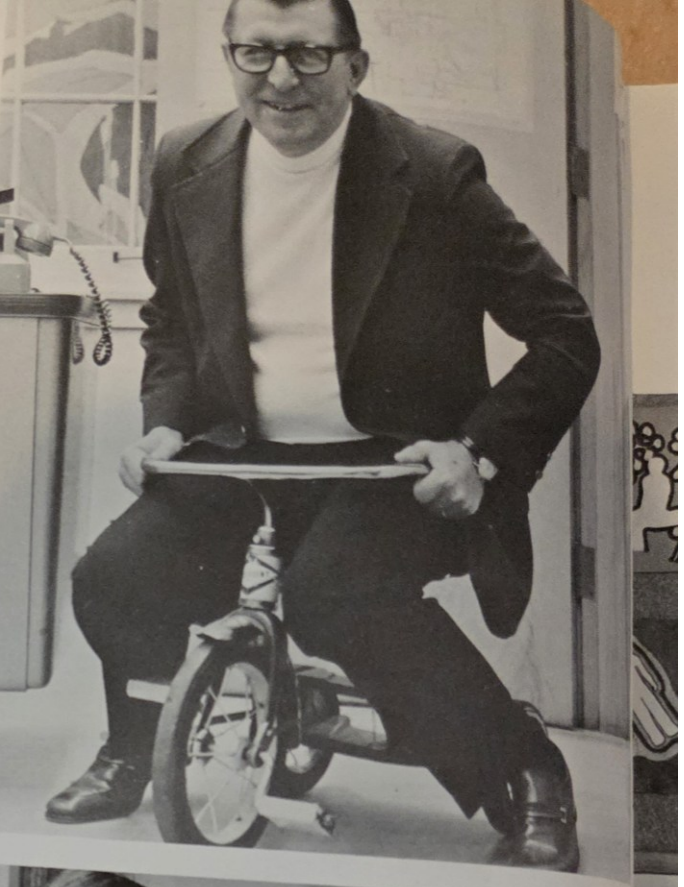
North Central High School and our Teachers' History and Legacy from Public Sources:

Who they were, how they got there, and what made them be the way they were, and in general their life stories.

Bill Worstell

5/31/2026

Next month will see the 50th Reunion for my Class Reunion of North Central High School in Spokane, and I am looking forward to it. Looking over my yearbook, I remember my teachers and my friends from that time fondly. North Central prepared me well academically and socially for Harvard College and then Harvard University in Boston where I live now. I spent my professional life writing and presenting classes, proposals, and scientific or technical papers, whose style and substance changed constantly over the past 50 years, but were always about telling a story. This is a story I have assembled that I hope will interest and entertain my classmates about some of our teachers and their history at BU.



My NC Institutional Lifetime Achievement Award

This goes to the Captain of our ship, Mr. Rodkey, here shown astride his majestic steed and approving the inaugural Rowdy Squad Regalia, and to his staff. In September, 1976 I was flying to Boston with a layover in Chicago when I discovered they had pinball machines there (that's me on the wall over there, with plenty of hair but no beard). Being skilled in the art and never tilting, I won a few bonus rounds, and missed my connecting flight. Mr. Rodkey, who had a brother in the Boston Area, had arranged for his brother to meet me at Boston Logan Airport and get me to Harvard Yard. When I did not arrive, he somehow tracked me down and got me there after dark to drop me off 1000 miles from anybody I knew. I think it was students like me who drove Mr. Rodkey to his tricycle, but he was ever up to the job.

<u>Life lesson learned: Focus! And Priorities!</u>
<u>Technical lesson learned: If you absolutely must multi-task, keep a sharp eye on the clock</u>.

The evolution of **North Central High School (NC)** mirrors the transformation of American public education, shifting from an elite, classical academy into a modern, comprehensive institution. As you prepare to celebrate the landmark **50th anniversary of the Class of 1976**, looking back reveals how the school adapted across four distinct eras.

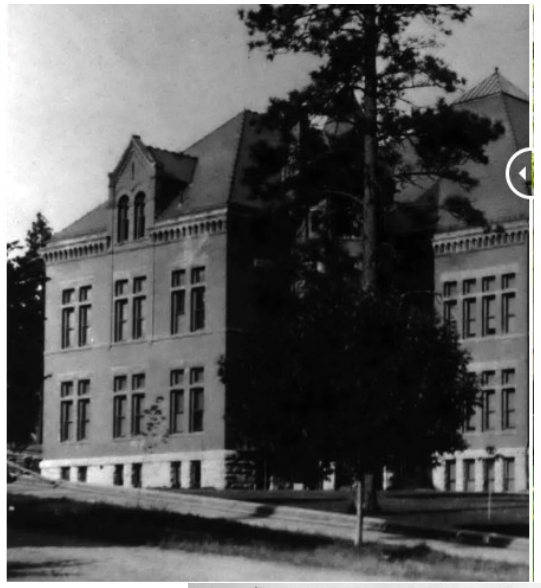
1908: The Era of Classical Academies and Civic Pride
When North Central opened its doors in September 1908, it stepped into a national educational landscape heavily influenced by the **1893 Committee of Ten report**, which standardized high school as a rigid, academic preparation ground for college. High school was still considered optional, and Spokane was experiencing a massive population boom fueled by the railroads and mining.

- **The Educational Philosophy**: High school was meant to refine the mind through a strict, classical curriculum. Rote memorization, public speaking, and mental discipline were paramount.
- **The Environment**: NC opened with just 12 classrooms in a magnificent structure that was a testament to civic pride. The academic atmosphere was elite and formal, emphasizing Latin, Greek, classical literature, rhetoric, and advanced mathematics. Early milestone events included visits from monumental historical figures like **William Jennings Bryan** and **Booker T. Washington**, highlighting the school's focus on oratory and civic responsibility.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Central_High_School_(Spokane,_Washington)

https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2008/jun/05/nc-marks-centennial/

A group of cheerleaders from North Central High School huddle under umbrellas in the fall of 1943. Photo courtesy of North Central High School (Photo courtesy of North Central High School / The Spokesman-Review)



South Central was first: “We see your colors flying high, it’s Halloween! “

https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2026/mar/02/then-and-now-early-spokane-schools/

Spokane: Early Education

By Stephen B. Emerson | Posted 8/08/2008 | HistoryLink.org Essay 8723

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https://www.historylink.org/file/8723

https://www.spokesman.com/then-and-now/2022/jul/25/then-and-now-spokane-high-school/

1958: The Mid-Century Boom and Post-Sputnik Science

By the year of my birth in 1958, the educational landscape had been completely upended by the **1944 G.I. Bill**, the post-war Baby Boom, and the dawn of the Space Age. The Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik in late 1957 sent shockwaves through American education, prompting the **National Defense Education Act of 1958**.

•**The Educational Philosophy**:
High schools pivoted violently toward rigorous math, engineering, and foreign languages to compete globally. Concurrently, the "comprehensive high school" model took root, designed to offer both college-prep tracking and vocational training.

The Environment:
The iconic old collegiate-Gothic building was bursting at the seams with the first wave of Baby Boomers. The environment was highly structured, defined by mid-century social conformity, traditional gender roles (such as home economics for girls and industrial arts for boys), and a booming subculture of high school athletics, pep clubs, and marching bands.

https://www.city-journal.org/article/when-high-schools-shaped-americas-destiny

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education_in_the_United_States

A 1768 depiction of Harvard College engraved by Paul Revere

"Our educational thinkers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the schools as the central and main hope for the preservation of democratic ideals and the endurance of the nation as a republic," writes education scholar E. D. Hirsch.

1976: The Bicentennial, Student Autonomy, and Social Shift

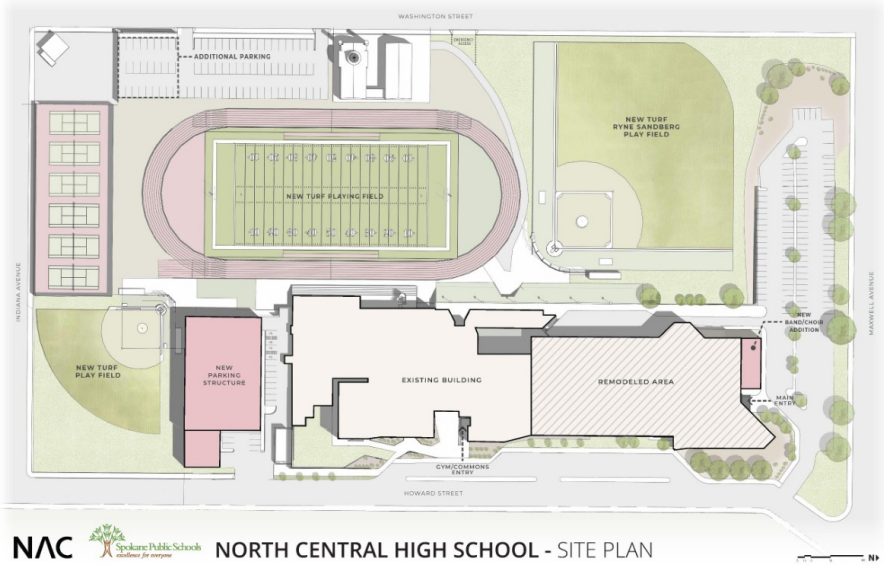
The year of your graduation—1976—marked the **U.S. Bicentennial** and arrived on the heels of massive social upheavals, including the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and Title IX (passed in 1972).

