

# **Reminiscences and Highlights of the History of the Russell High School Band: 60 years of Excellence and Service**

## **Volume II: 1950-1973**



by

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## **Dedication**

“Education, like faith, is a ladder reaching from darkness to light from earth to heaven. Each one possesses a ladder, varying in size and strength according to the innate aspirations and the varied experiences on the individual builders.”<sup>1</sup>

A Final Farewell Salute to Russell High School and a Welcome to the new Tri-Cities High School occurred in a special ceremony on 8 June 1988. Part of the ceremony included a musical selection by the Russell Band, thus ending the 60-year tradition of ensembles that went by the name Russell High School Band. This story is dedicated to the large number of honorable music students who came through the doors of the Russell High School band room from 1928 through 1988 and who chose to give of themselves and extend their musical ladders to enormous heights.

## **In Gratitude**

A project of this magnitude would not be possible without the support and assistance from numerous people and organizations. Gratitude is offered to the Teaching Museum South, living Russell High Band Directors, and numerous Russell alumni who provided materials that proved to be very beneficial. Recognition is also extended to Herb Cox for festival results and to Steve Bramlett of the East Point Historical Society (EPHS) who assisted in the early stages of the research. A great amount of gratitude goes to Charles Strickland, President of the EPHS, Charles Chambers, Thursday EPHS host and 1945 Russell graduate, and other officers and volunteers of the EPHS, who have been extremely helpful during the latter time frame of this study. Gratitude is also extended to

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<sup>1</sup> Carolyn Walker Nottingham and Evelyn Hannah, “Schools of Thomaston & Upson County,” chapter in The Early History of Upson County, 603. Vidalia, Georgia, Georgia Genealogical Reprints, 1969.

Leslie Chambers Champion, Mr. Chambers' daughter, who spent a great deal of time editing this manuscript and making it a better work to read.

A special word of thanks goes to Bill Prescott, my Russell Band Director, mentor, and long-time personal friend, for his service and untiring efforts at Russell, and who gave Russell and East Point some of the most memorable moments in the 60-year history of the Russell High School Band. It was an honor to have him as my band director. I have been fortunate to have him as a second father, whose inspiration provided me a life and career in music education.

William Enrico Fry  
Russell High Band '71

## **Introduction**

Volume II of this band history documents the Russell High School Band's two and a half decades of excellence and service to Russell High and the City of East Point from 1950 to 1973. Continuing the traditions established during the Band's previous two and a half decades (chronicled in Volume I: 1924-1950), the Russell Band as documented in Volume II was featured at football games, Memorial Day parades, civic events, school concerts, Southeastern Fair invitations, and numerous other special appearances.

The role and function of the Russell Band from its inception in 1928 through the end of the 1940s generally was an organization attached to, and supportive of, the Russell High ROTC and its numerous military activities. From the outset, the Russell High ROTC program established an outstanding tradition of service, pride, and excellence as part of the student body experience, and the Russell Band was vitally important in this

area. As an independent unit within the larger scope of the Russell ROTC program, the band led the way and provided the tempo for many “Pass and Review” ceremonies and many other parades in which the ROTC participated. In addition, the band was an active organization that provided service to Russell High and the community in many capacities, such as holiday celebrations, political rallies, World War II patriotic appearances, Southeastern Fair performances, and constant parades.

To a large extent, the Russell Band continued these areas of service; however, beginning in the early 1950s and extending into the years covered in Volume II, the Russell Band added an educational emphasis along with its traditional civic and school role. This additional focus was accomplished primarily through the hiring of full-time band directors and by the music festival system (see Appendix #1, p. 212) format administered by the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA).

### **Russell High Band Directors**

Particularly important in the band history of Russell High were the dedicated and highly qualified band directors who led the band at various points along the 60-year time line. The band director job was not a full-time position until the 1948-1949 school year. Those who served prior to that time primarily were members of academic departments first and did double duty as the band director on a part-time. Numerous directors over the years, especially from 1950 forward, were members of the Atlanta Symphony while serving at Russell High, and many went on to substantial and influential careers after their Russell days.



1928-1930: Harry P. Carpenter

1930-1941: Roy Drukenmiller (and Science Department)

1941-1942: Hoyt Griffin (and English Department)

1942-1943: Jack Swartz

1943-1946: Charles E. Taylor (and Science Department)

1946-1947: Capt. Warren T. Jackson

1947-1948: Roy Drukenmiller, Jr., a temporary substitute assisted by Cadet Captain Gene Carter; Robert B. Waggoner (mid-year replacement)

1948-1950: Harold W. Alenius

1950-1951: Manly C. Sanders/James Hopperstad/Charles Warren Little

1951-1952: Richard Hansberry

1952-1955: James M. Hopperstad

1955-1959: Frank V. Lentini

1959-60 Jim Lloyd; Roy Drukenmiller (Guest Conductor); Dan Hough (mid-year replacement)

1960-1963: John David Wiggins

1963-1967: William O. Latson

1967-1973: William Prescott

1973-1976: Larry Freund

1976-1979: Larry Sims

1979-1981: David Lee

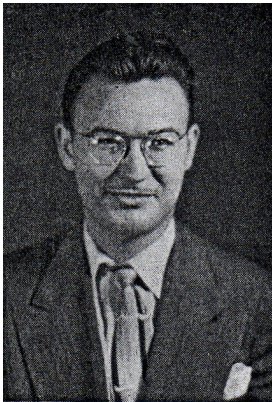
1981-1984: Jim Littlefield

1984-1985: Frank Banton

1985-1988: Samuel Jay Hutcherson, Jr.

## C. Warren Little: 1950-1951

Mr. Charles “Warren” Little (1927-2002) was a native of Atlanta and attended Ann E. West Elementary School, Murphy Junior High, and Boys High School. Later he attended the Eastman School of Music, Curtis Institute (for two years on full



scholarship), Interlochen Music Camp, and earned the B.F.A.

Degree from the University of Georgia (1946-1949).

He was an important name in the flute world for the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Anyone listening to the Atlanta Symphony during that time would have heard Warren Little as principal flute; however, few people knew that Warren Little was the Russell High Band Director for one year and later taught at Druid Hills High School in DeKalb County.<sup>2</sup>

The Atlanta Flute Club provided a retrospective on Mr. Little’s life:

“An Atlanta native, Mr. Little began studying flute at age 11 under Charles I. Bradley, the original Principal Flutist of the ASO. After continuing his studies at the University of Georgia, he went on to work and study under Joseph Mariano at the Eastman School of Music and William Kincaid at the Curtis Institute. In 1949 after only one year in the ASO flute section, he was well prepared and qualified to fill the gap left by the resignation of Charles Bradley and he served as the ASO's principal Flute for the next 41 years. He was married to Jane Finley Little, the ASO's Assistant Principal Bass Emeritus. They commuted together in the 1940's from their studies at UGA to Atlanta for ASO rehearsals and performances. For decades it was a familiar sight as Jane and Warren arrived backstage, he with her bass while she carried his flute.

Through the years, he was soloist in works by Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Mozart, Griffes, Kennan and others. He was recognized as one of the foremost freelance musicians in Atlanta, playing for Albert Coleman's Atlanta Pops Orchestra, Theater of the Stars, the Atlanta Ballet and countless commercial recording sessions. ‘It was quite an inspiration to play with him,’ said ASO

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<sup>2</sup> Jane Finley Little, telephone interview, 18 February 2012.

piccoloist Carl Hall. 'He was able to play with a wide dynamic range and could do some exquisite phrasing. I was always amazed at how softly he could play in the high register.' Martin Sauser, a former ASO concertmaster for 17 years said, 'He had a wonderful, lush sound with all the technique he needed to play anything. He was one of the country's great flutists.'

A rugged sometimes gruff man with a hearty laugh, he worked long and tenaciously to improve the lot of professional musicians in Atlanta. He completed 24 years of service with the Atlanta Federation of Musicians and was elected President of the Board in 1986. Mr. Little served as President of the AFM Local 148-462 through 1992 after his retirement as Principal Flute of the ASO in 1990. He also served as president of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Players Association.<sup>3</sup>

### Richard Hansbery: 1951-1952



Richard Hansbery was born and raised in Hillsboro, Wisconsin. After graduating from high school, Hansbery joined the Navy in 1939 and attended the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C. On 12 December 1940, he arrived at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for a musician assignment aboard the USS Raleigh, a naval cruiser. He was transferred for duty aboard the USS Dobbin, a destroyer tender on 30 September 1941, just before the 7 December 1941 surprise attack. Because of its position in Pearl Harbor, the USS Dobbin only sustained shrapnel damage; but, the USS Raleigh took a torpedo to its portside, causing a great deal of damage with only a few injured. Hansbery continued to serve on the USS Dobbin for most of the remainder of World War II, writing a copyrighted composition, the *Eternal Spirit March* in the process. After the war, Hansbery earned

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<sup>3</sup> Nancy Wilson, ed., "Death of Warren Little on February 23, 2002," *Atlanta Flute Club Newsletter*, Spring 2002, 6.

music education degrees under the G.I. Bill from Peabody College (Boston) and the Cincinnati Conservatory.

In 1951, Hansbery was hired by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as a trombonist and worked simultaneously at Russell for one year. After Russell he taught at south Atlanta schools while continuing to perform with the Atlanta Symphony until 1966. Sometime in the late 1970/early 1980s, Hansbery moved to the San Francisco area of California and was still listed in the Atlanta Federation of Musicians Directory as late as 1992 (San Rafael, CA resident). He passed away in Petaluma, California, on 9 February 2004 and was buried in Hillsboro, Wisconsin.

### James M. Hopperstad: 1952-1955



James M. Hopperstad left Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 1946 and served as band director at North Charleston (S.C.) before coming to Atlanta. He first came to Russell temporarily for the 1949-50 school year and taught at Russell High beginning in 1952 while doing coursework at the Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia (Georgia State University).<sup>4</sup> Mr. Hopperstad's experience with the Atlanta Symphony included String Bass during the 1949-1950 season and Tuba from 1950-1951; 1952-1957. Mr. Hopperstad left Russell in 1955 to pursue a legal career and earned a law degree from John Marshall Law School in Atlanta in June 1957.

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<sup>4</sup> Ray Ellis, "Music Column," *Russell Wildcat*, 24 October 1952, 3.

## Frank V. Lentini: 1955-1959

After graduating from East High School in Auburn, New York, in 1949, Frank V. Lentini earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Ithaca College, New York. The Russell Band position was Mr. Lentini's first band, serving for four and a half years. During his entire time at Russell High, Lentini performed as a clarinetist for the Atlanta

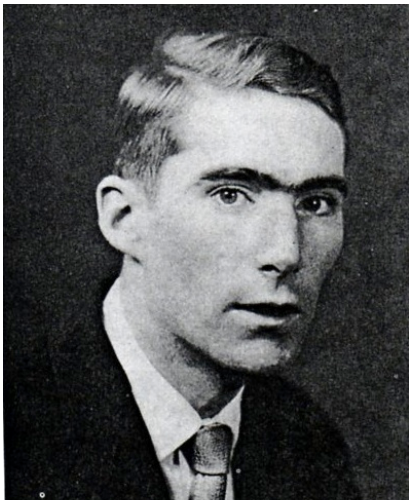


FRANK LENTINI  
Director

Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Pops Orchestra, and the Atlanta Concert Band. Also, he sang in and directed the choir of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Atlanta.

Upon leaving Russell and returning to Auburn, New York, Mr. Lentini assumed the band director position at Fayetteville-Manlius High School, where he led the program from 1959-1989. As he had done during his Atlanta area days, Lentini continued to perform in numerous outside music groups including the Auburn Civic Band, the Cayugans, and the Auburn Chamber Orchestra. In addition, he was a charter member (clarinet) of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra from 1961 to 1976. He was also a member of the Syracuse Concert Band from 1959 to 1989. Mr. Lentini passed away in Auburn N.Y. in 1996 at the age of 65.

## Don Hough: 1960

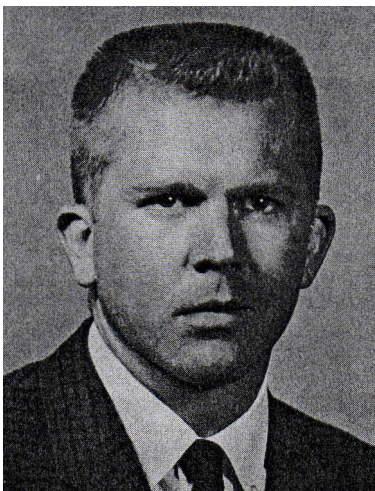


Don Hough graduated from the University of Illinois in 1954 and was awarded a master's degree in 1956 from the same institution. After military service, he



settled in Fulton County in 1959, serving as a band and strings teacher until his retirement in 1989. Hough started his Fulton County service as an orchestra teacher at College Park High School, but was transferred to Russell as band director midway through the school year in early 1960 to finish out the school term caused by the mid-year departure of Mr. Lentini. After Russell, Hough became active as an elementary band teacher at numerous schools in south Fulton County for the remainder of his Fulton County career. Hough's service to the community included long-time membership in the Atlanta Community Orchestra, where he played viola. Currently, he continues his service to music by holding the position of music librarian for the Atlanta Community Orchestra.<sup>5</sup>

### John David Wiggins: 1960-1963



Mr. John David Wiggins, a graduate of Texas Tech, taught choral and instrumental music in the Lubbock County, Texas, School System before coming to Russell. He also served in the U.S. Air Force as a jet pilot. In addition to his public school choral teaching, Wiggins' prior experience with chorus involved music director of First Methodist Church of Big Springs, Texas, Presbyterian Missionary of Tainan, Taiwan, Andrews Chapel Methodist of Newnan, Georgia, and St. Matthew Methodist Church in East Point.

While he taught at Russell, his wife, Gretchen, taught fifth grade at Harris Street Elementary School. As a semi-professional ballerina, Mrs. Wiggins also assisted in developing dance routines and coaching the Russellettes.

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<sup>5</sup> Don Hough, telephone interview, 28 February 2012.

Wiggins had a minor degree in physical education and contributed to the sports programs at Russell. He assisted the basketball coaches and was the head coach for the B-Team Girls in 1963, losing only four games during that season.

Wiggins' decision to leave Russell was a disappointment to many. During his three years, he managed to improve the Band to a "I" or "Superior" Rating earned at the 1963 Band Festival. Concerning Wiggins, Mr. Lennard Venable, Band Booster President, stated in the *Russell Wildcat*:

"He has done a wonderful job with the band and is loved by all. His enthusiasm and fine qualities as band director have brought Russell a greater understanding of what an excellent band means to a high school. We wish him and Mrs. Wiggins well in their new assignment and know that they will do a fine job wherever they go."<sup>6</sup>

Wiggins moved to Claremont, California, in 1963 and was an avid youth sports coach and continued to work in music education. He was the first band director at Alta Loma High School and then taught at Mt. San Antonio College for 30 years, serving as the chair of the Music Department for the last 11 years of that tenure. He passed away on 6 June 2010 in Claremont, California.

### William O. Latson: 1963-1967



A native of Amarillo, Texas, Mr. Bill Latson enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1943 after his graduation from Amarillo High School. He continued his education after the war and graduated from West Texas State and later earned an AB from

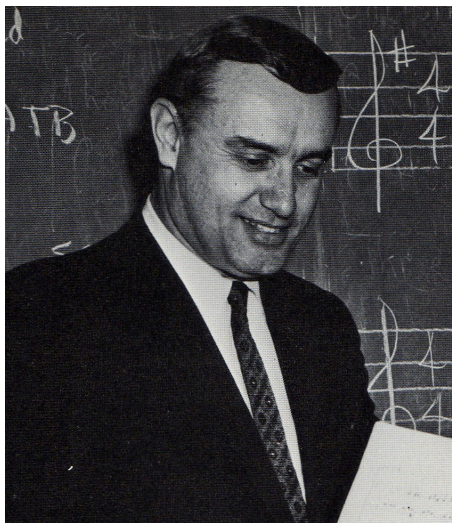
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<sup>6</sup> Louise Cox, ed., "Wiggins Leaves Russell," *Russell Wildcat*, May 1963, 1.

the University of Iowa. He did additional graduate work at George Peabody College in Nashville.

Latson was on the music faculty of West Texas State University in the early 1950s and later became band director at Amarillo High School, where he served just prior to coming to Russell in 1963. After his 4-year tenure at Russell High, he moved to the band director position at Henry County (GA) High School. Latson resided in Stockbridge, Georgia during his retirement and passed away there in October 2012.

### William Prescott: 1967-1973



William Prescott earned his Bachelor's degree from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He served in an Ohio-based U. S. Army Band during World War II and traveled the country performing for troops and aiding the stateside war effort. Prior to coming to Russell, Prescott taught at Eastern Kentucky University and obtained a master's degree from the University of Florida. After six years at Russell, Prescott left to attend the University of Arizona for a doctorate degree. Prescott's six years at Russell made him the second longest serving band director in the 60-year history of the band, behind Roy Drukenmiller, who served 11 years (1930-1941). While in Arizona, Prescott served as an assistant professor of flute. During this time, Prescott authored *The Prescott Flute Method*, which was published by Belwin-Mills in 1979. In 1976 Prescott returned to the Fulton County Schools as band



director at Westwood H. S., and then left in 1978 to serve as band director at North Gwinnett High School before retiring from full-time teaching in 1988.

Shortly after his retirement, Prescott was appointed as conductor of the “Sounds of Sewanee” Community Band (Forsyth County, GA) and directed for over ten years. Additionally, Prescott was selected to conduct the Yaarab Shrine Band in 1978, a group with whom he continues his association to this day on a Conductor Emeritus basis.

Prescott’s major accomplishments at Russell High included:

- 1) Starting a tradition of Pre-season Band Camps held at off-campus locations
- 2) Initiating Marching Festival/Competition participation
- 3) Earning Superior Ratings in GMEA Festival each year
- 4) Producing numerous college Music Scholarship winners
- 5) Invitations to six straight major out-of-state band trips
  - 1968 South Georgia/North Florida
  - 1969 Mardi Gras Parade
  - 1970 Bahamas Tour
  - 1971 Hollywood (FL) Band Shell
  - 1972 Disney World (Orlando)
  - 1973 St. Augustine Easter Parade

### **Russell High Principals**

Any successful band program necessarily involves the cooperation of all the stakeholders: band director, students, band parents, and administrators. 12 Principals led Russell High School during its history, all of whom had successful and distinguished careers.

**James T. McGee** 1924

**R. H. Bell** (1924-1927)

**M. C. Bishop** (1927-1928)

**C. W. Reid** (1928-1932)

**Paul D. West** (1932-1942)

**Roy Drukenmiller** (1942-1949)

**L. L. Deck** (1949-1963)

**Larry Dodd** (1963-1968)

**Hal Shields** (1968-1969)

**Garland Williams** (1969-1972)

**Jesse Shadix** (1972-1985)

**Henry Porter** (1985-1988)

### **Fulton County Schools Music Supervisors**

The Fulton County School System was fortunate to have two distinguished and dedicated Music Supervisors leading the County music programs. Much of the success of the County's music programs can be attributed to both Don Robinson and Joe Kirschner, the latter of whom was a frequent drop-in visitor and occasional guest conductor at Russell High.

**Don Robinson** earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of North Carolina in 1947, began teaching in the Fulton County, Atlanta, Georgia schools as an instrumental and choral conductor, and later served as an instructor at the University of Michigan School of Music where he earned a Master's Degree in Music. While in Michigan, he taught in the elementary and junior high programs in the Ann Arbor Public Schools, and later was an elementary and classroom music teacher in the United States Air Force Dependent Schools in Wiesbaden, Germany.

In 1958, Robinson returned to Fulton County Schools in Atlanta as Director of Music Education, where he served with distinction until his retirement in 1980. There he successfully increased the number of music teachers and the emphasis on the

performance of new music, and employed a string quartet in residence to perform and teach.

A talented conductor, Robinson served as Music Director of the Atlanta Boy Choir, the Atlanta Jewish Center Chorus, the Chorale of Atlanta, and the Central Presbyterian Church, and conducted groups at National, Division, and State MENC conferences, and All-State Choruses in eight states. Additionally, he published numerous articles in the *Georgia Music News*, *Music Educators Journal*, and the *ISME Newsletter*. In 1970, he served on the National Planning Committee on the White House Conference on Children, and also served as chairman of the MENC Committee on International Relations, chairman of the MENC Bicentennial Committee, President and Executive Director of the Georgia Music Educators Association, President of the Southern Division of MENC, and was a nominee for MENC President in 1975. As a 46-year member of ISME, he served as Chairman on the Commission of Schools and Teacher Education, and was a Life Member of the American Choral Directors Association.

Robinson was honored with the Distinguished Service Award from the University of Georgia Department of Music in 1981, where he did additional graduate work, and was chosen to address the South Korean Music Educators Association in 1989. He was awarded an Honorary Life Membership in ISME in 1998, and became an Honorary Board Member of the Choral Guild of Atlanta in 2002. In retirement, Don remained an active participant and supporter of local music groups, including the Atlanta Music Club, the Atlanta Opera, and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Robinson passed away in 2014.

*[Written and Attributed to Frank Crockett]*

**Joseph Kirschner** was originally from Chicago, IL., where he attended and performed with the John Marshall High School Orchestra under the direction of Ralph Lewis, Clifford Lillya, and Merle Isaac. He attended Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, where he received both his bachelor and masters degrees in music Education. He later received his Specialist in Music Education Certificate from the University of Georgia.

After serving as band and orchestra director in the school systems of Bledsoe County, Tennessee and teaching at Roosevelt High School in Atlanta, Georgia, Mr. Kirschner was appointed to the music administration staff of the Fulton County Schools in Georgia, where he remained until his retirement as Coordinator of Music Education. During this time he also served tenures as a violinist with the Chattanooga and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras. For a ten-year period, Mr. Kirschner was a Conductor and Director of the Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra.

He also served as a member of the national board of directors of the American String Teachers Association. He served as a conductor of all-state bands and orchestras and as director/adjudicator at regional festivals, contests, and auditions throughout the southeastern and central United States. He was especially proud to have served as a district band/orchestra director/festival adjudicator in every district of the state of Georgia.

He served as a workshop presenter for the College Board and conducted many specialized workshops and clinic events in brass and string instrument pedagogy and instrumental music education for students and teachers for school systems, universities, and professional music education associations, including the Festival Adjudication

Workshop of the Georgia Music Educators Association. In 1999, Mr. Kirschner chaired the organizing and development committee for the certificates of appreciation and outstanding service, presented by the Georgia Chapter and the National Board of Directors of the American String Teachers Association.

Mr. Kirschner was a past president of the Georgia Music Educators Association and the Georgia (Zeta) Chapter of Phi Beta Mu, a honorary bandmasters' fraternity. He was the recipient of many awards and distinctions, including the *Distinguished Alumnus - the School of Music of the University of Georgia Award*, the Distinguished Career Award of the Georgia Music Educators Association, and certificates of appreciation and outstanding service, presented by the Georgia Chapter and the National Board of Directors of the American String Teachers Association.

Mr. Kirschner passed away on 27 June 2013 after a long battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, and their four children and seven grandchildren.

## **Volume #2: Russell Band History by Year**

### **Academic Year: 1950-1951**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** Manly C. Sanders/James Hopperstad/C. Warren Little

**Band Officers:** Gene Greer, Captain; Ronald Andrews, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.; Douglas Brown, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.; Frances Howland, Majorette Captain; Barbara Mullins, and Majorette Co-Captain.

**Majorettes:** Frances Howland, Barbara Mullins, Beth Gibbons, Hazel Hartley, Jane Jergensen, and Lillian Turner.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

Russell Booth ('48-'51; Band Major '50-'51); Roy Bridenbaugh ('48-'50); Douglas Brown ('46-'51); Carl Crockett ('47-'51); Lonnie Greer ('46-'51; Band Captain '50-'51); Mark Kendall (Hapeville H. S. '46-'47; Russell H. S. '47-'51; Band Captain '49-'50); Anna Loach (Drum Majorette '46-'48; Captain Drum Majorettes); Clarence McCrary ('46-'50); Richard Nash ('48-'51); and Barbara Price ('49-'51).

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- The Class of '51 was the first to attend Russell High for 5 years.
- Boy's Track won Region 4AA.
- A building addition added classrooms, a new library, and a spacious choral room.
- FBLA was established on 9 March 1951.
- Driver's Education began at Russell.
- Alex Truitt was named the new football coach.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Hapeville, Rome, @ Sylvan, @ Rossville, R. E. Lee, North Fulton, @ Decatur, Marist, @ College Park, @ West Fulton.



Russell High, along with North Fulton

High, opened the school year on double sessions

due to the delayed opening of two new schools,

Southwest High and Northside High. The Russell

and North Fulton schedules ran from 8:30 A. M. through 12:30 P. M. while the students from the unfinished schools attended from 12:45 P. M. to 4:30 P. M. Russell High ran double sessions again at the beginning of the 1956-1957 school year when Headland High students awaited the completion of their new school.

Mr. Alenius's departure to the band director position at Milton High School created an opening at Russell. A 14 September article in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* listed nine new Russell teachers as announced by Principal Deck. One of the new teachers was Mr. Manly C. Sanders, who began the school year as Russell's band director, but was drafted into military service in mid-September because of the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. Mr. James Hopperstad came in temporarily for about a month, but was ultimately succeeded by C. Warren Little in mid-October.

The Southeastern Fair-A-Ganza was held from 27 September through 7 October. The traditional kick-off parade in downtown Atlanta was held Tuesday, 26 September at 8:00 P. M. and featured the usual procession of over 40 giant balloons. 26 bands participated in the parade that also included 10 floats commemorating an aspect of Atlanta history.

Writing the day after in the *Atlanta Constitution*, Bill Diehl wrote,

“thousands of kids...squealed delighted approval of the gigantic and colorful Fair-A-Ganza. For an hour the streets were filled with blaring bands, pretty drum majorettes in tasseled boots...and of course the immortal clowns.”<sup>7</sup>

A new Fair feature involved the first annual Fair-A-Ganza Ball, a formal dance commemorating the opening of the fair. This special event was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium and was free to the public. Ruby Nell Ward, a 15-year-old from

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<sup>7</sup> Bill Diehl, “Kids Yell Delight Over Gay Parade,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 September 1950, 6.

Buchanan, Georgia, was crowned the Queen of the 1950 Fair.

The 26 October 1950 issue of the *Russell Wildcat* listed the band membership as follows:

**Trumpets:** Gene Geer, Clyde Wheeler, Mickey Hallum, Gerald Dennis, James Chapman, Kenneth Ross, Russell Booth; **Trombones:** Newell Peacock, Melvin Pope, Harold Lindsey, Ray Bridenbaugh, Harold Nash; **Baritone:** Richard Crockett; **Saxophones:** Don McMillian, Ray McCrary, Kitty Brooks, Gene Morgan, Barbara Hamilton, Janice Fields, Emily Woodall, Mary Ann Vismor, Syrell Pope; **Clarinets:** Ronald Andrews, Billy Starrett, Jack Smith, Sue Barton, Geraldine Robertson, Barbara McConnell, Ray Ellis, Rammon Sammons, Ed Murphy, Stew McCord, Joyce French, Jim Johnson; **Drums:** Doug Brown, Mark Kendall, Barbara Price, Erminie Spence; **Flutes:** Janice Warren, Patsy Parrott, Peggy Tucker, Viann Robb, Babbette Howland; **French Horn:** Jim Hutcheson.

For the first time ever, the Russell Band Parents organized an association for the purpose of purchasing new instruments and music. Booster officers were Capt. F. A. Andrews, Chairman; Mrs. Clyde B. Wheeler, Co-Chairman; Mrs. Hoyt E. Barton, Secretary; and, Mrs. R. G. Woodall, Treasurer. Meetings were set for the second Thursday of the month. The group's initial effort began with a successful refreshment sale at the Hapeville vs. Russell game. Leftover food and other items enabled the Boosters to give the band a party at Colonial Hills Park on Monday, 18 September.

The first PTA meeting of the new school year featured an Open House, whereby parents were allowed to follow the schedules of the students. This Open House concluded with a viewing of the new library and choral music room.

The first of the Atlanta Symphony Student Concerts was held on 26 October in the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium. Henry Sopkin, the ASO conductor, featured two student soloists on the program: Mary Anne Cantrell, pianist, of College Park High



School, and John Gilmore, vocal baritone, of Bass High. The remaining two student concerts were scheduled for 1 December and 16 January.

Betty Thompson and Joe Durrett were crowned the 1950 Homecoming Queen and King at halftime during the Russell/Marist football game. Betty and Joe, draped in courtly robes and sitting on a large throne placed on the field, along with members of the court and escorts dressed in beautiful attire, made an elaborate on-field spectacle. The *1950-51 Pointer* coverage of the event contained the following comment: “This impressive ceremony was one which will not be soon forgotten by the Russell students.” The Russell Band received some publicity for the event with an *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter* article noting that the Band provided music for the occasion.<sup>8</sup>

A large Armistice Day Parade was organized by American Legion Post No. 51 and held in East Point on Saturday, 11 November 1950. The Russell Band and ROTC units marched in the procession. The parade began at City Hall and finished at Hillcrest Cemetery, where the band performed as part of an Honor of the Dead ceremony.

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<sup>8</sup> E. N. Martin, “Joe Durrett, Betty Thompson Crowned King, Queen of Russell in Impressive Ceremony,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 2 November 1950, 1.



Veteran's Day Parade 11 November 1950

The East Point Christmas Parade held in mid-December was the largest event ever held in the city. An *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* story estimated the Christmas celebration crowd at over 10,000 people. Over 100 entries, ranging from floats, bands, horseback riders, and others, took part in the parade and concluding festivities. The parade stepped off on Newnan Avenue and continued through the business district, finishing at City Hall.

A special "Christmas in Old Spain" concert was presented in the Russell Auditorium on 18 December 1950. The production was billed as an operetta and was a major collaborative effort between many groups at Russell High, including the Woodshop, Foreign Language, Choral, Art, and Band Departments. The climax of the show was the last act, set inside a church, where a robed choir sang "Song of Christmas," arranged by Fred Waring. Mr. Little directed an instrumental accompaniment group that

reportedly was comprised of “15 of the best students in and around East Point and guest artists from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.”<sup>9</sup>

In January, the University of Georgia Music Department announced a new music education initiative called the UGA Music Festival. The inaugural event occurred on Saturday, 13 January, and involved a 100-piece all-star band and a 120-member chorus comprised of students from 13 high schools in the Atlanta-Athens region. Robert Lorenz, choral director at Atlanta's North Fulton High School, served as the choral guest conductor; Owen Seitz, band director at Grady High in Atlanta, directed the all-star band.

The Russell “Queen of Hearts” was crowned at a Valentine Dance held in the school auditorium on 10 February 1951. Instead of recorded music, the “Wildcats,” a student dance orchestra under the direction of Mr. Little, played for the dance.

The Russell Band presented a full concert at the East Point City Auditorium on Monday, 5 March. Pre-concert publicity in the *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* stated: “A program of variety has been planned to interest all music lovers... The Band Parents Club is sponsoring the program and all proceeds will be used for benefit of the band members.”<sup>10</sup>

The Irish and the Irish-at-heart across the globe observe St. Patrick's Day on March 17, except on Sundays, when such conflicts involve the 16<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> as an alternate date. St. Patrick's Day began as a religious feast day and has become an international festival celebrating Irish culture with celebrations and parades. In America, some of the oldest St. Patrick's Day celebrations in several of our largest cities go back to the 18<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ed. “Glee Club to Present Operetta Tonight,” *Russell Wildcat*, 18 December 1950, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ed. “Russell High Band to Present Concert Monday Evening,” *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 1 March, 1951, 1.

century. The City of Savannah has hosted one of the largest St. Patrick's Day Parades in the country.

Some of the earliest St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Atlanta predate the Civil War, but the event went inactive for the first half of the 1900s. In 1951 Atlanta's Hibernian Society revived the celebration and parade on 17 March 1951. Several bands, including the Third Army Band, O'Keefe High, Marist College, Georgia Military Academy, and Decatur High School, marched in this St. Patrick's Day revival.

Later in March the band and other band groups participated in the District 5 Music Festival for the first time in many years. The GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Music Festival was held downtown at the Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia (known now as Georgia State University) on 7-9 March. Judges for the event included Bruce Jones of Louisiana State University; Robert Darr of Jordan High School, Columbus, Georgia; Royce Janszen of Oglethorpe University; and Hans Piltz of the Atlanta Symphony. Ms. Jerry Waggoner, Russell Class of 1948 and wife of Russell's former band director Robert Waggoner, served as majorette adjudicator.

According to the *Russell Wildcat*, the band earned a Superior (I) rating, a significant achievement for the band's first ever concert band festival. The majorettes also won numerous honors.<sup>11</sup> The Russell Clarinet Quartet also received a Superior (I) rating. By virtue of earning a superior rating at the GMEA 5th District Band Festival, the band made preparations to participate in the State Band Festival in Valdosta, Georgia. Plans as reported in *The Russell Wildcat* called for the band to spend May 8 and 9 in

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<sup>11</sup> Ed. "Band Wins 'Superior' Rating," *Russell Wildcat*, 13 April 1951, 1.

Valdosta.<sup>12</sup> Lillian Turner, Hazel Hartley, and Jane Morris, three of Russell's majorettes, earned Superior (I) ratings at the State Festival.<sup>13</sup>

The Tuesday, 20 March 1951, meeting of the Russell PTA featured the installation of the Russell High Honor Society, after which the band performed several selections. Earlier in the evening, the PTA recognized its executive committee and Russell faculty with a spaghetti supper.

In the spring of 1951, a group of *Atlanta Journal/Constitution* executives and political dignitaries, most of whom were newspaper boys in their youth, formed a charity organization called the 'Old Newspaperboys.' The group was organized specifically to benefit the Cerebral Palsy School on Ponce de Leon Avenue in Atlanta. Their fund-raising mechanism involved the members themselves selling special edition newspaper issues, the proceeds of which went directly to the Cerebral Palsy School.

To heighten awareness and fund-raising efforts, the Old Newspaperboys scheduled a parade headed by Mike Benton, president of the Southeastern Fair and veteran parade organizer. This first annual "Old Newspaperboys' Day" Parade occurred at 11:30 A. M. on Wednesday, 30 May. The mile-long parade began at Peachtree and Bakers Streets and proceeded down Peachtree and Whitehall Streets, to Hunter Street and returning up Forsyth Street before concluding at the *Atlanta Journal/Constitution* building. Participating bands included Murphy High School, West End Elementary Band, Yaarab Shrine Band, and the American Legion Post No. 1 Drum & Bugle Corps. Ann Hudson, the reigning Miss Atlanta 1951, also made an appearance in the parade.

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<sup>12</sup> Ed. "Band to Go to State Festival," *The Russell Wildcat*, 13 April 1951, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Ed. "Majorettes Attend State Festival; Win Rating," *The Russell Wildcat*, 31 May 1951, 1.

Russell High's formal accreditation evaluation occurred during the 1950-1951 school year. Sixteen committee members from around Atlanta and North Georgia met for several days and issued a detailed report concerning the status of Russell High. A major weakness cited concerned the lack of school instrument inventory. The committee recommended a long-range plan of purchasing instruments and band music.

The report went on to commend the band program:

“Your program is off to a good start. Mr. Little is a very good musician and maintains order and discipline in a good professional manner; but, without the above instruments, your band program will go no further.”<sup>14</sup>

The 1958 Committee, in re-visiting the 1951 Evaluation, commended Russell for addressing both of these shortcomings (see Academic Year: 1957-1958).

The *1951 Pointer* annual offered the following commendation for the Russell Band:

“Under the superb direction of Mr. C. W. Little, the Russell High School Band has flourished in the past year beyond our utmost expectations. It has not been easy, but Mr. Little's numerous efforts have not been in vain! He often meets the band as early as eight in the morning, and rehearses with special groups at night.”

One of these special groups is a dance orchestra, and this is the first year that Russell has had an orchestra of its own to play for its dances. This has helped build the spirit of the school, for the students have responded to the dances with enthusiasm. The Russell High School Orchestra has its own radio program over station WTJH.

The climax of this year's work was a brilliant concert presented before a packed house at the East Point City Auditorium on March 5, 1951. The success of this performance is due not only to the splendid teaching and directing of Mr. Little, but also to the Band-Parents Club, which has been a very active

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<sup>14</sup> Jordan, Floyd, co-coordinator. “Report of Visiting Committee on Russell High School, East Point, Georgia, 1951.” 17. Typed Report in 1951, 1958 Folder, Box Z-4; located in Teaching Museum South, Hapeville, GA.

organization in promoting band activities this year. Congratulations to the band for its splendid work, and best luck and more success for the future!”<sup>15</sup>

WTJH radio (AM 1260), mentioned above, was billed as the “Independent Voice of East Point” in the Heart of Dixie.

A similar evaluation of the band was reported in *The Russell Wildcat*:

“Russell’s band director, Mr. Warren Little, has made big improvements in the band. They have presented five chapel programs (one to each section), and the reaction of the student body indicates they were enjoyed by everyone.

Out of the large group, a small dance band of twelve members has been formed. They made their debut at the Valentine Dance, with such fine results that they now have a regular spot on Station WTJH every Wednesday afternoon.

Both bands are working with Mr. Little to present the best programs possible, so support your school band!”<sup>16</sup>

End-of-Year ROTC activities began with Russell’s Federal Inspection on 18 April. Shortly thereafter, the annual Fulton County ROTC Competition was held at Russell H. S. on 24 April. The Russell Band performed for the Pass-and-Review on both occasions. On 27 April, the Russell Band again performed for Russell’s ROTC Sponsor’s Night Pass-and-Review Parade where 28 ROTC Cadet officers presented their sponsors. Immediately after the presentation, the Russell ROTC held its annual military ball at the Officer’s Club at Ft. McPherson. Those recognized from the band were Cadet Major Russell Booth accompanied by sponsor Betty Gann, and Cadet 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Ronald Andrews accompanied by sponsor Margaret Pittman.

A combined Chorus Concert with College Park (Ruth Barron, Director) and Russell (Ruby White Brown, Director) occurred at the East Point City Auditorium on 7 May. Involving over 300 combined vocalists, the program repertoire included a selection

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<sup>15</sup> Brownlee, Jacquelyn, ed. *1951 Pointer Yearbook*, 85 (band section).

<sup>16</sup> Ed. “Band Shows Improvement,” *The Russell Wildcat*, 13 March 1951, 4.

of special Fred Waring arrangements, along with a variety of classical, romantic, and popular pieces. The opening selection, *The Nightingale* by Handel, featured Mr. Little performing a flute *Obligato*.

American Legion Post No. 51 organized a large Tri-Cities Armed Forces Day Parade on 19 May. With America involved with hostilities in Korea at the time, the parade took on added significance. In addition to bands and ROTC units from the Tri-City High Schools, numerous civic organizations, along with troops and heavy military equipment from Ft. Benning and Ft. McPherson, participated in the celebration.

Fourteen select members of the Russell Band attended a Fulton County Band Clinic on 19 May. Included in this group were: Newell Peacock, Doug Brown, Mark Kendall, Mickey Hallum, Gene Greer, James Chapman, Richard Crockett, Janice Warren, Peggy Tucker, Ronald Andrews, Stewart McCord, Jack Smith, Ray Ellis, and Jim Johnson. The band celebrated a successful year with a hayride and swimming party at Mooney's Lake.

End-of-year senior activities included a class presentation of the play, *The Fighting Littles*, on 12 and 13 April. The Junior-Senior Prom was held at the school auditorium and featured a Mardi Gras theme. Approximately 180 seniors graduated in a ceremony held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on Tuesday, 5 June 1951. Class Valedictorian was Mary Louie Mann; Martha Ann Hemperley was salutatorian. Martha Ann Hemperley also won the Atlanta Journal Cup for the best all-around Russell graduate. Eugene Greer won the Ritter Music Company award. Betty Christine Thompson, whose battle with cancer served as an inspiration to many, received a long ovation and was presented a Cup for Best All-Around Citizen.



A PTA sponsored post-graduation dance was held in honor of the seniors at the Dixie Ballroom in the Henry Grady Hotel. The Louis Ridley Band provided the music.

### **Academic Year: 1951-1952**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** Richard Hansberry

**Band Officers:** Ronald Andrews, Captain; Don McMillian, First Lieutenant; Louis Jones, Second Lieutenant; and Jack Smith, Drum Major.

**Majorettes:** Gloria Barnett, Lillian Turner, Jane Jorgenson, Barbara Mullins, Jean Sears, Jane Morris, Beth Gibbons, Faye Eubanks, Hazel Hartley, Marie Jennings, Shirley Davis; and Dana Wilson, mascot.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Ronald Andrews (Band '47-'52; Band Captain '52); Nettie Barton '48-'51); Wilma Bridenbaugh ('50-'52); Blackwell Gibbons ('47-50); Herman Hutcheson ('49-'52); Clarence McCrary ('46-'50); Don McMillian ('49-'52; First Lieutenant '51-'52); Barbara Mullins (Drum Majorette '48-'52; Majorette Captain '50-'52; American Legion Drum Major '50-'52); William Starrell ('47-'52); Lillian Turner (Drum Majorette Captain '49-'50; and Mary Vismor (Orchestra '48-'49; Band '50-'52).

#### **Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Mr. Alex Truitt started his first year as the head football coach.
- Barbara Cash won a state oratory competition.
- Betty Thompson, Russell '51, whose 3-year battle with cancer made national news, passed away in January 1952.
- The Russell D. E. Club earned the Sears, Roebuck and Company Trophy as the best DE Club in Georgia during the March 1952 Convention in Savannah.
- Russell hosted the *Atlanta Constitution*-sponsored (Boys) Fulton County Sports Day.

#### **Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Hapeville, Rome, Sylvan, Rossville, North Fulton, Decatur, Marist, West Fulton, Marietta, College Park.

The band director position prior to the beginning of the school year was somewhat unsettled. With the departure of Mr. Little in early July, *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* announced:

The Board of Education has employed Mr. George Campbell as teacher of instrumental music at Russell High School. Mr. Campbell will be at the school each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings and is interested in meeting all band and orchestra students.

Please contact Mr. Campbell if you are interested in any musical instrument study.<sup>17</sup>

Mr. Campbell was still listed as the Russell Band director in a mid-August *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* article promoting a newly organized Junior Drum and Bugle Corps at American Legion Post No. 51. Circumstances related to Campbell's departure and Mr. Richard Hansberry's selection as band director are not known.

Band Director Richard Hansberry was new to Russell in 1951. He was formally introduced to the school through a *Russell Wildcat* article, which listed him as one of ten teachers new to Russell at the beginning of the 1951 school year.<sup>18</sup> Mr. Roy Drukenmiller, former band director (1930-1941) and principal at Russell High (1942-1949), assumed the new full-time position of Coordinator of Elementary Instrumental Music, a position he held on a part-time basis for the previous two years.

Band members as pictured in the *1952 Pointer* included: Ray Sammons, Theo Scott, Mary Ann Vismore, Wayne Dill, Ronald Andrews, Stewart McCord, Billy Starrett, Mickey Hallum, John Jones, Jerry Stevens, Louis Jones, Peggy Tucker, Janice Warren, Billy Moss, Ray Ellis, Jerry Anderson, Kenneth Lancaster, Ed Murphy, Wilma Bridenbaugh, Charles Ackenbom, Eddie Morris, Linda Little, Emily Sue Woodall, Kitty Brooks, Don McMillian, Shirley Davis, Faye Eubanks, Jane Morris, Wayne Eubanks, Jimmy Hutcheson, Bobby Beal, Bobby Fuller, James Chapman, Jim Johnson, Macky

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<sup>17</sup> Ed. "To Members of Russell High School," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 5 July 1951, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Ed. "Russell Acquires 10 New Teachers," *The Russell Wildcat*, 24 October 1951, 1.

McElroy, Harold Lindsey, Eldon Court, Kenneth Goins, Newell Peacock, Hazel Hartley, Barbara Mullins, Beth Gibbons, Lillian Turner, Jane Jorgenson, and Jack Smith.

The Airport Area branch of Kiwanis International sponsored National Youth Day in the Tri-Cities on September 22. The celebration included a parade followed by a Field Day at South Fulton Park. The parade began at 12:30 P. M. at North Main and Church Streets in East Point and proceeded through East Point's business district to College Park.

The 1951 Fair-A-Ganza kicked off on Thursday, 27 September with the traditional downtown parade at 3 P. M. and another at Lakewood at 8:00 P. M. A large crowd of about 150,000 witnessed an hour-long procession that included 26 high school bands and a large number of giant balloons. Making an appearance for the fifth straight year, the giant balloons represented a group of storybook characters. The downtown parade proceeded down Peachtree Street, to Whitehall, to Garnett and then to Brotherton.

