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Halting White Flight: Atlanta's Second Civil Rights Movement

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HALTING WHITE FLIGHT: ATLANTA’S SECOND CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

by

ELIZABETH EGAN HENRY

Under the Direction of Clifford Kuhn

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the city of Atlanta from 1972 to 2012, *Halting White Flight* explores the neighborhood-based movement to halt white flight from the city’s public schools. While the current historiography traces the origins of modern conservatism to white families’ abandonment of the public schools and the city following court-ordered desegregation, this dissertation presents a different narrative of white flight. As thousands of white families fled the city for the suburbs and private schools, a small, core group of white mothers, who were southerners returning from college or more often migrants to the South, founded three organizations in the late seventies: the Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools, the Council of In-town Neighborhoods and Schools, and Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education. By linking their commitment to integration and vision of public education to the future economic growth and revitalization of the city’s neighborhoods, these mothers organized campaigns that transformed three generations’ understanding of race and community and developed an entirely new type of community activism.

INDEX WORDS: White flight, Civil rights movement, School desegregation, Neighborhood movement, Gentrification
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by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, whose love and support have made this possible.
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Introduction

On March 18, 1984, the Atlanta Journal announced, “City schools feel white flight’s result.”¹

Over the past decade, thousands of white families had fled from the public schools in the aftermath of the precedence set by the 1971 Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County ruling, which called for the cross-town busing of children to achieve integration. Nowhere in the nation was the hemorrhaging sharper than in the city that had been commended by President John F. Kennedy for the peaceful desegregation of its schools in August 1961. In contrast to the violence and resistance across the South, on that day nine African-American children had quietly walked through the doors of four of the city’s high schools, yet the peace was not to hold. By March 1973 with fears over the pending metropolitan busing lawsuit, Armour v. Nix, growing, the local N.A.A.C.P. and the Atlanta Board of Education ended the fifteen-year long court battle to desegregate Atlanta’s public schools. The resulting compromise agreed that there would be no large-scale busing in exchange for the hiring of an African-American superintendent and administrative staff. The exception to the compromise was to be the city’s white, northside neighborhoods, where an expanded voluntary Minority-to-Majority program and pairing of white and black elementary schools was to integrate the Buckhead and intown communities. The response was immediate and overnight. A 1991 study concluded:

Atlanta’s decline in white enrollment was among the most rapid of all large school districts. Between 1967 and 1986 the total Atlanta enrollment dropped by 41 percent. The school district was 38 percent white in 1968 but was only 15 percent white by 1974 and was down to 7 percent white in 1986.²

Hysteria and fear had driven white, middle-class families from the public schools. Four out of five white, northside parents transferred their children to one of the nearby private schools, and for every family that had secured a spot hundreds simply left the city.

¹ “City schools feel white flight’s result,” Atlanta Journal, March 18, 1984, 1B.
On the morning of July 12, 1978, a small group of white and black middle-class parents gathered at the Junior League of Atlanta’s office in Buckhead. The Junior League’s Public Education Task Force had invited these parents to discuss founding a potential citywide coalition and resource center that would encourage parents and the community to support the public schools. Among the eleven organizations represented at the meeting were members of the Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools (NAPPS) and the precursor to the Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools, the Close-In Reviving Communities Linked for Education (CIRCLE). The white, middle-class mothers from Buckhead had begun meeting informally in February 1975 and were determined to halt white flight to the private schools. The intown group had been founded earlier that year by the education committees from five neighborhood associations and was working to stop the closing of another neighborhood school due to declining enrollment. At the meeting, representatives from NAPPS and CIRCLE were also joined by middle-class women whose husbands worked at the historically black colleges of Morehouse, Spelman, or Atlanta University, and had been active in the southwest neighborhood and parent-based organizations that sought to promote integration, including the Atlanta Cooperative Preschool and the failed Committee for an Open School. For many of these white and black, middle-class, college-educated women, this was the first time they had met. However, as self-identified “products of the Sixties,” they had already helped host fundraisers and “meet and greets” to elect Atlanta’s first African-American mayor Maynard Jackson in 1973 and were part of the growing grassroots neighborhood movement that had elected candidates to the Atlanta City Council and Atlanta School Board in November 1977. After meeting for six months as a steering committee, the group of almost exclusively mothers came together to form the Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education (APPLE Corps.) on January 4, 1979. Over the next three decades the women who founded the three organizations, NAPPS, CINS, and APPLE Corps, worked tirelessly to halt white flight from Atlanta’s northside and intown neighborhoods.

In recent years, the historiography of white flight has largely focused on the rise of the New Right. Three well-received works in the field have linked the origins of the modern Republican Party to white families’ abandonment of the public schools in Atlanta, Charlotte, Richmond, and across Mississippi. In his 2005 monograph, Keven Kruse explores the experience and effects of white flight in Atlanta and argues that the mass movement of white families from the cities and outside the region to the suburbs was the most successful response by segregationists to the courts and the civil rights movement. By mapping out how the responses of working and middle-class whites to the civil rights movement varied, Kruse demonstrates that white flight was a physical and political movement away from populist and racist demagoguery to a new conservatism based on a language of rights, freedoms, and individualism. Matthew Lassiter’s 2006 work follows a periodization similar to that of Kruse and argues that the grassroots mobilization of white, middle-class families in response to court-ordered integration and busing in Atlanta, Charlotte, and Richmond during the 1960s and 1970s was rooted in a colorblind ideology of middle-class privilege. Organized around these three cities, Lassiter connects the open schools and the antibusing movements to the emergence of the Silent Majority and describes the political realignment of the Right as originating at the level of neighborhood politics and not the national Republican Party. Joseph Crespino examines the founding of segregationist and Christian schools in Mississippi and argues that the origins of modern conservatism grew out of white accommodation to the civil rights movement. He suggests that the religious Right’s influence within the national Republican Party’s platform, which under President Ronald Reagan sought to secure tax-exempt status for Christian-based educational institutions, can be traced back to the beliefs and values that motivated white southerners to flee the public schools in the face of court-ordered integration. While the historiography has focused on white families’ abandonment of the city and the suburban origins of modern conservatism, this dissertation presents a different

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narrative of white families’ response to white flight, which enriches our understanding of the reaction to court-ordered desegregation in Atlanta. As the modern Republican Party gained strength in the suburbs of Atlanta, a progressive neighborhood movement, which encouraged families moving to Atlanta to buy a home on the city’s northside and send their children to the integrated public schools, was reshaping the moderate urban regime that had governed the city.

When the historiography on the rise of the New Right is situated in California, the white flight narrative loses its persuasiveness as a distinctly racist and southern reaction to integration. Lisa McGirr’s earlier work on Orange County argues that modern conservatism was a grassroots movement of housewives that brought together socially conservative and libertarian ideology, while Eric Avila’s 2006 work on the significance of Disneyland, Dodger Stadium, and freeways in Los Angeles explains that the white flight mentality was rooted in a culture of patriarchy, whiteness, and postwar suburban home ownership. This focus on ideology and culture suggests that there was more to the white flight mentality than reactionary political realignment. Instead of further contributing to the origins of the New Right, my dissertation presents a different narrative on white flight and suggests that the historiography has ignored white families who supported integration. I find evidence of a grassroots movement by white, middle-class mothers in Atlanta and other cities during the 1970s that sought to halt white flight and argue that the political activism of these women did not originate as a segregationist response to integration nor did it serve as the precursor to the rise of modern conservatism. Rather the women, who as white southerners or migrants to the region, came to think of their activism as part of the next battle in the civil rights movement.

My research is influenced by efforts to revise the historiography of the civil rights movement. Introduced in Jacquelyn Dowd Hall’s 2005 article, the concept of a “long civil rights movement” broadens the periodization of the movement beyond the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision and the pas-

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sage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These revisionist efforts have pushed the origins of the civil rights movement back to the communism of the 1930s, carried the movement to northern cities and beyond the boundaries of the United States in the context of a global Cold War, and included the contributions of white opponents. Other efforts in the field, of which the richest contributions have focused on Charlotte, extend the narrative of the court-ordered desegregation of the public schools beyond the *Brown* decision and massive resistance to argue that the re-segregation of the 1990s was part of a much longer narrative of conservatism.

Brett Gadsden’s recent article on white flight in Wilmington, Delaware, similarly argues for just such a long civil rights movement north of the Mason-Dixon line. His focus, like those who have focused on Charlotte, tie the rise of the New Right to a long civil rights movement by demonstrating how metropolitan busing enabled suburban whites to exert a conservative influence on the outcomes of school desegregation policies and transfer the burdens of integration, in terms of both years and distances bused,

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onto black students. By turning their attention to the sustained protest movements for fair housing and school integration, Bobby Wilson and David Harmon shift the re-segregation of the 1990s away from the reactionary response of the white community back to Birmingham and Atlanta’s African-American community. Finally, Tomiko Brown-Nagin looks specifically at the grievances of parents who filed the failed metropolitan busing lawsuit in Atlanta and argues that the civil rights movement continued into the eighties but in the end benefited the middle-class and ignored the interests of Atlanta’s poor, African-American neighborhoods. Following Brown-Nagin’s extended trajectory of a long civil rights movement while also shifting the narrative to the city’s white northside, my dissertation parallels Jason Sokol’s recent work on how the civil rights movement changed the mindset of white, middle-class southerners. Like Sokol, I draw on oral history interviews and local newspaper articles and explore the mindset and personal decisions being made by white southerners as they resisted, questioned, and even came to embrace the civil rights movement in the seventies and eighties.

I argue that the neighborhood-based movement by northside and intown mothers to halt white flight to the suburbs and private schools not originate from racism predicated on a colorblind language of middle-class rights, freedoms, and individualism. Rather they came to believe that their campaign encompassed a second stage, or the next battle, in a long civil rights movement. Many of the young, college-educated and stay-at-home mothers were like intown homeowner and parent Midge Sweet and either experienced personally or were indirectly but deeply impacted by the civil rights movement.

I do remember and was very affected by the civil rights movement on TV. I was thirteen or fourteen when the riots came, and I wrote a whole series of poems about the images that I collected from those riots. I felt very strongly about it before coming here [to At-

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lanta, to the South]. My husband John had very much been a part of the civil rights movement. He was a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.\textsuperscript{15}

Upon moving to Atlanta, they frequently became active in the local League of Women Voters or sought out a progressive religious congregation. Most sent their children to one of the city’s church-sponsored or cooperative preschools and joined the parent-teachers association when their oldest started kindergarten.

With the choice to send their children to public school, they found themselves defending their decision to friends, neighbors, and co-workers on a daily basis. The simple belief that public education was best for their children and that they were blessed by the African-American families who agreed to bus their children across town became entwined with the values and principles, which they had embraced because of the civil rights movement. Sweet recalls:

\begin{quote}
    We lived in a community that was this little mostly pocket of white...we believed we could do this. It was important to do this. For me changing education in Atlanta was the next civil rights movement. This was what it was all about. This is why we had the civil rights movement, and we couldn’t stop just because the venue was now more focused just on schools and not water fountains or other public institutions. It meant we had to redouble our efforts and make things happen. It’s the one place we do all come together, even if our communities are not racially integrated the way we want them to be it’s the place where we have got to put our flag in the ground and say this is the America we want. This place where are kids are going to school is our first and our last stand. I still feel that so strongly.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

In the face of massive white flight, their commitment to their children and neighborhood grew into a desire to be a part of change. They responded to hysteria, fear, and pressure to retreat with an entirely new type of activism, which pushed beyond the traditional PTA-approach.

The three organizations that were founded in the late 1970s tied their grassroots movement to the city’s future economic growth; their resulting campaigns coincided with Buckhead’s shift from a bedroom community to a second downtown and the revitalization of the decaying, close-in neighborhoods, which by the late nineties had become Atlanta’s most sought after gentrified real estate. They never saw themselves as part of a national movement, but by the eighties NAPPS, CINS, and APPLE Corps had captured the attention of national press and media outlets. Their grassroots and neighborhood-based ef-

\begin{footnotes}
\item[15] Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
\item[16] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
forts to bring families back to the public schools, which they argued should be better than the private
schools because of the enriched curriculum that parental support and diversity could bring, continued to
evolve into a new set of strategies and language of activism and empowerment that transformed three
generations’ understanding of race and community. Atlanta mother Midge Sweet remembers how pro-
moting public education to her neighbors led to her own personal transformation:

I was fascinated with my own sense of racism. I went through all this thinking about the
fact that we really are racists and what the privilege of being white really means. I be-
rated against some of that and also was really interested in it…I believe that you have to
continuously being thinking about things and re-examining your beliefs. You have to be
working in contact with the folks that are part of this whole activity.17

As their children moved through the public schools, the college-educated women who had founded and
led NAPPS, CINS, and APPLE Corps as stay-at-home mothers moved from being politically active in
their schools and communities to an array of campaigns. “When you get exposed to this new reality, that
reality takes you further and further.” 18 Some of the women shifted their commitment to anti-poverty
rights. Other mothers became involved in the women’s movement, campaigns to end violence against
women and children, or the environmental movement. They remained grassroots political activists and
life long volunteers in the arts. What none of the founders imagined was how their campaign would tran-
form the northside and intown neighborhoods and public education in Atlanta.

On the evening of January 30, 2012, more than six hundred intown parents and community mem-
bers crowded into Maynard Jackson High School located in the southeast Atlanta neighborhood of Grant
Park. The auditorium’s seats quickly filled, but white and black couples continued to stream through the
school’s doors. By the time the community meeting had started, people were standing shoulder to shoul-
der in the aisles and had overflowed into the hallways. Two days later, northside families packed North
Atlanta High School for the third community meeting that had been scheduled to present the school sys-
tem’s proposed plans for redistricting. For two and a half hours, parents in brightly colored or tie-dyed t-
shirts, which had first been designed ten years earlier as marketing tools to bring families back to Buck-

17 Ibid.
18 Interview with Brenda Griffin, September 27, 2011.
head’s middle school, waited patiently to voice their concerns to school board members and board officials. Their disruptive tactics were coordinated; every time their school’s name was mentioned, they stood collectively and unfurled signs. The line to the podium and microphone only grew longer as the meeting continued on into the night. The following Sunday, nearly 300 Buckhead parents and community members from four of the neighborhoods that fed into E. Rivers Elementary School, many of whom had attended the meeting at North Atlanta, marched down Peachtree Road. The line of mothers, fathers, and children waving hand-painted banners stretched for over a mile. It was these images of white parents at podiums and marches that made the headlines of the evening news and local newspapers. Within Atlanta, the message was clear; northside and intown parents were fighting to protect their neighborhood schools to keep them white.

Yet the mothers and fathers refused to be governed by politics as usual. In the days leading up to the community meetings, they had reached out to parents who they knew through their school’s parent-teacher organization and NAPPS or CINS. Mobilized by phone trees, email lists, and newsletters, the two grassroots groups showed up at the community meetings angry but organized. Over and over, the comments of the northside and intown mothers and fathers standing before the microphones astutely demonstrated their knowledge of the school system: from school size, building capacity, projected enrollment growth and commute time versus walkability to the steps needed for International Baccalaureate certification, the budget process and ethics policy, they knew the city and its neighborhoods better than the demographers or representatives from the central office. Despite the media coverage and its depiction of the parents, they were demanding a new type of governance, in which the Board of Education and administra-

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tion stopped ignoring their principles and listened to their expertise. The first mother to take to the podium at North Atlanta High School, current NAPPS president and attorney Cynthia Briscoe Brown made their position clear, “Our principles seem to have been resolutely ignored.” The northside crowd, like its southeast and intown counterparts just a few days earlier, was not going to accept political decision-making that failed to include the community.

The northside and intown parents were defending their neighborhood public schools because they believed them to be at the heart of their community. The letters, emails, and comments at the community meetings clearly embraced the vision that the small, core group of Buckhead and intown mothers had first advocated for in the late seventies. These white, middle-class parents bought their homes in Buckhead or one of the intown or close-in, southeast gentrifying neighborhoods because of the values these places represented. They wanted to send their children to the city’s most diverse and highest-performing schools, which they saw as the model that should be held up to the entire city and the nation. One commenter, who posted on the Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s “Get Schooled” blog, explained her shock over the crowds along Peachtree Road, “So nearly 300 white people from Buckhead marched to keep their kids in a school that they love even though it is 60% non-white? That doesn’t fit any of the stereotypes I am supposed to believe.”

The foundation for what can be called nothing less than a full-scale campaign, which has swept across the city from the mansions on the far northside to the bungalows in the growing edge of the close-in, reviving neighborhoods southeast of Inman Park and Candler Park, rests on three generations of Atlanta mothers’ commitment to win what they had come to believe was the second front in the city’s long civil rights movement. I argue that the current redistricting process, in the aftermath of a national cheating scandal, has revealed that by transforming white Atlantans’ understanding of race and commu-

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22 “Get Schooled; Parents take to street for their beloved school,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 5, 2012. See also “Get Schooled; APS redistricting plans face strong resistance from some affected communities,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, January 31, 2012.
nity the neighborhood-based movement founded in the late seventies has created a new way of doing politics. Within the sprawling metropolitan region of Atlanta, it will be this type of community activism with its legacy of values and principles that grew out of the civil rights experience, grassroots strategies that promoted a public relations campaign and educational reforms, and language of involvement and empowerment in defense of the neighborhood that will provide the greatest challenge to the current political landscape.

The dissertation that follows is organized first spatially and then chronological into three sections. Since the turn of the twentieth century, Atlanta’s white affluent and middle-class families have followed Peachtree Street north away from the downtown business district and built magnificent homes near the Piedmont Driving Club. Beginning in 1904, the city’s first automobile suburb with a curvilinear street pattern, Ansley Park, was developed just to the north of the private club’s entrance and became the site of the Governor’s Mansion in 1924. In the aftermath of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot, African-American families clustered east and southwest of the downtown business district around the thriving, black businesses along Auburn Avenue and the historically black colleges of Morehouse, Spelman, and Atlanta University. Following the annexation of the affluent, bedroom community of Buckhead in 1952 and the migration of the city’s white families to the far northside during the postwar boom, the Governor’s Mansion was moved to West Paces Ferry Road in the heart of Buckhead in 1968. Even during the turmoil of the 1960s, Buckhead remained an oasis of white suburbs, while the once elegant, turn-of-the-century homes that could be found in the historic northeast ring of streetcar and automobile suburbs, now referred to as the intown neighborhoods, were subdivided. As the decade continued, the southwest ring of bungalow suburbs experienced violent and overnight racial transition from white to black, further shifting the African-American community south and west of Atlanta University. Meanwhile, urban pioneers began moving into the “decaying” intown neighborhoods, beginning with Inman Park and Ansley Park. Yet by 1971, twenty-seven elementary schools had transitioned from white to black and an estimated 60,000 white Atlantans fled for the suburbs north of the city limits, with another 100,000 whites to follow by the end of
the decade.\textsuperscript{23} Within each section, I reverse this white flight and follow the development of the city, moving from Buckhead (Appendix A) to the intown neighborhoods (Appendix B) and back to the citywide efforts by APPLE Corps, which brought the two “white Atlantas” in contact with the city’s African-American middle-class (Appendix C). This organizational decision draws on the theoretical argument for a “spatial orientation”\textsuperscript{24} embraced by urban historians studying the social and physical landscape of post-war cities and the “circuits of schooling”\textsuperscript{25} concept that urban geographers have used to determine how London parents’ decision regarding education corresponded to their neighborhood’s stage of gentrification.

Chronologically, the three sections begin with the 1973 Compromise and conclude with the debates surrounding the Atlanta Public Schools’ master facilities plan, the Build Smart program, which remained unable to address issues of overcrowding at the public schools that served the city’s historically white, middle-class neighborhoods between 1999 and 2003. The first two chapters look at what experiences in the sixties brought two small, core groups of white, middle-class mothers from the northside and

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[23] Kruse, \textit{White Flight}, 5, 166.
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\end{footnotesize}
close-in neighborhoods together and how they developed campaigns to halt white flight and prevent the closing of another neighborhood school in the late seventies. The third chapter explores the origins of the neighborhood movement in southwest Atlanta and how the two-year Junior League of Atlanta’s Education Task Force struggled to bring the three divergent groups together as a citywide, biracial, but largely middle-class coalition. I argue that as these women founded a grassroots, neighborhood-based movement to halt white flight they began to personally grapple with what racism meant to them as southerners and migrants to the South. Their efforts fostered a new set of values and principles that mobilized what they saw as the second civil rights movement and laid the foundation for a new type of community activism that would defend neighborhood schools and challenge politics as usual.

The second section of the dissertation returns to the northside and intown neighborhoods during the eighties. The first two chapters look at the new generation moving into the northside and intown neighborhoods and asks how the couples made their housing and school decisions in the face of continued pressure to send their children to the city’s exclusive private schools. Both chapters explore how the organizations tied their public relations campaign, which targeted corporations relocating to the city and the business community that the economic growth brought, and educational reform programs, which publicized the excellence and diversity offered by the public schools, to their neighborhoods’ rapid development and revitalization. Chapter 6 concludes the second part of the dissertation by tracing how APPLE Corps expanded the neighborhood-based efforts to include school-based programs that became a metropolitan, regional, and national model for promoting community involvement. I argue that as Atlanta parents organized a public relations agenda and promoted educational reforms, they developed the strategies needed to later mount a full-fledged, community-based campaign.

The last section of the dissertation looks at how the three organizations confronted the vestiges of the white flight mentality. Chapter 7 explores the angst and devastation that followed the high school crisis and how the northside PTAs began to compete with the city’s most exclusive private schools in the nineties. Chapter 8 returns to the intown neighborhoods, where the reputation of Morningside and Mary Lin brought new families to the neighborhoods and overcrowded elementary schools, and the painful di-
visions over race and class that collapsed the city’s first charter school movement. Chapter 9 looks at how 
APPLE Corps fought to move past its middle-class origins of volunteerism and empower low-income, 
African-American parents through the governance project and grant-funded, model programs but ulti-
mately folded in 2002. I argue that these crises and defeats provided the networks of the northside and 
intown parents, which continued to bring new homeowners to NAPPS and CINS through the powerful 
parent-teacher associations and American Roadhouse group, with a new language of community in-
volvement and empowerment that the parents would fall back on in their defense of neighborhood schools 
during the current controversial redistricting process. The conclusion turns to NAPPS and CINS today 
and their efforts to support the newly formed, grassroots organizations by parents from the resurgent 
southeast and southwest neighborhoods in the face of a national cheating scandal.

1 Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools (NAPPS): Halting White Flight

In January 1976, having just returned from the holiday break, Buckhead mother Betsey Stone was 
dropping her oldest child Jennifer off at Sutton Middle School when she ran into a group of mothers in 
the parking lot. Margaret Miller, who had children enrolled at Sarah Smith Elementary School, Sutton 
Middle School, and North Fulton High School, waved her over. An impromptu discussion ensued. Four 
out of five families from their neighborhoods were now sending their children to private school. Of those 
families who had started at Morris Brandon or Sarah Smith with their children, most transferred out after 
fifth grade. With half of the northside elementary schools having been forced to close due to declining 
enrollment, the mothers were worried about the future of Sutton.

Six years earlier the Fifth District Court had ordered Atlanta to immediately integrate its public 
school faculty. In March 1970 when the number “nine” was drawn, 1,600 teachers were reassigned mid-
year by a lottery based on the last digit of their social security number. Three years later after a series of 
behind-the-scenes meetings, the local N.A.A.C.P. and the Atlanta Board of Education reached a compro-
mise to end the fifteen-year long court battle to desegregate Atlanta’s public schools. Black and white
negotiators agreed that if busing caused white flight then Atlanta was going to hold on to families by supporting a system of neighborhood schools. Under the proposed plan, in exchange for the hiring of African-American administrators, including the next superintendent, white children were not to be bused from their neighborhoods. Instead, limited busing was to be used to voluntarily bring black children to the far northside. In July 1973, the Board of Education hired its first African-American superintendent, Dr. Alonzo Crim. By September, the school system had expanded its Majority-to-Minority program and paired four northside and intown elementary schools.

Instead of slowing white flight from the city’s public schools, the 1973 Compromise threatened to tear the Buckhead community apart. For fifteen years the northside had remained an oasis of white, middle-class enclaves and largely excluded from the court-ordered desegregation of the Atlanta Public School system in 1961. Buckhead families had maintained what Fortune magazine proclaimed was the “biggest encampment of top business executives in the southeastern US”, even as 60,000 white Atlantans fled from the city. The integration of the school system’s faculty by lottery in 1970, the desegregation of the northside schools by the 1973 Compromise, and the tumultuous early years of the only new school to be


created by the compromise, Sutton Middle School, shook the northside community. A Buckhead mother with four children in the public schools, who lived on Mornington Drive in the Castlewood neighborhood, remembers why the white parents she met were so deeply fearful of integration:

> Primarily the fears were fears of the unknown. Back then parents were being asked to deal with something they had no knowledge of. And also, the status quo was being changed whether they liked it or not. The suit was court-ordered. Initially the focus was on teachers, system-wide by lottery. Numbers were pulled from a hat, white and black teachers were moved around. So a lot of parents felt they didn’t have any control over who taught their kids.

Sensationalized news stories and the pending ACLU-metropolitan busing suit furthered parents’ hysteria. Despite the promise during negotiations that voluntary transfers were to be cut off when a Buckhead school reached a racial balance of fifty-fifty, parents feared that the compromise was going to be overturned. One young mother who moved into the Peachtree Park neighborhood of Buckhead in 1976 elaborated, “The fear was always too much busing.” All across the northside, “For Sale” signs sprung up. Real estate companies changed their advertisements. They no longer listed the school district; instead, distance to the nearest private schools became a property’s selling point. “Twelve thousand parents left after the ruling. Twelve thousand parents left and went to Cobb County.” Thousands of other parents fled to nearby private schools (Figure 1 and Table 1).

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29 Sutton Middle School spent one year in the former Tuxedo Elementary School building before moving to the closed Dykes High School facility in September 1973.
30 Atlanta Journal, February 13, 1980, 1B. For more on the northside schools’ response to the integration of the faculty see “Reception honoring new teachers is planned by housing group,” Atlanta Daily World, March 5, 1970.
32 Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
Table 1: Student Enrollment Data, 1950-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>百分比</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>百分比</th>
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<td>44.2</td>
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</table>

Source: Atlanta Public Schools.

Figure 1: Student Enrollment Data, 1950-2010

The same young Buckhead mother of three who was discouraged by realtors from enrolling her children in the public schools when she and her husband moved into their northside neighborhood in 1976 described what was happening, “One day children were at E. Rivers [Elementary School], and the next day their parents had them at Pace Academy...They were just scared because that’s the southern thinking. It was very tumultuous, uncertain, and scary to them.”

Parents like Betsey and Brian Stone, who kept their children enrolled at Morris Brandon Elementary and continued on to Sutton Middle School, felt the impact of the 1973 Compromise and the pending metropolitan busing lawsuit daily. Dropping their children off at school, socializing at dinners with other members of the law firm, and worshiping at Trinity

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34 Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
Table 2: Northside Public School Enrollment before and after the 1973 Compromise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>E. Rivers Elementary</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Margaret Mitchell Elementary</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>McClatchey Elementary</td>
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<td>Closed</td>
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<td>210</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>219</td>
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<td>R.L. Hope Elementary</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Rock Springs Elementary</td>
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<td>338</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Closed</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Sarah R. Smith Elementary</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>223</td>
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<td>Warren T. Jackson Elementary</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sutton Middle School</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>499</td>
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<td>Dykes High School</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>North Fulton High School</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>271</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northside High School</td>
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<td>847</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>1,208</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>691</td>
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<td>Total enrollment</td>
<td>6,808</td>
<td>5,722</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>4,924</td>
<td>2,251</td>
<td>2,372</td>
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Source: “School Desegregation in Metro Atlanta, 1954-1973” (Atlanta, GA: Research Atlanta, February 1973); “City schools feel white flight’s result,” *Atlanta Journal*, March 18, 1984, 1B.

Presbyterian Church on Sundays, they found themselves defending their decision to keep their children enrolled in the public schools. They felt that they had to explain to other Buckhead couples that they were financially able to send their children to private school but chose not to. Fear continued to drive their neighbors and co-workers from the public schools (Table 2).³⁵

As the mothers talked on that cold morning in the parking lot at Sutton Middle School an idea began to emerge.³⁶ For the past year several of them had been attending informal meetings, which were started by the northside elementary schools’ PTO and PTA presidents to share concerns and ideas.³⁷

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³⁵ Birney Elementary, Bolton Elementary School, McClatchey Elementary School, R.L. Hope Elementary School, and Rock Springs Elementary School were also closed in addition to Dykes High School. Tuxedo Elementary School had been closed prior to the Compromise at the end of the 1971-1972 school year. The four intown school that were closed, Highland Elementary, Spring Street Elementary, Inman Elementary, and Moreland Elementary will be discussed in Chapter 2.

³⁶ Margaret Miller, Betsey Stone and Gloria Carlton, “Parental involvement versus flight to the suburbs,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, San Francisco, California, March 6, 1978, Betsey Beach Papers (privately held); Betsey Stone, “Salisbury speech,” 1983, Betsey Beach Papers (privately held); Brenda Griffin, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, September 12, 2011; Betsey Beach, Reflections written for Elizabeth Egan Henry, September 27, 2011.

³⁷ The first meeting, organized by PTA community relations chair Betty Whittier, took place at Warren T. Jackson Elementary School on February 11, 1975. Morris Brandon Elementary, E. Rivers Elementary, Margaret Mitchell
Stone, who had taken over as PTO president at Morris Brandon that fall, suggested that they bring the two groups together and include representatives from the northside high schools. They each agreed to contact the presidents who they knew and invite them to a meeting on February 11, 1976.

The chapter that follows details how the meeting in a parking lot developed into a movement to halt white flight. At first, their efforts to recruit friends, co-workers, and neighbors back to the public schools introduced a new type of volunteerism that went beyond the scope of the traditional PTA-approach. NAPPS founder Clare Richardson explained the focus of their early grassroots efforts, “It was mostly personal. There were the neighborhood coffee mornings. What emerged after that was the increasingly role of realtors in steering people away. So we began having open houses at Northside, all very grassroots oriented.” At the same time, co-chairmen Margaret Miller and Betsey Stone directed the attention of NAPPS to the 1977 school board elections and lobbying against federal legislation that supported private school tuition tax credits. The following year, NAPPS president Clare Richardson, community relations chair Betty Whittier, and public relations chair Gloria Carlton strategically expanded their annual open houses to include a weeklong promotional event held at Lenox Square Mall. As their organizational assault on white flight grew, they began to personally grapple with what racism meant to them as southerners and migrants to the South and a new set of values and principles built around a commitment to integration and public education was fostered.

1.1 A Grassroots Campaign

On February 11, Atlanta mother Betsey Stone turned her car down Kingswood Lane in Buckhead. After parking, she made her way to the entrance of Northside High School and joined a small group of Buckhead parents who had gathered in the library. Like most of the other mothers attending the meeting,
she had moved to Atlanta in the sixties. Her husband had graduated from Duke Law School and been offered a position at an Atlanta law firm in 1964. At first, they had rented a house in Ansley Park, three miles north of the downtown. The Stones listened to the advice of other couples that they met through the law firm and purchased a home in Buckhead in order to be in the city’s best school districts. “On just that small street, Channing Drive, there were at least four lawyers: Neil Williams [at Alston & Bird’s predecessor], Bob Steed [at King & Spalding], and Gloria Carlton’s husband [at Troutman Sanders]. I think that is why we ended up there. I’m sure through someone at the law firm.” Stone quickly got to know other young mothers in the neighborhood. When her daughter Jennifer started at Morris Brandon Elementary School, she volunteered with many of the women whom she had met. They read to their children’s classes, purchased art supplies, served as room mothers, provided transportation for field trips, and organized fundraising events for the parent-teacher organization. The year before as Jennifer had approached middle school and their youngest child Brian eagerly waited for the day he could follow his sister to kindergarten at Morris Brandon, she saw first hand the hysteria and fear that gripped the Buckhead community. Many of her neighbors and husband’s co-workers had already fled to the city’s private schools. Of those neighborhood families who started at Morris Brandon, most withdrew their children at the end of fifth grade.

On that evening in February, Stone sat down across from fellow Sutton mother Margaret Miller in the Northside High School library. Born in Jacksonville and a 1957 graduate of Duke University, Margaret Miller and her husband Carl, whom she had met in college, had moved to Atlanta in 1962 after his insurance company transferred him. At first they rented an apartment. “We had an apartment at Lakemore…a lot of young people lived in that apartment complex. Mostly people in our age range, in their mid to late twenties. We had a pretty good time there.” Soon after moving, the Millers purchased their first home in North Buckhead on Herrington Drive, because it was located less than a half-mile from

39 Interview with Betsey Beach, September 27, 2011.
their neighborhood elementary school and “considered at that time to be the best part of the city.” Then their world began to fall apart. In 1973, it was announced that D.F. McClatchey Elementary was to be closed. Their three daughters were rezoned to Sarah Smith Elementary and the newly created Sutton Middle School. Carl Miller recalls why his wife got involved after the Compromise was announced:

That’s what got my wife into this. We have always been on what I guess you would say was the liberal side, and she wanted to see if we could make this work. Of course busing at that time was frightening to a lot of white, northside Atlantans…they didn’t know what to expect and thought it was disruptive and that the learning qualities would drop. All the usual things that people think when they are fearful and don’t understand. My wife determined that we could make this work if we got a lot of other white parents to stay and not move to Sandy Springs or go to private school. She tried to have lots of meetings to allay those fears of white residents in the Buckhead area concerning the busing in of black children…I was working fulltime and trying to build a business. I left it pretty much to my wife. It was mostly mothers. There were some good people, and they tried to calm everyone down by saying, “At least give it a try and see what happens. Then if you are dissatisfied you can make some alternative moves. But at least try it.”

During the spring of 1973, Miller helped organize activities to bring the children from both elementary schools together, including an Easter Egg Hunt for the kindergarten classes. She told one reporter who came to take photographs for the neighborhood paper, “We may lose some who will move out of the city and some of these children have been accepted at private schools, but there are still many who will work hard to make the compromise work.” She also made the decision to support the new middle school that was being opened and agreed to chair the newly formed, biracial Sutton Community Council’s steering committee. Just a few weeks prior to the Easter egg hunt, the minister at Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Atlanta, Reverend Randy Taylor, had decided to gather a group of white and black parents together to discuss how they could encourage support for the 1973 Compromise. He invited Miller to join what came to be known as the Atlanta Ad Hoc Committee for Excellence in Education. Though they had little success with the press, which continued to print stories that furthered parents’ fears over integration,

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41 Interview with Carl Miller, December 12, 2011.  
42 Ibid.  
the ad hoc committee focused its energy on overseeing and recruiting students to the expanded Majority-to-Minority program. Miller brought to the February 1976 meeting at Northside High School her earlier committee work and an unswerving faith in public education.

When Margaret Miller arrived at Northside High School she was happy to see Edith Hammond, whom she had worked with on Randy Taylor’s committee. Hammond, a Birmingham native and a graduate of Howard College, had moved to Atlanta in 1955 when her husband Joe was accepted to the Georgia Institute of Technology’s graduate program in electrical engineering. When he began teaching at Georgia Tech in 1962, she stayed at home with their three daughters. She started by volunteering as a room mother at Garden Hills Elementary School and eventually served as PTA president. Her early involvement in the voluntary transfer plan advisory committee led to an invitation by Reverend Taylor to join the ad hoc group he was organizing. The experience inspired her to run for the Atlanta Board of Education in 1973, and attorney Richard Raymer narrowly defeated her in the October run-off. On February 11, Hammond came to the meeting as the representative for North Fulton High School.

Sitting around the Northside High School library were other parents like Betsey Stone, Margaret Miller, and Edith Hammond. They had moved to the city in the sixties and were active in their children’s schools. A lively discussion began. For over an hour, the parents shared their concerns. A new, political

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45 School Talk, November 1979; “Notes” (compiled by Marcia Klenbort), APPLE Corps, Box 5, 2004.167, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center Archives. For more on Reverend Randy Taylor’s importance in the civil rights movement see “The Night MLK Was Shot: On the April Night Martin Luther King, Jr. was Assassinated, Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. Worked behind the Scenes with Atlantans from all Walks of Life to Keep Peace in the Aftermath,” Atlanta Magazine, April 2004; Rebecca Burns, Burial for a King: Martin Luther King Jr.’s Funeral and the Week that Transformed Atlanta and Rocked the Nation (New York, NY: Scribner, 2011). See also Interview with J. Randolph Taylor, May 23, 1985, Interview C-0021, Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007).

46 Howard College was renamed Samford University in 1965. Brown-Nagin, Courage to Dissent, 387.

47 At North Fulton, Edith Hammond had created an advisory council modeled after the Sutton Community Council and served as PTSA president. While concurrently serving on the superintendent’s Commission on Discipline from 1975 to 1976, she took on the role of being the NAPPS observer at Board of Education briefing sessions and meetings. She continued to attend the meetings until May 1980, when she stepped down in order to take over as chair for NPU-B. After Joe Hammond accepted a job at Clemson University, she became president of the League of Women Voters of Clemson in 2003. Atlanta Daily World, October 18, 1973, page 1; “Commission on discipline in Atlanta schools sets meetings,” Atlanta Daily World, December 1, 1974, page 9; School Talk, November 1980; The Mustard Seed, Newsletter for the Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church, June 2008.

48 Of the original Warren T. Jackson PTA members that organized the first informal meeting in 1975, only community relations chair Betty Whittier and room mother coordinator Marilyn Holmes, whose children were bused to
dimension to their volunteerism began to emerge as they voiced different ideas about how to halt white flight and alter the community’s perception of Sutton Middle School. What if each school in their group hosted a neighborhood coffee to talk to families? What if they designed a brochure for people thinking about moving to Atlanta? What if they got on the agendas at the realtors’ meetings and explained the facts?  

Lynn Westergaard, who was originally from Tennessee and had moved to Atlanta fifteen years earlier with his wife Cynthia after being hired by the newly formed regionally busing and rail system, or Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), as a Community Relations director, led the meeting. He voiced his frustration and hope to the other parents in the library.

For a long time now we’ve been hearing only the negative about desegregation and public schools: white flight, lowering of academic standards, discipline problems, and a general malaise in the public education system. Yes, the past few years have been difficult, for whites and especially for blacks whose children more often than whites have been transported out of their neighborhoods to schools in predominantly white sections of town. But what about the positive side, which I believe, far outweighs the negative? I am able, with three children in Atlanta’s public schools, to say desegregation has been a blessing.

At the end of the meeting, the small group of parents voted to found a new coalition, the Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools (NAPPS). With children at Morris Brandon, Sutton, and Northside High School, Westergaard volunteered to be the group’s first chairman.