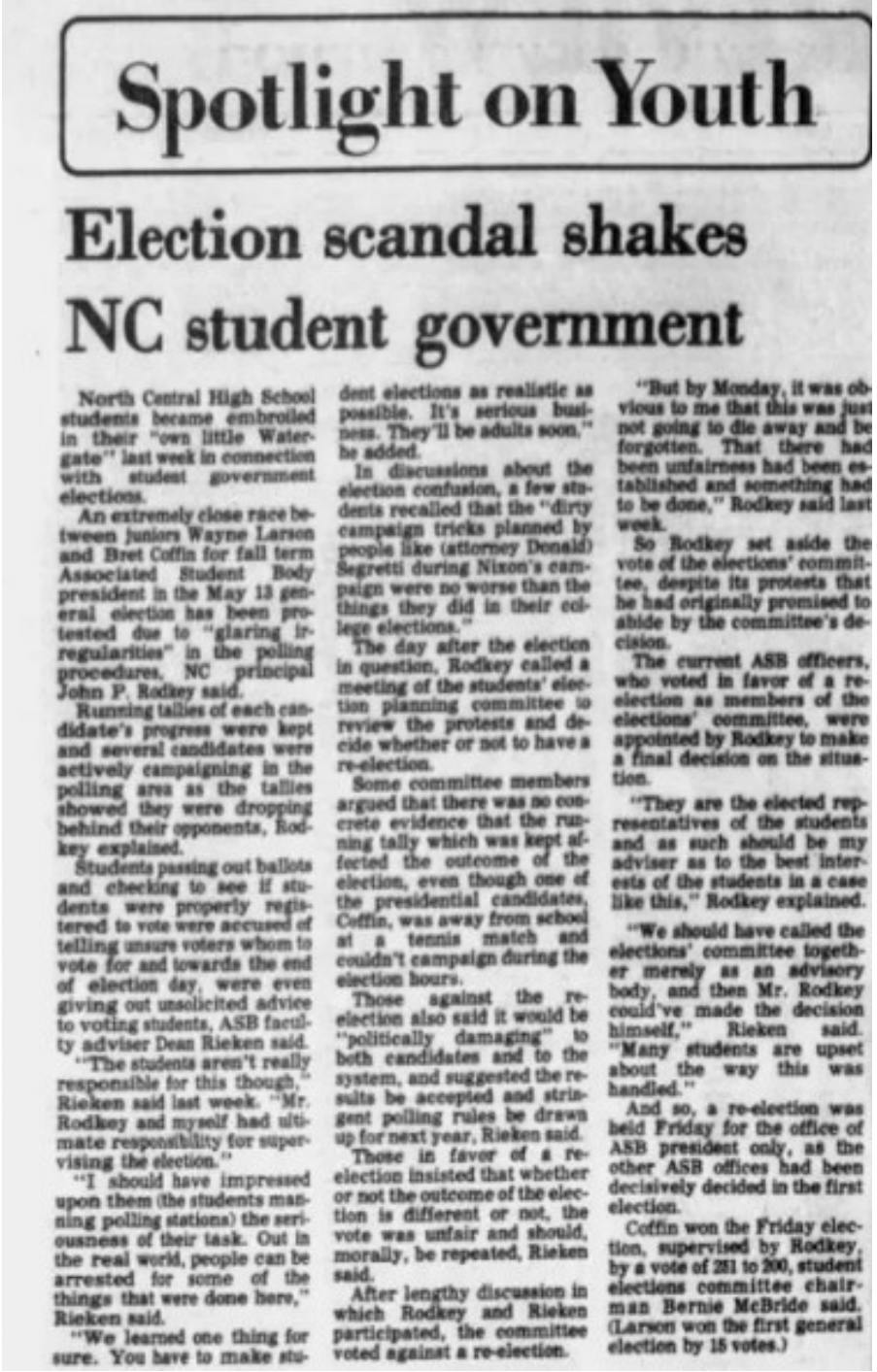
•**The Educational Philosophy**: The rigid structures of the 1950s gave way to student-centered learning, elective-heavy curricula, and a massive push for gender equity in sports and academics.

•**The Environment**: The atmosphere at NC was alive with the expressive, independent energy of the 1970s. Students exercised a level of political autonomy and social awareness unseen in previous generations—even mirroring real-world complexities, such as the historic student body election controversy that rocked the school in May 1976 over active campaigning and registry irregularities.

This era marked the final years of the fabled original building, which was razed shortly after in 1981 to make way for a more functional, modern facility.

https://www.togetherspokane.org/nc-modernization





Spotlight on Youth

Election scandal shakes NC student government

North Central High School students became embroiled in their "own little Watergate" last week in connection with student government elections.

An extremely close race between juniors Wayne Larson and Bret Coffin for fall term Associated Student Body president in the May 13 general election has been protested due to "glaring irregularities" in the polling procedures, NC principal John P. Rodkey said.

Running tallies of each candidate's progress were kept and several candidates were actively campaigning in the polling area as the tallies showed they were dropping behind their opponents, Rodkey explained.

Students passing out ballots and checking to see if students were properly registered to vote were accused of telling unsure voters whom to vote for and towards the end of election day, were even giving out unsolicited advice to voting students, ASB faculty adviser Dean Rieken said.

"The students aren't really responsible for this though," Rieken said last week. "Mr. Rodkey and myself had ultimate responsibility for supervising the election."

"I should have impressed upon them (the students manning polling stations) the seriousness of their task. Out in the real world, people can be arrested for some of the things that were done here," Rieken said.

"We learned one thing for sure. You have to make student elections as realistic as possible. It's serious business. They'll be adults soon," he added.

In discussions about the election confusion, a few students recalled that the "dirty campaign tricks planned by people like (attorney Donald) Segretti during Nixon's campaign were no worse than the things they did in their college elections."

The day after the election in question, Rodkey called a meeting of the students' election planning committee to review the protests and decide whether or not to have a re-election.

Some committee members argued that there was no concrete evidence that the running tally which was kept affected the outcome of the election, even though one of the presidential candidates, Coffin, was away from school at a tennis match and couldn't campaign during the election hours.

Those against the re-election also said it would be "politically damaging" to both candidates and to the system, and suggested the results be accepted and stringent polling rules be drawn up for next year, Rieken said.

Those in favor of a re-election insisted that whether or not the outcome of the election is different or not, the vote was unfair and should, morally, be repeated, Rieken said.

After lengthy discussion in which Rodkey and Rieken participated, the committee voted against a re-election.

"But by Monday, it was obvious to me that this was just not going to die away and be forgotten. That there had been unfairness had been established and something had to be done," Rodkey said last week.

So Rodkey set aside the vote of the elections' committee, despite its protests that he had originally promised to abide by the committee's decision.

The current ASB officers, who voted in favor of a re-election as members of the elections' committee, were appointed by Rodkey to make a final decision on the situation.

"They are the elected representatives of the students and as such should be my adviser as to the best interests of the students in a case like this," Rodkey explained.

"We should have called the elections' committee together merely as an advisory body, and then Mr. Rodkey could've made the decision himself," Rieken said. "Many students are upset about the way this was handled."

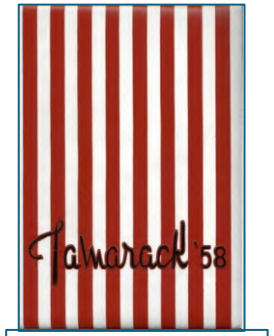
And so, a re-election was held Friday for the office of ASB president only, as the other ASB offices had been decisively decided in the first election.

Coffin won the Friday election, supervised by Rodkey, by a vote of 251 to 200, student elections committee chairman Bernie McBride said. (Larson won the first general election by 15 votes.)

https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2026/may/23/this-day-in-history-north-central-high-school-rock/

So this is how history remembers us …

"The students aren't really responsible for this though …" - Mr. Rieken takes the hit



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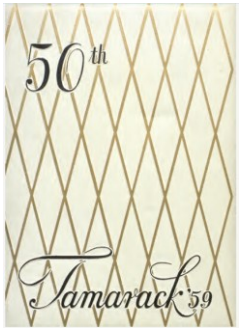

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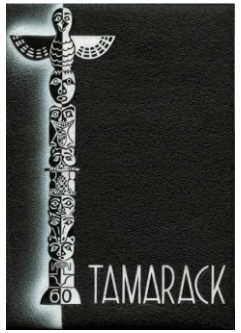

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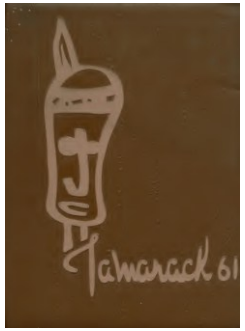

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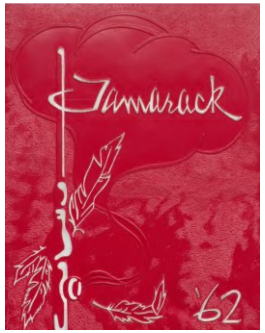

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SPL Yearbooks North Central 1976

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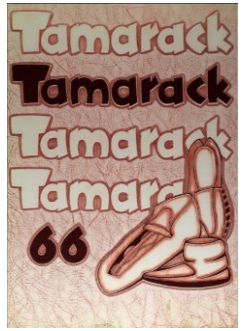

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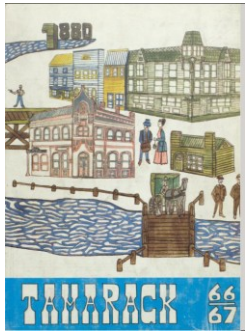

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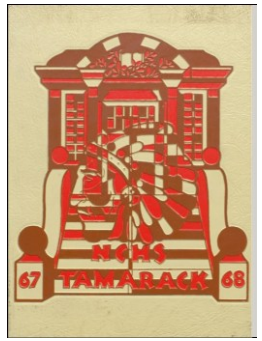

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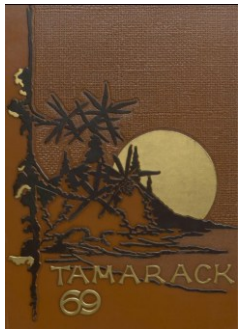

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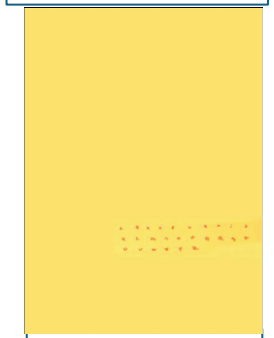

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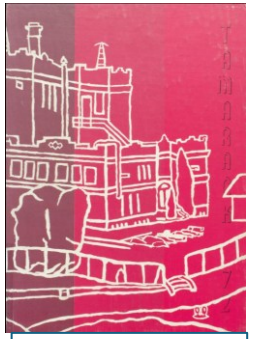

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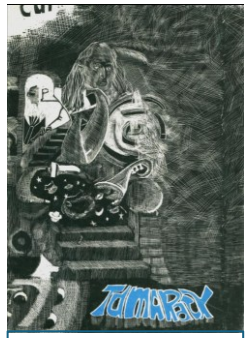

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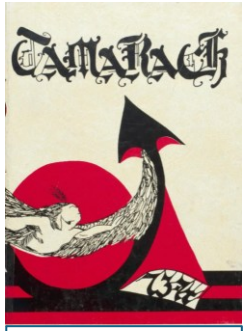

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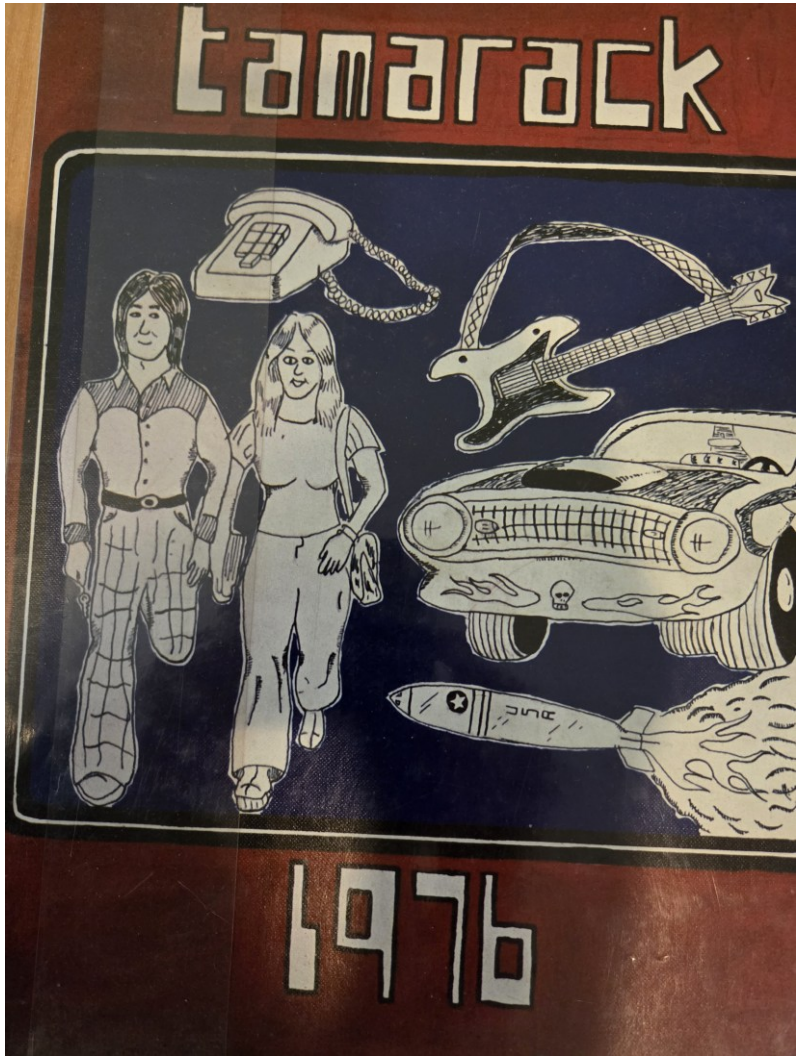


Which of our teachers had a half dozen of our other teachers as teachers when he graduated from NC in 1957?

