

# Kokomo High School

## Dates From Our Heritage

- 1845 Kokomo conducted the first educational classes in a log cabin through private subscription schools. The first school was located at the base of Washington Street near where Foster Park is located today.
- 1853 The Center Township Trustee erected the first free school in a log cabin at the corner of Washington and Walnut Streets.
- 1857 An “advanced school” was established in the old Christian Church on Mulberry Street just north of the old post office building currently used for governmental offices.
- 1863 The Normal School was established by a private joint stock company on the south side of East Sycamore Street between Market and Lafountain Streets.
- 1870 The Normal School became Howard College. Since there was no high school, students from the free school could opt to attend college directly from grammar school.
- 1872 Howard College closed and the first Kokomo High School was built on the northwest corner of Armstrong and Taylor Streets.
- 1873-1898 The Normal School (Howard College) was purchased for use of Kokomo High School. The 1872 building was sold to the Baptist Church.
- 1898 The Normal Building (Kokomo High School) was destroyed by fire.
- 1898 A new high school building was constructed at the southeast corner of Market and Sycamore streets.
- 1902 Central School was constructed on the north side of the 300 block of East Superior Street. It was originally known as the First Ward School for elementary and junior high students. With the opening of Sycamore School in 1964, Central was used for a Kokomo High School annex.
- 1914 The 1898 Kokomo High School structure was destroyed by fire.
- 1914 Classes for Kokomo High School were held in the Tabernacle Building on the south side of the burned structure facing Market Street. Other classes were held throughout the downtown area including the city building.
- 1915 A new Kokomo High School was opened for classes at 303 E. Superior Street. This building is currently Central Middle School.
- 1925 The old Haworth Gymnasium was built immediately to the west of Kokomo High School on Superior Street. Its location is where the vocational wing of Central Middle School is today. The building was named for C. V. Haworth former principal and superintendent at the time of its construction.
- 1944 The Haworth Gymnasium was destroyed by fire. Ball games were played at the Kokomo Armory.
- 1949 The current Memorial Gymnasium was dedicated.
- 1950 The Haworth Vocational Building was constructed on the site of the old Haworth Gymnasium.

- 1968 Haworth High School began classes on South Berkley. Kokomo had two high schools from 1968 through 1984.
- 1984 Kokomo and Haworth High Schools were combined with grades 10-12 located at the Kokomo High School South Campus (Haworth Building) and grades 8-9 at the Kokomo High School Downtown Campus (former high school building on Superior Street). Eventually all high school classes were moved to the South Campus and the Downtown Campus became Central Middle School. The Kokomo Area Career Center was opened as a part of the South Campus building in 1998.

### **Early Years**

The County of Richardville (later to become Howard) was established in 1844. It was carved out of a Miami Indian reserve along Wildcat Creek. Original founders, David and Elizabeth Foster, established a trading post at the rapids of the Wildcat and subsequently built a log cabin. It was in this cabin that the first church services were held, and it was not long thereafter that the Fosters donated land for a Methodist Church where Foster Park is now located. The community that developed around the Foster trading post and the Methodist church was named after an Indian Chief known to David Foster as Cocomo (or Kokomo) “the orneriest town after the orneriest Indian he knew.” The small community was recognized as the county seat, and in 1845 Dr. Adam Clark opened the first subscription or private school at the base of Washington Street near where Foster Park is today. The school was a log structure with plank benches for seats and only a wood fireplace for heat. Only spelling and reading were taught. Students were expected to learn arithmetic and writing on their own with occasional help from the schoolmaster.

The school term was thirteen weeks and cost each student \$2. The subscription school was the only school from 1845 to 1853, and enrollment ranged from 16 to 38 students per term. Teachers boarded with local families during the school term.

By 1850, a movement throughout Indiana promoted “free schools.” The concept was new, and the township trustee was expected to provide for the education of the students within their jurisdictions. Later the 1861 Indiana Constitution mandated free education for all students within the state. In 1853, the Center Township Trustee erected the first “free school” as a log structure at the corner of Washington and Walnut Streets. This school was primarily for the elementary grades. By 1857, the need for “advanced training” became apparent, and classes were opened in the old Christian Church which stood just west of the old Post Office building on Mulberry Street which is currently used for municipal and county offices. Older students attended this school, and it became parent to what we know today as a “high school.” Emphasis was placed on “normal education” which prepared students for teaching. A normal education was all that was needed for students to be able to teach.