Later that evening Bettye Tate, a 17-year-old drum majorette from Smith High School, was selected the 1951 Fair-A-Ganza Queen, a recognition initiated the previous year. Russell's Carol Waggoner was a top five finalist and was included in the Queen's court.

Midway through the Fair, the Russell Band and Glee Club were featured performers for special concerts scheduled at the Southeastern Fair-A-Ganza on October 2. Band selections included *The Star-Spangled Banner*, *Syncopated Clock*, *Manhattan Beach March*, and *On Wisconsin*. Those not hearing the live performance had the

opportunity to hear the concert on radio station WBGE.<sup>19</sup>

A Hollywood premiere of “Drums of the Deep South,” a Civil War-themed epic starring Barbara Payton, took place at the Rialto Theater on 16 October 1951. The movie opening was preceded by an evening parade from the Georgian Terrace Hotel to the Rialto. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that four bands performed *Dixie* and other Southern songs.

Atlantans observed the 1951 Armistice Day activities over a three-day period. Since 11 November fell on a Sunday, the main parade occurred on Saturday, 10 November, with special religious services on Friday, 9 November, and special sermons from pulpits on Sunday, 11 November.

The Saturday parade involved a large number of participants from the Legion, veteran's organizations, all branches of the armed forces, the National Guard, and various school, college, and civic organizations. The parade began at 9:45 A. M. at Baker Street and moved down Peachtree and Whitehall to Alabama Street. Parade participants were also invited to a retreat ceremony held at the American Legion No. 1 at Piedmont Avenue.

In November, the Russell High learned that the band would receive new uniforms. In a *The Russell Wildcat* article, the writer announced:

“The Russell Band is finally getting new uniforms after much determination and enthusiasm on the part of Mr. Deck, the Chamber of Commerce, and the cooperation of the Band Parents Club. With the purchase of these uniforms, which will be bright gold, it is desired that all 40 of the uniforms will be filled before the ’51-’52 year is complete. It is the wish of every band

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<sup>19</sup> Ed. “Russell Band, Glee Club Perform at Fair-A-Ganza.” *The Russell Wildcat*, 24 October 1951, p. 4.

member as well as the whole student body that the band will develop into the best in the county.”<sup>20</sup>

Shortly after the conclusion of the football season, the band received the new uniforms, which were first worn and seen at the second annual East Point Yuletide Festival held on 21 December. The first Yuletide Festival, held the year before, was extremely successful and drew over 10,000 people to the downtown area. The conclusion of the 1951 parade was moved to the Russell High Football field to accommodate the large turnout.

The new American Legion Post No. 51 Junior Drum and Bugle Corps, comprised mostly of East Point students, led the large parade. The Russell Band, sporting their new uniforms, began their march from the north end of Church Street. The parade proceeded south to East Point Avenue to Legion Way and then turned north at Main Street. After marching through the business district, the parade turned right on Jefferson Avenue and into the Russell Football Field, where numerous prizes, including a new Ford car, were given away.<sup>21</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival took place in early January and involved all-star groups comprised from the following Atlanta-area high schools: Bass High, Brown High, Grady High, North Fulton High, West Fulton High and Russell High; about 30 non-Atlanta schools were also represented. The Georgia Music Educators Association and the UGA Music Department sponsored the event.

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<sup>20</sup> Jerry Robinson, ed., “Band’s New Uniforms,” *Russell Wildcat*, 15 November 1951, 3.

<sup>21</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, “Russell Band Parades for Yuletide Festival; Student Wins Prize,” *Russell Wildcat*, 17 January 1952, 4.

The 22 January meeting of the Russell PTA featured a panel discussion on Community Relations. The Russell Boys Choir and the Russell Band provided special music for the occasion.

As mentioned earlier, the St. Patrick's Day celebration was revived in 1951 in Atlanta after a 50-year layoff. The Russell Band and the Third Army Band from Ft. McPherson were the only two bands to perform in the 17 March 1952 St. Patrick's Day Parade in downtown Atlanta. The U.S. Marine Corps supplied a Color Guard, while five parochial schools provided student marching units. The 2:00 P. M. parade traveled south down Peachtree Street to Baker Street.

In March, the 100-member strong Russell Boys Chorus performed for the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) National Convention in Philadelphia in what was perhaps one of the greatest national recognitions in the history of the Russell Music Department. The Boys Choir appeared in a general session concert named "Music and American Youth" on 25 March 1952.<sup>22</sup> The five-day trip cost about \$10,000.00, with round-trip transportation provided by train. The Russell Boys Chorus was the first Boys ensemble from the south to receive a MENC invitation honor.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Mrs. Ruby White Brown, Choral Director, was quoted in the *Atlanta Constitution* as saying that the Russell group was the only Boys chorus in the nation to be honored with a MENC

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<sup>22</sup> Buttleman, Clifford V. Ed., "Convention Schedule," *Music Educator's Journal*, January 1952, 31.

<sup>23</sup> E. D. Martin, Ed., "Russell Boys Choir Drive to Raise Funds for Philadelphia Trip," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 11 October 1951, p. 3.

performance invitation.<sup>24</sup> The East Point Lions Club assisted with fund-raising for the event.<sup>25</sup>

According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, the Boys Chorus traveled to Washington, D.C. after their MENC performance and met with Georgia Senator Richard Russell, who was serenaded with a performance of *Hail to Thee, Russell High*.<sup>26</sup> A month later, the Russell Band performed in Sen. Russell's presidential kick-off parade in Atlanta (see 'presidential election year' below, p. 20).

Like many cities around Georgia, East Point celebrated a weeklong Georgia Products Spring Festival during the final week of April. A highlight of the Festival involved a large parade that occurred on Tuesday, 22 April. In addition to featuring Shirley Irwin, the new "Miss New South," the parade also honored Russell High's own Barbara Cash, who was a recent State winner of the American Legion Oratorical Contest. A pre-parade announcement in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* noted that "a band" (not known with certainty if it was the Russell Band) would lead the parade. The parade formed at Sumner Park and proceeded down Semmes Street to Connally Drive, east to Main Street, south to Washington Street, west to Kimmeridge Drive, north to Cleveland, then across Sylvan Road, north to Jefferson Avenue, before concluding at Russell High School.

The GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Music Festival was held once again downtown at the Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia from 5-7 March. Hazel Hartley, Lillian

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<sup>24</sup> McGill, Ralph, Ed. "5-Million Fulton School Program Approved [100-Voice Russell Boys Chorus Offers Serenade)," *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 March 1952, 15.

<sup>25</sup> E. D. Martin, Ed. "Russell Glee Club invited to MENC," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 23 November 1951, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Ralph McGill, Ed., "Russell High Boys Serenade Russell," *Atlanta Constitution*, 28 March 1952, 17.

Turner, Barbara Mullins, Beth Gibbons, Jane Morris, Faye Eubanks, and Marie Jennings earned Superiors at District; Jane Jorgenson, Shirley Davis, Gloria Barnett, and Jean Sears received Excellent (II) ratings.

Throughout the spring of 1952, the music department faculty chaired by Ms. Brown, Chorus Director, researched and drafted a proposal to have Russell designated as a Fine Arts Magnet School. Before the conclusion of the school year, Earluth Epting, Fulton County Music Supervisor, and Mr. McRae, Fulton County Curricular Advisor, announced the approval of a plan that would allow Hapeville and Fairburn students to join students at Russell to be fine arts music majors.<sup>27</sup> While many Georgia schools had prior experience with schools offering magnet programs such as industrial arts, no school at the time offered a Fine Arts Magnet Program.<sup>28</sup> Proposed classes for the 1952-1953 school year included a variety of basic instrumental and vocal ensembles, along with general music, beginning and advanced theory, beginning piano, and a one-semester record survey for seniors. Students enrolled in this curriculum were eligible for up to four to six college course credits at select Georgia Colleges.

The annual Fulton County ROTC Competition was held at Russell H. S. on 24 April. The Russell Band performed for the Pass-and-Review. Officers and their sponsors listed in the 1952 Pointer included: Capt. Ronald Andrews and Faye Eubanks; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Don McMillian and Emily Hunt; 1st Lt. Louis Jones and Mary Lou Geller; and, Drum Major Jack Smith and Janet McKinnon.

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<sup>27</sup> Jack Smith, Ed., "Epting, McRae Announce Music Courses," *Russell Wildcat*, 5 June 1952, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



In 1952, a presidential election year, Georgia Senator Richard Russell was among a number of candidates vying for the Democratic nomination. Early in the campaign season, select members of the Russell Band were able to meet Senator Russell at a special occasion in Washington, D.C., and were asked to be the Senator's personal band.<sup>29</sup> Beginning at 4:00 P. M. on Friday, 25 April, the Russell Band performed for a Richard Russell campaign parade caravan that covered two miles down Peachtree Street from Memorial Drive and Whitehall Street in downtown Atlanta. Several bands performed for the parade, but only in stationary positions along the parade route. The Brown High Band performed at Whitehall and Hunter Streets; the Sylvan High School performed at Five Points; the Grady High School Band performed at Loew's Theater; and Howard High performed at Peachtree and Baker. The Russell Band was the only band allowed to follow Senator Russell back to his headquarters, the Biltmore Hotel. According to a pre-parade write-up in *The Atlanta Constitution*, the Russell Band was scheduled to ride in a "Gay '90s Bus" accompanied by a four-motorcycle police escort.

In a short follow-up to this event, the *Russell Wildcat* reported:

"A reporter from *Life* and *Time* magazines interviewed one of Russell's band members about the "Hustle-for-Russell" parade April 25. The reporter said that there would be a write-up in *Time* of the parade and Russell (H. S.) would be mentioned also."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Jerry Roberson, ed., "Band Participates in Russell-for-President Parade," *Russell Wildcat*, 16 May 1952, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Jack Smith, Ed., "Story in 'Time' to mention Russell Band," *Russell Wildcat*, 5 June 1952, 1.

*The Atlanta Constitution* noted, “The Russell High School Band (named for William A. Russell) carried a destination sign which prophetically read: “White House, Washington, District of Columbia.”<sup>31</sup>

Band programs were organized for the first time at several Southside elementary schools at the beginning of the 1951-52 school year. Young musicians in these schools formed a combined Tri-City Band that performed a Spring Concert in the Russell High Auditorium on 2 May. Future Russell High band students from Harris Street Elementary School were among those that also included students from Jere Wells, S. R. Young, and Newton Estates Elementary School. The Tri-City Elementary Band Parents Club, a parent support group, sponsored a dance on Friday, 18 April, at Sumner Park Recreation Building in East Point.

The State Music Festival was held in Milledgeville on 8-10 May. A special Constitution State News Service article appearing in the *Atlanta Constitution* detailed events and ratings as reported midway through the festival. Faye Eubanks, Hazel Hartley, Lillian Turner, and Jane Morris earned Superior (I), while Barbara Mullins and Marie Jennings earned Excellent (II).<sup>32</sup> Hazel Hartley also earned a Superior (I) in the Brass category. A photo labeled “Baton Twirlers from Atlanta practice their routines” was attached to the *Atlanta Constitution* article and featured Russell majorettes Faye Eubanks and Marie Jennings, along with two majorettes from West Fulton.<sup>33</sup> Under the

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<sup>31</sup> Sibley, Celestine, “Rebel-Yelling Crowd Hails Russell Kick-off,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 April, 1952, 1. (Story continues on p. 3 under “Noisiest Parade Greet Georgia’s Favorite Son.”)

<sup>32</sup> Jack Smith, ed., “Majorettes Make Showing in Festivals,” *The Russell Wildcat*, 5 June 1952, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ed. “Gold and White Uniforms Dot State Band Festival,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 9 May, 1952, 52.

Twirling Drum Majors & Majorettes categories, Russell's Hazel Hartley, Lillian Turner, Jane Morris, and Faye Eubanks earned Superior ratings.

The Russell Band participated in the large Tri-Cities Armed Forces Day Parade on Saturday, 17 May. The event coincided with the annual convention of the 5<sup>th</sup> District American Legion hosted by College Park Post No. 50. The parade proceeded through Main Street in College Park, ending at the College Park Auditorium where numerous post-parade speeches were offered.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Old Newspaperboys' Day," benefitting the Cerebral Palsy School, was held on Friday, 23 May. The 11 A. M. parade started at Baker Street and moved throughout areas of downtown Atlanta. Students from the Cerebral Palsy School watched the parade from elevated positions at the Capitol City Club. The Russell Band participated in the parade that included the Third Army Band, O'Keefe High, Stone Mountain High, College Park High, West End Elementary, and the Yaarab Shrine Band. Louise Hays, Miss Atlanta 1952, was also featured in the parade.

End-of-Year senior class activities included a production of *Every Family Has One* 20 March in the East Point City Auditorium. The play proved so successful that an encore performance was given on 8 April. The Junior-Senior Prom was held at Russell on Saturday, 17 May. With a theme of "Garden in the Rain," the auditorium was beautifully decorated with numerous props, including colored lights and white, lace-patterned garden furniture. Bob Axtell and his Orchestra provided the music.

About 145 seniors received diplomas in graduation exercises held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 9 June 1952. Student speakers included Helen Hendley, who

spoke on “The Fabric of Education,” and Louis Jones, whose address was “The Development of the South.”

According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, a post-graduation dance was held at East Point’s American Legion Post No. 51 and was hosted by Charles Sumner, son of Dr. and Mrs. Preston Sumner of East Point. This banquet and dance were given in honor of friends and Russell High graduates leaving for the armed forces and for college. Russell’s Grace Orr and guitarist Howard Jackson provided musical entertainment.<sup>34</sup>

### **Academic Year: 1952-1953**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** James M. Hopperstad

**Orchestra Director:** William W. Hutchins

**Band Officers:** Bill Hurt, Drum Major; Newell Peacock, Captain; James Chapman, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant; Kenneth Lancaster, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant; and Hazel Hartley, Majorette Captain.

**Majorettes:** Shirley Davis; Jane Morris; Faye Eubanks; Beth Gibbons; Gloria Barnett, Marie Jennings; Jean Sears; Hazel Hartley; Jane Jorgensen; and Susan Wells, Mascot.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Kitty Brooks (AL State Band Camp ’48-’49; RHS ’50-’52); George Ellis (’48-’52); Maurice Hallum (’48-’52); George Lindsey (’48-’52); Seward McCord (’48-’52); William Moss (’48-’53); Raleigh Murphy (’48-’52); John Newell Peacock (48-’53; Band Captain ’52-’53); Ramon Sammons (’48-’52); and Eva Warren (’49-’53).

#### **Russell H.S. Highlights of Note:**

- String Orchestra instruction was introduced at Russell.
- The Boys Basketball team won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the County Tournament.
- The 1953 Baseball Team won Region 4-AA.
- For the second year in a row, the Distributive Education Club, Mrs. Gladys Duke, teacher-coordinator, won the Sears, Roebuck, & Company award for the top D. E. club in the state.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

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<sup>34</sup> Ed., “Host and Entertainer,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 September 1952, 14.

Sylvan, Cedartown, @ Rossville, Marietta, Spalding, @ Decatur, Roosevelt, @ Dalton, @ College Park, @ Rome.

Russell High School started the 1952 school year with several changes in the music department.<sup>35</sup> James M. Hopperstad was the new band director, making him the fourth Russell band director in as many years. W. W. Hutchins initiated string orchestra instruction at Russell and Eleanor Burgess started the first of her numerous years with the Chorus, assisting Ms. Brown in the Choral Department.

The *Atlanta Constitution*'s weekly "News of the Tri-Cities" section featured a block band photo of the Marching Band. The accompanying caption read: "Russell High Band Struts Stuff: Russell High's noted musical group, led by the majorette team and drum major Bill Hurt, gets ready to step off.....the Band visited Washington, D.C., last year. (Members include):

Bill Hurt, drum major; Hazel Hartley, majorette captain; Jane Jorgenson, majorette co-captain; Sue Wells, mascot; Beth Gibbons, co-captain; Jean Sears; Marie Jennings; Faye Eubanks; Shirley Davis; Jane Morris; Mr. Hopperstad; Jim Johnson; Kenneth Goins; Mackie McElroy; Eldon Cort; Newell Peacock; David Caldwell; Joyce Robinson; Janice Warren; Billy Moss; Glenda Whiddon; Wayne Dill; Theo Scott; Diane Leverette, Ermine Spence; James Chapman; Jerry Stephens; Jimmy Knapp; Jack Roberts; Bill Nolan; John Jones; K. D. Lancaster, Jr.; Monte French; Reid Trimble; and Charles Ackenbom.<sup>36</sup>

Jack Smith, the designated Band Drum Major and *Russell Wildcat* Chief Editor for the 1952-53 school year, transferred from Russell when his father took a job in Macon. Bill Hurt assumed the drum major position; Martha Mae Damron became the new *Russell Wildcat* Editor-in-Chief.

The 1952 Fair-A-Ganza Parade, marking the opening of the Fair, was held on 2

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<sup>35</sup> Ed. "New Teachers to RHS in 1952-53," *The Russell Wildcat*, 24 October 1952, 1.

<sup>36</sup> Diehl, Bill, "Russell High Band Struts Stuff," *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 October 1952, 20.

October in downtown Atlanta. 33 high school bands participated in the parade, along with 40 storybook character giant balloons and 12 floats. The parade began at 7:15 P. M. and proceeded down Peachtree Street for Baker Street.

In 1950 the Fair inaugurated a music talent competition as a new feature. The 1952 winner was John Demos of Sylvan High School, a clarinetist, who later went on to a career in the Georgia State University Music Department and who also conducted the Atlanta Falcons Pep Band.

Overcast skies and the first rain in months dampened the activities of Armistice Day celebrations on Tuesday, 11 November. In the Tri-Cities, organizers planned a large morning parade through College Park ending with a Memorial service in the College Park High Stadium. Fifth District Congressman James C. Davis and State American Legion Chaplain Leon Hobby led the Memorial services. Participating groups included the East Point American Legion Post No. 51 Drum & Bugle Corps comprised of several Russell students, bands from College Park, North Clayton, and Hapeville High Schools, patriotic organizations from South Fulton, and a large array of military equipment from the Atlanta Depot. The downtown Atlanta parade started at Peachtree and Baker Streets at 9:30 A. M. About an hour later, ceremonies were held at Five Points, where Atlantans heard a speech from Major Orville E. Bloch, Congressional Medal of Honor winner stationed at Ft. McPherson. Parade units included groups from the Army, Navy, and Marines, along with numerous high school ROTC and bands.

Beverly Roberts, a Russell junior and accompanist for the Senior Girls Chorus, performed as a guest soloist on piano with the Atlanta Symphony in a November

concert.<sup>37</sup> Her selection of *Malaguena* by Ernesto Lecuona was very well received.<sup>38</sup> Ms. Brown presented Beverly with a basket of flowers decorated in Russell colors of Gold and White. Beverly, the daughter of Lt. Col. and Mrs. Keith Roberts, was the student of Mrs. E. Barlow, head of the Washington Seminary music department.

The marching band was acclaimed during the year. A *Pointer* yearbook insert stated, “The Band furnishes football music and contributes to school life.”<sup>39</sup> Yet another 1953 *Pointer* yearbook insert asserted:

“The band, under the direction of Mr. Hopperstad, improved considerably as the year progressed. Once again, the band was invited to go to Washington, D.C. to parade with the School Patrols. Russell was very proud of its band this year.”<sup>40</sup>

The majorettes were acknowledged for their dedication and hard work in a headline *The Russell Wildcat* article at the conclusion of the football season:

“It seems that everyone agrees that what brought life and color to our parades and halftime shows this fall are those high-stepping, prancing majorettes... The captain of the corps of girls, Hazel Hartley, made it plain that the performances they gave didn’t come about by accident. Hazel and alternate co-captains Beth Gibbons, Jane Jorgenson, and Faye Eubanks, Jean Sears, Jane Morris, Marie Jennings, Gloria Barnett, and Shirley Davis, wore a path down the football field practicing on those sweltering summer days. Being tops in twirling was a basic requirement; having the patience and skill of mastering a routine was next. The girls devised and perfected these routines, and worked out the precision drilling themselves.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Martha Mae Damron, Ed., “Beverly Roberts to Solo with Atlanta Symphony,” *Russell Wildcat*, 24 October 1952, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ed., “Russell High Girl Soloist on Youth Concert of Atlanta Symphony Orchestra,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 2 April 1952, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Allen, Sarah, Ed., 1953 *Pointer Yearbook*, 103.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Martha Mae Damron, Ed., “Majorettes Praised for Half-time Work,” *Russell Wildcat*, 3 December 1952, 1.

The East Point American Legion Post No. 51 Junior Drum & Bugle Corps marched in an Armistice parade through College Park, along with the bands from College Park, North Clayton, and Hapeville High Schools.

The annual PTA Christmas Concert occurred on 18 December with groups from the Band, Orchestra and Chorus. This 10<sup>th</sup> Annual event traditionally included an audience sing-a-long. According to *The Atlanta Constitution*, the program was built on a Christmas Song History theme, spanning over 500 years and featuring Christmas greetings from several different countries.<sup>42</sup> Mr. James Hopperstad, band director, and Mr. William Hutchins, Russell strings teacher, assisted the Choral Department. Johnny Brewer, Cello; Landon Huffman, Violin; and Kenneth Lancaster, clarinet, accompanied a special Choral presentation.<sup>43</sup>

The 3<sup>th</sup> Annual University of Georgia High School Music Festival was held in Athens on Saturday, 10 January. Over 500 students from around the state attended, including several Russell students, the vocalists of whom were tutored by Ms. Ruby White Brown, Russell's chorus teacher. Mr. Robert M. Barr, of Jordan High in Columbus, Georgia, and president of the Georgia Bandmasters' Associations, served as band clinician; Mr. Douglas Ramble, the president of the Georgia Music Educators' Association, conducted the chorus.

The GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Music Festival was held at Georgia State University in Atlanta on 10-13 March. Adjudicators included Earl Beach, University of Georgia; Allan Bone, Duke University; Guyton McClendon, Statesboro; and Oliver Hobbs, Leon High

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<sup>42</sup> Ed., "Russell High's Chorus, Orchestra, Band to Figure in Dec. 18 Carols, *The Atlanta Constitution*, 10 December 1952, 19.

<sup>43</sup> Ray Ellis, "Music Department to Present Annual Carol Fest," *The Russell Wildcat*, 18 December 1952, 1.



School, Tallahassee. Members of the Russell majorette squad scored Superiors, qualifying them for participation in the State festival in May. This group included Helen Young, Hazel Hartley, Maria Jennings, Shirley Davis, Faye Eubanks, and Jane Morris.

The 1953 St. Patrick's Day parade was held on 17 March. The hour-long parade included 12 bands and units from the armed forces, National Guard, high school ROTC, veteran's organizations and schools. The parade moved up Peachtree Street before passing the reviewing stand at Five Points.

The Russell Band performed in a 14 April parade for the Georgia Progress Festival Week in East Point.<sup>44</sup> Leading the parade was "New South Queen" Mary Helen Collins, a Russell student. Russell's Grace Orr competed in a Southern regional talent competition called "Stars of Tomorrow." The 2-day event, divided into various age brackets, was held at Georgia State University in Atlanta and was sponsored by the Dogwood Chapter of the American Business Women's Association.

Grace Orr, along with William Hay, won top awards at the Eastaganza Fashion Show sponsored by the East Point Lions Club on 3 April. The event, held at the East Point City Auditorium, included over 30 Russell student contestants, each of whom was sponsored by a local East Point business.

The annual Fulton County ROTC Competition was held at Hapeville H. S. on 24 April. The Russell Band performed for the Pass-and-Review. Officers and sponsors listed in the 1953 *Pointer* included: Capt. Newell Peacock and Sue Jean White; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. James Chapman and Renee Brown and, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Kenneth Lancaster and Sandra Norris.

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<sup>44</sup> Martha Mae Damron, ed, "Russell Student Miss New South," *The Russell Wildcat*, 1 May 1953, 2.

In May, select members of the Russell Band participated in a Music Festival sponsored by Fulton County Schools, under the supervision of Earluth Epting, Director of Music. Other participating schools included Campbell High (Minnie Alderman, Director), College Park H. S. (Harold Scott, Director), Hapeville H. S. (Merwin Crisman, Director), Milton H. S. (Kathryn Hesketh, Director), and Roswell H. S. (John Golden, Director). The event also involved a Festival Chorus and Orchestra. Band repertoire for this Festival included:

<i>Mister Touchdown U. S. A.</i>	(Roberts/Yoder)
<i>S. I. B. A. March</i>	(Hall)
<i>Sun Valley Mountains</i>	(Ogden)
<i>Student Prince Overture</i>	(Romberg)
<i>George Gershwin Selections</i>	(Gershwin)

Several Russell majorettes, having earned high ratings at District Festival, participated in the State Music Festival held again at Milledgeville, Georgia. The Russell group, including Helen Young, Hazel Hartley, Maria Jennings, Shirley Davis, Faye Eubanks, and Jane Morris, earned a Superior (I) rating. On a related matter, Langdon Huffman, Russell violinist, also received a Superior (I) rating at State with his rendition of *Hungarian Dance, No. 5* by Brahms.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual “Old Newspaperboys Day” Parade was held on 15 May. The number of newspaper people, bankers, businessmen, and other volunteer marchers grew to about 7,000. Bands included Hapeville High, West Fulton High, Sylvan High, and the Yaarab Shrine Band. In a post-parade interview, Mike Benton, parade coordinator, stated: “the parade featured high school bands, high-stepping majorettes, beauty queens, strong-

lunged vocalists, bulb-nosed clowns, cerebral palsied children, and the old newsboys themselves.”<sup>45</sup>

The end of the school year brought about the retirement of Ms. Brown, the successful and highly revered choral director, who came to Russell ten years earlier.<sup>46</sup> During her time at Russell, the Choral groups consistently earned Superior ratings. The highlight of her Russell tenure occurred in March 1952 when the Russell Boys Chorus performed for the national MENC Convention in Philadelphia. Ms. Brown’s Russell Boys choir was the first Southern school to perform at a National MENC Convention.<sup>47</sup>

Writing in *The Russell Wildcat*, a staff writer concluded:

“With the retirement of this wonderful teacher, Russell not only loses a great educator but a wonderful friend loved by one and all. Her undying courage to us, the name of Russell High or the Russell High Pedestal in the field of music could not be equaled. Although she leaves Russell, the memory of her effort shall not be forgotten.”<sup>48</sup>

*Heart Trouble*, the senior class play written by Robert Kean, was presented 28 and 29 March at the Russell High Auditorium. Gretta Sisby, Kenneth Ross, George Bradberry, Ray Ellis, Harold Lindsey, and Jimmy Fielding portrayed lead roles.

A total of 165 seniors graduated in ceremonies held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on Saturday, 6 June. Class speakers were Eleanor Dempsey and Jack Leverette. John Newell Peacock won the Ritter Music Medal for the most outstanding

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<sup>45</sup> Katherine Barnwell, “Palsy Drive Termed Definite Success Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 16 May 1953, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Ralph McGill, ed., “Russell’s Music Director Resigns After 10 Years,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 April 1953, 22.

<sup>47</sup> Martha Mae Damron, “Ruby White Brown Ends Russell Career (Beloved Choral Director Served School Ten Years),” *Russell Wildcat*, 1 April 1953, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

band member. Music scholarship winners included: Stewart Nelson McCord (The Juilliard School), Eleanor Dempsey (voice at Shorter University), Janet McKinnon (piano at Shorter University), and Jeannine Anderson (voice at Brenau University). Class music included *Lo, A Voice to Heaven Sounding* (Bartniansky). Janet McKinnon won the Atlanta Journal Cup for the best all-round senior. Ms. Ruby White Brown directed the music, while Helen Hendley provided the piano accompaniment.

Russell graduates were honored guests at a post-graduation reception and dance held at the East Point American Legion Post No. 51 and hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Preston Sumner of East Point. The Sumner's held a similar such event the previous year. An *Atlanta Constitution* photo showed select graduates dancing at the event.<sup>49</sup>

At the beginning of summer, the Fulton County Schools initiated an instrumental music instructional program to be held in conjunction with the summer school term regularly held at Russell. Music instructors included Mr. James Hopperstad of Russell High, Mr. Merwin Crisman of Hapeville High, and Mr. Walter Steinhaus and Mr. Harold Scott, both from College Park High. Over 60 students participated and received ½ credit upon successful completion of the camp.

### **Academic Year: 1953-1954**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** James. M. Hopperstad

**Orchestra Director:** Hans Karl Piltz

**Band Officers:** Bobby Fischer, Captain; John Jones, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant; Eldon Cort, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant; Kenneth Goins, Sergeant; Beth Gibbons, Majorette Captain; and Faye Eubanks, Drum Major.

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<sup>49</sup> Ed. "Graduation Festivities," *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 June 1953, 19.

**Majorettes:** Jane Jorgenson, Jean Sears, Jane Morris, Beth Gibbons, Faye Eubanks, Hazel Hartley, Marie Jennings, Harriet Young, Shirley Davis; and Dana Wilson, mascot.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** James Chapman ('49-'54; Band Officer '52-'53); Eldon Cort ('50-'54; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant '53-'54); Robert Fischer ('53-'54); Bessie "Beth" Gibbons ('49-'54; Majorette '50-'54; Majorette Co-Captain '52-'54); Hazel Hartley (Majorette '50-'54; Majorette Captain '52-'53; Majorette Co-Captain '53-'54); William Hurt (Brown HS '50-'52; RHS '52-'54; Drum Major '52-'53); Margaret Jorgensen (Drum Major '50-'52; Majorette Co-Captain '52-'54); Kenneth Lancaster ('49-'54; Band Officer '52-'53); and Peggy Tucker ('49-'54).

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Russell's enrollment grew to over 1,300, which was an all-time high. To alleviate over crowding at Russell, groundbreaking for Headland High School started on 28 December.
- Russell's new Gym was dedicated on December 1.
- The Russell Men's Basketball team won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Region 4-AA.
- The Russell Chapter of Beta Club was organized with 39 charter members in the fall of 1953.
- For the third year in a row, Russell's D. E. Club won the Sears, Roebuck & Company trophy as the top school with the best school project.
- Barbara O'Neil, a Russell junior, won the American Legion State Essay Contest.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Sylvan, @ Cedartown, Rossville, @ Marietta, @ Griffin, Decatur, Roosevelt, Dalton, Brown, Rome.



**1953-54 Russell High Band**

The school year began with Beth Gibbons, Majorette Captain, assuming the office of Editor-in-Chief of the *Russell Wildcat*. In the previous year, she served as junior editor of the paper and also served on the 1953 Junior-Senior Committee. In addition to her band and newspaper activities, she served as Senior Class president and was also involved with the Quill & Scroll and Co-Ed Hi-Y.

In an early *Russell Wildcat* article, Beth revealed:

“The Band has in training twenty new instrumentalists. The Russell High Band has been asked as one of two schools in Fulton County to participate in a Fair-A-Ganza Parade.”<sup>50</sup>

The 1953 Fair-A-Ganza parade was held on 1 October at 7:15. With over 300 parade units, Mike Benton, chief organizer for the Fair, declared that the parade was the biggest in over 21 years. A Santa Claus and his eight reindeer balloon was the biggest of over 30 giant balloons highlighted in the long parade. Over 50 Georgia girls rode in the parade and later participated in the Miss Fair-A-Ganza contest at Lakewood Park. 36 high school bands marched in the parade, and all were given \$50.00 for their participation.

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Fair-A-Ganza Music Talent Competition was held on Saturday, 3 October. 17 contestants from all over the state performed before a panel of five prominent Atlanta music judges. The winner won a one-year scholarship to the Wesleyan College Music Conservatory.

The Russell Band played at every football game, with the exception of the Rossville game. In the *Russell Wildcat*, a staff writer stated that the shows were well

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<sup>50</sup>Beth Gibbons, ed, “Music Department Plans New Program,” *Russell Wildcat*, 7 October 1953, 1.

received, and that “the excellency of the playing and half-time performances is due to the fact that Mr. Hopperstad has a corps of officers to assist him in the planning and rehearsal for the football games.”<sup>51</sup> The majorettes were singled out for their outstanding performances and contributions. An article appearing in the *Russell Wildcat* reported:

“The first half-time show was a big success and quite different. The eight majorettes, attired in the traditional grass skirts of the islanders, danced to Hawaiian music played by Russell’s Band. Equally successful in four other performances and the Southeastern Fair-a-Ganza Parade, our majorettes are still working and planning for future performances. They never seem to be satisfied and each Friday night they try to do better than the previous Friday night.”<sup>52</sup>

Atlanta's American Legion Post No. 1 sponsored the 1953 Armistice Parade in downtown Atlanta, marking the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War I. Many high school bands and ROTC units led the procession that also included the Third Army Band and detachment of troops from Ft. McPherson, and representatives of the Marines, Navy, Air Force and National Guard. The 9:30 A. M. parade began at Peachtree and Baker Streets and traveled down Edgewood Avenue before concluding at Hurt Park, where Senator Russell delivered a speech. The parade was broadcast over WSB radio.

The annual Christmas Concert was held on 15 December in the Russell High Auditorium. The Band, Orchestra, and assorted vocal ensembles performed for the PTA-sponsored event. According to the *Russell Wildcat*, the band music selected by Mr. Hopperstad was specifically the less familiar Christmas carols.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Beth Gibbons, ed., “Band Organization Increases Morale and Efficiency,” *Russell Wildcat*, 3 November 1953, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>53</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, “Music Department Plans Special Christmas Concert,” *Russell Wildcat*, 16 December 1953, 1.

Russell High students were given the offer of attending Atlanta Symphony school performances. For \$1.00, students were able to see three performances: 1) Tuesday, November 17 with guest artist pianist Leonard Pennario; 2) a mid-season subscription concert; and, 3) the 20 March 1954 Pops Concert.

On 5 January, the Russell Band attended a band clinic along with several other area bands for the purpose of reading new Festival Music. Miss Earluth Epting, Fulton County Music Supervisor, was on hand to observe the progress of the bands. On Saturday, 9 January, 800 students were guests of the UGA Department of Music for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual High School Music Festival. The 650-voice choir and 145-piece Festival Band performed in the Fine Arts Auditorium on Saturday, 9 January. Robert Lowrence, Jr., North Fulton High School, vocal; Howard F. Brown, music supervisor for the Nashville, Tennessee schools, band. Students and directors from over 58 high schools were represented.

Prior to 1954, the GMEA Festival format included a district performance followed by a state performance for those groups earning a superior rating at the District Festival. In a major change voted on by GMEA membership the previous year, the traditional district/state plan changed to a regional district-only format. The Fulton County schools were grouped with other schools in a new Region III district. The district performance for Russell was held in Carrollton, Georgia on 1-3 March. The band performed *Hall of Fame*, *Selections* from Rimsky-Koraskov, and *The Russian Chorale and Overture* and earned an Excellent (II) rating. This performance was the band's first



Festival performance in three years.<sup>54</sup> In the Orchestra division, the Tri-Cities Orchestra received a Good (III) rating.

Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District III Band Festival

1954 March 1-3  
at Carrollton, Georgia  
Director – James Hopperstad  
LEVEL C  
Program: *Hall of Fame*  
*Selections: Rimsky-Koraskov*  
*The Russian Chorale and Overture*  
Rating: II

In the Solo and Ensemble portion of the festival, a Russell String Quartet comprised of Langdon Huffman, Joanna Simpson, Gail Bradley, and Johnny Bruer, and conducted by Mr. Hans Karl Piltz, earned a Superior (I) rating. In the violin category, Langdon Huffman earned an Excellent (II) rating. Jane Morris earned a Superior (I) rating in majorette performance; Marie Jennings, Shirley Davis, and Faye Eubanks of Russell's majorette squad earned Excellent (II) ratings.

These majorettes were particularly successful and represented an exclusive group at Russell. In the *Russell Wildcat*, a writer offered a compliment:

“This is an outstanding group in our school and an honor to be proud of. It takes hours of hard work and practice to be able to do the things that are expected of them...Aside from the many parades each year, they add color and entertainment to every football game.”<sup>55</sup>

The Russell Band was among 10 bands that performed at the 1954 St. Patrick's Day parade in Atlanta. Four color guards, representing each of the four main branches of

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<sup>54</sup>Beth Gibbons, ed., “Students Receive Good Ratings at Music Festival,” *Russell Wildcat*, 18 March 1954, 1.

<sup>55</sup> Beth Gibbons, ed., “Three High steppers selected for Squad,” *Russell Wildcat*, 25 May 1954, 1.

the U.S. military, participated. Mike Hickey, parade organizer, was selected as the parade Grand Marshall. Four F-84 saber jets made a low over flight during the parade.

Twenty-one Russell Band students, along with similar numbers of students from five other high schools, participated in the district Festival Band. In an effort to boost band enrollment, this group performed concerts at all six schools during the month of April.

A parade intended to kick-off East Point's month-long "Clean Up/Paint Up" campaign was scheduled for Friday, 16 April; however, the event was cancelled because of rain. The Russell Band was among a large number of units signed up for the parade, which was to start at Newnan Avenue and Womack Park, go down North Main, and proceed along numerous thoroughfares before concluding at Russell High.

The annual Fulton County ROTC Competition was held at College Park H. S. on 30 April. The three schools represented were Russell, Hapeville and College Park. The Russell Band provided the music and cadence for Russell's Pass-and-Review. Band officers and their sponsors listed in the 1954 *Pointer* included: Capt. Bobby Fischer; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John Jones and Judith Lee; and, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Eldon Cort and Pat Lewis.

The Tri-City Music Festival, comprised of the top high school band and choral students, was held at the Hapeville Recreation Center on 4 May. The concert theme was "One World," and involved the concert finale, *Song of Man*.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Newspaperboys Day parade, which the *Atlanta Constitution* billed as "one of the most novel parades in Atlanta's history," kicked off at 11:30 A.M. on Friday, May 14. Gov. Talmadge and Mayor Hartsfield led the parade. The parade featured about 92 units that included Fulton County and City government officials,

Yaarab Shrine units, numerous floats, and about 6 high school bands, one of which was the Booker T. Washington Band. Money raised from this special May 14 Old Newspaperboys Day event benefitted the Cerebral Palsy School at 1815 Ponce de Leon Avenue.

This major fund-raising event took on a heightened festive atmosphere created with the new addition of hillbilly bands, wandering minstrels and musicians, and stars of the stage, radio, TV providing impromptu entertainment at various points around downtown Atlanta. Fraternities from Georgia Tech and Emory joined the effort as volunteers.

Citizens of the Tri-Cities area were treated to a large parade celebrating Armed Forces Day on Saturday, 15 May. The parade organized at Newnan Avenue and proceeded down West Washington Street past the reviewing stand in front of the American Legion No. 51 home. In addition to the ROTC units of Russell, College Park, and Hapeville High Schools, and GMA, bands from Jonesboro High and North Clayton High joined the parade formation.

A group of Russell Seniors presented the 3-act play, *Cannibal Queen* by Robert St. Clair, at the East Point City Auditorium on 2 April. Band member James Chapman was a member of an onstage cast that also included seniors Annette Bradley, Sally Crutchfield, Pat Fowler, James Gilstrap, James Hardy, Wanda Henry, Shirley Holt, Doris Hoskins, George Lindsay, Jean Sears, Sue Sparks, and Bobby Vansant. Dozens of seniors served backstage roles on committees such as Programs, Tickets, Properties/Scenery, Publicity, Make-up, and Art Work. The Junior-Senior Prom was held on 15 May in the Russell Auditorium with music provided by the Walt Cunningham Band.

Graduation for 185 seniors was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium at 4:30 P. M. on Saturday, 5 June. Student speakers, selected from among Russell's top honor graduates by a faculty committee, were Barbara Ann Jarrell and Julia Irene Jones. Julia was also presented the Atlanta Journal Cup awarded to the top Russell student. Among numerous scholarship and award winners, the Band's Martha Jean DeRamus won the Ritter Music Award.

The Fulton County Schools summer music instruction program begun in the summer of 1953 was offered yet again at Russell; Mr. Hans Karl Piltz, Russell's orchestra director, substituted for Mr. Hopperstad. Others teachers included Mr. Merwin Crisman, Band Director at Hapeville High, and Walter Steinhaus and Harold Scott, both of College Park High. The daily schedule was the same as the previous year: beginners from 8:00-9:30; intermediate students from 9:30-11:00; Advanced Band and Orchestra from 11:00-12:30. Additionally, a new dance band, comprised of Russell, College Park, and Hapeville students, was added.

### **Academic Year: 1954-1955**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** James M. Hopperstad

**Orchestra Director:** Joseph Pearlman

**Band Officers:** Marty McElroy, Captain; Jane Morris, Head Drum Major; Faye Eubanks, Co-Captain; Theo Scott, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant; and Kenneth Goins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

**Majorettes:** Faye Eubanks; Jane Morris; Mary Greak; Jean Steele; Lucretia Hill; and Dana Wilson (mascot).

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** John Alston ('53-'55); Helen Eubanks (Majorettes '51-'55; Co-Captain Majorettes '54-'55; Kenneth Goins ('51-'55; Band Officer '54-'55); Marie Jennings (Majorette '51-'54); John Jones ('50-'55; Band Officer '53-'54; William McElroy ('50-'55; Band Captain '54-'55; Jane

Morris (Majorette '50-'55; Majorette Captain '54-'55; Drum Majorette '54-'55; Shirley Ann Davis Quinn (Drum Majorette '52-'54; and Theo Scott ('50-'55; Band Officer '54-'55).

**Russell H.S. Highlights of Note:**

- The new Gym opened in 1955, the year Russell won the Class AA Basketball Title (Russell 65 - Columbus 57).
- Jerry Sawyer, Class of 1955, won a Ford Motor Company 'Certificate of Merit' at a National Industrial Arts Award Competition.
- The Russell Track Team won the Region 4-AA title.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Sylvan, @ Cedartown, @ Rossville, Marietta, Griffin, @ Decatur, Roosevelt, @ Dalton, Brown, Rome.



**1954-55 Russell High Band**

The Band commenced the year with a receipt of band instruments donated from the East Point VFW Post No. 7007. Included in this gift were two concert bass drums, six snare drums, one pair of cymbals and six bugles. The band size at the beginning of the year was 35 students, but the band had a goal of increasing membership to 50 by January

1955.<sup>56</sup> New uniforms for the year involved a light coat, lighter pant with stripe, and black military-style shoes.

At the end of September, Fulton County celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. To heighten and advertise the event, a number of Fulton County bands performed individual midday concerts at Plaza Park in downtown Atlanta during the week leading up to the big centennial celebration. On 27 September, the Russell Band performed first in this series and was followed by the Hapeville High band the following day.

The Southeastern Fair did not stage its annual parade on the eve of the Fair opening in order not to conflict with the Fulton County Centennial parade plans; however, on the evening of 29 September, the night of the Centennial parade and the night before the official opening of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Fair, 100 special guests previewed the fairgrounds and pronounced it the best in history. Since the fair was celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a 200-pound cake was cut for the guests. The Brown High School Band, directed by R. D. Chenoweth, provided music for the event.

The Russell Band participation in the Fulton County Centennial Celebration Parade on the evening of 29 September was a marching season highlight. This Centennial Celebration was a major event, involving the Southeastern Fair's giant balloons, floats from many companies/organizations, and bands from almost every high school in and around Atlanta. Indeed, the Tri-Cities Elementary School All-Star Band, directed by Roy Drukenmiller, provided some television sound track for NBC, which broadcast the parade to the nation via WSB-TV Atlanta.

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<sup>56</sup>Richard Yarbrough, ed., "Band Presented Instruments by East Point VFW," Russell Wildcat, 11 October 1954, 1.

Over 250,000 people turned out to see the celebration. Writing in *The Atlanta Constitution*, Bill Diehl exclaimed, “(The parade) is the biggest thing since *Gone With the Wind* came to town in 1939.” Parade coverage in *The Atlanta Journal* included a photo of Russell’s Jane Morris and the caption, “High School Bands Strut Their Stuff: Here’s Jane Morris, Russell High Majorette.”<sup>57</sup>

The parade order revolved around several themes. The first section of the parade included 20 floats, each of which depicted a milestone in Fulton County’s past. The second section of the parade was devoted to ‘present progress’ floats representing developments of local achievement. The last section of the parade included a vast array of giant balloons representing the Fair-A-Ganza. The Russell Band organized and staged in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division assembly area of Mills Street off of West Peachtree Street. The “Story of Transit Service” Float (Atlanta Transit Company) traveled in front of the band, and the “Story of Medicine” Float (Emory University) traveled behind the band.<sup>58</sup> The start of the parade formed at Peachtree and Baker Streets and moved down Peachtree to Whitehall and Hunter, where it turned on to Central Avenue and the reviewing stand in front of the then-new Courthouse Administration Building.