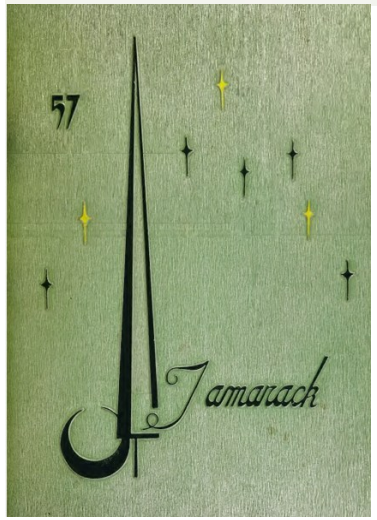
Weir, Michael Charles

Social Studies

Transferred from Gonzaga. Varsity Track, Baseball, Football

Mr. Theisen- Physics

Mr. Simonson - Biology



Mrs. Briscoe - Latin

Mr. Exley - Geometry

Mr. Nye- Algebra

Mr. Erickson – General Math

For 2 of coach Weir's 6 teachers, 1957 was their first year. Can you guess which two?

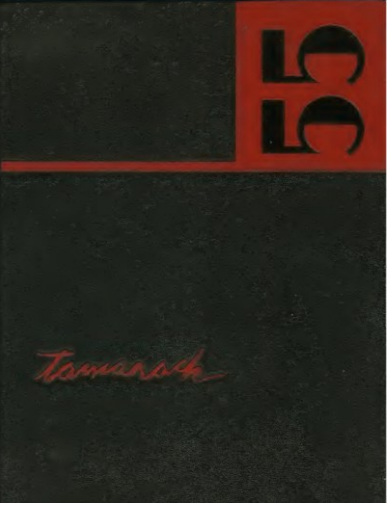
It's the 1956 Tamarack, and we're down to just 4 semi-finalists to see who, before we were all born, was the first of our teachers to start teaching at NC – all in the Math/Science Old Boy's Club!

Mr. Nye
Algebra

Mr. Exley
Geometry

Mr. Theisen
Physics

Mr. Simonson
Biology



1955 Tamarack

Mr. Exley -Math

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT — Seated: Wilhelmine Timm, Biology; Raymond Simonson, Biology; Donald Bonamy, Biology. Standing: Ernest Hix, Department Head; Paul Toble, Biology; Edward Anderson, General Science; Orval Thelsen, Physics; George Smith, Biology.

Over eleven hundred students are enrolled each semester in the various science courses. These students are in the six sciences: General Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Photography and Geology.

Through General Science, students gain an introduction to all fields of science. Then comes Biology, the study of living things. The biology laboratory is well equipped with movies and specimens to enable the student to learn about the human body, plants and animals.

Chemistry is the study of what things are composed of and the changes they undergo. Such things as atomic energy, radio activity, and the composition of foods and fabrics are taught.

Dealing with electricity, sound, light, heat, mechanics and other physical aspects of our complicated world is the course in Physics. Both the chemistry and physics laboratories are well equipped for experiments and demonstrations.

Photography offers the knowledge of how to take pictures, how to operate picture-taking devices, how to take better pictures, and how to develop, print and enlarge them. Geology offers the study of rocks, minerals, changes in the earth and earth composition.

Mr. Theisen -Physics

Mr. Samuelson- Biology

of our civilization's great unchanging secrets.

Mathematics ranges in difficulty from elementary arithmetic, studied in some freshman classes, to subjects on the college level. Although only one year of mathematics is required for graduation, many sophomores elect Plane Geometry. This year about one hundred twenty juniors are enrolled in Advanced Algebra, and more than fifty seniors are taking a fourth year of mathematics consisting mainly of Solid Geometry and Trigonometry.

Most students are aware that the completion of two years of high school mathematics is required for entrance to many colleges. Boys, especially, are faced with the fact that every reputable engineering school in the country has a prerequisite of at least three years of mathematics and that nearly all of these schools recommend four years. To prepare themselves properly in this age of mechanization and electrification, intelligent students know that mathematics is indispensable.

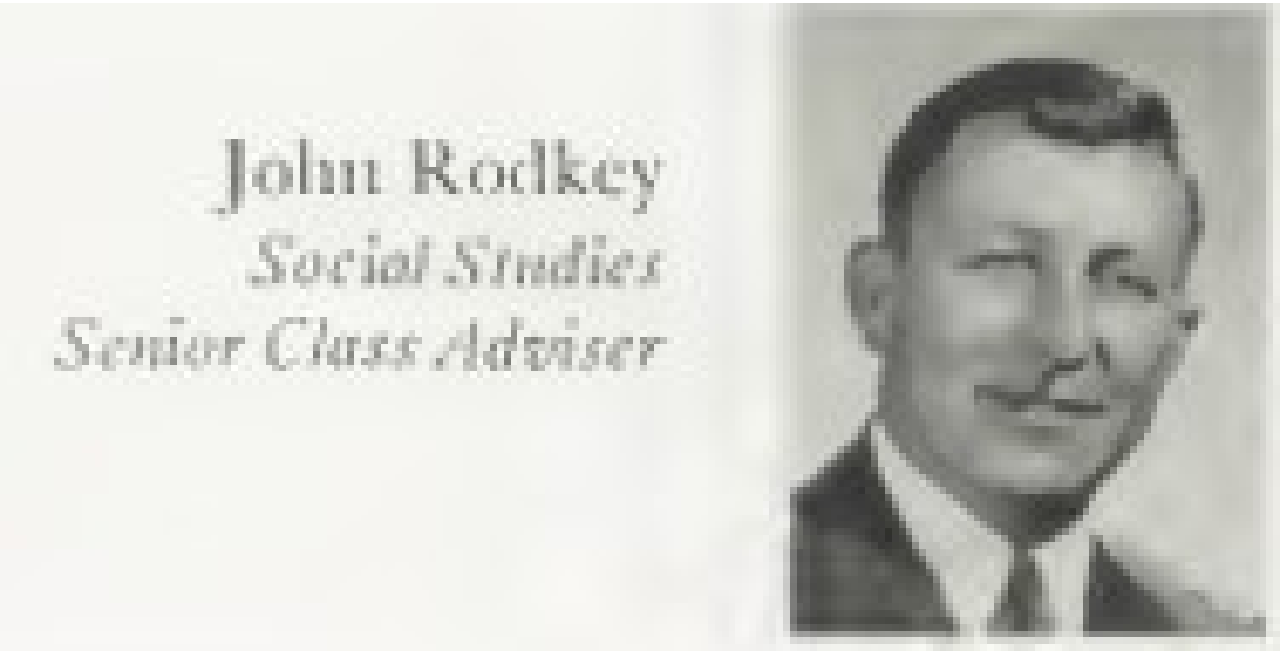
Recent developments in the field of automatic computers demand many more college trained mathematicians than are available. Each large machine of this type requires at least ten or fifteen analytical experts to program its operations and to control its sequences.

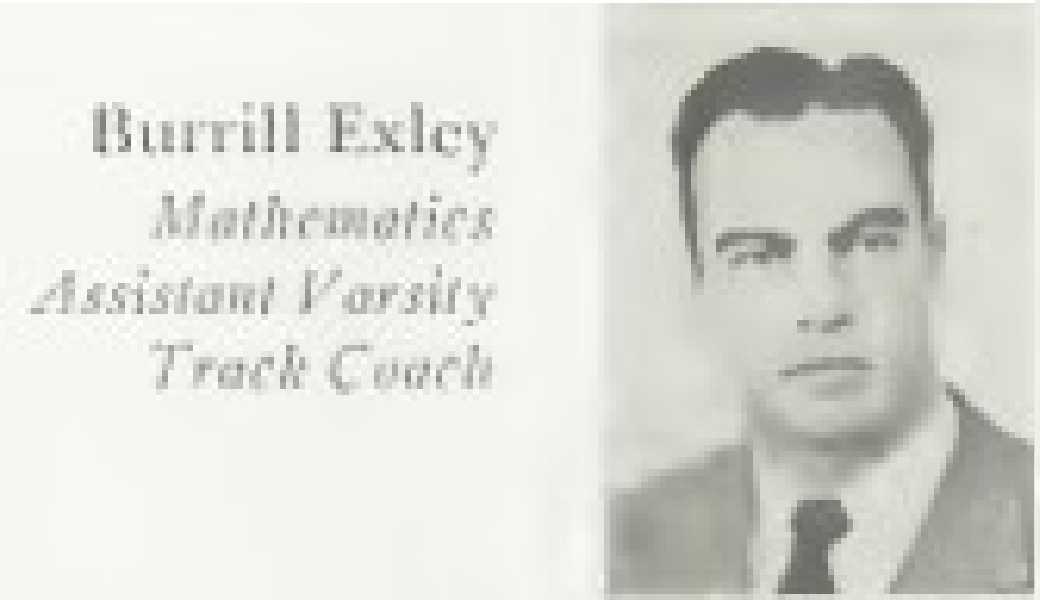
MATHEMATICS — Seated: P. H. Nygaard, Department Head; Dorothy A. Congdon, Geometry; Lowry M. Bennett, Algebra; Standing: Kenneth Moore, Algebra; Burrill Exley, Geometry; Robert F. Barnard, Algebra; R. A. Baldwin, Algebra.