In 1855, Kokomo became a “town” and was faced with improving its educational system. A joint stock company known as the Normal School Association provided funding for a Normal School which was built on the south side of Sycamore Street between Lafountain and Market Streets. The institution was known as the Indiana State Normal School of Kokomo. The fee for attending the Normal School was \$2 per week or \$6.50 for an eleven week term. By 1870, the Normal School had evolved into Howard College which lasted for only two years. Because there was still no high school, grade school students who wished to continue their educations went directly to college.

### **Kokomo High School**

In 1872 the Board of Education for the City of Kokomo built the first high school which was located at the northwest corner of Armstrong and Taylor Streets. It was a one story frame structure and enrolled 101 students in its first and only term (1872-1873). The first principal was J. Fred Vaile.

In 1873, the Board of Education purchased the Normal School Building (Howard College) and conducted high school classes there. This location served as the high school until 1898 when a fire destroyed the building. The first graduates from Kokomo High School were Anna Styer and John V. Ploughe in 1875. Enrollment was stagnant from 1873 until 1898; and during that time, no more than 27 students ever graduated in any one year.

After the 1898 fire, students were forced to attend classes in various places in downtown Kokomo. Most classes were conducted at the Tabernacle building, a consortium of town churches, just south of the destroyed structure facing Market Street. Other classes were conducted at the City Building. The Board of Education constructed a new stone structured high school building at the southeast corner of Market and Sycamore Streets and named C. V. Haworth as the principal. The new building prompted an increase in enrollment. In its first year, 278 students attended the high school and 41 actually graduated. Enrollment continued to increase for the next 16 years.

Another fire destroyed the 1898 building in 1914. The Board of Education was forced to purchase land, previously owned by David Foster, on Wildcat Creek on the south side of Superior Street. A new high school building was constructed, much larger than previous ones. Enrollment was increasing significantly. The building was opened in 1915 and is the same structure as Central Middle School today. In the interim, classes were held throughout downtown Kokomo.

The gas boom and the development of the auto industry in Kokomo caused enrollment to grow to unprecedented levels both before and after World War II. Enrollment at Kokomo High School had become so large that Central School, constructed in 1902 on the Normal School site as an elementary and junior high school, was used as an annex for the high school. By 1967, the Board of Education had determined that enrollment warranted a second high school in Kokomo. In 1968 Haworth High School was opened on the south side of Kokomo at the corner of Lincoln Road and Berkley Street. Haworth

High School operated as a second high school until 1984 when enrollment had dropped to the level that economic restraints could not justify two high schools. Kokomo High School and Haworth High Schools were merged in 1984. Grades 10-12 attended classes at the South Campus (formerly Haworth High School), and grades 8-9 were located at the Downtown Campus (formerly Kokomo High School). Kokomo High School was restored as the name for both campuses. Currently all high school classes, grades 9-12, are located at the Berkley Street location, and by 2002 the Downtown Campus had become Central Middle School housing grades 6-8.

### **Haworth High School**

Haworth High School opened its doors during the fall of 1968 under the principalship of Harry McCool. Mr. McCool remained principal until the school was merged with Kokomo High School in 1984.

During its seventeen years in existence, Haworth developed its own proud heritage. Located on the south side of Kokomo at the intersection of Berkley and Lincoln Road, patrons constructed their own athletic field which has become Walter Cross Field today. It had an Olympic-size swimming pool and one of the first all-weather tracks for high schools. Its unique location, allowed the development of an outdoor science laboratory which was one of the first of its kind in Indiana. Today, one of the first log cabins in Howard County was relocated next to the outdoor laboratory where nature paths and a pond provide opportunities for science and history students from throughout the school district.

Known as the Huskies, Haworth athletic teams competed fiercely and evenly with their cross-town rivals, the Kokomo Wildkats. The Haworth boys were state swimming champions in 1982. Their colors were navy blue and gold. A memorial room of Haworth High School memorabilia still exists at the Berkley Street building today.

### **Kokomo High School Vocational Education**

Vocational education in Kokomo developed over the years as “manual training.” Shop and home economics classes were established well before World War II. But practical vocational programs were needed as a part of the war effort. This is when vocational education really established its beginning. During World War II, students learned application-based electronics, aerodynamics, construction, health care, mathematics, food preparation, and auto-mechanics. Students from Kokomo High School developed and tested model airplanes that were used by the United States Air Force to improve its fleet. Programs became so popular that by 1949 the Board of Education built the Haworth Vocational building as a separate structure just west of the main high school building on Superior Street. This is the same location where the old Haworth Gymnasium was located before the gym burned in 1944. After a few years, space became scarce and the auto-mechanics, practical nursing, and auto-body programs were relocated to different areas throughout the city.