The parade line-up involved the below-listed bands in the following order:

North Fulton	(Carl M. Holbert, director)
College Park	(Harold Scott, director)
Grady H.S.	(R. Owen Seitz, director)
Hapeville	(Merwin Crisman, director)
Bass	(William H. Hill, director)
Roswell	(Christine Dunn, director)
Howard	
Northside	(William Hughes, director)

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<sup>57</sup> Ed. “High School Bands Strut Their Stuff,” *Atlanta Journal*, 30 September 1954, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Fulton County Commission, ed. *Fulton County Centennial*, 1854-1954. Atlanta: Foote & Davies, 1954: 60.

Brown	(Robert D. Chenoweth, director)
Jonesboro	(E. W. Woods, director)
Smith	(James J. Sedlack, director)
Russell	(James D. Hopperstad, director)
Murphy	(Ben L. Sisk, director)
Milton	(Paul Pittinger, director)
O'Keefe	(Robert Waggoner, director)
Southwest	(Kenneth Krause, director)
Sylvan	(Robert R. Jenkins, director)
Campbell	
Fulton	(James A. Taylor, director)
Roosevelt	(Joseph Kirschner, director)
Marist	

The majorette corps received positive comments for their contributions during marching season. Writing in *The Russell Wildcat*, a reporter exclaimed:

“The majorettes are really on the beam this year! They practiced hard last summer and learned many new twirls and routines that add to the half-time shows. They have also been in several parades, and are planning to compete in the state festival....The majorettes also have new uniforms this year. It took a lot of time and money to get them, but as everyone can see, it was worth it.”<sup>59</sup>

Atlanta's American Legion Post No. 1 sponsored the 1954 Armistice Parade that paid tribute to all veterans. A flag-lined Peachtree Street contained large crowds that cheered many units representing all the armed forces, veteran and civic organizations, ROTC groups, and 11 bands from the metro Atlanta area. The activities ended with a solemn ceremony at Hurt Park.

Russell students comprised a portion of the Tri-City Amateur Night line-up at the East Point City Auditorium on Tuesday, 16 November. One group, “Off-Note Six,” was made up of Mackie McElroy, Jimmy Stewart, Bill Scott, Kenneth Goins, Wyvis Harper

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<sup>59</sup> Ed., “Majorettes Aid Band in Half-time Show,” *Russell Wildcat*, 15 November 1954, 2.



and John Jones, all of the Russell Band. Jane Morris, also of Russell, was a participant. Jon Farmer, a well-known Atlanta entertainer, served as master of ceremonies.

The 15 December PTA Meeting featured the Russell Orchestra, along with the Drama Team, members of the Mixed Chorus, and Gold Robe Choir. The band performed a Christmas Concert on Friday, 17 December. After the holidays, select Russell Band and Choral students participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual University of Georgia Music Festival held in Athens on Saturday, 8 January. A total of over 800 students from about 60 high schools attended this Festival. The all-day Festival concluded with a concert and a post-concert dance at Stegman Hall. In addition to music activities, students were given tours of the campus. Guest conductors included Mr. Bob Barr from Columbus, Georgia (Band) and Clem Boatwright of the University of Florida (Chorus).

Discussions concerning the establishment of a hospital to serve the Tri-Cities area began around the early 1950s. The dream would not become fully realized until groundbreaking for South Fulton Hospital in 1962 and completion in 1964 on Cleveland Avenue. To heighten awareness and stimulate interest for such a large civic initiative, East Point Mayor Roberts organized a South Fulton Hospital Fund Drive parade for Friday, 18 February. Parade participants included the Russell Band, city officials, civic organizations, Boy Scouts, and a special 43-man Honor Guard from the Atlanta General Depot. The 3:30 P. M. parade stepped off at Newman and Main Streets and ended at East Point Street and Washington Avenue.

The Russell Band was the feature group for the Tuesday, 22 February, meeting of the East Point Music Lovers Club held at the Russell auditorium. The musical theme for the program was "International Music." The next day, the Russell Band and ROTC

participated in a celebration of National Defense Week at the Atlanta General Depot. ROTC groups from Marist School, College Park, Hapeville, North Fulton, Decatur, GMA, and Emory University were also in attendance.

To prepare for and finance the Russell Band's performance at District Festival, the band held a concert at the school on 3 March. Selections included *Oop Shoop*, *The Naughty Lady of Shady Lane*, *Sincerely* and *Let Me Go Lover* featuring vocal soloist Grace Orr. The Dance Band played *Cross Over the Bridge* and *Teach Me Tonight*, with vocal also sung by Grace Orr. Additionally, the majorettes performed twice with the band.<sup>60</sup>

On 4 March 1955, Russell High hosted a free concert performance by the Ft. McClellan, Alabama-based WAC Band, the Army's only all-female band. Directed by Lieutenant Alice V. Peters, the 59-member ensemble also featured a 16-piece dance band.

The GMEA Region 3 Music Festival was held in Rome, Georgia, on 11 March with a variety of Russell groups performing. The band performed *Hall of Fame*, *Sweethearts*, and *Student Prince*, and earned a Good (III) rating. The string quartet (Langdon Huffman, Gail Bradley, Dickey Moore, and Joanna Simpson) performed *Brigadoon* and earned a Superior. Majorettes Jane Morris, Faye Eubanks, and Mary Greak earned Superiors; Jean Steele and Lucretia Hill were awarded Excellent (II) ratings.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Richard Yarbrough, ed., "Russell Band Holds Concert for School," *The Russell Wildcat*, 23 March 1955, 2.

<sup>61</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Russell Musicians Play in Rome," *The Russell Wildcat*, 23 March 1955, 5.

### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District III Band Festival

1955 March 11  
 at Rome, Georgia  
 Director – James M. Hopperstad  
 LEVEL C  
 Program: *Hall of Fame*  
               *Sweethearts*  
               *Student Prince*  
 Rating: III

A student journalist writing in *The Russell Wildcat* offered an assessment and review of the music program. In it, this staffer wrote:

“Everyone in the entire music department is doing a wonderful job of cooperating with each other to build a better, bigger, and more educated program. Certainly this department would rank high throughout the entire Atlanta area. We are proud of the work they are doing and proud they are a part of our school.

It was very gratifying to learn that the String Quartet, comprised of Langdon Huffman, Gail Bradley, Dickey Moore, and Joanna Simpson received a Superior rating, 1<sup>st</sup> place, at the regional festival in Rome, Georgia, a few weeks ago.”<sup>62</sup>

Atlanta celebrated St. Patrick’s Day on 17 March under the sponsorship of the Hibernian Benevolent Society. Twelve bands, twelve floats and numerous public officials highlighted the long parade. Sam P. McKenzie served as grand master of the parade that moved down Baker Street, down Peachtree and Whitehall, to Garnett Street, before passing a reviewing stand at Five Points.

Jane Morris, a veteran Russell Band Majorette, won the 1955 Miss East Point crown. Since she was one year under the age limit for the State Pageant, Grace Orr, Miss East Point runner-up and Jane’s fellow Russell classmate, served as East Point’s

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<sup>62</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. “Easter Devotions Presented by Music Department,” *Russell Wildcat*, 2 May 1955, 2.

representative to the Miss Georgia Pageant held later in the summer in Columbus, Georgia.

A teenage Canteen specifically for Russell students opened for business on 30 April in the old Russell Gym. Sponsored by the Russell PTA and the South Fulton YMCA Branch, the Canteen featured music, dancing, games, and other activities for three hours on Saturday nights. The “Blue Knight Orchestra,” comprised of Russell students, made monthly appearances at the Canteen during the summer.

The Tri-City Music Festival was held at Russell High on 2 May. Select students from Russell High, Hapeville High and College Park High appeared in concert on the Russell Football Field.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Newspaperboys Day Cerebral Palsy Benefit Day parade was held on Friday, 13 May. The parade line-up included Yvonne de Carlo, a Hollywood actress; entertainers Mel Torme and Duke Ellington; and Jeannie Parris, Miss Georgia 1955. Participating bands included Hapeville High, Grady High, Fulton High, Southwest DeKalb High, and Turner High.

Armed Forces Day 1955 on 19 May was celebrated at two locations: the Atlanta Depot and downtown Atlanta. The Atlanta Depot event featured an Open House from 12:00-5:30 P. M. where visitors viewed exhibits and received guided tours of the troop area. The Open House concluded with a retreat parade that featured active duty troops marching to the music of the Third Army Band. East Point’s representative to the event was the American Legion Post No. 51 Junior Drum & Bugle Corps comprised mostly of East Point students as mentioned earlier.

The Atlanta parade began at 2:30 P. M. and included all-female WAC units from Ft. McClellan, Alabama, along with units from Ft. McPherson and Dobbins Air Base. The All-Girl Monroe Drum & Bugle Corps was featured, along with bands from Sylvan High, Smith High, and Georgia Military Academy. The event began at Peachtree and Baker Streets and concluded at Trinity Avenue.

The Senior Class started end-of-year activities with the play, *Leave it to Grandma*, with Beverly Rogers in the lead role of “Grandma.” Band member Theo Scott was joined in the cast with seniors Peggy Glover, Nellie Graham, Bill Mitchell, Grace Orr, Charles Robinson, Kay Slappey, Barbara Spangler, Mack Stephens, and Bobby Tyler. The play was produced on 1 April before a sold-out and enthusiastic crowd at the East Point City Auditorium. Graduation was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium at 4:00 P. M. on Saturday, 4 June, 1955. Class speakers included Charles Robinson and Grace Orr, who later participated in the Miss Georgia Pageant as Miss East Point. Special graduation individual awards included the Ritter Music Medal presented to William Howard McElroy, Jr., and the Lions Club Music Cup awarded to Wyvis Powers Harper. Marcia Amelia Maddox won the Atlanta Journal Cup for top academic performance at Russell High.

Graduation marked the end of an outstanding 5-year high school career for Jane Morris. Jane was an integral part of the Russell Band through her majorette and drum majorette activities. She was a champion baton twirler, having earned Superior ratings at both district and state festivals during her time at Russell from 1950 through 1955. She also was head drum majorette her senior year.

Jane certainly ranks as one of Russell's most accomplished and notable graduates. After graduation, Jane went on to a distinguished career, first as Miss Georgia 1956-57 and later as a featured performer with the national touring company of Holiday on Ice. For more information about Jane, see Appendix #2, page 214.

### **Academic Year: 1955-1956**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** Frank V. Lentini

**Orchestra Director:** Joseph Pearlman

**Band Officers:** Mary Greak, Majorette Captain; Jean Steele, Majorette Co-Captain; and Lucretia Hill, Majorette Co-Captain.

**Majorettes:** Mary Greak; Jean Steele; Lucretia Hill; Carolyn Tyler; Nancy Mitchell; Carol Callahan; Carolyn Dixon; Judith Porter; and Linda Harris.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Joe Boyd Emory (Band Captain; Dance Band '55); Carol Elizabeth Collins ('54-'55); Barbara Lalage Coombs ('54-'55); Langdon Eugene Huffman (Orchestra '52-'56); Robert Jerome Stephens ('51-'55); and Sylvia Jean Wampler ('53-'55).

#### **Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- The Football team earned a Co-Championship in 4-AA.
- The Men's Basketball team won the 4-AA Region Championship.
- The Russell D.E. won 2<sup>nd</sup> Place for Georgia D. E. Clubs.
- Sandra G. Ness, Richard L. Speers and Martha D. Truitt were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as among the top 40 students in Georgia.

#### **Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

@ Cedartown, Rossville, @ Marietta, Griffin, Decatur, Roosevelt, Dalton, Brown, Rome, Rossville.



Frank V. Lentini began the school year as the new Russell band director. A native of New York, he earned both his bachelor's and

master's degrees from Ithaca College, New York, in the early 1950s. He remained at Russell through the 1958-59 school year.

A major improvement to the Russell football field for the 1955 season involved the construction of a two-story press box on the Harris Street side of the stadium. The ground level of the press box contained a concession stand that was operated by the Lions Club. Additionally, the Russell High Wildcat Booster Club was organized for the first time prior to the start of football season. In addition to providing supplemental support to various Russell sports groups, the Booster Club also provided funds for transportation of the Marching Band.

A large motorcade, decked out and decorated in gold and white, drove to Russell's away game at Cedartown early in the season. The Russell Booster Club raised funds for the Russell Band to attend the game. At the end of football season, the Russell Band was busy with activities leading up to the playoff game with visiting Rossville on 25 November. On Wednesday, 23 November, the Russell Band was involved in a large pep rally. Prior to the game, the Russell Band led a parade and was involved in other pre-game festivities.

Homecoming 1955 was held the day of the Russell vs. Decatur game. At half time, seniors Lamar Seals and Marion Chapman were crowned Russell High's "King" and "Queen" by virtue of a student body vote.

The 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Southeastern Fair Parade occurred on Thursday night, 29 September. The parade theme revolved around a "Children's Holiday" subject. Christmas, Easter, and birthdays were represented by animal floats and costumed characters. Numerous bands participated in the parade line-up. The parade began at 7:30 P. M. at

Peachtree and Baker Streets and marched down Peachtree to Pryor and Mitchell. A number of special Atlanta dignitaries viewed the procession from a viewing stand at Five Points. About 250,000 spectators witnessed the hour-long parade.

A special feature of the Southeastern Fair involved a music talent competition instituted in 1950. The 1955 winner was Anne DeShazo, a violinist at Grady High School. Her rendition of *Scene de Ballet* by Deberoit won her the title and a \$500.00 tuition scholarship to the Wesleyan College of Music. Donna Ruth Doster of Southwest High earned second place, while Laura Helen Jones and Noel Abbott, both of Campbell High, won third and fourth respectively.

Russell's first PTA meeting was held on 29 September and featured Mrs. Walter H. Beckman of Miami, a prominent speaker on state and national PTA issues. The Russell Band performed several selections at the conclusion of the meeting.

The PTA also published a flyer detailing the wealth of Russell High Extra-Curricular activities as a way of advertising and communicating with Russell's parents and students alike. Since the establishment of Russell High in 1923, Russell students historically were involved in many school groups and community activities, and the 1955 flyer indicated that volunteer school groups were still strong. In addition to the various choral and band groups available to students, the flyer listed the following other organizations: Student Council; National Honor Society; Diversified Cooperative Training (D. C. T.); Beta Club; Distributive Education (D. E.); Civitans; Civinettes; Key Club; Gray Y; Y-Teens; Junior Red Cross; Future Homemakers of America (F. H. A.); *Wildcat* School Newspaper; *Pointer* Yearbook; Future Teachers of America; Junior



Achievement Bank; “R” Club; Girls Block Letter Club; Office Staff; Library Staff; and ROTC Officers Club, just to name a few.

The first of three annual Atlanta Symphony concerts for Fulton County School students occurred on 28 October at Atlanta Municipal Auditorium with Henry Sopkin, conductor. The final concerts were held later in the school year on 21-22 April 1957.

In 1954, the U.S. Congress changed the name of Armistice Day to Veteran's Day. The first observance under the new name was celebrated on 11 November with a downtown Atlanta parade of veteran organizations and armed forces units. The hour-long parade also included numerous school bands, the Third Army Band, the Monroe Drum & Bugle Corps, and military units from all the branches of the armed forces. American Legion Post No. 1 sponsored the parade that began at Peachtree and Baker Streets and concluded at Trinity Avenue. Lt. General Thomas F. Hickey, Third Army Commander, served as chief parade reviewing officer and guest speaker at a ceremony held at Hurt Park.

The weekend of 15-20 December provided East Point residents with numerous musical opportunities to enhance their Christmas spirit. The annual Russell PTA Christmas Concert was held on Thursday, 15 December, in the Russell Auditorium. A total of about 400 students from the combined Band, Orchestra, and Chorus Departments participated. The band selections included a medley of Christmas carols, with Mr. Lentini also leading an audience sing-a-long.<sup>63</sup>

The Russell Teen Town, which opened earlier in the year as the Canteen, held a Christmas Formal, complete with a band, on Saturday, 17 December. The inaugural

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<sup>63</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “400 Students Participate in Russell P.T.A.,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 8 December 1955, 2-A.

citywide youth Community Christmas concert was held at the East Point City Auditorium at 3:00 P. M. on Sunday, 18 December. This concert featured an all-star group from Tri-City elementary band programs and was sponsored by the East Point Parks and Recreation Department for the benefit of a East Point Woman's Club canned food drive. Mr. Roy Drukenmiller, Fulton County coordinator for instrumental music and a past Russell Band Director and Principal, conducted the select group of students, some of whom would be future Russell High Band students.

The Russell Band participated in another Christmas season event when they performed as part of the Community Christmas Caroling Concert sponsored by the East Point Music Lovers Club. The Christmas Caroling was held outside on the Linwood Avenue side of City Hall on 20 December. The Russell Band started the program with a medley of Christmas carols.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival occurred on Saturday, 7 January. In addition to the clinic band and chorus, the festival included a majorette clinic involving over 150 students coached by Mrs. Phyllis Dancz, wife of the UGA band director Roger Dancz. Assisting Mrs. Dancz were Shirley Hires, UGA drum major, and Jane Wilson, UGA solo twirler. On Friday, February 17, high school bands from Russell, Milton, Hapeville, College Park, and Campbell/Fairburn participated in a music reading clinic at Georgia State University.

The GMEA Region 3 Music Festival was held at the Georgia State University Business Administration Building and Atlanta Art Museum on Wednesday, 29 February, through Friday, 2 March. Mr. Drukenmiller served as chief festival organizer of an event attended by about 5,000 music students from the Fifth and Seventh Georgia Districts.

Ratings earned by Russell music students were: Girl's Chorus, Superior (I) ; Band, Good (III) ; Nancy Brown, solo, Superior (I) ; Twirling: Judy Porter, Carolyn Tyler, Mark Greak, Superior (I) ; Jean Steele, Lucretia Hill, Caroline Dixon, Nancy Mitchell and Linda Harris, Excellent (II); Strings: Langdon Huffman, Excellent; String Ensemble, Superior (I).<sup>64</sup>

Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District V Band Festival

1956 February 29-2 March  
at Georgia State University  
Director – Frank V. Lentini

Rating: III

The 1956 Atlanta St. Patrick's Day Parade took place at 2:30 P. M. on 17 March. The parade included 18 bands and 20 marching units and was one of the largest St. Patrick's Day parades in Atlanta's history. Starting at Peachtree and Whitehall Streets, the parade passed by a reviewing stand at Five Points.

The East Point Whiz Kid Little League Biddy Basketball team finished as runners-up in the National Biddy Tournament held in Atlantic City in late March. The boys were welcomed home with a large reception held at Terminal Station in downtown Atlanta on the morning of 26 March. The Russell Band and ROTC drill team squad were in attendance and added a great amount of excitement to the ceremony.

The annual combined Tri-City Music Concert was held at Hapeville on 9 April. Prior to the final concert, the choral students rehearsed at Russell High, while the band students rehearsed at College Park. The concert featured four types of music: Reveille, Romance, Revere, and Religious.

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<sup>64</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., "Tri-City Music Students Win Ratings at Third Area Festival in Atlanta," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 8 March 1956, 1.

The final PTA meeting of the school year was held on 26 April. The Russell Girls Choir, along with the Russell Orchestra, under the direction of Joseph Pearlman, provided special music for the occasion.

The 1956 edition of the annual Tri-Cities all-select concert was held at Russell high and involved the bands of Hapeville (Merwin Crisman, Director), College Park (Harold Scott, Director), and Russell. Performance selections included:

*Main Street, U.S.A.*.....(John Morrissey)  
*Donkey Serenade* .....(Friml/arr. Stothart)  
*Lumber Jack Overture*.....(Alfred Reed)  
*Storm King*.....(Walter Finlayson)

The concert concluded with a joint chorus/all-select band performance of *May The Lord Bless You and Keep You*, arranged by Peter Lutkin.

In May, East Point celebrated the crowning of the new Miss Georgia, Russell's own Jane Morris, class of 1955, who entered the event as the reigning Miss East Point. Jane Morris was the second Russell girl selected as Miss Georgia in the history of Russell High School, Miss Josephine Bowling having won the title in September of 1934 (see Vol. #1, Academic Year: 1934-35). There is no record of Josephine Bowling's involvement with the Russell Band; however, Jane was an integral part of the Russell Band through her majorette and drum majorette activities. She was a champion baton twirler, having earned Superior ratings at both district and state festivals during her time at Russell from 1950 through 1955. She also was head drum majorette her senior year. Jane participated in the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City during the first week of September.

Armed Force Day 1956 was a two-day celebration held at several locations during the weekend of 18-19 May. Ft. McPherson featured an Open House on Friday, 18 May, that included a helicopter demonstration and formal retreat parade. Events in downtown Atlanta the same day started with a luncheon speech given by General James M. Gavin at the Biltmore Hotel and ended with a 2:30 P. M. parade that featured the Third Army Band, ROTC units, National Guard troops and tanks, Civil Defense units, and Veteran's Trinity Avenue. Events on Saturday, 19 May, took place at Dobbins Air Base. Visitors were entertained with the aircraft exhibit, an air show, and an all-service parade. The parade traveled down Peachtree Street and ended at Whitehall.

The above-mentioned downtown Atlanta Armed Forces Parade was the second of two separate parades that occurred on the same day, which was somewhat of a rarity for Atlanta. Earlier in the day, the "Old Newspaperboys" held their annual parade benefiting the local Cerebral Palsy School. The 90-minute parade featured the Russell Band along with ten other bands, including the Marine Band, Yaarab Shrine Band, Druid Hills High, Sylvan High, Southwest High, Alpharetta High, Booker T. Washington High, Price High, and South Fulton High. The parade also included several floats, the "Palomino Posse" of the Fulton County Sheriff, fire trucks, antique automobiles, and Yaarab Shrine Temple units. A U.S. Naval Air Station float depicting a warship participated in both parades and thrilled crowds by firing blank shells along the parade route. In a review of the Old Newspaperboys parade, an *Atlanta Constitution* reporter wrote, "Beautiful girls, snappy marching bands, and merry-making clowns vied for attention in the colorful parade....the crowds along Peachtree Street responded with loud applause." This event raised over

\$90,000.00, the largest amount in the 6-year history of the Cerebral Palsy fundraiser.

Fraternities from Georgia Tech and Emory also assisted in this effort.

The Pilot Club selected two Russell students, Penelope Warren and Frank Cooper, as the Outstanding Girl and Boy respectively of the Fifth District. Penelope, a straight-A student with service to many school organizations, was President of the band and performed piano with the Russell Dance Band. Junior Frank Cooper, also an A student, was a leader in many extra-curricular activities and played piano for many groups, including the Russell choir.

Activities concluding the senior year included a senior class production of the play, *Grandma Goes to Washington*. Written by James Stone, the 3-act comedy was performed on 7 Monday in the East Point City Auditorium.

Graduation for 200 seniors was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 2 June 1956. Graduation music included *I Will Walk with God* (Nichols/arr. Brodsky). Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed the music, while seniors Jeanine Wilkes and Nancy Brown performed piano accompaniment. Nancy also was the winner of a 4-year Inter-Regional Scholarship based in part on her recognitions as: member of Music Educators National Convention (MENC) Anniversary Chorus in St. Louis, 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 1953 Spelling Bee, member of the GMEA All-State and Atlanta Symphony Chorus, and Russell's 'Most Talented Senior Girl.'

The opening of the Spring Street Swimming Pool summer season was inaugurated with a Water Show and Beauty Parade on Sunday, 5 June. Russell's own Jane Morris, recently crowned Miss Georgia of 1956, led a parade of about 120 girls. Ward DuVall and his band provided music for the occasion.

## **Academic Year: 1956-1957**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** Frank V. Lentini

**Orchestra Director:** Joseph Pearlman

**Band Officers:** Lucretia Hill, Drum Major

**Majorettes:** Mary Greak; Jean Steele; Carolyn Dixon; Nancy Mitchell; Carolyn Tyler; Judith Porter; Carolyn Callahan; and Linda Harris.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Jerry Burns ('53-'57); Richard Carroll ('52-'57); Carolyn Dixon (Majorette Letter Award '56-'57); Mary Greak (Majorette '54-'57; Drum Majorette '55-'56; Majorette Captain '56-'57); Edward Grove (Smith H. S. '53-'54; Russell H. S. '54-'56; Band Officer '55-'56); Lucretia Hill ('52-'57; Majorette Co-Captain '55-'56; Drum Major '56-'57; Drum Major for Fulton County Band '55-'57); David Jones ('55-'57); George Largin ('53-'56); Diane Leverette ('52-'56); Nancy Mitchell (Drum Majorette '55-'57); Bill Nolan ('52-'53); Uldis Palde ('53-'56); and Beverly Peacock ('53-'55).

### **Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- John Starr won the W. T. Grant Company Award and a \$50.00 U.S. Saving Bond for his selection as the most outstanding D. E. Club member in the entire state of Georgia.
- The Russell Rifle Team won the Hearst Trophy for a high score of 921 in the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual William Randolph Hearst ROTC rifle competition for the Third Army Area.
- Michael L. Callahan, Leo G. Parrish, Charme E. Robinson, and John E. Sheats were named National Merit Scholarship Finalists.
- Russell High Bomb Hoax on 16 May 1957.

### **Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

@ Sylvan, Marietta, @ Southwest DeKalb, Griffin, Marist, @ Decatur, Fulton, Athens.

The school year started with students on double sessions with then-new Headland High School. Headland was created to alleviate overcrowding at Russell, but the Headland building was not scheduled to open until February of 1957, hence the double session at Russell. The Russell students reported for the first session from 8:30 A. M. to 12:30 P. M.; Headland, complete with their own administration/faculty and comprised

that first year of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, attended Russell from 12:45 P. M. to 4:45 P. M. The only exception involved the Russell athletic booster organization, which opted to support both programs.<sup>65</sup>

For the first game of the season, a 100-car motorcade accompanied the football team to an away game at Cheney Stadium in Atlanta against Sylvan High. A similar such show of support occurred with the team's away game at Panthersville Stadium in DeKalb County against Southwest DeKalb High.

The marching band fielded a new group of twirlers midway through the football season. Performing under the name of the Russell Twirling Corps, this group numbered about 50 girls and was led by Jean Steele, Co-Captain of the Majorette squad. Writing of the group's debut in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, a writer stated: "With only two weeks of practice, these girls made a sensational showing."<sup>66</sup>

The 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Southeastern Fair opened with a 7:30 P. M. parade on Thursday evening, 27 September. In addition to the usual band and balloon parade units, horses, farm wagons, a sheriff's posse and about 50 parade participants symbolizing southern life sponsored by the First National Bank, this honor recognized two students from each of Georgia's congressional districts on the basis of scholastic achievement and community service. The 1956 winners from the 5<sup>th</sup> District were Penny Warren of Roswell High and Russell's Frank Cooper. His service as a pianist in the Russell music department stood out as one of many Russell contributions during his distinguished career (see also Frank Cooper, *Pilot Club*, page 74).

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<sup>65</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., "Wildcat Booster Club to Support Both Russell and Headland Highs," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 30 August 1956, 1.

<sup>66</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., "Russell Twirling Corps Success in First Appearance," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 1 November 1956, 2-A.



Since the traditional veteran's celebration date fell on a Sunday in 1956, the Veteran's Day salute to the veterans of America's wars was held the following day on 12 November. Units representing all the armed forces were presented in the line of march, along with Major Jack Treadwell, one of the Army's most decorated men. The parade began at 9:30 A. M. at Peachtree and Baker Streets and ended at Whitehall and Trinity years ago were featured to reflect the parade theme, "Cracker Town," a replica of a 100-year-old Georgia community. The *Atlanta Constitution* post-parade review indicated that 20 high school bands participated in the 30-minute parade viewed by about 60,000 spectators. The parade formed at West Peachtree and Whitehall Streets, moved south of Peachtree and Whitehall, and concluded at Trinity Avenue.

Among the number of special Southeastern Fair activities was a student recognition program called the 'Outstanding Girls and Boys of Georgia.' Jointly

Avenue. National Guard F80 jets, Lockheed-built C130 transports, and B47 jets made a low altitude Peachtree Street fly-over shortly after the beginning of the parade.

The Music Department Christmas Concert occurred on Wednesday, 12 December, in the school auditorium. The band and other Russell music organizations performed selections revolving around the theme, "Portraits of Christmas."

1,000 students from about 60 schools attended the 7<sup>th</sup> UGA Annual Music Festival held in Athens on Saturday, 5 January. A 100-piece orchestra was offered for the first time, joining a 145-piece band and 700-voice chorus. Clinicians included Walter Steinhaus, orchestra director at College Park (GA) High School and Atlanta Symphony cellist; Robert M. Barr, director of the Jordan High School (Columbus, GA) High School and conductor of the Columbus Civic Orchestra; and Douglas Ramble, Jr., director of

vocal activities at Henry Grady High School in Atlanta. Morning and afternoon rehearsal sessions preceded a concert in the Fine Arts Auditorium.

Miss Georgia 1956, Russell's own Jane Morris ('56), continued her busy personal performance schedule and official duties as Miss Georgia. She rode on the state float in the presidential inauguration parade in Washington, D.C. in January. She was also seen dancing the waltz lead in the ballet production of *Les Sylphides* that was presented on Saturday, 26 January, in the Brown High School auditorium by the Atlanta Civic Ballet.

The GMEA Region 3 Music Festival, involving about 6,000 students, convened in Marietta from 26 February through 2 March. Adjudicators included Richard Brittian, Vander Cook College of Music; Wilbur Hinton, director of Alabama Polytechnic Institute Band (Auburn University); and Kristian Kutschinski, University of North Carolina. In addition to the pre-prepared 3-song requirement, bands were also required to perform sight-reading for the first time in the history of festival participation. In the vocal portion of the solo/ensemble Region 3 Festival, Russell's Mary Ellen Burtz earned a Superior (I) and a Russell Trio earned an Excellent (II).

The 1957 edition of the St. Patrick's Day parade occurred on 18 March, because the traditional day, 17 March, landed on a Sunday. Fourteen bands and numerous other school marching groups participated in the parade. Starting at 2:30 P. M., the units organized at Peachtree and Baker Streets and traveled down Whitehall and Mitchell Streets.

Russell's Fine Arts Week occurred in early April with the band's performance on Tuesday, 9 April. A variety of art work was also on display for viewing before and after

the performances. The Home Economics Department provided receptions following the concerts.

The annual Fulton County ROTC drill competition took place on Friday, 26 April at College Park High School. Russell High and four other schools competed in the event.

In May 1957, select Russell Band students were involved in rehearsals and preparations for a special Washington, D.C., Safety Patrol all-star group called the Fulton County High School Band directed by Roy Drukenmiller, Co-coordinator of Instrumental Music in Fulton County and former Russell band director and principal. This special All-Star Band, comprised of students from the Russell, Hapeville, and College Park Bands, accompanied the Fulton County Safety Patrol delegation to Washington for the annual parade during the weekend of 3-5 May. The School Patrol trip, sponsored by AAA and inaugurated in 1932, involved literally thousands of young students from around the country as a reward for their service to traffic and student safety. The educational purpose of the trip included visits to historic sites and monuments. The highlight of the weekend always involved a five-hour parade down historic Constitution Avenue, and for this reason bands from the participating school districts generally provided music to accompany the line of march.

Before 1957, individual Fulton County High School Bands rotated for the honor of traveling with the Safety Patrols for their annual Washington, D.C., meeting. Prior trips included the following: Russell High Band 1950; Hapeville High Band 1951; College Park High Band 1952; Russell High Band 1953; Campbell-Fairburn High Band 1954; Hapeville High Band 1955; and College Park High School Band 1956.

According to *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, the Fulton County Band was the first of its kind in Georgia and the first of its type to appear in the "Parade of Youth."<sup>67</sup> The band, accompanied by the Russell High Color Guard and drum majorettes, paraded on Saturday, 4 May, to *Are You From Dixie* and *Youth on Parade*. This Fulton County All-Star Band also performed sacred music for the patrol Sunday School service on 5 May.<sup>68</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Newspaperboys Day Parade promoting a Cerebral Palsy School fundraiser occurred on 11:15 A. M. Friday, 17 May in Downtown Atlanta. The 99-unit parade started at Peachtree and Baker Streets and was led by a U. S. Marine Color Guard. Parade dignitaries included Gov. Griffin, Lt. Governor Vandiver, and Mayor Hartsfield. Band entries included those from the Yaarab Shrine, Howard High, Price High, Southwest High, Fitzhugh High, Rockmart High, Campbell High, Milton High, and Sylvan High, which featured 85 musicians and over 80 twirlers. Jane Morris, the reigning Miss Georgia and former Russell Band majorette, also appeared in the parade.

Army Day 1957 was held on Wednesday, 15 May and began with a luncheon speech by Secretary of the Army William M. Brucker before 1,000 guests at the Dinkler Plaza Hotel. A 2:00 P. M. parade followed the luncheon, and according to parade organizers, the event was the largest to date. The nearly two-hour parade included a vast array of military equipment and featured ROTC units and groups representing all military branches. Numerous bands participated, including those of the Third Army Band, the Ft. Benning Band, the 50-member WAC Band, and various high school bands from Atlanta

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<sup>67</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., "Fulton County High School Band to March in Parade," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 2 March 1957, 1.

<sup>68</sup> Marjory Rutherford. "Sunday School Goes With Patrol to D.C.," *Atlanta Constitution*, 3 May 1957, 17.

and surrounding areas. An Air Force fly-over along the parade route was a highlight of the day. The parade proceeded southward on Peachtree Street from Baker Street.

Later that spring, Russell Band students were also involved in the South Fulton High School Honor Band that performed at Russell on 13 May. The theme was “I Hear America Singing.” In addition to those from Russell, the all-select band and choral students came from the following high schools: Campbell (Marvin Miller, director), College Park (Harold Scott, director), Hapeville (John Beer, director), and Headland (Robert DePoy, director). The band selections included:

*Big Horn Boogie*..... “Tex” Brewster  
*Burst of Flame*..... Richard W. Bowles  
*Colorama*..... Peter DeRose

A combined band/chorus performance of *Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor* by Irving Berlin concluded the concert.

End-of-year senior activities included a 2-night presentation of the play, *Our Hearts were Young and Gay* held on 2-3 May in the East Point City Auditorium. An overwhelming show of support for this senior project dictated a separate cast for each night. In an *Atlanta’s Suburban Review* article, Russell faculty member, William Gatlin, wrote very favorably about the production on both evenings.<sup>69</sup> Graduation exercises for 219 seniors took place at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on Saturday, 25 May 1957. Class songs included *You’ll Never Walk Alone* (Richard Rodgers) and *Battle Hymn of the Republic* (arr. Wilhousky). Student speakers included Frank Cooper, Jr., and Linda Tucker. Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed the music and was assisted by senior accompanists Jean Marshall and Frank Cooper, Jr.

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<sup>69</sup> William Gatlin, “Russell High Seniors Display Dramatic Talents in Annual Play Performances,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 9 May 1957, 4-B.

### **Academic Year: 1957-1958**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** Frank V. Lentini

**Orchestra Director:** Joseph Pearlman

**Band Officers:** David Cook, Drum Major; Carolyn Tyler, Majorette Captain.

**Majorettes:** Carolyn Tyler, Carol Callahan, Linda Harris, Jean Beard, Harriet Richards, Judy Jarrett, Shelia Knight, Martha Ann Brewer, Judy Spencer, and Marilyn Burdette, mascot.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Rachel Beard ('53-'58); Majorette '57-'58; Fulton County Band '56-'57); Lillian Bishop ('53-'56); William Cook ('53-'58); George Crider ('56-'58); David Harris ('53-'56); Mildred Lyles ('52-'57); Larry Stevens ('54-'58); Jewel Taylor ('55-'58); Carolyn Tyler ('53-'55; Majorettes '55-'58; Majorette Captain '57-'58); and Myra Widener ('54-'58).

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Russell's Jimmy Bonner won the Suburban Atlanta Trophy as the most outstanding Tri-Cities football player; Bonner was also selected to the all-Greater Atlanta Prep Team.
- Russell High and several other Fulton County Schools were among the first in the nation to receive Geiger Counters (for detecting radioactive fallout).

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Sylvan, @ Marietta, @ Moultrie, Southwest DeKalb, Riverside, @ Griffin, Marist, Decatur, West Fulton, @ Athens.



*First row:* H. Richards, J. Spencer, J. Beard, C. Callahan, C. Tyler, M. Burdett, L. Harris, J. Jarrett, M. Brewer, S. Knight. *Second row:* H. Scofield, L. Hensley, D. Ballenger, B. Hyatt, G. Jones, B. Large, R. Harrison, D. Cook. *Third row:* H. Crider, B. McDaniel, J. Bradley, M. Dickinson, B. Kinney, T. Collins, H. Young, A. Widener, J. Taylor, A. Holloway, M. Wallace. *Fourth row:* A. Gloer, S. Golden, E. Darrington, M. Reeves, J. Burfield, S. Yard, C. McMillian, F. Campbell, C. Groover. *Fifth row:* J. Sandifer, R. Gaines, B. Emery, J. Fowler, J. Cooper, J. MacJenkins, B. Moss, L. Norri. *Sixth row:* J. Powell, S. Jett. *Seventh row:* S. Byars, J. Barrett, M. Howell, D. Johnston, P. Bishop.

On Saturday, 10 August, just prior to the beginning of the new school year, the City of East Point held a 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of its founding. Starting at 10:00 A. M., the four-mile parade was so large that it took over 1 and ½ hours to complete. The parade groups organized at Headland Drive and Semmes Street, proceeded down Semmes through East Point Street, south along Legion Way, and then to Main and Lawrence Streets, just across from the front of Russell High where the parade disbanded. As a special feature of the celebration, many of East Point's male residents grew beards.

Homecoming activities occurred during the week of the West Fulton football game. By a vote of the student body, Lloyd Clark and La Vera Robertson were selected

as the 1957 “King” and “Queen.” They would have been crowned on the football field between halves of the game; however, rain forced their coronation inside the Russell occurred auditorium during the post-game dance.

The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual Southeastern Fair opened on 3 October and featured the state’s largest midway, the largest assortment of educational exhibits, and one of the most expensive state exhibits ever assembled. After an enthusiastic premiere at the 1956 Fair, ‘Cracker Town, USA’ exhibit, a popular recreation of a 1890s town, returned for the 1957 Fair. The WAC Band from Ft. McClellan, Alabama, performed on the first two days of the Fair.

The 1957 downtown Atlanta Veteran's Day observance occurred on Monday, 11 November, with a 9:30 A.M. parade and 11:00 A.M. service held at Hurt Park. Col. William M. Perryman, Jr., commander of the 425<sup>th</sup> Transportation Group of the Army Reserve led the marching units; Frank Fling served as grand marshal. The parade proceeded down Peachtree and Whitehall Streets before ending at Trinity Avenue.

On November 16, shortly after the conclusion of the football regular season, the District 5 Orchestra Clinic was held at Georgia State University. The Band Clinic was held the following week at Georgia State University.

The 16 December PTA Christmas concert included the Chorus, Orchestra, and Band. The selections included *A Christmas Fantasy*; the Orchestra performed traditional Christmas Carols. Portions of the concert were presented in chapel the following day.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival held on 4 January attracted a record number 1,200 students. The 1957 clinicians returned for the 1958 Festival and included: Walter Steinhaus, conductor of the Macon Civic Youth Orchestra and orchestra director at Sandy



Springs High School; Robert M. Barr, director of the Jordan High School (Columbus, GA) High School; and Douglas Ramble, Jr., director of vocal activities at Henry Grady High School in Atlanta. Phyllis Dancz directed the twirling activities. A festival concert highlight included a mass performance of “Battle Hymn of the Republic” conducted by Mr. Barr. The Dixie Redcoat Band performed a short concert for the band students earlier in the day in the Fine Arts Auditorium.

Miss Georgia 1956, Russell’s own Jane Morris (’56), received a warm welcome home in February. Jane was in Atlanta as part of the ‘Holiday on Ice’ tour where she was a feature performer. On March 15, Jane marched with the Hapeville High Band in the Hapeville Aunt Jemima Parade, a fundraising event benefiting the Hapeville Benevolent Society.

The GMEA Region 3 Band Festival met at West Georgia College in Carrollton from 27 February to 1 March. The Russell Band and the Russell Orchestra each received a ‘Good’ (III) rating.<sup>70</sup>

#### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District III Band Festival

1958 27 February – 1 March  
at West Georgia College  
Director – Frank V. Lentini

Rating: III

The WAC Band from Ft. McClellan, Alabama, was the feature band in the annual Atlanta St. Patrick’s Day parade. A celebration highlight included the placement of a wreath on the memorial to Father Thomas O’Reilly, the priest who persuaded Gen. Sherman to spare Atlanta churches during the Battle of Atlanta.

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<sup>70</sup> Ralph McGill, ed., “5 Atlanta Bands Rated Superior at Schools Festival,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 February 1958, 10.

On 2 April 1958, the bands of Fulton County performed in a reading clinic at Headland High School. In addition to the Russell Band, bands from Headland (Depoy, director), College Park (Scott, director), Hapeville (Beer, director), and Campbell (Miller, director), played three songs each in the morning session and received comments from the assembled directors. In the afternoon session, an all-star group comprised of all five bands performed new band music.

Carolyn Tyler, Captain of the Russell majorettes, was selected *The Atlanta Constitution's* Female 'Top Teen of the Week' during the first week of April 1958. A Russell faculty member went on record saying, "Carolyn takes pride in her school work, personal appearance and in meetings with other individuals, making each a successful venture." The article continued in part to state,

"...a talented pianist....Carolyn is captain of the Russell majorettes, captain of the Tri-City Washington D.C. patrol majorettes, and teaches classes in baton twirling and dancing. For three years she has received the superior rating for solo twirling at the State Music Festival."<sup>71</sup>

The band's participation in the Russell Fine Arts Week involved a performance on 29 April in the school auditorium. In addition to several quartets and solos, the concert featured the selections *King Cotton March* by Sousa and Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C Minor*. The combined bands of Parklane and Harris Street Elementary Schools also performed.

Fine Arts Week concluded with a production of the senior class play, *Onions in the Stew*. The three-act comedy was performed on 2 May in the East Point City

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<sup>71</sup> Ralph McGill, ed. "Brown, Russell Seniors are Selected," *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 April 1958, p. 15.

Auditorium. Janice Higgins, Carlton Hays, Lillian Allen and Collette Fuller were cast in feature roles. In his *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* review, Mr. William Gatlin stated, "Onions in the Stew proved a delight for the audience and a jolly good time for the cast." Other early May news included the presentation of ROTC sponsors. Russell Band officers and their sponsors were Capt. David Cook and Ann Widener; and, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Tommy Collins and Bonnie Harden.

In 1958, the name of the traditional Tri-City Music Festival was changed to the South Fulton Music Festival. Having been comprised of band students from Russell, Hapeville, and College Park for many years in the past, the name change was made to accommodate the addition of Headland H. S. and Campbell/Fairburn H. S. The 1958 choral portion of the event was held at the Russell High Gymnasium on Friday, 12 May, with over 600 student participants. Vocal music directors involved with the Festival included: Madison Short, Hapeville High; Don Stevens, Campbell/Fairburn; Ruth Barron, College Park High; Mary Alice Dalrymple, Headland High; and Eleanor Burgess, Russell High. Music selections came from the religious, art song, and Broadway repertoire and included *Jacob's Ladder*, *Elijah Rock*, *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*, *Walk Hand in Hand*, *I Am Music*, and selections from *My Fair Lady*.

Beginning in 1951, the Old Newspaperboys organization held an annual drive to help support the operating and maintenance costs for the Atlanta Cerebral Palsy School-Clinic. Church and civic organizations, high school clubs, and thousands of other volunteers assisted the organization. The Atlanta Variety Club and the *Atlanta Constitution* jointly sponsored the benefit efforts.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Newspaperboys Day parade occurred at 11:15 A. M. on Friday 16 May. Mike Benton, chief organizer of the Southeastern Fair, served as parade marshal and claimed the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Parade was “the biggest in the history of the event.” The parade followed the traditional parade route beginning at Peachtree and Baker Streets.

Armed Forces Day 1958 was a week-long affair that culminated with a large celebration in College Park on Friday, 17 May. Sponsored by the Lyle-Brewster Post No. 50 of College Park, the parade was held as part of a greater overall 5<sup>th</sup> District Legion Convention held during the following Saturday and Sunday. Commander Fred Reeves of Post No. 50 reported, “This is the biggest parade yet staged in the Tri-City area.” Organized by Parade Chairman Hugh C. Conley, the event was the largest and most important Armed Forces Day observance held in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Starting on Rugby Avenue on North Main Street, the parade traveled southward to Oxford Avenue.

