

FHS 50th Anniversary Celebration a Big Success

By Neil Hufnagel, Superintendent

On a cool evening in the fall of 1958, the ground was broken. In the summer of 1959 the cornerstone was laid. And in the fall of 1959, our current high school building was opened to students and staff for the first time. For the past 50 years, our high school building has been home to dozens of committed teachers, hundreds of students preparing for a successful adulthood, and thousands of wonderful memories of academic, athletic, extracurricular, and social events.

The cool, sometimes rainy, weather didn't dampen the spirits or smiles of our many alumni and community members who came out on Friday, October 9 and Saturday, October 10 to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the current Fowler High School building. I was thrilled with the number of folks who came out with smiles on their faces to celebrate our school's history despite the sometimes challenging weather.

Highlights of the Friday night event included the traditional homecoming parade with special entries honoring the Class of 1960, alumni cheerleaders, and representatives from the six state finalist football teams. The parade was followed by a program at Spicer Field that featured the Fowler High School Marching band, performances by the 5th, 6th and junior high bands, and exhibition football games by the Fowler Youth Football program played under the lights. The evening was capped off with a traditional homecoming bonfire where the youth football teams joined the varsity football team to hear a pep talk from head coach Paul Hungerford, and see our captains burn a stuffed dummy of our competitors in effigy.

Saturday's events began in a light fog with over 200 participants in the Jeff Wieber Memorial 5K Run/Walk and youth fun run that followed. As the fog burned off, a classic cool, sunny football Saturday emerged for the pregame tailgate sponsored by the Fowler Public Schools Education Foundation. Community members enjoyed the beef barbecue lunch while being entertained by the local band, The JABS, which featured two of our Fowler grads. Attendees also enjoyed reminiscing in the gym among the many displays of memorabilia and historical videos created by our students. The 2:00 game was preceded by the introduction of representatives of the Class of '60, the first to graduate from our high school building, and the national anthem sung by our local men's harmony, the Clintonaires. It was great to see a large crowd cheer on the home Eagles to a 34 – 14 win over the visiting Portland St. Patrick's Shamrocks with the help of a large contingent of our alumni cheerleaders and band members.

The festive weekend wrapped up with a dinner and social at the Fowler Conservation Club hosted by the Athletic Boosters. Our alumni and interested community members reminisced among several television screens displaying videos of various sporting events over the previous decades.

I want to offer a huge thanks to the many volunteers who helped make this wonderful weekend a reality. I am grateful to the Band Boosters, FPS Education Foundation, and Athletic Boosters for each taking responsibility for big components of the weekend's celebrations. Individually, I appreciate the work Jeff Crowe put into running the Jeff Wieber Memorial 5K, and to Donna Piggott and Paul Hungerford for all of their effort in coordinating the memorabilia displays that were enjoyed by so many. Lastly, a big thanks to Judy (Feldpausch) Pierce, Class of '63, who first planted the seeds for this event in a conversation I had with her following their 35th class reunion last year. This was a great weekend celebrating the many successes and indelible memories of the past 50 years. We have a proud tradition as a school and community and I look forward to the many successes and memories to be made in the years ahead!