After the merger with Haworth High School in 1984, the new Kokomo Area Career Center was built as an addition to the Kokomo High School South Campus in 1998. The Career Center today enrolls students from all area high schools and continues to grow with employment needs in the community. A health care wing was added to the Career Center in 2008.

### **Kokomo High School Athletics**

Athletics at Kokomo High School have become a major part of student life and memories. Football was the first sport, and it started in 1899. It was not popular and was actually discouraged by President Theodore Roosevelt who believed it was too dangerous. By 1903, the athletic teams at KHS were football and track. Cycling and tennis however existed as clubs. The first basketball team for the Wildkats was organized in 1904 and only played four games. The first game was played in the eighth grade assembly room of the high school against Logansport. Early competition came from schools like Walnut Grove, Wheeling, Atlanta, and Michigantown. Girls basketball also started in 1904 but as an intramural activity.

Naming of the school mascot dates back to a 1915 basketball team that was especially good. They called themselves “the Wild Cats.” The name stuck and eventually became Wildcats. In 1984, the name Wildkats, with a “K” was copy-rited. Several depictions of the “Kat” are shown on these pages. School colors are Red and Blue.

The Wildkats and Huskies have won 108 state individual championships in all sports. Team state championships are the following:

Boys Basketball, 1961—Kokomo Wildkats

Girls Basketball, 1992, 1993, 2003—Kokomo Lady Kats

Boys Golf, 1958, 1985, 1986, 1988—Kokomo Wildkats

Baseball, 1985—Kokomo Wildkats

Boys Track, 1911, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1934, 1935, 1937, 1994—Kokomo Wildkats

Boys Swimming, 1969—Kokomo Wildkats; 1982--Haworth Huskies

Indoor sports were played in a variety of locations. The first gymnasium was located in the basement area of the 1914 high school building. It served as the venue for basketball games and physical education classes until the Haworth Gymnasium was constructed in 1925. The old gym remained in use as the “girls gym” until it was renovated into a media center in 1967. The Haworth Gym, named for Superintendent C. V. Haworth, was the home of the Wildcats until it burned in 1944. Arson was suspected but never proven. Basketball had become such a major part of Indiana heritage by that time, that the total Kokomo community became determined to build a much bigger and elaborate structure. Between the fire in 1944 and the opening of the new gymnasium in 1949, games were played mostly at the Kokomo National Guard Armory. In the meantime, a separate corporation was formed by various community members known as the Kokomo High School Athletic Association. This organization sold bonds and accepted donations for the construction of Memorial Gymnasium. One of the major benefactors of the gym

was Earl Turner whose son had been a Wildcat basketball star. His son was killed in duty to his country in World War II. The Turner donation included the construction of the "Memorial Room" to honor all KHS athletes killed in action. The gymnasium was consequently named "Memorial Gymnasium." The gym originally seated 7,000 people and was one of the largest high school gyms in the country. In 1951, Kokomo hosted its only semi-state basketball tournament at Memorial Gym.

The success of the Kokomo Wildcat track teams in the 1920's, prompted the School Board to construct an athletic field. In 1929, Kautz Field was constructed just to the east of Kokomo High School on Apperson Way. The field included a cinder track, a football field, baseball diamonds, and other areas for a variety of sports. The stadium itself was one of the first and only covered stadiums in Indiana. The field was named for J. A. Kautz, a former school board member who had donated part of the land for the high school building. Prior to 1929, the high school track was located between the high school building and Wildcat Creek. Football games were played in Foster Park.

Haworth basketball teams played their games at Memorial Gymnasium. However, patrons of the school constructed their own athletic field on Berkley Street. With the merger of Kokomo and Haworth High Schools in 1984, the Haworth Athletic Field was re-named "Walter Cross Field." Walter Cross was one of the first Gimbel Award winners in basketball when he played for Thorntown High School. Mr. Cross later became a long-time teacher and coach at Kokomo High School. His work with the 1920's track teams helped to establish the Kokomo dominance in that sport.

### Major School Activities

All Kokomo and Haworth alumni have memories of various school activities, and some of these activities have their roots deep in the history of the schools. From the beginning, KHS had co-curricular clubs which supported various academic areas. Foreign language clubs, speech and debate, drama, band and choir, student council, Girls League, and Boys Legion are some of the enduring activities which remain active today.