A visiting committee assigned to re-evaluate the Band section of the 1951 Russell High School Accreditation Report offered the following:

“There is evidence of fine work being done here. Excellent progress has been made since the last evaluation.

The committee commends:

1. the long-range program of instrument purchase which has been conducted;
2. the adequate facilities both for the bands and vocal groups;
3. the excellent work being done with the groups by the staff;
4. the adequate library.

The committee recommends:

1. that scheduling conflicts be worked out so that more students may be reached;
2. that a good working budget be provided;
3. that the program of performance through ensemble program and participation in music festivals and other competition be expanded;

4. that there be better understanding and cooperation of the faculty in all of the music department's activities;
5. that a whole unit (credit) be given for these students participating in band or chorus for a full year."<sup>72</sup>

Russell graduated 203 seniors at graduation ceremonies held the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium at 4:00 P. M. on Saturday 24 May. Robert Robinson and William Ness served as graduation class speakers. Brenda Eason was awarded the Atlanta Junior Cup as the best all-around senior at Russell. Miss Burgess led the senior class songs, *Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor* and *The Halls of Ivy*. Kay Clonts performed the piano accompaniment.

### **Academic Year: 1958-1959**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** Frank V. Lentini

**Orchestra Director:** Joseph Pearlman

**Band Officers:** Jack Barrett, Captain; Rhetta Gaines, First Lieutenant; Stuart Byars, Second Lieutenant; Paul Bishop, First Sergeant; Harriet Richards, Second Sergeant; Carole O'Neal, Secretary; and Linda Harris, Majorette Captain.

**Majorettes:** Carol Callahan, Linda Harris, Judy Spencer, Diana Spencer, Shelia Knight, Pat Polk, Martha Ann Brewer, Doris McClure, and Harriett Richards.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Jack Barrett ('54-'59; Band Sergeant '57-'58; Band Captain '58-'59); Martha Brewer ('57-'59; Majorette '57-'59; Majorette Co-Captain '58-'59); Carol Sue Callahan (Majorette '55-'59; Majorette Co-Captain '57-'58; Majorette Captain '58-'59); Francis Campbell ('56-'59); Thomas Collins ('54-'58); Mark Coombs ('58-'59); Robert Emory ('54-'59); Van Feltman ('57-'59); Linda Harris (Majorette Co-Captain '57-'58; Majorette Captain '58-'59); Andrea Holloway ('55-'58; Fulton County Band '56-'57); Shelia Knight (Majorette '57-'58; Majorette Co-Captain '58-'59); James Landgrebe ('55-'58); Diana Stevens ('56-

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<sup>72</sup> Editor. Visiting Committee. Re-Evaluation of Russell High School, East Point, Georgia, April 23-24, 1958: p. 10. Typed Report, in Evaluation Reports 1951, 1958 Folder, Box Z-4, located at Teaching Museum South, Hapeville, GA.

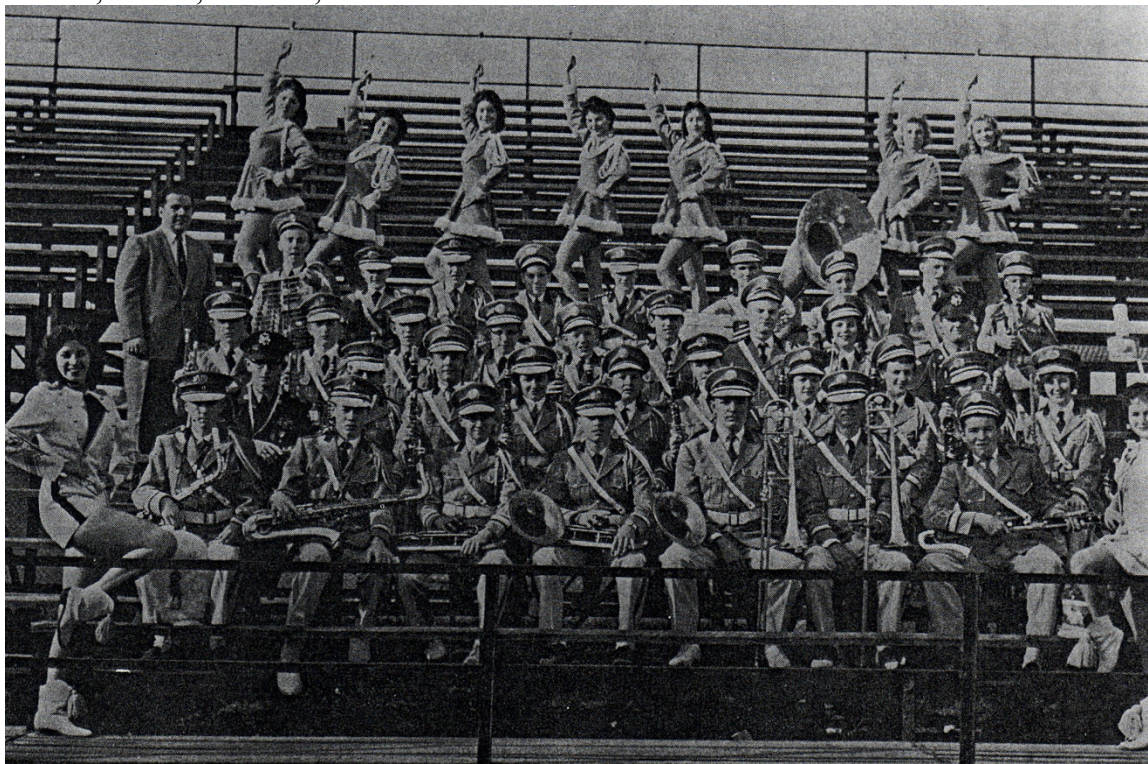
'59; Majorette '58-'59); Marifree Wallace ('54-'59; Band Secretary '56-'58; Most Outstanding Undergraduate in Band '57; All-State Band in Athens '57-'59); Larry Wicker ('58-'59); and Harris Young ('54-'58; Band Lieutenant '57-'58).

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- The Men's Basketball Team won the first Annual Metropolitan Holiday Tournament and the Region 4-AAA Championship.
- The Girls Basketball Team won the Tri-Cities Christmas Tournament and later placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in Region 4-AAA, making this the first Russell Girls team to go to the State Tournament.
- Band Member Marifree Wallace earned runner-up in the State Future Teachers of America Contest. Marifree also won a \$250.00 scholarship from Banker's Fidelity Life Insurance Company.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Campbell/Smyrna; Hapeville; Marietta; Druid Hills; Southwest DeKalb; Riverside; Griffin; Marist; Decatur; Athens.



**1958-59 Russell High Band**

Left to right, first row: Carol Callahan, Francis Campbell, David Allen, Gene Hardy, Steve Jett, Danny Ballenger, Curtis Wood, Jerry Birchfield, Linda Harris. Second row: Clifford Groover, Robert Carver, Skip Yarbrough, Jackie Bradley, Bobby Carroll, Billy King, Nancy Law, Marifree Wallace, Milton Reeves, Cathy Funke. Third row: Larry Henry, Harry Robinson, Johnny Jenkins, Eddie Robins, Bob Simmons, Jon Powell, James Fowler, Rhett Gaines, Mark Coombs.

Fourth row: Mr. Frank Lentini, Van Feltman, Bill Conway, David Johnston, Neil Berry, Jack Barrett, Larry Wicker, Ronnie Pierce, Stuart Byars, Richard Morris. Fifth row: Sheila Knight, Diana Stevens, Doris McClure, Harriett Richards, Pat Polk, Judith Spencer, Martha Brewer.

A large motorcade traveled with the football team and band to the first game at Campbell/Smyrna. The band participated in a spirited pep rally prior to the Marietta game. The Russell Band's performance was favorably reviewed in a *Russell Wildcat* article, which stated, "The halftime show was quite commendable, with both bands providing excellent entertainment."<sup>73</sup>

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Atlanta's WSB-TV in September 1958 was cause for a major celebration. WSB negotiated with the Southeastern Fair to combine their respective parades, which produced a WSB parade of huge magnitude. For parade headliners, WSB obtained numerous NBC guests, including: Jackie Cooper of "The People's Choice;" Keith Larson of "Northwest Passage;" Spencer Williams of "Amos & Andy;" Richard Carlson of "McKenzie's Raiders;" and Gretchen Wyles, popular guest on the "Perry Como Show."

In the days leading up to the WSB parade, Dave Garraway, well-known host of NBC's "Today Show," advertised the event in segments of his morning show. One such segment from Atlanta involved an interview with background music provided by the Fulton County Elementary Honor Band, many members of which came from the Tri-Cities area.

The parade began at 7:30 P. M. on 30 September and proceeded from the starting point at Peachtree and Baker Streets and continued down Peachtree to Whitehall to

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<sup>73</sup> Mike McClannahan, *Band's Sponsors Spark Halt Time Activities, Russell Wildcat*, 3 October, 1988, 1.

Trinity Avenue. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that over 100 marching bands, Shrine units, Southeastern Fair floats, and other groups participated in the parade. The event lived up to its advance billing, drawing an estimated quarter million spectators, which was one of the largest parades in the history of Atlanta. Mayor Hartsfield, who led the parade, declared, “the parade was one of the biggest I can remember in the past 29 years.”

The Russell Band participated in the parade as a Southeastern Fair unit, but their appearance was marred by a parade route incident involving a number of rowdy spectators and Russell’s majorette corps and band students. A group of young boys broke away from the sidewalk and impeded the line of march and harassed, both verbally and physically, the Russell majorettes in front of the band. Russell band boys came to the aid of the majorettes, but the effects of this negative experience could not be undone.

The Atlanta news media chose not to report the event, thereby adding more controversy to the incident. The story was later described in an *Augusta Courier* newspaper article, which ultimately was read into the minutes of the November meeting of the State Board of Education. This unusual action generated its own amount of controversy, so the *Atlanta Constitution* was compelled to respond by issuing a statement by Eugene Patterson, executive editor of the *Atlanta Journal/Constitution*:

“The Atlanta newspapers did not ‘ignore’ any reports of racial incidents. Our reporters painstakingly investigated every aspect of the reports, which involved not WSB-TV but the Southeastern Fair portion of the parade.

I personally watched from the reviewing stand as this situation developed past Five Points, and so am speaking first-hand as an eyewitness and not as a long-distance second guesser. Having investigated and found the facts, we declined to mislead and inflame the community with irresponsible sensationalism. We agree with Mr. Stewart that it was far beneath the dignity of the State Board



of Education to include in its minutes a matter that was grossly misleading and calculatedly inflammatory.”<sup>74</sup>

The 10-day run of 1958 Southeastern Fair featured several military bands. The Marine Corps Drum & Bugle Corps was featured in performance during the first three days of the Fair. The Third Army Band performed on 6 October. The all-women WAC Band from Alabama performed during the last three days on 7-9 October.

The highlight of the Fair involved a special Dick Clark Show originating from the grandstand on Saturday night, 11 October. The demand for the free tickets was heavy as many Atlanta-area students wanted to attend the extremely popular show.

Prior to the November 1958 elections, a “Get-out-the-Vote” parade was held in Atlanta. The Russell Band performance in the parade was memorialized in a picture that appeared in the September 8 Sunday edition of the *Atlanta Journal*.

The Shadows, a popular band comprised of Russell students, were very active during the first part of 1958. In October, the *Russell Wildcat* reported the band’s break-up due to college commitments of the band members.<sup>75</sup> In other music news, the first of three Atlanta Symphony Student Concerts was held in early December with Henry Sopkin conducting a variety of American Music.

Atlanta celebrated Veteran's Day 1958 with a large parade in honor of America's veterans. The Third Army Band and Honor Guard led a parade that included the 81<sup>st</sup> Infantry, numerous ROTC units, and marching groups from Dobbins Air Base and the Naval Air Station. Other featured marching music groups were the Monroe Girls Drum &

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<sup>74</sup> Ralph McGill, ed., “Purcell Urges Regents Raise Teacher Studies,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 18 November 1958, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Judy Tanner and Andrea Holloway, “Cat Tales,” *Russell Wildcat*, 3 October 1958, 2.

Bugle Corps, the Yaarab Shrine Drum & Bugle Corps, the Salvation Army Band, and numerous high school bands. A reviewing stand stood at the east veranda of the Capitol City Club on the corner of Peachtree and Harris Streets. The mile and a half parade began at 9:30 A. M. at West Peachtree and Bakers Streets and moved down Peachtree to Trinity Avenue.

The East Point Lion's Club organized a number of student music group concerts as entertainment for various Lions Club events. A Russell String Trio performed at a Lions Club dinner meeting in the Sumner Park Recreation Center on Thursday, 13 November. The group was comprised of Emily Austin and Jan Thomas, violinists, and Nancy Christian piano accompanist. They performed *South American Overture* by Isaac. The annual Russell High Christmas program was presented on 18 December.

The University of Georgia Music Department hosted about 1,200 high school students for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Music Festival held on the UGA campus on 10 January. After an all-day rehearsal and practice schedule, the band, chorus, and orchestra students performed an evening concert. Ms. Phyllis Dancz, twirling instructor and choreographer for the UGA Dixie Redcoat Band, supervised the twirling workshop.

The GMEA Region 3 Band Festival convened in Cartersville on 11-14 March. 55 bands from around the northwest district of Georgia performed during the event. The Russell Band earned a Good (III) rating.

#### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District III Band Festival

1959 11-15 March  
at Cartersville, Georgia  
Director – Frank V. Lentini

Rating: III

The Russell Band harassment incident during the WSB Parade on 30 September 1958 simmered in some circles for several months but came to a boil on the eve of the 1959 St. Patrick's Day Parade. Without citing the Russell Band incident by name, four days before the St. Patrick's parade, Atlanta Mayor Hartsfield banned the utilization of majorettes for all bands. Writing in the *Atlanta Constitution*, Warren Bosworth wrote that Hartsfield's decision was based on "racial tensions" in the city.<sup>76</sup>

The Mayor's opinion was further detailed in a mayor's directive quoted in Bosworth's article:

"Some time ago some very bitter, unfounded and demagogic attacks were made upon the city and its police department in connection with a parade in which a lot of majorettes were alleged to have had to push their way through a rough crowd and were allegedly subjected to insults. The decision is intended for the best interests of all, both the city and police department, as well as the bands themselves. We do hope that they will understand the necessity of this decision in these days of racial tension."<sup>77</sup>

Organizers of the St. Patrick Parade vehemently protested the majorette ban, but to no avail; Mayor Hartsfield held to his contentions and prohibited the use of majorettes for the 17 March 1959 St. Patrick's Day Parade. The parade proceeded as scheduled, but only 12 bands performed in the parade.

The Senior Class produced the comedy, *Annie Get Your Gun*, on 13 March. The Russell Band's Carol Callahan was cast in the lead role. Writing in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, Mr. Gatlin of Russell's English Department declared, "If Oscars were given for senior play productions, the entire cast of Russell's senior play would receive that

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<sup>76</sup> Warren Bosworth, "Irish Denounce Majorette Ban," *Atlanta Constitution*, 14 March 1959, 1-2.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

award.”<sup>78</sup> A *Russell Wildcat* page one review led with the title, “Senior Play *Annie* is Artistic Success.”<sup>79</sup>

The annual Fulton County ROTC competition was held at Hapeville H. S. on 29 April. Later that day, The Russell Band and Orchestra performed as part of Fine Arts Week. The orchestra performed several overtures; the band performed a number of marches and show tunes.

Russell Band member Marifree Wallace was selected as the Elks Club “Most Outstanding Female Senior” in South Fulton in March 1959. In the 7 March 1959 *Atlanta Constitution*, Marifree was described as “having earned a straight ‘A’ average, participated in practically every phase of all school activities, and participated in church and civic affairs.”

The annual South Fulton County Schools “Spring Music Festival” was held at Russell High on Monday, 11 May. In addition to band students from Russell, the all-star band included members from Headland H. S. (Robert D. DePoy, Director), Hapeville H. S. (John Beard, Director), Campbell H.S. (E. W. Moore, Director), and College Park H. S. (Harold W. Scott, Director). Festival selections for Band included:

*Liberty Bell*.....Sousa  
*Overture from “Eroica”*.....Beethoven/arr. Joseph Skornicka  
*Study in Rhumba*.....Francis P. Muccigrosso  
*The King and I*.....and Hammerstein/arr. Herfurth

End-of-year ROTC events included inspections at the annual Third Army inspection at Russell on 10 April and the Fulton County Competition held at Hapeville High on 29 April. An ROTC Sponsors Day ceremony preceded a Military Ball in the

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<sup>78</sup> William Gatlin, “Russell Seniors Produce Hit Play Reviewer Reports” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 19 March 1959, 2-A.

<sup>79</sup> Ed. “Senior Play *Annie* is Artistic Success,” *Russell Wildcat*, 26 March 1959, 1.

Russell Auditorium on 17 April. Three days later, the annual Officers' Dinner Dance was held at the Atlanta Army Depot with music provided by the Bob Axtell Orchestra. The same group also provided the musical entertainment for the Russell Junior-Senior Prom held in the school auditorium on Saturday, 2 May.

The Old Newspaperboys group held their 9<sup>th</sup> Annual parade at 11:15 A. M. on 8 May. The 106-unit parade, one of the largest in the parade's history, traveled south on Peachtree Street, through Five Points, before disbanding at Whitehall Street. Parade groups included numerous bands and majorettes. Mary Ann Swan, Miss Atlanta 1959, was also a featured parade participant.

The 1959 Armed Forces celebration on 16 May did not involve a parade, but rather featured an Open House at Dobbins Air Base, where over 90,000 visitors witnessed parachute jump demonstrations, aircraft displays, and fly-overs of the newest jet fighters, bombers, and transport planes.

Graduation exercises for 178 seniors commenced at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 30 May. Several band students were recognized as award winners: James Landgrebe ('56-'58) won the Atlanta Journal Cup, Bausch and Lomb Science Award, and Associated Industries of Georgia cash award; Carol Callahan ('55-'59) won the Russell High Faculty Medal; and Marifree Wallace ('55-'59) won the Ritter Music Company Award, Bankers' Fidelity Cash Award, and Elks Most Valuable Student Award. Majorette Linda Harris served the entire year as the elected Senior Class secretary.

Both James and Carol were also the featured student graduation speakers. Class music included *This Is My Country* (Al Jacobs). Ms. Burgess served as music director, and Deanna Cable performed the piano accompaniment.

## **Academic Year: 1959-1960**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** Jim Lloyd; Roy Drukenmiller (Guest Conductor); Dan Hough (mid-year replacement)

**Orchestra Director:** Joseph Pearlman

**Band Officers:** James Fowler, Drum Major; Steve Jett, Band Captain; Harriet Richards, Majorette Captain; Judy Spencer, and Majorette Co-Captain.

**Majorettes:** Harriett Richards, Judy Spencer, Becky Holloman, Linda Wishon, Diane Poole, Judy Parrish, Brenda Alligood, Kitty Stanfield, and Judy Grizzard, majorette mascot.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

Brenda Alligood (Majorette '59-'60); Jerry Birchfield ('55-'60; Georgia State Band '58); Stewart Byers ('55-'59); James Fowler ('55-'60); Rhetta Gaines ('55-'60; Band Lieutenant '59-'60; Most Outstanding Music Student Award '59); Clarence Jett ('55-'60; All-State Band '58; Band Captain '59-'60); Carole Lester ('55-'58); Judith Parrish ('59-'60; Majorette '59-'60; RHS Star Student); Milton Reeves ('55-'59); Harriet Richards (Majorette '57-'60; Majorette Captain '59-60).

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- The 1960 Boys' Basketball Team was crowned Champions of Region 4-AAA, marking 10 straight years of State Basketball Tournament appearances.
- Linda Sue Sears, an outstanding member of the Russell High Chorus, won the James Preston Music Award presented by the East Point Lions Club.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Campbell-Smyrna, @ Hapeville, @ Marietta, @ Druid Hills, Southwest DeKalb, Riverside, @ Griffin, Marist, Decatur, @ Athens.



### 1959-60 Russell High Band

The year started with a series of substitute band directors. Mr. Jim Lloyd began the year and served through most of marching season. Mr. Roy Drukenmiller, Sr., Fulton County Instrumental Music Supervisor, guest conducted through the Christmas season. Finally, Mr. Dan Hough, who had joined Fulton County schools as an orchestra teacher for College Park High School, was transferred to Russell mid-year to fill out the school term and was the band director of record for the year.

Band members listed in the *1959-60 Pointer* included: Richard Morris, Ronnie Mann, Pat Orr, Curtis Wood, Danny Ballinger, Betty Thames, Kathy Funke, Sam Ramsey, Gene Hardy, Louise Swords, Billy King, Ray Jarrell, Geraldine Harris, Bobby Sowell, Bobby Carroll, Madeline Brumblow, Dianne Hughey, Millie Williams, Willa Hardin, Eddie Robbins, Steve West, Steve Jett, Jerry Birchfield, Skip Yarbrough, Thomas Johnson, Gary Beck, Mike Galloway, George McAfee, Jon Powell, Larry Henry, Rhetta Gaines, Bob Simmons, Ray Marchman, Silva Golden, Ann Brown, Jimmy

Warner, James Fowler, Ronnie Pierce, Craig Hardy, Jimmy Lipham, Jimmy Cook, Neil Berry, Glen Wisenbaker, Bill Conway, and David Johnston.

The 45<sup>th</sup> annual Southeastern Fair opened on 1 October; however, the Southeastern Fair Parade, traditionally held the night before opening day, was postponed. According to a report in the *Atlanta Journal*, the parade was cancelled because of traffic problems in past parades. The report also mentioned the lack of enough participating groups as another reason to forfeit the parade.<sup>80</sup> The controversy involving the Russell Band in the Fair parade the previous year was not referenced, but the prohibition of majorettes in the aftermath of that parade (see 1957 St. Patrick's Parade above) undoubtedly had a negative affect on the enrollment of participating bands in 1958.

The Fair proper proceeded with a theme dedicated to Atlanta's growth. With a slogan of A Million Dollar Fair for a Million People, the Fair paid tribute to Atlanta surpassing the million people population mark. In addition, with the granting of statehood to Hawaii in 1959, the Fair celebrated a "Welcome Hawaii" program on 6-7 October with Hawaii's Lieutenant Governor and Honolulu's mayor as special guests. Another Fair highlight included the arrival of Santa by helicopter on 2 October. Santa spent the balance of his 10-day stay residing in the Holiday Gift House.

Sponsorship of competitions and contests was integral to the mission of the Southeastern Fair. The State Spelling Bee, for example, was held at the Southeastern Fair for decades. The Fair also sponsored an annual music talent competition for many years. Indeed, a major premise for the Fair involved prizes and ribbons for agricultural and

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<sup>80</sup> Ed. "Fair Parade Off This Year," *Atlanta Journal*, 30 September 1959, 2.



livestock showings. So, the inauguration of a competition involving young students in a popular activity was an easy decision.

In the early part of the century, twirlers were mostly boys and men – because the batons were very heavy. With the refinement of shorter, lighter batons, females began to take up the activity. Seeking to add more pageantry and audience appeal, majorettes in America made their debut with marching bands in the late 1930s. Baton twirling became more popular in the 1940s and was widespread in most high school and college band programs by the mid-1950s. Baton twirling associations began to develop in the 1950s and promptly organized state and nationwide baton competitions.

The National Baton Twirling Association, one of the largest of these groups, initiated a Southeastern twirling championship competition in conjunction with the 1959 Southeastern Fair. Held at 1:00 P. M. in Crackertown Square on Saturday, 3 October, contestants included a large number of soloists and corps of all ages from all over the southeast.

The Russell Band was among a total of five high school bands, the Third Army Band, and the Yaarab Shrine Band to perform with numerous other units in the Civil Defense Parade in East Point at 3:30 P. M. on Tuesday, 6 October. A reviewing stand was set-up at City Hall for numerous dignitaries and important visitors. Remarking about the parade, Councilman A. W. Etheridge exclaimed, “The parade was one of the best I’ve ever seen in East Point.”<sup>81</sup>

The Russell Band led a Friday afternoon homecoming parade on 30 October and provided musical entertainment for the crowning of the Queen during evening half time.

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<sup>81</sup> Ed. “They Enjoy ‘Disaster,’ ” *Atlanta Journal*, 7 October 1959, 30.

The following month, the Russell Band provided musical entertainment for the PTA Program on 19 November.

An Atlanta Veteran's Day observance began at the American Legion Post No. 1 with a luncheon speech by Representative James C. Davis of Stone Mountain. A very large parade stepped off at around 2:00 P. M. and was comprised of many military organizations. Col. Alton R. Sanders served as the Grand Marshal of the parade that traveled down Peachtree and Baker Streets to Trinity Avenue.

While the Russell Band performed in an East Point Civil Defense Parade in early October, Civil Defense Week was held nationwide during the week of 4-10 December. To kick-off the campaign and to heighten awareness of Civil Defense issues, Atlanta officials organized a large downtown Atlanta parade for Friday, 4 December. The two-mile parade stepped off at Peachtree and Baker Streets and ended at Trinity Avenue and Garnett Street. The Third Army Band was the lead music unit that included 15 other bands from around the Atlanta area. In addition to the usual complement of other civic, patriotic, and government participants, a large contingent of PTA groups added to the project. Quoting in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, Elliott H. Jackson, Atlanta Metropolitan Area Civil Defense Director, indicated that the Atlanta Civil Defense campaign was the largest in all of America.

In December, Mr. Roy Drukenmiller directed the Russell Band as part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Concert. The 18 December program opened with a performance of the Russell Orchestra.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival attracted over 1,400 students, an all-time record number for the Music Festival. Held on 9 January, students from over 117 schools

followed a hectic schedule that included rehearsals and clinics for band, chorus, orchestra, and twirling. The students also heard a performance by the Dixie Redcoat Band prior to playing their own concert in the evening. After the concert, the students attended a dance in the Memorial Hall ballroom.

Herbert W. Fred of the University of North Carolina served as the guest band clinician. Included in the band repertoire was his original composition entitled, *Moods Interlude*. Mr. Jack Best, a member of the Fred Waring organization, directed the choral activities, while Richard Seiber, Georgia State University in Atlanta, conducted the Festival orchestra. All students were selected on the recommendation of their high school instructor.

The second installment of three Atlanta Symphony's High School Young People's concerts occurred on Tuesday morning, 12 January. The student Music Makers String Ensemble of East Point, under the musical direction of Joseph Pearlman, an Atlanta symphony violinist and Russell's orchestra teacher, made a special guest appearance on the concert by invitation of Maestro Henry Sopkin, conductor of the Atlanta Symphony. They chose to perform *Siciliana and Allegro* by Charles Avison. Members of the group included violinist Emily Austin from Russell and fellow violinists Lydia Cantrell, Gayle Boehm, and Pam Cory of College Park High School; Richard Moore of Georgia Military Academy played cello.

The Annual GMEA District 5 Honor Band clinic was held at Bass High School on 21-23 January. Select members of the Russell Band played under the baton of Guest Conductor Roger Dancz, then director of the University of Georgia Band. Selections

included *Heat Lightning March*, *Suite Francaise* (Milhaud), *A Solemn Music* (Thompson), *Finale: Symphony for Band* (Berlioz), and *Selections from Gigi*.

Russell's Linda Wishon, a junior majorette, was crowned March of Dimes Queen in January. She was also the runner-up in the Montag Beauty Contest held the previous September.

The 1960 St. Patrick's Day Parade was held on 17 March. Bands for all the military services appeared in the parade, including the 14<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army WAC Band (all-female band) from Ft. McClelland, Alabama. The reigning Miss Atlanta was also featured, along with participants from local scout units and ROTC groups. The 1:30 P. M. parade started at Peachtree and Baker Streets and continued to Garnett and Whitehall Streets. The parade participation level was down to a smaller level than usual, causing the parade to last only 23 minutes. The aftermath of the Atlanta Mayor's prohibition of majorettes the previous year undoubtedly contributed to the lower number of parade entries.

Emily Austin, a member of the Russell High Orchestra, was very busy during the spring. She earned a superior rating in violin performance at the GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Solo/Ensemble Festival held in Marietta, and was awarded a scholarship to attend the Brevard Music Camp for six weeks in the summer.

The fourth annual Fine Arts Week at Russell was held on 4-8 April. The instrumental department was featured on Tuesday, 5 April, with Mr. Hough conducting the band and Mr. Joseph Pearlman conducting the string ensemble. The week concluded with the senior class play, *Man Overboard*, performed on 8 April at the East Point City Auditorium. Mr. Gatlin's play review in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* was very positive:

“Sue Sears, Jim Archer, and Margaret Ann Campbell delivered the best lines of the play in a strictly professional manner...they stole every scene they were in.”<sup>82</sup>

The East Point Jaycees sponsored a “Miss East Point” parade on Saturday, 10 April, as a lead up to the Miss East Point Pageant. The parade began at Forrest Avenue and proceeded through the East Point Business District. Numerous high school bands, along with the 11 pageant contestants riding in convertibles, were among the parade participants.

Russell High hosted the annual South Fulton County Schools “Spring Music Festival” held on Tuesday, 26 April. Select band students from Russell joined other all-star band members from Headland H. S. (Robert D. DePoy, Director), Hapeville H. S. (William W. Miller, Director), Campbell H. S. (E. W. Moore, Director), and College Park H. S. (Harold W. Scott, Director). Selections for the Festival Band included:

*Pride of the Pacific*.....Kleffman  
*An Occasional Suite*.....Handel/arr. Osterling  
 1) *March*  
 2) *Air*  
 3) *Chorus*  
 Selections from *The Music Man* .....Williams/arr. Reed

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Newspaperboys parade stepped off with a record high 125 units at 11:00 A. M. on Friday, 13 May. About 25 Cerebral Palsy students participated in the line of march, while other students from the Cerebral Palsy school watched from a special section of the Capitol City Club. Band participants included the Third Army Band, Yaarab Temple Band, and the high schools of Hapeville, Archer, South Fulton, Howard, Sylvan and Grady.

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<sup>82</sup> William Gatlin, “Russell Senior Play ‘Man Overboard’ Scores Hit at City Auditorium,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 14 April 1960, 3-B.

The Russell High and greater Atlanta music education communities were shocked to hear of the sudden death of Roy Drukenmiller on Wednesday, 23 May. He was 63 at the time of his death and was serving as the Fulton County Instrumental Music Supervisor. Mr. Drukenmiller had served a total of 32 years in the Fulton County School System. About 20 of those years were spent directly at Russell High as a Science/Band Teacher and later as the Russell Principal.

Mr. Drukenmiller was laid to rest in Westview Cemetery. In a testament to Mr. Drukenmiller's legacy, many of his fellow teachers and former students attended the funeral and paid their respects.

A total of 171 seniors graduated during ceremonies held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium at 4:00 P. M. on 28 May 1960. Student speakers included Judith Marie Parrish and Weyman McClure Davis. Christine Williams won the Russell High Faculty Medal, and Joseph Scraggs was awarded the Atlanta Journal Cup for best all-round student. Band members receiving recognition included: Harriett Richards, Emory Scholarship and D. A. R. Good Citizenship Award; Rhetta Gaines, 5<sup>th</sup> District Most Outstanding Future Teachers of America Award; and James Fowler, Ritter Company Band Award "to the senior who has participated and worked to further the instrumental music program for 5 years." Class music included *There Things Shall Be* (Barney-Wilson). Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed the music; seniors Shirley Ruth Brown and Christine Ragland Williams provided the piano accompaniment.

### **Academic Year: 1960-1961**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** John David Wiggins

**Orchestra Director:** Richard Everts

**Band Officers:** Linda Wishon, Drum Major; Judy Spencer, Majorette Captain; Pat Polk and Becky Holloman, and Majorette Co-Captains.

**Majorettes:** Becky Holloman, Judy Spencer, Pat Polk, Gwenda Hamlin, Sandra Gay, Diane Herring, Olendia Tucker, Kitty Stanfield, Nancy Luke; and Judy Grizzard, mascot.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- The Russell Anchor Club, sponsored by the East Point Pilot Club, was established.
- George S. Cargill, Marion W. Cornett, and Nancy J. Reid won finalist recognition in the National Merit Scholarship Competition.
- Students zoned for the new Lakeshore High School attended Russell until January.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Southwest, GMA, Marietta, Northside, Cherokee, Griffin, R. L. Osborne, South Cobb, Sprayberry, Campbell – Smyrna.

A summer music program was held at Russell High prior to the beginning of the school year. Mr. John D. Wiggins, a graduate of Texas Tech, was hired during the summer as the new Russell band director. The 1960 football season also marked the debut of the new Russellette dance/drill team, marching in white uniforms accented with a large treble clef sign on the chest and a music staff running the circumference of the bottom of the skirt.

Band members listed in the *1960-61 Pointer* included: **Clarinets:** Jimmy Kilpatrick, Bobby Carroll, Ronnie Mann, Louise Swords, Mike McCoy, Ray Jarrell, Connie Stanfield, Peggy Sanford, Ellen Bishop; **Drums:** Bill Conway, Gary Randall, Craig Hardy, Glenn Wisenbaker, Jimmy Cook, Butch Sheriff, David Cox, Jimmy Lipham, Neil Berry; **Woodwinds:** Cathy Funke, Barbara Dye, Douglas Martin, Skip Yarbrough, Mary Ann Carroll, Kirk Bunn; **Trombones:** Jim Frazier, Jimmy Jeffreys,

David Pendley, Dean Montgomery, Charlie King, Pat Orr; **Cornets:** Bruce Stalcup, Steve West, Jimmy Warner, David Winkles, Bobby Simmons, Robert Newsom, Mike Galloway, Frank Castleberry, Rusty Moseman, Eddie Robbins, Jon Powell; **Low Brass:** Linda Stovall, Drew Hill, Millie Williams, Gene Hardy, Gary Gilbert, and Sammy Bishop.

The 46<sup>th</sup> annual Southeastern Fair opened on Thursday, 29 September. New for 1960 was a Health Plaza sponsored by the Fulton County Medical Society. This exhibit gave fairgoers an up close and personal look at issues related to polio shots, chest X-rays, blood tests, and operating room equipment. The Russell Band Booster Club, led by Pat Orr, was awarded a food concession at the Southeastern Fair and sold the usual fare of hamburgers, hot dogs, cold drinks, and coffee. The stand was located next to the Railroad Museum, near the Pryor Street parking lot entrance.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Southeast twirling competition was held at the Southeastern Fair on Saturday, 1 October. Large numbers of twirlers from Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida entered the competition, which was divided into six categories: Elementary (grades 1-5); intermediate (grades 6-7); junior (grades 8-9); and senior (grades 10-12). A new category, adult (beyond high school), was added to the competition list and attracted numerous college soloists and corps. The first round of competition began at 2:00 P. M. at the Fair Center. Finalists in the older division competed for championships later in the evening. Adjudicators included J. P. Crumpler, former drum major of the Arkansas Razorback Band, national baton twirling champion, and instructor at the University of Arkansas Twirling Camp, and Mrs. Pat Arsers of San Antonio, Texas, who first introduced ensemble twirling in Texas in 1939.



The East Point observance of Fire Prevention Week culminated with a large Tri-Cities parade through downtown East Point on Saturday, 15 October. The Third Army Band joined other Tri-Cities bands for the musical portion of the parade. Fire Prevention Week officials made special presentations the evening before on the Russell football field just prior to the start of Russell's homecoming game.

Atlanta celebrated Veteran's Day 1960 with a parade of marching units and displays of military equipment. The parade proceeded down Peachtree before concluding at Trinity Avenue. A reviewing stand was set-up at the Capitol City Club on Peachtree at Harris Street. Lt. Governor Garland Byrd delivered a post-parade address at Atlanta's Post No. 1 Auditorium on Piedmont Avenue.

The Christmas Concert was held on 12 December in the school auditorium. The orchestra, under the direction of Richard Everts, performed selections from Bizet's *L'Arlesienne Suite* and traditional carols; the band, directed by Mr. Wiggins, performed *Christmas Fantasy* by Leroy Anderson. Both groups combined with the Chorus to close out the concert with a rendition of *Jesu Bambino*.

Another large group of 1,400 high school students attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival held on 7 January. After a busy day of rehearsals and clinic sessions, the Festival Band, Chorus, and Orchestra groups, along with the Dixie Redcoat Band, performed concerts on Saturday evening. Guest clinicians included: Robert Page of Temple University, Robert E. Lowery of Morningside College, Joseph Kirshner, assistant director of instrumental music in the Fulton County schools, and Roger Dancz, director of the Dixie Redcoat Band.

The annual GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Band Clinic was held at Bass High School on 21 January. Mr. Robert Barr, Director of Bands at Jordan High School in Columbus, Georgia, was guest conductor. Mr. Wiggins, Russell's band director, was involved with teaching sectionals for the event. Another GMEA event included the Region Band and Orchestra Festival that met at Briarcliff High School from Wednesday, March 1 through Saturday, March 4. Donald G. Schultz, festival chairman and band director at Briarcliff High School, announced that over 200 majorette entries were registered, along with over 70 bands and orchestras.

The modern era revival of Atlanta's St. Patrick's Day Parade started in 1951 after a 50-year absence. The annual parade was successful through the 1950s, but the majorette controversy involving the Russell Band in 1959 and a smaller than usual turnout for the 1960 parade contributed to a decision to cancel the 1961 parade.

The Russell High 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Arts Festival, featuring productions by the art and music departments, was held on 11 April. The Chorus and Orchestra collaborated with *You'll Never Walk Alone* and *Sarabande*. Mr. Gatlin, a Russell High teacher, narrated a special arrangement of *I Am an American*. Band selections included: *Queen City*, *Cascades March*, *Wonderland by Night*, *Pioneer Pictures*, *Red River Rock*, *Burst of Trumpets*, and *God of Our Fathers*.

Emily Austin, a senior violinist in the Russell High Orchestra, was a stand out member of the instrumental music department. In her junior year, she earned a superior rating in violin performance at the GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Solo/Ensemble Festival held in Marietta, and was awarded a scholarship to attend the Brevard Music Camp for six weeks in the summer. During her senior year, she continued her membership in the Russell

Orchestra and also served as a member of the Beta Club, National Honor Society, and Future Teachers of America Club. She was a featured soloist graduation.

Emily was also a contestant in the Miss East Point Pageant. She and the other contestants were featured in open convertibles during the Saturday, 8 April, Miss East Point parade through the business section of East Point. Both the Russell Band and Headland Band participated in the parade.

The annual South Fulton County High Schools Spring Music Festival took place at the Hapeville Recreation Center on 4 May. In addition to those from Russell, all-star students were selected from Lakeshore (Lucy Clark, Director), Hapeville (William W. Miller, Director), Campbell (E. W. Moore, Director), College Park (Harold W. Scott, Director), and Headland (Daniel J. Smith, Director). Performance selections included:

<i>Block M March</i> .....	Jerry Bilik
<i>Irish Tune from County Derry</i> .....	Percy Grainger
<i>Chorale and Hallelujah</i> .....	Howard Hansen

The final selection involving both the Festival Band and Choir was *Ode to Democracy* from the Cantata, *I Hear America Singing*, with text by Walt Whitman. This grand finale featured guest baritone vocal soloist Albert Phillips, a then-Emory student who had graduated from Russell in 1958.

Members of the Russell Orchestra and Chorus joined other select members from the above-mentioned schools to perform a special concert at the Arts Festival at Piedmont Park on Saturday, 13 May. Named the South Fulton County High Schools Special Chorus and Orchestra, the ensemble performed the following:

<i>Sound of Music</i> .....	Rodgers and Hammerstein
<i>Little Baroque Suite</i> .....	Kirnburger

<i>Wondrous Cool</i> .....	Brahms
<i>Port Royal</i> .....	McKay
<i>Camptown Races</i> .....	Foster
<i>A Mighty fortress Is Our God</i> .....	Luther
<i>Selections from "Porgy and Bess"</i> .....	Gershwin

The following month, the Russell Band performed at what is now known as Callaway Gardens (Pine Mountain, Georgia). A concert announcement stated: "Russell High School Band Concert, Ida Cason Gardens, Saturday, 3 June, 2:00 P. M."<sup>83</sup> Callaway Gardens was a popular destination for Russell students in the spring of 1961. The Senior Class trip was held there on Saturday, 6 May.<sup>84</sup>

April 2 marked the beginning of the last quarter for Russell's seniors, a time that included numerous special senior activities, such as Senior Follies, Kid's Day, and the above-mentioned senior trip. Other than graduation, the senior class play was a traditional experience that involved a large percentage of the senior class. The 1961 Senior Class production was *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, a comedy taken from a television character. The performance took place at the East Point City Auditorium on 28 April and starred Tommy Jordan in the lead role, with support from Susan Archer, Donna Adamson, and Melody Mauldin. Writing in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, Mr. Gatlin stated that a near-capacity house attended the production, which in his opinion was "a hit."<sup>85</sup> Glenn Wisenbaker, a member of the Russell Band, and his group of musicians provided the pre-performance music.

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<sup>83</sup> Mike McClannahan, ed., "Concert Announcement," *Russell Wildcat*, 26 May 1961, 4.

<sup>84</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Senior Class Retreats to Ida Cason Gardens," *Russell Wildcat*, 26 May 1961, 1.

<sup>85</sup> William Gatlin, "Russell High's Senior Play, 'The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis,' Scores a Hit," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 3 May 1961, 4-B.

The Junior-Senior Prom was held at the Mayfield Club in Atlanta on Friday, 12 May. The Prom theme was ‘Stardust’ and many decorations were utilized to provide the appropriate ambiance. The Wes Baxter Combo provided the music, with guest appearances by LaDora Rubert, who sang *Near You* and Chuck Lee, who sang a rendition of *Stardust*.

Graduation for about 160 seniors was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on Saturday, 27 May. Class music included *Cavatina* (Raff), a violin solo performed by Emily Austin. Emily was also recognized for the following awards: Wesleyan College, Stetson University, Ritter Music Company Medal, and Russell High Faculty medal for Bess All-Around Senior Girl. Slade Cargill won the Atlanta Journal Cup for the most outstanding Russell student. Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed the graduation music; Howard G. Dunlap provided the piano accompaniment. In a separate recognition, sophomore band member Bobby Carroll was selected as “Most Valuable Band Student.”

### **Academic Year: 1961-1962**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** John David Wiggins

**Orchestra Director:** Barbara Booth

**Band Officers:** Skip Yarbrough, Drum Major; and Diane Herring, Majorette Captain.

**Majorettes:** Kitty Stanfield, Diane Herring, Peggy Sanford, Carol Venable, Donna Bias, and Lynda Gaston.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** John Cook (’57-’60); Diane Herring (’60-’61; Orchestra ’57-’59; Russellettes ’57-’58; Majorettes ’60-’62; Majorette Captain ’61-’62); Billy King (’57-’61; All-State Orchestra ’57-’58; Fulton County Band ’57-’59); Bob Simmons (Band President ’61-’62); Kaye Strickland (Russellette Captain ’61-’62); Skip Yarbrough (’57-’62; Band Vice President ’61-’62; Drum Major ’61-’62; Tri-Cities Band ’59-’62).

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Margaret Walker won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the American Legion Oratorical Contest.
- Billy King, Henry Carroll, and John Johnson were selected as winners in the National Math Contest.
- Billy King, a veteran of the Russell Band, was named a 1961 Achievement Winner in English.
- Billy King was also selected as Star Student.
- Russell's 30-member ROTC Drill Team marched in the Kentucky Derby Parade.
- Elaine Norris won second runner-up in the Atlanta Junior Miss pageant.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

@ Fulton, GMA, @ Marietta, Roosevelt, Cherokee, @ Griffin, Osborne, South Cobb, @ Sprayberry, Campbell of Smyrna.

Prior to the beginning of football season, the Russell Majorettes were featured in an *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* article. The 6-member majorette squad was photographed, and the article introduced the members (Kitty Stanfield, Junior; Diane Herring, Senior - Captain; Peggy Sanford, Freshman; Carol Venable, Sophomore; Donna Bias, Sophomore; and Lynda Gaston, Junior). Four members of the group - Peggy, Carol, Lynda, and Donna - were recognized for selection to the Joycliffe Twirling Camp at Wesleyan College (Macon), Leon Culpepper, camp organizer.<sup>86</sup>

The 1961 Homecoming game occurred on 6 October against Cherokee High School. The Russell Band led a parade that day and performed as part of homecoming activities at halftime of a game won by Russell, 40-0.

The Southeastern Fair ran 10 days from 27 September through 7 October. The Health Plaza, which was well-received in its first appearance in the previous Fair, returned again in 1962, but with additional health screenings. In addition to those introduced in 1961, a tuberculosis patch test, blood pressure test, and diet information was included. Body temperatures were also taken utilizing a 3-second test.

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<sup>86</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., "Russell High School Majorettes," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 5 July 1961, 2-A.

