is not just a high school: it's a community.