

Classen High School Alumni Association *Building a Legacy*

From 1919 until it closed in 1985, Classen High School played a major role in the lives of more than 20,000 students who graduated from the school. The memories of a good education, camaraderie and lifelong friendships are kept alive by the Classen High School Alumni Association. Founded after the school was closed due to declining enrollment, association members have worked tirelessly to keep their strong memories alive through reunions and publications.

When the school reopened in 1994 as a public magnet school and renamed Classen School of Advanced Studies, the association took the opportunity to connect with current students and faculty.

“One of the most important purposes of our association is to recognize and encourage excellence in scholarship,” says Norma Bowden Harris, an association member. “Today more than ever, scholarships are needed to help students further their education. Not only does the scholarship help a student today, but for years to come.”

The association decided to expand its support of the school to include an annual scholarship to a graduating senior. Don and Carolyn Zachritz (both graduates of the Class of 1955) had established an Advised Fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation in 1992 and were very familiar with the scholarship endowment program we administer. The couple encouraged the establishment of the Classen High School Alumni Association Scholarship endowment fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation.

The endowment fund was established in early 2012 and made its first award that spring to Aubrey Brown. While this first award was a milestone for the alumni association in establishing a lasting legacy with the school loved by so many, for Aubrey it meant being able to attend the University of Central Oklahoma.

“I come from a single-parent home and my mother is a schoolteacher so this scholarship is greatly appreciated and needed,” Aubrey says. “Education is very important to my family and this scholarship will allow me the opportunity to attend college.”

Members of the Classen High School Alumni Association are joined by students attending the Classen School of Advanced Studies and their guidance counselor, Robin Lindsey. Front: Norma Bowden Harris (Class of 1951), Meishu Gu (Class of 2012) and Mary Ellen Wells (Class of 1950). Middle: Don Lee (Class of 1951), Carolyn Zachritz (Class of 1955), Robin Lindsey and Don Zachritz (Class of 1955). Back: Angelica Brooks (Class of 2012), Abi Hood (Class of 2013) and Jared Ontko (Class of 2012). The group is standing in front of an art project that was started by the school's current seniors when they were freshmen.

Photo by Brandon Snider