Jackson Elementary School, remained involved. Betty Whittier had married her husband Philip C. Whittier, a graduate of Davidson College and Emory Law School, in 1950. She was active in both Warren T. Jackson and North Fulton High School’s PTAs, while their four children were in school. The Whittiers were also members at St. Dunstan’s Episcopal Church, which was established in 1964 by St. Anne’s as a family-oriented parish committed to local outreach, and helped found FISH, a volunteer group assisting elderly and disabled Atlantans. Marilyn Holmes was the wife of the head of orthopedic surgery at Grady Memorial Hospital, Dr. Hamilton Holmes, who had desegregated the University of Georgia in 1961. She went on to serve as PTA president at Warren T. Jackson and Sutton Middle School. After her children graduated from high school, she returned to teaching second grade at Sarah Smith Elementary School in 1989 and was recognized as Atlanta’s Teacher of the Year in 1992.

Miller, Stone and Carlton, “Parental involvement versus flight to the suburbs”; Stone, “Salisbury speech.”


After the meeting ended, Betsey Stone went home and called up her friend Brenda Griffin. She and Brenda had first met in 1960, when their husbands had started at Duke Law School together. Griffin listened as Stone told her about the group and asked her to come to the next meeting in March.

The Carltons, Betsey’s neighbor Gloria Carlton and her sister Gail Bell, and Betsey and I, we were talking at PTA meetings all the time. Betsey called me after the first meeting and asked me to come be a founder of this new group. It’s crucial to understand that the spark for this went out from the middle school on because all the white parents were flying away after fifth grade.  

Just a month earlier in January 1976, they had organized a presentation to area real estate firms at Morris Brandon Elementary. “We decided that we needed show-and-tell…to influence the realtors, to try and educate them.”  

As PTO president Stone provided the realtors with an impressive list of why parents believed their school was a selling point that enhanced the neighborhood’s value and appeal. She highlighted the strong parental involvement in the school, which ranged from fundraising for new equipment to coffees for new mothers. 

On the phone Betsey Stone excitedly told Brenda Griffin about the group of parents she had met. Like them, they “were the parents who were involved in the PTA and tutoring and field trips.” As families had fled the public schools, they were the parents who stayed. They had organized presentations and open houses, which tried to make families aware of all the positive things going on in their own school while also working to counter the rampant rumors and misinformation being circulated by area realtors. Now they wanted to band together and reach out to the entire community. It was a small group from the neighborhood, but they were all philosophically and politically committed to the public schools. For each of them, there had been a moment in their lives that introduced them to the civil rights movement and changed their political consciousness as white, middle-class women.  

Betsey Stone had grown up in Oklahoma and met her husband, who was from New York, while attending Marietta College. Neither of them had ever been to the South before arriving in Durham, North

54 Interview with Brenda Griffin, September 27, 2011.  
55 Ibid.  
57 Atlanta Journal, February 13, 1980, 1B.
Carolina in 1960. As Brian Stone started his first year of law school, Betsey worked as a secretary at Duke, the only job available to a woman on campus with a college degree. Their lives were busy but peaceful. Then during Brian’s last year in law school, Duke University integrated. Stone recalls the impact the event had in awakening their political consciousness:

The entire university was white, and the entire law school was white, all the professors and all the students. Brian’s last year in law school, they desegregated the university through the law school. Two African-American men were admitted. On Sunday nights one of the white students had to go get food for them because they weren’t serving dinner on campus. It wasn’t safe for them to eat at a restaurant…we lived a white life in a white world…what happened at the law school when they desegregated, that for Brian and I was it. I came from a very apolitical family. I was clueless about politics…civil rights, and later women’s rights, was what made me political. No question about it. It defined where our passion was. It’s why Brian got into the Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, and I wonder if I ever would have gotten on this path if it not for that experience.58

The Stone’s emerging political commitment was reinforced by their faith. They had joined Trinity Presbyterian Church after moving to Atlanta and listened as Reverend Allison Williams encouraged the congregation to become active in progressive causes.59 “It was a totally white church, but Allison Williams was the minister and he was very intellectual. He was the one that motivated me in those sermons.”60

It was hard enough moving here. But my kids grew up as seeing integration as normal and that was the blessing for me as a parent living in the South. If there’s anything I celebrate today, that’s it. That was the gift that was given to them by the kids whose families voluntarily and willing put them on buses to come to the northside neighborhoods.61

For the Stones the integration of the public schools became the line they were going to hold.

Originally from Minnesota, Brenda Griffin met her husband Harry “Buck” Griffin while attending Smith College. After graduating from Duke Law School, they moved to Atlanta in 1964 when Buck

58 Interview with Betsey Beach, September 27, 2011.
59 Trinity Presbyterian Church was founded as part of Central Presbyterian Church’s outreach to the growing northern suburbs in 1949. The church opened with 150 members, and by the 1970s has grown to over 1700. As the population of the Buckhead suburbs swelled, overcrowding in the northside elementary schools led the congregation to expand its preschool, which had opened in 1951, to the elementary grades in 1964. That same year, the Trinity School became the first private school in the state of Georgia to integrate and in 1980, with enrollment continuing to grow, purchased the closed Birney Elementary School building from Atlanta Public Schools. Michael Gannon, “From White Flight to Open Admissions: The Founding and Integration of Private Schools in the City of Atlanta, 1951-1967” (M.A. thesis, Georgia State University, 2004); Michelle Purdy, “Southern and Independent: Public Mandates, Private Schools, and Black Students, 1951-1970,” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2011).
60 Interview with Betsey Beach, September 27, 2011. For more on how Atlanta’s religious community supported the integration in the seventies see “Aid Education, Churches Told,” Northside Neighbor, July 2, 1975, page 16.
61 Ibid.
was offered a position in the law firm of Smith, Currie and Hancock. At first, they rented a duplex on Hudson Drive in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood, and Brenda stayed at home with their one-year-old son. She fell in love with the “old English” feel of their neighborhood, its sidewalks, and people of all ages. She was even happier when six months later, their close friends from Duke Law School, Brian and Betsey Stone, followed them to Atlanta. For Brenda, it was after her husband Buck had graduated from law school and they had moved from Durham to Atlanta that she became aware of the civil rights movement. Griffin remembers:

    We were at home in March 1965. Buck was near the television, and he screamed “Oh my God!” I ran in there, and it was the attack on Pettus Bridge. We were both just shocked by that treatment. It was then that my consciousness was raised. It was then that I really knew what it was like to live in the South...so when we chose to live where we live, it was easy for me to choose to send my children to public school. But I have to emphasize that my child did not have to go across town and didn’t have to get up before sunrise to do it.\(^\text{62}\)

In 1967, the Griffins purchased a home on Dean Drive in the Wildwood neighborhood of Buckhead from one of Buck Griffin’s law partners, Overton Currie. Now with two children, the Griffins were attracted to the reputation of the neighborhood public schools, Morris Brandon and Northside High School. For both women, the civil rights movement had opened their eyes to the South, awakened their political consciousness, and inspired a deep commitment to integration that they brought to the Buckhead community as outsiders moving to Atlanta.

    Unlike many of the other young mothers, Betsey Stone’s neighbor and fellow Morris Brandon parent Gloria Howard Carlton was a native Atlantan and decided to keep her children in the public schools following the implementation of the compromise. She had met her husband in college at Emory, and they purchased their home on Channing Drive in 1966 when their first child was just six months old. “Most of our friends were in [Buckhead]. There were good schools. We found an area of young families. It was just such an appealing neighborhood from many perspectives.”\(^\text{63}\) Their oldest of three sons had just started at Morris Brandon when the busing plan was implemented. Carlton watched as family after family

\(^{62}\) Interview with Brenda Griffin, September 27, 2011.  
\(^{63}\) Interview with Gloria Stahle, December 14, 2011.
moved to east Cobb and Sandy Springs. There was “this general movement” and they were all fleeing “over the integration issue.” Carlton was worried about what they were going to do if not enough families stayed and their neighborhood school was forced to close. She discussed her concerns with her younger sister, Gail Howard Bell, whose oldest child had already completed first grade at Morris Brandon.

We were not concerned in terms of our children getting a good education or being in a good school. We were in the best school in the city. We were concerned about white flight, the families leaving, and also the unsubstantiated concerns and statements that were being made about the schools, which were not realistic or truthful. There was a lot of misinformation.

At home with her newborn daughter, Gail Bell and her husband Richard, whom had met at a rush party when he was a sophomore at Georgia Tech, had built their home on Northside Drive in 1973. They were drawn to the neighborhood’s quiet streets, young families, and wonderful schools. Like her sister, Bell was increasingly uncertain about the integration of the faculty and busing. She also understood what was causing the hysteria among her friends and neighbors. Bell explains:

It was just not knowing…busing was an unknown factor. What would it bring? How would things change? There were no precedents for knowing how quality of the schools would be affected. So there was this natural fear. A fear of losing control and not being in the kind of school, which had been all-white and of proven quality, that had always existed. This was all new and groundbreaking territory that no one had navigated before. Because of racism most parents assumed that the quality of education would decline because of integration.

Unlike so many of their friends and neighbors and despite being native Atlantans, who had grown up in the southwest neighborhood of Cascade Heights, the Howard sisters were not afraid of integration. They had had been impacted by the civil rights movement at a young age and learned from their parents an attitude of racial tolerance. Bell specifically remembers the incident that transformed her mother:

It was something that started when I was a very young child, and it came from my parents, my mother in particular. She grew up in a tiny town in Alabama. Both my parents did, and I think it’s pretty amazing her attitude…I knew from childhood on that it was wrong…my mother was the Director of Christian Education for a private kindergarten at

64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Gail Bell, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, January 8, 2012.
67 Ibid.
the Audubon Forest Methodist Church in Cascade Heights when a black family enrolled their child, a little boy. The board of directors of the church closed the school rather than integrate it. I just remember my parents’ reaction and that was [the] big lesson.⁶⁸

Despite the exodus of many of their neighbors and friends to Cobb County, both the Carltons and the Bells made the decision to continue on at Morris Brandon. Carlton recalls the decision, “There were some real problems and issues, but we decided and my own view was that we should try and do something about it rather than thank pick up and leave. That didn’t seem to be the solution.”⁶⁹ When she called up her younger sister to tell her about NAPPS meetings, it was a natural progression for Gail Bell to follow her sister’s lead. When asked why she and her sister got involved, Bell explains:

Why remain committed? We felt like pioneers. It never occurred to us to make a change. We felt a need to support public education, and our children prospered. We were certainly not going move out of the city, as some people did. Growth into Cobb County was rampant. We loved the idea of neighborhood school within walking distance, and it seemed like Brandon was a happy, comfortable setting. We were never scared by integration and saw the good in it. Growing up, I never heard or experienced racist remarks in my family so accepting it was natural. Being liberal on social issues, we saw it as an opportunity for personal growth. We liked having our children in the real world setting and never felt their education was compromised.⁷⁰

For southerners like Margaret Miller, Gloria Carlton and Gail Bell the impressions left by the civil rights movement on their childhood and the values that their parents had quietly discussed at home became the origins of their commitment to the public schools in the face of their neighbors’ hysteria and fear and would enable them to personally transcend racism and form close friendships with mothers from outside the South. “We made a circle of friends that we would not have made otherwise. I think we were very closely tied together.”⁷¹ For the young parents, finding and working with “other like-minded parents for a common goal at a critical time of social change” gave their convictions strength.⁷²

Having made the decision to take a stand and support integration, these mothers began to think very differently about their relationship to the city and the issues it faced. Despite having attended college

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⁶⁹ Ibid.
⁷⁰ Gail Bell, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, January 8, 2012.
⁷¹ Interview with Gloria Stahle, December 14, 2011.
⁷² Gail Bell, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, January 8, 2012.
and in a few cases graduate school, as the wives of white, middle-class lawyers and businessmen in Buckhead, they were expected to stay at home with their children and run the household. Organizing dinner parties simply was no longer enough. How could they learn more about the issues facing their city and change the mindset of their neighbors? Betsey Stone attended her first League of Women Voters meeting around the same time as the February 1976 meeting at Northside High School. Like she had with the school crisis, she immediately went home and invited Brenda Griffin to join her. Through their involvement in the League of Women Voters in the late seventies, they got to know other women like themselves with children at Warren T. Jackson, Sarah Smith, E. Rivers, and Garden Hills and invited them to NAPPS meetings that first year. As they worked on a range of political and social issues through the League, they learned how to run a committee meeting and incorporated the League style of organization into those early NAPPS sessions.


74 From their membership in the League of Women Voters and involvement in NAPPS, Betsey Stone went on to serve as president of the League of Women Voters of Atlanta-Fulton County from 1981 to 1983. She then became the coordinator for the Public Assistance Coalition from 1983 to 1986, where she worked with Frances Pauley on the poverty rights movement. “Frances Pauley was a huge influence in waking me up to other kinds of places where discrimination was rampant. I think starting with the civil rights that opened a window to neighborhoods and lifestyles that were different than what I had known. I worked with her at the legislature downtown. She opened my eyes to a different world. She educated me, and that hasn’t gone away, even today. That’s where my interests lie and it’s been quite a gift.” After serving as the Director of Christians Against Hunger in Georgia, she became the executive director of the citywide Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education, or APPLE Corps from 1987 to 1989. The Stones moved back to Durham, North Carolina after Brian was diagnosed with cancer. Betsey Stone returned to school and became a sixth grade teacher. Brenda Griffin went on to chair the League of Women Voters Education Committee and then worked as a lobbyist for the Georgia Residential Childcare Association. In 1982, the Griffins helped to found the St. Francis Table, which was started at her family’s church The Shrine of the Immaculate Conception before being moved to Trinity Methodist Church. Despite living in two different states, the two women have
By the fall of 1976, the membership of NAPPS extended to fifty parents.\textsuperscript{75} Margaret Miller and Betsey Stone quickly emerged as the “driving force” behind the movement.\textsuperscript{76} This core group continued to bring friends to meetings. “We were such a small group in the city of Atlanta, the outliers. But we didn’t see it that way. Those were our neighborhoods…it’s who we became friends with in this part of town.”\textsuperscript{77} Most of the mothers truly were outsiders and had come to the South because of their husbands’ careers.

One of the first women who Betsey Stone and Brenda Griffin asked to join the new group was fellow Morris Brandon mother and League of Women Voters member, Meg Taylor. She had moved to Atlanta from Columbus, Ohio in August 1970 with her three children after her husband George was hired by Georgia State University’s Psychology Department.\textsuperscript{78} They were excited by the opportunity that the move presented, but coming from the Midwest, Iowa and Nebraska respectively, were almost entirely unaware of the explosive racial situation confronting the city. At first, they looked at homes near Emory University, but on the advice of friends and colleagues who lived on the city’s northside purchased their first home in the Buckhead neighborhood of Castlewood. The house had been on the market for a while, and they liked that it offered easy access to downtown Atlanta and Georgia State University’s campus.

While they were moving into their new home, Mary Anne Blackwood, who lived across the street and was the wife of the rector of Covenant Presbyterian Church, came to welcome them to the neighborhood. She told Taylor about several groups that she was involved with and invited her to come to a League of Women Voters meeting. “I was more philosophical than an activist. Living my life [was] my action. The League of Women Voters taught me the history of education in Georgia. I also had the vested interest of remained close friends for the past fifty years. Monsignor Noel Burtenshaw, “St. Francis Table Finds New Home,” \textit{The Georgia Bulletin}, The Newspaper of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta, August 19, 1982; “Press Release: APPLE Corps names new Director for 1987-88,” June 22, 1987, APPLE Corps, Box 3; Frances Pauley, “Georgia’s schools: Separate and still unequal,” \textit{Atlanta Daily World}, December 15, 1994, page 1.


\textsuperscript{76} Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.

\textsuperscript{77} Interview with Betsey Beach, September 27, 2011.

\textsuperscript{78} After earning a Master’s in English from the University of Chicago, George Taylor taught at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois before completing his Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Minnesota. While in Minneapolis, Meg Taylor completed her B.A. at the University of Minnesota.
my own children, which made it very important to me.”\(^79\) The League very quickly became how she met her friends and learned about issues confronting her new city.

Meanwhile, their oldest child started first grade at Morris Brandon Elementary. “My only issue was that public education be available and of high quality…coming from Iowa, with 98% literacy at that time, I had trouble wrapping my head around some of the attitudes in the South.”\(^80\)

Our daughter entered the first grade with the first bussed students. Many of our neighbors moved. There was definitely pressure [for us to follow]. The first question was always, “Where do your children go to school?” We talked about the decision, but we believed our tax money should afford our children quality education. If one of our children had a particular need or if we saw poor quality education being provided then we would consider further…Morris Brandon was the neighborhood school. We believed in public education, having come from the Midwest where we had gotten excellent preparation for college…so we watched our kids’ scores, and we were able with his English and my mathematics and science training to know if they were receiving a quality education. We really valued the exposure to all the SES levels, different races, and ability levels.\(^81\)

She painfully watched as her neighbors and fellow members of St. Anne’s Episcopal Church with children moved or transferred to nearby private schools.

My church was not particularly interested in supporting public education and that was an ongoing source of sadness for me…some members had graduated from local schools but then sent their children to private schools. Some had sent theirs to private schools much earlier because the public schools had seemed too rigid. Some had tried staying but had painful racially influenced experiences. They didn’t want to use their children to further their political opinion. This was strange to me.\(^82\)

Then in 1975, after stepping back from her involvement to have their youngest son, who was born in 1973, she found herself attending informal meetings among the northside elementary school PTA presidents. “We talked about the schools and how to promote them. The lawyers’ wives were more knowledgeable about community action. Some were politically liberal. I just believed in equal opportunity and quality education. I had lived that...[now] I was learning about racial tension.”\(^83\) So when Stone, who had

\(^79\) Margaret Taylor, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, November 22, 2011.
\(^80\) Ibid.
\(^81\) Ibid.
\(^82\) Ibid.
\(^83\) The then rector at Saint Anne’s Episcopal Church Bishop Frank Allan and his wife Elizabeth Allan, who was a teacher in Fulton County, sent their kids to public school and had helped desegregate the schools in Macon before coming to Atlanta. But, the church membership and northwest Atlanta were consumed with the other social issues confronting the city and the nation, including Vietnam and later feminism.
\(^83\) Ibid.
gotten to know her through the League, called her up a year later Taylor eagerly joined the new northside parents group, which had emerged from those informal meetings.

Another Morris Brandon mother and League of Women Voters member, Clare Richardson, also excitedly joined the group. She had been a part of the informal meetings in 1975 but had moved when her husband’s firm relocated for a year. While abroad, she had continued to hear how the meetings were progressing. “I heard about it from phone calls and letters.” She welcomed the founding of the new group. Richardson had first moved from England to the United States in 1968 with her husband Nigel and their four children. They had rented and ultimately purchased a home on Mornington Drive in the Castlewood neighborhood of Buckhead because of the reputation of the schools on the northside.

What we had pretty much always done as we traveled was first find the schools that seemed like they were good schools. Then we would try and find somewhere to live. We always went to the schools first. You see we had four kids. Now in the same company as my husband there was another woman who told me that this is the area that had a good reputation. Her kids went to Garden Hills and that, E. Rivers, and Morris Brandon would be a good place to start. We found a realtor and started looking. In the interim we rented a house just off of Howell Mill in the Brandon school district. So for a year, we were in a rental house. Then we found our current house, which is in walking distance of Morris Brandon.85

After settling into her new home, she quickly became involved in the League of Women Voters. Having been “an RN at a huge kind-of Grady Hospital” and politically involved in England, the League appealed to her. “The area I grew up in had an industrial, ship building and mining economy, which were all beginning to decline with deindustrialization. So social services and public housing were big issues. The biggest issue was dispersal, so I had become very involved with that, as I did with the League.” When they returned to Atlanta, their children reenrolled at the northside public schools and Richardson called up her friends who were involved in the League and the new NAPPS group.

Most of the northside parents who began attending meetings in the fall were like Richardson and Taylor and had moved to Atlanta from outside the South. They “felt or believed as we did…they had experienced good public education where they came from. Many of them were not local and did not buy

84 Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
into the mythos of private education, socially or politically. Desegregation was a desired necessity to most of us.\textsuperscript{87} Because they frequently came from outside the South and had a transformative experience during the civil rights movements, they deeply struggled with the racism that they encountered upon arriving in Atlanta and had concentrated all their attention on the schools that their children attended. Their schooling decision became the moment they took a stand. These were parents who could afford private school tuition but wanted to send their children to their integrated, neighborhood public school. Richardson explained the new set of values and principles that she came to embrace, “It was not a socio-economic decision. It was philosophical…to us it was a value decision that we needed our children to go to school not just with children of very diverse backgrounds racially but also socio-economically because that’s what the real world is like.”\textsuperscript{88} According to Taylor, this new set of principles grew with the decision to keep their children enrolled in the public schools, “We held on.”\textsuperscript{89}

These values and principles, which grew out of the women’s experiences during the earlier civil rights movement, came together because the founding of NAPPS coincided with a period of tremendous growth, which was transforming the historic bedroom community of Buckhead and the suburbs north of the city, including Sandy Springs, north Fulton, and east Cobb County.\textsuperscript{90} Between 1956 and 1969 eight retail developments, including Lenox Square and Phipps Plaza, were completed on the northside alone. In 1966, the first large, free-standing store, a Sears and Roebuck, opened near the intersection of Peachtree and West Paces Ferry Roads at the center of Buckhead’s historic but declining shopping district. The two

\textsuperscript{87} Margaret Taylor, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, November 22, 2011.
\textsuperscript{88} Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
\textsuperscript{89} Margaret Taylor, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, November 22, 2011.
shopping malls and the Sears and Roebuck were the engines behind Buckhead’s early economic growth.\textsuperscript{91}

During the seventies, the growth brought by the retail industry to the northern suburbs continued. In 1972 Lenox Square Mall was fully enclosed with an additional wing and anchor store. Eight years later a three-level plaza court was added. These renovations made the regional shopping center a national model for the redevelopment of aging malls. During this same decade, employers also began following the middle-class population and the retail industry to the suburbs. As they relocated, the demand for additional commercial office space resulted in seventeen new office developments in Buckhead, including the northside’s first steel and glass high-rise, Tower Place, in 1975.\textsuperscript{92} Even as white Atlantans fled the city for suburbs, young couples hired by one of the corporations or law firms that had purchased the new office space overlooking Peachtree Road were choosing to move into the city.\textsuperscript{93} Richardson recalls how she and the other founders were a part of that growth:

Betsey was from Oklahoma. Brenda was from Minnesota. We were from the UK. There were some Atlantans, definitely, but Atlanta in the seventies was in a period of huge growth. People were coming from everywhere. They met at college. Married their husbands at university and now coming as lawyers, businesspeople, developers, or architects…it was a very exciting time in many ways.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{91} The construction of the largest retail development in the southeast in 1956, Lenox Square Mall, marked department stores Rich’s and Davison’s first suburban location. The second shopping mall, Phipps Plaza, was completed in 1969. Though located diagonally across Peachtree Street from Lenox Square, it was the first fully enclosed, climate-controlled, and high-end shopping center in the city. The other developments included Lindbergh Plaza, Peachtree Battle Center, Market Place Center, North Buckhead Plaza, Pharr Road Shopping Center, and Peachtree Plaza. Layne Keith Porter, “From Bedroom Community to Suburban Business Center: A Geographical Analysis of the Buckhead Community in Atlanta, Georgia, 1920-1988,” (M.A. Thesis, Georgia State University, 1989): 58-70.


\textsuperscript{93} According to the 1990 census, 54.1% of Buckhead residents moved to their homes between 1985 and 1990, while 59.1% of residents were born outside of Georgia. “Buckhead is rated special by people who live there,” \textit{Atlanta Journal}, November 30, 1977, 1NF; Carrie Teegardin, “People of Buckhead,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constiution}, May 20, 1993, 1E.

\textsuperscript{94} Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
The decision by the Richardsons and the other couples to purchase homes in the middle-class neighborhoods of Buckhead during this period of suburban growth directly shaped their first grassroots efforts to halt white flight, which started with an open house for prospective parents.

On the morning of April 28, 1976 Lynn Westergaard, Margaret Miller, and Betsey Stone met with Area III superintendent Dr. Ruel Morrison to finalize plans for the organization’s first major event. Meanwhile, Brenda Griffin arrived at Northside High School. She had secured the space for the first NAPPS open house and now spent the day assisting teachers and principals pulling presentation demo boards into the auditorium. They had prominently placed an advertisement for the open house on a billboard fronting Peachtree Street and mailed 3,000 invitations to parents of children in preschool, fourth, and fifth grade and families who lived in the northside school districts but were attending private school. They were targeting the families like their own, that had recently moved to Buckhead. Later that evening and to the astonishment of NAPPS members, over 1,000 parents walked through the halls of Northside High School. Margaret Miller explained to one reporter that she hoped to bring their cause to the Buckhead community that night:

I have always been a proponent of integrated education as a means for children to learn how to live and relate to children from other cultures and socioeconomic and racial backgrounds…we came together under court order from very different backgrounds, and we struggled long and hard. But now the time is right for this campaign. We have really turned the corner and people are coming back from the private schools.

For many of these prospective parents, it was their first time visiting the five-storey school located at the corner of Northside Drive and Kingswood where the Castlewood, Wyngate, and Brandon neighborhoods intersected. Carleton described how her friends responded to the event, “The open house calmed parents’ fears and gave people a firsthand view of the situation. It informed them of the good things that were going on. I think meeting the teachers and other parents was very supporting.” In front of displays that showcased the northside public schools’ curriculum, academic programs, student achievement, and in-

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96 Interview with Brenda Griffin, September 27, 2011.
97 Ballard, “Northsiders Voice Faith in Public Schools.”
98 Interview with Gloria Stahle, December 14, 2011.
structional materials and equipment, they candidly talked with principals, counselors, teachers, and current parents.99

NAPPS members encouraged the PTAs to follow the first public school open house with individual school open houses and neighborhood coffees for prospective kindergarten parents. In living rooms across the northside, parents listed the reasons why Buckhead families should reinvest in their neighborhood public schools. Bell organized an open house at Morris Brandon to personally share with her neighbors why she and the other current parents had chosen public education for their own children. “We wanted to showcase the good things, the teachers and program, at Brandon. We worked closely with the principal, Doris Johns.”100 Similar open houses followed at Jackson and Garden Hills Elementary Schools. Meanwhile, mothers at E. Rivers Elementary School hosted a coffee for prospective parents. Since the informal meetings began in 1975, this small group of committed public supporters from the exclusive Peachtree Battle neighborhoods had formed what they self-titled a “Back to E. Rivers Movement.”101 The NAPPS Open House had provided them with the momentum they needed, and seventy-five parents of preschool children and current E. Rivers students gathered at the home of PTA president Nancy Hewes. After conversing with current parents about the advantages of neighborhood proximity to a school and the quality of education offered at E. Rivers, several of the families in attendance agreed to enroll their children the following September. Hewes described the impact of the two events on the Peachtree Battle neighborhoods, “We can trace the growing enrollment and strong parental interest in E. Rivers to that meeting and other similar gatherings.”102 At Sarah Smith Elementary School, the principal from 1975 to 1989, Charles Pepe, also worked closely with parents to promote similar efforts. He summarized those efforts to a reporter in a 1978 interview:

Sarah Smith is a good school because the parents in this neighborhood deemed it about six or seven years ago that integration was not going to throw them and that they could get a quality education in the public schools. They were going to send their kids here, and

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100 Gail Bell, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, January 8, 2012.
ever since it’s been straightened up. But that’s because the parents in this neighborhood decided that it could be done…It’s not only this school, but E. Rivers, Garden Hills, Jackson and Brandon are all experiencing the same thing.\footnote{Buckhead Atlanta, December 7, 1978.}

By September, the NAPPS open house and coffees that followed were credited with the return of 476 students from the private schools.\footnote{“NAPPS Exhibit A Big Success,” Northside Neighbor, March 2, 1977, page 5; Mary Stewart, Hagy Eileen Segrest, and Patty Slick, “Public Schools—Again a Viable Alternative,” Peachtree Paper (May 1977): 20-21; “NAPPS minutes,” November 10, 1977, Susan Bledsoe Papers, 1999.238, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center Archives.} Hoping to repeat their success, cochairmen Betsey Stone and Margaret Miller planned a second public school open house for the evening of February 10, 1977 at Northside High School.

Anticipating an even larger turnout than the year before, the committee decided to station principals, teachers, and parents from the nine schools in individual classrooms to answer specific questions and discuss particular concerns. In the auditorium prospective parents enjoyed student performances as they strolled among the updated displays. NAPPS members were not disappointed. By seven o’clock, over 2,000 northside parents had entered the school. They had doubled the previous year’s attendance.\footnote{“NAPPS Exhibit A Big Success”; “Public Education Exposition At Northside Draws 2000,” Atlanta Daily World, March 10, 1977, page 2.}

That winter, in addition to the open houses and coffees for the elementary schools, parents organized a separate, follow-up open house for the families of current fourth and fifth graders. On Wednesday, March 16, at 9:00 a.m. parents met with members of the Sutton Community Council for refreshments and a discussion period. Later that morning, just over 250 children from the six elementary schools arrived on NAPPS-paid-for school buses to begin a tour of Sutton Middle School with their parents.\footnote{“Explore Sutton Day scheduled March 16,” Atlanta Daily World, March 6, 1977, page 3.} By the following year, the open houses were credited with the return of 754 students from nearby private schools.\footnote{Margaret Miller, President NAPPS, “Reader Comment: North Fulton Defended,” July 19, 1978, page 4.}

Lynn Westergaard, George Taylor, Margaret Miller, and Betsey Stone found themselves talking to reporters from national media outlets, including CBS-TV, NBC-TV, Newsweek Broadcasting Service, and US News and World Report. Meg Taylor recalls her husband’s involvement, “A lot of effort focused on how to get the good news about the schools out. We were very present in the schools and on the PTAs
and PTOs and my husband did programs at Sutton and Northside. Then he was asked to be on morning national television, the “Today Show,” to talk about our efforts. Following the national press attention, the group was locally recognized by the Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, which presented NAPPS with an award for its outstanding contributions to the Atlanta community. School board member Richard Raymer acknowledged the mothers’ contributions at the Board of Education’s December meeting:

The Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools provides a means to reverse white flight by encouraging parents to take an objective look at the Atlanta Public School System and to learn of the advantages the Atlanta schools have to offer. It is really the only effective group I’ve ever heard about in a large urban area, which has had any effect on stemming white flight.

This national recognition also brought the organization to the attention of parent activists in other states, who were struggling with the growing loss of its middle-class tax base to the suburbs. Over the next two years, Margaret Miller, Betsey Stone and Gloria Carlton met with representatives from DeKalb County in suburban Atlanta, Dallas, Memphis, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Tampa and presented workshops on “Parental Involvement Versus Flight to the Suburbs” and “Emerging Concerns in Urban Education: Alternative Solutions” at conferences in San Francisco and Philadelphia. As public relations chair, Carlton organized the delegates to the conferences. “The trip to San Francisco that was proof that we had really achieved something that was worthwhile and people wanted to follow us…we were up against such a big emotional issue.”

The chairman of Tampa’s new organization, Friends of Public Education, Malinda Gray, explained that NAPPS gave them “courage and an example to follow.”

Yet despite the success of these grassroots efforts to halt white flight, the actual number of white, middle class families returning to the public schools remained small. The organization had fallen short of

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108 Margaret Taylor, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, November 22, 2011.
109 “50 Northsiders Boost City's Public Schools.”
111 Interview with Gloria Stahle, December 14, 2011.
its goal of 1,000 students set by chairman Lynn Westergaard.\textsuperscript{113} The social pressures of the Buckhead community outweighed the activists’ personal, grassroots efforts to reach friends, neighbors, and co-workers. In February 1976, Pat McGuone and her husband purchased a home in the Peachtree Park neighborhood after he was hired at the law firm of Gambrell and Stoltz. She described what it was like for them as parents moving to the city and trying to decide on schools for their oldest daughter, who was a rising first grader. “There certainly [was] pressure in your neighborhood. The little boy next door went to Westminster. The little girl down the street went to Lovett. There was the dichotomy, where do you go to school? And those people were adamant that their children not go to public school.”\textsuperscript{114} Clare Richardson, who returned with her husband and children to their home that was walking distance from Morris Brandon Elementary in the summer of 1976, remembers a similar experience:

Even in our neighborhood, and Morris Brandon was seen as one of the most stable, well reputed elementary schools, I remember Mary Gellerstedt stopping me on the street on our way to school saying, “Welcome to the neighborhood. I love to see you walking to Morris Brandon, my kids all went to Morris Brandon. Aren’t there more neighbors going to Morris Brandon?” And I said, “Well, not that I can think of.” [The Gellerstedts] lived in our neighborhood. Their company has now been taken over by Skanska, but it used to be the Beers Construction Company. Mostly in the immediate neighborhood the kids went to Westminster, Lovett, or Pace Academy. Or they didn’t have kids and were young professionals who wanted to live in our neighborhood.\textsuperscript{115}

During the late seventies and early eighties, the majority of the white, middle-class families moving to Buckhead were not choosing to enroll their children in their neighborhood public schools, despite the efforts of the North Atlanta Parents for Public Schools. Most of these parents opted for private education.\textsuperscript{116} Headmasters at the city’s most prestigious private schools described the increased demand for private education as “unnatural” and a result of the disruption and social unrest surrounding the public schools.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{113} “NAPPS Minutes,” November 10, 1977, Susan Bledsoe Papers.
\textsuperscript{114} Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
\textsuperscript{115} Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
\textsuperscript{116} Wei-ling Gong, “Race, Class, and Atlanta Public School Integration, 1954-1991” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1992).
As white enrollment in the city’s public schools fell to under 6,000 students, the State Department of Education estimated that enrollment at private schools had risen to over 12,000 children. The early leaders of NAPPS were very deeply committed to both public education and to integration. Even while they recruited white families back to the public schools, they were also discussing how to further involve the parents of children coming to the northside schools through the M-to-M program. Taylor, who had come to the organization with little understanding of racism in the city, explained how her perspective had changed, “There was great effort to enlist joint work with the black families. Efforts were made to get to know and socialize with the black parents who brought their students: Andy and Jean Young, Marilyn and Ham Holmes, the Blasingames, the Bruces, the Cones.”

Having started with such optimism, Richardson gradually came to realize that the group of mothers could not change the mindset of their white, middle-class southern neighbors, the majority of whom felt that their children would be better educated at the city’s independent and parochial schools.

Buckhead was still very old school Southern. People in those years, I understood how they were like that. I didn’t understand how they could continue to be like that. We would have my children coming home from school saying, “I want to go home with so-and-so.” I would say, “We always arrange that ahead of time. Where are you going and is it all right with so-and-so’s mother?” “Oh yes, Anne’s mother said it is fine. She can bring anybody home she likes as long as they are white.” It hits you in your gut, and you think, my God, here’s this extremely wealthy, seemingly very liberal couple that live very close to the school. Had bought in and stayed in yet still promulgating this with their children.

Unlike Clare Richardson, native Atlantan Gail Bell was not shocked. She understood that the underlying fears and prejudices they were trying to counter were deep-rooted. “You have to remember that many families could afford private schools, as we all could…and so they made the choice to go to private school for college acceptances, sports, and social reasons. In Buckhead, social reasons were the huge factor, sometimes outweighing purely educational pursuits.” For those families who started their children

118 “City schools feel white flight’s result.”
119 Margaret Taylor, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, November 22, 2011.
120 Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
121 Gail Bell, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, January 8, 2012.
at one of the northside elementary schools, the overwhelming majority transferred their children in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade “as students got older and were exposed to more social settings, dances, and dating.” Though no one was willing to come out and say it to the NAPPS members, the fear surrounding the middle school years was not rooted in the newness of Sutton but in the possibility of interracial dating.

At one 1978 community meeting headed by Atlanta’s first female, African-American assistant superintendent Dr. Barbara Whitaker, which was to introduce the community to the proposed rezoning of intown children from O’Keefe Middle School to Sutton Middle School, it really hit home for Clare Richardson. She was sitting next to a young Buckhead mother, when one of the Atlanta University professors whose children were enrolled in the northside public schools stood up to express his opposition. The woman, who Clare Richardson knew from NAPPS, leaned over. Richardson recalls the conversation that followed:

She looked at me and said, “Clare, you do realize that if my mother heard me…knew the kind of activities I’m involved in right now, despite the fact that she would lose access to her grandchildren, she would forbid me in her house. I said, “You’ve got to be kidding. I just cannot imagine that.” She said, “I am telling you it is deep. It is deep seeded, and she would not be able to understand. It would be beyond her comprehension and my father’s. With regret and grief, they would say, “If you continue on this path, we can’t.” And to me that was a very fundamental thing. I felt a tremendous sense of respect for people who came from those backgrounds, who bought into this. That was very different from us.

Richardson realized just what NAPPS was up against in the community, the fears that surrounded the middle school years, and the strength of the women she was working with who were from the South.

The only school that was created as part of the court-ordered desegregation suit was Sutton. So everybody at Sutton was new. The teachers didn’t know each other. The principal didn’t know them. People were there from all over the city of Atlanta, and we were all finding our way. So the first years were pretty turbulent, and there were issues as there were in any school formed in that way. People who managed to say through the elementary years, they either made the decision that they needed their kid at a prep school or they moved out. Sold up lock stock and barrel and moved. I think for them it had always been a struggle. So that’s really where everyone became much more active and politically active with the school board.

122 Ibid.
123 Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
124 Ibid.
1.2 Politicizing their Campaign

With the second open house behind them, Margaret Miller, Betsey Stone and Brenda Griffin, who had taken over as education chair for the League of Women Voters, turned their attention to the 1977 school board race. Four years earlier, the city’s first African-American mayor Maynard Jackson, eight city council members, and five school board members had been elected by a coalition of African-Americans, white northside liberals, and intown urban pioneers. Though the neighborhood movement that swept the 1973 and 1977 elections originated in the intown neighborhoods over opposition to proposed expressways, the Buckhead neighborhoods had elected new representatives to the school board and the city council in 1973: Richard Raymer to the District 4 Board of Education seat and Richard Guthman to the District 8 City Council seat.125 During that tumultuous year, Margaret Miller had gotten to know parents from other parts of the city on Randy Taylor’s committee, including a young, African-American mother, Goldie Johnson, who had moved to Atlanta when her husband Tobe was hired as a professor at Morehouse College. It was from these friendships that the Atlanta Council for Public Education (ACPE) had been founded at Atlanta University on October 28, 1974. As the 1977 school board election approached, Miller, who had served as the first secretary for the ACPE, worked with current president and school board candidate Goldie Johnson to co-sponsor two school board candidate forums on June 30, 1977 and August 4, 1977 at the Georgia Hill Center in southeast Atlanta.126 Following the candidate forums on September 27, 1977, NAPPS held a press conference and announced its slate of endorsements.127

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125 Both men served on the Board of Education and City Council until 1988.

