

TOM SPIVEY



Years at Piedmont

- 1992-2005: Principal
- 1987-1991: Assistant Principal

Awards and Recognitions relating to Piedmont

- Individual awards were not very important or especially memorable to me as I've always been more attuned to overall school and student success. I guess the two most meaningful individual awards were the CMS Wachovia Principal of the Year 1996 and the CMS Wachovia Principal of the Year 2005 as they were selected by my peers. During my time at Piedmont, we were named a National School of Excellence, National Blue Ribbon School, National School of the Arts and consistently achieved high/exemplary academic growth. Myers Park also consistently achieved

high/exemplary growth and was regularly named one of the top 100 High Schools in America by Newsweek.

- Another personal honor was being selected by colleagues to chair the CMS Middle Schools Principals, a position I held from 1998-2005. I was also honored to serve on the Superintendents Leadership and Advisory Committee for more than 10 years and on the Summer Leadership Program for Principals from 1995-2013.

Why is Piedmont a special place?

- I am very grateful for my many years at Piedmont and am proud to call myself a “Pirate”. Being a Pirate means that I have been a smart part of an institution that has and will continue to be such a major difference in the lives of children and the community. A school that is on the cutting edge, consistently adapting to address student needs and always putting children first.

What do you say about Piedmont when someone asks?

- When asked about Piedmont, I say that it is such a unique and special place that defined who I am as an educator. Any success that I’ve experienced can be tied directly to the people I’ve worked with and the experiences shared over the years. I’m quick to share that I could have chosen any school for my own children to attend but brought them to Piedmont. It was such a special time and provided the foundation for who they are today. Piedmont is so much more than a middle school. It is a truly exceptional group of educators, parents, students and alumni with a shared vision and unique bond that continues to bridge time.

What is your fondest memory of Piedmont?

- It’s hard to pinpoint just one memory over my 18 years. I have so many - the colleagues, students, parents, academic successes,

field trips, sports and the arts. I look back fondly on so many experiences. The two most memorable are probably the design and creation of the new building and the gradual evolution to the current academic program. By the late 90s, the original Piedmont building was in severe decline. At a time when so much of Charlotte's history was going the way of the bulldozer, early discussions were to simply demolish the building and rebuild with no guarantee that Piedmont would continue to be in its current central location. Through a lot of discussions and hard work with the School Board, CMS staff, and Architects we were able to save the original footprint and facade while developing a new school within, one designed to meet the unique needs of students, staff and the academic program. I'll never forget the pride felt by all when we entered the new yet old Piedmont for the first time.

- Also during the late 90's, the Open program was slowly being phased out. We had to find a path to continue being a viable magnet option by redesigning our academic program while still emphasizing the open strategies that made us so successful. We developed a Pre-AP program which led to Open IB and eventually to Open MYIB. Our student numbers never declined during this transition and our academic success never wavered.
- A close third, might be the expansion of the Arts and Athletics. While I received nothing but support in expanding the Arts, there was a lot of initial pushback with the addition of sports teams in an Open school- especially football. It is equally rewarding to see how the expansion of these two programs helped redefine Piedmont.

How do you feel about receiving this honor?

- I am very honored and humbled to be added to the Piedmont Wall of Fame. It's gratifying to be acknowledged by others as playing a small part in the success of Piedmont and in the lives of so many students and staff.

What encouraging words would you like to leave with future Piedmont Pirates?

- Enjoy and embrace your time at Piedmont. You are so fortunate to attend a school where everyone is not the same, where you are provided opportunities to gain insights into the similarities we all share. Piedmont reflects the whole community and provides opportunities to work, learn and play with students from so many different cultures and backgrounds. During your Piedmont years, you will continue to learn lessons that can't be found in textbooks or measured on end of the year tests. Don't take this experience for granted.
- High School will soon provide new expectations, challenges and opportunities. The experience will be what you make it and success will hinge on the amount of effort you put forth. Set clear goals, focus on your studies, advocate for your needs, find ways to get involved and choose your friends wisely. Don't follow the crowd, follow your heart and always stand up for what is right, even if it's not always the most popular choice.
- Maintain that Piedmont zest for learning, serve those less fortunate and strive to always maintain a strong sense of character. Remember that character is not inherited. One builds it daily by the way one thinks, acts, and lives-thought by thought, action by action, moment by moment.