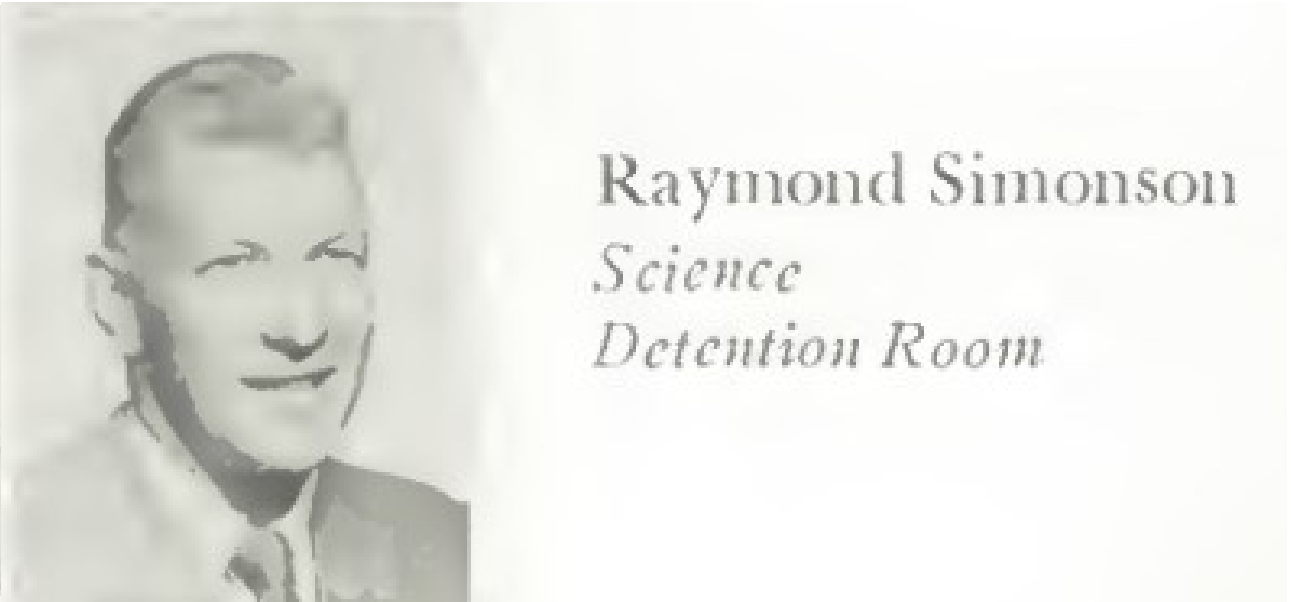
It's the 1955 Tamarack, and we're down to just 3 semi-finalists to see who, before we were all born, was the first of our teachers to start teaching at NC !

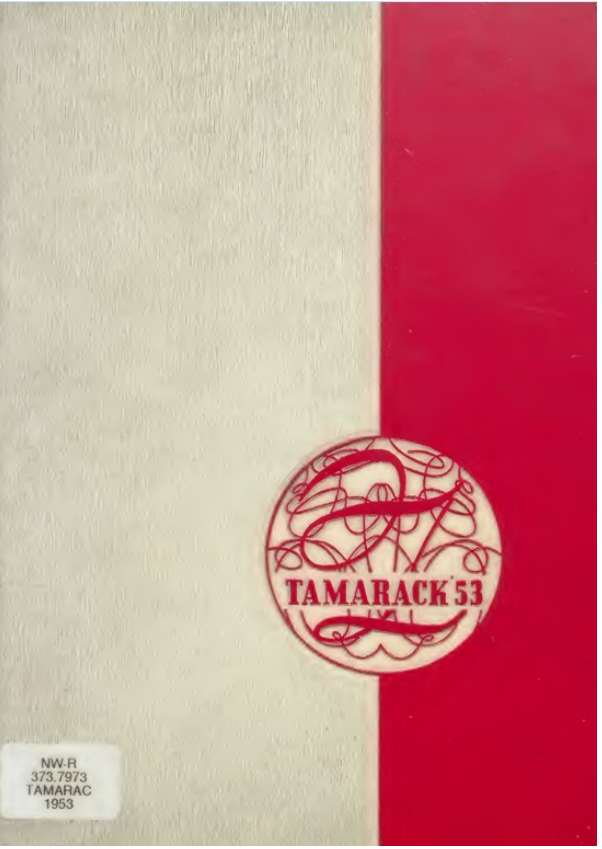
1954 Tamarack

It's the 1954Tamarack, and we're down to just 2 finalists to see who, before we were all born, was the first of our teachers to start teaching at NC – both in the Math/Science Old Boy's Club! But wait, someone has brought in a ringer!









1953 Tamarack

It's the 1953 Tamarack, and ladies and gentlemen, we have a winner!

Mr. Exley was the first of our teachers to have taught at NC! And it's not even close – except for Mr. Rodkey, who is a special case, with a gap in his tenure.

He had in fact been teaching there for more than 25 years, since 1950.
We have photographic evidence that he did not age a day his first 3 years.

Mr. Rodkey did not age for 2 years.

1953 – age 30

1949 Tamarack

1949 – age 28

JOHN RODKEY
English
Mathematics
Social Studies
Frosh Athletics

1952 Tamarack

1952 – age 29

Exley, Burrill
Mathematics
Intramural Coach

1951 Tamarack

1950 Tamarack

John Rodkey
Social Studies
Whitworth College, B.A., B.Ed.

Mr. Exley -

Burrill Dean Exley (1923–1997) was a beloved math teacher, coach, and department head at North Central High School in Spokane from 1950 to 1978.

Biographical Highlights:

- **Early Life & Service:** Born in Colville, Washington, he was a veteran of World War II.
- **Career:** He taught algebra and geometry at North Central High School for 28 years. Afterward, he taught at Kennedy High School in Burien, Washington, from 1980 to 1985.

John P. Rodkey served as the beloved principal of North Central High School in Spokane, Washington, from 1959 until 1979. Born in 1921, he passed away on May 16, 2012. Before his long career in education, he served as a radio operator in the Army Air Forces during WWII.

Life and Legacy:

- **Background:** Born on a farm in Colorado, his family relocated to Post Falls, Idaho, during the Great Depression.
- **Career:** He spent 20 years at the helm of North Central High School, bringing deep compassion, grace, and energy to the student body.
- **Personal Life:** He was married, raised three children, and was a dedicated member of his church who valued faith, learning, and storytelling.

You can read more about his remarkable life or pay tribute through the full Obituary for John P. Rodkey published by Heritage Funeral & Cremation, or explore his legacy feature in the Spokesman-Review.

John graduated from Whitworth College with his BA degree in Recreational Leadership in 1947 and a BA in Psych / Soc / Education in 1948. He later received his Master's Degree in Administration in 1958. He remained a loyal and active alum of Whitworth University. After student teaching at North Central High, he was hired to teach there after his college years. He taught from 1948 - '57, then served as Vice Principal of Shadle Park for the two opening-years, '57-'59. He then came back to NC as principal from '59-79.

Principal John P. Rodkey

Principal John P. Rodkey Bears Many Responsibilities

John P. Rodkey, as principal of North Central, assumes many responsibilities. Before he comes to school, he makes arrangements for substitute teachers. After arriving at school, he consults with teachers about grading and other problems.

In the morning, Mr. Rodkey works with the deans and vice-principal on acute discipline cases and has orientation with cadet teachers assigned by the near-by teacher-training colleges. Lunch, if any at all, is usually taken shortly after noon.

In the afternoon, Mr. Rodkey attends meetings with other secondary principals of the school district and with the athletic board of control to discuss league schedules and problems. Every Tuesday after school he conducts a faculty meeting for the in-service training of teachers. Mr. Rodkey also edits the daily bulletin of school news and when completing this, he often has a meeting at the Administration building to work on millage and bond levies or other school matters with the board and superintendent.

During his busy day, Mr. Rodkey answers numerous phone calls, writes volumes of correspondence regarding former students, discusses curriculum problems with department heads and makes plans for building improvements. In the evenings, he attends the athletic, music and drama events of the school and helps chaperone the school dances.

1963 Tamarack

Freedom Places Responsibility Upon the Individual

Some persons in this great land of ours, yes—and in this school of ours, are not very aware of the great reponsibility that FREEDOM places upon the individual. If one considers what freedom really is, it becomes obvious that freedom means only that a person is free to do what he ought to do. He is also free to pay the penalty for wrong choices!

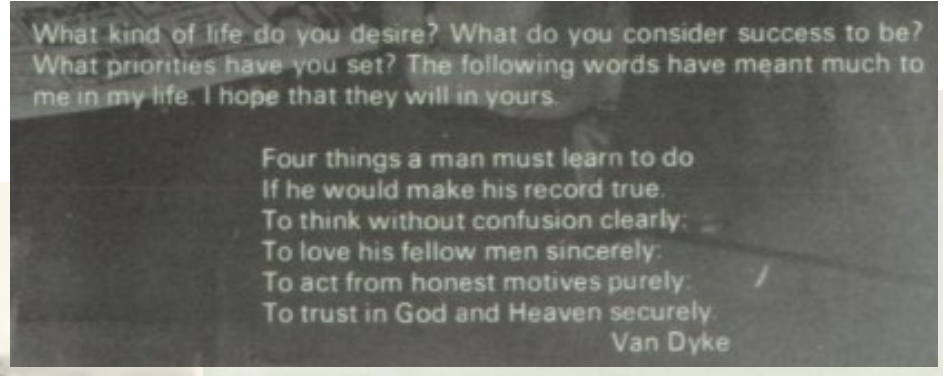
As we come to the end of another year it is good to think back on the past—and yet to look ahead to the future. First, may I thank you for the cooperation you have given the school this year. The courteous way you treat your friends, your teachers, and visitors to our building; your loyalty to your school; your participation in the activities of the school—these are the things that are REALLY important to you and to communities in which you will reside! We should never forget that the citizens of Spokane, through tax sources, provide educational opportunities for us that are unknown to most of the world. Where else does freedom abound? Where else does the individual have such free choice in determining his own future? "Where, oh where, but in America?"

Take time at the end of this year to say a word of appreciation—to parents, to friends, to teachers, to your community, to all who have given you assistance in developing yourself toward a worthwhile future.

To those who will not be returning to North Central next year we give our kindest regards and send our best wishes, especially to GRADUATES who will be finding their way into new experiences in life. May you retain fond memories of your years at North Central, and may that which you have learned assist you in attaining those positive goals you have established.

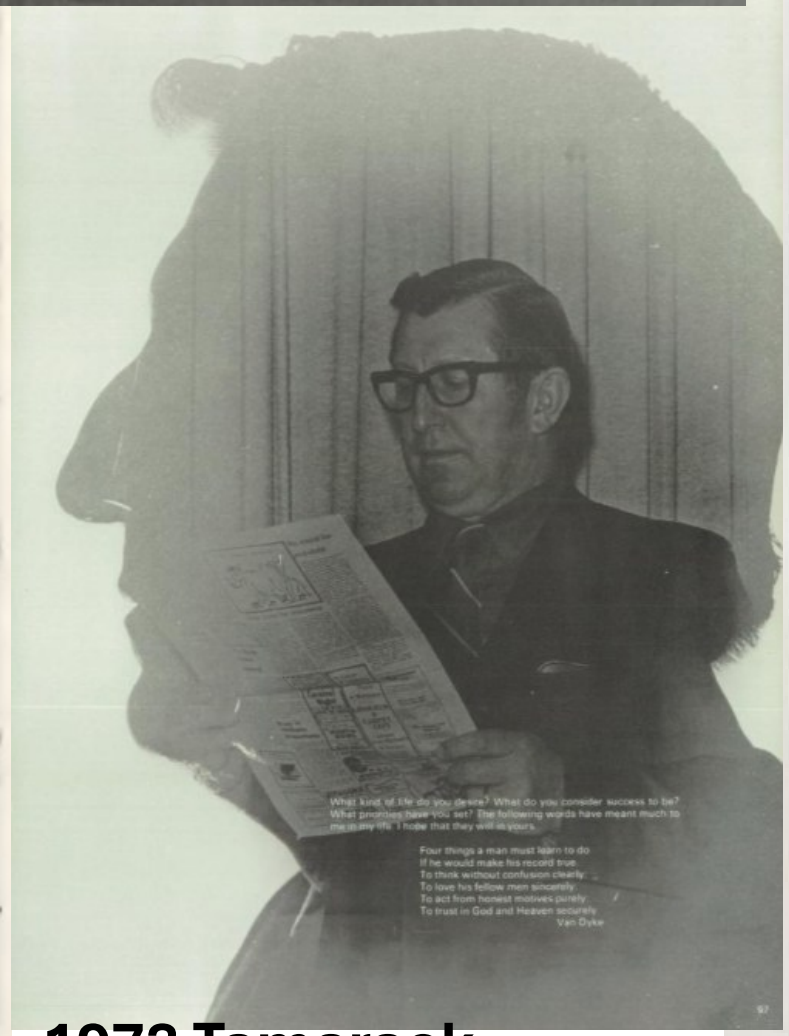
John P. Rodkey

Being a busy man, John P. Rodkey, Principal, scarcely takes time for photograph.