The third annual Baton Twirling Competition was held at the Southeastern Fair on Saturday, 30 September. Adjudicators included Mr. J. P. Crumpler of Arkansas, who returned as a judge from the previous year, and Mr. William F. Swor of Jacksonville, Florida. Miss Bonnie Mitchell of Norcross, Georgia was selected champion of the adult division.

With a theme of “Lest We Forget,” Atlanta held one of its largest Veterans parades in history on Saturday, 11 November. The huge parade included groups as diverse as heavy military equipment to the Boy Scouts. Music groups from the military services and local high schools also were featured. Major General Joseph H. Harper served as chief reviewing officer at a stand located at the Capitol City Club on Peachtree Street. The parade began at 3:00 P. M. and stepped off at Peachtree and Baker Streets and proceeded south at Trinity Avenue.

The annual Christmas Concert was held on Monday, 11 December, in the Russell Auditorium. The band performed *The Christmas Suite* and traditional carols; the string ensemble, under the direction of Miss Barbara Booth, performed a Bach *Suite* and accompanied the Choir on several Bach *Chorales*.

The University of Georgia Music Department sponsored the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival on Saturday 6 January. 1,400 students representing over 185 schools, followed a busy rehearsal that concluded with Festival concerts on Saturday evening. Dr. C. B. Hunt, Chairman of the Music Department of Peabody College (Nashville) directed the 135-member Festival Band; Dr. Mishel Piaspro, former concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted the 110-piece orchestra; and Dr. Elwood Kiester, director of choral music at the University of Florida, led the 650-voice choir.

The Miss East Point Pageant was held Saturday, 7 April in the East Point City Auditorium. The Russell Band participated in the Miss East Point Saturday morning Pageant parade that included the contestants who appeared later that night in competition. Jean Diane Herring, a Russell senior and Majorette Captain, twirled fire batons for her evening talent exhibition. June Orr won the title of “Miss East Point” and Sally Waller, then a senior in the Russell choral department, earned first runner-up.

The Saturday festivities included a new feature, the running of the Mayor’s Bike Race. The first Mayor’s Bicycle Race occurred as a separate event the previous year, but it was included in 1962 as part of the activities scheduled for the Jaycee-sponsored Miss East Point Pageant. The bike race began at 2:00 P. M. following the Pageant Parade, which occurred earlier that morning.

Dick Lane, director of parks and recreation in East Point and a former Russell Band member and athletic stand out, organized the first Mayor’s Bike Race in response to a July 1961 challenge issued by President Kennedy, who encouraged Americans to become more physically active. The inaugural Mayor’s Bike Race included the mayors and several councilmen from East Point, College Park, and Hapeville; by 1962 the number of racing politicians had grown to a list representing over 15 towns and cities. Bob Brown, a First Ward East Point Councilman won a close race over second place finisher Charles Weltner, a Fifth District Congressional Candidate from Atlanta, and Mayor J. P. Smith from Menlo.

The 1962 Band Festival was held at Briarcliff High School in DeKalb County outside of Atlanta. The Russell Band performed on 8 March and earned an Excellent (II) rating. Adjudicators for this event were: Robert Braunagel of FSU; Oliver Hobbs of Leon



High School in Tallahassee, Florida; Don Cassell, Peabody College; and Dr. Leon Culpepper (Sight Reading), Music Supervisor, Macon, GA. The GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Solo/Ensemble Festival was also held at Briarcliff High School. Russell majorette Lynda Gaston received a Superior (I) rating for twirling.

#### Russell Band at GMEA District V Band Festival

1962 March 8  
at Briarcliff H. S.  
Director – John D. Wiggins Rating: I  
LEVEL C  
Program: *Men of Harleigh*.....Davis  
*Grecian Theme and Dance*.....Cacavas  
*Prelude, Mvt. V, King Manfred*.....Reinecke

After a one-year absence, Atlanta's St. Patrick's Day Parade resumed in 1962. The parade led off with Atlanta's Vice Mayor Sam Massell and the WAC Band from Ft. McClelland, Alabama. The parade featured ten other bands, along with floats, the Fulton County Sheriff Mounted Horse posse, and 400 Marist ROTC Cadets. The 2:00 P. M. parade traveled down the traditional route beginning at Peachtree and Baker Streets, down Peachtree Street, and past Five Points before concluding at Garnett and Whitehall Streets.

The new Russell High Music Department wing, sitting separate from the school across from the old gym, opened in the spring. The official Open House was held on Sunday afternoon, 8 April. Activities that afternoon included guided tours and singing groups.

The annual South Fulton County Music Festival was held at the Hapeville Recreation Center on 12 April. The Band and Orchestra was comprised of select high school all-star instrumentalists from Russell, Hapeville, Campbell/Fairburn, Lakeshore,

Headland, and College Park. The Orchestra performed *Trumpet Voluntary* by Purcell, *Finlandia* by Sebelius, and *Triumphal March* by Greig; band selections included *Overture for Winds* by Carter, *Folk Song Suite* by Vaughn-Williams and *The Sound of Music* by Rodgers/arr. Bennett

A group picture of the Russell Concert Band and an accompanying *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* news article outlined the band's activities for the spring:

“Pictured here is the versatile Russell High School Band which will hold a concert Wednesday, 9 May, at 8 P. M. at the Russell High School auditorium. A varied program of entertainment, featuring concert, contemporary and rock 'n roll music is planned for the evening under the direction of John D. Wiggins, Band Director.”

“The Russell Band, which has appeared at numerous civic functions in the area and received a Superior rating at the 5<sup>th</sup> District Music Festival recently at Briarcliff High School, will go to Thomasville this weekend where it will march in the annual Rose Festival Parade at the South Georgia City. Following the parade the band members, traveling in two chartered buses, will visit St. Augustine, Florida, over the weekend before returning to East Point late Sunday.”<sup>87</sup>

In an *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* article, band parent Ada Wilbanks outlined the events of the above-mentioned 27-29 April St. Augustine band trip. According to Mrs. Wilbanks, the band trip, involving 92 students, began with a 5:00 A. M. charter bus trip to Thomasville, Georgia, in order to be there for the 11:00 A. M. parade. Russell was one of 28 bands in the parade that concluded at a local school where the band students gathered for lunch. The Russell Band boarded their buses at 2:00 P. M. for the trip to St. Augustine, where they arrived at around 6:30 P. M.

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<sup>87</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “Across for Russell High,” *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 25 April 1962, 2-A.

On Saturday morning, the students had two choices, either the beach or shopping. The band completed the Saturday activities with a dance at Teen Town. On Sunday, the band left for East Point and arrived home at around 7:00 P. M. after a very successful trip.<sup>88</sup>

The annual Russell High Fine Arts Week concerts occurred on 7-9 May. Choral groups were featured on the Monday and Tuesday concerts. On the Tuesday concert, Mr. Wiggins accompanied the girls' chorus on the French horn for a Brahms selection. The Tuesday concert also featured the String Ensemble, under the direction of Barbara Booth, performing a Corelli Suite and the jazz standard, *Blue Moon*. The band concert on Wednesday involved a variety of pop and classical music.

Band student Jimmy Jeffreys was elected president of the Music Makers Club on 20 May. His past experience included the presidency of the Tri-City Music Club and vice president position with the Music Makers Club.

The senior class produced *Down to Earth* at the East Point City Auditorium for the annual senior play on 12-13 April. Writing in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, Mr. Gatlin asserted that the production was "handsomely staged" and "delighted the audience."<sup>89</sup> Another end-of-year senior activity involved the Junior-Senior Prom at Atlanta's Progressive Club on Friday, 20 April.

Graduation for 160 seniors was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 26 May. Class speakers included Sandra Gay, Faith Dowdy, and Band student Lanier B. "Skip" Yarbrough. Skip was selected for a number of end-of-year awards, including:

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<sup>88</sup> Ada Willbanks, "Russell High School Band Plays in Rose Festival Parade," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 9 May 1962, 4-B.

<sup>89</sup> William Gatlin, "Russell High School Senior Play 'Down to Earth' Makes a Hit," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 25 April 1962, 9.

1) The Ritter Music Company Award to the outstanding student in instrumental music; 2) the Russell High School Faculty Medal; 3) First place: National Merit Scholarship Finalist Competition; and 4) the Bausch & Lomb Science Award. Veteran band student Billy King was named RHS Star Student. Sandra Gay won the *Atlanta Journal Cup* as Russell's most outstanding student award. The Class music included *Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor* (Irving Berlin). Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed the music; accompanists were Harriet Dobbs, Lynn Harkey, and Sally Waller.

### **Academic Year: 1962-1963**

**Principal:** L. L. Deck

**Band Director:** John David Wiggins

**Orchestra Director:** Gregory Barnes

**Band Officers:** Millie Williams, Drum Major; Eddie Robins, President; Kitty Stanfield, Majorette Captain; Lynda Gaston, Majorette Co-Captain; Angie Thomas, Russellette Captain; and Karen Roper, Russellette Co-Captain.

**Majorettes:** Kitty Stanfield, Lynda Gaston, Donna Bias, Jenny Austin, Barbara Dye, Peggy Sanford, Louise Swords, Carol Venable, and Mary Ann Carroll.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Neil Berry ('58-'63); Bobby Carroll ('58-'62; Georgia Honor Band 58-'60); Lynda Gaston ('60-'63; Russellettes '60-'61; Majorettes '61-'62; Majorette Co-Captain '62-'63); Earl Hardy ('58-'63; 5<sup>th</sup> District Band '62-'63; All-County Band '60-'62); Eddie Robins ('58-'63; Band Vice President '62-'63; All-County Band '62-'63); Kitty Stanfield ('58-'63; Majorettes '58-'63; Majorette Co-Captain '61-'62; Majorette Captain '62-'63); Glen Wisenbaker ('59-'63).

#### **Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Russell's Margaret Walker won \$300.00 for being named Georgia's top D. E. student. She won an additional \$100.00 for winning the State D. E. speech competition with an address entitled, "What Distributive Education Means To Me."
- Steve West and Carol Venable, a Russell Majorette, were nominated for Achievement Awards by the National Council of Teachers of English.
- Bobby Carroll, former Russell band student, made straight A's throughout his Russell career and also was named a National Merit Finalist.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

@ Decatur, GMA, South Cobb, @ Athens, @ Campbell of Smyrna, Marist, Gainesville, R.E. Lee, @ Osborne, and Sprayberry.



**1962-63 Russell High Band**

Band members listed in the *1962-63 Pointer* included: Mary Ann Carroll, Barbara Dye, Charles Chambers, Martha Lipham, Lyn Dye, Pam West, Carol Lowery, Ann Vincent, Carol Venable; Ray Jarrell, Ronny Mann, Mike McCoy, Andrea Grizzard, Bonnie Lovett, Pam Howard, Susie Pendley, Dixon Banks, Linda Stovall, Aubry Boswell, Bob Scratcher, Bruce Stalcup, Randy Mercer, Frank Castleberry, Linda Gaston, Jenny Austin, Janet Bell, Vicki Dean, Carol Womack, Jimmy Kilpatrick, Ronald Regan, Mike Smith, George Phelps, Donnie Orr, Gilda Bias, Kirk Bunn, Louis McCann, Charles Williams, Eddie Robins, Mike Gallaway, Keith Harris, David Winkles, Doug Cook, Steve West, Peggy Sanford, Donna Bias, Mary Ellen Hall, Patty Mann, Jan Andrews, Johnny Amos, Mille Williams, Gene Hardy, Bruce Moody, Bobby Carroll, Ronny

Wilbanks, Joe Davis, Charlie King, Pat Orr, David Pendley, David Cox, David Hall, Craig Hardy, Billy Hendley, Bill Conway, John Thornton, Rusty Moseman, Drew Hill, Glenn Wisenbaker, Jimmy Cook, and Jimmy Lipham.

A summer announcement in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* indicated that Lynda Gaston and Kitty Stanfield were selected as Co-Captains of the Russell Majorettes. Lynda, a veteran member of the Russell Band and Russellettes, was active in several Russell organizations including Coed Hi-Y, Civinettes, Senior Y-teens, Future Leaders of America, Junior-Senior Dance Committee, Future Homemakers of America, and was a *Russell Wildcat* staff writer. Lynda was also a contestant in the Miss Tri-Cities Pageant sponsored by the College Park Jaycees and held at GMA on 18 August.

Kitty, a rising senior, had been a Russell band member for four years and had three years of majorette experience. Kitty also was active in numerous Russell extra-curricular groups, such as the *Russell Wildcat*, Anchor Club, Beta Club, Coed Hi-Y, and Civinettes.<sup>90</sup>



<sup>90</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., Photo, "Miss Kitty Stanfill" *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 13 June 1962, 1-C.

With Russell's new placement in region 5-AAA, the band and football team saw several new schools along with some traditional rivalries. Senior Mac Gillam was one bright spot in an otherwise disappointing 2-6-2 football season when he was named "Outstanding Senior Player of the Year" for the entire Tri-City area. Another football highlight involved Russell's scoreless tie "upset" of then state ranked and heavily favored Gainesville High in a game played at Russell (see "4-touchdown underdog" below).

The Russell Band participated in a parade very early in the school year. On 8 September, East Point held a Physical Fitness Day and organized the parade to heighten awareness of the issue. In addition to Russell, other bands included the Third Army Band from Ft. McPherson. Dick Lane of the East Point Parks and Recreation Department handled most of the organizational details. The parade began in front of Sumner Park and proceeded in a long route through a number of East Point streets before returning to Sumner Park.

The Band Booster Club held their first meeting of the year on 17 September. Those elected to offices included Mr. and Mrs. Venable, President; Mr. and Mrs. John Thornton, Vice President; Mrs. Dixie Scratcher, second Vice President; and, Mr. and Mrs. Earl E. Hardy, Treasurer. Band Booster Club fund-raising activities included two dance sponsorships, the first on October 27 and the second in March.

The Russell Band was very busy during the annual Homecoming Week and played an important part in homecoming events. A large bonfire pep rally was held on Thursday evening, 11 October. On game day Friday, the band played in the Homecoming Parade and furnished the music for the crowning of the Homecoming Queen, Gay Little. The efforts of the band helped, for the struggling Russell Wildcats, a

4-touchdown underdog to a powerful Gainesville team, “upset” the 10<sup>th</sup>-ranked Red Elephants with a tie.

After a two-year absence, a large balloon parade returned on the evening of 26 September and signaled the beginning of the 48<sup>th</sup> annual Southeastern Fair that ran from 27 September through 6 October. Ted Williams, the Boston Red Sox star baseball player, was the feature parade dignitary. Only seven bands participated in a procession that lasted 30 minutes. Atlanta businesses and organizations sponsored over 40 giant balloons and floats. The parade stepped off from Baker Street and proceeded through Peachtree and Whitehall to Trinity Place.

The fourth annual Baton Twirling Competition was held at the Southeastern Fair on Saturday, 29 September. The younger contestant divisions were scheduled for the afternoon, while the older divisions competed in the evening.

With the traditional Veteran's Day date falling on a Sunday, the 1962 Veteran's Day Parade was held on Saturday, 10 November. Atlanta's American Legion Post No. 1 sponsored the event and a post-parade rededication ceremony. Six high school bands and drum & bugle corps provided music for the parade that included units from all the military services, mounted sheriff's posse, Confederate-uniformed groups, fire trucks, and antique cars. Major General Ethan A. Chapman, commanding general of the XII Army Corps, served as chief reviewer on a stand that also included Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., and numerous other city, county, and state officials.

The Russell Band was honored with a request to record five selections from the GMEA Junior High School List of Required Music for Georgia Festivals. Dr. M. J. Newman, Head of Music Education and Director of the Georgia Conference on School





The 1963 St. Patrick's Day Parade featured eight bands. The 2:00 P. M. parade started at Baker Street and marched up Peachtree Street, past the Five Points reviewing stand, before concluding at Garnett Street.

In the spring of 1963, a Fulton County Schools "South County High School Chorus and Orchestra" performed Vivaldi's *Gloria* under the direction of Mr. Don Robinson, Supervisor of Music in Fulton County. The ensemble included students from Campbell H. S., College Park H. S., Hapeville H. S., Headland H. S., Lakeshore H. S., and Russell H. S.

On 6 April, a new Dairy Queen opened at 1519 Norman Berry Drive, within a short 15-second walk from the doors of the Russell Gym. A restaurant opening generally would not be newsworthy for a study such as this, but the Dairy Queen's close proximity to the school made it a favorite spot for generations of band students who had some free time before evening concerts, football/basketball games, practices, or many other events. Newspaper publicity surrounding the grand opening indicated that the Banana Splits and large Brazier Burgers, which usually sold for 35 cents, would be on sale for 29 cents. Today either item at the same Dairy Queen, which still stands, would cost over \$3.00.

The annual South Fulton County Schools "Spring Music Festival" was hosted by Russell High and held at the East Point City Auditorium on 9 April. Select all-star students from Russell performed with Headland H. S. (Dan Smith, Director), Hapeville H. S. (William Miller, Director), Campbell H. S. (E. W. Moore, Director), College Park H. S. (Harold W. Scott, Director), and Lakeshore H. S. (Bert Kempe, Director). Festival

selections for Band included:

<i>Music for a Carnival</i> .....	Claire Grundman
<i>Solemn Fugue</i> .....	Clifton Williams
<i>Jamaican Rumba</i> .....	Arthur Benjamin
<i>Dance Rhythms</i> .....	Wallingford Reigger
<i>Elsa's Procession</i> .....	Richard Wagner/arr. Calliet

The Miss East Point Parade was held at 10:30 A. M. 20 April prior to the contest later that night. The Russell Band and Russell ROTC Drill Team participated in the event. Fredda Lee won the Miss East Point crown; Gay Little, Russell's 1962 Homecoming Queen, won 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up.

Georgia Governor Carl Sanders designated 2-9 March as Georgia Youth Physical Fitness Week. East Point's observance of Physical Fitness Day, held on Saturday, 4 May, drew a large crowd. A series of races of varying lengths were run through East Point during the course of the morning and afternoon; however, the highlight of the day was the third annual Mayor's Bike Race involving various government and political officials. Run the previous year as part of the Miss East Point Pageant, the race had grown in popularity and was held as a single attraction in 1963. Lester Maddox came across the finish line as the winner. Known for unusual bicycle tricks, such as riding a bike backwards, Mr. Maddox would later serve Georgia as a controversial Governor from 1966-1970.

The kick-off for the Saturday races revolved around a large 10:00 A. M. parade that contained numerous bands and over 120 unit entries. The groups formed at Kimmeridge Drive and moved down Neely, turned right at Church Street, proceeded up Cleveland, turned right at City Hall, and continued down East Point Street to Legion Way. The procession continued left on Main Street and turned left on Forrest Avenue, where the parade disbanded.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual International School Arts Festival was held at Lenox Square during the week of 5-15 May. The Russell High Modern Dance group was among numerous dance ensembles, high school bands, and other participants.

The annual Russell High Fine Arts Week was held on 6 May through 8 May. The Tuesday concert featured the orchestra performance, directed by Gregory Barnes, and a dance group presentation. The band concert on Wednesday, the last for Mr. Wiggins, featured *Folk Song Suite* by Vaughn Williams, *Overture for Winds* by Carter, *Deep South Rhapsody* by Isaac, the *King and I* by Rodgers, the *Sound of Music*, and *Parade*.

End-of-year seniors activities included a production of the play *Fire Away* on 9 and 10 May at the East Point City Auditorium. The Junior-Senior Prom was held a week earlier on Friday 3 May at the Progressive Club in Atlanta. The students danced to the music of The Ambassadors.

The Class of 1963 graduated 117 in Atlanta's Municipal Auditorium at 4:00 P. M. on 25 May. Band member and Honor Senior Neil Berry served as a graduation speaker. Former Band member and Honor Senior Robert Lewis Carroll was selected Russell's "Most Outstanding Senior" and earned "Star Student." He also was awarded the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation/WSB Radio Scholarship.

### **Academic Year: 1963-1964**

**Principal:** Larry S. Dodd

**Band Director:** William O. Latson

**Orchestra Director:** Arthur Cotruvo

**Band Officers:** Jimmy Cook, President; Donna Bias and Carol Venable, Majorette Co-Captains; Karen Roper, Russellette Captain; Carol Crymes, Russellette Co-Captain.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

**Majorettes:** Jenny Austin, Donna Bias, Peggy Sanford, Barbara Dye, Carol Venable, and Mary Ann Carroll.

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Coach Buddy Ellerbee served as the acting football head coach for the year.

- Russell's Margaret Walker was named the Georgia 1962-63 D. E. student of the year.
- A Russell Chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes was organized in January 1964.
- Russell High won First Place in the Georgia Industrial Arts Fair at Macon.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Decatur, @ GMA, @ South Cobb, Athens, Campbell of Smyrna, @ Marist, @ Gainesville, @ R. E. Lee, Osborne, @ Sprayberry.

The 1963-1964 school year was a transition year on many levels. Capt. L. L. Deck, a former Russell faculty member in the 1930s and Russell's long-time and highly revered principal since 1949, retired and was replaced by Larry S. Dodd. He was well known in Russell High circles, having been a multiple sport student/athlete of the class of '39 and coach of various sports at Russell since 1947. Also, Mr. Wiggins, Russell's band director for three years, moved to California and was replaced by Mr. William O. Latson. Finally, with the abrupt resignation of Coach Alex Truitt, Coach Buddy Ellerbee assumed the role of interim coach just before the start of football season. The school year started ominously with a fire at Russell that damaged parts of the Industrial Arts Building, and changes with the football program contributed to a 0-10 season.

One of the first appearances of the Russell Band under Mr. Latson was at the Georgia Tech Band Day on 14 September. Russell was one of 21 bands performing at Grant Field in a Tech game versus the University of Florida.

The 49<sup>th</sup> annual Southeastern Fair Parade kicked off with a downtown Atlanta Parade on 25 September. The parade began at Peachtree and Baker Streets and wound up at Whitehall and Trinity Place. 12 bands marched in a procession that included a variety of giant balloons and floats sponsored by Atlanta businesses, clubs, private groups, and the armed forces. Music groups represented in the parade included the all-female Monroe

Drum & Bugle Corps and the Morris Brown College Band. The first day of the Fair featured a 8:00 P. M. band concert by a Marine Band. A Fair highlight involved the Senor Arturo Chimpanini stage show that featured a ten-monkey mechanical Dixieland band ensemble.

The fifth annual Baton Twirling Competition occurred on Saturday, 28 September, at the Southeastern Fair. Hundreds of twirlers competed in various divisions in the solo and corps categories. Adjudicators included Tay Tanya Tallman, head majorette and choreographer at the University of Florida, and Joanne Taylor, former head majorette at the University of North Carolina. Kenneth Krause, band director at Southwest High School, served as an advisor for the competition. Competition winners were Loretta Butler, a senior at Murphy High, and Mary Ann Cooke, runner-up, from Therrell High. Earlier in the summer of 1963, Mrs. Jere Conner Ward, a former prize-winning majorette, initiated a majorette group called the Atlanta All-Star Majorettes, an organization comprised of 34 of Atlanta's best majorettes. They practiced at the Decatur Recreation Center and performed in exhibition in numerous areas in and around Atlanta.

The Russell Band participated in a huge Homecoming Week bonfire pep rally held on Thursday evening, 3 October. The Russellettes performed a drill, and the majorettes were featured in a fire baton routine. The next day, the Russell Band led a Homecoming Parade through the East Point business district and later performed at halftime, where Millie Williams was crowned Homecoming Queen.

The first Russell Band Booster meeting was held on Monday night, 21 October. Having been on the job for two months, Mr. Latson discussed the progress and future plans of the Marching Band and the A Band and B Band curricular classes. Booster

Officers for the year included Mr. Pat Orr, Projects and Fundraising; Mr. John Thornton, Membership; Mrs. Louis McCann, Secretary; Mrs. Earl E. Hardy, Treasurer; Mrs. A. B. King, Dance; Mrs. C. L. Bunn, Uniforms; Mrs. C. L. Moseman, Transportation; Mrs. G. L. Carroll, Hospitality; Mrs. H. B. Lovett, Telephone; and Mrs. L. S. Venable, Publicity.

The 11 November meeting of the Russell PTA celebrated American Education Week. Music for the meeting included a performance by the Russell Girls' Chorus accompanied by Mr. Art Cotruvo, Russell's Orchestra teacher, and violinist Linda Emerick.

Russell's Mary Ann Carroll, a majorette and flute player, won the Atlanta Symphony concerto competition. She appeared as a guest soloist on Tuesday, 19 November, at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that Mary was involved in numerous Russell activities, including: Junior Class officer, *Atlanta Constitution* Teen Board, Beta Club, Anchor Club, Coed Hi-Y, Latin Club, FTA, and FHA, along with church activities.<sup>92</sup>

Having outgrown the school auditorium for the annual Christmas program, the Music Department Christmas presentation was held in the Gymnasium on 9 December. The band portion of the concert included *Chorale and Alleluia* by Howard Hanson and a medley of Christmas selections. The Orchestra, under the direction of Arthur Cotruvo, performed Clarke's *Trumpet Voluntary* and various Christmas carols. The highlight of the concert involved a chorus, band, and orchestra collaboration of *Three Songs for Christmas*.

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<sup>92</sup> Ralph McGill, ed., "True Love Guides These Teens – Their Love for Good Music," *Atlanta Constitution*, 16 November 1963, 15.

This 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Music Department's Christmas Concert was reviewed in *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*. Comments were very positive and included, "Performing to a packed audience in the gymnasium, the musicians gave a uniformly enjoyable program...Executed in a professional manner. The program had no weak spots."<sup>93</sup>

Orchestra selections included:

*Trumpet Voluntary*.....Jeremiah Clarke  
*Three Christmas Carols*.....E. De Lamater  
*Russian Chorale and Overture*.....Merle Isaac

Concert Band selections were:

*Overture to the Messiah*.....Handel/arr. Cailliet  
*Chorale and Alleluia*.....Howard Hanson  
*Noel, selection*.....arr. Hawley Ades

The UGA Music Department sponsored the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Music Festival on Saturday, 4 January. 1700 students from 254 schools, a record number, were represented in the band, chorus, orchestra, and twirling groups. Russell Band students participated in the annual South Fulton County Band Clinic held at Headland High on Friday, 31 January. William Miller Hapeville, Dan Smith (Headland), and Bert Kempe (Lakeshore) conducted the three Festival Bands.

The Russell Band earned a Good (III) rating at the GMEA District 5 Band Festival held at Briarcliff High School on Saturday, 29 February. Band adjudicators for the event were Julian Stephens (Auburn University), Harry Schmidt (Florida State University), Earl Beach (East Carolina University), and Roger Dancz (University of Georgia). Solo/Ensemble Festival participants were as follows: Patti Mann, Linda

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<sup>93</sup> C.N. Martin, ed., "Russell Music Department Presents 21<sup>st</sup> Christmas Concert," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 18 December 1963, 3A.



Mercer, Gilda Bias, Donna Bias, Andrea Grizzard, Twirling; Pat Orr, Brass; and Mary Ann Carroll, Flute.

Recap: Russell Band at GMEA Band Festival:

1964 Saturday, Feb 29, 6:30 P. M. at Briarcliff H. S.  
 Director – William O. Latson Rating: III  
 LEVEL A  
 Program: *Coat of Arms March*.....Kenney  
*Prelude and Fugue in E minor*.....Menotti  
*Prairie Overture*.....Ward

The 1964 edition of the Atlanta's St. Patrick's Day Parade featured an Irish representative from Irish Airlines, who brought greetings to Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen. For the first time, the celebration also included a large green line pasted along the parade route, an idea copied from New York's St. Patrick's Day celebration. The Five Points reviewing stand contained numerous state, federal, and local officials. The parade line-up included 13 bands.

The Russell Band performed for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual International School Arts Festival on Thursday, 9 April, at Lenox Square. Representing the Fulton County Schools, the Russell Band participated in the weeklong event, which was sponsored by the National Art Education Association and the National Red Cross.

The annual South Fulton County Spring Music Festival was held in the Russell Gymnasium on 14 April 1964. In addition to select band, chorus, and orchestra members from Russell, other students came from Lakeshore (Bert Kempe, Director), Hapeville (William W. Miller, Director), Campbell (E. W. Moore, Director), College Park (Harold Scott, Director), and Headland (Daniel Smith, Director). Festival Band concert selections, conducted by William Hill of Georgia State University, included:

<i>Colonel Bogey March</i> .....	Alford
<i>Etude</i> .....	Scriabin/arr. Davis
<i>Suite of Old American Dances</i> .....	Robert Russell Bennett
<i>Ballet for Young Americans</i> .....	Herman

For a second year in a row, the Russell Band participated in the Rose Festival Parade in Thomasville, Georgia, in late April and continued on with a 2-night stay in Florida, this time at Ellinor Village in Daytona Beach. Chaperones for the trip were Mr. W. S. Ruff, Mrs. Bebe Mossman, Mr. and Mrs. L. S. Venable, and Mr. and Mrs. Louis McCann.

The South Fulton Beauty Pageant parade and the Mayor's Bike parade, held as separate entities in 1963, combined forces for a mega parade celebrating both events in 1964. Organized by the East Point Recreation Department, the parade was held on 18 April and included many groups, such as the East Point bands, the Atlanta Legion Post No. 1 Drill Team, and civil defense units. These groups assembled at Sumner Park and traveled up Neely Street, to Church Street, left on Cleveland Avenue and on to East Point Street. From there, the procession continued south to Legion Way, turned left onto Main Street and proceeded north to Forrest Avenue, where the parade disbanded.

Preliminary Pageant competition was held the week before on 11 April at Headland High School and produced the following semi-finalists: Earleen Bryan, Carmen Stansberry, Janis Palmer, Elaine Norris, Cheryl Topshe, Nancy Legg, Midge Ivie, Janet Bailey, and Barbara Wood.

Graduation was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 16 May 1964. Class music included *The Road Not Taken* (Randall Thompson). Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed

the music and senior Carol Crymes performed the piano accompaniment. Reminiscing about their experience at Russell, a student contributor for the *Pointer* Annual wrote,

“Russell is always proud of its music department...have contributed much to our years at Russell.”<sup>94</sup>

### **Academic Year: 1964-1965**

**Principal:** Larry Dodd

**Band Director:** William Latson

**Orchestra Director:** Arturo Cotruvo

**Band Officers:** Ronny Wilbanks, Drum Major; Bruce Stalcup, Assistant Drum Major; Jenny Austin, Majorette Captain; Dixie Hardin, Russellette Captain; and Cathy Herring, Russellette Co-Captain.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

**Majorettes:** Gilda Bias, Andrea Grizzard, Peggy Sanford, Bonnie Lovett, Barbara Dye, Jenny Austin.

#### **Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

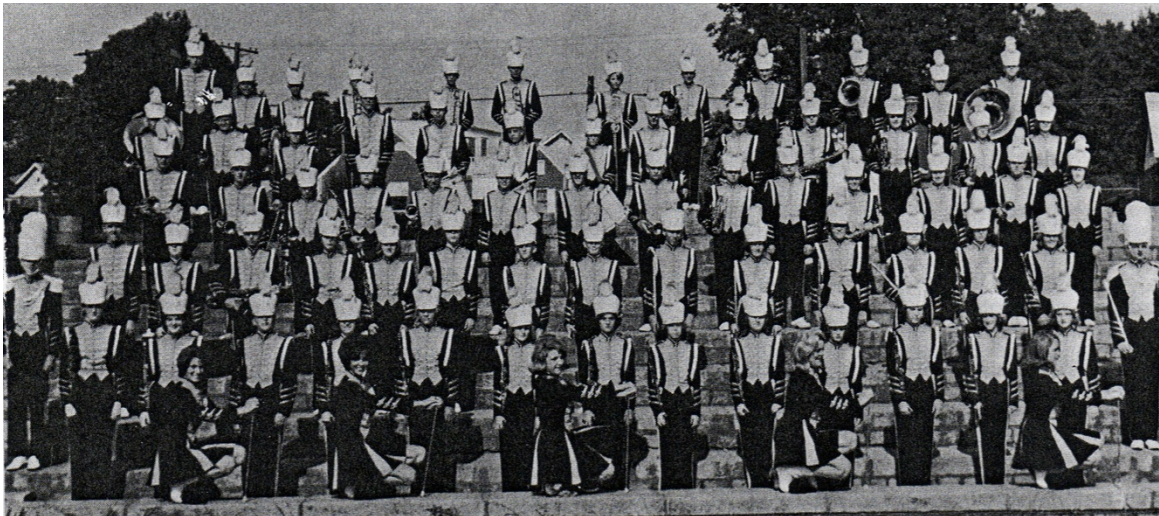
- The fall 1964 football season began with new head coach Nolan Lang, a veteran football coach from Fulton County and Atlanta Public Schools.
- The Russell High ROTC Drill Team, commanded by Cadet Major Jerry Rye, placed second in the State Competition held at Ft. Gordon.
- Mr. Mack Williford, the father of band members Mack, Jr. ('68), Walter ('71) and Barbara ('74), was Vice President (Membership) of the Russell High Athletic Booster Club.
- Russell's Track team won the Tri-City schools Trophy.
- Anne R. Richardson was Russell's Star Student.

#### **Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

@ Headland, Fairburn, Douglas County, @ Milton, @ St. Pius, Sandy Springs, Briarcliff, Lakeshore, @ Hapeville, @ Newton County

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<sup>94</sup> Maxine Bishop, ed., *1961 Pointer Yearbook*, p. 18.



### **1964-65 Russell High Band**

The 1964 season began with the Russell Band in new uniforms. The sleek 2-piece, West Point-style uniform was black with a yellow chest guard. A yellow pant stripe, white shoes, and a white shako hat accented the uniform.

The 50<sup>th</sup> annual Southeastern Fair began with a Wednesday, 30 September, parade featuring many giant balloons depicting numerous storybook and dreamland characters. Fair president, former Mayor William B. Hartsfield, also announced the parade participation of many high school bands and musical groups.<sup>95</sup> Several bands, including an Air Force Band concert on Friday, 2 October, were highlighted during the 10-day run of the Fair.

The 6th Annual Baton Twirling Contest occurred at the Southeastern Fair on Saturday, 3 October. Various age categories were represented for contestants, who performed to standard march music.

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<sup>95</sup> Harold Joiner, "Rain Threat Hovers Over Fair Opening," *Atlanta Journal*, 1 October 1964, 2.

Homecoming activities on 23 October featured the renaming of the Russell Football Field in honor of the late R. L. Bowen, a long-time former football coach who started at Russell High in 1929. Coach Bowen was a teacher and coach at Russell for 19 years before retiring in 1948 from athletics. He continued to teach in the science department before his final retirement in 1953, and died on 3 July 1960.<sup>96</sup> Other highlights for the Homecoming celebration included a parade led by the Russell Band on Thursday, 22 October, and a Disc Jockey Show in the auditorium after school on game day. Peggy Sanford, a Russell Band majorette, was elected Homecoming Queen during halftime of the Russell vs. Briarcliff football game.

An American Legion Post No. 1-sponsored Veteran's Day Parade occurred at 3:00 P. M. on 11 November. Parade participants included active military units and numerous veteran, fraternal, civic, and patriotic organizations. The parade began at Peachtree and Baker Streets before dispersing at Trinity Avenue. Sheriff T. Ralph Grimes and George W. Hooten, Jr. served as parade marshals. Prior to the parade, Senator Richard B. Russell spoke at a Legion Post No. 1 re-dedication ceremony.

The annual Christmas concert was held in conjunction with the December PTA meeting on Monday, 14 December. The band selections included *Silent Night*, *Delightful Pleasant Groves*, *Chester*, *Christmas Rhapsody*, and *Klaxson March*. The orchestra, under the direction of Arthur Cotruvo, performed *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* and *The Prayer* from *Hansel & Gretel*. The band accompanied the chorus in a rendition of *White Christmas*.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival was held on campus on Saturday, 9 January.

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<sup>96</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., "Russell Stadium to be Dedicated as R. L. Bowen Stadium this Friday," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 21 October 1964, 1.

Enrollments for the honor groups included 125 students for the band, 700 students for the chorus, 100 students for the orchestra; numerous others were involved with the drum major, majorette, and flag twirler clinics. All the music groups, along with the UGA Dixie Redcoat Band, performed in concert on Saturday night. J. Kimble Harriman, visiting associate professor of music, served as festival coordinator.

Linda Emerick, a violin student in the Russell Orchestra, earned membership in the 1965 Georgia Governor's Honors Program. Established the year before by the State of Georgia as a concentrated 6-week summer program at Wesleyan University in Macon, Governor's Honors students were first nominated by their schools and then competed on a regional and state level for select positions in the areas of art, dance, music, and several academic areas.

The Russell Band received a Good (III) rating at the GMEA District 5 Band Festival held at Dykes High School on Saturday, 13 March. Festival adjudicators included: Manley Whitcomb, FSU; Don F. Cassell, Peabody College; T. Edison James, Temple Terrace, Florida; and Guyton McClendon (Sight Reading), Fitzgerald, GA.

#### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA Band Festival

1965	Saturday, March 13 7:00 P. M. at Dykes H. S.	Rating: III
	Director – William O. Latson	
	Program: <i>Inglesina</i> .....	Cese
LEVEL A	<i>L'Arlesienne Suite I</i> .....	Bizet
	<i>Second Suite in F</i> .....	Holst

The 1965 St. Patrick's Day Parade was cancelled. The annual parade was popular through the 1950s, but the majorette controversy involving the Russell Band in 1959 caused a smaller participant turnout that year and an even smaller than usual turnout for the 1960 parade. As a result, the 1961 parade was cancelled. The St. Patrick's Day

parade returned in 1962, but it never returned to the success the parade enjoyed in the 1950s.

The Fulton County ROTC Competition was held at College Park H. S. on 2 April. Russell's Company B, commanded by Cadet Captain Terry Phillips, was selected the Best Drilled Company. Cadet Phillips was awarded the Military Order of World Wars medal. The Russell Color Guard was selected as the Best Drilled Colors and was awarded a streamer.

The Band Spring Concert was held on 6 May 1965 and featured selections by both the Russell Area Beginning Band and the Russell Area Elementary Band. The program was as follows:

*Away We Go, March*.....Weber  
*Two Famous Waltz Melodies*.....Weber  
 Russell Area Beginning Band

*Military Escort, March*.....Bennett  
*Folk Song Suite*.....Weber  
*Burst of Trumpets, March*.....Walter  
 Russell Area Elementary Band

*The Klaxon March*.....Fillmore  
*Marriage of Figaro*.....Mozart  
*The Four Hornsmen* .....Bennett  
 Russell High School Band

The new Jefferson Park Recreation Center-Gymnasium was dedicated in May. The Russell Band performed several selections on a program that also included an exhibition by the East Point Acrobatics Team and a judo demonstration under the direction of Fred Cochran and John Young.

Graduation exercises for 220 graduates were held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 22 May 1965. Class music included *Climb Every Mountain* (Rogers &

Hammerstein). Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed the music; Nancy Haynie and senior Jo Anne Lee provided piano accompaniment.

### **Academic Year: 1965-1966**

**Principal:** Larry S. Dodd

**Band Director:** William O. Latson

**Band Officers:** Bobby Carroll, Drum Major; Randy Mercer, Drum Major; and Gilda Bias, Majorette Captain.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

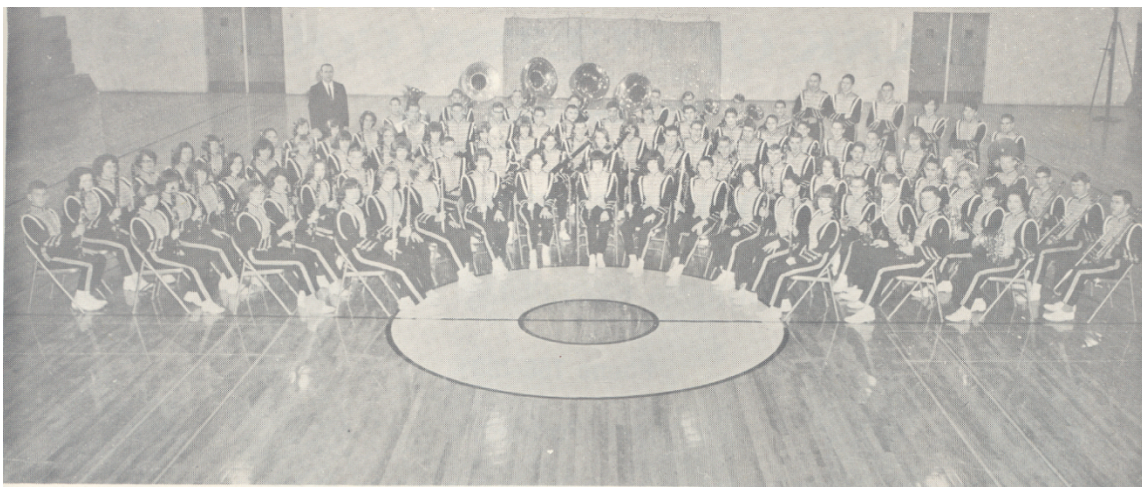
**Majorettes:** Linda Mercer, Carol Lowery, Bonnie Lovett, Andrea Grizzard, Patty Mann, Donna Leftwich, Carol Womack, and Gilda Bias, Captain.

**Russell H.S. Highlights of Note:**

- The school year began with new head football coach, Garland “Bulldog” Williams.
- Russell was the 18 October 1965 WQXI Football Team-of-the-Week.
- The 1965-1966 Boys Basketball Team earned 4<sup>th</sup> in State “AA.”
- Mike Wainer won “Best Drilled Cadet” in the South Fulton Military Competition.
- The Russell ROTC Rifle Drill Team placed second in a Southeastern United States Regional held in Savannah.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Headland, @ Campbell of Fairburn, @ Douglas County, Milton, St. Pius, @ Sandy Springs, @ Briarcliff, @ Lakeshore, Hapeville, Newton County.



**THE MARCHING BAND OF RUSSELL HIGH**



With the transfer of Coach Nolan Lang to another school, Russell High started the football season with new head coach Garland “Bulldog” Williams. The start of the new football season also involved a football field renovation that included a new lighting system.

In 1965, the Southeastern Fair began its second half-century of fun times and great memories for Atlanta’s youth. The kick-off parade marched through downtown Atlanta on Wednesday night, 29 September. In its parade preview, the *Atlanta Journal* reported: “Scores of balloons representing storybook characters, marching bands and prancing majorettes will play pied-pipers to what officials hope will be thousands of Atlantans.”<sup>97</sup>

The seventh annual Baton Twirling contest, held in connection with the annual Southeastern Fair, took place on Saturday, 2 October, near the grandstand. Shirley Ross, judge of the 1964-65 World’s Fair twirling championship, served as contest director.

The Russell Band made news when a band bus was involved in an accident in Marietta, Georgia, on Sunday, 10 October, during a return trip from a festival trip in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The bus struck the rear of a car that had stopped at a light on U.S. 41 about one mile north of Marietta. No injuries were reported.

Homecoming 1965 was held on Friday, 5 November, the night of the Hapeville game. The Russell Band was the lead organization in the annual Homecoming Parade that traveled through the East Point business district earlier in the afternoon. Freddie Hutchins was elected Homecoming Queen.

Veteran's Day 1965 was the first year that referenced the Vietnam War. The

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<sup>97</sup> Harold Joiner, “Huge Parade on Peachtree Kicks Off Southeastern Fair,” *Atlanta Journal*, 29 September 1965, 2.

theme for Veteran's Day in Atlanta and in cities across Georgia was support for the troops in Vietnam. The Atlanta parade was led by Lt. Governor Peter Zack Geer; the Third Army Band and Color Guard marched in a position of honor in front of all the other groups that included active military units, Reserve forces, and numerous civic and school groups. The parade started at 2:30 P. M. from Peachtree and Baker Streets.

Performing in lecture demonstration for the Georgia Music Educators Convention in Athens on 2-4 December, two separate chamber groups of singers brought much publicity and recognition to the Russell High School Music Department. The two groups, the "Hi-Fi's" and "Five Gals and a Guy," demonstrated small group music appropriate for different occasions. Members of the "Hi-Fi's," who sang sacred, art, and love songs, were Norma Denson, Nancy Haynie, Patsy Crymes, Omelia Donahoo, Carolyn Cooper, Elaine Griffin, and Terry Turner. Those involved in "Five Gals and a Guy," who sang folk songs with guitar accompaniment, were Hal Hembree (guitar), Carla Whitfield, Janis Sorrells, Patricia Hannah, Penny Williamson, and Celeste Sanchez.