126 The aggressive, interracial Atlanta Council for Public Education became an important predecessor to the city-wide, NAPPS-styled APPLE Corps, which by the 1977 election was in its planning stages as a Junior League of Atlanta task force on public education. “Atlanta public education council names committee,” Atlanta Daily World, November 19, 1974, page 3; “Education Committee supports outstanding city-wide candidate, Goldie Johnson,” Ansley Parkside (September 1977), page 4.

127 The 1977 election brought to office three important NAPPS supporters. Atlanta businessman and Morningside-Lenox Park resident Joe Martin defeated the District 3 incumbent Angela Ionides. Pete Richards, who had served two terms as the Morningside-Lenox Park Neighborhood Association president, president of the CW Hill PTA during the implementation of the pairing in 1973, and chair of the Atlanta Council for Public Education’s goals task force, was elected to the District 8 At-Large seat in a close run-off over Ina Evans. Buckhead attorney and Paces homeowner Richard Raymer was elected to his second term as the District 4 representative. “Board Candidates Forum Thursday,” Atlanta Daily World, July 31, 1977, page 2; “NAPPS Backs Five for School Board,” Atlanta Daily World, September 29, 1977, page 2.
The upcoming 1977 election seemed to signal a shift in Atlantans’ faith in the public school system. On August 29, 1977 over 400 parents, who that morning had loaded their children onto buses or picked up carpool for the first day of school, gathered in downtown Atlanta’s Woodruff Park to rally in support of public education. Organized by the Atlanta Council for Public Education and the North Atlanta Parents for Public Schools, Goldie Johnson and Lynn Westergaard each took to the podium to get out the message that public education was important for the city’s future. Mayor Maynard Jackson followed and officially declared it “Public Education Support Day.” In January 1978, as a new Board of Education was sworn in, it seemed that the grassroots commitment by parents to the public schools was turning the tide of hysteria and fear.

However, NAPPS members were hard hit by news of the proposed Tuition Tax Relief Act, which had been introduced in Congress in 1978 by Senators Bob Packwood and Pat Moynihan. They feared that the proposed bill, which allowed up to a $500 tax credit on tuition and amounted to more than $2.5 billion in federal aid to private schools, was going to reignite the exodus of middle-class families from the public schools. Brenda Griffin and Meg Taylor, through their involvement in the League of Women Voters, orchestrated a lobbying effort against the tuition tax credit. Griffin spoke before the Board of Education and wrote an op-ed article that appeared in the Atlanta Constitution, while Taylor attended luncheons with legislators. Defeated in 1978, the tuition tax credit was reintroduced several times between 1981

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and 1983. Griffin continued to keep NAPPS members abreast, and in 1981 NAPPS joined the Georgia Task Force Against Tuition Tax Credits.\textsuperscript{131}

1.3 A Marketing Campaign

In the fall of 1977 with Margaret Miller focused on the approaching school board election and Brenda Griffin and Meg Taylor lobbying against the tuition tax credits, NAPPS founder Clare Richardson, community relations chair Betty Whittier, and public relations chair Gloria Carlton began to expand their marketing efforts.\textsuperscript{132} Richardson started by organizing meetings at the Chamber of Commerce. She recalls:

\begin{quote}
We began meeting with realtors at the Chamber of Commerce when Tom Hamall was there [from 1974 to 1983]. They had not exactly been supportive, and we began to realize that we needed to reach out to more constituencies because it was, or could be perceived as, an economic development issue. That trying to attract people to come and live in the city of Atlanta, but the realtors say you don’t want to go to public schools. So we began to meet with realtors, and we also began to criticize the information they were putting out in newcomer packages.\textsuperscript{133}
\end{quote}

Following the meeting at the Chamber of Commerce, Whittier mailed letters to Atlanta’s “Realtors of the Year.” She enclosed in each letter a copy of the first NAPPS brochure. She also requested a meeting with representatives from C&S Bank, which distributed newcomer kits to families looking at buying a home in Buckhead and north Fulton. Within two months, their marketing campaign had leapt forward; C&S Bank agreed to distribute 1,500 brochures each month. Soon the Atlanta-owned Trust Company Bank had joined its rival, and an additional 18,000 brochures were ordered. In April 1978, Brenda Griffin’s husband

\textsuperscript{131} “NAPPS minutes,” November 17, 1980; Betsey Beach Papers (privately held); “NAPPS minutes,” December 15, 1980, Betsey Beach Papers (privately held); “NAPPS minutes,” March 16, 1981, Betsey Beach Papers (privately held); “NAPPS minutes,” February 28, 1983, Betsey Beach Papers (privately held).

\textsuperscript{132} Unlike most of the other mothers, at the time that NAPPS was founded Gloria Carlton was working outside the home for an Atlanta public relations firm and later moved to nonprofit work with United Way.

\textsuperscript{133} Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011. Inspired by NAPPS’ message, Chamber of Commerce president Tom Hamall wrote a letter to the editor of the \textit{Atlanta Constitution} expressing his support for public education, which appeared in the paper on November 10, 1977. The following year, Tom and Barbara Hamall became the NAPPS representatives for Margaret Mitchell Elementary School. “List of NAPPS Representatives for the 1978-1979 School Year,” August 1978 Susan Bledsoe Papers.
Buck expanded their efforts by distributing brochures to Atlanta’s law firms. The culmination of the campaign drive came at the end of summer when over 10,000 NAPPS brochures were mailed to families.\textsuperscript{134}

Having rallied support around the 1977 school board election and in the midst of planning their annual open house, NAPPS members were shaken when only a few months after the election the Board of Education proposed a new round of school closings.\textsuperscript{135} Upon the recommendation of the State Department of Education, the board decided that it was going to close fourteen schools, including O’Keefe Middle School. Students were to be reassigned to the struggling Sutton Middle School and North Fulton High School, which was to be converted into a middle school.\textsuperscript{136} Public school parents in Buckhead were outraged as news of the decision leaked out. Enrollment was down on the northside, but they were beginning to see a reversal of the flow of students to the private schools. At the start of the 1977-1978 school year the three northside schools were successfully integrated: Sutton Middle opened with 367 black students and 418 white students; North Fulton High School with 296 black students and 300 white students; and Northside High School with 686 black students and 710 white students.\textsuperscript{137} NAPPS leaders believed the proposed zoning changes were going to threaten the precarious stability their campaign had brought. With the assistance of the North Fulton Parent-Teacher Association, Taylor planned a meeting at the high school for January 17, 1978. On Tuesday evening, more than 150 parents turned out to voice their opinion on the two options being considered. As one parent after another stood up to speak before the audience, each fervently and repeatedly expressed that the closing and conversion was going to negatively impact the neighborhoods and be a setback for NAPPS. The vote was unanimous; O’Keefe Middle School and North Fulton High School should remain open.\textsuperscript{138}


\textsuperscript{135} Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.


\textsuperscript{137} “City’s schools 89% nonwhite, report reveals,” Atlanta Daily World, September 15, 1977, page 5.

With the school board not expected to make a decision on O’Keefe Middle School until May, the NAPPS board made the decision to move their third annual open house to Sutton Middle School, which was located in the Chastain Park neighborhood on Powers Ferry Road. Having already brought back 754 students from the private schools, NAPPS hoped to draw attention to the quality of Sutton Middle School’s programs. NAPPS program chair Kitsey Mostellar coordinated the planning of the event. She started by meeting with the northside principals and Dr. Elizabeth Feely at the Area III office to hear how they wanted to organize the open house. On February 6 and February 7, thirty-five parent volunteers from the schools spent the morning at the home of one of the NAPPS mothers in the Chastain Park neighborhood addressing the invitations. Meanwhile, public relations chair Gloria Carlton sent press releases to the local papers: the *Northside Neighbor*, the *North Side News*, the *Atlanta Journal*, and the *Atlanta Constitution*.

I was in charge of the publicity…I did my best to get the word out and sent out releases about activities to the local news media. My major goal was to try and get information out that would change people’s attitudes. I publicized the successes and tried to counter the many negatives that were often just rumor and not truthful but rooted in fear…we were trying to establish a comfort level by letting our neighbors know about the good things and that we were not leaving, we were pleased, and working for the school system. I think the primary thing we did was to open people’s eyes and minds.

Her sister, Gail Bell, helped her with the efforts. “We tried to get publicity in the local newspaper, the *Northside Neighbor*, and to include pictures of white students to show the community that while families were involved and committed…there is strength in numbers and we wanted to show the community our support.” On the evening of February 16 at 7:30 pm, Mostellar met with the open house committee to go over the distribution of school flyers and 300 posters. To stir up excitement, NAPPS paid for school buses to transport all the fifth graders to Sutton Middle School on February 20 so that they could tour the school. That night, over dinner, the children told their parents about the building, which had only been

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140 Interview with Gloria Stahle, December 14, 2011.
141 Gail Bell, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, January 8, 2012.
142 The hosts and hostesses included Clare Richardson, Brenda Hudson, Ruth Fireman, Sue Appel, Joan Beaver, Linda Salzman, Howard Benson, Margie Davis, Ann Lemaster, Ellen Auten, Suzanne Lewis, and Nancy Williams.
converted five years earlier, and the teachers they met. Finally, after weeks of hard work on February 23, 1978 Sutton opened its doors to the community.\textsuperscript{143} By the end of the open house, which the board had called “People to People for Public Schools,” sixty-five prospective parents had enrolled their children for the following year.\textsuperscript{144}

Over the next several months NAPPS continued to direct its marketing efforts towards promoting the middle school concept. In April, Miller met with intown parents, who had recently formed the Close-In Reviving Communities Linked for Education (CIRCLE) to discuss the middle school situation.\textsuperscript{145} Out of this meeting, the Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools paired with CIRCLE to sponsor a forum on June 1, 1978. That Tuesday at 8:00 pm, eighty parents from the northside and intown neighborhoods gathered at First Presbyterian Church on Peachtree Road to hear the Dean of Education at Georgia College, Dr. John Lounsberry; the President of the Georgia Association of Middle School Principals, Mr. Howard Stroud; and the Director of Middle Schools for Dallas Public Schools, Mr. Frank Wittlesey. With the school board’s decision regarding the future of the middle concept still pending, the speakers informed parents of the special needs of the middle school age child.\textsuperscript{146} For many sitting in the audience, the forum countered the misinformation and inaccuracies surrounding the safety and academic standards of their neighborhood middle and high schools, which had recently appeared in the local press and on television.\textsuperscript{147}

By the beginning of the 1978-1979 school year, the open houses and forums were credited with the return of 984 white students from the private schools. Yet the organization, whose membership had grown to over 100 parents, determined that its personal, grassroots-oriented campaign was not having a

\textsuperscript{143} “NAPPS Minutes,” January 25, 1978, Susan Bledsoe Papers.

\textsuperscript{144} The publicity surrounding the event led to a follow-up editorial in the \textit{Atlanta Constitution} and a half hour program about NAPPS by WGST (Radio Station 920) that aired on Saturday and Sunday, March 4 and 5. “NAPPS Newsletter,” February 28, 1978, Susan Bledsoe Papers; “NAPPS Minutes,” March 16, 1978, Susan Bledsoe Papers.

\textsuperscript{145} “NAPPS Minutes,” April 26, 1978, Susan Bledsoe Papers.

\textsuperscript{146} On June 19, 1978 the school board voted to sell O’Keefe Middle School, which would be leased from Georgia Tech until the end of the 1978-1979 academic year, and implement a citywide middle school plan. “Northside Slates Middle School Forum on June 1,” \textit{Atlanta Daily World}, May 28, 1978, page 5.

\textsuperscript{147} Margaret M. Ballard, “Will the middle school concept remain part of Atlanta system?,” \textit{Northside Neighbor}, June 7, 1978, page 1, 7; Miller “Reader Comment: North Fulton Defended”; “NAPPS Newsletter,” August 1978, Susan Bledsoe Papers.
broad enough impact. Miller explained that after three years and despite their efforts to keep schools integrated and stable white flight from the northside had not been halted. “The rumors still reach[ed] us that real estate agents were telling prospective homebuyers, ‘Let me show you Cobb and north Fulton. You certainly don’t want to live in the City of Atlanta because of the schools.’ That was absolutely not the fact. We believed that integration could be exciting and help the community too.”

The NAPPS board determined if they were to increase enrollment from the northside, then they needed to reach a larger constituency. Drawing on their own house hunting experiences, they asked themselves, “How could their campaign reach the parents that never entered the neighborhood schools? That never even considered public education?” There seemed to be no better location to host an event than the engine of Buckhead’s growth in the seventies, Lenox Square Mall. Richardson, who had worked on the last open house, describes how their marketing efforts evolved into a full-fledged campaign based out of the regional shopping center:

I think that when we began to realize that to a certain extent the open houses at the schools were successful, but that we were really probably preaching to the converted. A school in and of itself was not enough. If someone came to an open house, they are really interested in that school. As it is often with these things, it’s who you know, and the general manager at Lenox Al Barr, his kids were at Morris Brandon, and some other business-oriented people said up until now the whole involvement of Lenox in the community had been having school choirs coming to sing carols at Christmas and that kind of stuff. They said given the fact that right now it’s the biggest shopping area in Buckhead, we should start working together…I think in a sense that was really a better thing to do because there is no doubt the people we met there, were people we would not have met at neighborhood school open houses. We were all very passionate about what we wanted, and we were very politically active individually. I don’t know how strategic we were in our thinking, but I think we ended up being very strategic.

In February 1979, NAPPS stationed parent volunteers at information booths throughout Lenox Square Mall, much like they had done in classrooms at the annual open houses.

Pat McGuone, the young Buckhead mother of three who had moved to Atlanta in 1976 after her husband was hired at the law firm of Gambrell and Stoltz, was one of those first parent volunteers. Daily, after walking her children to school, she drove from her Peachtree Park home north up Peachtree Road to

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148 Michael Pousner, “Integration is working at northside high,” Atlanta Constitution, January 15, 1979, 1A, 7A.
149 Rebecca Burns, “Mall of Fame: Lenox Turns 50,” Atlanta Magazine (August 2009).
150 Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
Lenox Mall. On the short drive, she might hear one of the public service announcements written by public relations chair Priscilla Davis encouraging northside parents to “drop by for a talk about public schools. Now, more than ever, they make sense.”¹⁵¹ After parking, she walked to the mall’s main entrance and headed towards the stage in front of Rich’s department store where school choirs, orchestras, bands, and dancers from each of the northside schools were scheduled to perform daily. She had volunteered to sit in front of the Garden Hills Elementary School’s display, which was set up at the kiosk along the center walkway.¹⁵² From 10:00 am until 9:30 pm, parent volunteers like Pat McGuone took turns manning the booths. “The event at Lenox was genius, and Lenox was very accommodating to let us. Lenox in the old days had one floor with big kiosks from all the different schools, and we would have volunteers there to talk to people who were interested. I think it was great exposure for us.”¹⁵³ When shoppers stopped at the Garden Hills display, she answered their questions and invited them to attend one of the two events NAPPS had planned for the week.

Still aware of the poor image of Sutton Middle School within the community and that the middle school years were frequently the reason parents decided against sending their children to their neighborhood public school, the NAPPS board planned a second middle school forum and scheduled their fourth annual open house at Sutton Middle School during Lenox Week. On the evening of February 14, 1979, Buckhead parents gathered in the Sutton gymnasium. Modeled after television talk shows, a panel of teachers, parents, and students sat on the stage answering questions from the audience about the function of the middle school. The following Monday, on February 19, 1979 NAPPS parents of rising sixth and

¹⁵³ Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
seventh grade students from the six northside elementary schools again walked through the doors of Sutton Middle School.154

Following the successful coverage of the event, the NAPPS board decided to make “Public School Week at Lenox Square” an annual event held in conjunction with its open house.155 Over the next two years as president Clare Richardson refined their marketing strategy to reach more and more parents. Starting in 1981, NAPPS members placed “Public Schools-A Good Choice” yard signs, 500 in the first year alone, across Buckhead to advertise Lenox Week and proclaim to neighbors which households supported public education. In 1982, NAPPS printed blue and white "Support Public Schools-Put Your Child in One" bumper stickers so that its members could promote the public schools as they drove to work, church, or the store.156 This week long series of events were a massive undertaking that required more than eighty parent volunteers. In the early eighties, their marketing campaign publicized the northside public schools to a new generation of parents who were moving to Atlanta, and for several mothers who became active in NAPPS, the reason they purchased their Buckhead home and attended their first coffee or open house.

By examining the impact that the civil rights movement had on northside mothers, who as southerners and migrants to the South founded a movement to halt white flight, this chapter explored how their resulting organization’s grassroots, political, and marketing efforts fostered a new set of values and principles in Buckhead during the late seventies. Membership in the League of Women Voters and progressive congregations and the friendships that were forged provided the women with the support they needed

154 “Sutton Middle School Planning Busy Season,” Atlanta Daily World, February 13, 1979, page 6; Brochure, “Sutton Middle School, Join Us Now Because...We’ve Gotten Our Act Together! Northside Atlanta Parents for Public School (NAPPS) Proudly Presents At the Schools (All Week Long!)...On State (Lenox Square),” February 1979, Betsey Beach Papers (privately held).
to hold on against mounting pressure from friends, neighbors, and co-workers to withdraw their children from the public schools. This same commitment to integration, public education, and neighborhood inspired a parallel but unrelated movement among the city’s first urban pioneers, who were moving into the intown neighborhoods in the sixties and seventies.

2 Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools (CINS): Reviving the Close-In Community

On the evening of December 6, 1978 just to the south of Buckhead, two yellow school buses wound their way through the city’s first automobile neighborhood, Ansley Park. As they turned onto Monroe Drive, past-president of the Ansley Park Civic Association Bruce Weddell and his wife Sallie, who was on the neighborhood association’s education committee, talked to friends and neighbors who were sitting across the aisle from them. Sallie Weddell recalls why the committee had decided to sponsor the unusual open house:

Ansley Park parents were scared. As our kids got closer in age to starting school there was a lot of talk, a lot of pressure, a lot of if you don’t make a decision now your child will never be able to get in [to a private school], you’ve got to decide now which one. There were many good things about CW Hill, and I went over and spent a lot of time in the school. I really did want to use the public school...I actually organized through the neighborhood education committee a bus trip to take us to CW Hill, which was where our kids would start in elementary school. It was a big turn out. We had a whole busload of parents from Ansley Park who went over to CW Hill, got a tour, and set in on classrooms.

The buses quietly crossed over Ponce de Leon Avenue, which had historically separated the city’s white and black neighborhoods. For many of the white, middle-class Ansley Park residents, this was their first time in the Old Fourth Ward. Pulling up in front of C.W. Hill Elementary School, the parents and their children were greeted by the school’s African-American principal, Dr. Paula Calhoun. The children were escorted to a play area that had been set up. The parents gathered in the school’s library, where they en-

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157 Ansley Park, which was home of the governor’s mansion until 1968, is part of an arc of white, automobile suburbs that are located north and east of the downtown business district between DeKalb County and Buckhead. The intown neighborhoods were developed between the 1890s and the 1920s, declined in the sixties, and were revitalized by the city’s first wave of urban pioneers. See Rick Beard, “From Suburb to Defended Neighborhood: Change in Atlanta’s Inman Park and Ansley Park, 1890-1980” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1981).

158 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
joyed refreshments and listened to a prospective parent orientation prepared by the school’s three first grade teachers, the gifted teacher, and the media specialist. They were then ushered on a tour of the contemporary, John Portman-designed building by members of the parent-teacher association.159

The unusual open house left education chair John Tucker hopeful for the first time in two years. In 1976, Ansley Park’s neighborhood elementary school had been closed and children joined the cross-town busing to the historically black CW Hill for first, second, and third grade. Ansley Park education committee member and mother Sallie Weddell described the neighborhood’s reaction, “There was a lot of fear of the public schools. Most of the families in this neighborhood at that time ended up using the private schools.”160 By 1978, sixty-eight percent of the children in Ansley Park were enrolled in one of Atlanta’s private schools.161 Yet on December 6, over 120 parents attended the open house. After two years of turmoil, Tucker wondered if the community’s mood was changing, “The unexpected discovery was the strong interest shown by parents of very young children and infants. We found that new parents are really looking ahead and seriously exploring public school opportunities.”162

This chapter traces the origins of the intown, grassroots movement to halt white flight to the highway battle and the 1977 school board races. With their success at the polls, Atlanta’s first urban pioneers turned their attention to the schools and founded education committees through their neighborhood associations, which focused on easing parents’ fears. When news broke that their middle school was to be closed, the five education committees came together to form a new coalition. I argue that for these parents, who had moved into the close-in, reviving neighborhoods in the face of white flight, defeated the highway, and through a grassroots movement transformed local politics, the values such decisions repre-

160 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
161 Data based on a survey conducted by the Ansley Park Civic Association’s Education Committee and coordinated by Barbara Seymour and Sallie Weddell. The survey identified 222 children in Ansley Park. Of the sixty-eight percent attending private school, twenty-one different schools were represented. “School Survey Data Revealed,” Ansley Parkside, The Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, December 1978, page 5.
162 “Education Committee Sponsors C.W. Hill Open House.”
sented were the foundation for their activism and carried them into the next stage in the civil rights movement, public education.

2.1 A Grassroots Movement

Fourteen years earlier in October 1964, the Georgia Highway Department had announced plans to build two six-lane highways, Interstate 485 and the Stone Mountain Freeway, straight through the heart of the intown neighborhoods. As the state began buying up houses that were in the right-of-way, many residents who already felt threatened by the uncertainty surrounding the public schools decided to sell. The efforts by the school board “to stall, to postpone, to put off” the court-ordered integration of Atlanta’s schools furthered their resolve to move. By 1970, over 1,000 lots had been acquired and 300 homes bulldozed.

Three years later as negotiators reached the Atlanta Compromise, the neighborhoods of Ansley Park, Morningside-Lenox Park, Midtown, and Virginia-Highland had already seen thousands of white families flee in the face of the encroaching highway (Table 3 and Figure 2). For those families who remained, the voluntary busing of black children and the cross-town pairing of the white Morningside Elementary School with the black C.W. Hill Elementary School simply proved to be too much. An Atlanta native and future Morningside-Lenox Park homeowner recounted the impact of the Compromise on the neighborhoods, “There were a lot of parents that just took their children out. They weren’t going to live

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163 I-485 was part of the State of Georgia’s transportation plan, which had been designed by the Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission in 1954 and was one of five potential routes. The path that was selected in 1964 to connect present day I-675 with the Georgia 400 Tollway was the most direct because it sliced north to south through the intown neighborhoods. It also included an east/west tollway, the Stone Mountain Tollway, which began downtown, intersected with I-485 in the historically black Old Fourth Ward, and traveled east through DeKalb County. Richard Herbert, Highways to Nowhere: The Politics of City Transportation (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972); “Tollway Alternatives Study, Atlanta Urban Area Tollway System (An Analysis of Alternatives)” (Atlanta, GA, Georgia Highway Department, 1974).

164 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.


166 Under the compromise plan, children attended kindergarten in their neighborhood. Then in first, second, and third grade, students from the white, middle-class Morningside-Lenox Park neighborhood were bused south to the historically black neighborhoods of Bedford-Pine and the Old Fourth Ward. Both white and black children returned to Morningside Elementary School for fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. The plan sought to integrate the other intown elementary schools by closing and rezoning children from Highland and Luckie Street Elementary Schools, moving all seventh and eighth grade student to O’Keefe Middle School, and actively recruiting African-American families to the elementary schools through an majority-to-minority transfer plan.
Table 3: Intown Census data by Neighborhood, 1960-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Ansley Park</td>
<td>6,538</td>
<td>5,105</td>
<td>4,519</td>
<td>4,109</td>
<td>5,399</td>
<td>6,402</td>
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<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>Druid Hills</td>
<td>2,285</td>
<td>2,177</td>
<td>2,024</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>1,943</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Home Park</td>
<td>3,361</td>
<td>1,987</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>2,707</td>
<td>5,203</td>
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<tr>
<td>11, 12, &amp; 13</td>
<td>Midtown</td>
<td>13,670</td>
<td>11,384</td>
<td>9,156</td>
<td>7,955</td>
<td>10,663</td>
<td>15,122</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, 2, &amp; 201</td>
<td>Morningside/Lenox Park</td>
<td>12,726</td>
<td>11,733</td>
<td>9,627</td>
<td>10,132</td>
<td>11,382</td>
<td>11,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Piedmont Heights</td>
<td>3,089</td>
<td>3,613</td>
<td>3,168</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>4,052</td>
<td>6,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 &amp; 15</td>
<td>Virginia-Highland</td>
<td>7,783</td>
<td>6,671</td>
<td>5,210</td>
<td>5,764</td>
<td>6,335</td>
<td>6,508</td>
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</table>


Figure 2: Intown Population, 1960-2010
with it.”167 Four historically white, intown schools were forced to close, including Ansley Park’s neighborhood school, Spring Street Elementary School (Table 4).168 As neighborhood elementary schools were closed, children were rezoned to the Morningside-CW Hill pairing, and enrollment continued to fall.169 A Virginia-Highland homeowner recalls what those years were like in her neighborhood:

The atmosphere was pretty bleak. There was certainly no strip. The shops that have been very effective there, Los Angeles Auto Parts and Eats and Sweets, and all those little restaurants that have always been there, George’s, Murphy’s, and Moe’s and Joe’s, were there, but there was a whole lot of empty store fronts. You had no place to go but up and this was all a result of the highway. I mean people really ran scared. When we moved in here, there were already houses that had been torn down and lots that were empty on Virginia Avenue. I think there was a lot of disheartened people…all they could see was if you did one more thing to this neighborhood, you’re putting a highway through here and then you’re putting power lines through here and now you’re asking for pairing. These three things just defeated people so much, they just left. And then what happens of course, the real estate just bottoms out. Everything was bleak around you, but the housing cost was good [and] that is looked at as an advantage by other people.170

As white flight drove property values down, the 1920s bungalows became affordable to young couples, who were moving to Atlanta in the late sixties and early seventies.171 Couples like the Weddells bought their Ansley Park home in 1970. He had just graduated from Emory Law School, and she was finishing at Emory University. They were attracted by the convenience of the neighborhoods to the downtown and loved the diversity of the historic neighborhood. “Now Ansley Park was real different when we moved in here. It was a lot more fun; it was more diverse! We bought our house the year we got married in 1970.”172 The Weddells quickly became active in their neighborhood association.173

Meanwhile, a small group of women who had moved into the nearby Morningside neighborhood and met through the League of Women Voters decided that they needed to do something about the

167 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
169 Following the implementation of the pairing, enrollment at Morningside Elementary School declined from 416 students in 1973 to 148 students in 1976. “Morningside School History Project,” May 1996.
170 Interview with Nancy Hamilton, February 16, 2009.
172 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
Table 4: Intown Public Elementary School Enrollment before the 1973 Compromise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intown Elementary Schools</th>
<th>Neighborhoods served</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>1972-1973 enrollment</th>
<th>% Black</th>
<th>% White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler Street (now Centennial) Elementary School</td>
<td>Techwood Homes</td>
<td>Rebuilt (1996)</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highland Elementary School</td>
<td>Poncey-Highland and Inman Park</td>
<td>Closed (1973)</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.W. Hill Elementary School</td>
<td>Bedford-Pines and the Old Fourth Ward</td>
<td>Paired (1973)</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Park Elementary School</td>
<td>Home Park</td>
<td>Closed (1986)</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inman Elementary School</td>
<td>Virginia-Highland</td>
<td>Closed (1979)</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luckie Street Elementary School</td>
<td></td>
<td>Closed (1973)</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Lin Elementary School</td>
<td>Lake Claire</td>
<td>Closed (1973)</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreland Elementary School</td>
<td>Candler Park</td>
<td>Closed (1982)</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morningside Elementary School</td>
<td>Morningside-Lenox Park</td>
<td>Paired (1973)</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Street Elementary School</td>
<td>Ansley Park and Midtown</td>
<td>Closed (1976)</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


proposed highway. They organized the neighborhood by going door-to-door, and in 1971 the neighborhood association formed a political action committee and hired a lawyer to take the State Highway Department to court over the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, which mandated that all projects using federal funds conduct environmental impact studies. With an immediate injunction from the district court that called for the Georgia Highway Department to halt all condemnation and razing of properties until an environmental impact study was completed secured, PAC members organized a formal coalition that brought together the civic associations that had been fighting the highway separately.174 Against all odds the Atlanta Coalition on the Transportation Crisis won. With the signing of the Board of Aldermen’s resolution opposing I-485 by then-mayor Sam Massell at Manuel’s Tavern in Poncey-Highland and the

Federal Department of Transportation’s rejection of the state highway department’s impact study on June 19, 1973, the interstate was defeated.175

The young couples, who moved into the intown neighborhoods and first met through the I-485 highway battle, turned the attention of their growing and successful neighborhood movement to the 1973 election. They peeled off old “Atlanta Yes, I-485 No!” bumper stickers from their cars and replaced them with new “Maynard Yes!” stickers. They founded the Citywide League of Neighborhoods to endorse “pro-neighborhood” candidates and attended fundraisers that were being held all across the close-in, reviving neighborhoods. Bruce and Sallie Weddell hosted one such “meet and greet” for African-American mayoral candidate Maynard Jackson at their home on South Prado in Ansley Park.176 “We felt like Atlanta and race relations were hopeful. Maynard Jackson was running for mayor, and we got excited about him. We got involved in his campaign and had a party here for him. We were young and idealistic. We felt like things were changing, that we were going to put racism behind us.”177 Aided by the adoption of a new city charter in March 1973, which had replaced the at-large Board of Alderman with a City Council, the neighborhood movement helped elect the city’s first African-American mayor, along with one-third of the council members.178

Over the next several years, couples who had often gone to college during the civil rights and anti-war movements and received job offers from local law firms or at one of the nearby colleges continued to move to Atlanta.179 Nancy and John Hamilton were settling into their 1920s bungalow on Los An-


176 Maynard Jackson, who was elected by a coalition of African-American voters, white liberals, and intown gentrifiers, first won the support of the neighborhood movement as vice-mayor when he cast an important tie-breaking vote against Interstate 485.

177 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.

178 The new nineteen-member City Council was made up of a council president, six at-large members and twelve council districts. The school board was also reorganized to include six districts and three at-large posts. In 1996 the number of at-large members was reduced from six to three.

George Avenue in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood, which they had purchased after he was hired by the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1968. Coming from the Peace Corps, they saw Atlanta as an exciting and hopeful place. Floyd and Charlotte Hale, who had returned to Atlanta after he graduated from law school in Chicago, moved to Morningside in 1974 from southwest Atlanta where they had been unable to reverse the rapid and violent white flight from their beloved neighborhood of Cascade Heights. Trisha and Jack Senterfitt also moved to Morningside just after the highway had been defeated in 1974. He had accepted a job at the predecessor to the prestigious, Atlanta-based law firm of Alston & Bird. Couples like the Hamiltons, the Hales, and the Senterfitts bought their homes in the close-in neighborhoods of Virginia-Highland and Morningside-Lenox Park in the face of the highway and massive white flight because of the values, the desire to be part of the change that the reviving, close-in neighborhoods embraced.

Forty-one years later, Nancy Hamilton explains what experiences brought them to the intown neighborhoods:

I think that there were a lot of things that came together. There were a tremendous number of people, who had gone to college, maybe grad school, who had gone through the civil rights movement or in someway impacted in their college and grad school years, just like they were with Vietnam. All of this was going on at the same time. Then these people were coming to cities like Atlanta and gravitated towards urban living. They were not interested in living in the suburbs. The whole northeast side of the city was relatively inexpensive because of a number of different issues: the integration of schools…and I-485. You had all of this going on with a group of people who had been though the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and the assassination of Kennedy. There was this whole set of historic circumstances, and these were the people who came into the urban area and were looking around saying what do you mean you can’t fight the expressway? Why can’t I live here and change the circumstances of the environment? 

When the Hamiltons had first moved to Atlanta, like most of their neighbors, they did not have children.

“I will say this many of us moved in here without kids. We moved in and then started to have families. If you were looking for education, you had this little bit of window of time to make a difference…you had

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180 Interview with Nancy Hamilton, February 16, 2009.
As the 1977 elections approached, they directed the attention of the neighborhood movement, which had defeated the highway and elected Maynard Jackson in 1973, to the upcoming school board races.

In August 1977, the Hamiltons invited other parents to their home in Virginia-Highland. They felt the incumbent Angela Ionnides, whose children were enrolled in private schools, had lost touch with the community. After much discussion, the group of homeowners and young parents decided that the most significant impact they could have was to support a candidate for the District 3 seat that was strongly committed to the public schools. After the meeting, Nancy Hamilton went with Betsy Richards, the wife of Pete Richards who was running for the District 8 At-Large seat, to the Commerce Club. They met with Atlanta businessman and Morningside-Lenox Park resident, Joseph Martin, Jr.

Joe Martin was like many of the couples moving to the close-in neighborhoods in the sixties and seventies and had never demonstrated in the civil rights or anti-war movements. Yet the movements had awakened his political consciousness. While in college at Vanderbilt University, he heard about the desegregation of Northside High School from his brother Jim, who was then president of the student body. As he watched the marches on television, he came to realize that the resistance and delaying tactics of the school board were morally and legally wrong. “I just knew it was wrong…the changes had to be made: racial justice, common sense, changing times, the progression of the law.”182 When Joe Martin and his wife Larrie Del returned to Atlanta in 1971, they purchased their 1930s home on Noble Drive in the Morningside-Lenox Park neighborhood. Six years later, Nancy Hamilton and Betsy Richards sat down and convinced him to run against Angela Ionnides.183 Martin recalls:

181 Ibid.
182 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
Our kids were born in 1973 and 1976. I had gone through public schools, Atlanta Public Schools, and my wife had too. We lived in Atlanta, and our kids were going to go to the public schools. That was just it! There was nothing to think about. We could have afforded to do something else, but we didn’t. There weren’t that many kids in the neighborhood because people had left. On our street there were very few school aged children…people were going to private schools or more frequently just leaving. There were a lot of us who said you know we’re going to stick it out. And we’re going to make it work. About that time the neighborhood political movement was beginning. A lot of that came out of the I-485 fight, and we said if that can happen in terms of city government then it can certainly happen in terms of schools. We got together, and I became the candidate…I was just thirty-five, but what was important was the neighborhood roots.  

From its beginnings in Nancy and John Hamilton’s living room to the campaign itself, the 1977 election brought a new kind of grassroots, neighborhood-based politics to Atlanta. Joe and Larrie Del Martin’s neighbor and close friend from Trinity Methodist Church, Charlotte Hale, agreed to serve as a precinct chair. She and her son, who had just started fifth grade, canvassed the neighborhood with yard signs. Neighbors like Trisha and Jack Senterfitt “gave money, put up signs, and hosted parties.” The Morningside-Lenox Park Neighborhood Association and the Virginia-Highland Civic Association hosted forums in September so that residents could meet the candidates.186 On October 4, 1977, with the support of the neighborhoods Joe Martin was overwhelmingly elected to the school board. Two weeks later on October 18, in a close run-off Pete Richards was elected to the At-Large seat.  

2.2 Mobilizing Education Committees

With their success at the polls, the small core group of parents who elected Joe Martin to the school board started asking, why not direct the neighborhood movement towards the schools? Many of them had first met at a neighborhood association meeting, and as they started having children helped found the Morningside babysitting co-op and the Atlanta Cooperative Preschool. Like the older women who had fought the highway, they also joined the League of Women Voters while at home with their

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184 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
185 Interview with Trisha Senterfitt, October 13, 2011.
187 For an account of the impact of the 1977 election in the context of the Atlanta Compromise see Jackson, “Desegregation, Atlanta Style.”
young children. During the seventies as their children had joined the cross-town pairing, they volunteered at CW Hill Elementary School. Every Wednesday morning, the mothers met for breakfast at the Old Hickory House on Monroe Drive at Piedmont to talk about their concerns. They took turns serving as PTA president and between 1976 and 1978 formed education committees through their neighborhood associations. For these parents, who had moved into the close-in, reviving neighborhoods in the face of massive white flight, defeated the highway, and through a grassroots movement transformed local politics, the public schools were the next stage of the civil rights movement. What brought these families, Atlanta’s first urban pioneers, to this new kind of growing edge? What made them want to be a part of the change mechanism?

In Morningside-Lenox Park, Charlotte Hale, who had served as one of Joe Martin’s precinct captains in 1977, focused on sharing information with other parents in the neighborhood. Now with children at Morningside and CW Hill, she saw how uneasy the pairing made parents. Having moved from southwest Atlanta three years earlier, she knew firsthand the impact that white flight could have on the neighborhood. Having grown up in Georgia and attended Wesleyan College and then Michigan State for graduate school, Hale moved back to Georgia in 1964 after her husband Floyd graduated from the University of Chicago Law School. Her husband, who had been on a scholarship from the Cobb County-based aerospace company Lockheed as an undergraduate student at Emory University, accepted a job in its law department. At first, they lived in the suburb of Sandy Springs. Yet after five years, the Hales realized they were not happy with their lifestyle in the suburbs. Hale remembers why they decided to move:

After being at Lockheed for five years he decided he wanted to do a different kind of law, one where he had more contact with the clients individually. So he went from Lockheed to Legal Aid. It was a big change. It just evolved, and we decided to make some other changes at the same time. I actually came up with the idea of moving to southwest Atlanta. I had seen on television Southwest Atlantans for Progress, [which had been founded in 1968 by white and black homeowners to integrate the southwest neighborhoods]. We wanted to see if we could help stabilize the white flight...the third thing we changed was our church. We had gone to Peachtree Road Methodist, and then when we moved we went downtown to the progressive Trinity Methodist Church. Which was also a dramatic change but something that was very meaningful to us.188

188 ibid. Floyd Hale became very active in the city’s first shelter and soup kitchen, which had been started at The Shrine of the Immaculate Conception before it moved to Trinity Methodist.
Though their son had only just turned two and their daughter was still an infant, the Hales realized that they wanted their children to grow up in an integrated neighborhood. So they made the decision in 1969 to move from Sandy Springs to Cascade Heights in southwest Atlanta. They loved their new community. They attended concerts at Spelman and Morehouse College. Their children made friends and attended the birthday parties of their African-American neighbors. However, the optimism that brought them to southwest Atlanta was not enough to counter white homeowners’ fears. They painfully watched as block-busting rapidly transitioned the neighborhood from white to black. 

By the time their son had started at Cascade Elementary School in 1971, he was the only white child in his class. His experience contrasted sharply with their younger daughter, who was attending the integrated Atlanta Cooperative Preschool.