What kind of life do you desire? What do you consider success to be? What priorities have you set? The following words have meant much to me in my life. I hope that they will in yours.

Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true.
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow men sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and Heaven securely.
Van Dyke



1973 Tamarack

1976 Tamarack

Impressions of North Central

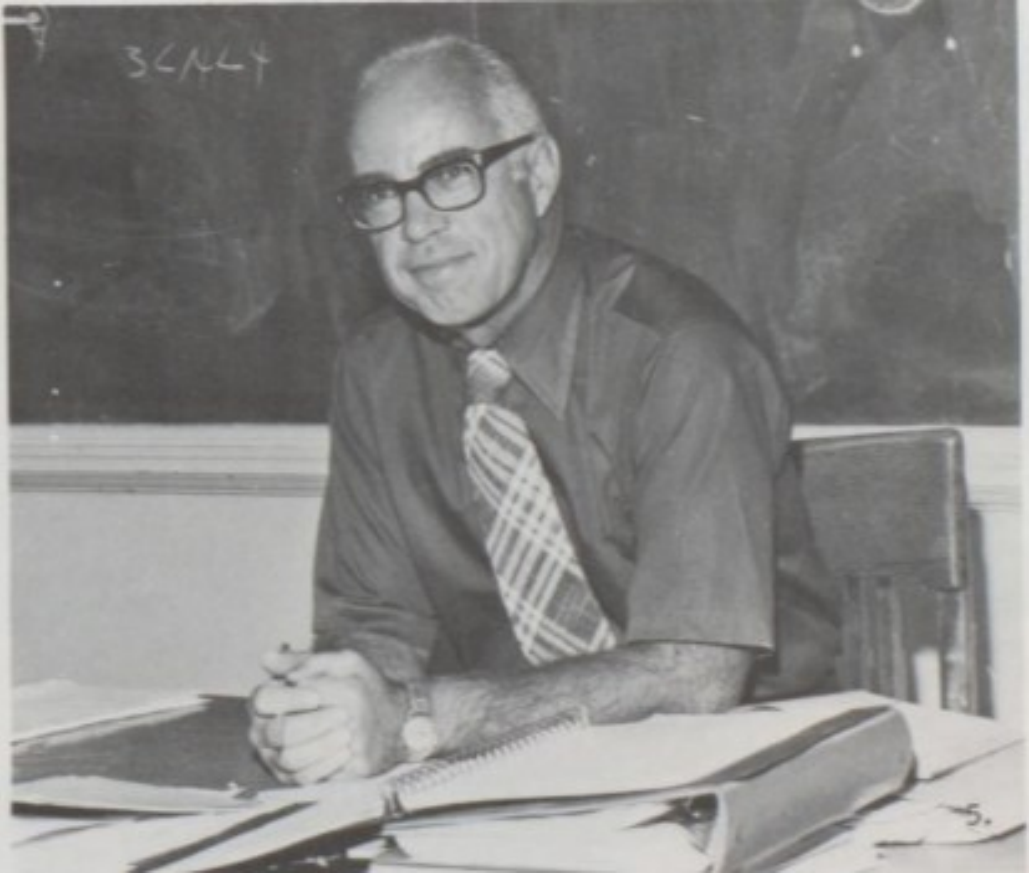
John P. Rodkey, Principal

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you,
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I,
But when the trees bow down their heads
The wind is passing by.
-Christina Rossetti

That poem has always held an awesome, mysterious, beauty to me, because it deals with something that is most intangible, yet very, very real. In many ways that is what North Central means to me. Who can precisely state what North Central really signifies? It is so real and so true to say that it was, and it is opportunity, joy, work, play, success, failure, sorrow, friendships. It is history and tradition; it is the cutting edge of tomorrow.

But whatever else North Central is, it is people caring, sharing, hoping, dreaming, remembering, helping, without reference to age, status, or gender. Yes, North Central was, and North Central is. We are all experiencing it.



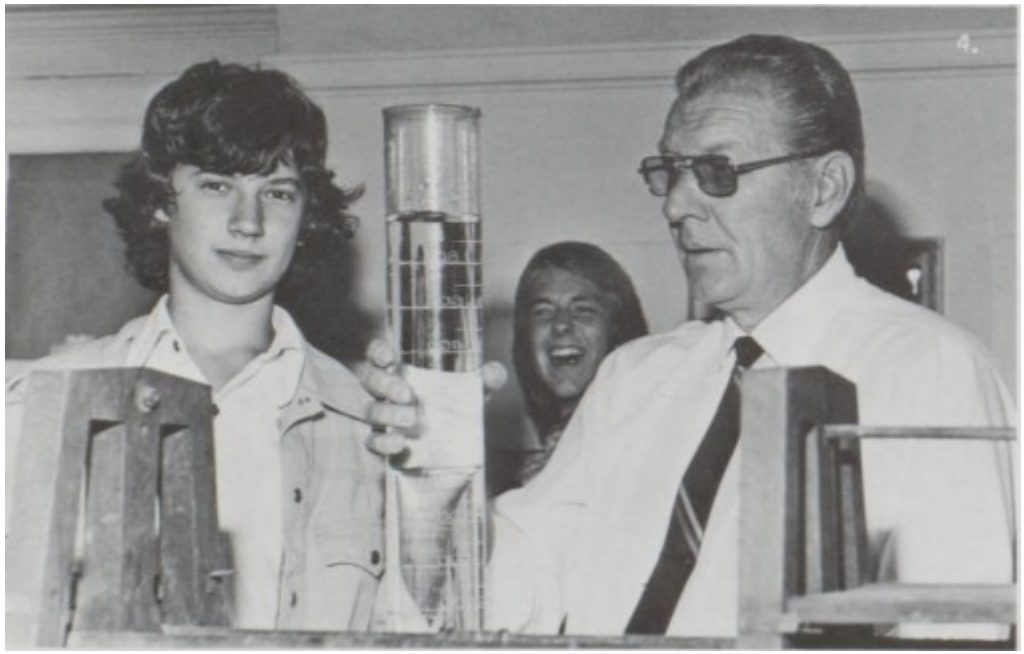
https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1997/jun/27/obituaries/

https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2025/aug/25/this-day-in-history-gerald-ford-calls-new-kootenai/

Burrill Dean Exley was born **May 8, 1923**, in or near **Colville, Washington**, and died **June 19, 1997**, at age **74**. His obituary appeared in *The Spokesman-Review* on June 27, 1997, under "Burrill Exley, Seattle." It says no service was held at his request and that Bleitz Funeral Home in Seattle handled arrangements.

The obituary gives the key North Central facts very clearly: he was a **World War II veteran** and served as a **teacher, coach, and math department head at North Central High School from 1950 to 1978**. After leaving North Central, he taught at **Kennedy High School in Burien, Washington, from 1980 to 1985**. He was survived by his wife **Marion**, daughter **Linda Rumans**, and a granddaughter.
A Washington State University record lists **Burrill Dean Exley** receiving a **Bachelor of Education** on **October 4, 1950**, which aligns neatly with his beginning at North Central that same year. The 1951 *Tamarack* faculty listing gives a fuller educational line: **Washington State College, B.A., B. of Ed.; Whitman College; Murray State Junior College; Dayton University**, and identifies him as a mathematics teacher, senior class adviser, and involved with intramural sports. The yearbooks also document his long role in the math department. The 1967 *Tamarack* lists **Burrill Exley — Mathematics, Department Head, Scholarship Committee**, and the 1969 *Tamarack* lists him as **Math Dept. Head**. Earlier yearbooks show his coaching role as well: the 1958 *Tamarack* refers to **"Burrill Exley's cross-country team"** taking honors, and the 1957 *Tamarack* mentions track activity under Coach Exley.

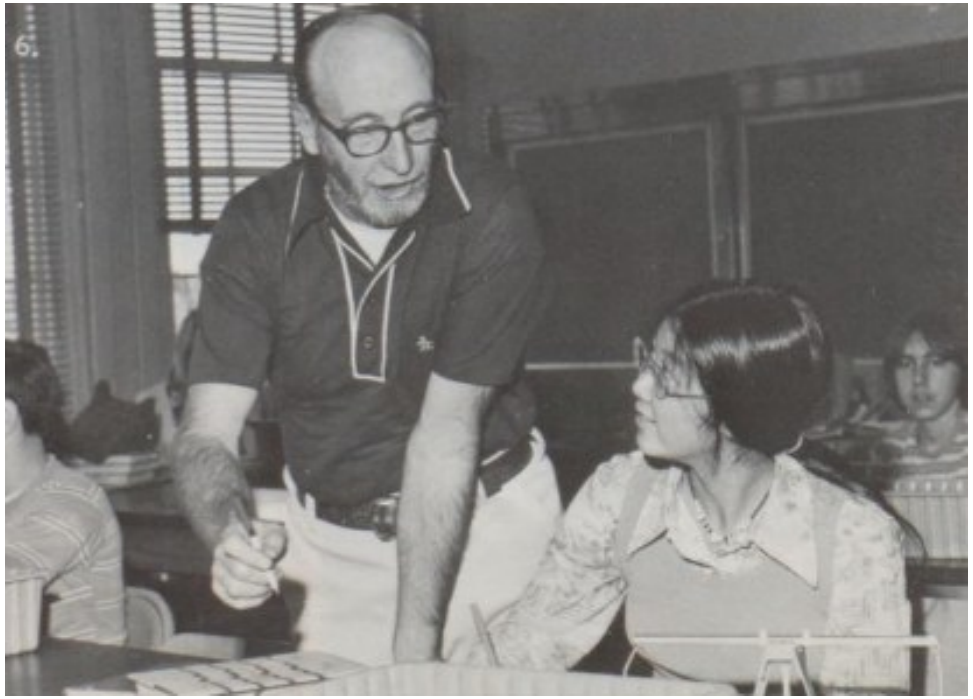
One charming extra: a 2025 *Spokesman-Review* "This day in history" item reached back to 1925 and described 27-month-old **Burrill Dean Exley** as a Spokane Valley "mental wizard" who knew the alphabet at 17 months and could spell more than a dozen words — a delightful foreshadowing for a future math teacher.