The annual Christmas concert involving the Chorus, Band, and Orchestra was held in conjunction with the 13 December PTA meeting. The orchestra started the program with several selections that ended with *Carol of the Drum*. The orchestra and choir then did a joint performance of *A Quiet Christmas*. The chorus followed with a combination of selections from the small vocal ensemble, Gold Robe Choir, and boys and girls choir. The band performed *Adeste Fidelis* and *Tocatta*. The Grand Finale incorporating all the groups was *O Holy Night*. The Art Department designed the printed concert programs, while student groups, including FCA, Y-Teens, *The Russell Wildcat*,

and Student Council, all pitched in to prepare special decorations in the gym for the occasion.

Veteran's Day 1965 was the first year that referenced the Vietnam War. The theme for Veteran's Day in Atlanta and in cities across Georgia was support for the troops in Vietnam. The Atlanta parade was led by Lt. Governor Peter Zack Geer; the Third Army Band and Color Guard marched in a position of honor in front of all the other groups that included active military units, Reserve forces, and numerous civic and school groups. The parade started at 2:30 P. M. from Peachtree and Baker Streets.

1,200 students attended the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival. The annual Atlanta Symphony Fulton County Student Concert was held at Brown High School on 10 February. Russell music students, along with those from neighboring high schools, paid 75 cents for admission to this cultural event.

The Russell Band received an Excellent (II) rating at the GMEA District 5 Band Festival held at Dykes High School on Saturday, 26 February.

#### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District 5 Band Festival

1966	Saturday, Feb 26 11:30 A. M. at Dykes H. S.	
	Director – W. O. Latson	Rating II
	Program: TBA	
LEVEL B	<i>Concert Suite</i> .....Ashe	
	<i>Toccata</i> .....Frescobaldi	

In early March, the Optimist Club inaugurated a Student-of -the-Month award program whereby a student from each South Fulton high school was recognized for superior scholastic achievement and extra-curricular involvement. Johnny Thornton, a senior band student, was Russell's first designee based mostly on his academics and for his selection to: the 1965 Georgia Governor's Honors Program, National Merit

Scholarship Finalist, South Fulton County Orchestra, GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Band (see also Johnny's awards at graduation, page 128).

The 1966 St. Patrick's Day Parade was held on Thursday, 17 March, with the Third Army Band of Ft. McPherson leading the procession. The 2:00 P. M. parade traveled the traditional route of Peachtree Street to Garnet Street. The parade participants included 12 bands and numerous convertibles carrying notable Irishmen. For the first time, a car saluting Vietnam Veterans was featured.

Atlanta was welcomed into the big leagues with a first pitch and opening game at Atlanta's brand new stadium on 12 April 1966. The day began with a Braves Dogwood Festival parade that began at Peachtree and Baker Streets and proceeded down Peachtree before dispersing in the vicinity of Trinity Avenue. In addition to the Russell Band, groups from the Second Marine Division, the Continental Air Command Band, Lakeshore Marching Band, Booker T. Washington Band, Northside High School Band, and Decatur High School Band participated in the parade.

A coalition of Tri-City-area America Legion Posts hosted a large Armed Forces Day Parade in College Park on Saturday, 21 May. This salute to the military featured ten school bands and military units from all over the Tri-City area. The parade formed in East Point and routed through the business district of College Park, where Georgia Senator Richard Russell, who was then chairman of the U.S. Senate Armed Forces Committee, delivered a speech in front of the College Park City Auditorium.

End-of-year senior activities included the Junior-Senior Prom held at Atlanta's Progressive Club on 6 May. In addition, Senior Follies were held in the gymnasium on 14 May and Baccalaureate at East Point First Baptist Church on Sunday, May 15.

Graduation was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium at 4:00 P. M., with a post-graduation dinner-dance at the Hilton Hotel, on Saturday, 21 May. Class speakers included Kay Phillips and June Turner. Mason Cargill was selected as Russell's Star Student.

Johnny Thornton, a veteran of the Russell Band and member in the South Fulton County Orchestra and Fifth District Honor Band, won numerous awards and recognitions: Participant in the Governor's Honors Program in Math, Winner of the American Legion local Oratorical Contest, Optimist Club Honor Student, National Merit Scholarship Finalist, and acceptance at Emory University.

### **Academic Year: 1966-1967**

**Principal:** Larry S. Dodd

**Band Director:** William O. Latson

**Orchestra Director:** William O. Latson

**Band Officers:** Bobby Carroll, Drum Major; Randy Mercer, Drum Major; and Donna Leftwich, Majorette Captain.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

**Majorettes:** Jeanie Eidson, Carol Womack, Bonnie Lovett, Donna Leftwich, Kay Almond, Deborah Fulton, Jan Leach, and Linda Mercer.

**Russell H.S. Highlights of Note:**

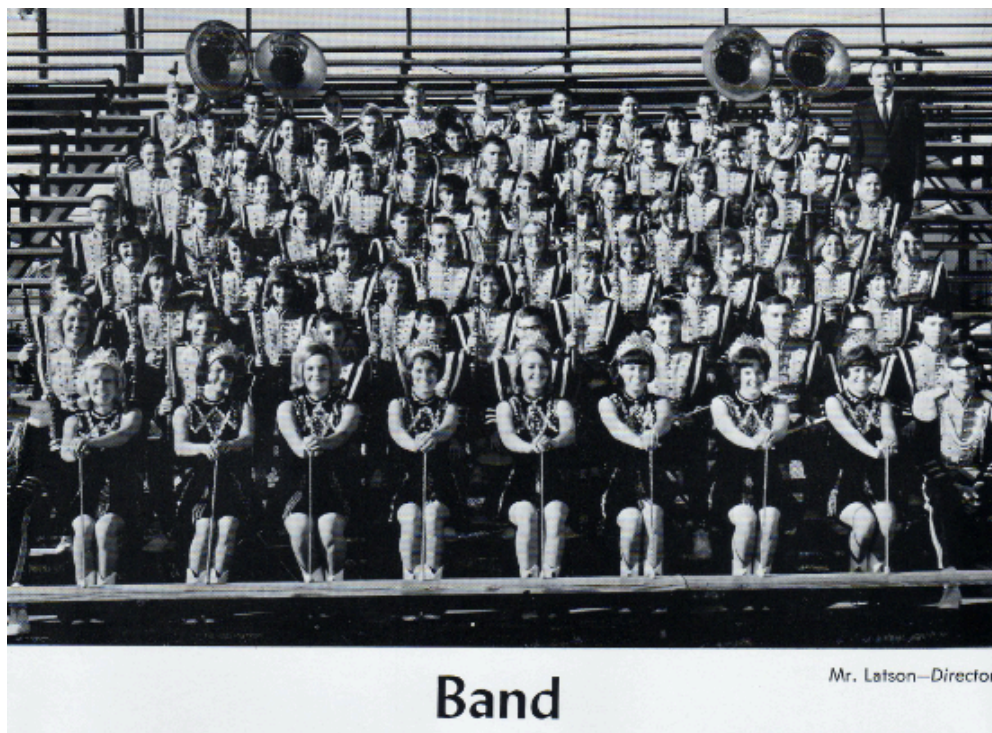
- Mr. Tom Simonton was selected as the new head football coach.
- The Russell ROTC Drill Team (Rifle) earned 2<sup>nd</sup> place in VFW Nationals held in New York on 20 August.<sup>98</sup>
- Earlier in the summer, the Drill Team was featured prior to the start of the 24 June Los Angeles Dodgers vs. Atlanta Braves game at Atlanta Stadium. The Russell ROTC Color guard raised the American Flag at the same event.
- The 1967 Girls Basketball placed 4<sup>th</sup> in State "AA."

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<sup>98</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., "Russell High Drill Team Receives VFW National Medals for Meet," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 12 April 1967, 1.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

@ Headland, @ Troup County, Douglas County, @ Newnan, College Park, Campbell of Fairburn, @ North Springs, North Clayton, Lakeshore, @ Hapeville.



With Coach Williams assuming a new position within the school system, Coach Tom Simonton was hired to lead the Russell football team. A graduate of the University of Georgia, Coach Simonton was previously an assistant at R. E. Lee High School in Thomaston, Georgia. He was the fifth head coach at Russell High in as many years.

The opening of the 52<sup>nd</sup> annual Southeastern Fair began with a parade on Wednesday, 28 September. The big parade, which organized at Peachtree and Baker, was ten blocks long and lasted over 30 minutes. The procession moved down Peachtree Street and featured over 40 giant balloons and a combination of 10 military and Atlanta-area high school bands. Band performances during the 10-day run included concerts by the Marine Corps Drum & Bugle Corps and the Woodward Academy Band.

Homecoming 1966 occurred on Friday, 30 September, in a game against the

College Park High School Rams. A Homecoming Parade beginning the week's activities occurred on Thursday, at 3:00 P. M. on 29 September. Beginning at Lawrence and proceeding down East Point Street, the parade was led by the Russell band, majorettes, and cheerleaders. The highly-acclaimed Russell ROTC Drill Team also participated. Friday's events began with a 4:00 P. M. all-class alumni meet-and-greet. Halftime features included an alumni march around the field and the crowning of the 1966 Homecoming Queen. Two dances occurred after the game: one in the Jefferson Park Recreation Center for the alumni, and the other in the school auditorium for the students.

When all votes were counted on Election Day in November, Russell's own Richard G. "Dick" Lane was elected to the State House of Representatives from House District 126. A prominent East Point resident who lettered in four sports in his student days at Russell, Lane played trombone in the Russell Band in the early 1940s.

According to George Hooten, Commander of American Legion Post No. 1, the 1966 Veteran's Day Parade was held as a special tribute to the U.S. Servicemen serving in Vietnam. The parade line-up included the 493<sup>rd</sup> Army Band from Ft. Gordon, units from the state's American Legion posts, the Salvation Army, Yaarab Shrine groups, and numerous high school bands and ROTC units. General Leland W. Smith, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, appeared as the parade grand marshal. The parade began at 2:30 P. M. and stepped off from Peachtree and Baker Streets before winding up at Trinity Avenue. Earlier in the day, Fletcher Thompson, newly elected Fifth District representative, made a speech before select veterans and city officials at the Post No. 1 Hall on Piedmont Avenue.

The Annual Christmas Concert was held on 12 December at a PTA meeting held at Jefferson Avenue Baptist Church and featured a performance of the Vivaldi *Gloria* directed by Mr. Latson. Members of the band joined the chorus for the massed choir performance. The Russell orchestra also provided an instrumental contribution, with Mary Lynn Lester, a Russell sophomore playing the organ.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual UGA Music Festival was held on Saturday, 7 January. The day-long event featured an Honor Band, Honor Orchestra, and 750-voice Festival Choir. In addition, Mrs. Phyllis Dancz, choreographer for the Redcoat Twirlers, administered a twirling clinic with the assistance of several UGA twirlers. The Dixie Redcoat Band, fresh from marching in the Cotton Bowl on 1 January, quickly converted from a marching unit to a concert unit to perform as part of the evening concert.

In preparation for the 1967 School Accreditation, Mr. Latson and Eleanor Burgess, Russell Choral Director, contributed to a Russell faculty self-evaluation. Information included in the assessment included the following enrollment figures: Symphonic Winds, 46 students; Concert Band, 60 students; Strings, 19; plus Choral enrollment. Out of a total number of 1,387 students at Russell, the music enrollment equaled about 20% of the school population.<sup>99</sup>

A School Accreditation Committee visited Russell early in 1967 and issued a Report that stated in part:

“Commendations:

1. Physical facilities for instrumental and vocal music are good and attractive;

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<sup>99</sup> Burgess, Eleanor & William O. Latson. Evaluative Criteria, 1960 Edition: Section D-13 (Music), p. 177-184. Evaluation Booklet found in Box Z-4; located at Teaching Museum South.



2. There is an excellent library of instructional material available, which is being taught with skill and enthusiasm;
3. Ample recordings, record player, and tape recorder are available to aid instruction;
4. The contribution of the talents of students and teachers is used for the betterment of the community;
5. Cooperative spirit exists between parents and teachers; and
6. Teachers are active in district, state, and national organizations.

Recommendations:

1. Immediate attention should be given to the temperature problem in the instrument room;
2. Additional storage space is needed for the large string instruments in the storage rooms;
3. A director's stand for instrumental teacher that would include storage space for music should be provided;
4. Consideration for enlarging budget for upkeep of large instruments – piano, wind, and strings;
5. Black out curtains and audio-visual equipment to be used exclusively in music building should be provided;
6. A better piano for the auditorium is needed;
7. Consideration should be given toward scheduling eighth grade students into a general music class – thus adhering to the grammar school – high school sequential program; and
8. More courses in areas of music other than that of performance should be offered. A more flexible schedule could make this possible.”<sup>100</sup>

Harris Street School, the elementary school in closest proximity to Russell High School, was always an important feeder program for the band. As such, Russell band directors generally spent a portion of their day teaching band at Harris Street. According to the *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, the Harris Street School Band (made up of 136 band students!) was the only Metro Atlanta band from a single elementary school to perform in the GMEA District 5 Band Festival held at Therrell High School in the spring.<sup>101</sup> All

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<sup>100</sup> Phelps, M. O., Chair. Report of the Visiting Committee Russell High School, East Point, Georgia, February 21-23, 1967: p. 16. Typed report in 1966-1967 Folder in Box Z-4; located in Teaching Museum South.

<sup>101</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “Harris Street School Band Participates in Festival,” *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 15 April 1967, 3-B.

other elementary bands were area all-star groups comprised of students from four to five elementary schools.

### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District 5 Band Festival

#### Harris Street Elementary Band

1967 Thursday, March 2 11:30 A. M. at Therrell H. S.

Director: William O. Latson Rating II

Program: *Military Escort*.....Bennett

LEVEL E *Sarabande and March*.....Handel/arr. Wallace

*Contradance No. 1*.....Beethoven/arr. Johnson

#### Russell High School Orchestra

1967 Thursday, March 2 4:30 P. M. at Therrell H. S.

Director: William O. Latson Rating II

Program: *Olympia*.....Whear

LEVEL C *Prelude* .....Reinecke

*Prologue, Hymn and Dance* .....Holsovsky

#### Russell High School Concert Band

1967 Friday, March 3 1:00 P. M. at Therrell H. S.

Director: William O. Latson Rating II

Program: *Brighton Beach* .....Latham

LEVEL B *The Good Daughter* .....Puccini/arr. Osterling

*Grecian Theme and Dance* .....Cacavas

#### Russell High School Symphonic Band

1967 Friday, March 3 5:00 P. M. at Therrell H. S.

Director: William O. Latson Rating II

Program: *Amparita Roca* .....Texidor

LEVEL B *Chorale and Capriccio* .....Giovannini

The 1967 St. Patrick's Day Parade was held on 17 March. Ft. McPherson's Third Army Band led a procession that included 15 high school bands and the Monroe Girl's Drum & Bugle Corps. Feature dignitaries included Vice Major Sam Massell, Ms. Atlanta Sandra McRee, and the entire Atlanta Chiefs team, Atlanta's new soccer team. The 2:00 P. M. parade began at Peachtree and Baker Streets and passed the reviewing stand at Five Points.

Following the presentation of colors and the Pledge of Allegiance presented by Russell's Color Guard and Drill Team, the band performed *Symphonic Winds* at the April meeting of the PTA. A Band/Orchestra Booster Fish Fry held at about the same time was very successful.

The mid-1960s saw the formation of several rock bands made up of Russell students. "The Teardrops" were comprised of Ricky Phillips, Art Johnson, Ricky Johnson, Joe McDaniel, and Mike Moody. Members of "The Luv Lites" included Mike Hall, Merrill Jackson, Bob Sullivan, Charlie Sanford, Curt Saunders, and Gerald Posey. The group "Brown" a few years later included Russell Band members Larry Hall and Bob Mathis.

The sponsorship of weekend dances was a popular method of fundraising for various Russell organizations. In the last half of the school year alone, Russell High held over ten dances. The Band Boosters sponsored the 7 April dance. A previous band-sponsored dance after the Troup County game during football season featured the band, "Good Omens."<sup>102</sup>

An announcement in May indicated that Mack Williford, junior band student, and Virginia Lichlyter, earned membership to the 1967 Governor's Honors Program for Music at Wesleyan College, Macon.

Senior class spring activities began with the Junior-Senior Prom held at the Air Host Inn in Hapeville on Friday, 28 April. The Senior Picnic was held at Callaway Gardens on Saturday, May 6. The Senior Follies program was held in the gym during 5<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Susan Kidd, "Wildcat Lair," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 11 January 1967: 5-A.

and 6<sup>th</sup> periods on Thursday, May 11. The final school day for seniors was Friday, 12 May.

Graduation for 168 graduates was held at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 20 May 1967. The senior class music selections were *The Impossible Dream* (Leigh) and *I'll Walk with God* (Brodsky). Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed the music; senior Nancy Haynie performed the piano accompaniment. Class speakers included Miriam Sailors, who spoke on *Love Lines of Life*, and Joanne Abel, whose speech was "The American Dream." Kenny Gray won the Atlanta Journal Cup as Russell's best all-around student. A Dinner-Dance occurred on graduation night at the downtown Atlanta Marriott.

Celeste Sanchez of the Class of 1967 earned a scholarship to Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. During her years at Russell, she was a piano accompanist for the choir, and also performed in the Concert Band, Symphonic Winds, and Stage Band.

### **Academic Year: 1967-1968**

**Principal:** Larry S. Dodd

**Band Director:** William Prescott

**Orchestra Director:** William Prescott

**Band Officers:** Mack Williford, President; Randy Fields and Randy Beard, Drum Majors; George Coleman, Student Conductor; Debbie Fulton, Secretary, Kirk Elliott, Treasurer; David Staats, Librarian; Mike Grizzard, Manager; and Donna Leftwich, Majorette Captain.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** John Andrews, Randy Beard, George Coleman, Jeanie Eidson, Kirk Elliot, Deborah Fulton, Micheal Grizzard, Wayne Hagan, Lindy Hahs, Donna Leftwich, Joe McDaniel, Linda Mercer, Scott Tomlinson, Fred Warren, Mack Williford.

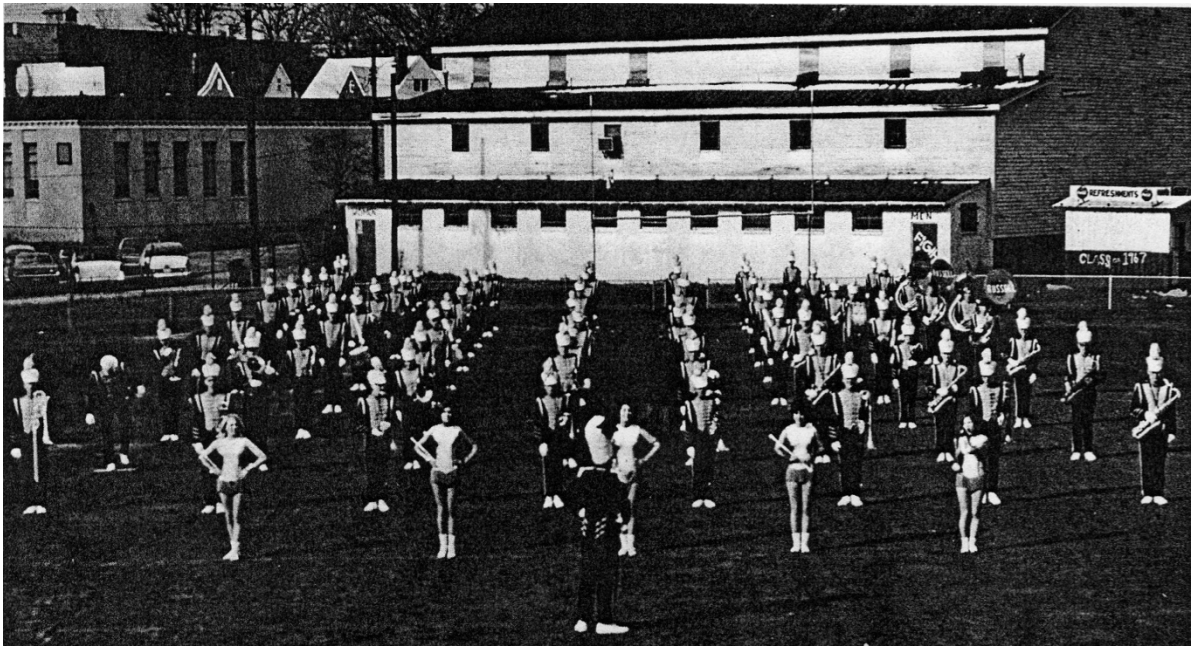
**Majorettes:** Linda Mercer, Debbie Fulton, Kay Almond, Jeanie Eidson, Jan Leach, and Donna Leftwich.

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Mack Williford and Wanda Kenny attended Governor's Honors in the area of Music the summer prior to the start of the new school year.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Headland, Troup, @ Douglas Co., Newnan, @ College Park, Campbell of Fairburn, North Springs, @ North Clayton, @ Lakeshore, Hapeville.



**1967-68 Russell High Band**

William Prescott was the new band director, coming from the University of Florida, where he had earned a Master's degree and served as an assistant on the UF Band staff. Mr. Prescott (1967-1973) was the second longest serving Russell Band director in the 60-year history of the band, behind Roy Drukenmiller, who served 11 years (1930-1941).

The 1967 Marching Band made its first appearance during the first game of the season against Headland. Anticipating a huge crowd, Russell Boosters arranged to add five sections of temporary stands, making the total possible capacity of around 7,500 at

Russell's R. L. Bowen Field. Russell's Homecoming was held against North Springs High School at Russell's R. L. Bowen Field on Friday 13 October.

The 53<sup>rd</sup> annual Southeastern Fair opened with the traditional Fair parade at 8:00 P. M. on Wednesday, 27 September. Giant balloon characters highlighted the parade that proceeded up Baker Street, down Peachtree, before concluding at Trinity Avenue. Opening day Fair activities included a performance by the Towers High School Band from DeKalb County.



The 9<sup>th</sup> annual Baton Twirling contest took place in the grandstand at the Southeastern Fair at noon, Saturday 30 September. Sanctioned by the National Baton Twirling Association, the judging criteria

involved beauty, strutting, solos, two-baton, flag, duets, teams, dance-twirl and corps.

Mrs. Shirley Ross, Mrs. Majorette of America for 1966, served as contest director.

President Lyndon Johnson designated Saturday, 11 November, as the official date for Veterans Day and urged all Americans, especially students and young people, to attend appropriate activities throughout America. In his proclamation, President Johnson stated: "Let us demonstrate to all the world our devotion to the principles of freedom for which so many have served in the past, and pledge our full support of those who today carry on the battle to insure that freedom shall survive." Johnson further declared "we never can repay fully the debt we owe the nation's war veterans, but we can show our



**Flute**

Kay Almond  
Steve Chambers  
Mary Len Phillips  
Debbie Waldrep

**Oboe**

Randy Fields  
Debbie Fulton

**Clarinet**

Ellen Evatt  
Donna Leftwich  
Lindy Hahs  
Yvonne Robinson  
Kathy Caskey  
Jeanie Eidson  
Stewart Bishop  
Andy Birdsong  
Judy Grizzard  
Tom Bryson

**Alto Sax**

Bill Workman  
Walter Williford

**Tenor Sax**

Joe McDaniel

**Baritone Sax**

Steve Moody

**Bass Clarinet**

John Goen

**Contra Bass Clarinet**

Randy Beard

**Bassoon**

Mack Williford

**French Horn**

George Coleman  
Linda Mercer  
Bobby Mathis  
Paula McCullough  
Vicki Leftwich

**Cornet**

Stan Warren  
Mike Daniell  
Kirk Elliott  
John Andrews  
David Staats  
Ken Higginbottom  
Bob McCann

**Trombone**

Tim Culpepper  
Mike Grizzard  
Lee Abel  
Randy Rye

**Baritone**

Ellen Thornton  
Bill Miller  
Wayne Hagan

**Tuba**

Paul Anderson  
David Shelton  
Lance Phagan

**String Bass**

Scott Tomlinson

**Percussion**

Dan Kadel  
Stuart Banks  
Penny Clack

**Timpani**

Larry Hall

Closing out the calendar year, the band held a New Year's Dance at the Jefferson Park Recreation Center on Friday, 29 December. Parents and students who assisted in the event included: Mr. and Mrs. Eidson, Mr. and Mrs. Hahs, Mr. and Mrs. Beard, Mr. and Mrs. Leach, Mr. and Mrs. Leach, Chaperones; Mrs. Williford, Kirk Elliott, and Mack Williford, Tickets; Mr. and Mrs. Froment, Donna Leftwich, Mike Grizzard, Judy Grizzard, Stewart Bishop, Walter Williford, Yvonne Robinson, Cokes; Jeanie Eidson, Debbie Fulton, Kay Almond, Mary Len Phillips, Linda Mercer, Cindy Leach, Check-in.

The Georgia Music Educators Association sponsored an annual District Honor Band, an all-star group comprised the best students from all Fulton County and City of Atlanta schools. Russell students selected to perform with this 1968 District 5 Honor



Band held in January included, Randy Beard, Contra-Bass Clarinet; Randy Fields, Oboe; Mack Williford, Bassoon; Joe McDaniel, Tenor Sax; Stan Warren, Trumpet; Kirk Elliott, Trumpet; Ellen Thornton, Baritone; Steve Chambers, Flute; Ellen Evatt, Clarinet; Cathy Caskey, Clarinet; Sewart Bishop, Clarinet; Edgar Harris, Clarinet; Andy Birdsong, Clarinet; Bob Mathis, French Horn; Tim Culpepper, Trombone; Lee Abel, Trombone; Larry Hall, Tympani; Stuart Banks, Drums; Gerry Gardner, Drums; Joyce King, Violin; LouAnn Harkins, Violin; Wendy Kenny, Viola; Paul Anderson, Tuba; Scott Tomlinson, String Bass; John Goen, Bass Clarinet; George Coleman, French Horn; and Mike Daniell, Trumpet.<sup>104</sup>

In the weeks leading up to the annual GMEA District 5 Band Festival, Mr. Prescott organized numerous extra rehearsals and sectionals before school, after school, and on Saturday mornings. While the main thrust of festival preparation took place during regular band class, these extra rehearsals allowed extra work and detailed preparation generally required for an exceptional performance. Part of this additional preparation involved a Pre-Festival concert held at Russell the evening of 29 February. This “practice concert” by the Symphonic Winds also featured the Stage Band, the first ensemble to feature music of the jazz idiom at Russell High.

The hard work paid off, for the Symphonic Band earned a Superior (I) rating in Class B at the GMEA District 5 Band Festival in Bill Prescott’s first year. This Superior was the band’s first since 1963 and was the cause of a big celebration. Events of the post-concert events were chronicled in the *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*:

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<sup>104</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “Russell High Band Members Named All-Star,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 31 January 1968, 5.

“Band members gave a great triumphal shout of joy as the ratings were announced. Principal Larry Dodd was on hand to witness his Band’s great achievement. And word was flashed to parents who had remained behind in East Point. When the band returned Friday evening, signs had been painted welcoming the champions, and a table spread with all kinds of punch and goodies helped celebrate the occasion.

Conductor William Prescott gave high praise to the Band members, mentioning the ‘blood, sweat and tears’ that had gone into preparations for the contest. ‘They took all the pressure I could give them, and they came back for more! They proved our Band motto: “Mediocrity is really only failure” by putting in countless hours of preparation. They’re an outstanding group of young men and women, and deserve to be called ‘Superior,’ said Prescott.<sup>105</sup>”

#### Recap: Russell at GMEA Band Festival

1968	Friday, March 8 9:30 A.M. at Sandy Spring H. S.	
	Director: William Prescott	Rating I
	Program: March Lamar .....	Clifton Williams
	LEVEL B Trauersinfonie.....	Richard Wagner
	Overture in Bb.....	Giovannini

A band trip to South Georgia and North Florida was an end-of-year highlight.

The trip began with a Thursday, 25 April, evening concert at Bainbridge High School, Bainbridge, Georgia. The concert selections included *Die Fleidermaus*, *Jamaican Rumba*, *Ballet Parisien*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Overture in Bb*. After the concert, the band members were guests in the homes of Bainbridge Band parents. In a concert follow-up addressed to Mr. Prescott, William Widener, Band Director at Bainbridge, wrote:

“I would just like to tell you how much we enjoyed having you and your fine band down here. You might convey to your students that I have heard nothing but the nicest and finest comments from their hosts. You and your principal can be proud of the favorable impression your students made on our people here in Bainbridge.”<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “Russell High Band Judged ‘Superior.’ “ *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 20 March 1968, 4.

<sup>106</sup> William Widener, letter to Bill Prescott, 1 May 1968.

The next day, the band performed in the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Rose Parade in Thomasville, Georgia. Writing in the *Southside Sun*, a reporter wrote, “Television crews at the famed Rose Festival in Thomasville picked up the Marching Wildcats, and kept a camera on them for more than three minutes, while the Band did several street maneuvers and showed off their famed high strut and special music.”<sup>107</sup> The band spent the rest of Friday and all day Saturday at Panama Beach before returning home on Sunday, 12 May.

The band department sponsored a Farewell Pops Concert the evening of Wednesday, 15 May, in the Russell Auditorium. Performing groups involved the Symphonic Winds, the Concert Band, the Orchestra, the Stage Band, and combined Chorus with band. Numerous guest conductors were featured, including Joseph Kirschner, Supervisor of Instrumental Music in Fulton County; Richard Everts, College Park High School Orchestra director; and Russell Principal Larry Dodd.

Concert selections included a band medley from *Sound of Music* and a combined Band/Chorus rendition of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Student Conductor George Coleman and saxophone soloist Joe McDaniel were also featured.

Graduation was held for 220 graduates at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium at 4:00 P. M. on 18 May 1968. Student speakers included William Price, whose address was entitled, “Forward from Here,” and band member Joseph McDaniel, who spoke of “Don’t Be Afraid To Be Different.” Class music included *Once to Every Man and Nation* (York) and *Climb Every Mountain* (Rodgers).

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<sup>107</sup> Ed., “Wildcats March Home in Victory,” *The Southside Sun*, 9 May 1968, p. 7

## **Academic Year: 1968-1969**

**Principal:** Hal C. Shields

**Band Director:** William Prescott

**Orchestra Director:** William Prescott

**Band Officers:** Randy Fields and Lee Abel, Drum Majors; Stewart Bishop, President; Penny Clack, Vice President and Student Conductor; Marilyn Phillips and Kay Almond, Majorette Co-Captains; and Virginia Lichlyter, Russellette Captain.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

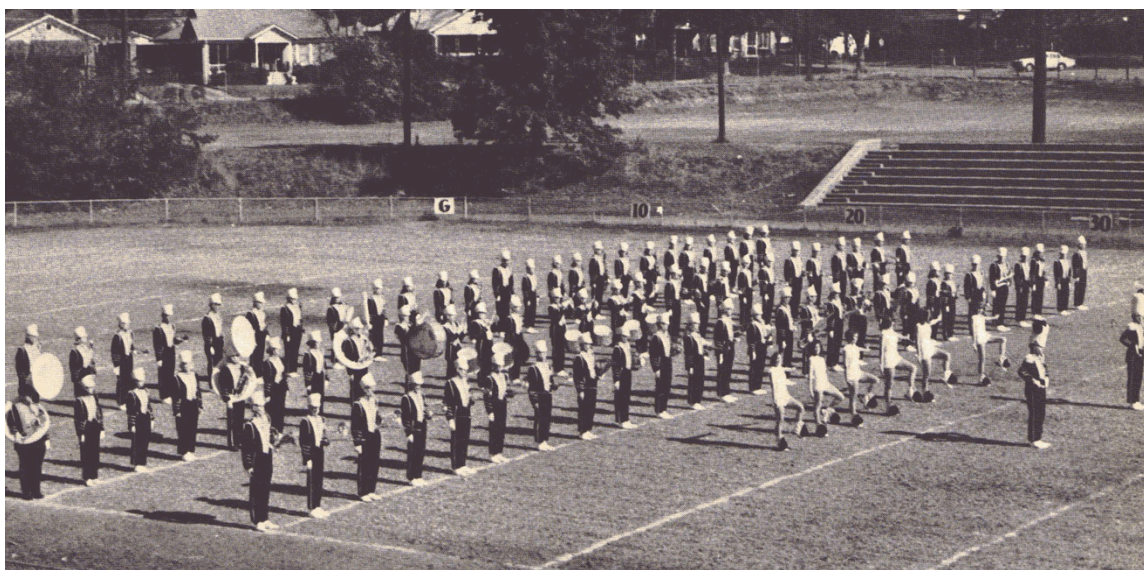
**Majorettes:** Judy Grizzard, Vicki Leftwich, Cindy Leach, Margie Bias, Marilyn Phillips, and Kay Almond.

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- A team of Russell students, comprised in part by Marching Band members Randy Fields and Virginia Lichlyter, competed in the WAGA, Channel 5 Quiz Contest show, "High-Q," on 18 April.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

@ Campbell of Fairburn, @ Douglas County, Lakeshore, Headland, Troup, @ College Park, Briarwood, @ North Clayton, Hapeville, South Fulton.



**1968-69 Russell High Band**

Marching Band season began with a week-long Band Camp at Reinhardt College in Waleska, Georgia, during the second week of August. The Marching Band fielded over 100 marchers comprised of the instrumentalists, Majorettes, Russellettes, and dual drum majors. Band members as listed in alphabetical order in the 1969 *Pointer* were:

Lee Abel	Penny Clack	Mary Ellen Harris	Mike Skinner
Ginger Alford	Billy Cooper	Sharon Hudgens	Wayne Smith
Kay Almond	Deborah Crews	Cindy Leach	Daniel Staats
Denise Anderson	Tim Culpepper	Vicki Leftwich	Mike Stanley
David Anderson	Mike Daniell	Steve Logue	Ellen Thornton
Jerry Avery	Ricky Davidson	John Mann	Bob Timmons
Stuart Banks	Mark Davis	Gary Maxson	Phillip Tribble
Les Bell	Ellen Evatt	Gayle Miller	Debbie Waldrep
Margie Bias	Randy Fields	Steve Moody	Donna Walton
Stewart Bishop	John Goen	Martha Moore	Kay Warr
Janice Blair	Debbie Graham	Barry McCarty	Bobby Watson
Beth Brackett	Bill Gregory	Kay Phillips	Barbara Williford
Donna Brown	Judy Grizzard	Yvonne Robinson	Walter Williford
Buddy Brown	Butch Hahs	Randy Romines	Steve Wood
Harold Brown	Larry Hall	David Rutledge	Joe Young
Kathy Caskey	Leslie Hamby	Pat Rutledge	Joy Young
Bill Capps	Keith Harkness	Randy Rye	
Steve Chambers	Mark Harris	Frank Sawyer	

The 54<sup>th</sup> annual Southeastern Fair ran from 26 September through 5 October. A pre-Fair Parade, the traditional method of promoting the Fair, was held Wednesday, 26 September, at 8:00 P. M. The one-hour parade traveled south from Peachtree and Baker Street, to Whitehall Street to Trinity Avenue and was witnessed by about 100,000. Parade participants included numerous bands along with the traditional giant balloons, fraternal organizations, floats, and beauty queens. Governor Lester Maddox arrived at the Thursday morning ribbon-cutting ceremony by riding a bicycle backwards. Senior Citizens Day on 1 October featured a band concert for entertainment.

Homecoming was held on 18 October versus Briarwood. The Russell Band and

Orchestra Booster Club hosted a pre-game Alumni Reception and Dinner at the Jefferson Park Recreation Center, where graduates of 1928, 1938, 1948, and 1958 were special guests. The Homecoming Halftime Show involved a Civil War Theme and many “Gone With The Wind” references. The Russellettes marched with Confederate flags and the court wore 1860s-style formal wear. The court included two band members: Margie Bias, who was the 8<sup>th</sup> grade representative, and Cindy Leach, who represented the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Laura Brown was elected Homecoming Queen, and the football team won 12-0 on a rain-soaked field.

Atlanta's American Legion Post No. 1 organized the 1968 edition of the Veteran's Day Parade. For the first time, veterans of the Vietnam War began to comprise a larger percentage of America's veteran population. The 2:00 P. M. Parade began at Peachtree and Baker Streets and concluded at Trinity Avenue.

The Russell Band Christmas performance schedule included a special Christmas music performance for the residents of Highview Nursing Home. The band played Christmas Carols as the Highview Christmas tree was lit. An arrival of Santa Claus by helicopter was the big feature of the evening.

*The Atlanta Constitution* broke the news of the Russell Band's selection to march in the 1969 Mardi Gras Parade in New Orleans.<sup>108</sup> The article mentioned that Governor Lester Maddox had selected the ‘Marching Wildcats’ as Georgia's designated band for Mardi Gras. The governor's statement also included the following: “The administration of the Fulton County Schools, the faculty of Russell High School, and the parents of these young people are understandably proud of the superior achievements of the band.”

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<sup>108</sup> Ralph McGill, ed., “Russell High Band to Represent Georgia in Mardi Gras Parades,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 February 1969, 28.



1968-69 Band Officers with Gov. Lester Maddox

Back row: Mike Daniell, Stewart Banks, Larry Hall, Kay Almond, Randy fields, Steve Chambers David Staats; Second Row: Dick Lane, Virginia Lichliter, Wanda Kenny, Mary Len Phillips, Mary Ellen Harris, Penny Clack, Lee Able, Mr. Prescott; Seated, Gov. Lester Maddox

As a result of the band's selection to the 1969 Mardi Gras Parade, East Point Mayor R. E. Brown proclaimed February 9<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> as Russell High Band Week. His resolution stated:

WHEREAS, the Russell High School Band has been organized for the past 40 years; and

WHEREAS, this band won the highest rating in competition last Spring; being named a Superior Band; and

WHEREAS, the Marching Wildcats have consistently given East Pointers very entertaining shows during football season and other school activities; and

WHEREAS, this band has participated to the honor of our city in many activities in the City, State, and Nation in the years past; and

WHEREAS, the Russell High School Band has been invited to represent the City of East Point in marching in the Mardi Gras parades in New Orleans in February;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the City of East Point that February 9-15<sup>th</sup>, 1969 be proclaimed as RUSSELL HIGH SCHOOL BAND WEEK; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be signed by Major R. E. Brown and presented to the officers of the Russell High School Band in behalf of the Mayor and Council and the citizens of East Point in appreciation of the fine work they have done in the past, and with congratulations on being invited to represent our city in

these festivities.

Signed this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 1969.

R. E. Brown, Mayor  
City of East Point, Georgia

In terms of exposure, importance, and significance, this trip ranked as probably one of the top two or three appearances in the 60-year history of the Russell Band.

Russell's participation was by special invitation of General Harry Mendelson, Mardi Gras Parade chairman, and the Russell Band was proclaimed the "Official Band of Georgia" for the duration of the trip.<sup>109</sup>

The student group numbered 116 and was comprised of members of the Band, Majorettes/Drum Major, Russellettes, Orchestra, Staff, and eight members of the ROTC, whose presence with rifles at the front of the band was intended to keep the marching path clear for the band. Principal Shields and three members of his family, along with Mr. J. P. Jackson, Russell High Counselor, accompanied the band. Mr. Prescott and 25 parent chaperones made for a total group of 146, all of whom traveled on three Greyhound buses. The trip was supported in part by the Russell High Band and Orchestra Club, C. L. Robinson, president and Robert Watson, vice-president.

The trip lasted a total of five days, from Thursday, 13 February, through Monday, 17 February. Because of limited motel space during Mardi Gras season, Russell was given accommodations at St. Gertrude Convent in Ramsey, Louisiana, just outside New Orleans. The girls were situated in dormitories on campus; the boys stayed in the nearby seminary.

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<sup>109</sup> William Prescott, "1969 Mardi Gras Tour Information." Typed manuscript, February 1969, 1.



The trip involved some sight-seeing at the Vieux Carre in New Orleans for the upperclassmen and Lake Pontchartrain Park for the underclassmen. The trip, however, was for the purpose of marching in the Mardi Gras Parade, which the band did on two separate occasions. The Russell Band stepped off for the Krewe of Endymion Parade at 6:30 P. M. on Saturday and marched again at 10:00 A. M. the next day for the Krewe of Thoth parade. With an 8-mile parade route filled with slow-moving floats surrounded by thousands of people, the parades were extremely long.

The GMEA District Band Festival was held at Sandy Springs in March. Performing *Overture in B Flat* and Wagner's *Trauersinfonie*, the Band earned a Superior rating. In words of celebration memorialized in an *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter* article, Mr. Prescott exclaimed, "...They proved our band motto - *Mediocrity is really only failure* – by putting in countless hours of preparation. They're an outstanding group of young men and women, and deserve to be called "Superior!"<sup>110</sup>

#### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District V Band Festival

1969	at Sandy Springs HS	
	Director: William Prescott	Rating I
	Program: <i>Overture in B Flat</i> .....	Giovanini
	LEVEL B <i>Trauersinfonie</i> .....	Wagner

The annual Spring Farewell concert was held on Thursday, 15 May and featured a large number of groups. In addition to the Symphonic Winds, the following groups performed: Chamber Chorus, Girls Chorus, Orchestra, and a 140-member Russell Area Elementary Orchestra directed by Ms. Joyce Relyea. An article publicizing this spring concert appeared in the *Southside Sun*:

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<sup>110</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., "Russell High Band Judged 'Superior'," *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, 20 March 1968, 4.

“Conductor Bill Prescott, former principal flutist with several symphony orchestras and well known as a soloist, will make his first appearance in the Atlanta area. The Symphonic Winds, under the baton of student conductor Mike Daniell, will accompany Mr. Prescott in the difficult *Beautiful Colorado*”<sup>111</sup>

The article also referenced a Dixieland Band appearance and stated, “Russell’s fine Stage Band, a Glenn Miller-type dance band will swing on several numbers.”<sup>112</sup>

The Russell Junior-Senior Prom was held at the Progressive Club on Friday, 2 May. The Prom theme was “An Evening in Paris” and the group, American Brass, provided the music. Graduation was held for 210 graduates at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 24 May 1969. Class music included *I’ve Got to Be Me* (Walter Marks) and *Let There Be Peace On Earth* (Sy Miller and Jill Jackson Miller). Ms. Eleanor Burgess directed the music; senior Mary Lynn Lester provided the piano accompaniment.

### **Academic Year: 1969-1970**

**Principal:** Garland Williams

**Band Director:** William Prescott

**Orchestra Director:** Joyce Relyea

**Band Officers:** Mike Daniell, President; Cindy Leach, Secretary; Judy Grizzard, Head Majorette; Larry Hall, Drum Major.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Kathy Caskey ('65-'70); Mike Daniell; ('65-'70); Barbara Dees (Russellettes '68-'70); Judy Grizzard ('65-'70; Majorette '67-'70; Band Secretary '65-'66 and '67-'68; Band Vice President. '66-'67); Denson Landrum ('65-'70); Bob Mathis ('65-'70; Band President '69-'70); and David Staats ('65-'69).

**Majorettes:** Margie Bias; Cindy Leach; Kay Phillips; Leslie Hamby; Judy Grizzard; Vicki Leftwich.

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<sup>111</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Farewell Concert Set at Russell High,” *Southside Sun*, 15 May 1969, 3A.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Mr. Garland “Bulldog” Williams, former Russell Football Coach, returned to Russell as the new Principal, replacing Mr. Hal Shields, who left Russell after one year to be the new principal at Campbell of Fairburn.
- William H. Cooper was Russell’s 1970 Star Student.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Campbell of Fairburn, Douglas Co., @ Lakeshore, Headland, @ Troup, College Park, @ Briarwood, North Clayton, @ Hapeville, @ South Fulton.

Prior to Band Camp and the start of school, the band participated in two memorable events: a Theater of the Stars production and an Atlanta Braves game.

The second of these two events, the Braves game, occurred at Atlanta Stadium and was done in collaboration with the Headland Highlander Band, Ken Durham, director. The Theater of the Stars production at the Atlanta Civic Center involved the Marching Wildcats with star Tony Randall in a production of *How Now, Dow Jones*. The select group of Russell musicians was one of the hits of the show. The audiences and the professional cast were enthusiastic about the performances of the band.