At the Co-op, the Hales met other white parents who were committed to integration, including Marcia and Dan Klenbort, Pete and Betsy Richards, and Jane and Andy Lipscomb. The Klenborts, like them, had moved into southwest Atlanta, while the Richards and Lipscombs were some of the early pioneers who moved into Morningside. Through her friendship with Marcia Klenbort, she became involved in the “committee for an open school,” which from 1973 to 1974 sought to establish the city’s first integrated K-8 public school. “It was a very exciting committee with a lot of the preschool people from across town. Then we lost by one vote at the Atlanta school board meeting.” With their final attempt to support integration having failed, the Hales decided to move. They knew from friends at the cooperative pre-

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school that Morningside had defeated the highway and that there was a core group of parents who were committed to the neighborhood and the pairing. In fact, Pete and Betsy Richards, who they also knew from the preschool co-op, had agreed to take on the presidency of the CW Hill PTA that first year. \(^{191}\) Hale recalls how those friendships led to them buying their home in Morningside-Lenox Park:

> We started talking to our friends the Lipscombs, Jane and Andy Lipscomb in Morningside, who were some of the pioneers there. They had started the first babysitting co-op [and] were in the busing program at CW Hill. We moved intentionally, knowing from the Lipscombs, who were supportive of [the pairing], that Hill was a really good, formally black, small school...so we left in 1974 and went to Morningside, to another kind of growing edge. That was just after the highway had been defeated by the neighborhood...they were really energized because they had just defeated the road, but what we also understood was that a lot of families had moved out right before we got there, worrying about the schools primarily and also the highway. It was sad because those two things really took a lot of long time residents and families that had been there. But new people were moving in and that was the same year that the big gasoline crunch hit, the energy crisis. People wanted to move near town and so that helped. It was a dynamic changing time. \(^{192}\)

They found Morningside to be invigorating. Like many of the young couples moving in, they joined the civic association right away. As their children got older, they decided to finish off their attic, and the next year, their home on North Morningside Drive was on the Tour of Homes. Charlotte Hale also joined the League of Women Voters, but her primary focus, as it had been in Cascade Heights, was the schools. As a former teacher, she knew how important it was to have parent volunteers. She started off doing “the normal things” in her children’s schools and that eventually led to her serving as PTA president at CW Hill Elementary School in 1977 and education chair for the Morningside-Lenox Park Neighborhood Association in 1978. \(^{193}\)

Under her leadership, the education committee concentrated on easing parents’ fears. She put together a brochure that provided information on each of the four schools to show Morningside-Lenox Park parents that the public schools were their neighborhoods’ greatest assets. \(^{194}\) She also coordinated coffees

\(^{191}\) Pete Richards then served as president of the Morningside-Lenox Park Neighborhood Association for two years before being elected to the school board.

\(^{192}\) Interview with Charlotte Hale, October 18, 2011.

\(^{193}\) Ibid.

\(^{194}\) The brochure provided a school system overview and detailed descriptions of the public schools that served the neighborhood: C.W Hill Primary, Morningside Elementary, O’Keefe Middle School, Grady High School, and spe-
and tours with other parents in the neighborhoods, including newly elected school board member Joe Martin and his wife Larrie Del and Trisha and Jack Senterfitt, who had taken over as co-presidents of the CW Hill PTA that fall.

The August before in 1977, Morningside Elementary School had opened with only eight kindergarten students.¹⁹⁵ With their oldest child Marie starting kindergarten, the Martins decided to start hosting coffees in their home. Martin remembers why he and his wife opened up their home to prospective parents from the neighborhood right after their daughter started school:

Morningside’s enrollment dropped to less than 200 students and was on the verge of being closed. I was coming on the board, and my wife and I decided to have open houses recruiting for Morningside Elementary School. Can you think of anything more ridiculous than that today? But that was because there was so much concern about getting on the bus and going to Hill. It was not that far, but it was a whole other world.¹⁹⁶

When they were out and people would say to them, “Well, I’m not going to sacrifice my children to send them to a certain school,” the implication was clear, “Why did you sacrifice your children? Are you just committed to a cause and you let your kids suffer the consequences?”¹⁹⁷

Trisha and Jack Senterfitt confronted similar pressure from couples at her husband’s law firm after they started hosting coffees for parents at their home. Trisha Senterfitt targeted the wives of other lawyers because they could not use the argument that the Senterfitts could not afford private school. Instead, she explained that they were choosing to send their children to public school because it was “the right thing to do” if they were going to push past their fears. After becoming the co-presidents of the CW Hill PTA in 1978, the Senterfitts tried to have the coffees at Hill. Their oldest daughter Shelley had just started second grade, and they hoped to get prospective parents into the neighborhood to show off the beautiful facilities. Parents’ fears persisted, yet Trisha Senterfitt held to her beliefs. “We should not be a

cial programs. “Schools: Our Neighborhoods Greatest Assets,” brochure, Morningside-Lenox Park Association Education Committee, date unknown, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
¹⁹⁵ “Morningside School History Project,” May 1996.
¹⁹⁶ Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
¹⁹⁷ Michelle Cohen Marill, “Re segregation: Integration was supposed to level the playing field in public schools. Fifty years later, is new de facto re segregation so bad?,” Atlanta Magazine, April 2009.
separatist world, and were going to be if we didn’t break that cycle…it’s very clear how we learn our
fears. So that’s what we were trying to do and hoping to do.”

When the Senterfitts had moved to Atlanta in 1974, they had searched for a neighborhood and
church that embraced their values. Trisha Senterfitt recalls their housing hunting experience:

We first came to Atlanta in the summer of 1973. My husband is a lawyer, and he clerked
at Alston, Miller and Gaines, where he ultimately received an offer…we had met some
friends that summer at the law firm when Jack was clerking and when we analyzed who
we identified with the most, [it was the couples] that lived in Morningside. That was a big
factor. That and the schools. We knew that they were in trouble because of integration,
but we weren’t afraid of that. We wanted our kids to be in school with black people…we
then found a church out in Decatur because the Morningside Church was so small. We’re
Presbyterian, and we wanted to go right there where we lived but there were no kids so
we went to North Decatur, which was very liberal and supportive of integration.

The more they looked at homes in Morningside, the more the Senterfitts were attracted to the neigh-
hood. The style and age of the homes, the proximity to his new office, and the price were appealing. The
most important factor in their decision was the values the community represented. Her father was a Pres-
bbyterian minister and his parents were a Baptist minister and a director of Christian Education. Growing
up, both of their families had been active in the civil rights movement. “Both of our families took us to
 marches. We had been a part of trying to get racial peace.”

In Kingsport, Tennessee, Trisha Senterfitt
had listened to her father preach in support of the civil rights movement, and she was looking for a neigh-
borhood where their young family could be part of an integrated community and continue the mission of
the movement.

After Jack Senterfitt finished law school at Vanderbilt, they returned to Atlanta so that he could
start work at Alston and Bird’s predecessor. At home with their daughter who had just turned three,
Trisha quickly got involved in the Morningside baby-sitting co-op. Made up of over fifty families, the
group had been started after a couple of the mothers read about the idea. “The road was still a threat at
that point, so everyone that moved into the neighborhoods had to be risk takers…the personalities of the

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198 Interview with Trisha Senterfitt, October 13, 2011.
199 Ibid.
200 Ibid.
kind of people that came here, we were all pioneers, that was important.”201 For women like Trisha Senterfitt, who had graduated from Eckerd College and worked as a high school German teacher while her husband finished his tour in Vietnam, the babysitting co-op was a lifesaver. It was how she made friends, how she found playmates for her children, and how she first got invited to join the League of Women Voters. After their children started school, the same group of mothers started meeting every Wednesday morning at the Old Hickory House for breakfast.202 “We had to have those weekly meetings to cheer each other on, to process what was going on, and to make our plans for how to deal with problems. It was really brilliant, how it happened. We didn’t have any training. It was out of sheer desire for our kids.”203

This core group of mothers, women like Charlotte Hale who was now chairing the Morningside-Lenox education committee and Trisha Senterfitt who was serving as president of the CW Hill PTA, reached out to prospective parents moving into the close-in, reviving neighborhoods that were zoned for the pairing. Through coffees and tours, they encouraged the parents to visit the schools. “We spent hours trying to take people on tours to meet the teachers,” yet they found that not even the brand-new building was enough. It wasn’t about the facilities. “It was about race.”204

The most challenging of the close-in neighborhoods was Ansley Park. The Ansley Park Civic Association’s education committee had been founded two years earlier by parents fighting to keep their neighborhood school, Spring Street Elementary School, from being closed.205 Like the Hales, Marcia and Dan Klenbort had decided to move from Mozley Park in southwest Atlanta after their youngest child, who had been attending the Atlanta Cooperative Preschool, became the only white student at Frank L. Stanton Elementary School.206 They had first moved to Atlanta ten years earlier when her husband was hired by Morehouse College’s History Department. They began searching for a stable neighborhood with

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201 Ibid.
202 When the Old Hickory House at Piedmont Road and Monroe Drive closed, the group moved to the American Roadhouse. Though several generations of parents had now come through, the group continues to meet every Wednesday morning.
203 Interview with Trisha Senterfitt, October 13, 2011.
204 Ibid.
205 The 1976 Ansley Park Civic Association education committee members included Marcia Klenbort, Betsy Leifermann, John and Joyce Tucker, Emily Tillman, Sally Hardin, Nancy Foster, and chair Sally George.
206 After the defeat of the “committee for an open school,” the Klenborts enrolled their older son at the private Paideia School.
an integrated, neighborhood school. In 1976, the Klenborts purchased their second home on Avery Drive in Ansley Park in order to be in the Spring Street Elementary School district. Upon moving in, Marcia Klenbort quickly became caught up in the Ansley Park education committee’s campaign to keep the neighborhood elementary school open. Despite their efforts Spring Street Elementary, whose enrollment had fallen to 200 students, was closed. It was announced Ansley Park families were to be rezoned to Morningside Elementary School. That fall, the Klenbort’s son, who was starting third grade, joined the cross-town pairing.207

Parents like Marcia Klenbort and education committee chairs Sally George and John Tucker, who had orchestrated Ansley Park’s campaign to keep its neighborhood school open, joined the core group of parents in Morningside-Lenox Park.208 Even while the majority of the parents in Ansley Park relied on the city’s private schools,209 this dedicated group following the Morningside-Lenox Park education committee’s lead and sought to address their neighbors’ unease and fears of busing by sharing information. They started by writing articles in the neighborhood newsletter, which challenged Ansley Park parents to consider public education and the values it represented for urban pioneers like themselves. Klenbort composed the lead story in the front page of the May 1977 edition:

We feel that there are two primary dangers of public school education: (1) lack of information and the fear, which is breeds; and (2) lack of parent involvement with the child’s school and program. As Ansley Park residents we are obviously committed to an in-town urban way of life. As our taxes rise along with the cost of private school education, many of us reach an economic breaking point/decision-move further out of town for cheaper taxes and a “better” school system? Continue private education? Utilized local public education (which is paid for by our taxes)? Still others philosophically favor public education; and the economic benefits are a bonus. The argument is often heard, “We will not “sacrifice” our children by forcing them into public schools!” We wonder, in light of our experience and some of the following statements, if that argument isn’t really saying, “We pay the private school to take care of our children so that we do not have to “sacri-

208 Unlike in Morningside-Lenox Park and Virginia-Highland, the 1977 school board race did not play as important a role in their education committee’s early efforts. Ansley Park’s school board representative, Richard Raymer, who had been elected in 1973 ran unopposed. The neighborhood association was supportive of citywide candidates, Pete Richards and Goldie Johnson. “Education Committee supports outstanding city-wide candidate,” *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, September 1977, page 4.
209 By the start of the school year, ten different private schools had attended the education committee meetings and presented parents with their educational options. Sally George, “Schools,” *Ansley Parkside*, The Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, March 1977, page 2.


212 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
A series of intense community meetings ensued. For newly elected school board member and Morningside father Joe Martin, the meetings were heartbreaking. “There were all these public hearings and people crying at me. They were really upset because Virginia-Highland was losing its elementary school.” Representatives from the Board of Education office presented their recommendations to the community. Parents listened to several alternative plans that were under consideration. Virginia-Highland families would join the pairing, while seventh and eighth graders would be bused five miles north to either Sutton Middle School or North Fulton High School, which was to be closed and converted to a middle school. The parents who had become activists when they made the decision to move into a reviving neighborhood and commit to the public schools adamantly maintained that the loss of a neighborhood middle school and its relocation outside the intown neighborhoods would be devastating. They realized that the board’s decision on where to locate the middle school could have a significant impact on the continued revitalization of their community.

Nancy Hamilton, who served as Joe Martin’s campaign manager, invited other parents to her home to discuss what to do about O’Keefe Middle School. She and her husband John had watched as enrollment at Inman Elementary School fell. It was hard news to bear. She had worked with the Virginia-Highland education committee since 1976 to organize panels and open houses at Inman Elementary School. Like Charlotte Hale in Morningside, she had explained to prospective parents how she and her husband made their decision, and they had not found the quality of education to be suffering because of integration. Hamilton and Hale decided to bring the five neighborhoods together. As the parents sat around Nancy and John Hamilton’s living room discussing plans for the forum an idea for a neighborhood-based organization made-up of the five education committees also began to emerge, and the Close-

214 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
in Reviving Communities Linked for Education, or CIRCLE, was formed. Over the next several months, the new group met as the homes of several of the parents who had supported the pairing, including Charlotte and Floyd Hale. Hale recalls:

> I remember some meetings in my living room [with] Nancy Hamilton...CIRCLE was formed when we really got serious about whether or not the middle school should be relocated and also promoting the middle school as a concept because at that time or shortly before that it was a new idea. Atlanta was one of the earlier systems in the state that went to the middle schools. We were trying to promote the middle schools in general, and we came up with the idea to get O’Keefe moved to Inman Elementary.\(^{219}\)

The five close-in neighborhood associations had met before to informally discuss the public school situation.\(^{220}\) Now the education committees began to work together to counter the white flight that they feared was going to push families at O’Keefe Middle School to the private schools the following year.\(^{221}\) The parents knew what their neighbors’ concerns were: facilities, academic standards, safety, and what so few were willing to say to them, the possibility of interracial dating.

CIRCLE, with the assistance of the three-year-old Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools, began lobbying the school board to establish a system-wide policy on the middle school concept before making a decision about where to move the intown children.\(^{222}\) On December 11, 1978, the school board voted that the Inman property, which was to be merged with Morningside Elementary School at the end of the school year, would become the site of a new middle school for seventh and eighth graders. Despite

\(^{219}\) Interview with Charlotte Hale, October 18, 2011.

\(^{220}\) The first such meeting documented in the neighborhood newsletters was in June 1977, when representatives from the Ansley Park Civic Association, the Morningside-Lenox Park Neighborhood Association, the Midtown Neighborhood Association, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, and Home Park Neighborhood Association met with over forty of the intown ministers met to talk about how the community could support the pairing. “School Committee,” Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, September 1977, page 6.

\(^{221}\) Interview with Nancy Hamilton, February 16, 2009.

\(^{222}\) To demonstrate their continued commitment to the middle school concept, the school board established a 127-member task force in 1982 to study the grade level make-up of the middle schools. Several members of CIRCLE, and its successor CINS, were appointed to the task force, including Nancy Hamilton (CINS president-elect), Daphne Reider (Morningside), Connie Tahtinen (Inman), Diana Curtis (CW Hill), and Charlotte Hale (Grady, past-CINS president). In July 1982 the recommended adding the sixth grade to the middle school, which required extensive renovation of the Inman facility. Throughout the four-year debate, school board representative for the intown neighborhoods, Joe Martin, maintained the position that they needed to have a uniform plan first, a middle school concept second, and then determine which grades constituted the program. He encouraged civic associations and other groups to give input to the board. Nancy Hamilton, “Community School News,” Virginia-Highland Voice, May 1978; Sue McConnell, “Civic Association News,” Virginia-Highland Voice, June 1978; Margaret M. Ballard, “Will The Middle school concept remain part of Atlanta system?,” Northside Neighbor, June 7, 1978.
high emotions over the closing of another neighborhood school and Dr. Alonzo Crim believing it was too small of a lot, the parents who had founded CIRCLE felt the site, which was centrally located, was best suited for their needs. As a sign of good faith, Dr. Crim offered to have the school torn down and a new, modern facility constructed. But school board representative Joe Martin, speaking on behalf of the community, turned him down. “As an expression of good will, Dr. Crim offered to demolish ‘that old building’ and replace it with a new modern structure. He was astonished when I told him that this is not what our neighborhood wanted.” Instead, parents asked the school system to renovate and expand the building by purchasing the nearby lots, once condemned for I-485, from the Georgia Department of Transportation. Thirty years later, Martin remembers how they secured the property:

Pete Richards, who was on the board then as the at-large representative, and I were both from Morningside. The Inman site was just too small for a middle school, but the adjoining property was owned by the Georgia Department of Transportation because that was the right-of-the-way for I-485. So I went and talked to the school people and said, “What we ought to do is buy some of that property.” “Well, you can’t do that. That’s where the freeway is going to be”…finally the Superintendent, Dr. Crim, said, “Mr. Richards and Mr. Martin, Pete and Joe, you go down to that Department of Transportation and see what you can work out.” Pete and I met with Tom Moreland, the Georgia Commissioner of Transportation. He was a legend. And of course we were both scared to death. Pete and I were both shaking inside. I was holding my stomach in my hands as we negotiated the purchase of the property next to Inman where the playfields are today. And sure enough, we prevailed…now I always took great pleasure in that because that really was the nail in the coffin for I-485.

Meanwhile, the new Area III superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Feely, who had been the principal at Spring Street Elementary School, was working on forming an organization in the close-in neighborhoods patterned after the successful Buckhead group, the Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools.

In March 1978, the Inman, Home Park, CW Hill, and Morningside Elementary school principals, the schools’ PTA presidents, and representatives from CIRCLE sat down together in a classroom at In-

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224 Martin, “Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of CINS.”
The first plenary meeting of Dr. Feely’s organization was underway. Nancy Hamilton remembers listening as the group discussed the organizational structure for the proposed council:

I think that [NAPPS] was something of a model, but I think we realized very quickly that yes, you can have your principal involved, you need parents, but all of us were coming from neighborhoods that were really threatened by the expressway, which the northside neighbors were not threatened with. They were threatened by white flight and all these folks that thought, “I can’t have my kid in an integrated school.” For the intown neighborhoods that was really not an issue. The integration of the schools was not the critical issue; the critical point was that you lived in some kind of community that was cohesive and that supported public education. So we didn’t have quite the same rationale for organizing that the northside did. If anything, we had people coming into the neighborhood wanting to live here and contribute to making this a solid community.

From the start, CINS was a political organization. The parents, who founded it, when they purchased a home in the close-in neighborhoods and enrolled their children in the struggling public schools, were making an overtly political statement. Now they had a council that viewed the schools in relation to the neighborhoods. On the heels of the successful neighborhood movement, CINS enabled intown parents to become a potent advocate for the public schools, and on May 30, 1979, CIRCLE agreed to officially merge with CINS in order to avoid duplication.

On the afternoon of May 2, 1979, children from the six-intown schools lined up in front of the Grady High School stadium. The teachers had to work hard to make sure that everyone stayed in line. Children shouted to their siblings who were in other grades or attended another school. Then it was time. The schools marched into the stadium and wound their way around the track. They waved to their parents, who had gathered inside. The parade of schools kicked off the first Intown Festival. For the next four hours, families enjoyed contests, games, sports, concession stands manned by neighborhood groups, and student performances, including a brilliant array by a special choral group composed of students from the

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227 Interview with Nancy Hamilton, February 16, 2009.
five elementary schools. Throughout the afternoon, CINS members were on hand to assist. Inman principal Sid Blackstone, who had run the plenary meeting two months earlier at his school, explained why CINS had put the event together. “The main purpose of the May 2 festival was to have fun, but it was also designed to make people aware that we serve a wonderful bi-racial, multi-cultural and international setting and that the public schools close-in are good.”

Charlotte Hale agreed to serve as CINS first president. She focused on promoting the community’s support for the schools. In addition to inviting the education chairs from the neighborhood associations, PTA presidents, the principals, and Joe Martin and Pete Richards to the meetings, she reached out to area real estate agents. “We began to realize that one of big problems areas was the realtors. They primarily were just promoting hearsay…we got the impression that they were not encouraging parents with children to buy in Morningside. So we said, well let’s invite the realtors to send representatives.”

CINS also welcomed ministers from area churches and the recently formed Midtown Business Association to attend meetings. By the spring, CINS had completed its first brochure, which was being distributed by the realtors and the schools to prospective parents (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

When Tricia Senterfitt took over as CINS president a year later, the organization continued its efforts to develop a sense of community around the Grady cluster of neighborhood schools by co-sponsoring education forums with the neighborhood associations.

In the early eighties, the families who had moved into the close-in neighborhoods, fought the highway, and pieced together a successful neighborhood-based political movement in the sixties and seventies were being joined by a new generation. Yet a questionnaire conducted by the Ansley Park Civic Association discovered that public school enrollment had fallen from thirty-two percent in 1978 to

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230 Interview with Charlotte Hale, October 18, 2011.
231 The Midtown Business Association, the precursor to the Midtown Alliance, was founded in 1978.
twenty-one percent four years later. The dedicated and enthusiastic group of parents, who had served as presidents of the CW Hill and Morningside PTA or chaired their neighborhood association’s education committee in the seventies, worked tirelessly to build the intown community’s confidence in the public

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Figure 4: CINS Brochure, back

schools. In a memorandum to superintendent Dr. Alonzo Crim in 1983, school board member Joe Martin explained the intown parents’ vision.

They are committed to the cause of public education and want the very best program, not only for their own children, but for all children. Despite some further losses to private schools and other school systems, including some children whose parents have been
leaders in the past, I have seen more optimism this year than at any time since I have been on the Board...as a spokesperson for the community served by this cluster of schools, I want to thank each of you for what you have done to revive these schools. Not very long ago, they were drifting, but there is now a renewed sense of purpose. The parents are seeing the improvements and are truly grateful.234

When he was elected in 1977, if real estate agents were trying to sell a house in the intown neighborhoods, they did not include the address in the classified advertisement. “You couldn’t give them away,” explained one Atlanta realtor. By the early eighties this had changed. Homes in the reviving, in-town neighborhoods, which had sold for less than $16,000 during the highway battle, were selling for between $60,000 and $90,000 the same day they appeared on the market. Advertisements in the local newspapers touted these homes for their intown location.235 Joe Martin and his wife Larrie Del saw these changes in their neighborhood. In March 1983, a traffic management study concluded that vehicular traffic in and around the Morningside-Lenox Park neighborhood was increasing significantly because of the growing number of young families with children. Children equated to more trips to work, the grocery store, dance classes, athletic practices, and school.236 That same fall, Larry Del Martin took over as chair of the fundraising committee at Morningside Elementary School. Through her work with CINS, she observed the curriculum supplements at several NAPPS schools, particularly the purchase of computers at Sarah Smith Elementary by the northside parent-teacher associations.237 Upon learning that the funds came through an annual Sally Foster sale, the committee decided that Morningside students would start selling Sally Foster wrapping paper in late September.

If you look at a map of the city of Atlanta for a long time the entire northside was the wealthy side of town and northeast Atlanta is sort of an evolving piece...that’s partly because of who lives there and partly because of the taxes. Just the ability to know what to do, how to organize, how to raise money, like when Sally Foster came. You know we never had Sally Foster in any of the CINS schools. Sally Foster sold wrapping paper on the far northside long before that whole phenomenon hit this part of town. And it was when this community saw all that playground equipment they raised, how much money

234 Joseph G. Martin, Jr., District 3 School Board member, Memorandum to Dr. Alonzo A. Crim, CC: Mr. J.Y. Moreland, Dr. Elizabeth L. Feely, “Re: Community Views,” September 6, 1983, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
236 “Neighborhood traffic management study funded by the city,” MLPA Newsletter, March 1983.
they raised from wrapping paper, people started to think. If they can do it then surely we can do it. But that same phenomenon doesn’t exist in other quadrants of the city…it is education from the get go. It’s raising kids in all the support that middle-class and upper middle-class families give kids. You just cannot replace that.\textsuperscript{238}

The fundraiser only became possible because the number of young, middle-class families moving into the intown neighborhoods was growing.\textsuperscript{239} It was this growth and the revitalization of the neighborhoods that he represented, which made Joe Martin so optimistic about the future of public education in the early eighties despite continued losses of intown families to the private schools. CINS president Trisha Senterfitt was equally hopeful. “It was an amazing thing that I have never seen before or since…we were trying to reach out to people moving into the neighborhood.”\textsuperscript{240} They just knew the sixties-inspired commitment of CINS parents was going to change the mindset of the intown community and its support for the public schools.

By tracing the origins of intown parents’ movement to halt white flight to the highway battle and ensuing grassroots neighborhood movement, which successfully influenced municipal and school board races in 1977, this chapter argued that the values and principles embraced by Atlanta’s first wave of urban pioneers became the basis for the next stage in the civil rights movement, the defense of public education. Membership in neighborhood-based babysitting and preschool cooperatives, the League of Women Voters, progressive downtown congregations, and as their children got older, the parent-teacher association and Wednesday morning breakfast group provided the women with a network of friends that turned their council of neighborhoods and schools into a political force within the community. In 1979, the founders of NAPPS and CIRCLE began meeting with other parent and civic groups at the Junior League office in Buckhead. They hoped to forge a coalition and share their model for organizing with the rest of the city.

\textsuperscript{238} Interview with Nancy Hamilton, February 16, 2009.
\textsuperscript{239} The first year, the Morningside PTA aimed to raise $3,000 for the purchase of a computer and improvements to the playground. The fundraising campaign pulled in $5,232.10. By 1988, the annual wrapping paper sale was raising $39,000. “Morningside Elementary School,” \textit{MLPA} Newsletter, August 1983; \textit{The Inman Park Advocator}, September 1983; “Progress on our Schools,” Joe Martin, \textit{Ansley Parkside}, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Winter 1983, page 8; “Morningside elementary,” \textit{MLPA} Newsletter, Winter 1983; \textit{Ansley Parkside}, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1988; \textit{Ansley Parkside}, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Winter 1988, page 7.
\textsuperscript{240} Interview with Trisha Senterfitt, October 13, 2011.
On September 22, 1976, Eileen Segrest called the first meeting of the Atlanta Junior League’s education task force to order. The women, who had been assigned to the task force as part of their annual membership placement, sat in the Junior League office in Buckhead and listened to Segrest explain that the Junior League had formed the committee in response to a 1975 survey of the general membership. Members had expressed a strong interest in supplementing educational services in the city. Two years after the implementation of the Atlanta Compromise, the publicity surrounding the public schools remained negative, and League members hoped to do “something about the schools.”

In the late seventies, the Junior League was still a “white glove” organization, in which membership was extended to Atlanta women by invitation only. With more than eighty percent of the members relying on the northside private schools, the task force began with virtually no knowledge of the school system or how white families’ responses to court-ordered school desegregation had contributed to the current crisis.

At the first meeting Segrest presented the new committee with results from a recent questionnaire. Business and civic leaders had named public education as the primary concern confronting Atlanta’s economic growth and development. The task force decided to begin its yearlong study by asking the question, “How can the Junior League positively affect Atlanta’s public schools?” They hoped to


243 A September 1976 survey of the membership found that 64 out of 314 League members with school age children sent their children to public schools. Of these families, most attended the ten-year-old Warren T. Jackson Elementary School through the fourth grade before transferring to The Westminster Schools or one of the other prestigious northside private schools. Mary Stewart, Hagy Eileen Segrest, and Patty Slick, “Public Schools-Again a Viable Alternative,” Peachtree Paper (May 1977): 20-21.
identify a volunteer project that the League could undertake, which sought to address the problems in the schools and subsequently improve the publicity surrounding the city’s public school system. Later that same month, committee members gathered again at the Junior League office on Northside Drive. They divided up the tasks that had been outlined at the first meeting. Over the next three months, some of the women began reaching out to other Leagues and researching how they were supporting public education, while another group drew up a list of individuals and organizations from the community to interview about the needs of Atlanta’s public schools.

The task force met twice that fall to update each other on their progress. Members continued to scheduled and conduct interviews, and it was at the first of these meetings, which was held at Junior League member Stewart Hagy’s home on Putnam Drive, that they realized just how misinformed the League membership was about the northside public schools. Hagy described the tours she had been on at Morris Brandon, Warren T. Jackson, Sarah Smith, E. Rivers, and Margaret Mitchell Elementary Schools. She found that there was a renewed interest in the neighborhood public schools and enrollment was increasing. Committee chair Segrest confirmed that enrollment from the white, middle-class neighborhoods was on the rise. She had recently met with the NAPPS board and heard that in its first year, their grassroots campaign recruited over 476 children back from the private schools. After much discussion, the members decided that they needed to publish an article in the Junior League’s newsletter, Peachtree Papers, to share what they had learned with the entire League. They also hoped to poll the membership at the next general meeting to quantify their feelings regarding public versus private education. At the same time, through their research and very honest discussion, the committee acknowledged that because they were so removed from the facts and had not seen past the quiet hysteria and fears that surrounded the public schools, it was important to get both black and white Atlantans’ viewpoints in the interviews. They revised and expanded their original list of individuals and groups to interview.

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244 “Public education task force minutes,” September 22, 1976, Susan Bledsoe Papers.
By the end of the year, the task force’s understanding of the northside public schools had improved, yet Junior League members rotated off the committee having not found another League’s project to model in Atlanta or identified a system-wide need that the Atlanta Junior League could address. Junior League member Patty Slick agreed to remain on the task force, which now also included chair Cathy O’Kelley and recent transfer to the Atlanta League, Susan Bledsoe. Several of the women had heard chairman and founder of NAPPS Lynn Westergaard address the provisional class the fall before. They enthusiastically began the second year of the public education task force ready to continue in-League education efforts.

Over the next three months, the committee met on a regular basis and reported on the interviews they had completed. Interviews with Joe Drolet from the Citywide League of Neighborhoods and NAPPS members, including Lynn Westergaard, Margaret Miller, Edith Hammond, Gloria Carlton, and Eleanor Beckman, introduced the Junior League members to the neighborhood schools movement to halt white flight and its impact on the Buckhead community. The overlapping membership of NAPPS and the League of Women Voters, including NAPPS founders Betsey Stone and Clare Richardson, helped expand their original list of completed interviews. They put them in touch with other League members, including Anne Curry and Edwina Hefner. Education committee chairs and civic association presidents, such as Sandra Padgett in Grant Park, Sally George in Ansley Park, Diane Cox in Venetian Hills, and Jessie Barnes from southwest Atlanta, broadened the scope of the neighborhood movement to include the reviving, intown neighborhoods and stable, middle-class African-American neighborhoods, which had undergone violent racial transition a decade earlier. Yet it was the interviews with Goldie Johnson, who represented the Atlanta Council for Public Education, and Marcia Klenbort, who had recently moved with her family from their southwest Atlanta home in Mozley Park to the reviving, intown neighborhood of Ansley Park, that alerted committee members to the need for better cooperation among the city’s black

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247 Committee members included Ann Canipe, Bobbi Cleveland, Vesta Jones, Margaret Pearl, Becky Pinckney, Midge Yearly, Cynthia Tanner, Nancy Green, Paula Bevington, and Betty Edge.
and white neighborhood and parent groups. Klenbort recalls her initial impression when a Junior League member called her at home:

I can remember the day they called me. I had worked on the Atlanta Preschool Cooperative and the failed committee for an open school. Three years later, when Susan Bledsoe called in 1977, I was guarded, especially a call from the Junior League. I had never met a NAPPS person or a League person…I had only negative images of the Junior League. I remembered my mother saying to my sister and I, “Oh wouldn’t it be wonderful if you were tapped for the Junior League?” That was all we needed; I knew it wasn’t something I wanted to do…I don’t know how she got my name, but it was a good conversation. I remember that I had a lot of regard for Susan. She’s very methodical and very careful with process.  

Klenbort suggested to Bledsoe that an informal meeting to exchange ideas, as long as the meeting was inclusive of the different groups, might be to everyone’s advantage.  

By January 1978 having talked with many individuals and groups involved in their neighborhood schools, the education task force confirmed that interest in public education was on the upswing. They also came to realize that there was virtually no communication between the city’s neighborhood-based parent groups. The 1973 Compromise was not yet five years old and despite the efforts by small groups like NAPPS on the northside, fear gripped white Atlantans. The few attempts to work as a biracial coalition, such as Randy Taylor’s group or the Atlanta Council for Public Education, had been limited in their impact.

At the education task force’s monthly meetings Susan Bledsoe kept coming back to her interview with Marcia Klenbort. She thought that an informal conference might be the way to begin the conversations that were needed. Bledsoe had moved from Greenwich, Connecticut to the Tuxedo Park neighborhood in Atlanta two years earlier and in Connecticut had worked with her Junior League on an education center. Klenbort recalls how Bledsoe, as an outsider moving to the South, brought new ideas to the Atlanta Junior League:

Now people had different ideas, and I think Susan Bledsoe’s original idea, she had come from Greenwich, Connecticut and was upset about a lot of things in the South, was to

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249 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
start a resource center because she had just done this as part of a major Junior League project in Greenwich. I think key to her thinking was, “We’ll be a center that encourages volunteers.”

That spring, she pushed for the other committee members to consider using the idea of a conference as a leaping off point, from which they could develop a major Junior League project in Atlanta. She hoped to get the groups she had been interviewing to sit down together and share resources. She also felt that it was important to get a greater number of black parents involved, and by getting current groups to work together, they might be able to reach this segment of Atlanta. When the task force presented their three-stage proposal to the Junior League’s executive committee, they had far exceeded the original scope of the task force.

The majority of the Junior League leadership overwhelmingly endorsed the idea of hosting a conference, evaluating the education scene, and developing a resource center. There was a small, but very vocal minority that absolutely opposed the idea of supporting the public schools. The general membership of the Junior League remained largely apathetic. Most members were not able to see how the project benefited them. The exhausted task force regrouped. While the idea of hosting a conference failed to become a reality, by July 1978 a steering committee, which was made up of the diverse neighborhood and parent groups that committee members had spent the past two years interviewing, was been pieced together.

This chapter traces how the Junior League committee, which was established to address the poor publicity surrounding the Atlanta Public Schools, evolved into a biracial, largely women-led steering committee that brought together the white and black middle-class, neighborhood-based movements of the seventies. After tracing the origins of the neighborhood movement to southwest Atlanta, the chapter ex-

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251 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
amines the hurdles and early achievements of the citywide resource center. I argue that the experience founding Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education, or APPLE Corps, educated the white, middle-class mothers on the history of segregation in Atlanta and its continued legacy of fear, distrust, and latent racism among white and black parents. They had come to the steering committee believing that their movement to halt white flight was a model for the city. But as they grappled with their sense of racism and discovered that they shared a set of values and principles with African-American parent activists began to embrace a new type of community activism.

3.1 A Public Education Task Force

On the morning of July 12, 1978, representatives from eleven neighborhood and parent groups gathered at the Junior League office in Buckhead.\(^{255}\) Cathy O’Kelley, chair of the two-year-old Atlanta Junior League’s public education task force, had invited them to discuss the possibility of founding an information and resource center.\(^{256}\) She began the first meeting by introducing everyone and then providing some background on the Junior League committee.\(^{257}\) At the end of the meeting, the parents agreed to bring friends who they thought might be interested in the project to the next meeting, which was scheduled for July 28, 1978.\(^{258}\)

At the first meeting it was evident that those who Cathy O’Kelley had initially invited came to the steering committee with very different agendas. Even among the white women, who joined the steering committee, outlooks and approaches varied greatly. The Junior League members, whose husbands were part of the growing Atlanta business community, hoped to promote their philanthropic organization’s

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\(^{255}\) The eleven groups included the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, the “Advocates” or the Atlanta Council for Public Education (ACPE), Close-In Reviving Communities Linked for Education (CIRCLE) which was replaced by the Council of Intown Neighborhood and Schools (CINS), the Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools (NAPPS), the Junior League of Atlanta, Parents for Action, Equal Opportunity Atlanta (EOA), Exodus, Inc., the Institute for Responsive Education, the League of Women Voters of Atlanta/Fulton County, and the Atlanta Council of PTAs. “Public School Supporters—a Look at Our Heritage,” *School Talk*, January 1980; *School Talk*, February 1980. See also “Panel Presentation at Clark-Atlanta,” speech, April 8, 1989, APPLE Corps, Box 4.

\(^{256}\) Cathy O’Kelley chaired the education task force from 1977 to 1978, before moving to New Orleans with her family in August 1978. At the second meeting of the steering committee, she was replaced by Susan Bledsoe.


\(^{258}\) Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
form of volunteerism and improve the publicity surrounding the public schools. By the late seventies, there was growing concern among white civic and business leaders that the public school situation was affecting the city’s ability to encourage the relocation of major corporations to Atlanta.259

Unlike the League members, the small, core group of mothers, who had founded NAPPS and CIRCLE, were personally invested in the public school system. They had chosen to enroll their children in one of the northside or intown elementary schools and founded organizations to provide support and encouragement to one another in the face of white flight or the proposed highway. Meg Taylor recalls how the NAPPS members’ approach conflicted with League members’ assumptions about the schools:

The Junior League’s method of working was to give seed money and personnel to address a perceived problem with their organizational skills and with their reach into the community. Once an organization is developed, they moved on to a different problem. It is an ambassadorial approach…we, who were working to maintain and augment quality education by being in it with our families, had personal gains and losses to consider.260

NAPPS founders, including Clare Richardson, joined the steering committee because they hoped that the League project “could perform a somewhat similar role for the whole of Atlanta.”261 Taylor and Richardson, who served as representatives for the League of Women Voters and NAPPS respectively, invited other NAPPS members, including Betty Whittier, Connie Calhoun, and Mary Amos, to begin attending the meetings with them.262 Though the group of white, northside women came to the meeting having spent the past two years promoting public education and integration within the Buckhead community, it was not until the steering committee that they began to realize how different their movement was from the problems were confronting the city’s African-American parents. White flight had closed dozens of schools, and the city’s white, northside neighborhoods were still struggling to overcome the hysteria that had followed the compromise. But fear and racism was not the same thing as decades of neglect and underfunding. For many of the leaders in NAPPS, the meetings were the first time that they had sat down with African-American mothers and learned of their movement. Taylor recalls how the steering commit-

260 Margaret Taylor, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, November 22, 2011.
261 “APPLE Corps board retreat minutes,” January 10, 1981, APPLE Corps, Box 3.
eventually exposed her to the history of segregation in Atlanta and its continued legacy of racism, fear, and distrust among white and black parents:

I belonged to the League of Women Voters and represented them on the steering committee to organize APPLE Corps. The original members had invited friends to join them...the steering committee continued to meet for the next six months. We had [monthly] meetings and information sessions to try to improve communication with the various neighborhoods in Atlanta. I had to learn about racial tension. I had not grown up with it. It was stimulating and lots of fun.263

By the second meeting of the steering committee later that month, the recently formed Close-In Reviving Communities Linked for Education (CIRCLE), which sought to tie the revitalization of the intown neighborhoods with their strong civic associations to the Grady cluster of neighborhood public schools, had also sent a representative, Frank Windom. Charlotte Hale, the president of the newly founded Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools (CINS), soon joined Windom at meetings. The intown parents similarly hoped that the center could bring their model of community organizing to the entire city.