The Sargasso, KHS yearbook, was first published in 1909. It was named for the Sargasso Sea where flotsam and jetsam collected in the Caribbean. Therefore, the yearbook collected its own memories, personalities, activities, and history of Kokomo High School. Since 1911, the Sargasso has been an annual publication except for 1914 when the high school burned including most of the records with it. What materials that were saved from the fire were published in the 1915 edition.

The Red and Blue, school newspaper, traces its beginning to 1923. In that year the KHS Hi-Y Club (affiliate of the YMCA) decided to "surprise" the student body and published the first school newspaper. The student council felt that the paper was a such a success that it voted to continue publication. It conducted a contest among students for an appropriate name, and Red and Blue was selected. The paper has been a weekly and bi-weekly over the years of its existence.

The first student handbook, the Lens, was published in 1921. The Lens was intended to help new students with orientation and assist existing ones with vital information such as rules and regulations, school activities, athletic events, curricular options, and various staff members.

Haworth High School activities mirrored those at KHS almost from the beginning. The school published a yearbook every year of its existence and named it the Subraucus. In Latin Subraucus stands for “hoarse voice.” The school newspaper was subsequently named The Husky Voice. Both became complements to each other.

### Principals and Superintendents

#### *Principals*

J. F. Vaile, 1872-1873  
C. M. Harrison, 1873-1876  
Bessie Cox, 1876-1878  
W. H. McClain, 1878-1879  
J. M. Hitt, 1879-1880  
A. C. Hopkins, 1880-1881  
H. G. Woody, 1881-1893  
E. B. Bryan, 1893-1894  
J. Z. A. McCaughan, 1894-1909  
C. V. Haworth, 1909-1913  
E. O. Maple, 1913-1915  
C.E. Hinshaw, 1915-  
O. I. Farmer, 1964  
Kenneth Crook, 1964-1967  
Frank G. Moore, 1967-1989  
Harold Canady, 1989-2008  
Douglas Arnold, 2008-present

#### *Superintendents*

Sheridan Cox, 1873-1893  
H. G. Woody, 1893-1898  
R. A. Ogg, 1898-1910  
A. O. Neal, 1910-1913  
C. V. Haworth, 1913-1944  
O. M. Swihart, 1945-1964  
Lowell C. Rose, 1964-1967  
Robert Dalton, 1967-1987  
Larry Horner, 1987-1992  
Roger Thornton, 1993-1998  
Stephen Healy, 1998-2001  
Thomas Little, 2001-2008  
Christopher Himsel, 2008-present

### Distinguished Alumni

All Kokomo and Haworth High School Alumni are “distinguished;” some have achieved national acclaim. A few are the following:

William Kepner, 1946 KHS graduate, war hero from World Wars I and II; recipient of Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross

Don Pardee Moon, 1912 KHS graduate, World War I war hero, Admiral U. S. Navy

Robert Coughlan, 1932 KHS graduate, editor of the Red and Blue, Fortune and Life Magazines.

Misch Kohn, 1934 KHS graduate, nationally acclaimed artist with expertise in wood engraving

Jack DeLon, 1944 KHS graduate, opera star with New York Civic Opera and Operetta Company

Edgar Garbert, 1947 KHS graduate, one of the first layout and design artists for Walt Disney

Virginia McClamrock, 1947 KHS graduate, member of the June Taylor Dancers and Rocketts

Margaret Hillis, attended Kokomo High School, conductor of New York City Concert Choir and Chicago Chorus

Elwood "Bud" Hillis, attended Kokmo High School, Indiana 5<sup>th</sup> District Congressman 1971-1987

Norman Bridwell, KHS graduate 1946, author and illustrator of children's books notably Clifford the Big Red Dog

Rupert Boneham, HHS graduate 1982, television personality on the Survivor series with CBS

Jimmy Rayl, KHS graduate 1959, known as the Splendid Splinter; played professional basketball with the Indiana Pacers

Tom Underwood, KHS graduate 1971, professional baseball pitcher with Phillies, Cardinals, Blue Jays, Yankees, Oakland A's, Orioles

Pat Underwood, KHS graduate 1975, professional baseball pitcher for Detroit Tigers

Joe Thatcher, KHS graduate 1999, professional baseball pitcher for San Diego Padres

Steve Kroft, attended KHS 1960s, television journalist, host of 60 Minutes

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