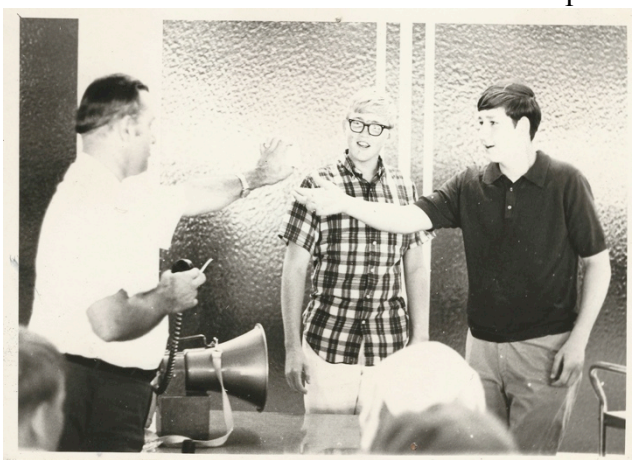
After the final performance, the band presented Mr. Randall with a souvenir Drum Major’s baton and an honorary band monogram, which he promised to keep in his collection of awards and other memorabilia. Members of this theater production band were: Drum Major Larry Hall, Kathy Caskey, Ricky Davidson, Ginger Alford, Mark Harris, Leslie Hamby, Judy Grizzard, Vicki Leftwich, Sharon Hudgens, Jim Suttles, John Mann, David Mathis, Terry Phillips, Randy Romines, Frank Sawyer, Paul Ward, Rusty Stevenson, Maurice Brown, Bob Mathis, Steve Moody, Steve Logue, Barbara Williford, Janice Camp, David Westbrook, Stuart Banks, Ken Brown, Terry Bentley, Kenneth Goodrun, Bobby Edwards, Mindy Harrison, Marcia Harrison, and Mike Stanley.

Cooperating band directors were Marvin King of Jonesboro Senior High and William Prescott of Russell High.<sup>113</sup>

After these two pre-season events, the Russell band began preparations for the upcoming football season. An article in the *Southside Sun* announced:

“The Russell Wildcat Marching Band will leave for its annual training camp this Sunday, August 24. The Camp will be held on the campus of West Georgia College in Carrollton.”<sup>114</sup>

110 members of the Russell Band spent a week at West Georgia College in



Mr. P with Keith Harkness and Walter Williford

Carrollton, Georgia learning marching basics and music to be played during the season. The first show was performed at Russell High on 12 September and included the selection, “*Are You From Dixie?*” All together, the marching band

performed in nine half-time shows, one of which involved a patriotic spectacular. This special show featured an on-field presentation of a 50-foot American flag and over 350 participants, including Boys Scouts and members of both the VFW and the American Legion. Other marching season appearances involved performances at the Atlanta Veteran’s Day Parade and the East Point Shriner’s Parade.

A large parade signaled the opening of the 55<sup>th</sup> annual Southeastern Fair. Held the night before opening day on Wednesday night, 24 September, the parade featured

<sup>113</sup>Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Russell Band and Tony Randall Star in ‘How, Now, Dow Jones,’” *Southside Sun*, 28 August 28 1969, 6.

<sup>114</sup>\_\_\_\_\_. “Russell Band to for Annual Camp this Sunday,” *Southside Sun*, 21 August 1969, 4.

many metropolitan Atlanta bands along with various balloons, floats, and other parade highlights. An *Atlanta Constitution* post-parade review revealed: “And interspersed throughout the line were the booming, blaring marching bands, with prancing majorettes in glittering, sequined uniforms.”<sup>115</sup>

With Neil Armstrong’s historic walk on the moon just several months before, the Fair highlighted many things lunar. The Fair Parade showed a balloon of an astronaut sitting on a man-on-the-moon balloon. Warner von Braun of NASA fame was the major guest of honor for the ribbon-cutting ceremony, which signaled the official opening of the Fair. A major Fair exhibit included a reenactment of the Apollo 11 Moonwalk narrated by aerospace officials. A replica of the moon’s surface was built of concrete, sand, and other materials. A full-scale model of the Apollo 11 spacecraft was also placed on public display.

Russell celebrated its 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary during Homecoming festivities on Thursday and Friday, 9 and 10 October. The Russell Band led a Homecoming Parade through the East Point business district on Main Street on Thursday afternoon. On Friday, alumni and guests were honored at a pre-game Reception/Supper sponsored by the Russell Band and Orchestra Boosters at the Jefferson Park Recreation Center. The Russell Band was on the field when Kay Warr, a former band student, was crowned Homecoming Queen.

The Choral Department organized a Variety Show at the East Point City Auditorium on Saturday, 25 October. Various faculty and student participants included Mike Daniell’s Jazz Combo.

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<sup>115</sup> Bob Rohrer, “Big Parade Preview Of Fair Attractions,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 September, 1969, 1.

membership to All-State and All-District Honor Ensembles. GMEA All-State Band/Orchestra students were Frank Sawyer, tuba, and Carol Steen, violin, Junior High All-State

While America became increasingly divided on the Vietnam issue, support for the troops during Veteran's Day remained strong. Atlanta's American Legion Post No. 1 organized the large Veteran's Day Parade that included the Russell Band and 15 other bands and numerous military and civic organizations. Grand Marshal Guy Sharpe of WAGA-TV and Georgia Governor Lester Maddox were among a number of featured parade dignitaries.

The parade route began at the traditional starting point of Peachtree, but was expanded to include Mitchell Street to accommodate the large parade line-up that lasted for over one and a half hours. No crowd estimates were published; however, Captain C. C. Hamby, Atlanta's police traffic director, was quoted in the *Atlanta Constitution* as saying, "the parade was larger than any other Veteran's Day he had seen."

In early December, Bill Prescott accompanied several students to the annual University of Georgia Band Day, where the guest clinician was Colonel Arnald Gabriel, Commander and Conductor of the United States Air Force Band. Band students who attended included Mike Daniell, trumpet, 12<sup>th</sup> grade; Bill Fry, tenor saxophone, 11<sup>th</sup> grade; and Frank Sawyer, tuba, 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Other participants were: Drum Major Larry Hall, 11<sup>th</sup> grade for the drum major and percussion clinic; and majorettes Margie Bias, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Leslie Hamby, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and Kay Phillips, 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

The Russell Band performed for two Christmas events, a Christmas Parade in Griffin, Georgia on Tuesday, 2 December, and the traditional Christmas Concert at

Russell. The band's participation in the downtown Griffin parade was well-received as evidenced by a letter from Mr. Gary Powell, Executive Vice President of the Griffin Area Chamber of Commerce:

“We certainly appreciate your band participating in Griffin's Santa Claus parade. Your band was a major factor in the parade's success. We are grateful you could participate and for your wonderful cooperation. Thanks a million.”

The Christmas concert was held in the school auditorium at 8:00 P. M. on Thursday, 18 December 1970. The Symphonic Winds portion of the performance began with *A Christmas Festival* (Anderson) and continued with *Three Songs of Christmas* (Clare Grundman) and *Adeste Fidelis* (arr. Ployhar). The middle section of the concert involved group singing on selected tunes performed solo as follows: *Jingle Bells*, Debbie Waldrep, Piccolo; *Joy to the World*, Steve Logue, Alto Sax; *Deck the Halls*, Martha Ann Moore, Flute; *O Holy Night*, John Mann, Baritone; *Away in the Manger*, Cindy Leach, French Horn; *First Noel*, Bill Fry, Tenor Sax; *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, Bobby Watson, Clarinet; *Carol of the Drums*, Stuart Banks, Drummer; *Silent Night*, Mike Daniell, Trumpet; and, David Boswell, Narrator.

In January of the new calendar year, numerous band students won; Mike Daniell, trumpet, Joyce King, violin, and Bill Fry, tenor sax (alternate), High School All-State. In February, Russell High hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> District Band and Orchestra event that involved over 350 Fulton county students, 18 of whom were Russell students. The *Southside Sun* chronicled this significant event:

“350 all-star selected high school musicians from the fifth district will gather at Russell High School next Saturday for the annual Instrumental Clinic.....two bands and one orchestra to rehearse all-day Saturday. Dr. Andrew Galos will conduct the orchestra; Boyd McKeown conducts the Blue Band;

Guerry Youmans conducts the Red Band....18 Russell high students are selected to perform: Joyce King, violin; Carole Steen, violin; LouAnn Harkins, violin; Keith Harkness, contra-clarinet; Bill Fry, tenor sax; David Boswell, trumpet; Cindy Leach, French horn; Leslie Hamby, clarinet; Denson Landrum, tuba; Stuart Banks, drums; Mike Daniell, trumpet; Larry Hall, drums; Martha Ann Moore, flute; Steve Moody, baritone sax; and John Mann, baritone.”<sup>116</sup>

Early morning rehearsals, sometimes in freezing or foggy weather, were a mainstay for the Marching Band during the Bill Prescott era, and Symphonic Band was no different. Early morning and Saturday morning rehearsals of the Symphonic Band became a hallmark for the ensemble, especially during band festival season. Guest conductors from around Atlanta usually conducted the Saturday morning rehearsals.

One particular guest conductor was Dr. Andrew Galos, violin professor and Music Department Chairman at Columbus College, now Columbus State University (Columbus, Georgia). Dr. Galos’s prior professional experience had included a lengthy stint in the first violin section of Toscanini’s NBC Symphony, which was probably one of the best ensembles in the history of orchestras. While primarily an orchestra conductor, Galos was intimately familiar with one of the projected band works, an orchestral transcription of Vivaldi’s *Concerto Grosso in D minor*. Having a guest conductor of his caliber was a distinct honor and special privilege for the band.

The Spring 1970 Symphonic Winds calendar listed below was fairly typical of Mr. Prescott’s schedule in the weeks leading up to GMEA Band Festival:

Tuesday, March 3	7:25 A. M. in seats, full band. 3:15 P. M. sectionals as needed
Wednesday, March 4	7:25 A. M. in seats, full band. 3:15 P. M. sectionals as needed

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<sup>116</sup>Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Russell High to Host All-Star School Musicians,” *Southside Sun*, 22 January 22 1970, 5B.



Thursday, March 5	7 P. M. – 9 P. M. full band; Mr. Tarpley, Forest Park H. S.
Friday, March 6	7:25 A. M. in seats, full band.
Monday, March 9	No early rehearsal; 1 <sup>st</sup> Period: Report Cards
Tuesday, March 10:	9 A. M. – Noon registration for 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , and 12 <sup>th</sup> grades; 1:00 P. M. – 3:30 P. M. full band
Wednesday, March 11	9 A. M. – Noon registration for 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> grades; 1:00 P. M. – 3:30 P. M. full band
Thursday, March 12	7:20 P. M. roll call, tune-up; 8 P. M. Pre-Festival Concert; Judges: Mr. Evarts, College Park High; Mr. Struck, BandBox; Mr. Durham, Headland High; Mrs. Suchanek, O’Keefe High; Mr. Scott, College Park High
Friday, March 13	9:00 A. M. – Noon, full band; 1:30 – 4:00 P. M. full band; Dr. Andrew Galos, Columbus College
Monday, March 16	7:25 A. M. in seats, full band; Mr. Kirschner 3:15 P. M. sectionals as needed
Tuesday, March 17	7:25 A. M. in seats, full band
Wednesday, March 18	7:25 A. M. in seats, full band
Thursday, March 19	7:00 P. M. full band (tentative)
Friday, March 20	Festival: 7:00 P. M. at Therrell High School

In March, the Symphonic Band earned a straight Superior Rating at band festival held at Therrell High School. A festival recap appeared in the *Southside Sun*:

“Three judges were unanimous in awarding the Band a superior rating. Judge Manley Whitcomb, famed Florida State University bandmaster, said, ‘a superb effort, a genuine musical expression!’ Judge John Corina, of the University of Georgia, wrote, ‘best Band we have heard today!’ The audience

gave the band members a standing ovation. Director Bill Prescott told the *Southside Sun*, ‘this band has to be the greatest in Russell’s history: it has won more honors and made greater achievements than any in memory...a wonderful group of kids.’<sup>117</sup>

#### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District V Band Festival

1970 Friday, March 20 7:00P. M. at Therrell H. S.

Director:	William Prescott	Rating	I
Program:	<i>March Regalis</i> .....	Charles Minelli	
LEVEL B	<i>Concerto Grosso</i> .....	Antonio Vivaldi	
	<i>Emperata Overture</i> .....	Claude Smith	

The Tri-Cities Optimist Club was entertained by the Russell High School chamber (vocal) ensemble as part of the regular Thursday morning meeting on 16 April. Singing with the group were band members Mike Daniell, Mark Harris, and Steve Moody. The annual band trip was a grand finale and highlight of the year.

Most band trips are special occasions, but the announcement of this particular trip created quite a stir. For the second year in a row, the band traveled as Musical Ambassadors by Proclamation of the Governor of Georgia. Not only was the band leaving the state, they were also leaving the country. Yes, the Russell Band went



international with a trip to the Bahamas. The first public announcement appeared in a 25 April *Atlanta Constitution* article and picture under the caption, “Russell Band Invited to tour Bahamas Islands.”<sup>118</sup> The

article stated that the Russell Band, “has been proclaimed Georgia’s official

<sup>117</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Russell Band Wins Top Award,” *Southside Sun*, 26 March 1970, 4A.

<sup>118</sup> Reg Murphy, ed., “Russell Band Invited to Tour Bahama Islands,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 25, 1970, 11-T.

‘Ambassadors of Goodwill’ to the Bahamas Islands by Governor Lester Maddox,” the second straight year that the Band was so designated (see New Orleans trip, February 1969). In the accompanying photo above, Governor Maddox is seen greeting Mike Daniell, Band President, and Judy Grizzard, Head Majorette.

The spring trip was by invitation of the Port Authority of Freeport, Grand Bahamas, which was made possible in part by the assistance of Congressman Fletcher Thompson. The educational focus of the trip was a concert at the Camelot Room of the Freeport King’s Inn, a performance sponsored by the Grand Bahamas Catholic High School Key Club. Russell groups included in the trip were the Symphonic Winds, Stage Band, and Russellettes. The trip involved 135 students and parents chaperones, along with the following special guests: Thomas Perkins, Assistant Principal; James Suddeth, Russell math teacher; Mr. Larry Dodd, former Russell Principal, and wife; and Mr. John Grindle, Assistant to the Superintendent, and wife.



Bill Prescott (far left) at the Capitol office of Governor Lester Maddox with Russell High Band Officers, Mike Daniell, President (seated). For the second consecutive year, Governor Lester Maddox appointed the Russell High Band as representatives of the State of Georgia, this time to the Bahamas Islands in the spring of 1970.

The trip started with a Thursday evening, 7 May, bus ride and arrival in Miami early on Friday, 8 May. After breakfast at the National Airlines cafeteria, International Airport, the band visited the Seaquarium and then had lunch at Crandon Park, a local Miami Zoo. Later that day, the band passed through Customs and boarded the M/V Freeport ship, which transported the Russell group to the Bahamas. A flotilla of cabs transported the group from the port to the motel. The Saturday schedule enabled the students to sight see and shop at the Freeport Flea Market before the concert on Saturday night.

The Grand Bahama Catholic High School Key Club and the Kiwanis of Lucaya sponsored the feature performance. The band performed at the Camelot Room of the King's Inn in Freeport on 9 May and performed the following program:

<i>March Regalis</i> .....	Chas. Minelli
<i>Peter Schmoll Overture</i> .....	Carl Maria von Weber
<i>Napoli</i> .....	Herman Bellstedt
Mike Daniell, Trumpet Soloist	
<i>Sound of Music Selections</i> .....	Richard Rodgers
<i>Windy</i> .....	Ruthann Friedman
Majorettes: J. Grizzard, C. Leach, V. Leftwich, K. Phillips, M. Bias, L. Hamby	
<i>Carnival of Venice Variations</i> .....	Paganini/Blalock
Trumpet Trio: M. Daniell, D. Boswell, M. Brown	
<i>Sugar Lips</i> .....	Billy Sherrill and Buddy Killen
The Russellettes	
<i>Tailgate Concerto</i> .....	arr. Johnny Warrington
Dixieland Soloists and Band	
<i>Emperata Overture</i> .....	Claude T. Smith

The band received a standing ovation for their efforts. A front-page review of the concert in the *Grand Bahamas Tribune* read: "The Symphonic Winds were given a standing ovation for their musical performance." Furthermore, the reporter wrote, "the band which played to a large audience of Freeporters was described as being

‘magnificent’ by many of the patrons who attended.”<sup>119</sup> *The Freeport News* led with the caption, “105-Piece High School Band Gives Polished Performance.” The paper attached a picture of the Russellette dance and included the comment, “The Russellettes, well received in concert.”<sup>120</sup>

Trip details were chronicled in a *Southside Sun* article:

“For the second consecutive year, Governor Lester Maddox appointed the Russell High Band as representatives of the State of Georgia, this time to the Bahamas Islands. The Russell Symphonic Winds were the guests of the Bahamas Government on a concert tour that began May 7.

138 students, parents, and guests boarded the ocean liner “Freeport,” in Miami. John and Mary Harkins, co-Presidents of the Parents Club, headed the expedition. Russell Assistant Principal, Thomas Perkins, and Professor of Mathematics, James Suddeth, were among the dignitaries. Other political and educational celebrities will be guests.

Congressman Fletcher Thompson was instrumental in preliminary arrangements. Representative Dick Lane assisted in the Governor’s recognition of these outstanding young East Pointers. After winning straight concert superior ratings in this year’s Georgia Band Festival, Conductor William Prescott said, “this is the greatest Band in Russell’s history!”

They eminently deserve this honor. And on top of that, “they’re just a great group of kids,” he added. Band officers are: President Mike Daniell, secretary Cindy Leach, Treasurer Vicki Leftwich, V.P Bob Mathis, Manager Steve Moody, Librarian Walter Williford, Drum Major Larry Hall, Head Majorette Judy Grizzard and Russellette Co-Captains Susan Stephens, Louann Harkins and Elaine Reeves.

This is the third year of a rebuilding program initiated by former Principal Larry S. Dodd, when he brought Prescott to Russell. Since that time, and under the continued inspiration of Principals Hal Shields, and now Garland H. Williams, the Band and Orchestra have earned two superior ratings, the marching band has developed an enviable reputation as a brilliant show band, and a “new breed” of dedicated, talented young

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<sup>119</sup> Ed. “Russell High School Band and Dancers Delight Audience,” *Grand Bahama Tribune*, 13 May 1970, 1.

<sup>120</sup> Ed. “105 Piece High School Band Gives Polished Performance,” *The Freeport News*, May 13, 1970, p. 1.

musicians has emerged that puts in many early and late hours of rehearsal.”<sup>121</sup>

The band returned to Russell High School extremely late on Sunday night preceding school the next day, making for some very tired, yet fulfilled, band students. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade bus, or ‘subbie’ bus as it was known, actually broke down while enroute back to Georgia, arriving on campus just prior to the start of the Monday school day. The number of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who reported to school that day is unknown.

The end-of-the year Russell Band Banquet was a celebration of the Bahamas trip and the success of the entire year. A *Southside Sun* article outlined the highlights:

“Over 350 people came to see Russell’s top musicians receive trophies and medals for their record-breaking year. Members of the community board heard the history of more than twenty-five major performances, including appearances with Tony Randall at the Civic Center, nine football shows, a gigantic patriotic spectacular, four major concerts, winning of a Superior rating in State contest and a concert tour of the Bahamas Islands, just to name a few.

Principal Garland H. Williams received the Georgia Music Educators Plaque, emblematic of a Superior Band and expressed his pride in the young people of the Band and Orchestra. He also said, “we all laughed when the Bahamas trip was first proposed, but we made it. Who knows, we may be in London next year!” Representative Dick Lane, Lions Club President Harry Steele, Optimist President Butch Hemperley and other luminaries helped present the Awards as follows:

The Williford Memorial Trophy to the outstanding boy, Mike Daniell; The Band Boys Award to the outstanding girl, Judy Grizzard; The Parents Club Trophy, outstanding girl in Orchestra, Louann Hawkins; Lions Club Trophy, outstanding musician in Russell, Mike Daniell; Jazz Man of the Year, Headland Music Center Award, Larry Hall; Jackson Music Company Trophy, outstanding officer, Vicki Leftwich; Conductor’s Trophy, best musician in Symphonic Winds, Bill Fry; Most Improved Trophies were won by Carole Steen, Ken Johnson, Clyde Reeves, Melissa Collins, David Westbrook, Cindy Leach, Buddy Brown, Sharon Hudgens, Rusty Stevenson, Sally Focht, David Loggins and Frank Sawyer.

Service Awards were presented to Maurice Brown, Steve Moody, Mark Harris, Stuart Banks, Judy Grizzard, Susan Stephens and Elaine Reeves.

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<sup>121</sup>Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Russell Band Assigned As Ambassadors To Bahamas,” *Southside Sun*, 14 May 1970, 4B.

Citizenship Awards were won by David Boswell, Eileen Alexander, John Mann, Bob Watson and David Loggins. Medals and emblem jackets were awarded to Band, Orchestra, and Russellette members for conspicuous performance and service. The Parents Club presented State medals to each member of the Symphonic Winds for their Superior rating in Festival.

The banquet was prepared and planned by chairmen Ed and Pauline Mann, Lewis and Imogene Maurer, and John and Mary Harkins. Jim Sudduth was the master of ceremonies.”<sup>122</sup>

Another *Southside Sun* article detailed the results of the officer selections:

“Mark Harris was elected President of the Russell Band Council for the 1970-71 school year in a close three-way race. Bill Fry and Bobby Watson were selected by their band mates as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> V.P. Cindy Leach was retained as council secretary; Vicky Leftwich was also selected for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term as Treasurer. Steve Moody will be band manager and David Westbrook will serve as Librarian. Larry will continue as Drum Band council officers help to determine policy and activities for the Russell bands, Orchestra, and Russellettes and Majorettes. Officers for these 2 organizations have not been chosen yet.



Mike Daniell

in expenditures.<sup>123</sup>

These newly-elected officers will have the responsibility of coordinating such activities as summer camp, football halftime shows, pep band, planning for tours and trips, handling parades, keeping financial records, promotion, publicity, and officials records. Officers, this year, were responsible for over \$7,000.00

The end of the school year brought to a close the five-year band career of Mike Daniell, who was one of the most decorated musicians in the history of the Russell Band. At the Band Banquet, Mr. Prescott announced the Mike had earned a four-year music scholarship to play trumpet and study music education at the University of South Florida in Tampa. Mike’s musical resume during his Russell tenure included: First Chair, Georgia All-State Band; First Chair with GMEA District 5 All-State Orchestra; Superior

<sup>122</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Russell High Fetes Award-winning Band,” *Southside Sun*, 4 June 1970, 6B.

<sup>123</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Russell Band Elects Officers,” *Southside Sun*, 2B.

ratings at GMEA District 5 Solo/Ensemble; Winner, Williford Memorial Trophy for Outstanding Senior in the Russell Band; Lion's Club Cup for Outstanding Musician at Russell High; and Tri-Cities Optimist Club Scholarship for Study in the Field of Education.

### **Academic Year: 1970-1971**

**Principal:** Garland Williams

**Band Director:** William Prescott

**Orchestra Director:** Joyce Relyea

**Band Officers:** Larry Hall, Drum Major; Mark Harris, President; Bill Fry, Vice-President; and Cindy Leach, Secretary

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Stuart Banks; Ann Collins; Lynda Caldwell (Russellettes); Mark Davis; Bill Fry; Larry Hall; Keith Harkness; Louann Harkins (Russellettes; Orchestra); Mark Harris; Joyce King (Orchestra); Cindy Leach; Vicki Leftwich; John Mann; Steve Moody; William Morris; Randy Rye; Terri Smith (Russellettes); Debbie Waldrup; and Walter Williford.

**Majorettes:** Vicki Leftwich, Captain; Cindy Leach; Leslie Hamby; Janice Blair; Kay Phillips; Margie Bias.

#### **Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- Integration was fully implemented with the consolidation of South Fulton High with Russell High. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders from both schools attended the old South Fulton High School facility; the upper classmen attended school at the Russell campus (for more detail and commentary, see Appendix #3, p. 216).
- Russellette Member Angela Talley won Miss Russell 1971, while Louann Harkins, Russellette and Russell Orchestra member, won first runner-up.

#### **Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Campbell-Fairburn; Lamar County; Rockdale County; Woodward Academy; Headland; Harris County; Briarwood, Henry County; Jackson.

Russell High School became fully integrated in the fall of 1970. This event was part of an overarching plan to desegregate all of the Fulton County Schools to comply with a court-ordered mandate to sufficiently integrate black and white students



throughout the district. While compliance with the court order was accomplished primarily with changes in Fulton County's school zones, the method of integration at Russell High involved "pairing" with all-black South Fulton High School. This plan resulted in the merging of South Fulton's upper grades with those of Russell, while the 8<sup>th</sup> grade from Russell combined with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders from South Fulton at that location.

Recent attempts to obtain newspaper accounts and reviews concerning the first year of the Russell-South Fulton merger were unsuccessful. Newspapers such as the *Atlanta Constitution*, *Atlanta Journal*, *Atlanta's Suburban Reporter*, and the *Southside Sun* apparently had nothing sensational to cover on the subject. The author's informal conversations with fellow classmates turned up no instances of major problems related to the consolidation. Further research and additional interviews may reveal different conclusions; however, the Russell/South Fulton consolidation was arguably successful for all involved.

The annual pre-season Band Camp was held at Baptist Convention Assembly (Camp Glisson) in North Georgia with Mr. Bradley, Mr. Walthal, and Mr. Alan Balter of the Atlanta Symphony serving as guest instrumental clinicians. The Marching Wildcats performed in seven half-time shows and premiered the Circle Drill concept to the Atlanta area audiences.

The Russell Marching Band competed in one of their first competitive marching festivals at the Douglas County Marching Band Festival. In 1970, the Marching Band Festival experience was a relatively new and novel concept. By contrast, Concert Band Festival for high school bands was a historic event going back decades to the early 1920s. The adjudication and rating of marching band shows, however, did not become

widespread until the late 1970s, so the Russell Band was on the cutting edge and extremely forward-looking with their participation in this new music phenomena.

Other items of significance included participation in the Georgia Tech Band Day (Russell was part of “1970” formation on the field) and an appearance at the American Legion “Americanization Day,” where members of the band were individually greeted and handed small flags by Gov. Lester Maddox. The Marching Wildcats experienced an official band inspection by CWO Colas Martin, Band Leader of the Third Army Band at Ft. McPherson.

The annual pre-Southeastern Fair parade was held on Wednesday, 30 September. The parade occurred in downtown Atlanta and proceeded down Peachtree Street. Fair exhibit highlights included the Olympic International Circus and moon rock samples brought back to earth from the Neil Armstrong’s moon landing in 1969.

Post-football season marching activities involved a Veteran’s Day Parade in Atlanta. With anti-war protests in full swing around the country, the 1970 Veteran's Day observance took place against a backdrop of controversy. Veteran's Day flag waving and other celebrations went on as usual, but things were a little different than past Veteran's Days. American Legionnaires drove go-carts in the Decatur parade with signs stating, “America-Love It or Leave It.” In a Veteran's Day speech, Governor Lester Maddox complained against “sicknicks” and “self-styled guerrillas” protesting across the United States. The downtown parade proceeded as usual. The next day, the *Atlanta Constitution* published a picture of the Third Army Band on page one.

Before the end of the calendar year, 12 band members and majorettes participated in the University of Georgia Music Festival, and Larry Hall, Cindy Leach, and Carole

Steen performed in the All-County Beethoven Extravaganza in Atlanta's Symphony Hall. Also, for the third consecutive year, the Russell Band marched in a Christmas Parade in Griffin. Shortly thereafter, the band held a Christmas Party at Morrison's Cafeteria.

During the January/February festival season, the Symphonic Winds continued the extra early morning and Saturday rehearsals that proved effective the previous year. The ensemble also performed a pre-festival concert judged by: Mr. Ken Durham, Band Director, Headland High; Mr. Frank Struck, owner, The Band Box; Miss Eleanor Burgess, Choral Director, Russell High; Mr. James Patterson, Band Director, Clark College; and Mr. Mitchell Henson, Band Director, Roswell High School. The hard work paid off, for the band earned a Superior (I) rating at Ridgeview High School, marking the first time in many years that the band earned back-to-back "straight" Superior ratings.

News of this event appeared in the *Southside Sun*:

"For the first time in its forty year history, the Russell High School Band has earned straight superiors for two years in a row. This year its Symphonic Winds were judged straight superior, the highest rating given by the Georgia Music Educators Festival held in Atlanta recently, with over 80 bands competing.

Judges were unanimous in awarding the superior rating. Dr. Andrew Galos, of Columbus College, wrote, 'darn good band. Wow!' Judge Frank Greer, from East Tennessee University, said, 'Best Band we have heard today!' And Judge D. A. Ellis, Band Director at Furman University, wrote, 'THAT is the way to play Wagner!'

This marks the third time in the last four years that the Band has earned a superior rating."<sup>124</sup>

#### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District V Band Festival

1971	Friday, 26 Feb 8:30 P. M. at Ridgeview H. S.	
	Director: William Prescott	Rating I
	Program: <i>Strategic Air Command</i> .....	Clifton Williams
	LEVEL B <i>Siegfried's Funeral Music</i> .....	Wagner/arr. Whear
	<i>Chorale and Capriccio</i> .....	Giovannini

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<sup>124</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., "Russell Band Beats 80 Bands at Festival," *Southside Sun*, 11 March 1971, 4A.

Bill Fry earned a Superior rating as a student conductor during the Festival.

Spring activities and recognitions were numerous. 18 band students participated in the GMEA District 5 Honor Band; Bill Fry earned membership in the Georgia All-State Band on Tenor Sax; and numerous students earned Superior ratings at Solo/Ensemble Festival at Dykes High School. The Russell Stage Band performed for the PTA - sponsored Miss Russell Pageant held at the East Point Auditorium.

The Russell Band participated in the 105<sup>th</sup> Confederate Memorial Day ceremony held at Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery on Monday, 26 April. The band performed a number of patriotic selections and *Dixie*. Indeed, this performance of *Dixie* was an issue that appeared in a follow-up article in the *Atlanta Journal* a day later:

“It is getting difficult to get a high school band to play *Dixie*, which in recent years has been opposed by a number of black students in some schools. ‘I called at least 50 bands before I got one to play,’ complained Mrs. W. C. Cantrell, president of the Atlanta Ladies Memorial Association which sponsors the annual event. ‘I even chased one band director at the Easter Bunny Parade at Lenox Square.’

She said many of the band directors said their students like to play *Dixie*, but they gave her all kinds of excuses why they couldn't accept the invitation to play. Mrs. Cantrell, whose grandfather was a doctor in the Confederate Army, said she finally arranged through Fulton County School Superintendent Paul West to have the Russell High School Band play for the occasion. The band played *Are You From Dixie?* Prior to the ceremonies while people were still gathering, and then struck up *Dixie* as part of the program.”<sup>125</sup>

Russell produced the musical, “The Student Prince,” on 17-18 May in the East Point City Auditorium. Darlene Gray was cast in the lead female role of Kathie, while Barry Gamblin portrayed Prince Karl Franz, the leading male role. Other cast members

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<sup>125</sup> Sam Hopkins, “Small Crowd Honors Dead of Confederacy,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April 1971, p. 8A.

included Martin Alexander (Dr. Engle), Mark Harris (Lucas), and Steve Moody (Von Asterberg). Select Symphonic Band members performed in the pit orchestra.

The spring “Farewell Concert” was held on Tuesday, 25 May and featured a virtuoso violin performance by Dr. Andrew Galos. A promotional article stated:

“Andrew Galos, former assistant concertmaster with Toscanini and NBC Symphony, will be guest soloist with the Symphonic Winds of Russell High, on Tuesday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Galos, who is now head of the music department at Columbus (GA) College, is known throughout the nation for his superb technique and tone. He has concertized across the U.S. and has played under most of the great conductors of our times, including Bernstein, Szell, and Ormandy. As a member of the famed NBC Symphony, Galos spent 10 years playing for the legendary Toscanini. The world’s finest players were recruited by NBC when the orchestra was formed. In his appearance with the Russell Band, Dr. Galos will play Fritz Kreisler’s *Variation on a Theme by Corelli*.<sup>126</sup>

The band program for the evening followed this order:

<i>Strategic Air Command March</i> .....	Clifton Williams
<i>Alla Barocca</i> .....	C. Giovanini
Symphonic Winds	
<i>Fifth Contest Solo</i> .....	Maury
William Fry, Tenor Saxophone; Steve Clark, Piano	
<i>In-A-Gadda-Da-Vita</i> .....	Doug Ingle
Russellettes	
<i>California Dreaming</i> .....	John Phillips
<i>Star Dust</i> .....	Hoagy Carmichael
<i>Stompin’ at the Savoy</i> .....	Benny Goodman
Stage Band	
<i>Prelude in G minor</i> .....	S. Rachmaninoff
<i>Gallant Men</i> .....	John Cacavas
Honor Band	
<i>Til Eulenspiegel</i> .....	Richard Strauss
<i>Chorale and Capriccio</i> .....	C. Giovannini
Symphonic Winds	
<i>Variations of a Theme of Corelli</i> .....	Fritz Kreisler
Dr. Andrew Galos	
<i>Espana Rhapsody</i> .....	E. Chabrien

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<sup>126</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Famed Musician is Guest Soloist at Russell High,” *Southside Sun*, 2 May 1971, 7A.

The Symphonic Winds personnel listed on the Farewell Concert included the following:

<u>Flutes</u>	<u>Clarinets</u>	<u>Trombones</u>
David Westbrook	Bill Fry	Randy Rye
Martha Moore	Leslie Hamby	David Loggins
Sally Focht	Bob Watson	Mark Harris
Ginger Alford	Ricky Davison	Paul Ward
Debbie Williams	Jean Mauer	Mark Davis
Ann Norton	Margie Bias	<u>Percussion</u>
<u>Oboes</u>	Keith Harkness	David Mathis
Sharon Hudgens	Pam Carroll	Stuart Banks
Vicki Cannon	Sally Sanchez	Keith Norton
<u>Bass Clarinets</u>	<u>Trumpets</u>	Mike Stanley
Lynn Casey	Maurice Brown	Phillip Harden
Patti Prestage	Rusty Stevenson	<u>Tympani</u>
<u>Bassoon</u>	Tom Fritts	Larry Hall
Clyde Reeves	Max Spiglemeyer	<u>Staff</u>
<u>Alto Saxes</u>	Rebecca Kilpatrick	Pat Crews
Kay Phillips	<u>French Horns</u>	Steve Clark
Steve Logue	Cindy Leach	Mike Brown
Randy McCarty	Eileen Alexander	Ellen Tatum
Ken Johnson	Vicki Leftwich	Brenda Ingram
<u>Tenor Saxes</u>	Melissa Collins	Anna Collins
Walter Williford	<u>Baritone</u>	LouAnn Harkins
Barbara Williford	John Mann	
<u>Baritone Sax</u>	<u>Tuba</u>	
Steve Moody	Frank Sawyer	

The Stage Band was comprised of the following students:

<u>Saxes</u>	<u>Trumpets</u>	<u>Trombones</u>	<u>Bass</u>
Walter Williford	Rusty Stevenson	Mark Harris	Frank Sawyer
Steve Logue	Buddy Brown	David Loggins	<u>Piano</u>
Randy McCarty	Tom Fritts		Barry Gamblin
Bill Fry	Max Spiegelmyer		<u>Drums</u>
Clyde Reeves			Larry Hall
Steve Moody			

The Spring Band Trip involved the Symphonic Band, Stage Band, Russellettes, and Majorettes for concert performances at Columbus College (GA) and the Hollywood Bowl in Hollywood, Florida. Over 130 students and parent chaperones attended the trip, along with Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Shadix, assistant principal at Russell. Newly elected Governor Jimmy Carter issued an official proclamation designating “the Russell High School Symphonic Band as the ‘OFFICIAL: BAND OF GEORGIA’ at the Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood, Florida, May 27 -30, 1971, and as our Ambassadors of Goodwill from the State of Georgia to the State of Florida.”



Spring 1971

L-R: Bobby Watson, Steve, Moody, Mark Harris, Louann Harkins, Larry Hall, Gov. Jimmy Carter, Bill Fry, Cindy Leach, Dick Lane and Bill Prescott. Members of the Russell Band with Governor Jimmy Carter, who issued an official proclamation designating “the Russell High School Symphonic Band as the ‘OFFICIAL: BAND OF GEORGIA’ at the Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood, Florida, May 27 -30, 1971, and as our Ambassadors of Goodwill from the State of Georgia to the State of Florida.”

The tour began with a performance in the Columbus College (GA) Fine Arts Hall, a concert made possible by invitation of Dr. Andrew Galos, Chairman of the Music Department. The Hollywood, Florida, portion of the trip was under the auspices of Mr. Edward Parsons, Band Director at South Broward High School, who was first introduced to the band as a guest instructor at the Russell High Marching Band Camp the previous August.

Prior to departure, the band practiced and rehearsed a concert repertoire that included: *Strategic Air Command*, *Alla Barocco*, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vita*, *Chorale and Capriccio*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Espana Rhapsody*, *Emperata Overture*, *Siegfried's Funeral Music*, *Moonlight Serenade*, *Hostrauser's March*, and *Swing March*.

After a 1:12 P. M. Thursday, 27 May, school check-out time, the band members loaded the buses and left Russell at 4:00 P. M. The band arrived at Columbus College by 6:00 P. M. and performed in the Fine Arts Hall at 7:00 P. M. After a dinner break, the band began an all-night trip to South Florida.

The band arrived at the Hollywood Beach Howard Johnson Motel (A1A and Taft Street) at around 8:30 A. M. on Friday morning. After check-in and breakfast, the band was on the bus again to attend a joint rehearsal with the South Broward High School Band. After some free time on the beach and by the pool, the Russell Band performed a joint concert with the host band at 8:00 P. M. at the Hollywood Bowl, a large open-air concert venue in the heart of the Hollywood, Florida, tourist district.

Saturday, May 29, was largely free for more beach and pool time. The day ended with a beach party hosted by the South Broward Band. Travel day on Sunday, 30 May ended with a return to the Russell band room at around 9:00 P. M.



The year concluded with a Band Booster-sponsored band banquet held in the school cafeteria. A newspaper recap stated:

“The Russell High School band reaped the rewards of a championship year at its annual Awards Banquet recently. The GMEA Plaque, symbolic of a superior year, was presented to Music Supervisor Joe Kirschner. Principal Garland Williams accepted the Governor’s Proclamation, signed by Gov. Jimmy Carter, recognizing the Russell band as the state’s Musical Ambassadors during its tour of South Florida.

One of the hilarious highlights of the Banquet was the raffle of Band Director Bill Prescott’s “plantation hat,” a much worn trademark of the Marching Wildcats, seen at every field rehearsal for the past 4 years. After spirited bidding, Band Manager Steve Moody and a large group of co-sponsors paid \$18.00 for the privilege of owning the heirloom. The Band Parents who accompanied the Band on their Florida trip gave Mr. Prescott a brand new hat. It is rumored that the hat will be mounted and hung in the band room.

The Williford Memorial Trophy, for the outstanding boy member, went to William Fry, for his All-State rating, his superior solo and ensemble ratings, and his full scholarship to the University of South Florida. Cindy Leach received the Band Box Trophy as the outstanding girl member for her outstanding performances in the All-Beethoven Orchestra, work as band secretary and her superior French horn performance. The Founder’s Trophy went to Larry Hall, for superior contributions to the musical excellence of the Band. Steve Moody was awarded the Jackson Music Company Trophy as the outstanding officer, and Rusty Stevenson received the Jazz Man of the Year Award from the Headland Music Company.

Debbie Williams and Phillip Harden were judged “most improved” among members of the Concert band, and Eileen Alexander and Vicki Cannon were “most improved” among members of the Symphonic Winds. Buddy Brown and David Westbrook received service trophies for their contributions to the Band. The Inner Rim Award for *oscular macrostomia* went to Rebecca Kilpatrick. The Big John Award, for *furor loquentia*, was won by Randy McCarty. Debbie Waldrep won the Tin Can Trophy for the best marcher, and the Dirty Spoon Award went to the Drum Section for the “neatest” equipment storage. Ken Johnson earned the Purple Heart for wounds suffered in action, and Martha Moore won the Big Sweater for the biggest heart.

Merit Trophies for participation over and above the call of duty, were awarded to Carole Steen, Vicki Cannon, Pam Carroll, Sally Focht, Bill Fry, Larry Hall, Keith Harkness, Sharon Hudgens, Steve Moody, Clyde Reeves, Max Spiglemyer, Rusty Stevenson, and David Westbrook.

Fifteen bandsmen were inducted into the Gold Jacket Club.<sup>127</sup> 11 Bandsmen won coveted gold shirts and 17 seniors were presented with

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<sup>127</sup> Mr. P awarded the seniors gold jackets, wind breaker-style apparel, instead of the traditional band letter. The Class of ’71 band students reported the loss and/or disrepair

individually engraved plaques. 22 Russellettes earned special awards. 13 Bandsmen and staff members were awarded the school monogram. Band members presented Mr. Prescott with a gift at the close of the banquet.<sup>128</sup>

Mr. Prescott announced that Bill Fry and Larry Hall earned college music scholarships. The newspaper announcement for Fry's scholarship read:

“William Fry, Vice-President and student conductor of The Russell High School Band, has been awarded a scholarship by the University of South Florida. Dr. Gale Sperry, Chairman of the Division of Fine Arts, made the announcement in East Point this week.”<sup>129</sup>

A short time later, a newspaper article announced Hall's scholarship:

“The University of Florida has announced the award of Bachman Scholarship to Larry Hall, Drum Major and principal percussionist of the Russell High School Band. Richard W. Bowles, director of Bands at the University, made the announcement in a telephone call to Bill Prescott, Band Director at Russell.”<sup>130</sup>

Approximately 230 seniors graduated at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on 22 May 1971. Bill Fry, Band Vice President, won the Roy Drunenmiller Science Award. Class music included *Bridge Over Troubled Water* (Paul Simon) and *If We Only Have Love* (Jacques Brel Calhoun). Miss Eleanor Burgess directed the music; Sandra Green Calhoun performed the piano accompaniment.

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of many of these jackets over the years, so in 2006, during the 35<sup>th</sup> Reunion of the Class of '71, traditional gold letters, with “Band '71” were presented to the band students.

<sup>128</sup> Spencer, Ragsdale, ed., “Good year for Russell High Band,” *Southside Sun*, 17 July 1971, 5B.

<sup>129</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “\$5000 Scholarship Goes to William Fry,” *Southside Sun*, 25 March 1971, 6A.

<sup>130</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Scholarship Won by Russell High Drum Major,” *Southside Sun*.

## **Academic Year: 1971-1972**

**Principal:** Garland Williams

**Band Director:** William Prescott

**Orchestra Director:** Joyce Relyea

**Band Officers:** Keith Norton, Drum Major; Steve Logue, Assistant Drum Major; Buddy Brown, President; Ginger Alford, Secretary; Sharon Hudgens, Vice President; and Barry Gamblin, Student Conductor.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):**

Buddy Brown, Karen Gronke, Ricky Davidson, Gale Tyson, Keith Norton, Martha Ann Moore, Pat Crews, Jean Jackson, Ginger Alford, Barry Gamblin, Beverly Jones, Kay Phillips, Tina Baker, Leslie Hamby, Debbie Wallace, Carol Jernigan, Patti Grimes, Trevia Bush, Mike Brown, Sharon Hudgens, and Ann Norton.

**Majorettes:** Kay Phillips (Captain), Margie Bias (Solo Twirler), Leslie Hamby, Sally Focht, Pam Carroll, Beth Gregory, Patti Grimes, Trina Kennemore.

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- A new Classroom Building was completed in January 1972.
- The Boys Basketball Team won the 1972 Georgia State AA Basketball Championship.
- Dr. Paul D. West, the long-serving Fulton County School Superintendent and former Russell Principal, retired and was replaced by Ed Baker.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

College Park; Campbell-Fairburn; Lamar County; Rockdale County; Woodward Academy; Headland; Harris County; Briarwood; Henry County; Jackson.

The year started with Band Camp at Camp Glisson in Dahlonega. Pre-season band camps work best when a band is the sole occupant of a band camp site, but rarely does that happen. Whether the location is a church camp or university campus, the local hosts often schedule other groups as space permits. While these various visiting groups remain somewhat separated for the duration of the camp, invariably there will be contact between members of the groups, and often tempers may flare or there may be some other conflicts. Such was the case with this band camp. Toward the end of the week, several

members of a church youth group sharing the camp campus took issue with some of the Russell Band boys, causing an altercation that required adult intervention. The incident made for one of the more memorable Russell Band Camps.

Marching Band highlights included seven halftime performances based on a Las Vegas nightclub theme and participation in Georgia Tech's Band Day. In early September the band traveled to Conyers, Georgia, and played for an Atlanta Area Council No. 92 SOAR Boys Scouts Encampment. On Sunday, 24 October, the band performed incidental music and the National Anthem for the American Legion Post No. 51 Eternal Flame and Memorial Dedication at 2:30 P. M. at Victory Park in East Point. The marching season concluded with a Veteran's Day performance in Atlanta and a Christmas Parade in Griffin, Georgia.