The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce also agreed to participate in the biracial, largely women-led committee and sent the African-American associate director of the Chamber’s public affairs division, Milt Lincoln, to observe. The Chamber was in the midst of planning a campaign to attract corporations to the city and recognized that they needed to improve publicity surrounding the public schools if their campaign was to be effective. At the second meeting in July, Milt Lincoln suggested that the first project of the resource center could be to serve as the telephone call center for the Chamber of Commerce’s multimedia advertisement campaign, which was set to begin the following year.264

Other invitees were middle-class women whose husbands worked at Morehouse College or Atlanta University, including Marcia Klenbort and Goldie Johnson.265 At first, they saw these white north-

263 Margaret Taylor, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, November 22, 2011.
265 Other members of the Morehouse and Atlanta University community that became involved in the steering committee included Edwina Hefner, Shirley Williams, Hugh Fordyce, Barbara Jones, Al McWilliams, Barbara Hatton, Edwina Miles, and Collette Hopkins. “Notes” (compiled by Marcia Klenbort), APPLE Corps Papers; “Steering committee minutes,” August 29, 1978, Steering Committee folder June 1978-Jan 1979, APPLE Corps Papers.
side women as “the other people” who wanted to be involved in the schools but from a distance.\textsuperscript{266} They found the notion that an information and resource center could build coalitions and promote parent involvement in the city’s poorer, black neighborhoods naïve and removed from those communities’ histories of activism.

3.2 The Origins of Neighborhood Activism

Marcia Klenbort moved to Atlanta in 1966 after her husband Dan was hired by historically black Morehouse College’s History Department. Having grown up in the white Chicago neighborhood of Hyde Park and been active in the civil rights movement since attending a sit-in in Greenville, South Carolina, she did not want to move to the South or Atlanta, which she did not view as a progressive city.\textsuperscript{267} They decided that Dan should accept the job offer, and the Klenborts moved into the close-in, southwest neighborhood of Mozley Park, which by then was a stable middle-class, African-American neighborhood. They were concerned that faculty members and students would not be able to safely visit them if they purchased a home in one of the city’s white neighborhoods. For their children’s safety, they did not want to move into the newer southwest suburbs that were undergoing violent racial transition. Once settled, Marcia Klenbort’s world was southwest Atlanta and Morehouse. Except to attend the symphony or buy groceries because there were not any decent stores in the black neighborhoods she did not interact with “white Atlanta.” Like most stay-at-home mothers, Klenbort first became active in the schools. She joined the Atlanta Cooperative Preschool, which was founded in 1965 by middle-class families from the Atlanta University Center neighborhoods as the city’s first attempt at integrated education,\textsuperscript{268} and later Frank L.

\textsuperscript{266} “Notes on history of APPLE Corps,” Discussion with founders, September 19, 2000, APPLE Corps, Box 6.

\textsuperscript{267} Klenbort graduated from DePauw University with a Bachelor of Arts in English and later earned her Master of Arts in teaching from the University of Chicago and a Masters in American Civilization from New York University. Judy Winder, “Community advisory board, Marcia Klenbort: Committed to the Corps,” The Colleague, the Junior League of DeKalb County (December/January 1985): 16-17.

\textsuperscript{268} The Atlanta Preschool Cooperative Center lasted over thirty years. It started as a three mornings a week program for four-year-olds and a two mornings a week program for three-year-olds, at which the parents were required to work in the school in addition to raising funds. After the first school burned, which the parents believed was due to arson, they moved the Co-op to the old, five-room Central Methodist Church parsonage on Mitchell Street, gradually enlarged the program to four classes, an art room and a dress-up/play room, and hired two full-time teachers. During its last years of being opening, the preschool met at Community Baptist Church’s community rooms. Inter-
Stanton Elementary School’s parent-teacher association (PTA), where she volunteered in the classroom and was introduced to the open classroom concept. The open classroom concept was such a success at Stanton that Klenbort began putting together a citywide proposal. She reached out to Co-op parents and families she was meeting through her work on “Randy Taylor’s committee,” which had been founded by the minister at Central Presbyterian Church to bring white and black parents together to support the 1973 Compromise. The liberal-minded and progressive Co-op and committee parents wanted to find a way to support integration in the public school system, which increasingly due to white flight seemed impossible to achieve. From 1973 to 1974, the committee put together plans to open an integrated school on the open classroom model. The parents hoped to pull from all over the city and serve children from kindergarten to eighth grade. Then in July 1974, all their plans came crashing down. After a heated debate, the school board voted five to four against the controversial proposal. Klenbort recalls:

> I started the committee for an open school and that went on for two years before it failed. It failed with a school board vote of five members against four members. When it got to the board, we were [already in the process of] hiring a director. We did not call him a principal but a headmaster and that was a mistake. We made a couple of stupid political moves, which earned us that five to four vote. That was in June of 1974. The [African-American] president of the board, Dr. Benjamin Mays, called me and apologized…it was disappointing. I had given a year and a half of my life to it.


Klenbort loved the smallness and proximity of the tiny neighborhood school, though after the cooperative preschool with its “messy activities,” in which children had been busy building things, doing art projects, and gardening, she found the traditional public elementary school’s structure limiting. Upon hearing a Headstart lecture on the open classroom concept, she applied for a small ESAA grant. She began teaching classes at Stanton from 2 to 3 pm. She ran the program for a year and a half, before deciding to spend a couple of weeks one summer in England. There she enrolled in a course on the open classroom model and visited schools that were successfully implementing the concept in their curriculums. Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.

The Atlanta Ad Hoc Committee for Excellence in Education, or “Randy Taylor’s committee,” tried to support school desegregation and worked towards getting the Chamber of Commerce to stop bad-mouthing the schools and the Atlanta Constitution and the Atlanta Journal to quit writing articles that inspired fear in the white community. Some of the parents that came, including Marcia Klenbort, Shirley McPherson, and Goldie Johnson, knew one another from the Preschool Cooperative. Other participants were members of the congregation and lived in the Morningside area, which was to be one of two areas with “paired schools,” or on the northside, including future NAPPS founder Margaret Miller. The group did not accomplish much, though it did hold some meetings with the Chamber of Commerce. The real impact of Randy Taylor’s committee was that it briefly brought together white and black parents that had not previously interacted with one another and showed them that there were other people in the city who were equally committed to integration. The experience inspired participants to found groups like the Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools and the Atlanta Council for Public Education. “Notes” (compiled by Marcia Klenbort), APPLE Corps Papers.

Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
Klenbort brought these experiences, along with her unique perspective as a white, middle-class resident from the close-in neighborhoods of southwest Mozley Park and northwest Ansley Park to the steering committee. Her deep commitment to integration was evident when she spoke to the white, northside women attending the steering committee meetings. She came to the Junior League office in Buckhead determined “to remove the edge of discrimination” that she felt persisted among white Atlantans. She hoped that the resource center could serve as a “vehicle for empowering parents—for giving them the information and the organizational strength to change intolerable situations in their schools.”

After accepting the phone call from Susan Bledsoe in 1978, she extended to her “real base of friends in the city” an invitation to the steering committee. Colleagues from the Co-op and the Committee for an Open School, including Goldie Johnson, agreed to attend the next meeting with her.

For me, I had come to Atlanta in 1966, and it wasn’t until I started working with the committee in 1977 that I felt like I joined the city…it started as a group of people that were invited by the Junior League to have conversations. I brought Goldie Johnson, who was my co-op buddy and a very feisty parent from southwest Atlanta.

After founding the Atlanta Preschool Cooperative, Johnson had become active in the Atlanta Council for Public Education (ACPE), which was formed on October 18, 1974 as a citywide organization to support the public schools during the heated implementation of the Atlanta Compromise. In 1978, after being invited by her good friend Marcia Klenbort to join the steering committee, Johnson agreed to attend. She was “tired of the good old PTA approach, [which was] cookies and teacher appreciation days. [She] hoped that the center could enlist serious-minded, well-informed persons who were willing to take some

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272 Ibid.
274 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
risks to improve the public schools.“276 While the Junior League’s education task force had begun their two-year study with virtually no understanding of the situation confronting the Atlanta school system and were narrowly proposing that the steering committee found an information and resource center to do something about the publicity surrounding the schools, women like Klenbort and Johnson knew that the steering committee was in fact building on the foundation of these earlier groups.

At the meetings, Klenbort and Johnson met other members of Atlanta’s black, middle-class community, including vocal parent activist Mamie Darlington. The efforts of southwest Atlanta parents to promote desegregation stretched back into the sixties.277 They had founded organizations, including Southwest Atlantans for Progress (SWAP) and Parents for Action, to support their neighborhoods in the face of white flight and later to advocate for their underfunded neighborhood schools.

A decade earlier, white and black middle-class homeowners had founded Southwest Atlantans for Progress (SWAP). The city’s close-in southwest neighborhoods were experiencing violent and overnight racial transition, and in 1968 these families hoped to counter the “blockbusting” techniques of real estate agents. When the Klenborts moved to Atlanta, it was these neighborhoods they tried to avoid. Klenbort recalls how Morehouse faculty members described the racial transition to her:

Turning happened real fast. In nine to twelve months...there were neighborhoods that were in rapid transition. If you crossed south of I-20, all those little streets that backed up to Gordon were house after house of “For Sale” signs. So those whites were moving out. That neighborhood turned within a period of months to being all black...southwest Atlanta was changing rapidly, and those brick ranch houses [in] neighborhoods like Beecher Hills, Cascade Heights, and further out almost to the perimeter, Lynhurst Drive and West Manor, those were also changing very fast.278

The founders of SWAP hoped to convince white homeowners to stay and stabilize the neighborhoods of Cascade Heights, West Manor, Beecher Hills, Oakland City, and Ben Hill. They believed if families were reassured that the advantages of living in southwest Atlanta—the convenience, modern suburban homes, and a sense of community—then they would integrate their neighborhoods. They hosted town hall meet-

276 “APPLE Corps board retreat minutes,” January 10, 1981, APPLE Corps Papers.
278 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
ings, placed “This Is My Home. It Is Not for Sale” signs in their yards to counter the rows of “For Sale” signs, and ultimately elected Bill Alexander, a white, native Atlantan and SWAP founder, to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1970.²⁷⁹

Despite their success at the polls, SWAP was unable to counter the racial fears that spread unabated through the white, middle-class neighborhoods. They were never able to obtain the support from the school board and city council, which could have reassured parents and homeowners. Instead, the school board and the administration were in its last months of “foot-dragging” and delays in an effort to resist the court-ordered desegregation of the public schools. Growing numbers of white families sold their property below market value, and black families who had been excluded from the postwar housing boom moved in.²⁸⁰

In 1969, Southwest High School was over ninety percent white.²⁸¹ As the neighborhoods’ racial composition rapidly changed, the school was briefly naturally integrated. It was during these days, in 1971, that just over thirty parents with children at West Manor Elementary, Venetian Hills Elementary, and Southwest High School formed an “action committee” to draw up their complaints and present the school board with indisputable evidence that their schools were underfunded and overcrowded. They hoped to hold families to the school with improved facilities and curriculum.²⁸² The momentum behind this effort to unify the southwest area schools continued, and parents from Continental Colonies Elementary, Peyton Forest Elementary, Cascade Elementary, Arkwright Elementary, Ben Hill Elementary, Fick-


²⁸⁰ For an overview of the “red-lining” that blocked African-American families from purchasing homes see Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier: 190-218. For more on discriminatory loan practices in Atlanta see the four-part series Bill Dedman, “The color of money,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 1-4, 1988.


ett Elementary, and Therrell High schools joined the ad hoc parents group. By the fall of 1972, the parents group had elected state representative Bill Alexander as chair and begun formally organizing themselves as a coalition of PTA representatives, three years before a similar neighborhood school movement began on the northside. The white, native Atlantan, who had grown up in the West End and was elected to the State House of Representatives, knew that his cluster of neighborhoods and schools had long been neglected. At a community meeting in 1972, Alexander explained to parents that the city’s white business and political power structure, which lived on the city’s northside, had long insured that municipal and school board spending benefited their neighborhoods and schools and ignored the rest of the city.

Some parents seem to feel that the school board has neglected southwest Atlanta because there are so many blacks here now. But that is not the case, I grew up here and it has always been the case because people in southwest Atlanta are not as politically astute as they should be. They just do not make themselves heard by the right people…by the people who can do something about school problems.

In 1973, that changed. Southwest High School was ninety percent black, and the black, middle-class families who had stood in the face of violent racism when they purchased their southwest homes had helped elect the city’s first African-American mayor to office. The neighborhood movement, which had originated in the intown neighborhoods battling I-485 and the Stone Mountain Tollway, surged onto the political scene and elected candidates to the city council and the school board. The neighborhood-based parents group, which had emerged from SWAP, brought that movement to the close-in southwest neighborhoods.

By the late seventies the original ad hoc parents group that had been made up of PTA representatives from the Southwest and Therrell high schools had dissolved and then was reinvented. In 1977, after the administration again failed to relieve overcrowding, Therrell parents, including Mamie Darlington, formed Parents for Action. Membership quickly grew to 250 parents, as they fought for quality education

283 Southside Sun (East Point), October 19, 1972.
284 Southside Sun (East Point), November 2, 1972.
286 Southside Sun (East Point), October 19, 1972.
in their neighborhood schools. In 1980, the cluster movement around Southwest High School would also reemerge when the school board made the decision to convert it to a middle school. The PTA presidents from Southwest High School, Peyton Elementary, West Manor Elementary, Cascade Elementary, and Beecher Elementary formed a coalition, Southwest Parents for Public Education (SPPE), and campaigned for the Board of Education to create a special “reading and math enrichment” magnet program at Southwest. Despite heavy parent lobbying, the school reopened in 1981 as the Jean Childs Young Middle School. These middle-class, southwest parent activists had never driven through Buckhead, let alone attended a Junior League meeting, but they came to the steering committee meetings that summer because they hoped to address overcrowding and bring quality instruction to the city’s predominantly black schools.

For the next six months, they met with the white mothers, who had recently founded two parallel but unrelated neighborhood-based movements to halt white flight, at the Junior League office in Buckhead. The northside and intown mothers came to the meetings entirely unaware of the history of the earlier movement, and neither group was able to agree upon the problems confronting the school system. An undercurrent of fear, distrust, and latent racism simmered. Even the meetings’ location at the Junior League office on the city’s far northside was confrontational. In the summer of 1978, integration was not a reality. Neighborhoods and churches were segregated. For many of these white and black middle-class women the meetings were the first time they had met. Chair Susan Bledsoe, who had taken over running the steering committee meetings in August after Cathy O’Kelley moved, remained committed to founding a resource center, which could bring together the city’s grassroots movements around a shared set of val-

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288 The “new” middle school was recognized as a Georgia School of Excellence in 1985 and again in 1999. Students previously zoned for Southwest were assigned to the newly opened Benjamin E. Mays High School, which offered a science and mathematics magnet program built to rival Northside and North Atlanta high schools’ academic programs. The “new” high school was recognized as a Georgia School of Excellence in 1987 and again in 1993 and as a national Blue Ribbon School during the 1986-1987 school year. Past-Southwest High School PTA president and SPPE’s secretary, C.T. Martin, would go on to be elected to Atlanta City Council in a special called election in 1990. Atlanta Constitution, December 5, 1980, 10C; Atlanta Constitution (Intown Extra), February 5, 1981, Page 14; “Here’s how some citizens are working with schools-Southwest Parents for Public Education,” School Talk, February 1981; Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Intown Extra), November 28, 1985, 4E.
ues and principles. As the steering committee gathered endorsements from civic and neighborhood organizations and began the process to officially incorporate, members’ perspective of the city and themselves was changing. Taylor recalls:

I learned a lot about networking. I enjoyed very much becoming acquainted with such talented people from so many neighborhoods with approaches to quality education…I was very impressed with the intown people. Some of the women from public housing were sharp and helpful. I remember Marcia Klenbort helping; she was very effective reaching out. Through the experience, I grew close to Susan Bledsoe, and we enjoyed running into each other in the neighborhood.

No biracial organization had succeeded on a citywide level, yet by January the proposed Junior League initiative created a unique coalition of neighborhood-based, mother-led movements. Klenbort explains the significance of the steering committee in Atlanta history:

We were an entirely new kind of organization. And that was what was interesting about the steering committee…there hadn’t been any organization like it before. Ok, you had the League of Women Voters, and they are pro-democracy, pro-making schools and other public institutions work and focused on elections. You even had a little group like NAPPS that was pro its group of schools, its little cluster of schools, and some of the other founding groups like Parents for Action, which was grouped around Therrell High School. Now NAPPS had huge neighborhood cohesion because they founded themselves on the shoulders of white flight. So they looked around and were looking for people like themselves. Clare Richardson is looking for Margaret Miller, and Margaret Miller is looking for Meg Taylor. They’re thinking if we’re going to keep our kids in public schools then we’ve got to find each other and do it together. CINS also had this tremendous neighborhood cohesion; they’d fought the road. They found each other. But nobody had taken on an entire school district.

3.3 A Citywide Resource Center

In late August, a series of new billboards appeared on the city’s major thoroughfares. They joined 1,500 posters, which blanketed the city’s businesses. Over the next two weeks advertisements popped up in Atlanta-area newspapers and were broadcast on local radio and television stations. On September 6, 1979 these efforts culminated in a public forum at Colony Square Mall. The Chamber of Commerce’s

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290 Margaret Taylor, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, November 22, 2011.
291 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
292 The League of Women Voters-sponsored forum entitled “Public Education, Who Cares?” was held in the Colony Square Community Room and organized around a panel of representatives from five local parent and community support groups, including NAPPS president Clare Richardson, CINS president Charlotte Hale, Parents for Action
campaign, which had been in the works for months and was designed to focus Atlantans’ attention on the public school system, was underway. This publicity was part of the Chamber’s yearlong effort to attract major corporations to the city.\textsuperscript{293}

At the bottom of each billboard and poster or at the end of every radio advertisement, a telephone number was listed.\textsuperscript{294} When parents and citizens called this number, they were connected to the Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education (APPLE Corps) office on Georgia Avenue in southeast Atlanta. No one had heard of this new group, which in January 1979 after months of planning and searching for an appropriate office location had officially opened.\textsuperscript{295} Hundreds of parents called the number and requested assistance on specific problems in their children’s school. When the Chamber’s campaign began the office had not yet built up resources or database. The volunteers, who were manning the phones, were overwhelmed.

Inspired by the large number of calls they were receiving, APPLE Corps first director Carolyn Graham, who had been hired by the Board of Directors in May, proposed conducting a survey to measure the level of community involvement in the schools and from that data, select a target area where APPLE Corps could provide support and promote volunteerism on the model of NAPPS and CINS.\textsuperscript{296} By early September, Graham had compiled the list of questions and was pushing for them to select a low-income, president Mamie Darlington, Chamber of Commerce member Frank Howard, and APPLE Corps Board of Directors president Susan Bledsoe. WSB-TV reporter and anchorwoman Jocelyn Dorsey moderated the panel discussion, which emphasized growing community support for public education and debated how the groups could work together to create a more positive image of public schools. “Black and White Together: The 25th Anniversary of Brown vs. The Board of Education, a special news report,” \textit{Atlanta Constitution}, May 16, 1979; “League of Women Voters Sets Public Education Study With APPLE Corps,” \textit{Atlanta Daily World}, September 6, 1979, page 3; “APPLE Corps executive committee minutes,” September 17, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers; “APPLE Corps minutes,” September 24, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers.

\textsuperscript{293} The Chamber of Commerce’s campaign can be credited with bringing Georgia Pacific’s headquarters to Atlanta in the early eighties.

\textsuperscript{294} “APPLE Corps minutes,” June 11, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers.

\textsuperscript{295} The steering committee looked at several “race-neutral” sites, including the Laura Haygood School, the North Avenue School, Bryant School, and Spring Street School, and several downtown churches: Central Presbyterian Church, Trinity Methodist Church, St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, Fort Street Memorial Methodist Church, and the United Methodist Center, before deciding on the Georgia Hill Building. “APPLE Corps minutes,” January 4, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers.

\textsuperscript{296} Carolyn Graham had previously served as the executive director of “Atlanta 2000,” where she organized town hall meetings to develop a twenty-year plan for the city’s future. She served as APPLE Corps director from May 1979 to September 1979.
racedly diverse southeast neighborhood, where the first wave of urban pioneers was just starting to move in, near the APPLE Corps office. On September 24, 1979, she presented her proposal to the Board.

The Board of Directors was hesitant to grant its approval. They wondered if a citywide questionnaire, designed to identify areas where parental support was lacking was too big of a task for a new organization that lacked credibility within the community. When Milt Lincoln had first proposed to the steering committee that the organization they were founding serve as the telephone hotline for the Chamber of Commerce’s campaign, the founding members had viewed the project as a means of drawing citywide attention to their resource center’s ability to address community needs. But by leaping in through the Chamber, APPLE Corps was also immediately and publicly identified with the white, business community. The newly appointed Board of Directors found itself under attack from the city’s African-American educators. Carolyn Crowder, president of the Atlanta Council of PTAs and Atlanta school board member, had only just started sitting in on meetings. Steering committee member, Marcia Klenbort explains Crowder’s opposition:

Carolyn Crowder had been the president of the Atlanta Council for PTAs, and very pro-PTA. She didn’t really see the use for APPLE Corps... the Council of PTAs has its own interesting history because we’d had one fiscal system but two school systems in Atlanta:

During the month of August, Carolyn Graham had met several times with neighborhood association leaders, including Anita Greiner of the Association to Revive Grant Park, Paul Bolster from South Atlantans for Neighborhood Development (SAND), and the principals of the three neighborhood elementary schools-Jerome Jones, Slaton, and Grant Park—which were to be consolidated and redistricted. The turn-of-the-century, middle-class neighborhoods had declined in the 1950s and 1960s as residents moved away to the suburbs following the construction of I-20. A small number of urban pioneers began moving in and the Association to Revive Grant Park (ARGP), which was later re-named the Grant Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA), was founded in 1973. By the late eighties, the struggling but reviving neighborhood of Grant Park formed a new community organization Southeast Partners for Public Schools (SPPS) to provide support for the neighborhood school, which was again being threatened with closing. The parent and neighborhood group held its first meeting on November 19, 1987 at St. Paul’s Methodist Church on Grant Street. SAND was founded in 1979 as an umbrella organization for seven neighborhoods: Benteen Park, Boulevard Heights, Glenwood Park, McDonough-Guice, North Ormewood Park, Ormewood Park, and Woodland Hills. “APPLE Corps minutes,” May 8, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers; “APPLE Corps minutes,” June 5, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers; “APPLE Corps minutes,” July 16, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers; Carolyn N. Graham, director, Memorandum to the executive committee, “Subject: Target Area, Grant Park,” July 16, 1979, APPLE Corps, Box 3; “APPLE Corps minutes,” August 25, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers; “APPLE Corps minutes,” September 24, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers. For more on SPPS see School Talk, October 1987.

At the time APPLE Corps was founded, there were seventy-one active parent-teacher associations in the city and fifty-six of them were members of the Atlanta Council of PTAs. Carolyn Crowder served four terms on the school board before being defeated by Midge Sweet in the 1989 election. “Steering committee minutes,” September 24, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers. Francis, “Citizen Networks in Education,” 22.
one black system and one white system. There were also two PTA Councils, and they had recently merged. So [she] was very sensitive to this upstart group that looked mostly white.  

Other educators challenged the racial make-up of the Board of Directors, calling it unrepresentative of the school system, and suggested that APPLE Corps’ goals and objectives made it a tool of the Chamber of Commerce.  

With a white staff, white volunteers from the Junior League, and two of the executive positions on the first board being held by white, northside women, the accusations held a degree of legitimacy.  

Richardson, who had served on the steering committee as the representative from NAPPS and agreed to serve as the Board of Director’s first secretary, spoke up next. They had come together and founded APPLE Corps because they as middle-class parents had been concerned about desegregation, white flight, and quality education. The Board of Directors needed to start looking at how APPLE Corps could support the city’s poorer neighborhoods, which did not have access to the same resources as the city’s middle-class parents. When asked about the racial tensions on the board, she explained to one reporter:

“If the only people, who are working with Apple Corps, whether through time spent working with the organization or by using its resources, are the Junior League and other middle-class blacks and whites, there is no sense continuing. We need to pull in people who aren’t active in any organization. Most Junior League and NAPPS people find it impossible to function in low-income areas. We need members of those communities to tell us what they need, what the problems are and to reach out to other community members.”

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301 APPLE Corps president Susan Bledsoe responded that the board of directors was nearly sixty percent black and the Chamber of Commerce, like the other charger organizations, had one representative and one vote of the board. Susan M. Bledsoe, Letter to Dr. Don Davies, Institute for Responsive Education, April 23, 1979, APPLE Corps, Box 3.

302 The steering committee had sought to address this image problem during the nomination process, but only two white, northside women accepted the presidency and vice-presidency. After a lengthy discussion, led by Taylor, Bledsoe agreed to serve as the Board of Directors’ first president and Clare Richardson became the treasurer. The first Board of Directors included: Michael Fisher, Helen Bell, Barbara Cleveland, Hugh Fordyce, Charlotte Hale, Edwina Hefner, Goldie C. Johnson, Carrie Lacey, David Lewis, Edith McGrew, Virginia Plummer, Frank Smith, Margaret Taylor, and Norman Thomas. “APPLE Corps minutes,” January 18, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers.

303 Francis, “Citizen Networks in Education,” 20-21. For more on this view that APPLE Corps and its founding parent and neighborhood groups were part of a middle-class response to school desegregation see Jeffrey Henig et al.,
Graham left the meeting frustrated by the board and exhausted by APPLE Corps’ poor reception among the groups they were supposed to be representing. She resigned at the end of the month.

Marcia Klenbort, who had originally applied for the position of director, returned from vacationing with her family and heard from Goldie Johnson, her good friend on the board, that Carolyn Graham had resigned. She decided to offer her assistance. She called APPLE Corps president Susan Bledsoe, whom she had first spoken with two years ago when the Junior League was conducting interviews of parent activists, and offered to serve as an interim director. She told her that she could work part-time until December and get a newsletter started. Before September was over, Bledsoe welcomed her to the staff (Figure 5). Klenbort decided that the best way to build APPLE Corps’ credibility was to focus her immediate attention on publishing the newsletter that she had spoken of with Bledsoe. She believed that a monthly newsletter could address the lack of access to information and resources that was limiting parental and community involvement in the schools.

Klenbort spent hours during the month of October researching and writing. She frequently carried her work home from the APPLE Corps’ one-room office in the Georgia Hill Building each afternoon so that she could meet her sons after school and prepare dinner before heading back out to attend a community meeting somewhere in the city. She attended every school board meeting and took notes on any issue that might affect Atlanta parents. Klenbort knew from her own experience with the closing of Spring Street Elementary School that information was not reaching the community.

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304 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.

305 During the 1979-1980 and 1980-1981 school years, the Atlanta Public School system implemented several significant policy changes, including all-day kindergarten, bus transportation, new graduation requirements, a pupil progression policy, a parent/community involvement policy that mandated every school have a PTA or PTO, and superintendent Dr. Alonzo Crim’s five-year goal to raise test scores above the national average. The APPLE Corps newsletter became one of the few publications alerting parents. “Parent/community involvement policy being written by APS,” School Talk, March 1980; “Atlanta Public Schools Kindergarten Round-Up: May 5-9; September marks the beginning of the first all-day kindergartens!,” School Talk, April 1980; “Coming attractions…APS to provide bus transportation,” School Talk, June 1980; “Who shall speak for the schools?,” School Talk, June 1980; “Why are we testing?,” School Talk, September 1980; “Gets the bugs out of the new bus system,” School Talk, September 1980; School Talk, October 1980; “New policy for promoting first graders,” School Talk, April 1981; “We are in the era of tests, like it or not,” School Talk, May/June 1982.
Klenbort also attended the Board of Directors’ meetings. After the meeting, she followed up with Mamie Darlington, who had reported to the board that the five-year-old Parents for Action had exhausted all opportunities to address overcrowding and was contacting the American Civil Liberties Union. The month prior, the ACLU had appealed the District Court’s dismissal of the metropolitan busing lawsuit. The shift in principles by the southwest parents group, which campaigned for the ACLU to oppose the continued busing of African-American children across town and instead redirect the community’s efforts towards the securing of funding for new facilities and academically challenging programs, signaled that the movement by black, middle-class parents for integration was faltering.\(^{306}\) Having been a southwest

\(^{306}\) “APPLE Corps minutes,” June 11, 1979, APPLE Corps Papers. During the 1980s, “black flight” of the city’s African-American middle-class families to the suburbs and private schools would subsequently follow the dismissal
Atlanta resident, Klenbort understood the black parents’ frustrations. She also saw how the monthly Board of Directors’ meetings were educating NAPPS and CINS representatives about the history of segregation and its continued legacy within the city. The problems confronting African-American parents were such a contrast to reports by Meg Taylor or Charlotte Hale on NAPPS and CINS. These two white, middle-class-led groups were busy planning their successful Lenox Week or publishing their first brochure and expanded their membership. For many of these white, middle-class women, it was the first time they realized the tremendous burden integration had placed on the black families who chose to have their children make the long bus to the northside or intown neighborhood schools. Klenbort recalls how during that first year the founders of NAPPS and CINS were slowly being educated:

> You have to remember what the racial situation was like, and I’ll just take my brief period, as director from 1979 to 1987…part of what we did was to educate each other about what was happening in our corners of the world. It was a big eye opener to the NAPPS parents who had effective schools and powerful principals that could snap their fingers and get something done downtown. It was such an education for them to talk to parents from other parts of the city where they felt like their principals just didn’t have that kind of grace smiling on them.

With that realization, Klenbort had an idea. The newsletter that she had promised to start could do the same thing for the entire city. The first few editions could focus on the history of the Atlanta Public School system and the parent and community groups that had founded APPLE Corps.

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307 After having served as the League of Women Voters’ representative to the steering committee and then NAPPS representative to the Board of Directors, Meg Taylor resigned in May 1980 to become the League of Women Voters’ education chair. After getting four children through Morris Brandon Elementary, she started teaching at Northside High School in 1982 and completed her Master’s in Education at Georgia State University. Meg Taylor taught at North Atlanta until her retirement in May 2000. “APPLE Corps minutes,” January 14, 1980, APPLE Corps Papers; “APPLE Corps minutes,” March 31, 1980, APPLE Corps Papers.

308 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
The family’s dining room table became plastered with her notes, article outlines, a calendar covered with the times and locations of upcoming meetings, and several mock-ups. A month after she had taken over as interim director, Klenbort held in her hands a copy of the first edition of School Talk. Over 5,000 copies were circulated throughout the city in November 1979. By the end of the school year APPLE Corps had published seven issues of School Talk. After introducing the organization and providing a brief history of its founding member groups, Klenbort began to report on the new, grassroots efforts by APPLE Corps to support community activism in neighborhoods that did not have access to the same resources as middle-class parents.

The Grant Park education committee was the first neighborhood group to approach the resource center and met several times with Klenbort at the APPLE Corps office in the Georgia-Hill building. Beginning in 1980, APPLE Corps was providing statistical research and sponsoring community meetings in April 1980 to design education plans for the neighborhood. After the meetings, Marcia Klenbort frequently put together packets so that other school communities could learn from the efforts underway in Grant Park. They stored these handouts and additional brochures that they had collected from other parent groups at the office alongside periodicals, educational studies, grant opportunities, and bound works.

Four years after the Junior League’s education task force began envisioning the city’s need for the facility, APPLE Corps was being identified in the local press as a group that could build coalitions in Atlanta.

309 Ibid.
312 Examples of the brochures available at the resource center include the following: “Lending Support to Teachers: What Works? What Doesn’t?” “A Catalog of Artists Who will Work in Schools”; “Getting the most out of a conference with your child’s teacher” flyer designed by Slaton and Moreland Elementary School parents; a 3-page handout titled “How to start or improve your school newsletter”; “Guide to Atlanta Media” notebook put together by NAPPS; Council for Basic Education pamphlet titled “How effective are your schools? A checklist for citizens”; a 1-page tip sheet on “Breakfast tours of schools”; a 1-page flyer titled “Planning a school open house, one school’s experience”. As part of its growing role as a resource center, APPLE Corps also created a Print Co-op, which schools joined at a flat annual rate, to share the costs of ink, paper and stencils and publish school directories, school newsletters, invitations, programs and certificates of appreciation for faculty and staff. For advertisements of the handouts and brochures available see School Talk, January 1980; School Talk, September 1980; School Talk, November 1980.
As one reporter put it, it was part of a “growing, vocal movement of neighborhood groups, which had come together to form a citywide resource center.”

At their first board retreat in January 1981, APPLE Corps board members discussed how their organization had emerged from the neighborhood-based movements by middle-class parents. After a lengthy debate over what the goals should be going forth, they decided that APPLE Corps needed to expand its accessibility as a resource center to reach all the city’s parents, while also encouraging middle-class parents to move from “my kid, my school, my crisis” to “our kids, our schools, our concerns.”

Under the leadership of director Klenbort, with the support of board of director president and ACPE founder Goldie Johnson and her successor and NAPPS founder Clare Richardson, the monthly newsletter and efforts in Grant Park evolved into workshops, forums, and improved publications.

On the morning of September 26, 1981, forty-five parents from all over the city gathered in the APPLE Corps office, which had recently been expanded to two rooms in the Georgia Hill building that was located on the edge of the Grant Park neighborhood. APPLE Corps director Marcia Klenbort had spent several months preparing for the opening workshop of the year, “Parent & Community Involvement: Let me count the ways.” She asked Dr. Barbara Jones, past-president of Oglethorpe Elementary School’s PTA, current APPLE Corps vice-president, and an economics professor at Clark College, to be the keynote speaker. Jones spoke to the audience about how to strengthen their parent-teacher organizations. Workshop participants then broke off into smaller work sessions. For three dollars, participants received a fifty-page folder of materials and heard presentations by associate superintendent J.Y. Moreland on who to call in the school system when one had a problem, NW Area Council of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce member John Stewart on how to get help from local businesses, outreach minister at the First Presbyterian Church Reverend Bob Bevis on how area churches were supporting integration, BOND president and Atlanta University professor Frank Cummings on involving the civic association, Gladys

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Reid on requesting support from the Atlanta Council of PTAs, and NAPPS and CINS representatives on starting a neighborhood coalition of schools. At the end of the workshop, Marcia Klenbort spoke to participants about attending one of APPLE Corps upcoming workshops or new monthly lunch forums.\(^\text{316}\)

A little over two weeks later on October 16, 1981, over seventy Atlanta parents, educators, and community leaders walked through the doors of Ed S. Cook Elementary School on Memorial Drive. Most members of the audience had never visited the predominately black school, which served almost five hundred low-income students. APPLE Corps had decided to hold its first monthly luncheon at Cook Elementary and asked the school’s principal, Dr. Betty Strickland, to be the keynote speaker in order to highlight that an inner city school could promote excellence and community involvement in the one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods.\(^\text{317}\) Klenbort recalls the reception that followed the first forum, “We went to Betty Strickland’s school, where she had everybody for lunch in the cafeteria. She talked on how she made Cook Elementary School work. She said to me later, ‘I’ve been principal here for two years, and the superintendent has never come to my school until today.’”\(^\text{318}\) APPLE Corps had successfully brought the attention of the administration and the city to the ability of a struggling school to succeed. Over the next six months, APPLE Corps sponsored eight additional workshops and forums. With parent interest high, Klenbort decided to continue the program schedule the following year.\(^\text{319}\)


\(^\text{318}\) Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.

As Marcia Klenbort spent more of her time driving all over the city to attend meetings or organize workshops and forums, she began to discover shortcomings in the curriculum and discrepancies within the school system. Having grown up a half mile from the largest science museum in the country, the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, she had wonderful memories of frequent visits and believed that such field trips were an important part of a rich academic experience. She was disappointed that a big city like Atlanta did not have a science museum for her children to visit and frustrated by the cuts that increasingly eliminated electives and field trips from schools’ budgets. As she got to know the NAPPS and CINS representatives to the APPLE Corps, she discovered that the city’s middle-class parent and neighborhood groups frequently supplemented their schools’ curriculum opportunities. Then it occurred to her. Perhaps this was just the type of project that APPLE Corps should take on. They could produce a small publication that provided teachers and parents with all the possible science places they could visit in the city. Clare Richardson, who had just taken over the board presidency from Goldie Johnson, agreed that it was a great idea. They decided to publish a resource that promoted the idea of the community, parents and teachers as partners in science education. Klenbort remembers presenting the idea:

I thought, “Somebody ought to get together all the little science places we do have.” We’ll put together a book, and that will get the poor children who are not able to go to science museums into these good experiences. That wasn’t really on the APPLE Corp agenda, but I think that is an example of how we tried to be alert to the holes and help.

Klenbort began by asking her neighbor and past Ansley Park education committee member, Barbara Seymour, to do the research. Over the next few months Klenbort and Seymour drove all over metropolitan Atlanta. They visited over forty possible science outings, including museums, nature centers and science-related industries, that were all within a day’s drive of the city. They noted the address, hours of operation, and provided a brief description that could be used later to write-up the location.

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320 Middle-class families fleeing the city for the suburbs triggered a decline in enrollment and a corresponding increase in per pupil cost that the falling levels of tax revenue could not cover. For more on policymakers’ perspective on the “decline” of urban school systems in the eighties see James G. Cibulka, “Response to Enrollment Loss and Financial Decline in Urban School Systems,” *Peabody Journal of Education* Vol. 60, No. 2 (Winter 1983): 64-78; Charol Shakeshaft and David Gardner, “Declining to Close Schools: Alternatives for Coping with Enrollment Decline,” *Phi Delta Kappan* Vol. 64, No. 7 (March 1983): 492-496.

321 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
Around that same time, a local newspaper, the *Southside News*, folded.\(^{322}\) Klenbort had been writing a weekly schools column for the paper and asked the owners if one of their reporters, Wayne Martin, might be interested in assisting her write the first version of the "Family Guide to Great Science Outings in the Atlanta Area," which was set to come out in 1982. Martin was in Atlanta as part of his two-year term of service in the Mennonite Church. The Mennonite Central Committee agreed to let him come on as a volunteer for the next year. Martin compiled the notes taken by Klenbort and Seymour, while former Co-op parent Phillip Cox worked on the illustrations and foldout map.\(^{323}\)

As the final pages of the guidebook were being completed, the eighth scheduled workshop of the year was held at the Kennedy Neighborhood Center on March 20, 1982. Over forty participants, including superintendent Dr. Alonzo Crim and chair of the school board’s instruction committee, Ms. Marge Yancey, listened to APPLE Corps board member Frank Cummings present the data that APPLE Corps’ staff had been compiling: the level of science literacy among the city’s students was down, as was the number of “Superstar” students in science. With a need for more women and minorities in the fields of science and engineering, this was an area of instruction that the school system should emphasize. The three-hour Saturday workshop culminated with a six-member panel discussion of what could be done in Atlanta’s schools to improve “the teaching of science in elementary and secondary schools.”\(^{324}\) APPLE Corps’ focus on promoting science in the schools continued, and on April 27, 1982 eighty parents, educators, and community leaders gathered for breakfast at the Outdoor Activity Center in southwest Atlanta to celebrate the release of the resource center’s first major publication titled “Family Guide to Great Science Outings in the Atlanta Area.” Over 5,000 copies of the thirty-two page guidebook were printed and distributed to parents, teachers, and local bookstores, where they were sold for two dollars each (Figure 6).