I found **yearbook and educational traces**, but **not a clean public obituary** for the North Central teacher Raymond Simonson in this pass. The public record trail is still useful. The strongest identification is that **Raymond Simonson was himself a North Central student before returning as a teacher**. The 1947 *Tamarack* lists **Raymond Simonson** among the January class students, and the 1952 Washington State College *Chinook* lists **Raymond Simonson, General, Spokane**, which fits a North Central graduate who later returned to Spokane Public Schools.

By **1954**, he was on the North Central faculty. In later yearbooks he is identified more specifically with **biology**, and sometimes **chemistry**: the 1956 *Tamarack* lists him in Science as **biology**; the 1958 *Tamarack* lists **Raymond Simonson, biology**; and the 1959 *Tamarack* lists **Raymond Simonson, chemistry**.

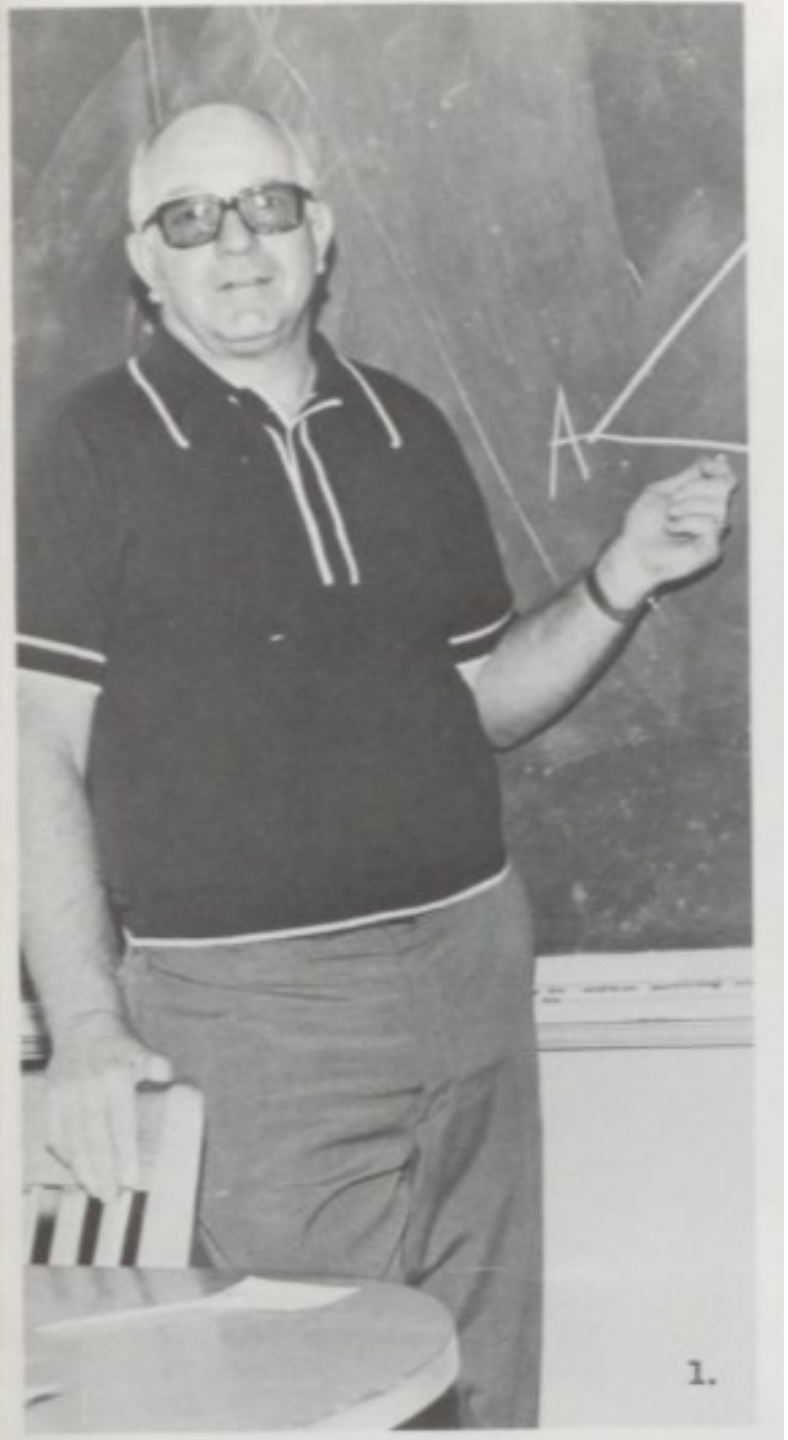
He also had a substantial role in **boys' golf**. The 1959 *Tamarack* reports that a team coached by **Raymond Simonson** won the Lewiston Invitational Golf Tournament. The 1963 *Tamarack* says the varsity golf team, coached by Raymond Simonson, placed second in the fall All-City high-school tournament. In 1964 and 1965, he is listed with **Biology / Boys' Golf**, and in 1965 he is also listed with **Biology, Chemistry**.
He was still present in the 1970s. The 1972 *Tamarack* includes **Raymond Simonson** in a science/biology context, and 1976 evidence is consistent with a career continuing at least that long



The 1958 *Tamarack* lists **“Orval Theisen, physics”** in the science faculty, alongside Walter Spangenburg in biology and Donald Bonamy in biology. The 1959 *Tamarack* likewise lists **“Orval Theisen, physics”** in the science department. He remains visible in later *Tamarack* records: 1964 includes a caption referring to **“Orval Theisen, physics teacher,”** 1965 indexes him in the North Central yearbook, 1968 lists him among faculty, and 1976 indexes **“Theisen, Orval”** on page 30.
One nice professional detail: **Orval P. Theisen** published a letter titled **“Help Wanted!”** in *The Physics Teacher*, Volume 10, Issue 6, September 1972, page 301. That is a useful detail for your slide because it shows him not just as a local teacher, but as someone engaged with the national physics-teaching community.

I found a reasonably strong biographical outline for **Orval N. P. Theisen**, though I did **not** find a full newspaper obituary in open access.
Orval N. P. Theisen was born **January 14, 1916**, in **Erwin, Kingsbury County, South Dakota**, and died **August 7, 2007**, in **Spokane, Washington**, at age 91. FamilySearch gives his full indexed life span as **1916–2007**.
Your earlier NC Teachers notes summarize him as a longtime **physics and science teacher at North Central High School**, born in South Dakota, deceased in Spokane in August 2007, and associated with both physics teaching and *The Physics Teacher* journal.

Before his teaching career, he served in the U.S. military during World War II. The notes identify his service as **January 1943 to October 1945**, including Army Air Corps / Air Force service as a **radio operator and gunner on B-17s**, with **35 bombing missions over central Europe**. He married **Anna Aileene Cantlon** in Spokane on **January 5, 1946**.



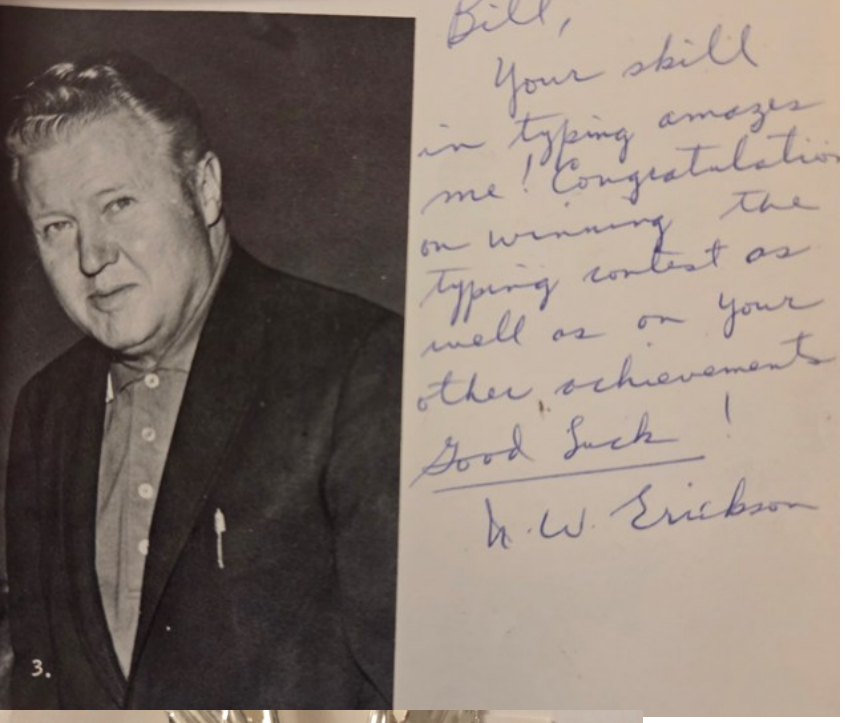
I found a good **North Central yearbook trail**, but **not a reliable public obituary** for this older NC mathematics teacher in this pass. There are newer Spokane Public Schools records for a different/current **William Nye**, so I would keep the biographical claims conservative.

William Nye appears in the North Central *Tamarack* by **1956**, where the OCR places him in the mathematics faculty group: "Standing: Robert F. Barnard, algebra: William Nye…" By **1958**, he is clearly listed as **"William Nye, algebra"** in the mathematics department, alongside P. H. Nygaard, Mack Saunders, Robert Barnard, Dorothy Congdon, and Burrill Exley.

In the early 1960s he is listed with **general mathematics**. The 1961 *Tamarack* page text identifies him in the faculty group as **"William Nye, general mathematics."** The 1963 yearbook also places him in the math department context, with a nearby caption involving Burrill Exley explaining an algebra equation.

He also appears to have coached or supervised **tennis**. The 1969 *Tamarack* says North Central's tennis team was **"led by Mr. William Nye."** The 1970 *Tamarack* similarly reports that the tennis team, under **William Nye**, ended in a tie for third place.

The 1975 *Tamarack* lists **William Nye** in the faculty material near Gene Rostvold, Burrill Exley, Gilbert Baker, and others.



Bill,
Your skill in typing amazes me! Congratulations on winning the typing contest as well as your other achievements.
Good Luck!
N. W. Erickson

I may have lettered in Wrestling, but in Typing I was an actual champion. 84 words per minute, and that was on a manual typewriter. My secret was that I had been playing piano since first grade when my sister taught me since she had had lessons. It built great dexterity and finger strength. Later it got me a job at Harvard in the Geology Library, where they called me "Whiz".