In the final years of the 1960s, a number of issues arose that caused some to question the future of the Southeastern Fair. In 1967, a stabbing with racial overtones cast a pall over the general security and safety of the Fair. The same year, Six Flags Over Georgia, a new major theme park, opened outside the western boundary of Atlanta, just off I-20 West. Six Flags offered many rides, roller coasters, and gaming midway and was open for about 6 months annually as opposed to a 10-day Fair. School holiday collaborations, where thousands of school children attended at discounted entry prices on select weekdays, waned in popularity and ultimately were discounted by school systems by the early 1970s.

In February 1971, the Atlanta school board seriously considered converting the Lakewood Fair property into a junior college. In June 1971, the City of Atlanta Parks and Development Board suggested the Lakewood property as a new site for a softball, pool,

and gym complex. The next month, in an *Atlanta Constitution* article examining a possible Southeastern Fair president replacement caused by the February death of former president Mayor William B. Hartsfield, a committee explored the total question of the Fair, including whether a president was required. The lead *Atlanta Constitution* editorial bluntly stated: “We think the Fair has outlived its time and should be disbanded...the Fair has degenerated into filthy snack bars, hoochie-koochie shows, and gambling corners.”<sup>131</sup>

Despite the rash of negative publicity, the Fair managed to open in the fall for the 57<sup>th</sup> time. As usual, a pre-Southeastern Fair parade a day before the official opening occurred on Wednesday, 29 September. The Third Army Band and Color Guard lead a parade that featured numerous other bands and giant balloons depicting “Alice in Wonderland” characters. The Fair featured a battery-powered replica of the Apollo 15 lunar rover.

Shortly after Thanksgiving, the Russell Band traveled to Griffin, Georgia, and participated in their annual Christmas Parade. On Saturday, 4 December, South Fulton held a Christmas parade, an event labeled the First South Fulton Citizens Parade. The parade started at the East Point City Hall and concluded at College Park, where a Christmas Fair was set up in the College Park Recreation Building. Numerous government agencies and military groups were represented at the fair co-sponsored by the Georgia Federation of Voters and the South Fulton Chamber of Commerce.

The annual Christmas concert at Russell High by the Symphonic Winds included traditional and contemporary Christmas music, ranging from Handel’s *Messiah* to the modern classic, “Carol of the Drums.” The Russellettes performed a dance interpretation

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<sup>131</sup> Murphy, Reg, ed., “What About the Fair?” *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 July 1971, 4-A.

to *The Night Before Christmas*, with choreography by students Angela Talley and Patsy Gardner. The concert concluded with a holiday sing-along.

The Symphonic Winds performed another Christmas Concert at St. Matthew United Methodist Church on Sunday evening, 12 December. The band held a Christmas Party at the church following the concert.

The GMEA District Honor Band Clinic was held at Russell on 21-22 January. Over 600 students from Atlanta and Fulton County Schools auditioned and were placed in five bands. Col. Harold Bachman, a mentor and long-time friend of Mr. Prescott, served as guest conductor for the event. Numerous Russell student hosts were able to acquaint themselves with Col. Bachman during his stay. It was, therefore, quite a shock to the Russell students to hear of news of Col. Bachman's sudden death on stage after conducting the last Junior High All-State selection in Macon later that spring. The Russell Farewell Concert on 18 May 1972 was dedicated to his memory.

In addition to regular in-class rehearsal time, the Symphonic Winds added extra early morning and Thursday evening rehearsals in preparation for the annual GMEA District 5 Band Festival. Entering in Class B and performing at Ridgeview High School, the Symphonic Winds earned a "straight" Superior for the third consecutive year, and fifth overall Superior in a row.



### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District 5 Band Festival

1972 Friday, 25 February 7:30 P. M. at Ridgeview H. S.  
 Director – William Prescott Rating: I  
 LEVEL B  
 Program: *Contest March*.....Prescott  
*Peter Schmoll Overture* .....Von Weber  
*Overture in Bb*.....Giovannini

An article in the *Southside Sun* provided some festival details:

“For the third consecutive year, the Russell Band earned a straight superior rating at the GMEA District V Band Festival. More than 75 bands and orchestras competed in the annual festival.

Judge Frank Greer, of the University of Tennessee, commented, ‘A very fine band; I wish I could hear you in a full concert.’ Judge Earl Beach, from East Carolina University, said ‘Excellent sensitivity, no slips of consequence, very musical, excellent taste and style, wonderful work going on.’

Student Conductor Barry Gamblin also earned a ‘Superior’ rating in the student conducting section of the contest. He directed the band in the *Nordic Overture*. Barry also plays tuba in the Band. Soloists in the concert performance were clarinetist Leslie Hamby, flutist David Westbrook, and oboist Vicki Cannon.

Conductor Bill Prescott, elated at the rating, commented on the hard work, dedication and musical talents of the band members who received a standing ovation from the audience at the conclusion of the performance.

This marks the third consecutive year that the Russell Band has brought home a superior rating, and the fourth in the last five years.”<sup>132</sup>

The 1967 Russell School Accreditation offered the following observations:

#### 1967 Recommendations:

1. Immediate attention should be given to the temperature problem in the instrument room;
2. Additional storage space is needed for the large string instruments in the storage rooms;
3. A director’s stand for instrumental teacher that would include storage space for music should be provided;
4. Consideration for enlarging budget for upkeep of large instruments – piano, wind, and strings;
5. Black out curtains and audio-visual equipment to be used exclusively in music building should be provided;
6. A better piano for the auditorium is needed;

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<sup>132</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Russell Band Wins,” *Southside Sun*, 2 March 1972, 3B

7. Consideration should be given toward scheduling 8th grade students into a general music class – thus adhering to the grammar school/high school sequential program; and
8. More courses in areas of music other than that of performance should be offered. A more flexible schedule could make this possible.

A 1972 re-evaluation committee investigating the status of the 1967 recommendations revealed the following progress:

1. Problem has been hopefully solved with the replacement of a furnace and repair of another;
2. Storage space is sufficient for the present-size department, but working and case-unloading space remains insufficient;
3. A podium was designed and built that will accommodate music and recording equipment;
4. No budget is provided for the repair of school-owned instruments;
5. Other than recording and record-playing equipment (mostly purchased by the Parents Groups), no audio-visual equipment is permanently assigned to the Music Building;
6. A piano was purchased for the auditorium by the PTA in 1971;
7. No longer applicable;
8. Additional non-performing courses have been offered. However, many students cannot take advantage of this offering because of the number of required courses in the 6-period day.<sup>133</sup>

Two former Russell Band students, Mike Daniell ('70) and Bill Fry ('71), were music scholarship students at the University of South Florida in Tampa. As a result of this relationship, the USF Wind Ensemble performed a concert in the Russell Auditorium on 9 March 1972, the night preceding their performance at the Music Educators National Convention in Atlanta. USF concert selections included the *Concerto for Piano and Band* (Stravinsky) and *Raga for Band* (Steinman).

Russell Band Booster-sponsored paper sales were common fund-raisers over the years, but the one held on Saturday, 11 March, was perhaps the biggest to date. A newspaper report indicated that the Lewis Maurer family alone brought in over 17,500

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<sup>133</sup> Russell High School, Report of the Faculty committee on Progress made toward implementing Recommendations of the 1967 Visiting Committee. Typed Report, March 14, 1972: p. 18. In Box Z-4; located in Teaching Museum South, Hapeville, GA.



pounds of paper.<sup>134</sup> The Boosters were busy again the next weekend with a barbecue and Fun Carnival held at the Tri-Cities Plaza Shopping Center. The Carnival included a 3:00 P. M. Russell Band concert. Other fund-raising events during the year included car washes at the American Station, candy sales, paper drives, and donut sales.

Disney World in Orlando opened on 1 October 1971. The first opportunity that school bands and other school groups could visit and perform at Disney World was spring 1972. Disney World extended an invitation to the Russell Band for a May 5, 1972, in-park Parade and Concert, making Russell one of the first bands in history to perform at the Disney World Park. Over 140 students and parents participated in the trip, along with the following special guests: Mr. and Mrs. Norman Sudnick, Russell Science Department Chairman; Ms. Joyce Relyea, Russell Orchestra Teacher; and Larry Hall, former Russell High Drum Major ('71).



1971-72 Russell Band Officers with Gov. Jimmy Carter

Back Row (L – R) David Mathis, Ann Norton, Keith Norton, Barry Bamblin, Mr. Dick Lane, Mike Brown, Mr. Prescott, Rusty Stevenson, Pat Crews, Steve Clark; Front Row (L – R) Martha Ann Moore, Debbie Wallace, Leslie Hamby, Gov. Jimmy Carter, Kay Phillips, Margie Bias, Sharon Hudgens, Karen Gronke

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<sup>134</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “Marching Wildcats Hold ‘Biggest’ Paper Sale; Set sights on Carnival,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 15 March 1972, 6.

Information related to this very significant event was detailed in the *Southside*

*Sun*:

“The Russell High School Band, the on-fire “Marching Wildcats,” has been invited to parade and present a concert in front of the Cinderella’s Castle at Disney World, Orlando, Florida, on Friday, May 5.

Disney World officials selected the Russell Band after hearing tape recordings and seeing pictures of the championship group. Within four years, the Band has received four invitations to perform at major events. It was named ‘Official State Representative’ to the 1969 Mardi Gras by Gov. Maddox and as ‘The Governor’s Own Band’ when it performed in the Bahamas in 1970. Governor Jimmy Carter named the Band ‘Ambassadors of Goodwill’ when it was invited to play in the Florida Hollywood Bowl in 1971.”<sup>135</sup>

The band prepared the below-listed music, from which selections were made for the Parade and the in-park Concert:

*Die Meistersinger, War March of the Priests, Tin Soldiers, Can-Can, Sabre Dance, Magnificent 7, Do Lord, Sardar, Man with the Golden Arm, Joshua, Brazil, His Honor, Instant Concert, The Stripper.*

After a 2:05 P. M. school check-out on Thursday, 4 May, the band departed at 3:30 P. M., ate dinner enroute, and arrived at the Royal Motel (919 West Colonial Drive) in Orlando at around midnight. On Friday, 5 May, the band performed in the 12:30 P. M. Main Parade with a variety of Disney characters and concluded their appearance with a concert in the park. The students were free for the remainder of the afternoon and evening to explore the park.

The band spent the entire day Saturday, 6 May, in free time at the Park. Each student received a free booklet of “A” through “E” tickets that enabled entrance to

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<sup>135</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed., “Russell High Band Bound for Disney World Appearance,” *Southside Sun*, 27 April 1972, 3b.

attractions of various designations. After some free time at the motel on Sunday morning, 7 May, the Band departed for Russell at 2:00 P. M. and arrived home at around 10:30 P. M.

At school the next day, the band began preparing to host the South Broward High School Band for a visit on Thursday and Friday, 11-12 May. The band, led by Mr. Ed Parsons, a noted band director in Florida music education circles, performed in concert on Thursday evening and followed up the next day with a jazz band concert for the Russell student body. Mr. Edward Parsons was first introduced to the Russell band as a guest instructor at the Russell High Marching Band Camp in August 1970. Later, in May 1971, he and his South Broward Band hosted the Russell Band during a trip to Hollywood, Florida; so Russell was more than happy to return the favor.

The Farewell Concert honoring the members of the Class of 1972 occurred on 18 May in the East Point City Auditorium. Mr. Joe Kirschner, Assistant Director of Music Education for Fulton County Schools, served as Guest Conductor. The symphonic winds performed a number of selections including, *Unfinished Symphony* (Schubert) and *Cancion de Adelita* (Chavez). Featured small groups included a Flute Quartet, Orchestra, a Russellette feature, Stage Band, and a piano solo of Chopin's *Polonaise in A Flat Major* (The Heroic) by Steve Clark. Other spring performance appearances included a Stage Band performance for the Miss Russell Pageant and individual/small group performances for Solo/Ensemble Festival at Headland High School.

The annual Awards Banquet was held Friday, 26 May at 7:00 P. M. in the St. Matthew Methodist UMC fellowship hall. The event was planned by the Russell Band and Orchestra Boosters, Lorraine and Leroy McCarty presidents, and organized by Ms.

Peggy Stevenson. Russell Band members recognized for earning GMEA All-State membership were: Kerry Stevenson, flute; Ricky Fitts, clarinet; Michelle Zarzaca, contrabass clarinet; Beverly Scruggs, baritone; Barry Gamblin, tuba; and Carole Steen, violin. Music Scholarship winners included: Barry Gamblin (Georgia State) and Steve Clark (Columbus College).<sup>136</sup>

### **Academic Year: 1972-1973**

**Principal:** Jesse Shaddix

**Band Director:** Bill Prescott

**Orchestra Director:** Joyce Relyea

**Band Officers:** David Westbrook, Drum Major; Rusty Stevenson, President; Vicki Cannon, Secretary; Margie Bias, Head Majorette; and Patsy Gardner, Russellette Captain.

**Band Seniors (or Seniors with significant prior Band experience):** Rusty Stevenson, Patsy Gardner, Margie Bias, Eileen Alexander, Jeanie Mauer, David Westbrook, David Mathis, Kirby Jones, Gary Murray, Phillip Harden, Emily Nix, and Brenda Scruggs.

**Majorettes:** Margie Bias, Captain; Sally Focht; Pam Carroll; Michelle Zarzaca; Beth Gregory; Vicki Cannon.

**Russell H. S. Highlights of Note:**

- The Boys Basketball team placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the State AA Tournament.

**Russell Band appearances likely for the following football season schedule:**

Ridgeview, @ Gordon, Morrow, @ Woodward Academy, Troup, Lakeshore, @ Henry Co., Cherokee, @ Fayette Co., Headland.

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<sup>136</sup> William Prescott, *Farewell Concert Program*, 18 May 1972, 4-5.



1972-73 Band Council

L – R Michele Zarzaca, Phillip Harden, Rebecca Kilpatrick, Clyde Reeves, Pam Carroll, Eileen Alexander, Rusty Stevenson, Vicki Cannon, David Westbrook, Margie Bias, Mike Thomas, Patsy Gardener, Dexter Harris, Tommy Fritts

For the third consecutive year, the annual band camp was held at Camp Glisson in Dahlonaga. News of the pre-season camp was published in the *Southside Sun*, which stated:

“The annual Russell High Band Camp will be held from August 20 through August 24, at Camp Glisson, in Dahlonaga. All veteran and new members of the band, the majorettes and the Russellettes, will participate in this pre-school training in preparation for the football season.

The band camp has become a tradition at Russell and has been partially responsible for the outstanding spirit and style of the Marching Wildcats during the past few years.”<sup>137</sup>

The Marching Band performed eight half-time shows, the last of which was a Disney World Re-creation show. A mid-season show included a Professional Sports recognition. Writing in the *Southside Sun*, Mike Bentley wrote, “the RHS Band will present a ‘Salute to Professional Sports in Atlanta’ Friday night during the halftime of the

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<sup>137</sup> Spencer Ragsdale, ed. “Russell High Band Camp Told,” *Southside Sun*, 12 August 1971, 6A.

Russell-Lakeshore football game.”<sup>138</sup> Baseball players Ralph Garr and Dusty Baker represented the Atlanta Braves in an on-field appearance.

The future of the Southeastern Fair, discussed seriously for the first time the year before, continued to be in doubt in 1972. As they had done the previous year, the *Atlanta Constitution* editorial board came out strongly against continuing the fair. In a 30 May editorial, they argued:

“We urge the special study committee on the future of the Southeastern Fair to consider, frankly, if the fair still has reason to exist. Its origin, essentially, is related to the agricultural interests and makeup of Georgia and the Southeast. Times change. Atlanta is no longer in any predominant measure, an agricultural center....Now is the time to consider if maybe the whole thing ought to be abolished or drastically overhauled.”<sup>139</sup>

Homecoming was held on Friday, 27 October. A semi-formal dance in the Russell Auditorium followed the game. The Russell Band and Orchestra Booster Association was on hand for three hours prior to kick-off providing a Spaghetti Supper fund-raiser in the school cafeteria.

1972 was a presidential election year. President Richard Nixon sought re-election and made a campaign trip to Atlanta on Thursday, 12 October, his only major visit to the South that year. The Georgia State GOP arranged a 12:00 noon motorcade caravan from the Airport, up Peachtree Street from Five Points, to the Hyatt Regency Atlanta hotel. Organizers arranged for the Russell Band and many from Atlanta, Fulton County, DeKalb, Clayton, and Cobb County schools to be positioned at many points along the

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<sup>138</sup> Mike Bentley, “Russell Band Will Salute Pro Sports,” *Southside Sun*, 12 October 1972, 7b.

<sup>139</sup> Reg Murphy, ed., “Southeastern Fair,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 30 May 1972, 4-A.

motorcade route. An *Atlanta Constitution* article the day after estimated the crowd at around 500,000.

Christmas season was busy for the Band. Christmas performances included the City of Griffin Christmas Parade, the annual Christmas Concert at Russell, and a Christmas Party held at St. Matthew United Methodist Church in East Point.

In addition to the Spaghetti Supper fund-raiser mentioned above, the Band and Orchestra Band Booster Association engaged a number of fund-raising activities early in the school year. Two of these drives involved the Stationary Sales and Bicycle Ticket Sales. Later in the school year, the Fun Carnival was held at Tri-Cities Plaza. The *Southside Sun* posted an article informing about the Carnival and other items associated with the Carnival:

“This project (RHS Band Carnival Barbecue) is under the leadership of Elsie and Gene Reeves, and its earnings will help pay for new uniforms for The Russell Wildcat Marching Band, a band which has taken many honors under the direction of Bill Prescott, and now holds an invitation to perform at Disney World in Florida this May.”<sup>140</sup>

The GMEA 5<sup>th</sup> District Festival season meant yet another long and arduous series of early morning and Thursday night rehearsals. Special pre-festival guest conductors included Mr. Joseph Kirschner, Supervisor of Music in Fulton County, and Dr. Andrew Galos, Music Department Chairman at Columbus College. Appearing at Crestwood High School as the last band on the Friday night schedule, Russell earned a Superior rating, as did David Westbrook, the band’s student conductor. Adjudicators included E. W.

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<sup>140</sup> Ragsdale Spencer, ed., “Russell Band Carnival Barbeque,” *Southside Sun*, 9 March 1972, 8B.

Woods, F. N. Gatlin, and David Walters. Later in the year, numerous Superior and Excellent ratings were earned at the 5<sup>th</sup> District Solo/Ensemble Festival.



### 1972-73 Symphonic Winds

#### Recap: Russell Band at GMEA District V Band Festival

1973 Friday, March 2 9:00 P. M. at Crestwood HS

Director – William Prescott

Rating: I

LEVEL B

Program: Minuteman.....Pearson  
Zweignung.....Strauss  
Fanfare, Chorale, and Fugue.....Giovannini

Shortly after the 5<sup>th</sup> District Band Festival, Dr. Andrew Galos announced several music scholarship winners at Russell. The *Southside Sun* noted:

“Four members of the Russell High Band were awarded scholarships to Columbus College, according to the announcement by Dr. Andrew Galos, Chairman of the College’s Music Department. French Hornist Eileen Alexander, trumpeter Rusty Stevenson, flutist David Westbrook, and drummer David Mathis competed in statewide auditions. All received scholarships valued in the neighborhood of \$4,000.00.....Dr. Galos said he was impressed with the musical maturity of the Russell Band members...(and was) highly complimentary of the band program and quality of the students in the band at Russell.”<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Spencer Ross, ed., “Russell Students Win Scholarships,” *Southside Sun*, 1 March 1973, 5A.



A large group of Russell students, comprised mostly of band members, engaged in a service project to repaint the old gym. Writing in the *Southside Neighbor*, Carol Gentry, a staff reporter, detailed a student volunteer effort to repaint the old gym that had been defaced by vandals. This positive story was particularly timely since Russell had previously received what some considered poor press concerning a small student protest and school suspension over a Board-mandated hair length rule. Using a large quantity of paint and brushes donated by local businesses, the students spent an entire Saturday restoring the gym exterior. Gentry's article listed the following student volunteers:

Terry Black, Gary Sewell, Eileen Alexander, Debbie Williams, Carl Garrison, Dexter Harris, Andy Hart, Janet Allison, Clyde Reeves, Patti Prestage, Patsy Terry, Patti Pierce, Patti Raiford, Pam Carroll, Vicki Cannon, David Fritts, David Camp, Art Musselwhite, Jeannie Maurer, Pat Brown, Terisa Marinos, C. B. Hackworth, Margie Bias, Beth Gregory, Doug Davis, Ricky and Tommy Fritts, Karel Gamblin, Kerry Stevenson, Denise Hendrix, Beverly Scruggs, Rusty Stevenson, Vicki Jones, Randy McCarty, Ken Johnson, Michele Zarzaca, Jeff Hulsey, Lisa Lowe Donna Carr, Nancy Miller, Mary Davis, Teris Merriweathr, Emily Nix, Kay Hand, Del Hunter, Patsy Gardner, Brenda Scruggs, Linda Blackmer, Tammy Henderson, Gwen Ivey, Gwen Stalcup, Alicia Goen, Becky Horne, Pam Shelton, Darlene Russell, Kathy Bannister, Angie Talley, Fran Logan, Rebecca Kilpatrick, Ken Horsley, Veronica Lewis, David Westbrook, and Mindy Lane.

The annual spring trip took the Russell Band to St. Augustine, Florida, where they accepted an invitation to perform in the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Augustine Easter Parade. In addition to the parade, the Symphonic Winds were invited to perform a concert in the Bayfront Band shell. Over 120 Russell Band students, parents, and guests participated in the trip.

After completing a half-day school attendance at Russell on Friday, 20 April, the students packed the buses and departed the Russell campus at 4:00 P. M. After a dinner stop near Valdosta, the band arrived at the Red Carpet Inn on I-95, St. Augustine, at

around 11:00 P. M. After breakfast and an early Saturday morning rehearsal at the Bayfront Band shell, the band members were able to visit various points of interest in the historic section of St. Augustine. The concert at the band shell occurred around 3:00 P. M., with free time and a Band Dance completing the day.

On Sunday, 22 April (Easter), the band marched in the 3:00 P. M. Parade before returning to the Red Carpet Inn for a pool party. On Monday, 23 April, the students enjoyed some free time before the 3:00 P. M. departure and 10:00 P. M. arrival at Russell High School.

The Annual Farewell Pops Concert was held in the school auditorium at 8:00 P. M. on Thursday, 24 May. The concert repertoire included the first movement from Borodin's 2<sup>nd</sup> *Symphony*, *American Sailing Songs*, and the Dixieland-styled *Tailgate Concerto*. Eileen Alexander also performed the third movement from Mozart's *Horn Concerto*. Another important end-of-year activity involved the annual Awards Banquet held at St. Matthew Methodist Church. Additionally, at the conclusion of the year, Prescott announced he would be leaving Russell High to pursue a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Arizona. In comments offered after his announcement, Prescott reminisced:

“The band students have been a wonderful group of young people. They are a dedicated bunch of kids. And the band parents Club is probably the best in the state....Teaching at Russell has had its problems, but the administrations, from Larry Dodd, through Hal Shield and Garland Williams, and finally with Jesse Shaddix have all been extremely cooperative and backed the band to the hilt. These years at Russell have been a pleasure for me.”<sup>142</sup>

## End Volume II

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<sup>142</sup> Dorie Green, ed., “Prescott Leaves Russell,” *Southside Sun*, 5 July 1973, 5A.

## CODA

[In December 2018, just five months after the completion of this Volume II, news came of the passing of Mr. P. The following two articles, as written and published by the Georgia Music News in 2019, have been added here.]



Dr. William Prescott, a devoted music educator and musical mentor to many former music students, passed away on December 14, 2018 at the Oaks at Hampton Senior Living in Cumming, Georgia. He passed away peacefully after having been in failing health since about October 2017. He was 95.

Bill Prescott earned his Bachelor's degree from Case Western Reserve University in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. He served in an Ohio-based U. S. Army Band during World War II and traveled the country performing for troops and aiding the stateside war effort. After the war, Prescott taught music at the high school and college levels and obtained a master's degree from the University of Florida. He was recruited and hired by Joe Kirschner in 1967 to come to Fulton County where he served at Russell High School in East Point for six years. Prescott took a leave of absence and left to attend the University of Arizona for a doctorate degree. While in Arizona, Prescott served as an assistant professor of flute and authored *The Prescott Flute Method*, which was published by Belwin-Mills in 1979. In 1976 Prescott returned to Fulton County as band director at Westwood High School, and

then left in 1978 to serve as band director at North Gwinnett High School before retiring from full-time teaching in 1988.

Shortly after his retirement, Prescott was appointed as conductor of the “Sounds of Sawnee” Community Band (Forsyth County, GA) and directed for over ten years. Additionally, Prescott continued to conduct Atlanta’s Yaarab Shrine Band, a group he conducted for over 30 years prior to being selected as Conductor Emeritus. He leaves behind many former students, who carry his memory and example.

## IN MEMORIAM: DR. WILLIAM PRESCOTT

By William E. Fry



It was at the worst point in my then young life that I met Bill Prescott, or Mr. P, as his students affectionately knew him. For reasons I did not understand at the time, a family situation required my transfer from a high school I had attended for three years, an abrupt move at the beginning of my junior year that I found devastating. Yet, as I have often reminisced, it was a moment of Divine Intervention, for the first class I walked into at Russell High was Mr. P’s band class, and it was at that moment my life changed forever. It was September 1969, and over time I had the good fortune to know Mr. P as a teacher, mentor, and second father until this past December 14, 2018, when he passed away at Oaks at Hampton Senior Living in Cumming, Georgia. He passed away peacefully after having been in failing health since about October 2017. He was 95.

When I met Mr. P, he was in his mid-forties and had a wide range of experience, including college teaching. Just two years earlier, Joe Kirschner, assistant supervisor for music education with the Fulton County School system, recruited Mr. P to come to Fulton County and Russell High. Perhaps owing to his background and dynamic personality, I found that Mr. P was different than any teacher I had ever known. I noticed early on that he had a towering and keen intellect and was knowledgeable about so many subjects. There was the time, for example, that I walked into the band room after school to find Mr. P giving answers and mini lectures on the various Greek gods that were posed to him, Jeopardy style, by David Boswell, one of my band friends. As for any chance of changing his mind or winning an argument against him, students and numerous adults I observed over time were simply no match. Mr. P could have written the book, ‘How to Frame and Win an Argument.’” In this regard, Mr. P was fond of telling me the story of how he single-handedly prevailed in a debate against an entire class of fellow students while enrolled in an educational doctoral seminar at the University of Arizona.

It was also evident that Mr. P had a deep passion for music and exhibited it in classes and in his life on a daily basis. His path in music began when he joined the band at Cathedral Latin School under the direction of John Hruby in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. P quickly mastered the flute and developed into an outstanding flute player who performed first with an Ohio-based Army Band in World War II and several other professional symphonic organizations early in his career. Later, he taught applied flute at the collegiate level and ultimately authored the “Prescott Flute Method,” published by Belwin-Mills in 1978. Mr. P could have easily made a career as a

professional flute player, but he decided to devote his life to public school teaching. It was his love for, and dedication to, his students that stands out as his legacy.

In my case, Mr. P was quite often my ride to and from Russell High, whether early before school or late after those Thursday night marching band rehearsals. Additionally, since we both had close relatives in the south Florida area, Mr. P offered transportation to there during every school vacation. Those numerous car rides stand out as some of my most memorable high school experiences, for our talks directly contributed to me formulating a philosophy of life that includes a commitment to service and making a difference in the lives of others.

Mr. P demanded high musical standards from his students but also wanted them to be better people. He was constantly preaching, “Be of service to others.....Don’t drift through life.....Live life with a purpose.....Make a difference.” To help you remember, he made signs or wrote on the chalkboard those uniquely ‘Prescottian’ phrases, such as: “Mediocrity is really only failure;” “Do it immediately, if not sooner;” and his grand motto, “Early is on time; on time is late.”

To various degrees, Mr. P influenced every student who came through his band programs. While some may have only learned a basic life lesson or two before moving on with their lives, others were inspired to become professional musicians and music teachers. Starting with 1970 Russell High grad Mike Daniell, who currently conducts music at Point University (GA) and with the Peachtree Wind Ensemble and North Fayette UMC, Mr. P sent numerous Russell High students to college music programs. This collegiate supply line continued during the mid 1970s when Mr. P was band director

at Westwood High School in Fulton County and later at North Gwinnett High, where he worked until his retirement in 1988.

Retirement did not slow him down. Mr. P taught private flute lessons from his home office on Lake Lanier and did short-term and long-term substitute teaching mostly in the Gwinnett County area. He continued his activities as conductor of the Yaarab Shrine Band and eventually became director of the Sounds of Sawnee Community Band, both of which he retired from around 2010 with the title of Director Emeritus. Vision and other health problems eventually slowed him down, but even as recent as several years ago, Mr. P was still making guest conductor appearances.

There is an old saying that goes something like: 'Don't forget where you came from.' I, like many of his former students, look back fondly on those days with him. For me, there were many times in my personal and professional life when I pulled out my 'Bill Prescott Card' to handle various situations and decisions.

In a memorial service held in Cumming on December 21, 2018, a large collection of former students, relatives, friends, and acquaintances said goodbye to Mr. P. My eulogy concluded with the following: "You changed my life. I have loved you as a friend, mentor, and father, and you were the Maestro I looked up to. I, along with many of your former students, will carry your memory and example with us all the days we have left."

## **Appendix #1: History of Band Festivals**

The history of band music festivals began in 1912 with the establishment of the All-Kansas Music Competition Festival. Owing to the popularity of these competition festivals, five competition festivals were held throughout the state by 1919. Within a few years, other states in the Midwest, such as Michigan and Oklahoma, held band competitions of their own. The first national band contest occurred in Chicago in early June 1923 under the sponsorship of music dealers and band instrument manufacturers. The success and popularity of this event provided the impetus for the creation of a regional system, which in turn led to the national competition. Thirteen bands, representing ten states, appeared at the National Contest held in Fostoria, Ohio in 1926. The Band Contest format grew rapidly in the North and Midwest over the next decade, only to be discontinued in the early 1940s by World War II.

Southern states were slow to adopt the music contest concept. When Georgia implemented a system in 1937, it was based on a festival design whereby bands were rated against a set of performance criteria instead of the contest/competition mode, where bands were rated against each other. The Russell Band participated in the GMEA District Band Festivals for just a few years prior to the cancelation of band festivals throughout Georgia caused by World War II.

With the cessation of World War II hostilities, GMEA re-introduced band festivals on an annual basis and school bands slowly returned to the event in their respective districts. Whereas Russell participated in just a few festivals in the years covered in Volume I, the Russell Band returned to festival participation during the 1950-1951 school year and continued each year throughout the 23 years covered in Volume II.



These annual music festivals, which also included small ensembles and solo performances, focused more on educational rather than social rationales and were very important dates on the annual Russell Band calendar. Not coincidentally, this new direction and philosophy, with an emphasis on festival performance, occurred about the time the Russell Band went co-educational and was reflected by a change in uniforms from ROTC olive drab to brightly colored pageantry uniforms.

Whether on the football field at halftime, in a concert hall in and around Atlanta, or in appearances throughout the southeast (and the Bahamas in 1970), the Russell Band earned a reputation as one of Fulton County's premiere bands, offering music with great variety and appeal. As Volume II clearly reflects, the Russell Band was an important segment of student life at Russell High, contributing to the morale of the school and engendering pride in the East Point community.

## **Appendix #2**

**Jane Morris Collins** [Published in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* from Jan. 3 to Jan. 4, 2008]

Jane Collins passed away peacefully on December 28, 2007 at the Jones Harrison Residence. Janie, as she was affectionately called, was born on March 24, 1938 in Atlanta, Georgia to Maxine Elliot and James W. Morris. She was preceded in death by her parents and her stepfather, James T. Lawlor. Janie will be dearly missed by her devoted husband Tom, and sons, Michael, Mark (Melissa) and Marty. She also leaves behind granddaughters, Lauren and Dylan; nephews, Tom (Miriam) Collins and Bruce Collins; brother-in-law, Gerald Collins. Having been raised in Atlanta, Janie began her life as a true Southern Belle. She was accomplished in ballet and the gentler arts of conversation and etiquette and from this foundation succeeded in becoming Miss Georgia, thus representing her state in the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City in 1956. This led to one of her great adventures in life, that of skating for the touring show, Holiday on Ice. She and her skating partner, Alfredo Mendoza, were the Adagio Stars of the show. Janie and Alfredo also worked with the artistic staff at Cypress Gardens in Florida, creating balletic routines that could be possible on water skis. Her skating career with Holiday on Ice took her around the United States, Mexico and Cuba, and led her to the next phase of her life, that of wife and mother. During this exciting time, she met, was courted by, and married the man who became her life partner, her husband, Tom; and together they had three children. There was very little that Janie would not do for her children, or for that matter, any other child or person. She was an attentive and tenderhearted mother who had an endless capacity of love, and was not afraid to show it. Janie had the ability to make

anyone feel special, whatever their standing in life. And this, combined with her great sense of humor and fairness, endeared her to everyone that she met. Although in her heart, she knew that she was truly a Georgia Peach, in 1971 Jane did move to the North with her husband Tom, and their family to the city of Minneapolis. She became a member of Our Lady of Grace Church, and was a devout Christian. Some of her greatest comforts were the conversations that she had with friends from the clergy, and she lived her life according to her convictions. Mass of Christian Burial, Our Lady of Grace Church, 5071 Eden Avenue, Edina, MN 55436, on Saturday, January 5th at 12:00 Noon. Visitation with the family one hour prior to the service. Interment at Lakewood Cemetery following a private family service.

### **Appendix #3**

#### The 1970 Russell-South Fulton Consolidation: An Overview

Russell High School became fully integrated in the fall of 1970. This event was part of an overarching plan to desegregate all of the Fulton County Schools to comply with a court-ordered mandate to sufficiently integrate black and white students throughout the district. While compliance with the court order was accomplished primarily with changes in Fulton County's school zones, the method of integration at Russell High involved "pairing" with all-black South Fulton High School. This plan resulted in the merging of South Fulton's upper grades with those of Russell, while the 8<sup>th</sup> grade from Russell combined with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders from South Fulton at that location.

#### Status of Integration

Integration came late to Fulton County, for the issue was decided in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* as far back as 1954. Opposition to school integration occurred not only in Fulton County, but also in practically every county and jurisdiction in Georgia and the entire South as well. The first concerted effort at integration resulted in violence in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. Shortly afterwards, massive protests and uprising occurred throughout many areas in the South.

As a response to *Brown v. Board of Education* the Georgia State legislature passed a state law in the mid-1950s requiring the complete closure of local school systems facing mandatory desegregation. Gubernatorial candidate Ernest Vandiver, who won election as Georgia's governor in November 1958, adopted a campaign slogan of "no, not one" (black student would integrate a Georgia school under a Vandiver

administration.) In the late 1960s, Governor Lester Maddox advocated resistance to school integration.

The Atlanta Public Schools (APS) were the first to integrate in the Atlanta area when 9 African-American students were peacefully admitted to four all-white high schools on 30 August 1961. The APS sought to achieve integration through the adoption of “Freedom of Choice,” leaving the choice of schools to the parents and students. By April 1965, the District Court of Atlanta deemed such a plan had not sufficiently integrated the school system and that more aggressive methods were needed. Over the next few years the APS experimented with a number of remedies, including school re-zoning, teacher reassignments, limited busing, and the 1972-73 majority-to-minority program, to name a few.

#### Fulton County Board of Education

Fulton County’s first official attempt at desegregation was outlined in a 22 February 1965 School Board plan based on a graduated concept whereby certain grades would be integrated and full integration achieved over time.<sup>143</sup> The proposal was as follows:

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Grades</u>
1965-66	1, 12
1966-67	1, 2, 11, 12
1967-68	1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12
1968-69	1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12
1969-70	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
1970-71	all grades

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<sup>143</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “County School Desegregation Plan Announced; Effective in ’65,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 24 March 1965, 1.

The School Board plan was amended on 13 May 1965 as follows:<sup>144</sup>

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Grades</u>
1965-66	1, 2, 8, 12
1966-67	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12
1967-68	all grades

This proposal, which was initially approved by Francis Keppel, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, contained a “Freedom of Choice” provision that allowed students to remain at their old school, with transportation provided, if they so desired. In the spring of 1966, the Commissioner of Education rejected the plan, stating it insufficient due to the relatively low numbers of affected students. Commissioner Keppel remanded the plan back to the Fulton County School Board for different and faster action. The Board stood fast to the “Freedom of Choice” plan underway and objected to the edict, resisting any effort to change the pace or method from the previously approved plan.<sup>145</sup>

The impact of “Choice” did little to change the racial make-up at Russell High. Louise McDaniel, Russell librarian from 1948-1979, wrote a manuscript in 1967 entitled, *History of Russell High School*. In it, she wrote about the first attempt at integration at Russell in the fall of 1966 and mentioned that African-American students were offered the choice of attending Russell on a limited basis. That year, two African-American teachers were on the faculty and only 9 African-American students, mostly in the lowered grades, opted to attend Russell. During the 1969-70 school year, the year prior to

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<sup>144</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Fulton County Board of Education Plan for School Desegregation, Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter, 2 June 1965, 1/8.

<sup>145</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “Fulton County Board of Education Questions Integration Speed-up,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 23 March 1966, 3A.

consolidation, the African-American presence at Russell was still low and included a total of only four teachers and thirteen students.

During this late 1960s time period, however, the U. S. Office of Education concentrated specifically on the situation concerning all-African-American Eva Thomas High in College Park and predominately white College Park High School. By the spring of 1969, that office mandated one of three acceptable plans: 1) “Pair” both schools with certain grade levels at each school; 2) Close Eva Thomas High outright and combine all students at College Park High; or 3) Drastically alter attendance zones. The Fulton County School Board and Superintendent Paul West, along with local U.S. Congressman Fletcher Thompson, strongly opposed all three alternatives and continued to opt for the “Freedom of Choice” then currently in operation.<sup>146</sup> Faced with legal sanctions from the federal government, the Fulton County Board of Education finally relented and decided on option #2, the closing of 6-year-old Eva Thomas, the newest high school in all of Fulton County, and assigned the Eva Thomas students to College Park High, Lakeshore High, and Hapeville High.<sup>147</sup> Major protests from the Eva Thomas community eventually led to a one-year postponement of the closure of Eva Thomas; however, by April 1970 U. S. District Judge Albert J. Henderson issued a ruling that involved a comprehensive integration of all Fulton County schools for the fall of 1970. While “pairing” was not favored by the School Board the previous year, several such “pairing” plans were ultimately undertaken, including the one for South Fulton and Russell. The 1970-71

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<sup>146</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “Fulton County Must Make-up for Past Discrimination,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 25 June 1969, 7.

<sup>147</sup> C. N. Martin, ed., “Fulton School Board Adopts Plan to Close Eva Thomas High,” *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, 30 July 1969, 1.

school year began with African-American and white students at the Russell facility, while the combined 8<sup>th</sup> graders attended school at the South Fulton building.

#### African-American Education in East Point

For African-American students in East Point, the consolidation of South Fulton and Russell was the end of an extended journey for educational equality that began shortly after the Civil War. Both prior to and during the early parts of the 1900s, the only avenue for any kind of formal education occurred in churches, such as the Union Baptist Church. By 1916, a school was built on Randall Street and eventually about 225 students attended the school. The facility was destroyed by fire in 1926 and a new school was built on Bayard Street in 1928. This building also burned in 1940. The school was rebuilt at 605 South Bayard Street and renamed the East Point Colored School.

This facility only served the needs of African-American students in grades 1-8. Since Fulton County did not have any African-American high schools at this time, African-American students wishing to pursue additional education beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade attended Booker T. Washington High School in the APS district. Fulton County paid the cross-boundary tuition; however, the students were required to provide their own transportation, a difficult feat considering the distance involved and the necessary walking and trolley transfers to and from Booker T. Washington. A high school experience for East Point African-American students did not occur until 1947, when the East Point Colored School added a ninth grade and one grade level each year thereafter until a full senior high was in place by 1950.



### Russell/South Fulton Consolidation Aftermath

The 2000 movie, “Remember the Titans” starring Denzel Washington was reminiscent of the Russell/South Fulton consolidation. The movie storyline involves the 1971 pairing of an all-African-American school with an all-white school in Virginia, showing the resulting problems the football team and the community encountered. This Hollywood version of events included a number of violent incidents in the initial days of the school’s integration, but the actions and success of the football team eventually brought both the white and African-American communities together.

The Russell-South Fulton consolidation occurred during this author’s senior year. Integration appeared to go smoothly and all seemed well from this author’s white point of view; however, such may not have been the case from the African-American students’ perspective. Former South Fulton students left a school that was historically, socially, and culturally an important source of African-American identity. Also, when arriving at Russell, the former South Fulton African-American students did not see their former school officials in positions of authority, but rather saw white holdovers in important positions such as principal, head counselor, head football coach, male and female basketball coaches, and band director. The total Russell faculty only included six African-American teachers. In addition, large and highly visible student positions, such as Varsity and B-team cheerleaders, the Russellettes dance team, class officers, and the Majorette Corps, were all-white.

Recent attempts to obtain newspaper accounts and reviews concerning the first year of the Russell-South Fulton merger were unsuccessful. Newspapers such as the *Atlanta Constitution*, *Atlanta Journal*, *Atlanta’s Suburban Reporter*, and the *Southside*

*Sun* apparently had nothing sensational to cover on the subject. The author's informal conversations with fellow classmates turned up no instances of major problems related to the consolidation. A recent brief discussion with Bob Murray, a then-young coach and English teacher at Russell in 1970, revealed no problems that he could remember from a faculty member's perspective. The author recalls an incident when African-American students staged a walk out of a pep rally when *Dixie* was played; but, other than this action, no other major problems were observed nor reported.

A school accreditation committee visited Russell High during the second year of integration. In an official memo written by Evaluation Chairman M. O. Phelps, the opening sentence of his first paragraph stated: "Student and faculty morale appeared to be unusually high for a school which had been integrated to the extent that Russell High School has in the recent past."<sup>148</sup> A memorandum dated 16 March 1972 from Evaluation Committee member Wiley S. Bolden stated in part: "The degree of (outstanding) progress seems especially noteworthy when consideration is give to the fact that much of the attention and effort of the faculty have necessarily been diverted to making changes and adjustments occasioned by the desegregation of the Fulton County school system."<sup>149</sup> G. L. Carroll of Southern Technical Institute in Marietta, GA, led the Steering Committee of Philosophy of Objectives and School/Community, a sub-committee of the evaluation group. His memorandum time stamped 17 March 1972 included ten Russell High

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<sup>148</sup> M. O. Phelps, Observations Concerning the Interim Evaluation for Russell High School, 14 March 1972.

<sup>149</sup> Wiley S. Bolden, Interim Evaluation Russell High School, memo to Dr. M. O. Phelps, 16 March 1972.

accomplishments, the first of which read: “Black and white students have integrated without major difficulty.”<sup>150</sup>

Further research and additional interviews may reveal different conclusions; however, the Russell-South Fulton consolidation was arguably successful for all involved.

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<sup>150</sup> G. L. Carroll, Meeting of Group I, report of the Steering Committee, Philosophy of Objectives and School & Community, 14 March 1972.

## William Fry, Russell High Band, '71

Dr. William Enrico Fry, a 1971 graduate of Russell High School, is researching and documenting the 60-year history of the Russell Band. In 2011, Fry retired after 36 years of service to music education and is writing the Russell Band History as his first retirement project.

After his graduation from Russell, where he was a band student of Dr. William Prescott, Fry graduated from Columbus State University (GA) in 1975 and received the Masters of Music Education from Georgia State University in 1981. He obtained the Doctor of Musical Arts in Instrumental Conducting from the University of North Carolina/Greensboro in 1991.

Prior to his recent retirement from a music position with the Muscogee County School District (Columbus, GA), Fry held band director positions at Columbus State University and Susquehanna University (PA). From 1975 to 1987, Fry was coordinator of all instrumental music activities at Redan High School, Stone Mountain, Georgia, and held an assistant conductor position with the Yaarab (Atlanta) Shrine Band.

Fry has appeared as a feature conductor at the Georgia Music Educators State Convention, Florida State University "Tri-State" Conductors Symposium, CBDNA/NBA Southeastern Regional, and the Carolina Conductors Symposium. He has authored several articles on conducting and is a noted authority on the band music of Don Gillis.

Fry has three grown children and resides with his wife, Anne, in Columbus, Georgia, where he is an on-call part-time member of the saxophone section of the Columbus Cavaliers Jazz Band and has been conductor of the Columbus Community Orchestra since 1999 to present. He is also a saxophonist with "DNR," an all-doctor rock band that plays volunteer benefit performances throughout the Columbus area. Additionally, Fry holds a part-time music position at Columbus Tech College.