\(^{322}\) Dr. Paul Bolster, who served in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1975 to 1986, owned the newspaper with his wife.

\(^{323}\) Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.

\(^{324}\) The panel members included the director of the new Benjamin E. Mays magnet program Helen Carrithers, APS science coordinator Lucy Smith, the president of the Roosevelt magnet program’s advisory committee Frank Howard, and three students who won science fair awards.
Klenbort recalls the popularity of their first publication, not among the Atlanta parents they had hoped to target, but with white, middle-class families, who lived in the suburbs north of the city:

“My idea was we would have a guide, a little booklet, and every kid in the city could be closer to a science experience. Did that happen? Of course not! Cobb County Boy Scout troops called up! One of the things we learned when we started putting out the “Family Guide to Great Science Outings in the Atlanta Area” was that the people who already had the know how to get around now could take advantage of one more resource.”

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326 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
While Marcia Klenbort thought her idea was a wonderful resource and it in fact generated enough enthusiasm for the printing of two additional editions,\(^{327}\) the project also convinced her that APPLE Corps needed to extend its reach beyond the middle-class parents who were already able to provide their children with educational enrichment by promoting community involvement citywide.

Klenbort proposed that APPLE Corps publish a booklet for parents that oriented them to the school system. The Junior League of Atlanta and the Metropolitan Atlanta Community Foundation agreed to provide funds to cover the cost of the study, research and writing.\(^{328}\) Klenbort interviewed parent leaders and school officials and set up checklists to quickly show what services and programs schools offered to families. She recalls how the idea for the booklet developed:

There was not any Internet like there is now, where schools have their own websites that are very informative and you can get a sense for how it is at that school: its physical location, what kind of afterschool clubs, what kind of music, what kind of special stuff is offered. So my idea was that a publication could equalize at least the information that is getting out there. As we began working, it turned out you can’t get everything on a printed page. We had these endless checklists; a school has this, but doesn’t have this. We had the voluntary transfer plan and the magnet programs, which [beginning in 1981] offered award-winning curriculum opportunities in the performing arts, international studies, communications, and the sciences. The hope was the magnets would promote integration by encouraging white students to attend one of the public high schools rather than transfer out and black students to agree to be bused to the city’s white northside neighborhood schools. But there wasn’t any way for parents to find out what are all the schools offered. We helped give them a choice on where their children should go. That was the reason, what was guiding me.\(^{329}\)

Martin, who was finishing out his placement with the Mennonite Central Committee, wrote four articles that were inserted between the informational sections: research findings on effective schools, tips for newcomers on how to choose a school, who to call if you have a problem, and how to increase commu-

\(^{327}\) APPLE Corps published a supplement titled “Getting A Start In Science: An annotated list of resources suggesting Science Activities for Children from Pre-School to Upper Elementary Grades” in 1984. At the request of the State Department of Education, the original guidebook was revised for a 1989 printing as the “Great Science Outings in Georgia.”

\(^{328}\) The Metropolitan Foundation of Atlanta was created in 1951 by Atlanta’s four largest banks-Citizens & Southern National (C&S), First National, Fulton National and Trust Company of Georgia-to provide grants to local nonprofits. It was renamed the Metropolitan Atlanta Community Foundation in 1977, and The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta in 1997. The philanthropic organization gives away between $60 and $75 million annually.

\(^{329}\) Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
nity and parent involvement. By the end of the year, the “Citizen’s Guide to Atlanta’s Public Schools” was ready to go to the printers for its initial run. Neal Shorthouse, the executive director at Exodus, Inc. and a former Atlanta Cooperative Preschool parent, made a unique offer. Marcia Klenbort had been searching for funding to pay for the printing costs, and he offered to print the seventy-two paged guidebook at the Exodus office.

On October 6, 1983 school officials, community leaders, parents and APPLE Corps representatives gathered in the Georgia Pacific building auditorium. Associate superintendent J.Y. Moreland stood before the crowd and congratulated APPLE Corps president Nancy Cunningham. Mayor Andrew Young followed. Greeted by boisterous applause, he cut open the first box.

We had a “Coming Out Party” in the Georgia Pacific building’s auditorium, and Mayor Andy Young was there to bring the first copy out of the boxes. The school district distributed it to every kindergarten, first, and second grade parent. We also had copies in other places, libraries and stuff. Everybody who was moving into the school system got a copy of the “Citizen’s Guide to Atlanta Public Schools.”

APPLE Corps’ second major publication, which had been the project of two boards, made its way to the homes of Atlanta parents. On the city’s far northside, NAPPS members welcomed the new publication. They were developing a new public relations campaign, which hoped to reach families that were moving to the city in the eighties, and used the “Citizens’ Guide to Atlanta Public Schools” as a resource for presenting the facts to prospective parents, realtors, and the business community.

By tracing the evolution of the Junior League of Atlanta’s task force on education from a steering committee that brought together the white and black middle-class, neighborhood-based movements of the seventies to a citywide resource center meant to support those groups, this chapter argues that the exper-

330 “Recommendations from the Executive Committee for 1981-82 Year,” APPLE Corps, Box 3; Marcia Klenbort, director, Letter to APPLE Corps board, May 11, 1982, APPLE Corps, Box 3.
331 Exodus, Inc. was an umbrella organization founded in 1972 by David Lewis and Neil Shorthouse that was committed to serving the city’s at-risk youth. One of the organization’s most successful pilot programs established the city’s alternative schools for high school dropouts. Kristine Anderson, “Profile on Peachtree; ‘Most people in the United States have so much. We must constantly find ways for people to give and reach outside of themselves to get involved. The ultimate degradation of being poor is being stripped of the ability to give,’ Neil Shorthouse,” Atlanta Weekly, October 9, 1988, Page 3-6.
333 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
ence founding APPLE Corps educated white, middle-class mothers on the history of segregation in Atlanta and its continued legacy of fear and distrust among white and black parents. Having personally grappled with their own sense of racism and come to view their organization in relationship to the larger city, the leaders of NAPPS brought back to their movement League and Chamber-inspired strategies, which viewed improving the publicity surrounding public education as an economic development issue.

4  NAPPS: Stabilizing the Buckhead Community during a Period of Rapid Growth

On the evening of March 10, 1983, cars began to line the streets of Buckhead’s Garden Hills neighborhood. White, middle-class couples making their way to North Fulton High School for the annual NAPPS-sponsored open house turned off of Peachtree Road and wound their way through the neighborhood. They passed the Tudor and craftsman-style bungalows nestled among the early twentieth-century Georgian and Spanish Revival homes. After parking in front of the Philip Shutze-designed North Fulton High School, which was tucked back in the middle-class neighborhood, they made their way to the main arched entranceway.

For the past month, the NAPPS board had concentrated on publicizing the open house. “Public Schools-A Good Choice” yard signs were out in force across Buckhead. Three days of parent-manned booths and student performances on the stage at Lenox Square had preceded the event. Behind the scenes, the efforts remained very hands-on and grassroots. A few weeks earlier, NAPPS president Pat McGuone had invited members to her home to stuff over 3,000 envelopes addressed to area realtors, businessmen, and prospective parents inviting them to the annual open houses.334 McGuone recalls:

We had a meeting at my house on Dale Drive because I had a big basement. People came over, and we stuffed leaflets to distribute for the open house mailing. I remember it was people from all the different schools who came over. It was just a great coming together of very bright, very dedicated women, who wanted to promote the public schools in a very favorable way.335

334 “NAPPS minutes,” February 28, 1983, Betsey Beach Papers (privately held).
335 Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
At 7:30 pm Atlanta Board of Education president and local attorney Richard Raymer, who lived on Rivermeade Drive in the Paces neighborhood, welcomed the more than 500 parents who had gathered in the school’s auditorium. He then introduced the keynote speaker, Michael Servais. As the ambassador at the Belgian Consulate in Atlanta, he was a member of the Buckhead community’s social scene yet also had two children enrolled in the public schools. Servais spoke to the large crowd of the quality of education his children were receiving in the northside public schools. After a brief opening address by Superintendent Dr. Alonzo Crim, parents were then invited to attend two sessions on individual schools. Modeled after the format used at the first open houses held at Northside High School in 1976 and 1977, president-elect Carroll Lindseth and activities chair Sally Long, who had served as Morris Brandon PTO president during the 1981-1982 school year, stationed parents, faculty, and principals from each of the nine NAPPS schools, the newly-established International Studies magnet at North Fulton, and the Northside School of Performing Arts in classrooms. There, representatives answered parents’ questions and encouraged them to consider public education.336

A month after the open house NAPPS founder Betsey Stone traveled to Salisbury, North Carolina. The PTAs at Overton and Isenberg Elementary School had invited her to speak with parents and share how NAPPS had successfully halted the largest exodus of white families from any city in the nation.337 She described to the more than 100 mothers in the audience the impact that the open house and Lenox Week had on the Buckhead community.338 Back in Atlanta co-founder Clare Richardson, who was finishing her last term as president of APPLE Corps, was in awe of the effect that the NAPPS-led cam-

336 Judi Rabel and Sally Long, Activities Chairmen, letter to NAPPS Principals, CC: Mr. Billy Densmore, Director of the Northside High School of the Performing Arts, Mrs. Ann Goellner, Director of the North Fulton Center for International Studies, Dr. Elizabeth Feely, Area III Superintendent, Mrs. Pat McGuone, NAPPS President, January 13, 1983, Anne Harper Papers (privately held); Invitation for March 10, 1983 Open House at North Atlanta High School, Anne Harper Papers (privately held); Program bulletin, “Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools presents Education for the Eighties,” Betsey Beach Papers (privately held).
338 Sharon J. Salyer, “Group trying to show off city schools of the ‘80s,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Intown Extra), March 17, 1983; “Photograph: Northside Parents group president Pat McGuone and Carroll Lindseth help set up part of display boosting the Atlanta Public Schools at Lenox Square last week. The map at top left shows the location of the nine schools the parents group works with,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Intown Extra), March 17, 1983; “PTAs hear speaker; Atlanta mother: Schools don’t have to fall victim to white flight,” Salisbury Post, April 15, 1983; “Parents are key to school success,” Salisbury Post, April 19, 1983, page 10.
campaign was having on her neighborhood. “By the 1980s, some of the white flight had dropped off. I don’t know if we totally stopped it, but we certainly slowed it down. There were many more white families in the neighborhood, at least staying through elementary school.”339 Because of the efforts by women like Stone and Richardson, the northside schools had achieved a 50-50 racial balance and made integration, which no one had dreamed possible, a reality on Atlanta’s northside.

NAPPS began to shift its focus to reaching out to a second generation of white, middle-class parents who were moving to Atlanta in the eighties. The newcomers were making their housing decisions based on the advice of friends in their preschool carpool group, co-workers at their husband’s office, and fellow members of their church’s congregation. Frequently those same friends and co-workers, the parents who had refused to allow their children to become caught up in the wave of white flight sweeping the city, invited them to a kindergarten coffee or shared with them a NAPPS brochure. Couples, who were relocating to the South, or native Atlantans, who were returning after graduating from college, became part of the rapid growth that was transforming Buckhead from a bedroom community to a suburban business center. Over the next decade, these new families and their commitment to public education worked to stabilize the northside community after a decade of traumatic white flight.340

This chapter examines the values and principles that brought a new generation of white, middle-class couples, who were moving to Atlanta in the eighties, to the public schools and ultimately to the leadership of Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools. I then trace the development of the NAPPS-sponsored public relations campaign, which targeted corporations relocating to the city and the business community, whose wives were members of the Junior League of Atlanta. I argue that by tying their efforts to the future economic growth of the city, this second generation of NAPPS mothers developed the community-based strategies that successfully integrated Sutton Middle School, while also recognizing the limits of their campaign’s impact on changing the mindset of white, northside parents.

339 Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
4.1 A New Generation

Carroll and Alfred Lindseth had moved to Atlanta from Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1973 after he accepted a job at the law firm of Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan. The couple first rented an apartment in Colonial Homes, a garden townhouse community built in south Buckhead off of Peachtree Road in the 1940s, before buying their first home in the Lenox Square area. Proximity to her husband’s office on Peachtree Street was the deciding factor in their house hunt. Carroll Lindseth explains how they reached their decision, “We decided to move to Atlanta and live close-in. Lenox Square was not very far away…[and] my husband’s law firm built a branch office on Peachtree when all that growth was going on down Peachtree.”

The families that she met at her husband’s law firm, in the neighborhood, and at the Brookwood Hills Community Club, where she played tennis and her children were on the swim team, all relied on private schools. They quickly recognized that if they were going to expose their children to “different races or people from different ethnic or financial backgrounds” then they needed to support the public schools.

Despite pressure within their growing social circle, they enrolled their son at Sarah Smith Elementary School. Every morning before leaving for Piedmont Hospital, where she worked as a registered nurse, Lindseth walked her son to the bus stop. He rode the school bus north along Wieuca Road across Peachtree Road to the school, which had been constructed in 1952 to meet the needs of the newly developed North Buckhead suburb. After having her second child Sarah, Lindseth decided to stay at home with the children and began volunteering at the school.

In 1980, the Lindseths moved to a larger home on Alton Road off of Peachtree Battle Avenue. Few families in the affluent neighborhood attended the nearby E. Rivers Elementary School, which was located at the intersection of Peachtree Battle Avenue and Peachtree Road. For many of their new neigh-

341 Interview with Carroll Lindseth, June 9, 2011.
342 Ibid.
344 In 1974, the historic Haynes Manor neighborhood had joined with Peachtree Heights Park and Westover to form a civic association, the Peachtree Battle Alliance, to protect the neighborhoods from development and preserve their suburban character. Harvey Newman, “Historic Preservation Policy and Regime Politics in Atlanta,” Journal of Urban Affairs 23.1 (2001): 71-86; Stone, Regime Politics, 126-133.
bors, it was family tradition to attend the prestigious Westminster Schools or one of the city’s other private schools. Lindseth recalls:

There was a lot of growth in Buckhead [in the eighties], but you still had the same support for the same schools. You still didn’t have a lot of neighborhood support for E. Rivers…because of the socio-economic group on Peachtree Battle. People put their kids in private school because that was the thing to do.\textsuperscript{345}

She began talking to parents, who had moved into the neighborhood around the same time as she and her husband or that she knew from their daughter’s preschool and dance classes. She explained that they were going to send their daughter to E. Rivers, and the other couples should also give it a try. A small, core group of girls around Sarah’s age started kindergarten together the same year that their son Alfred started sixth grade at Sutton Middle School. It was this decision to support the northside public schools and encourage her neighbors to do so that propelled Carroll Lindseth into NAPPS.

When native New Yorkers Pat and Jim McGuone moved to Atlanta in the late seventies, they came via way of Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia, where he had been stationed after finishing law school and she taught kindergarten. After her husband received a job offer from the Atlanta-based law firm of Gambrell and Stolz, they decided to stay in Georgia. The couple began their house hunt in January 1976. They found a home on Dale Drive in the Peachtree Park neighborhood that was near Jim’s new office. Pat McGuone recalls why the home appealed to them:

We wanted to live intown because of transportation to Jim’s job and to be on the bus line. Convenience to the downtown was a factor back then…schools were also a factor because my daughter was in first grade. And price. It all came down to price, and it was really the kind of community we wanted to be a part of. We didn’t like the suburbs…and to me, coming from Long Island, Buckhead was very relaxed. It was like a small community, where you could trust everybody and everybody was friendly. We felt very comfortable.\textsuperscript{346}

As native New Yorkers, the McGuones were not aware that northside families did not consider public education and sent their three children in their neighborhood elementary school.

It was just after the massive white flight…that crisis was right before we got here, and so it had stabilized. People had already decided [that they were] not going to public school. There were diehards, who went to public school. Really, coming from New York, I think

\textsuperscript{345} Interview with Carroll Lindseth, June 9, 2011.

\textsuperscript{346} Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
that’s our perspective of course. We grew up in New York, and schools were integrated. I taught in a school in Brooklyn that was mostly black and Puerto Rican. Our schools were excellent public schools…my husband went to public school. I went to public school. We did go to Catholic grammar schools, but we were products of public schools. And so we believed in public schools. When we came here, we actually had no idea being from outside of Atlanta what this whole phenomenon was until we moved in, got into our neighborhood, started meeting more people through the law firm, through tennis, and social activities about this public versus private thing people had such an issue with. So to begin with, we never considered private schools. We just considered public.347

The decision to put their children in their neighborhood school would make the McGuones, like the Lindseths, unique among their friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

In contrast, Pamela Brown had grown up in Atlanta. She and her husband purchased their first home in the Lenox Square-Phipps Plaza area. Brown discovered that of the young families with children in their neighborhood, few considered public school to be an option. When their children reaching school age, they planned to sell or enroll their children in one of the northside private schools.

We lived in the Lenox Square-Phipps Plaza area, and in our neighborhood there were a lot of people who had been living there for twenty to twenty-five years, whose children were no longer in school, and then there were very young families. And with the very young families, like us, you saw probably fifty percent of them never considered the public school, given the desegregation mandate that had taken place. It wasn’t even something they looked at. Another fifty percent that were either willing to give it a try or were definitely going to move when their children became school age. They were going to go to their second home.348

As Northside High School graduates, the Browns were very committed to the public schools. Having not been withdrawn from public schools by her parents and with a younger brother still at Northside, Pam Brown just “didn’t have the level of hysteria” prevalent among the Buckhead segment of her generation. Her husband had a different experience. Having gone to Morris Brandon Elementary School, his family, which “was more conservative, a little more concerned” about desegregation, had pulled both their children out of school. Despite being Jewish, they had enrolled both their sons at the Marist School, a private Roman Catholic preparatory school located north of the city in Brookhaven. While his brother graduated from Marist, Robbie Brown had a difficult time and ended up back in public school.349 By the time their

347 Ibid.
348 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
349 Ibid.
oldest daughter was approaching first grade, both Pam and Robbie Brown were sold on their public
school because of its proximity to their home. It was their neighborhood school. As a young, twenty-six-
year-old mother, Pam Brown visited Sarah Smith Elementary School. Brown recalls attending open
houses and coffees for new mothers:

I remember going up to the school several times for open houses, observing at the school,
and going to coffees. But we were pretty committed. We were very comfortable with the
whole idea that the school was close by, and we didn’t really have a lot of anxiety about
sending her there in first grade. We just figured if it didn’t work, we’d take her out. So
our main interest was in meeting other parents whose children would be there…but again
our biggest issue was that our child be happy, and why not use your neighborhood
school? It was wonderful, it was right there, and we knew the children. I had a friend
whose daughter was there and thriving. I didn’t have that level of anxiety.\(^{350}\)

Both Pat McGuone and Pam Brown as young, stay-at-home, middle-class mothers sent their oldest chil-
dren to the neighborhood elementary school because they had attended public schools. Carroll Lindseth
and her husband, Alfred, through representing a more affluent segment of the Buckhead community by
the early eighties, were ardent public school supporters. Anne Harper’s experience moving to Atlanta,
buying a home, and choosing a school provides a different perspective on the mindset of the Buckhead
community.

In 1983, Anne Harper and her husband Greg Nobles decided to move to Atlanta from Blacksburg,
Virginia with their two daughters. Greg Nobles had just been offered a job in the History Department at
the Georgia Institute of Technology. They made their first house-hunting trip in April. Friends of
Harper’s from Virginia Tech’s Political Science Department and the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church,
Bob and Phyllis Albritton, had put them in touch with friends who attended Central Presbyterian Church
in Atlanta. The Atlanta couple mailed a NAPPS brochure and encouraged them to live intown and con-
sider public schools (Figure 7 and Figure 8). Though their real estate agent “seemed a bit clueless” when
showed the brochure, she used the map to show them houses on the northside that Saturday.\(^{351}\) The next
day, they attended Central Presbyterian Church, where they met the couple that had mailed them the
NAPPS flyer. He was a minister in the Presbytery, and both had been active in the civil rights movement.

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\(^{350}\) Ibid.

\(^{351}\) Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
So while the real estate community and most of the Georgia Tech faculty advised them to live out in the suburbs, the couple admonished the suggestion of private schools or the purchase of a home in north Fulton. Harper recalls the impact the couple had on their housing decision:

We went to worship at Central Presbyterian Church, where we ultimately ended up joining. This couple, but especially the wife, was just adamant that if you are committed to public education, progressive on the issues of race, then you absolutely have to buy a home in one of these six schools that are feeding into Sutton Middle School. She just made it clear that if you’re a Presbyterian, liberal, right thinking, God-fearing person then this is of course what you should do. But there were people who were clearly saying other things to us. Not just real estate agents, but also people at Georgia Tech, “You won’t be able to afford private school on a Georgia Tech salary so of course you are going to live in the suburbs. This is one of the least attractive things about Georgia Tech; none of us can live around Tech because there are no decent schools. You have to live out in the suburbs.” It was clear, it wasn’t really about money; it was about the schools for them. “Of course you both clearly highly value education, and you couldn’t possibly put your children in these Atlanta public schools given what’s happened to the school system already.” Remember this is ten years out from desegregation. This is 1983 and white flight had already happened. Essentially, in those ten years people were just appalled, and they continued to be appalled.
Figure 8: “NAPPS presents Education For The Eighties” Brochure, back

For Anne Harper, who had grown up in the suburbs of Chicago and was finishing her doctorate in political science, the house-hunting experience exposed her for the first time to the mindset of white, middle-class southerners. Unlike most southerners, they were going to make their housing decision based on their commitment to public education, and from the onset, “NAPPS was presented by these Presbyterian friends as an organization that [they] should pay attention to.”

After moving in, the couples realized that most of their neighbors were retired, young professionals without children, or families who planned to sell once their children reached kindergarten. Yet they came to love their “small homes” that others viewed as starters and the sense of community created by their “mixed neighborhood.” The arrival of this second generation of young Buckhead parents was part of the massive growth that was transforming the northside neighborhoods. “There was mass migration...”

353 A 1970 graduate of Smith College, Anne Harper completed her dissertation and earned her doctorate in political science from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor after moving to Atlanta.
354 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
355 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
coming into Atlanta in the eighties, and we were a part of that growth. If you look at population growth and what was happening in the metro Atlanta area...we were part of that.\textsuperscript{356} The changing skyline of Buckhead was mirrored across metropolitan Atlanta as “second downtowns” emerged around the Cumberland Mall-Galleria area, Perimeter Center, Midtown, and the Buckhead-Lenox Mall area.\textsuperscript{357}

When Pam Brown left her home near the Lenox Square and Phipps malls to go shopping or buy groceries, she was shocked by the construction she passed. Everywhere she looked cranes were raising concrete, glass and steel beams high above the street. The completed Monarch and Atlanta plazas and scaffolding for the proposed One Buckhead, Resurgens, and Capital City plazas soared over the stretch of Peachtree Road that had been the shopping center of the region for two decades.\textsuperscript{358} The Lenox Mall-Phipps area had attracted the interest of developers, and new office buildings, luxury hotels, condominiums, and apartment complexes were redeveloping the Peachtree Road corridor.\textsuperscript{359} From 1983 to 1987 fifteen new office developments were constructed, seven of which were high-rises that added 3.4 million square feet of leasable office space to the expanding Buckhead skyline.\textsuperscript{360} Between the new office towers and plazas, Brown could see the plush hotels and trendy restaurants that were sprouting up.\textsuperscript{361} Just south of her home on Lenox Road, where the Lindseths had purchased their first house in the seventies and

\textsuperscript{356} Interview with Anne Harper, August 14, 2009.


\textsuperscript{359} In 1986, Lenox Mall underwent its second major renovation, which added a three-storey food court on the back of the mall and connected the mall to the new Lenox transit station.

\textsuperscript{360} Porter, “From Bedroom Community to Suburban Business Center,” 155.

\textsuperscript{361} The Ritz-Carlton-Buckhead opened in 1985, while construction began on three additional hotels in 1987. Porter, “From Bedroom Community to Suburban Business Center,” 127-129.
gle-family estates on vast lots had stood, new condominiums and apartment complexes catering to single, professional buyers now loomed. This redevelopment was supported by the construction of three rapid rail stations in Buckhead, which opened in 1984, and developers who were betting on the Georgia-400 extension being built. Entire neighborhood streets were appropriated and razed as elderly homeowners decided to assemble and sell their properties to developers in a phenomenon known as the “neighborhood buy-out.” The single professionals who moved into the new luxury homes frequented the more than 100 restaurants, clubs, and theaters that were popping up on the northside around the newly renamed Buckhead Village. They referred to Buckhead as “cosmopolitan” and Atlanta’s 24-hour urban center, while older residents referred to the changes as “ultra-urbanization.” There was no other way to describe what Pam Brown was seeing; a “second downtown” soared upward at the intersection of Peachtree and Piedmont Roads. Buckhead’s rising skyline brought with it a new corporate class. When they relocated to the city, the newly arrived businessmen and their wives started their house hunt on the city’s

362 Formally called the North Atlanta Parkway, the Georgia 400 is a 6.4-mile toll road connecting I-285 and I-85. The original proposal also called for an extension to continue south from I-85 and connect with the failed I-485.


During the eighties, over 4,000 new residents purchased homes in Buckhead even as the city continued to lose people (Table 5 and Figure 9).  

Table 5: Buckhead Census data by Neighborhood, 1970-2010  

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<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Wildwood/Springdale</td>
<td>3,783</td>
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<td>3,472</td>
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<td>91</td>
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<td>4,603</td>
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<td>Peachtree Battle Alliance/Wyngate/Arden-Habersham/Argonne Forest/Peachtree Heights West/South Tuxedo Park</td>
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<td>6,124</td>
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<td>7,884</td>
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<td>7,325</td>
<td>7,255</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>56,531</td>
<td>51,522</td>
<td>55,534</td>
<td>66,772</td>
<td>77,787</td>
</tr>
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Figure 9: Total Buckhead Population, 1970-2010

northside. During the eighties, over 4,000 new residents purchased homes in Buckhead even as the city continued to lose people (Table 5 and Figure 9).  

366 “Atlanta In Focus: A Profile from Census 2000” (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2000): 12. The data provided in Table 5 is based on boundaries established the Atlanta Regional Commission in 1991. It includes U.S. Census tracts 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, and 100. These
4.2 Targeting Corporations

NAPPS leaders focused their campaign on this growth and saw the public schools as a part of the mechanism for attracting new corporations to the city.\textsuperscript{367} In 1982, when what would become the Georgia-Pacific Company was determining whether or not to relocate its headquarters from Portland, Oregon to Atlanta, it was NAPPS mothers who the Chamber of Commerce flew across the country. The city’s civic leaders hoped that the white, middle-class women could sell the corporate executives and their wives on the quality of the public schools and the Buckhead neighborhoods. NAPPS founder and past-president Clare Richardson recalls the trip to Oregon:

When Alonzo Crim was school superintendent, he and I went to Portland, Oregon to talk to the Georgia-Pacific Company employees because Georgia-Pacific was moving its headquarters to Atlanta, Georgia. They had been bombarded with queries about the schools from their employees because they were hearing all of the stereotypes, mostly from realtors…they wanted to see well-educated people from the white community…and so it was going out and telling personal stories. Basically explaining that we were in the system and that our children were in the system. Our children were being educated. We did live in nice neighborhoods. We did have to point out that the schools were much more diverse than they would have been in Portland, Oregon. But they would find that in the South.\textsuperscript{368}

Even in Seattle, the wives of Georgia Pacific executives were fearful of the busing situation in Atlanta. Richardson took special care over the image that NAPPS was selling to them. Their schools were diverse, and that was good. Buckhead was a lovely place to raise their children with many cultural opportunities.

Two years later, the mayor’s wife Jean Young, joined Clare Richardson at the Chamber of Commerce for a meeting with SunTrust Banks chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) Bob Strickland.

\textsuperscript{367} The connection between NAPPS members and the business community is further highlighted by Leadership Atlanta’s efforts to include representatives from NAPPS in its membership. “They wanted NAPPS people in Leadership Atlanta because it was the brainchild of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce is about recruiting people to come to Atlanta and settle in Atlanta. [They needed us to say] look our public schools are good.” Interview with Brenda Griffin, September 27, 2011. Betsey Stone was invited to join Leadership Atlanta in 1977, three years after her husband. Gloria Carlton followed her in 1978, and Brenda Griffin, whose husband Harry “Buck” Griffin had gone through the program four years earlier, in 1979. Marilyn Holmes and Clare Richardson were accepted in 1981.

\textsuperscript{368} Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
NAPPS had become aware that the company’s newcomer package was steering families away from the public schools and the northside neighborhoods. Richardson remembers the meeting:

By then it was a pretty biracial group...we tried to be biracial [in order] to make a clear statement...Jean Young was very active, Andy Young’s first wife. She and I met with Chamber members, bankers, and one notable meeting with Bob Strickland at SunTrust because they had a newcomer package. He was very supportive of what we were trying to do with the neighborhood schools because he lived in Brookwood Hills. We pointed out that his own bank’s package was steering people away, and he was so angry.\(^{369}\)

Clare Richardson’s vision, that their movement to halt white flight could be perceived as an economic development issue, became the basis of the organization’s evolving campaign.

By the mid-eighties, the second generation of NAPPS mothers, who had moved to Atlanta as part of this growth, began taking on a greater leadership role in the organization. The experiences of Pat McGuone and Pam Brown are representative of typical Buckhead wives and explain how as white, stay-at-home mothers, they effectively developed a public relations campaign targeting corporations and the business community. Both women had purchased homes with their husbands on the northside and first became active in the their neighborhood elementary schools as their oldest children approached kindergarten. They started by painting the hallways and classrooms to make their schools brighter and more cheerful. Gradually, they chaired committees for their PTAs that focused on fundraising to buy amenities such as new playground equipment. Through these leadership positions within the parent organization, the women became aware of NAPPS. McGuone recalls her experience:

I got involved in NAPPS slowly because I am a person who has a lot of leadership capabilities. I don’t know how to say it any other way! It comes with family history. My mother was very active in the PTA. My father was a union leader. So they were people who rallied for the people. When Jennifer got into public school, I having been a teacher knew that teachers needed help, and I started getting involved...I was very active with the PTA starting at the bottom and going all the way up. Of course one thing leads to another, and I became president of the PTA of Garden Hills. That’s how I got into NAPPS. You just heard there’s this organization...my daughter, Jennifer, was in third, forth, and fifth grade at Garden Hills and then went to Sutton. All along you’re in your neighborhood, and through all the different activities, basketball at Peachtree Road, soccer, whatever, you get this pressure to explain why you aren’t going to private school. So you’d always be singing the song. Look we go to public school. It’s a great experience. We have some good teachers and some bad teachers but every school does. And then I re-

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\(^{369}\) Ibid. See also Jean Childs Young Papers, Box 41.4, Archives Division, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System.
member going to my first NAPPS meeting. It was very exciting to know that just outside your little community, you’re meeting all these other people from the neighborhoods who are singing the same tune you are. It’s very reassuring that you made the right decision; you’re sticking up for your guns and your beliefs. And they’re very bright people, very capable of getting the message out. So I found it extremely stimulating. I became a representative for Garden Hills and then NAPPS president.370

Brown was similarly working her way up through the Sarah Smith Elementary School PTA when a friend from carpool introduced her to the organization and encouraged her to attend a NAPPS meeting. Brown similarly felt a new sense of support as she listened to mothers from the other northside schools praise public education.371

Unlike McGuone and Brown, Carroll Lindseth and Anne Harper did not work their way up to NAPPS from the PTA. Neither woman was ever president or chair of any committee at the Sarah Smith, E. Rivers, or Morris Brandon parent-teacher associations. After the Lindseths moved to their second home and their children started school at Sutton Middle and E. Rivers Elementary, Lindseth realized how little community support there was for the public schools because of the realtors. After her daughter’s kindergarten class performed at the NAPPS-organized Lenox Square Week for Public Schools, she became more aware of the organization. Lindseth remembers how these two experiences prompted her to become more involved in NAPPS:

I was involved as a volunteer at Sarah Smith, and then when [my son] went on to Sutton I became more involved. There’s six years of school between them. So when she was in kindergarten at E. Rivers, and he was in the sixth grade at Sutton...one of the reasons I got involved in NAPPS was because of the real estate people. Anyone who moved to Atlanta, they were sending them outside the city because of the school system. To Fulton County. To Cobb County. They weren’t actually touting the schools in the city on the northside...I also became more involved because we started having the Lenox Square Week for Public Schools, and the kids would perform. Sarah’s kindergarten class did a cute little musical that they put on at Lenox Square on the stage right outside of Macy’s, which was then Rich’s. There was a stage in the center, and during that week different schools would come and perform. It was a good way to show the parents what the kids were doing. Then I started getting more involved in NAPPS.372

She began working with the Sutton PTA president, Marilyn Holmes, who had attended the first meeting in 1975 as the Room Mother coordinator for Warren T. Jackson Elementary School and had a son two

370 Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
371 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
372 Interview with Carroll Lindseth, June 9, 2011.
years ahead of her son.\textsuperscript{373} Despite coming from opposite sides of white and black Atlanta, Lindseth and Holmes soon began to work together to get NAPPS brochures to prospective parents.

After moving to Buckhead in 1983, Anne Harper joined the PTA. However, she quickly realized that she wanted to do more than volunteer in the classroom. She wanted to influence policy. Within less than a year of moving to Atlanta, she agreed to be the Morris Brandon representative to the NAPPS board. Harper recalls:

> When I started going to PTA meetings, it became very clear to me that most people on the PTA were doing things that were very important to the local school but they weren’t so much my style. I was working on a dissertation in political science so I was oriented toward politics and public policy. Very quickly at the Morris Brandon PTA it became clear that people didn’t like having to go downtown to school board meetings, but there was a feeling that somebody should go downtown and monitor school board meetings. And that person was also quite often the NAPPS representative, or the person that met with the other schools and tried to make common cause over what to do about the budget. So my recollection is that very first year I volunteered to be the NAPPS representative. Atlanta in this era was quite shocking for me having grown up in the suburbs of Chicago with a lily white but very strong public school system. It was shocking to me that there were people in this PTA in Buckhead, all women, almost none of them in the workforce in 1983, who were afraid to drive downtown and were certainly afraid to go on the freeway because if something happened to your car you would be very vulnerable…in terms of race relations and crime, there were some pretty serious issues. There was a lot of fear here still. But I was not afraid. So that’s how I got involved. I was never PTA president; I didn’t leapfrog from the PTA into NAPPS. I really, right away, became active in NAPPS…I think my involvement was not at all typical for the other people in NAPPS. Most of the women who came to those meetings were former PTA presidents.\textsuperscript{374}

These women came to NAPPS with different backgrounds and first chose public schools for a variety of reasons. Some came from households where their own parents had been leaders in the parent-teacher organizations. For others, their activism was rooted in their faith community, their neighborhood, or political orientation. Most would continue to be politically active for their rest of their lives.\textsuperscript{375} The leadership

\textsuperscript{373} “NAPPS minutes,” January 19, 1981, Betsey Beach Papers (privately held).

\textsuperscript{374} Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.

\textsuperscript{375} After serving as a part-time researcher for the Institute for Responsive Education in the eighties, founder and early leader Clare Richardson returned to social services as the associate executive director for the YWCA of Greater Atlanta. In the late eighties, she shifted her activism to environmental issues and was heavily involved in the revitalization of Zoo Atlanta. In 1986, she became the president and chief executive officer of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International. After serving as NAPPS president, Carroll Lindseth was the campaign manager for Gail Lindsey, who ran against Ina Evans for the at-large seat on the school board in 1985. Though unsuccessful, their hope was to change the make-up of the contentious school board and remove some of the school board members who were seen as not really concerned about the schools as much as being in politics. Their campaign efforts foreshadowed the success of the neighborhood schools groups to reshape the school board in the 1989 and 1993 elections.
skills they employed across a broad range of issues after their children had left the public schools were first learned as neighborhood-oriented, parent activists. They adopted Richardson’s strategies and steadily remade NAPPS into a public relations firm focused on stabilizing the Buckhead community.\(^{376}\)

4.3 A Public Relations Firm

In 1983, the summer following the open house at North Fulton High School, Carroll Lindseth took up the reigns of the presidency from Pat McGuone. She started by meeting the new PTA presidents for coffee. The following Monday evening, on September 19, a group of dedicated northside parents gathered at Morris Brandon Elementary School for the first meeting of the 1983-1984 school year. The representatives from the nine-northside schools planned to continue to coordinate the successful public school week at Lenox Square Mall. They discussed how NAPPS could promote the activities the schools had planned for the year and decided to begin each meeting with school reports by the representatives. The goal was to share information, to hear what worked and what didn’t work, and to brag about their individual schools’ successes, awards, and achievements so that NAPPS could better publicize public education within the Buckhead community.

It was in the fall of 1983 that Anne Harper attended her first NAPPS meeting as her husband, Greg Nobles, began his first semester teaching at Georgia Tech. She remembers sitting and listening to those reports:

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Carroll Lindseth also did campaign work in her neighborhood for state representatives Kathy Ashe and Jim Martin, though most of her volunteer work revolved around the League of Women Voters. She ultimately became education chair for the state League and lobbied the legislature of behalf of education. Pam Brown turned her attention to the issues of child abuse and sexual assault, serving as the director of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia and later, the senior fellow and project director for the Primary Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence project at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Anne Harper, after serving for two terms on the Atlanta School Board, became politically active in several liberal causes, including the Feminist Women’s Health Center, NOW Legal Defense & Education Fund, Girls on the Run of Atlanta, and the Coalition for Gender Equity in Sports. All the women were active on the AP-PLE Corps board after serving as presidents of NAPPS. “Strategies for increasing citizen participation in education decision-making” (Atlanta, GA: Institute for Responsive Education, March 17, 1979).

\(^{376}\) NAPPS’ stated objectives were “to continue to obtain and disseminate accurate information about public schools; to persevere in the stabilization of our school communities; to educate the community about the values of public education; to continue to attract groups and individuals to supportive positions with regard to public education; and to persevere in the development of a sense of community among supporters of public education by maintaining open lines of communication and by sharing ideas and concerns as everyone works together in pursuit of common interests.” Florence Sumner, NAPPS President, “Press Release: Public School Week at Lenox Square,” March 27, 1982, Anne Harper Papers (privately held).
There was a lot of discussion about how to get the word out to other families that these schools were safe, good schools and they should put their children in these schools...so we would come to meetings, and the first thing that would happen would there would be a school report from every school. It was brag time. Let me tell you what is going on at Margaret Mitchell. Let me tell you what is going on at Sarah Smith. And each representative would give the highlights.  