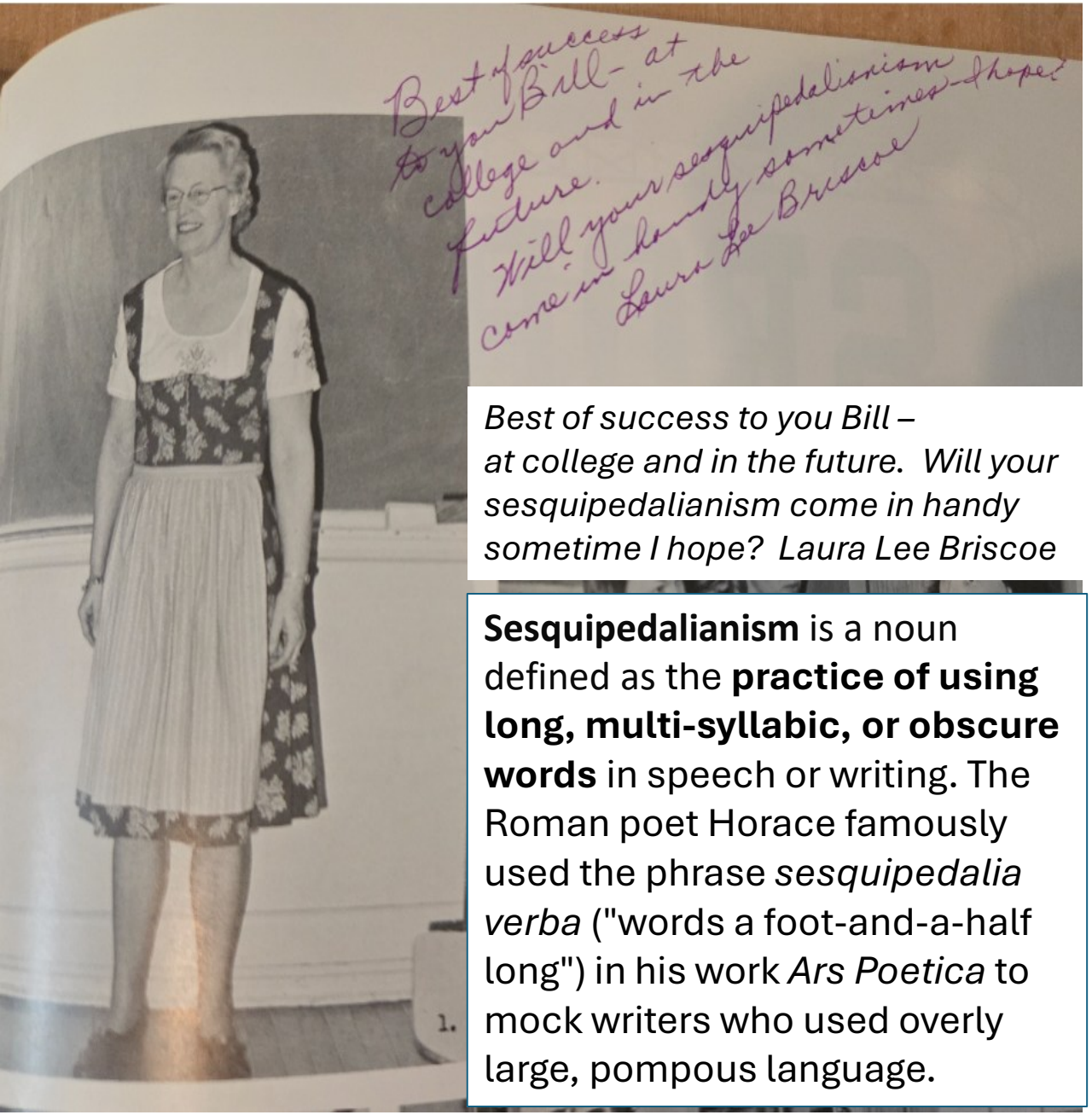
Norman W. "Norm" Erickson died **July 8, 1999**, at age **81**. His memorial service was held at Sunset Chapel at Fairmount Memorial Park, and *The Spokesman-Review* obituary identifies him as a **52-year Spokane resident** born in **Oakes, North Dakota**.

His education and early career make a nice story arc. He graduated from **Fargo High School in 1935**, attended **Concordia College** and the **University of Minnesota**, served as a **lieutenant in the Navy during World War II**, and after discharge in 1946 completed a bachelor's degree in business at the University of Minnesota. He moved into Spokane work first with **Madison Lumber** in 1948 and then as an accountant for **Watson Management** in 1950.

He married **Marjorie Henniger** in **1949**. He later returned to college, attending **Washington State University** and then graduating from **Eastern Washington University with a teaching degree in 1956**.
The key North Central fact is explicit in the obituary: Erickson was a **business and mathematics teacher at North Central High School from 1956 until his retirement in 1979**. Your own NC Teachers notes also summarize him as a business/math teacher at NC from 1956 to 1979, with death in July 1999 and survival by his wife, children, and grandchildren.

North Central's *Tamarack* records place him in **typing / business education** contexts: the 1961 OCR lists **"Norman Erickson, typing,"** the 1964 page places him in business education near bookkeeping and office-practice material, and the 1969 *Tamarack* discusses typing contest awards in the business-education setting.

His obituary lists memberships in the **Retired Teachers**, **Spokane Education Association**, **Washington Education Association**, and the **Moose Lodge**. He was survived by his wife, two sons, two daughters, and five grandchildren.



Best of success to you Bill – at college and in the future. Will your sesquipedalianism come in handy sometime I hope? Laura Lee Briscoe

Sesquipedalianism is a noun defined as the **practice of using long, multi-syllabic, or obscure words** in speech or writing. The Roman poet Horace famously used the phrase *sesquipedalia verba* ("words a foot-and-a-half long") in his work *Ars Poetica* to mock writers who used overly large, pompous language.

Laura Lee Mohn Briscoe appears to have been born in **1917** and died in **1999**. FamilySearch indexes her as "Laura Lee Mohn (1917–1999)" and connects her records to the names **Laura Lee Briscoe**, the 1950 Census, Washington county marriage records, and Find A Grave.

She married **Robert Herman Briscoe** in Spokane in **1939**. A newspaper marriage notice indexed by Newspapers.com lists "Miss Laura Lee Mohn" and "Mr. Robert Herman Briscoe," with Spokane as the marriage place.

She was teaching **Latin at North Central High School** by at least **1957**. The 1957 *Tamarack* OCR lists "Laura Lee Briscoe. Latin" among faculty. The 1959 *Tamarack* likewise lists "Laura Lee Briscoe, Latin."

By the mid-1960s she was still part of the foreign language faculty. The 1965 *Tamarack* page identifies **Laura Briscoe** with **Latin** and **Latin Club**, in a Foreign Languages section headed by Helen Oscarson. The 1968 *Tamarack* says that under Laura Lee Briscoe, Latin Club worked on increasing members' knowledge of Latin and its origins.

By the early 1970s she appears in the **English** department rather than foreign languages. The 1971 North Central yearbook OCR lists "Laura Lee Briscoe" in an English-related faculty list. The 1975 *Tamarack* also indexes "Laura Lee Briscoe," consistent with your statement that she was still at NC into the 1970s. The 1976 yearbook OCR includes a caption: "Laura Lee Briscoe wears a costume from Germany for International Week," matching the attached photo context.

Her husband, **Robert H. Briscoe**, died in 1995. His Spokesman-Review obituary says he was a former Spokane resident, a WSU graduate in mathematics and physics, a former Whitworth teacher, later connected with Expo '74 and Eastern Washington University, and that after retirement he and his wife **Laura Lee** spent summers at Priest Lake and winters in San Diego before moving to La Mesa, California in 1987. Their son Barry Don Briscoe's obituary also identifies him as one of five children born to **Robert and Laura Lee (Mohn) Briscoe** in Spokane.

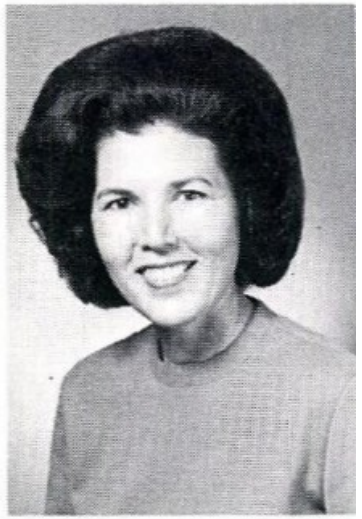
https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/spokesman/name/michael-caldwell-obituary?id=16901545

Michael W. Caldwell was born **June 6, 1939**, in **Wenatchee, Washington**, and died **May 14, 2018**, in Spokane at age 77. His obituary says he graduated from **Wenatchee High School in 1957** and from **Washington State University in 1962**, where he studied music and was active in Theta Xi fraternity; he later earned a master's degree from **Eastern Washington University**.

His teaching career began at **Sumner High School**, but he spent the bulk of his career at **North Central High School**, where he taught **choir and singing for more than 30 years**.

He was also a major presence in Spokane's broader musical life. His obituary says he directed church choirs, directed the **American German Society Choir**, sang with the **Spokane Chorale for 50 years**, performed with the **Spokane Civic Light Opera** and **Spokane City Theater**, helped direct a joint American/Canadian choir for **Expo '74**, and performed at **Carnegie Hall**.

A 1976 University of Idaho Jazz Festival program lists **North Central High School, Spokane, WA — Mike Caldwell** in the vocal jazz ensemble schedule. Later records show that his work continued: a 1991 University of Idaho Jazz Festival program again lists **North Central High School — Mike Caldwell**, and a 1995 *Spokesman-Review* article identifies **music teacher Mike Caldwell of North Central High School** as coordinating the mixed choir for an All-Northwest student performance event.



Dorothy Murray
Girls' League

Age 44 in 1965

Age 55 in 1976

https://obits.oregonlive.com/us/obituaries/oregon/name/donald-howard-and-dorothy-elliot-murray-obituary?id=19666674

Dorothy Mae Elliott Murray died on **March 2, 2004**, at age **83**, the same day as her husband, **Donald Howard Murray**, who was 84. Your notes correctly capture the striking shared obituary: Donald had been his wife's primary caregiver during her later health difficulties, and the couple had been married for about 60 years.
Her obituary says she grew up in **Colfax, Washington**, began musical training at age 8, and graduated from **Washington State University** with a degree in **music**. She was classically trained as a **concert pianist** and later earned teaching credentials. During World War II, while Donald was away, she taught **music appreciation**; after the war the couple moved to Spokane to raise their family.

