

Phelps Laboratory School: Many Memories

An SIA Project submitted by Kate Parsi

Held within Winona State University's mission statement is the phrase that we are "a community of learners improving our world." I believe that long before this mission statement was written; WSU played a monumental role in improving the lives of many people in the Winona community, including many 4 and 5 year old "First Kindergarten" students who attended The Phelps Laboratory School. To truly accomplish the University's goal set in the above mission statement, we need to look back on our history as we plan our future. This sums up why this project was so important to me and why I wanted to see it through to fruition; we can better anticipate our future when we understand, know and appreciate where we came from.

While I was with the WSU Retiree Center I oversaw the completion of the Phelps faculty video, the first video of the series, and I learned just how important the Phelps School was to WSU and its history. The faculty that taught there, many of whom continued their careers by becoming professors at WSU, have powerfully fond memories of their time at Phelps and how that time shaped their lives.

My reasoning behind the request for the SIA award was to be able to continue the series by completing two additional videos, one of former students in a panel discussion format and the other, a collection of stories from people who have fond memories of their days at Phelps. Along with a great deal of help from Professor Robin O'Callaghan and two of her Mass Communication students, I was able to complete the videos as planned. The videos provide a visual and verbal archive of what it meant to be apart of the Phelps Laboratory School experience and what a special place it was.

My proposal also called for the time to help plan the Phelps All-School Reunion being held on Friday, September 5, 2008. My WSU colleague Cathy Sieracki and I have been able to accomplish all of the preliminary items like designing and ordering the invitations, RSVP cards and the program. We have also designed and ordered a memento that the reunion attendees can take with them to remember the day by. We have contacted several parties, both on campus and off, who will be a part of the program portion of the day by either speaking or by being there to answer questions and guide campus tours. We have also contacted a caterer and have a menu planned for the day as well. We will soon run advertisements in the Winona Daily News to announce the event and we have plans to speak on HBC to talk about the event as well. The above mentioned videos will premier during the reunion and they will be for sale with proceeds going towards a *Phelps-WSU College of Education Scholarship*. The invitations will be mailed mid-July and we are hopeful that there will be many who will attend the event. We were given the financial support from Vice President Jim Schmidt to make all of the above mentioned reunion events possible and we are grateful to him for his support of this project.

This is our sesquicentennial year, what a great time to celebrate our past as we head into our next 150 years. I am proud of WSU and its history and honored that I was able to partake in the events being held to celebrate its longevity.