So each month, the NAPPS board came together and discussed ideas to attract neighborhood people into the schools. That fall alone, the nine schools had an array of social events planned to recruit prospective families and increase current parental involvement. They also bragged about their strong PTAs and the impact of fundraising on the school’s facilities and curriculum. They added art teachers, PE teachers, and expanded computer programs to the elementary schools. Largely women-run, the elementary schools’ parent-teacher organizations were strong and well organized because northside families as two-parent middle-class households in which the wives stayed at home had the time and financial ability to volunteer in the classrooms, organize activities for their schools, and attend PTA and NAPPS meetings.

President Carroll Lindseth and community relations chair Sally Pickett realized it wasn’t enough for every elementary school to sponsor a neighborhood coffee or potluck dinner for prospective kindergarten parents. The social events and fundraising efforts were not going to bring people from the neighborhoods into the schools. If NAPPS was going to stabilize the public schools and reverse the white flight mentality, then it needed to make the community more aware of the positive things going on in the schools. Public relations efforts, which “touted all the good things about the schools...[and] really tried to get the focus on people moving into the city,” became the board’s priority. Past-president Pat McGuone recalls how the strategies evolved, “We were trying to do for the public schools, what the public schools couldn’t do for themselves. That was to attract neighborhood people, to get them to come back to the

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380 Interview with Carroll Lindseth, June 9, 2011.
schools...the real purpose of NAPPS is a public relations firm.”381 But it was going to be a real struggle. While the northside was no longer losing white students, it was a much slower process to attract families back to the neighborhood schools. As Lindseth knew from her own personal experience at her husband’s law firm, the Brookwood Hills Community Club, and in her Peachtree Battle neighborhood, it was a challenge to find northside parents who would even consider their neighborhood public schools, let alone attend a kindergarten coffee. When interviewed by a reporter from the Atlanta Constitution in March 1984, Lindseth elaborated, “We have made some strides. But it’s a continuous public relations process for the schools on the northside. It was just harder with all the social pressures.”382

In 1983, Anne and Tony Cochran purchased their home on Brentwood Drive in the Garden Hills neighborhood. She and her husband had moved to be within walking distance of Garden Hills Elementary School. They wanted their six children to attend public schools, and they loved the diversity of the neighborhood’s elementary school, which was about one-third white, one-third black, and one-third Asian. Like so many mothers, Anne Cochran started by volunteering at the school, though eventually she followed Anne Harper as president of NAPPS. However, before she became involved in NAPPS, not long after they moved into the neighborhood, she attended her first Garden Hills Garden Club meeting. The guest speaker was a real estate advisor who stressed that the private schools were very accessible to the neighborhoods and advised the young mothers that most parents didn’t use the public schools.383 This was the attitude across the northside.

At the first meeting of the 1984-1985 school year, which was held at Morris Brandon Elementary School on September 17, the NAPPS members discussed what could be done to counter the pressures with the Buckhead community to see private school as the only option available to parents. Pam Brown, who took over the presidency that fall from Carroll Lindseth, decided that their goal was “to do public relations work so that people in the community could learn more about the public schools…and to pro-

381 Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
382 “City schools feel white flight’s result,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 18, 1984, 1B.
383 Anne Cochran, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, October 10, 2011.
vide resources for the schools, especially in the area of recruitment.”384 As individual school PTA’s continued to stuff mailboxes and send letters to parents of preschool-age children inviting them to attend one a coffee or open house,385 NAPPS orchestrated a more direct approach and targeted the real estate community, which had continued to ignore the facts surrounding the public schools, and the business executives and other professionals moving into Atlanta as part of the corporate growth of the eighties, who were pressured by their companies and firms to send their children to private school.386

With the support of NAPPS president Pam Brown, Anne Harper’s first big project as the community relations chair from 1984 to 1985 was to schedule speaking engagements with real estate companies for their Tuesday morning sales meetings and to attend the Buckhead Business Association’s Thursday morning breakfasts. She wrote letters to realtors and businessmen, in which she introduced herself and NAPPS and requested an opportunity to speak with them in the future. In the letter, she included copies of the new NAPPS brochure with its tear-off card and a 14-page description of the of nine school zones with corresponding maps (Figure 10). She asked the northside real estate brokers to share the brochure with their clients and include them in the packets that they prepared for out-of-town clients. She also appealed to the real estate firms to no longer leave the information on schools in the house listings blank or as “private.” She explained that NAPPS felt confident that they “could add as a selling point that Northside homes are enhanced by an excellent group of public schools.”387

386 For a discussion of the lack of support by the real estate and business communities in the early eighties see “School desegregation more difficult now,” Atlanta Inquirer, November 21, 1981, page 1.
387 Anne Harper, Community Relations Chair, Draft of letter to realtor, CC: Pam Brown, NAPPS President, Salley Pickett, President-Elect, date unknown, Anne Harper Papers (privately held); Anne Harper, Community Relations Chair, letter to Northside Real Estate Brokers, CC: Pam Brown, NAPPS President, Salley Pickett, President-Elect, April 22, 1985, Anne Harper Papers (privately held).
Within a few weeks of mailing the letter, Anne Harper followed up with the realtors she had contacted and scheduled a meeting, often for their Tuesday morning caravan day. Harper recalls:

I enjoyed public speaking, so I began taking my dog and pony show to them. Calling them up and making arrangements to be their speaker on caravan day. The Internet has changed so much about real estate, but in those days they gathered at their offices...with a whole list of places that were open on Tuesdays. So I would go and set up for [the Atlanta-based] Harry Norman real estate firm and give my introductory pitch. I’d take the flyers and answer questions. I tried to dispel the urban myths about the public schools...they were polite because everybody in Atlanta is always polite. They also seemed to be somewhat incredulous as if they didn’t really believe what I was telling them. They consistently repeated the same horror story about something they had heard happened at Sutton Middle School, and then a month later you’d be at a real estate agency and hear that same story dragged out...there were times I couldn’t believe the questions from people who clearly had college degrees and read the newspaper. No one was really openly hostile, but I was not sure how many minds I was changing. In those days, the advertisements were one mile from Westminster, two miles from Pace. Their world was how far is the house from the private schools you would be considering.

As inserts from the brochure arrived in the mail, Anne Harper had the school representatives or PTA presidents personally reach out to every new homebuyer and parent who returned the tear-off asking for...
more information (Figure 11). They mailed individual school brochures and invited parents to attend a prospective parent tea or tour the school. She came to realize that even if she wasn’t changing the mindset of northside real estate companies and Buckhead businessmen, every time she, Pam Brown, or Salley Pickett spoke or NAPPS sponsored an event, it was a public relations opportunity.

In the weeks leading up to the popular and already successful Lenox Week, which was scheduled to start on March 3, 1985, community relations chair Anne Harper and major activities chair Vicki Darrah focused on increasing the publicity surrounding the event. With enrollment from the neighborhoods up compared to previous years, they hoped a well-executed campaign could be particularly significant in capturing community interest in the public schools. So they prepared press releases that highlighted the schools’ accomplishments over the past year, ran advertisements in local newspapers, and mailed bulk invitations to the northside realtors and businessmen whom Harper had contacted the previous fall.

On Monday, February 18, 1985, Harper met with the NAPPS representatives to discuss volunteer sign-up and the set-up at the mall. She also provided each parent with twenty-five posters that were modeled after the Chamber of Commerce’s campaign and advertised the weeklong public school exposition, which was less than two weeks away. She asked the parents to place the posters in their school, local

391 “Press Release: Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools (NAPPS) will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, January 21, at 7:30 pm at Margaret Mitchell Elementary School, 2845 Margaret Mitchell Drive, NW, Atlanta. There will also be a discussion of Northside Public Schools Week at Lenox Square, schedule for March 3-8, 1985,” January 10, 1985, Anne Harper Papers (privately held); Anne Harper and Vicki Darrah, “Press Release: Some of the most talented students from Northside Atlanta will be on stage at Lenox Square during Northside Atlanta Public Schools Week beginning Sunday, March 3, and continuing through Friday, March 8,” February 15, 1985, Anne Harper Papers (privately held); Advertisement, “NAPPS School Display March 3rd thru 8th Lenox Square,” Atlanta Weekly; Advertisement, “Northside Atlanta Public Schools Week at Lenox Square March 3-8,” Northside Neighbor; Linda Rehkopf, “Lenox Square Is Hosting Schools Week,” Northside Neighbor, February 27, 1985, 6C; Bulk-mail invitation, “Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools Invites You To Attend Northside Atlanta Public Schools Week At Lenox Square Sunday, March 3, Through Friday, March 8, 1985,” Anne Harper Papers (privately held); Anne Harper, Notes (handwritten), "Public Schools Week at Lenox: Report & Recommendations," date unknown, Anne Harper Papers (privately held).
Public Schools in Northside Atlanta

Please send me information about the schools or programs checked below:

☑️ Morris Brandon Elementary
☑️ Garden Hills Elementary
☑️ Warren T. Jackson Elementary
☐ Margaret Mitchell Elementary
☐ E. Rivers Elementary
☑️ Sarah Smith Elementary
☐ Sutton Middle School
☐ North Fulton High School
☐ Northside High School
☐ Northside School of the Arts
☐ North Fulton Center for International Studies
☐ International Baccalaureate

Figure 11: “Public Schools in Northside Atlanta” Brochure, insert (Anne Harper)
churches, neighborhood recreation areas, nearby preschools, and grocery stores, businesses, clinics, and doctors' offices on the northside. The parents paid particular attention to the shopping centers and major roads near each school.\textsuperscript{392} While advertisements and media attention leading up to the event were important, NAPPS stirred up interest and excitement within the Buckhead community during the week. The students from the Northside School of Performing Arts, which had gained national attention when they performed on ABC’s program “20/20” three months earlier, kicked off the “Northside Atlanta Public Schools Week at Lenox Square” at 2 pm on Sunday, March 3. When interviewed, president Pam Brown explained to one reporter, “We think bringing the schools to the public is one of the best ways to give people information about our outstanding programs.”\textsuperscript{393} Other performances from the different schools’ orchestras, choruses, and bands followed throughout the week as they had in previous years and were advertised as “Atlanta On Stage.” During that first week of March, NAPPS turned the event, which had grown in stature and size since 1979, into a showcase of the northside public schools.

4.4 Targeting the Business Community

As late as 1988, when Anne Harper returned to work at the consulting firm of McKinsey & Company, not a single person had a child in public schools.\textsuperscript{394} For those who were native Atlantans, they “weren’t too apologetic about it because they had mothers and fathers who went to Westminster. It was a family tradition.”\textsuperscript{395} In 1984 when Pam Brown became president and community relations chair Anne Harper focused her energy on the real estate community, the elementary schools were just beginning to stabilize.\textsuperscript{396} Between 1984 and 1988, several prominent figures within the business community, whose wives were members of the Junior League of Atlanta, made the decision to enroll their children in the northside public schools (Table 6).\textsuperscript{397} Couples like the chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of

\textsuperscript{392} Memorandum To NAPPS Schools, “Re: NAPPS Week At Lenox,” date unknown, Anne Harper Papers (privately held).
\textsuperscript{393} Rehkopf, “Lenox Square Is Hosting Schools Week.”
\textsuperscript{394} Interview with Anne Harper, August 14, 2009.
\textsuperscript{395} Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
\textsuperscript{396} Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
\textsuperscript{397} The data presented in Table 6 differs slightly from the final enrollment figures, which were reported to the Department of Education and available through the National Center for Education Statistics. However, I chose to in-
Table 6: Northside Public and Private School Enrollment in 1984 and 1989

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<tr>
<td>E. Rivers Elementary</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>Christ the King School (K-8)</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>485</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garden Hills Elementary</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>The Galloway School (K-12)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>525</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Mitchell Elementary</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>Lovett School (K-12)</td>
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<td>1,445</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morris Brandon Elementary</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>Marist School (7-12)</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah R. Smith Elementary</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>Pace Academy (K-12)</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren T. Jackson Elementary</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>Trinity School (K-6)</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton Middle School</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>The Westminster Schools (K-12)</td>
<td>1,680</td>
<td>1,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Fulton High School</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>Woodward Academy (K-12)</td>
<td>1,742</td>
<td>1,950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northside High School</td>
<td>1,208</td>
<td>1080</td>
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Atlanta-based Rich’s department store Jim Zimmerman and his wife Alison, the president and chief executive officer (CEO) of The Carter Center Dr. John Hardman and his wife Laura,398 and several of the lawyers in the prestigious law firms of Austin & Bird and King and Spaulding encouraged their coworkers and friends to also consider public school, at least through fifth grade.399 “It wasn’t the majority. It wasn’t ubiquitous, but it was some.”400

The real turning point came as this small segment of Buckhead society began to take on leadership roles within their parent-teacher organizations and became part of the public relations campaign NAPPS was developing. Jim and Alison Zimmerman, who were a prominent, wealthy, and highly visible young couple in the community, enrolled their twins at Warren T. Jackson Elementary School. When they became co-presidents of the parent-teacher association, they started attending NAPPS meetings while Pam Brown was president. Brown recalls the impact, “Suddenly, the world changed over there…so much

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398 Laura Jones Hardman was the daughter of Boisfeuille Jones, who was a professor and dean at Emory University, a member of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and later served as president of the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation from 1964 to 1988.

399 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.

400 Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011.
of what happened in north Atlanta had to do with who was there and people’s comfort level in saying my children are in public school.”

John and Laura Hardman had a similar impact on Morris Brandon Elementary School. They both came from old, prominent Atlanta families, yet their three children also went to public school all the way through, middle and high school. She helped with public relations by getting an article published in the Junior League of Atlanta’s newspaper, the Peachtree Papers, about why its membership was now choosing public education. Harper remembers Hardman’s article, “When you write an article in the Junior League newspaper about your kids going through middle and high school in the public schools and make that commitment, the impact on the community is tremendous.”

The article shared the experiences of Junior League members who had children at one of the northside public schools. Across the bottom of the article, a photo spread of League members’ children starting their days at Northside High School, Warren T. Jackson Elementary, and Morris Brandon Elementary. The largest of the photographs: Laura Hardman and principal Doris John reading to her three children in the Morris Brandon library.

Even as the enrollment at the elementary schools increasingly drew from the neighborhoods, the middle and high school years remained a challenge. Northside parents, who had kept their children in their neighborhood elementary school, withdrew them between fourth and eighth grade. As the oldest children of the second generation of NAPPS leaders approached the middle grades, they overheard the hushed and quiet conversations that started with the question, “What are you doing to do?” at nearly every PTA meeting and party they attended. They listened as the parents of their children’s classmates voiced

401 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
402 Interview with Anne Harper, August 14, 2009.
404 During the 1986-1987 school year parents began to push for racial balance at Northside High School in an effort to stabilize the school’s enrollment. Past-NAPPS presidents, Pam Brown and Carroll Lindseth, and their husbands, Robbie Brown and Al Lindseth, met with superintendent Dr. Alonzo Crim to discuss implementing a moratorium on out-of-district transfers. With enrollment at sixty-five percent black and thirty-five percent white, students that participated in the transfer program at Sutton Middle School were automatically being admitted to Northside High School. Dr. Crim supported the parents because he wanted to stabilize the northside schools. The decision was made to build up the percentage of white children from the neighborhood by only allowing students to transfer into Northside through the magnet program, which was the policy followed at North Fulton High School. Interview with Carroll Lindseth, June 9, 2011. See also School Talk, Vol. 8, No. 2, September 1986.
their concerns over curriculum and safety. For some parents it was extracurricular activities or athletics; the northside private schools offered more competitive swim or soccer teams. For other parents, they did not feel their child was getting the electives, particularly with regards to the arts or foreign language that he or she needed in a college preparatory track. What no one was willing to say, the fears surrounding race and sex as their children approached the age to start dating, persisted. Northside parents knew that with limited enrollment at the northside private schools “if they didn’t get their children in at the sixth grade level then they wouldn’t be able to get them in at the ninth grade level, and they definitely were not going to go on to the high schools.”405 People, who had felt comfortable sending their children to the neighborhood elementary school, wanted them to go to a private high school, and so the drop off to the private schools began as early as fourth grade.

In the late eighties and early nineties, many of the NAPPS leaders ended up relying on a mix of both public and private education. While Pat and Jim McGuone’s daughter graduated from North Fulton High School’s International Baccalaureate program and their middle son attended a private high school, they decided to move outside the city limits in the mid-eighties. Their home on Inland Ridge Way in Sandy Springs was just a mile from North Buckhead but offered lower taxes and more opportunities for their youngest son. “We ended up moving out here for a couple of reasons. One of them was taxes, and the other one was to go to a public high school that had better sports.”406 Carroll and Alfred Lindseth similarly made different school decisions for their two children. Though their oldest child had already graduated from Northside High School and their daughter had stayed in the public schools through Sutton Middle School, they enrolled Sarah at Pace Academy in ninth grade. Lindseth recalls their reasoning:

All the girls, who were at E. Rivers with Sarah, went on to Sutton. A few of them surprised me. I figured they would opt out and try to go to a private school at that time...[so that] small group of girls who went all the way through elementary school to Sutton together, they were all applying to Pace, and Sarah wanted to apply. She was a really good student. We let her make that choice, and that was the year they were closing Northside to redo it and open it up as the only high school on the northside of the city. They had

405 Ibid.
406 Interview with Pat McGuone, April 30, 2011.
temporary buildings at North Fulton and were housing the [students] there…Alfred and I decided if that was where she wanted to go then she would.\footnote{Interview with Carroll Lindseth, June 9, 2011.}

Other parents, like Pam and Robbie Brown and Anne Harper and Greg Nobles, visited nearby private schools as their children approached middle school but ended up decided against it.

When the Brown’s oldest daughter, Erin, entered fourth grade, they became concerned as increasing numbers of their friends pressured them to leave the public schools. Brown remembers the growing pressure:

People kept saying are you sure you’re going to keep her in public school? Maybe middle school [was] a different kind of story? My husband was very insistent about it, and I said, “I’m at least going to look at what the alternative is about.” We had not looked at the private school prior to this. So she was in fourth grade, just before the final year in elementary school, and we went to look at private schools. We went to what was then the big three in Atlanta: Westminster, Lovett, and Pace Academy. We didn’t look at some of the schools, which were sort of the ones that seemed acceptable to those people who saw themselves as liberal: Paideia and Galloway. Because we said if it’s all about education then let’s go look at what’s supposedly the best.\footnote{Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.}

Having grown up in Buckhead, Pam Brown knew how people thought and how things were done. She insisted that they were not going to be herded around with a bunch of other parents on the private schools’ open house days. She wanted an individual appointment and also requested to sit in on a fourth grade class to see what was actually happening in the classroom. Brown recalls what they observed:

We were dismally unimpressed with what we saw. Aside from the physical plan at each of [the schools], which was lovely…they were using many of the same textbooks. So the material that was being given to them was the same, and whether this is right or wrong, if you had a very bright child in the public schools, they got a lot of great opportunities. There was the gifted track, which exposed the children to things that they maybe ordinarily wouldn’t be exposed to in the larger classroom. So she had gotten a tremendous amount of nurturing in the school system. I didn’t see much individualization when we were there and what really got to both of us…this is the thing I remember the most about these visits at all three schools, probably most at Westminster, was when we would walk around and we’d look at the kids was the homogeneity of the school, which we didn’t like. We just thought, “This is not the world. This is not life.” It is such a richer experience what our children are having. We don’t want to give that up. She wouldn’t like this.\footnote{Ibid.}
For Brown, the experience was eye opening. She and her husband were struck by the expansive campuses, which covered numerous buildings laid out across lovely, landscaped grounds. She had truly expected that they were going to be enrolling both daughters in private school despite the financial burden because they were committed to providing both of their daughters with the best education available. Instead, Brown began to recognize that there were a lot of factors driving parents’ decision-making process and that all parents wanted to do what was best for their children. But that in Buckhead, “the real issues were race, class, and social pressures.”

The core group that had stuck with it through the elementary schools saw the eroding damage caused by “the fear and loss of community support” at the middle and high school levels. Coming from outside the South, Anne Harper in particular saw the division in the community’s support for the neighborhood elementary schools and Sutton Middle School. There remained prevalent in Buckhead, a “still negative attitude [towards] racial integration” that grew “much more hostile the higher the grade level that you got.” Sutton Middle School principal David York expressed his appalling frustration with the Buckhead community in the eighties, “‘Nobody came right out and said, ‘The private schools are better because they are a lot whiter,’ but the message got across.’” Yet the northside parents who stayed in the public schools, embraced integration, and with the decision to send their children to Sutton Middle School led the charge, shifted the focus of the NAPPS-sponsored public relations campaign to the middle and high schools. Anne Harper recalls the mothers’ strategy:

More and more people put their children in the elementary school but didn’t go on to the middle schools. So a lot of our focus was on Sutton and about North Atlanta...[it became] let’s see if we can get a cohort going to Sutton. Could we get the Sarah Smith kids to go to Sutton? Could we get the Jackson kids to go to Sutton? There would be a lot of conversation that the principals weren’t really pushing Sutton and were very happy to be writing those letters of recommendation for Westminster and Pace. What are we going to do about that? We quickly moved from having meetings for parents to talk about why they should come into the elementary school to meetings about why they should come to Sutton and open houses at Sutton.

410 Ibid.
411 Ibid.
412 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
413 “School proves change is possible,” Atlanta Business Magazine (September 1989): 72-78.
414 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
They continued the grassroots efforts that had worked so well in the elementary schools. On Thursday, October 11, 1984, the northside elementary schools sent home invitations with every fourth and fifth-grader. Reminders followed the day before the open house (Figure 12). On the morning of October 17, 1984, eighty parents gathered in the library at 9 am to meet with principal David York and current Sutton parents. A student-led tour followed which enabled parents to sit in on classes. NAPPS president Pam Brown explained to local reporters they hoped the open house appealed to northside parents who were uncertain about Sutton.

Sutton is a broad representation of the city itself, which we think is its strength. We want parents to feel comfortable with the next step after elementary school and get hands-on information about the school. The northside Atlanta community tends to be more reticent.

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415 Anne Harper, Community Relations, Memorandum To NAPPS Representatives, September 17, 1984, Anne Harper Papers (privately held); Invitation for October 17, 1984 Open House at Sutton Middle School, “An Open House for Parents at Sutton Middle School,” Anne Harper Papers (privately held).
about taking a look at what's in the public schools, and that's one of the reasons we have the open houses.416

The grassroots and publicity efforts surrounding Sutton Middle School continued, and in 1989 the *Atlanta Business Magazine* declared that the middle school, whose enrollment was fifty percent white and fifty percent black, proved change was possible. The business community that had abandoned the public schools and made it fashionable to knock the public schools was slowly reversing its stance. “The big Atlanta law firms were no longer pressuring their associates to send their children to Westminster, Lovett, Pace, Trinity, and spouses were no longer hearing about these private schools at parties.”417 It was a big boost every time that a high-level executive or partner enrolled his child at Sutton, North Atlanta, or Northside.418 However, the success of the public relations campaign was not to last.

After identifying the values and principles that inspired a second generation of northside parents to move into the city and send their children to the public schools, this chapter traced the experiences that brought the women into the leadership of NAPPS and their development of a public relations campaign during the eighties. By tying their efforts to the future growth and development of Buckhead, the mothers developed strategies that appealed to the community, which ranged from scheduling speaking engagements to publishing articles. Meanwhile, just to the south of Buckhead, a second generation of mothers was also moving into the intown neighborhoods and began to identify similar strategies for organizing a CINS-supported campaign for educational reforms that was tied to their neighborhoods’ revitalization.

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416 Connie Green, “Sutton middle open house will promote public schools,” *Atlanta Constitution* (Intown Extra), October 11, 1984, 14E. See also “Campus Notes,” *Northside Neighbor*, October 10, 1984, 11B.
418 As evidence of this transformation and the shift in community support, these three schools were all recognized by the state as Georgia Schools of Excellence: North Fulton High School in 1985, Sutton Middle School in 1987, and Northside High School in 1988.
On the evening of March 22, 1984 parents from the close-in, reviving neighborhoods were greeted at the entrance to the Grady High School gymnasium by members of the Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools. After taking their seats, CINS president Nancy Hamilton welcomed them to the first annual “Our Intown Schools-Commitment to Quality” Open House. They listened as she introduced Area III superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Feely and Atlanta superintendent Dr. Alonzo Crim. The speaker for the opening program, Dr. Crim thanked the parents for attending and commended CINS for its continued efforts to advocate on behalf of the public schools. The parents sitting in the audience responded with loud applause.

Those parents with pre-school aged children had come to the open house hoping to hear about the elementary schools. When they asked parents with children at CW Hill about their experience in the pairing, they spoke highly of principal Dr. Paula Calhoun and the small school’s wonderful teachers. Those same parents came to the open house because they were enthusiastic about their school’s rising test scores and were interested in learning more about Morningside and Inman. This was not the case across town. Many of the parents of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at Morningside were leaning towards withdrawing their children and enrolling them in private school the following year. The small but active group of Mary Lin parents had many of the same concerns. The closing of Highland Elementary in 1973 and Moreland Elementary in 1982 and the subsequent rezoning of Inman Park families to Mary Lin Elementary had already pushed many of their neighbors from the public schools. Couples with children at Home Park Elementary School were fearful that their neighborhood school was going to be closed. From Ansley Park

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419 Joseph G. Martin, Jr., District 3 School Board member, Memorandum to Dr. Alonzo A. Crim, CC: Mr. J.Y. Moreland, Dr. Elizabeth L. Feely “Re: Community Open House at Grady,” date unknown, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
to Inman Park, the number of white, intown parents in the audience from Inman Middle School or Grady High School significantly dwindled off.\footnote{Surveys conducted by the Ansley Park Civic Association and Inman Park Restoration education committees found families from the intown neighborhoods had children at The Westminster Schools, the Trinity School, the Lovett School, Pace Academy, Woodward Academy, The Galloway School, the Paideia School, and St. Thomas More. Unlike the older northside private schools, Galloway and Paideia, which were identified as the more liberal choices, were founded in 1969 and 1971. “IPR Education Committee surveys inner-city options,” \textit{Inman Park Advo-cator}, April 1979; “School committee conducts survey,” \textit{Ansley Parkside}, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, April 1982, page 6.}

Five months earlier on October 18, 1983 at a meeting over coffee, area superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Feely, the schools’ PTA presidents, and CINS representatives had first discussed the idea of organizing a CINS-sponsored open house. At their monthly meeting on November 17, 1983 in the Fowler Street Elementary School library, which served the Techwood Homes and Clark Howell Homes public housing projects, the predominately white CINS board set up committees to begin coordinating the event, which they hoped was going to showcase the public schools to the community. It was a massive undertaking to bring the seven parent-teacher associations together, and they decided to hire NAPPS founder Margaret Miller as a consultant. With the flair of a Buckhead-styled public relations campaign, they distributed invitations to current and prospective parents.\footnote{“CINS agenda,” October 20, 1983, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “CINS agenda,” November 17, 1983, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “Open house for intown schools,” \textit{MLPA} Newsletter, Spring 1984.}

The chapter that follows explores the experiences that attracted a new generation of families to the gentrifying neighborhoods and inspired in them a commitment to integration. I then trace the development of the grassroots campaign by CINS mothers to promote educational reforms that celebrated parental and neighborhood volunteerism and the diversity of their school communities. I argue that by tying their efforts to the revitalization of their neighborhoods, this second generation of intown mothers developed the strategies needed to mount a full-fledged, community-based campaign, which originated in the BOND neighborhoods over the second highway battle and the 1989 school board race.
5.1 A New Generation

The first annual CINS Open House coincided with a second wave of gentrification, which was transforming the intown neighborhoods and schools. The rising property values that Joe Martin had observed in Morningside-Lenox Park in the early eighties continued to climb. Renovated, intown bungalows that were selling for $60,000 a few years earlier were now on the market for $150,000. Along North Highland Avenue in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood, new retail shops and restaurants joined the small stores that had held on when the neighborhoods declined. Meanwhile, Midtown experienced a construction boom that brought ten new, high-rise office towers to Peachtree and West Peachtree streets between 1986 and 1994.

With the rising home prices and commercial development, came middle-class families. Couples like Syd and Don Janney, who moved to Morningside-Lenox Park in 1988 with their two children two years after he was made a partner at the law firm of Troutman Sanders, were attracted to the architectural charm of the historic intown neighborhoods and the reputation of the public schools. “We were looking for a historic neighborhood with a great school. One of the main things we feel strongly about [was] public education.” When the Janneys had first moved to Atlanta from Charlottesville in 1978, they had bought a home in the Peachtree Hills neighborhood of Buckhead. By the late-eighties with two young children, they began to consider their school options and realized that they wanted to get away from the “complete Buckhead experience.” Most families in the neighborhoods surrounding E. Rivers sent their children to one of the northside private schools, if not for elementary school, certainly by fifth or sixth grade. Around the same time, one of her friends suggested that the Janneys look at Morningside, where

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her in-laws lived. “She really told me how well suited it would be as a community for me and my interests.” Another friend, Becky Vaughn, attended Northside Drive Baptist Church with the Janneys and also encouraged them to look at Morningside. She told them about the neighborhood’s excellent public elementary school. Janney recalls their house hunting experience:

Because I was trained as a historic preservationist, that’s my background, it was real important to me to get a historic house…so after getting a Master’s degree at the University of Virginia and having children a little later than some of my peers…I decided and hoped that my husband Don, who is an attorney, would go along with it that we would have a historic house in a school district in which our kids could go to public school. I was lucky enough, to have some really great friends at church and where we were living at the time that [told us about how] the historic Morningside neighborhood was civically involved and the public schools were on the up and up.

The Janneys asked their real estate agent to show them restored homes in the neighborhood. When they saw the Atlanta Constitution’s 1928 model home on East Morningside Drive, they both immediately fell in love. Three years later when the paper wanted to do a feature on the white, middle-class families moving back into the city, it was a photograph of Syd Janney and her two children, Taylor, age 7, and Camden, age 6, playing in their front yard that was spread across the “Sunday Homefinder.”

By the late eighties the intown schools surpassed even the optimistic vision of school board member Joe Martin. The Grady cluster added 190 students in 1984 and 241 students in 1985. Enrollment at the struggling Inman Middle School steadily rose from 361 students in 1984 to 650 students in 1989. Morningside Elementary School saw a similar increase in enrollment from the neighborhood with enrollment rising from 320 students in 1985, 452 in 1986, 503 in 1987, 527 in 1988, 560 in 1989,

426 Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
427 Becky Vaughn was already a leader in the Morningside community by the late eighties, when the Janneys first started house hunting. She had served as MLPA president for two years from 1985 to 1986. In 1994, she followed Judith Gott as president of CINS.
428 Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
430 “CINS minutes,” October 18, 1984, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “CINS minutes,” October 17, 1985, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
Table 7: Morningside Elementary School Enrollment as reported by the neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>320</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>452</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>503</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>527</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>560</td>
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<td>635</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>632</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>686</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>750</td>
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and 635 in 1990. The following August, Morningside added three doublewide portable classrooms to accommodate the overflow (Table 7).432

After settling into the neighborhood, young mothers like Syd Janney quickly became active in their neighborhood.433 At home with young children, they often first joined their neighborhood’s babysitting co-op and got to know women like Chris Carlsten, Faye “Jimi” Moore and Tricia Deitz, who were a little bit older and whose children were a few years ahead of their oldest. Frequently, those same women encouraged them to join the League of Women Voters and after their children started kindergarten at

432 The data presented in Table 7 differs from the enrollment figures that were reported to the Department of Education and available through the National Center for Education Statistics. However, I chose to report the enrollment increases as reported by the monthly civic associations’ newsletters because these were intown parents’ main source of information. Joe Martin, “Readin’, Writin’, Arithmetic: Close-In Schools on Cutting Edge of Education Reform,” *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1986, page 8-9; *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1987, Page 15; *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Winter 1987, Page 12; *Inman Park Advocate*, February 1987; *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1988; *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1989; *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Winter 1990, page 19; “Morningside School History Project,” May 1996.

433 With a master’s in urban planning and historic preservation from the University of Virginia, Syd Janney became active in the Morningside-Lenox Park Neighborhood Association’s historic preservation committee where she helped develop the guidelines and a walking tour of the neighborhood in 1995. After working for the Midtown Alliance, she took on the CINS presidency in 1997. She then worked on Joe Martin’s campaign for state school superintendent in 1998 and again four years later in 2002. In 2004, Syd Janney returned to work as the project planner for the Midtown Alliance. She retired in 2011 after serving as the administrative programs coordinator for the Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, where Larrie del Martin is President and CEO.
Morningside or Mary Lin welcomed them at the mothers’ Wednesday morning breakfasts, which had been moved from the Old Hickory House to the American Roadhouse on North Highland Avenue. Over coffee, they talked about the school board, potential PTA fundraisers, or what to do after fifth grade.

Chris Carlsten had moved to Atlanta in the summer of 1973 after finishing graduate school at Hollins College in Roanoke, Virginia. She had met her husband Jon while he was at the University of Virginia and she was in college at Randolph-Macon. With offers from architecture firms in Washington, DC and Atlanta, they were excited by the idea of moving to a growing city like Atlanta. Despite the bias of the realtors, who urged them to look at homes in Cobb County and north Fulton, they were both committed to intown living. Carlsten recalls them making their housing decision:

We wanted to live intown, and at that time all the realtors were trying to push out of town. But we said we’re intown kinds of people…we wanted to have access to movies, museums, the theater and restaurants, just more of an urban kind of landscape. Diversity was also important to us. The first place we lived was an apartment at Ansley Forest. We looked in Morningside and Virginia-Highland, and we wanted to buy in Virginia-Highland. But at the time it was redlined and the banks were not giving loans because it was not considered desirable.  

Not long after moving to Atlanta, the Carlstens found a home on Windemere Drive in the Morningside-Lenox Park neighborhood.

With her husband starting his new job, 435 Chris Carlsten began meeting other mothers, including Trisha Senterfitt, through the babysitting co-op. From there Senterfitt encouraged her to join the League of Women Voters and a small, ongoing book club that was made up of League women. “The overlaps were pretty strong…Trisha was a leader because her oldest child Shelley was about four years older than my daughter Brooke.” 436 Carlsten came to understand from the other mothers that there had been this incredible white flight, but this core group of parents had started sending their children to Morningside. “So you did have this continued sense of being an urban pioneer, yet the same concerns persisted: What was the quality of the education going to be? Who were the teachers going to be? What were these kids going

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434 Interview with Chris Carlsten, December 13, 2011.
435 Jon Carlsten returned to graduate school at the Georgia Institute of Technology and earned his Master’s in architecture in 1978. In 1980, he founded his own firm, Carlsten Associates.
436 Interview with Chris Carlsten, December 13, 2011.
to learn? Were they going to get a proper education?” Growing up in Syracuse, New York, Carlsten had seen her mother fighting for fair housing.

We were Unitarians, and a very close friend of my family was a Unitarian minister, who had really been a spearhead in the movement in Syracuse. My mother would go and look at a house with someone, and then a black couple would go and look at the house later to test whether or not the house was available to a white couple when the black couple was told, “No.”

By the time she was in high school, Chris Carlsten was skipping school to picket with other civil rights activists. It was those values and principles that led to them buying their intown home and to her joining the Morningside babysitting co-op. Now by getting to know this group of other mothers, whose children were older and farther along in the public schools and who in the face of the cross-town pairing “had said we believe in public school and we’re going to put our time and our effort into making those schools viable,” Chris Carlsten found herself reassured. “We were all in this together and not striking out on our own…it was our community. It meant the world, and so we went to battle. Oh my gosh we did battle.”

She would similarly seek to provide support and a sense of leadership to young mothers, like Syd Janney, who were moving into the intown neighborhoods and joining the babysitting co-op and PTA in the eighties. “We had open houses at people’s homes to invite parents from the neighborhood to send their kindergartners to Morningside…I remember having coffees and teas at my house to try and pull people in.”

In April 1979, Jimi Moore and her husband John moved from Decatur to their home in Morningside. With a toddler and twins on the way, the Moores, who had met while working for CNS Bank, had decided that they needed a bigger place. Having grown up in New York and attending the University of Chicago, Moore “liked the idea of living in a city…I’m a city girl. We wanted to move intown and the Morningside area specifically because it was possible to send their children to public school.” After staying at home with her twins, she returned to work downtown and enrolled her children in daycare at

437 Ibid.
438 Ibid.
439 With several friends having served as president of CINS, Chris Carlsten got pulled into the organization and became president in 1986. She also represented the League of Women Voters on the APPLE Corps Board of Directors.
440 Interview with Chris Carlsten, December 13, 2011.
441 Interview with Faye Moore, December 19, 2011.
Central Presbyterian Church. Even before her oldest child had started kindergarten at Morningside with
the prospect of the pairing looming, she began attending CINS meetings.

   I’m a firm believer that you need to be involved in your children’s school. My mother
had been on the Board of Education and president of the board in the town that I grew up
in for several of those years. I knew that you had to be involved, and because of the pair-
ing between Morningside and CW Hill, it made since to me to get involved with more
than just Morningside. I was told about the Council of Intown Neighborhoods and
Schools, and I said, “You know that sounds like something that I would be interested in.”
So I got involved and was a member even before my kids were in school.442

As she met other mothers from the Morningside neighborhood that were committed to public education,
she joined them on Wednesday mornings for breakfast. Each week the women gathered at their table at
American Roadhouse. “It was a support group for a lot of the people that were already involved in
CINS…I was pretty determined to put my kids in public school that was just real important to me and was
part of the reason we had moved to Morningside. So I actually became one of the moms pushing the oth-
ers to keep their kids in public school.”443

   I remember fighting with a lot people that I knew. “You need to look at the public
schools. You need to consider the public schools.” I had a lot of friends that would not
send their kids to the public schools. So it was a fight. A real uphill battle…it was not an
easy time. I was constantly on the defensive. People would look at us like we couldn’t af-
ford to send our kids to private school, and I would try to explain that was not the issue.
The issue was that I believed in public education. It was really a struggle. We tried to ar-
gue that people should move into Morningside for the schools…I would constantly say,
“Consider the public schools. Go and look at them. Just do that.” It was a battle.444

From the time she attended her first CINS meeting in the early eighties until the Moores moved to Ten-
nessee a decade later, Jimi Moore continued to encourage mothers moving into the neighborhood to go
look at Morningside and Inman and to consider public education.445

   In Ansley Park where homes values were higher and families more likely to choose to send their
children to private school,446 Tricia and Sam Deitz, who was a professor in the College of Education at
Georgia State University, had gotten married in 1980 and settled into the home that Sam Deitz had pur-

442 Ibid.
443 Ibid.
444 Interview with Faye Moore, December 19, 2011.
445 Faye “Jimi” Moore followed Chris Carlsten and Tricia Deitz as president of CINS from 1990 to 1992. In January
1993, the Moore’s moved to Memphis.
446 Interview with Trisha Senterfitt, October 13, 2011.
chased and started renovating after first living in a basement apartment in Ansley Park. For Tricia Deitz, who had grown up in Atlanta after her father was transferred when she was still young, Ansley Park was a wonderful neighborhood to raise their growing family.