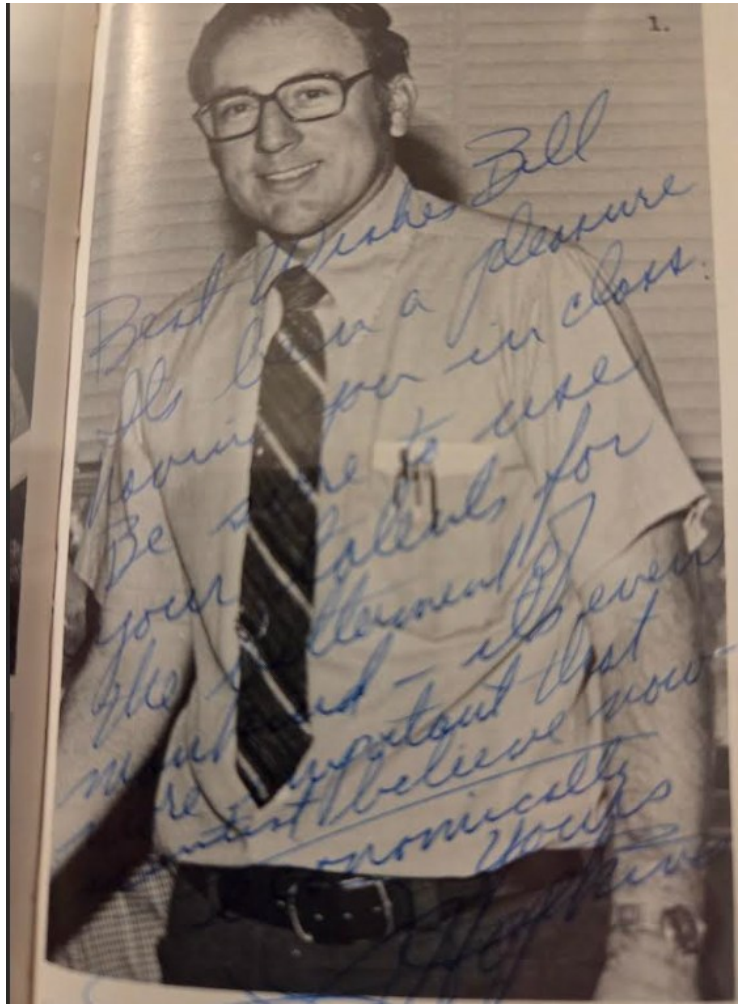
Her North Central connection is very well documented in the obituary: she taught **English at North Central High School for many years** and was also **head of the drama department**. The obituary gives a lovely classroom detail: every Monday, Donald had a flower delivered to her classroom. It also describes her as a teacher with a "fierce love of language" and a passion for teaching, remembered warmly by peers and students.

In the **1965 *Tamarack***, she is shown as **Dorothy Murray — Girls' League**, and by the **1976 *Tamarack*** she appears in the English department context. The 1976 North Central yearbook OCR also includes **"Dorothy Murray-advisor"** in a club/adviser listing.

Her obituary also emphasizes her lifelong intellectual and artistic life: she continued to read, play piano, and write letters to children, grandchildren, and friends despite serious physical difficulties later in life. It lists affiliations including **Rainbow**, **Beta Beta Chapter of Chi Omega**, and **Mu Phi Epsilon**, the honorary music society.

Jerry Hopkins
Social Studies Forum

Best Wishes Bill,
It's been a pleasure having you in class. Be sure to use your talents for the betterment of mankind – it's ever more important that a scientist believe now.
Economicallly yours,
J. Hopkins



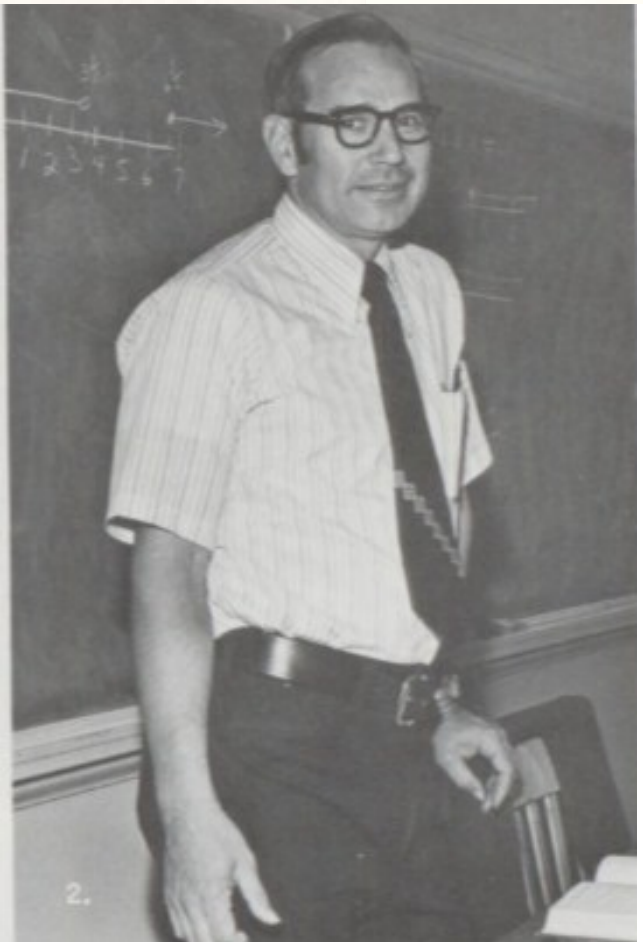
Jerry Hopkins was a longtime North Central social studies teacher. In 1996, *The Spokesman-Review* described him as age **58**, raised on a farm in Eastern Washington, and having moved to Spokane in **1965**. That same profile says he taught **economics, world affairs, and social studies at North Central High School for 27 years**.

His later public résumé adds that he had **bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Eastern Washington University**, administrative credentials from **Whitworth College**, and six years in the **Air Force Reserve**. It also says he had recently retired as president of the **Spokane Education Association**, had served **10 years on the Spokane City Park Board**, and was a member of the **Spokane Area Empowerment Committee**. https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1996/oct/27/jerry-hopkins-d

The 1967 *Tamarack* confirms him in the North Central faculty record as **Jerry Hopkins — Social Studies**, associated with **Social Studies Forum** and **ASB Committee**. A 1996 letter to the editor describes him as having "recently retired after **30 years as a teacher and social studies department chairman at North Central High School**" and as president of the Spokane Education Association for the previous year. That slightly differs from the newspaper candidate profiles' "27 years," but both agree on a long NC career ending around 1996.
https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1996/sep/12/letters-to-the-editor

He also ran for the Washington State Legislature in **1996** as a Democrat in the **6th District, Position 2**. *The Spokesman-Review* covered the primary and general election; the general election report described him as the former president of the Spokane Education Association and showed him trailing Republican Duane Sommers.
https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1996/sep/19/lerts-shoestring-caign-appears-to-have-won/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Age 33 in 1967



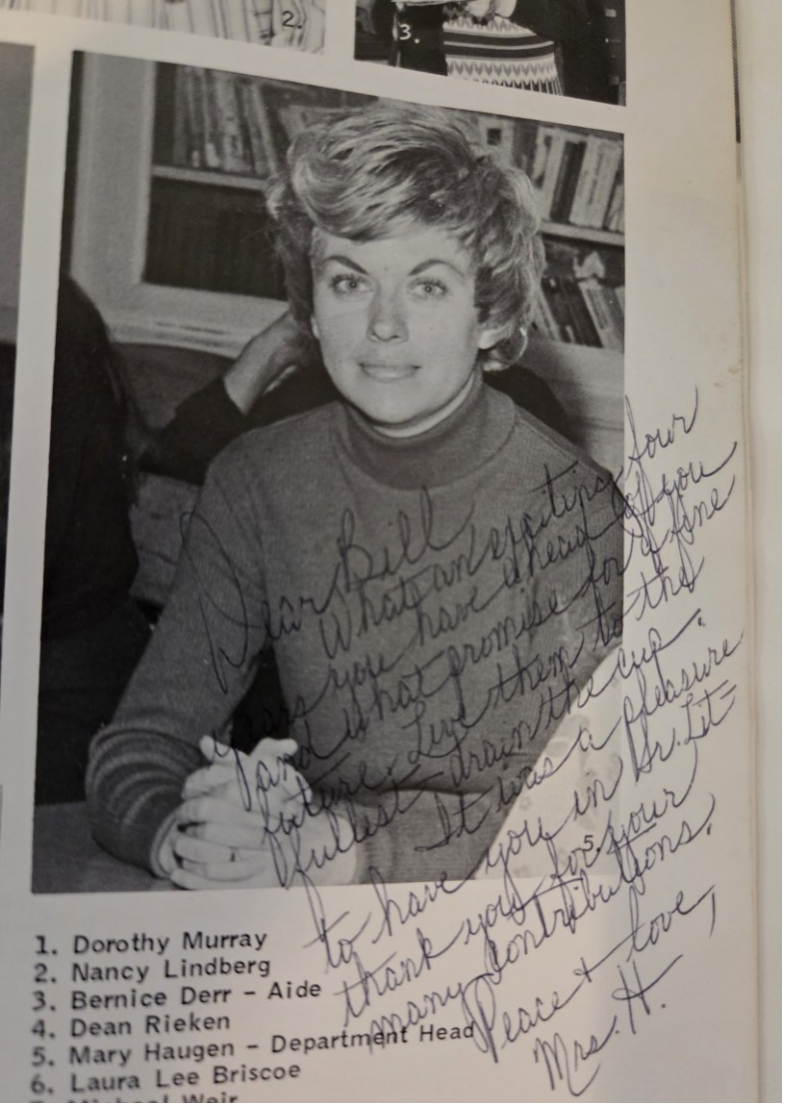
Age 42 in 1976

Joseph J. / Joseph Juneau Schauble was born **June 14, 1934**, in **Killdeer, North Dakota**, and died peacefully at home on **February 7, 2024**, at age **89**. His family moved from North Dakota to **St. John, Washington**, in 1937, where he grew up. https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/spokesman/name/joseph-schauble-obituary?id=54344483&utm_source=chatgpt.com

He attended **Gonzaga University** on a partial basketball scholarship and graduated in **1956**. His obituary notes that he and his older brothers **Bill** and **Rollin** were the only set of three brothers to play basketball for the Zags, and that Joe also played baseball for four years.

Professionally, he was both a **math teacher and coach**. His obituary says he taught for **38 years**, with the final **30 years at North Central High School**, retiring in **1996**. He earned a master's degree in school administration, but apparently preferred the classroom and court to administration.

His coaching career was unusually broad. A 1996 *Spokesman-Review* retirement article says that after **43 years of coaching**, Schauble had reached "the finish line" of that career. The same article describes him as versatile, noting that he coached across multiple sports and levels, served as co-director of Gonzaga summer sports camps for eight years, and worked for 11 years as a Spokane Parks Department recreational leader coaching baseball teams. https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1996/jul/04/north-central-coach-retires-after-varied-career/?utm_source=chatgpt.com



Dear Bill,
What an exciting four years you have ahead and what promise for a fine future. Live them to the fullest – drain the cup. It was a pleasure to have you in Senior Lit.- thank you for your many contributions.
Peace + love, Mrs. H.

Mary Haugen was an English/theater teacher at **North Central High School** in the mid-1970s. She began at NC as an English and drama teacher in **1975/1976**, later moved into administration, served as principal of **Salk Middle School**, received the **Washington Award for Excellence in Education**, and retired in 2000.

The Salk record is strong. A 2000 *Spokesman-Review* article says Pam Scott took over for **Salk Principal Mary Haugen**, who had "retired last year after **13 years at the helm**" of the North Side middle school. That places Haugen as Salk principal roughly **1986/1987–1999**.

Her recognition is also documented. In 1999, the state superintendent's office recognized **Salk Middle School principal Mary Haugen** in the **Washington Award for Excellence in Education**, and she was the **only nominee from Spokane School District 81**. https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1999/may/06/finch-plans-dance-performance/

Several *Spokesman-Review* articles show the character of her Salk leadership. In 1996, after the Moses Lake school shootings, Haugen and Assistant Principal Les Johnson visited every class to discuss bullying and safety; the article describes Salk as having a well-established program to address teasing, taunting, and fighting. In 1999, she praised Salk's peer-mediation program, saying students often resolve problems better when peers help them find their own solutions.
https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1999/aug/26/salk-solvers-peer-mediators-train-to-resolve/