We lived right across the street from McClatchey Park, where the tennis court and little playground are. It could not have been a better place to live as far as bringing up kids. Piedmont Park was also right across the street. The only issue I had, as our kids got older was very few families in Ansley Park put their kids in public school. I would be at the playground, and moms would be saying, “Well my kid is special. My kid needs something else,” which turned me into this public school fanatic.  

Tricia Deitz joined the Ansley Park babysitting co-op and the League of Women Voters after her first child, Josh, was born. Through that group, she got to meet other parents that had kids older than her children and from whom she heard wonderful things about Morningside Elementary School.

There were people before us, all of these women whose kids were older but had gone through. They were so committed to public schools and you got hooked up with them. You thought, “This is where I need to be”…it was a choice that we felt we wanted to do. We were just not going to send our kids to private school.

After joining the PTA in 1986, she was invited by the older mothers, many of whom had also participated in the co-op, to join them on Wednesday mornings for breakfast. “It was CINS and PTA people, and we were all in it together.” Almost right away, she and her husband were volunteering to organize “coffees and desserts” at their home and encouraging other families that were moving into Ansley Park in the eighties to consider Morningside Elementary School.

Meanwhile, to the southeast in the close-in, reviving neighborhoods of Candler Park and Inman Park, mothers like Judith Gott and Midge Sweet were working tirelessly to support Mary Lin Elementary School.

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447 Interview with Tricia Deitz, December 14, 2011.
448 Ibid.
449 Ibid.
450 After her oldest child started kindergarten at Morningside Elementary School in the fall of 1980, Tricia Deitz served on the League of Women Voters’ education committee and as PTA president at Morningside, Inman, and Grady. She went on to serve as CINS president from 1988 to 1990. After her husband was hired as the dean of the College of Education in 1990, she volunteered again to act as co-president of CINS with Judith Gott in 1995. Four years later in the summer of 2000, the Deitz moved to Texas after Sam Deitz was hired by Texas Christian University. “Interested in our public schools?,” Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Spring 1986.
Inman Park families were now attending their third elementary school in less than a decade after being rezoned to Mary Lin Elementary School and the new Inman Middle School. A small group of these urban pioneers, who had moved in and started restoring the subdivided Victorians during the seventies, remained committed to public education and worked with Candler Park parents to improve the quality of instruction offered at the racially and economically diverse Mary Lin Elementary. Sweet remembers how her neighbors responded to the loss of their neighborhood school, “Some of the founding folks of this neighborhood, of Inman Park, had sent their kids to public schools. Some people just couldn’t. They felt that was just more than they could tackle. There were folks in Candler Park, who had their kids in school at Mary Lin, and we thought, ‘We can do this.’” The redistricting had pulled the two groups of neighborhood activists into CINS, and in the months leading up to the CINS Open House, members of the Inman Park Restoration education committee took turns hosting forums at their homes for new home owners with young children, at which current parents provided presentations on their experiences in the public and private schools (Table 8 and Figure 13). At each of the forums, Midge Sweet, whose daughter had started kindergarten, passed out the new CINS brochure and encouraged parents to attend the March open house. Sweet recalls: “Those meetings were about sharing the content and making people feel comfortable…there was this sense that our values were the same and a lot of us had put a lot of time into the neighborhood and public schools.”

453 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
454 Joseph G. Martin, Jr., District 3 School Board member, Letter to Mrs. Diana Curtis, CINS representative, Virginia-Highland Civic Association, October 18, 1982, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
456 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
Table 8: Census data for the BOND neighborhoods, 1960-2010

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<tr>
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<td>3,360</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3,148</td>
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<td>1,663</td>
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</table>


Figure 13: Population for BOND Neighborhoods, 1960-2010

Like the families moving into the neighborhoods that had founded the Council for Intown Neighborhoods and Schools, the couples coming from the Bass Organization for Neighborhood Development (BOND), or Candler Park, Inman Park, Lake Claire, Poncey-Highland, and the Little Five Points business
district, were attracted to the rich architectural history and the sense of community that the gentrifying neighborhoods offered. Like the urban pioneers, who had moved into Ansley Park, Morningside-Lenox Park, Midtown, or Virginia-Highland, they did most of the renovation work themselves. They took the once elegant, turn-of-the-century Victorian homes that had been subdivided in the sixties and rebuilt them board by board. Midge Sweet, who had married her husband and Atlanta City Council member John in November 1978, was both amazed and excited by the project that he had taken on.

I was threatened a little bit by how big the house was, there were three different units in it...the front porch was all off and there were just two pieces of plywood over the “moat.” When my mother came to visit, the first thing she said was “Well this is very interesting.” It’s a beautiful space and for someone like myself, who lived in Connecticut and Washington, DC, it seemed like a great neighborhood. I couldn’t figure out why people thought it was so dangerous. It seemed like a great place to be...and there was such lovely camaraderie and esprit de corps, when you are all taking out and dumping plaster on the side of the street so the city can pick it up. You can’t pay for that kind of time, commitment, and energy that people were putting in to it. It was really lovely.

In July 1982, the Sweets were shocked by the news that Atlanta City Council had approved a four-lane, limited access, high-speed highway cutting through their neighborhood. Mayor Andrew Young, who had first been elected to Congress a decade earlier in part by the neighborhood movement because of his opposition to the toll way, had largely negotiated the parkway behind the scenes. Built to provide access to the planned Carter Presidential Library from the I-75/I-85 downtown connector, the proposed highway was to follow the path of the defeated Stone Mountain Tollway. The Sweets’ neighbors, who were spending their weekends on scaffolding and hauling plaster to the side of the road as they board restored their historic homes, and fellow Mary Lin parents, who were organizing an education committee through the neighborhoods association, refused to accept the proposal. The second highway battle had begun. Together with white, middle-class residents from Lake Claire, Druid Hills, East Lake, Virginia-Highland, Poncey-Highland, and the City of Decatur, and Candler Park, Inman Park homeown-

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457 The Bass Organization for Neighborhood Development (BOND), which represented Little Five Points, Inman Park, Candler Park, Lake Claire, and Poncey-Highland, was founded in 1967 during the first highway battle.
458 John Sweet had purchased the 1893 Victorian home on Elizabeth Street in 1971, three years after moving to Atlanta as a VISTA volunteer, in an effort to help neighbors that wanted to block a proposed National Linen Service manufacturing center. After being elected to city council in 1977, John Sweet worked to get the properties on the perimeter rezoned as residential to preserve the small, reviving neighborhood’s boundaries.
459 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
ers and parents founded Citizens Against Unnecessary Thoroughfares in Older Neighborhoods or CAUTION, Inc. They mounted a decade-long legal campaign in opposition to the limited access, high-speed highway and in support of the preservation of the cleared lots as a “Great Park.” Sweet recalls what happened next, “The fight against the road and for the park was in some ways really fortuitous because it galvanized people. It got people together around a common belief and value system so that they could find commonalities where there would not have been.” Inspired by their efforts to stop the expressway from tearing through their gentrifying neighborhoods, parents from the BOND neighborhoods also increased their grassroots support for Mary Lin Elementary. Sweet explains how in her mind the two battles came to be connected:

Maybe we were high on the beating the road…at the exact same time we were fighting the road we were working on Mary Lin and the schools. There was a picture of me in the Christian Science Monitor of me holding Eli, he was born in 1983 so it was probably the beginning of 1985, and there were bulldozers coming. John said, “There’s a picture of you with Eli in front of a bulldozer.” I said, “Don’t worry, I would have moved.” But there was just this sense that we had to continue on all these fronts to make things better.

The photograph of Inman Park resident and Mary Lin mother Midge Sweet standing in front of an approaching bulldozer with her youngest child that appeared in the February 1985 edition of the Christian Science Monitor captured their resolve of intown parents. “My belief is really for that wonderful community and that just is shockingly powerful. It is just what motivates me and inspires me. I feel lucky to have come to Atlanta and found myself willingly embraced by folks and found this opportunity to be part of something that was really meaningful.” Whether it was the highway or the public schools, they were going to defend their neighborhood and all the elements that made it a community.

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461 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.

462 Ibid.


For young mother Midge Sweet the fight to preserve their neighborhood’s residential character through zoning changes, the fight against the road, and the fight for a good public schools were the essence of what she had come to value by the eighties. She had grown up in Colorado and Connecticut before moving to Washington, DC to work as a copy editor for the Environmental Law Institute following the passage of NEPA. In 1975, after graduating from Yale University, she moved to the South and began working for Mayor Maynard Jackson. Sweet recalls what experiences had inspired her to down this career path and ultimately to becoming a community activist:

They were beliefs that had been growing all along. There was no seminal moment. I do remember and was very affected by the civil rights movement on TV. I was fourteen or thirteen when the riots came, and I wrote a whole series of poems about the images that I collected from those riots. I felt very strongly about it before coming here [to Atlanta, to the South]. Then John was very much a part of the civil rights movement. He was a member of SNCC. We lived in a community that was this little mostly pocket of white…we believed we could do this. It was important to do this. For me changing education in Atlanta was the next civil rights movement. This was what it was all about. This is why we had the civil rights movement, and we couldn’t stop just because the venue was now more focused just on schools and not water fountains or other public institutions. It meant we had to redouble our efforts and make things happen. It’s the one place we do all come together, even if our communities are not racially integrated the way we want them to be it’s the place where we have got to put our flag in the ground and say this is the America we want. This place where are kids are going to school is our first and our last stand. I still feel that so strongly.

Inspired by the grassroots highway battle, the BOND parents brought to the Council for Intown Neighborhoods and Schools a renewed commitment to the next stage in the civil rights movement, public education.

Ansley Park, Morningside, and Virginia-Highland mothers, like Syd Janney, who were moving into their neighborhoods and joining CINS in the eighties, shared these same political values and deep

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465 After staying at home with her two children for four years, Midge Sweet returned to work as a consultant. She spent the next eight years working on getting economic justice for minority and women-owned businesses. The firm conducted economic statistical analysis-based disparity studies on contracting that went to women and African-American businesses.

466 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
belief in public education as the foundation of American democracy, which the civil rights activists had imagined. Janney explains the origins of her beliefs:

I grew up in a small southern town, Holly Hill, South Carolina, that did not completely integrate until the year after I graduated from high school in 1970. It’s a small place with a very big black to white disparity, and my parents, along with other so-called leaders in town, took it upon themselves because integration was coming to found the Holly Hill Academy, which was in affect their reaction to integration.\textsuperscript{467}

While her parents supported the new segregationist school, Janney started college at Furman University, where she majored in political science. As she listened to her professors, she found herself drawing on the lessons she had learned growing up in the Baptist Church and began to question her parents’ mindset. At eighteen, Janney just recoiled internally against what she realized her parents were doing. “I love my parents and my hometown, but I started wondering, what if the community, the whole community, had instead of trying to create a separate academy truly participated in integrating the school system? What would have happened instead? My father was very political and very Republican, which in South Carolina is the way things are…my politics became very different.”\textsuperscript{468} As a “product of the public school system” she wanted her children to attend a public school. Janney explains the next step in her emerging activism:

I had come to believe that public education was the foundation of democracy, with all of the problems that public schools may present. I feel as strongly about that as I do about anything even in this complicated world that we live in. I was devoted to the idea that public schools is what sets American life apart. I know that sounds so pie in the sky, but that’s still the way I feel. Without the hope of good public schools then American ideals do not work.\textsuperscript{469}

In many ways she wanted her children to experience what she had growing up: the ability to walk to school and to meet friends from the neighborhood at the playfields. “That small town really gave me a great education, but it was a public education.” At the same time, she wanted for her children the values that her town had not embraced. “I wanted my kids to be exposed to people that were different from themselves, and that experience of meeting many different kinds of people, which unfortunately as a

\textsuperscript{467} Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
\textsuperscript{468} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{469} Ibid.
southerner diversity means black and white, is what a public schools is about.” So after moving into their new home and sending her oldest child off to kindergarten, Morningside mother Syd Janney came to the public schools with the “baggage of wanting to prove her parents wrong.”

In the fall of 1988, she joined the PTA. The Janney’s neighbors across the street on East Morningside Drive, Jackie and David Tatum, were the co-presidents that year. They very quickly felt a part of the school community because of their neighbors. Though the Tatum’s chose differently and sent their children on to private school after Morningside, through that friendship and the PTA Syd Janney “quickly got in with the tried and true that felt the same way [she] did. There were a lot of strong parents that had paved the way…some really creative mothers, many of whom gathered every Wednesday morning after eight o’clock at the American Roadhouse. We talked about the public schools…so many of the people going to those coffees were motivated, smart and passionate. We all wanted the experience of our children and the other children in the school system to be successful…the coffee group was also how the organizations cross-pollinated. It was sort of unofficial leadership training.” For the next fifteen years, she met the other mothers for coffee and got to know the parents that had children, who were just ahead of her two. Janney really came to respect the sacrifices they made “to raise the quality for all kids at the next school up.” From this group, she was invited to join CINS, where she met mothers from the BOND neighborhoods whose politics and values she deeply shared. They became each other’s support network, while also cultivating the leadership that the community needed to bring a new type of campaign to the city.

5.2 A Project to Promote Excellence

In the spring of 1984, parents that had moved into the gentrifying neighborhoods and attended the CINS open house considered all their schooling options. In addition to the northside private schools, the couples looked at the nearby St. Thomas More, Galloway School, and the Paideia School before consider-

470 Ibid.
471 Ibid.
ing Mary Lin Elementary or the Morningside-CW Hill pairing. Midge Sweet recalls that she and her husband did go look at the private schools:

I really wanted to see why people were so nervous, what was making them anxious about Mary Lin and to see what the choices were. We even went and spoke with Paul Bianchi, the headmaster, and toured Paideia. It’s a great school, but even when I looked at it I said this isn’t that revolutionary…I didn’t see them as any more exciting or innovative than what we could do in public schools.\(^\text{472}\)

Those parents, who did decide to enroll their children at Mary Lin or Morningside, were frustrated by the rigidity of the curriculum and instructional methods. Many of the families had been active in their neighborhood’s babysitting co-op or attended one of the city’s church-sponsored or cooperative preschools, including the Cliff Valley School and the Inman Park Cooperative Preschool, where their children had thrived in nurturing environments that focused on the individual child and learning through discovery and play.\(^\text{473}\) They could not understand how teachers expected children to sit at their desks all day long, or in the “good kindergarten class” get to bring the blocks and paints out only once a week.\(^\text{474}\) The learning environment and the attitude of the teachers, their unwillingness to change, proved to be too much. Those parents that had chosen to move into the gentrifying neighborhoods and send their children to the paired CW Hill-Morningside schools or the merged Mary Lin-Moreland districts, where enrollment had stabilized at between fifty and seventy percent African-American, ultimately withdrew them between the fourth and sixth grades.

In the fall of 1984, a group of young mothers, whose children were in kindergarten and first grade at Mary Lin Elementary School, decided to set up a meeting with the school system’s curriculum coordinators to discuss their frustrations. As a group, they were deeply committed to the value that parental involvement brought to public education. Just three years earlier, they had founded the Inman Park Coop-

\(^{472}\) Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
\(^{473}\) The Cliff Valley School was a progressive, cooperative preschool that was founded in 1966 by parents at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta. The Inman Park Cooperative Preschool was founded in 1981 by parents from the neighborhood that separated from the Inman Park Methodist Church’s “Mother’s Morning Out” program. “Lecture series sponsored by the Inman Park Cooperative Preschool,” Inman Park Advocate, February 1985; Betsy Johnson and Joe Drolet, “Focus on…Our Schools: Inman Park Cooperative Preschool,” Inman Park Advocate, January 1989.
\(^{474}\) Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
ervative Preschool (IPCP). They decided that if they could open a preschool, then they could get into their children’s classrooms and make the public schools’ curriculum better than the city’s private schools.

Midge Sweet recalls their meeting with the science curriculum coordinator down at the board office:

She was this lovely, African-American woman, and I started by saying, “What are we doing in science for kids? What are they learning?” It just seemed like a great age to have fish and guppies, to make crazy things with materials and to not having to worry about outcomes. Where science and art merge, and its an intellectual and creative process to get everybody to succeed. She was getting very frustrated with me because I was saying, “But what exactly?” Then she put down her notebook and said, “This. This is what they are learning on this paper.” “I don’t quite understand.” I’m leafing through it, and she said, “This is the section about what they’re going to learn. Like here. Here is a rectangle, and they are going to learn about rectangles. And this is the material.” I said, “So they are going to read about rectangles?” And she said, “Yes.” “So they’re not going to make anything?” She said, “No. This is it.” I was truly stunned. It was 1984. I just said, “This can’t be possible. Do you have children?” “Well, yes I do.” “Where do they go to school?” I’m thinking, ok, we’ll go see what they are doing. “Westminster.” And I thought let me assure you; your children are not reading about rectangles. I said, “That’s the problem. We want, and we deserve and will have the same education that the kids at Westminster are getting.” There’s no reason for this. Public education means excellency. It doesn’t mean the dredges. It doesn’t mean less. It means more because we get all of these wonderful kids together.

The meeting had been a debacle. The mothers were heartbroken but also angry. “I was young. I was twenty-nine as a kindergarten mom…my husband tells me I was pretty aggressively rude, but I really wanted change.”476 They were not going to pull their children out of public school. The mothers decided to start by supplementing the curriculum. By the end of the year they had added a series of Friday science projects that entailed one of the mothers going to the Farmers’ Market and buying fish for the children to dissect. Before Midge Sweet’s second child had started at Mary Lin, the parents had constructed an outdoor learning center behind the school.477 They were not going to wait for the school system to change; they were going to make Mary Lin Elementary School the model for every school in the city. They were going to win.478

475 Ibid.
476 Ibid.
478 In addition to funding field trips and electives, including drama and puppetry activities, the strong Mary Lin PTA brought U.S. Congressman John Lewis to the school to talk at the Martin Luther King assembly about growing up black in the United States and founded a “buddy system” that paired students of opposite races together so they could spend a weekend at each other’s homes. These parents, or what principal Barbara Nayer called the school’s...
Mothers are Morningside were just as persistent. Chris Carlsten had joined the Morningside-CW Hill PTA when her oldest daughter started school in the fall of 1980, the same year that Morningside added a second kindergarten class. Coming from the babysitting co-op and the Cliff Valley School, she expected the same quality of education, and with the group of mothers that she had met through the neighborhood began funding artists-in-residence and teaching creative movement, physical education, and drama classes. “It was the mothers. It was a sense of coalition that this was what we had to do.”479 By the time Tricia Deitz’s oldest child had started kindergarten in 1986, “The PTA at Morningside was pretty effective at raising money. We were able to pay for an art teacher, a music teacher, and an extra foreign language experience for the students.”480 Two years later when Syd Janney’s older child started kindergarten, she found a strong PTA and an expectation that parents, in large part because so many of the mothers due to their spouses’ jobs had the time and ability to be in the school, could make qualitative differences through volunteering and fundraising.481 The parents that had brought enrichment programs to Mary Lin and Morningside were determined that the curriculum and instruction in the public schools was going to rival that of the city’s best private schools.482

On February 2, 1984, CINS president Nancy Hamilton attended a luncheon at Georgia State University’s Urban Life Dining Room that was being put on by Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education. Hamilton had been invited to represent CINS, which was a founding member of APPLE Corps. She sat in the audience of more than 300 parents, educators, and citizens and listened to the guest speaker, Dr. Ernest Boyer, who was the President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, con-

479 Interview with Chris Carlsten, December 13, 2011.
480 Interview with Tricia Deitz, December 14, 2011.
481 Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
gratulate Atlanta for being a leader among urban school systems. He spoke of the need to affirm the value of good teaching.\textsuperscript{483} At the end of the lecture, there was a time for questions.

We had Ernest Boyer come as one of the Speakers of Note, and at the end of his talk there were some questions. A guy at the back of the room that I think was actually a Cobb County school superintendent, said, “What do you do about the terrible teachers?” Dr. Boyer responded, “I find if you reward your best teachers, the other teachers will take care of themselves.” Then he said, “It's surprising what a small amount of money, put in the hands of a teacher, say $500 or $200, can do. Teachers spend a lot of money out of their own pockets to buy what the school district can’t supply. If you do a small grants program to teachers, it’s amazing what kind of response you will get.”\textsuperscript{484}

Nancy Hamilton left the luncheon inspired.

At the next CINS meeting in the Mary Lin Elementary School library on April 26, 1984, she proposed to the board that they found a Fund for Excellence in Teaching. The purpose of the fund would be “for us as a community to support and encourage teachers in pursuing opportunities for professional and intellectual growth.”\textsuperscript{485} The board agreed with Hamilton; the key to creating great public schools was effective and creative teaching supported by the intown community. They set a fundraising goal of $10,000 and decided that $200 mini-grants would be awarded annually to CINS schools for specific classroom or library projects, guest lecturers, field trips, or special equipment. Each fall, teachers and librarians interested in applying would submit a detailed plan, and a panel of judges would then review the applications and select the best from each school.

Before the end of the school year, fundraising was underway. A CINS representative from each neighborhood focused on collecting donations for the newly established FET account.\textsuperscript{486} Chris Carlsten, who was serving as CINS treasurer for the school year, agreed to oversee the fundraising campaign. Carlsten recalls:

I’d had several friends who had been president of CINS, including Trisha Senterfitt, so I got involved. The first real position that I held was to sit down and help organize the grants to teachers program. Nancy Hamilton asked me to help with the fundraising… I’d

\textsuperscript{484} Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
\textsuperscript{485} “Fund for Excellence in Teaching,” two-page proposal, 1984-1985, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
\textsuperscript{486} Carol Craig represented Inman Park, Candler Park, and Lake Claire, Kit Young represented Ansley Park, Jane Bagwell represented Midtown, Nancy Hamilton represented Virginia-Highland, and Larrie Del Martin represented Morningside-Lenox Park.
call realtors, I'd call restaurants, I'd call all of the local businesses and say here's a way to support our local public schools...for the most part the [teachers] were underfunded and having to provide their own materials for anything they did. We thought that as a community, we could provide those materials.\textsuperscript{487}

By the fall, they had raised nearly $4,000.\textsuperscript{488} On October 1, 1984, the winners of the first annual FET were announced at the monthly CINS meeting.\textsuperscript{489} The success of the Funds for Excellence in Teaching, which was inspired by a single question from the audience at a 1984 luncheon, became CINS most recognized project for promoting the excellence education offered in the public schools. The teacher grants program “really helped everyone feel more a part of the community and also feel better about the educational opportunities their children had.”\textsuperscript{490} Awarded to all the CINS schools, the teacher grants tried to “equalize the schools...there were so many schools in CINS that didn’t have PTAs and didn’t have the resources that we had at Morningside. So the teacher grants, awarded through CINS, helped out the teachers at those schools that didn’t have the parents like we had a at Morningside or Mary Lin.”\textsuperscript{491} “We were all there for the same reason, to raise the level for all kids in all of the schools. They weren’t equal. We all knew that there were discrepancies among some schools in the cluster and were going to lessen those discrepancies.”\textsuperscript{492} For mothers like Midge Sweet, Chris Carlsten, Tricia Deitz, Syd Janney, and Nancy Hamilton, the CINS grants program had brought their vision of what public education was capable of offering to the entire Grady cluster. In 1986 the success of the mini-grants took Hamilton to APPLE

\textsuperscript{487} Interview with Chris Carlsten, December 13, 2011.
\textsuperscript{488} Funds came from the Ansley Park Civic Association, Candler Park Civic Association, Inman Park Restoration, Inc., Midtown Neighborhood Association, Morningside-Lenox Park Civic Association, and Virginia-Highland Civic Association, along with local businesses and corporations with Midtown offices, including Citicorp, Mead Packaging, Southern Bell, and Trust Company Bank. “CINS agenda,” April 26, 1984, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “CINS minutes,” April 26, 1984, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “Excellence in Teaching,” Inman Park Advocate, August 1984; “School council starts fund for teaching,” Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1984, page 7.
\textsuperscript{489} The next year the grants program was expanded to include the new CINS-member schools, John Hope Elementary and Walden Middle Schools, and raised an additional $1,000 to bring the total amount distributed to nearly $5,000. “CINS minutes,” October 18, 1984, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “CINS initiates grants program,” Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, December 1984; “CINS minutes,” May 23, 1985, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “CINS minutes,” October 17, 1985, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); Nancy Hamilton, “CINS has active year,” Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Spring 1986.
\textsuperscript{490} Interview with Chris Carlsten, December 13, 2011.
\textsuperscript{491} Interview with Tricia Deitz, December 14, 2011.
\textsuperscript{492} Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
Corps, where she would oversee a citywide grants program funded by the Junior League of Atlanta and modeled after the original CINS project.493

In the early eighties just over 200 children from the historically white, intown neighborhoods boarded the bus each day and made the fifteen-minute ride south across Ponce de Leon Avenue to CW Hill Elementary School. Another 200 children from the historically black neighborhoods similarly gathered at CW Hill each morning. Then just before school started, the convoy of buses left Bedford Pines and the Old Fourth Ward and drove north through the neighborhoods to Morningside Elementary School. The Morningside-CW Hill pairing remained the only mandatory, court-ordered busing of students in the city.494 Those white, middle-class intown parents who chose to enroll their children in public school found that the system of pairing worked well. The quality of instruction and the curriculum was excellent. The parents loved their principal Dr. Paula Calhoun and the dedicated teachers. The CW Hill facility was new and modern. Some children actually came home after the first day of fourth grade and asked their parents why their new school, the historically ‘white’ Morningside Elementary School, was so old?495 For the younger children, the bus rides from the neighborhood to school ranked up there with the best part of their day after recess.496 More importantly, the parents felt that the real-world diversity their children experienced, which could only be achieved through busing, was an equally important part of their education. Yet ten years after the pairing began, all the work put in by the CW Hill-Morningside parent-teacher associations, the neighborhoods’ education committees, and CINS to make these two elementary schools the best in the Atlanta school system came under threat.

School board representative Joe Martin, whose youngest child, Daniel, had just started first grade at CW Hill Elementary School, faced a quandary. The renovation and expansion of Inman Middle School, which placed it in compliance with the system’s new organizational grade-level structure, when com-

493 “CINS minutes,” September 18, 1986, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
494 The majority-to-minority transfer program that the NAPPS schools depended upon was voluntary.
495 Interview with Judith Powell, October 11, 2007.
496 Janet Ward, “Future limited for paired schools,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Intown Extra), date unknown, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
pleted in the fall of 1985 would move all intown sixth grade students to the school. This left Morningside Elementary School too small to continue receiving state funds.

The Board adopted a five-year plan in May regarding city schools. The plan included an annotation to indicate that Hill and Morningside are paired schools. But it also adopted a form of organization by which elementary schools would include grades K through 5, middle schools would include grades 6 through 8 and high schools would be grades 9 through 12. The pairing of Hill and Morningside is not consistent with the new organization. When that occurs, the pairing will be inconsistent with the overall plan for the schools. We're committed to the cause of racial integration. Right now, I'm staunchly opposed to any arbitrary decision that would undo what we've accomplished through this pairing.497

Enrollment had finally stabilized and the pairing was maintaining close to a fifty-fifty black-white racial composition at CW Hill, a predominantly black school district, and Morningside, a predominantly white school district.498 The rezoning of sixth grade students from Morningside to Inman eliminated the balance of demographics and enrollment achieved by the pairing. Parents like Joe and Larrie Del Martin, Trisha and Jack Senterfitt, and Chris and Jon Carlsten did not want to give up on their commitment to integration. The majority of families from their neighborhood balked at the suggestion of moving all kindergarten students to CW Hill and third grade students to Morningside. CINS members recognized it was critical “to keep kindergarten close by in each neighborhood” if the neighborhood school concept was going to continue stabilizing and improving the gentrifying, intown neighborhoods.499

Despite protests by a small group of families from the Old Fourth Ward at the May 6, 1985 community meeting of the Atlanta School Board, in which CW Hill parents Claudia Wynn, Irish Thomas, and Edith Hollas presented their concerns that the end of the pairing would make an all black school and impact the quality of instruction their children received, the school board had made its decision.500 In September 1985, after the two-phase, $4 million renovation and expansion was completed rising sixth grade students from Morningside Elementary, CW Hill Elementary, Home Park Elementary, Fowler Street Elementary, and Mary Lin Elementary were rezoned to Inman Middle School and the pairing was ended.

497 Ibid.
498 Ibid.
499 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
The new Morningside and CW Hill school zones were separated by Ponce de Leon Avenue, which had since the turn of the century served as a de facto divide between the city’s black and white neighborhoods. Senterfitt recalls the impact of the ending of the pairing on enrollment:

It broke my heart when they unpaired the schools, and I know it killed Joe…enrollment doubled at Morningside after the pairing ended, but they didn’t stay [through Inman]. My strong feeling is that it was about race, not safety, not academics…that’s racism. Those parents didn’t really care about that neighborhood school. They wanted their kids there as long as it’s safe, and what was safe? Away from black kids. It was not about education.

That fall Chris Carlsten’s oldest daughter started fifth grade at Morningside Elementary School. She and her husband were disappointed that their younger daughter was not going to get the wonderful experience that the pairing had offered. “We all actually felt very disappointed that the pairing wasn’t going on anymore simply because the friendships that were built by those kids at an early age held them through Inman in a lot of ways and when that wasn’t there, the culture shock of going from a mostly white to a then predominately black school hit a lot harder.” Despite the regret of parents like the Senterfitts or Carlstens, the effect was overnight and undeniable. Between 1985 and 1990, Morningside Elementary School doubled in size.

Intown parents like Sallie and Bruce Weddell, who had enrolled their oldest child in private school, took a second look at the nearby Morningside Elementary School. “When my daughter came along a little bit later. I observed again and sat in on classes, and I felt comfortable [at] Morningside. By that time there was no pairing.” Their daughter started at Morningside Elementary School, but like many of their neighbors in Ansley Park they made the decision to shift her to the Paideia School, where her brother was thriving. The private school’s unusual structure with its non-grading, individual tutoring, smaller classes, and emphasis on respecting each child’s learning style appealed to them.

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502 Interview with Trisha Senterfitt, October 13, 2011.
503 Interview with Chris Carlsten, December 13, 2011.
504 Enrollment rose from 320 students to 635 students.
505 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
506 Ibid.
There’s so much unevenness, and the public schools unfortunately tend to separate the kids out and track them too early. They don’t have enough resources, and the good teachers try to do as much as they can. In schools with a lot of support, they are able to do a lot more. In the private schools, if there is a problem, tutoring is easily arranged and that’s what kids need in those early years. She spent some time at Morningside, but she really blossomed at Paideia.\(^507\)

Weddell knew that Paideia was able to provide her children with the support they needed to thrive because it had “more money, more funding.”\(^508\)

The Carlstens made a similar decision and transferred their daughters to the nearby Paideia School.

Brooke was going to go into seventh grade, and she had a good year in sixth grade. Then one of her friends died. I just thought that is more violent death that I have ever experienced in my life, and here my kid, she’s ten years old and had this experience. I just felt like I needed to protect her…she begged to be pulled from school, so we sent her to Paideia.\(^509\)

Like the Weddells, they found the problems and struggles that the diverse student body brought to Inman too be too much. “It really had not been initially, but there were a couple of things that happened, in particularly the death of a second student [from the Techwood Homes housing project], which really came out of their poverty. It was such a contrast to the experience that most of the kids in Morningside, Ansley Park, and Virginia-Highland were coming from…I felt terrible pulling my kid out of public school. I felt absolutely terrible about it.”\(^510\) When Inman principal Betty Strickland called Chris Carlsten at home and asked her why she was pulling her daughters out, she struggled to explain. “She’s had two kids from her homeroom die. I just feel like I need to protect her.”\(^511\) The reality was it went far beyond that, and the

\(507\) Ibid.
\(508\) Ibid. After enrolling her children in private school, Sallie Weddell remained a supporter of public education and through her volunteer work with the League of Women Voters of Atlanta-Fulton County conducted a study on teacher tenure and the Georgia Quality Basic Education Act. Because of her work with the LWV, APPLE Corps director and Ansley Park resident, Marcia Klenbort, hired her part-time to work on the organization’s newsletter, School Talk, as the issues director about the same time that Nancy Hamilton, then past-CINS president, was hired to start a citywide grants program.
\(509\) Interview with Chris Carlsten, December 13, 2011.
\(511\) Ibid.
Carlstens felt like they had betrayed their very basic values. While Paideia offered a wonderful opportunity, by the end of middle school, both girls had asked their parents to let them return to the public schools. Their oldest daughter would graduate from North Fulton High School’s International studies magnet program, with which she traveled to England three times, while their youngest was drawn to Grady High School’s communications magnet.

For the parents, like the Weddells and Carlstens, who wanted to stay in the public schools and had worked with their neighborhood association’s education committee and CINS to improve and support public education, the diversity proved to be too much. It wasn’t racism; it wasn’t integration that parents feared. Those families that started their children at Morningside and Mary Lin believed in public education, but they ended up doing what they thought was best for their children. As the percentage of children coming to the schools from public housing, including Techwood/Clark Howell, U-Rescue Vista and John Hope Homes, rose at Inman and then Grady, teachers were challenged with meeting the needs of students that were less academically prepared. Even for white parents, like the Moores, that kept their children in the public schools, Inman and Grady were a real struggle. “We had some had bad experiences at Inman, but we were there and at Grady. I would have stuck it out [if we had not moved]. I was such a strong proponent of public schools...at Inman, my younger son had a terrible mathematics teacher, and he ended up getting a Ph.D. in engineering. Math was what he loved, but she almost destroyed him. At Grady, my older son didn’t get the attention he needed. They couldn’t give that to him.”

During the eighties, even as Morningside and Mary Lin maintained two of the only naturally integrated student bodies in the city, intown families continued to leave the public schools when they reached Inman Middle School and Grady High School. What “really became very clear was people’s personal history of schooling, their experiences, their religious beliefs, sense of social standing and what was important to them.”

On April 26, 1984 the CINS board had decided during their monthly meeting at Mary Lin Elementary School to make the open house an annual event. The following September, inspired by the im-

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512 Interview with Faye Moore, December 19, 2011.
513 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
mensely successful NAPPS week at Lenox Square, they looked into the possibility of moving the event to Colony Square but decided that the open house was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the renovated but struggling Inman Middle School to the community.514 On the evening of March 14, 1985, current and prospective parents from the neighborhoods north of Virginia-Highland turned down Monroe Drive. Families coming from the neighborhoods southeast of Virginia-Highland drove north along Moreland Avenue through Little Five Points, where local merchants had formed a partnership four years earlier to support the restoration of the retail strip. After crossing over Ponce de Leon, they turned left and bypassed the small Atkins Park district of Virginia-Highland. Driving along North Highland Avenue, they passed the reviving, commercial strip where new restaurants, bars, and shops had opened. Finding that the school parking lot on Virginia Avenue was already overflowing, they navigated their cars through the narrow side streets of the Virginia-Highland neighborhood searching for parking. As couples looked for open street parking, they admired the renovated bungalows, which surrounded the school. Next to subdivided rental property and homes needing a fresh coat of paint, homeowners along Virginia Avenue had prepared for the open house by cutting grass, placing flowers on their porches, and putting away their children’s bicycles. After parking their cars, the families joined parents from the neighborhood that were walking to the school. They pushed strollers and held the hands of their youngest children. Older students ran up and down the sidewalk looking for friends.

Tucked back in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood, the two-phase expansion and renovation of the sixty-year-old building had been completed that fall while students and faculty temporarily met at Grady High School. The neighborhood and CINS had worked with the architect to modernize the facility while maintaining its 1920s character. Parents approaching along Virginia Avenue passed the new play-fields encircled by beautifully laid out rock walls and took in the new addition. The second annual CINS Open House showcased Inman Middle School, which all intown sixth graders were to begin attending in

514 “CINS minutes,” April 26, 1984, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “CINS minutes,” November 15, 1984, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
September 1985 (Figure 14). The families took their seats in the new gymnasium. CINS president Nancy Hamilton welcomed them to the annual open house. This is an “opportunity for the community to come in and see what the schools are doing, and to get to know the host school as a facility.” She then introduced Inman principal, Betty Strickland, who thanked the community for its continued support of Inman Middle School. She followed her welcoming comments with an informative talk on the philosophy of middle schools, titled “Bridging the Gap.” Parents and children spent the next hour examining the photographs, artwork, and writing projects that were on display from each school. Between the displays, parents could also admire exhibits of classroom projects that were funded by the new CINS-sponsored “Fund for Excellence in Teaching”. They met with principals, teachers, and parents and asked questions about

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515 “The Atlanta Public Schools announce opening plans,” Atlanta Inquirer, September 1, 1984, Page 5.
the curriculum, test scores, and the gifted classes. Finally, those parents that were interested could take a tour of the renovated school.\textsuperscript{517}

5.3 A Project to Promote Diversity

As CINS president Nancy Hamilton and Tricia Deitz’s oldest children moved through middle school, they watched as parental involvement tapered off. Deitz explains, “[By the late eighties,] Morningside was like a private school in the sense that there were so many families that put their kids there, but they slowly dropped away, particularly as you got to middle school because Inman, for a lot of parents, was scary. It pulled kids not like their kids from other neighborhoods and was seen as being not quite as good as Morningside.”\textsuperscript{518} Hamilton was aghast and frustrated by parents’ decision. When interviewed in 1985, she argued to one local reporter:

> Citizens have a responsibility to be concerned about the quality of public education. Public education is the great equalizer, the means through which people of all socioeconomic levels have been able to achieve in this society. If you don't support the public schools, either by sending your child to private schools or just by talking down the public school system, then you are, in essence, not supporting society.\textsuperscript{519}

It wasn’t enough to demonstrate to white, middle-class families living in the intown neighborhoods that their public schools provided the best teachers and an excellent education. As the geographic boundaries of the school zones widened and families were drawn in from public housing, apartments, and the historically poorer, African-American neighborhoods of Bedford Pines and the Old Fourth Ward, the ability of parents to be involved in the schools and to contribute time and financial support was limited. These were parents who worked hard but could not always take time off to volunteer in the school or attend a monthly, noon meeting that rotated among the Grady cluster of schools. At Inman, Hamilton saw the impact as her son tried to select a high school.

> His experience was listing three magnet schools he would be specifically interested in learning about and then it got down to the point where he could only choose one of those

\textsuperscript{517} Invitation for March 14, 1985 CINS Open House, “The Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools invites you to an Open House on the theme of ‘Our Intown Schools: A Commitment to Quality’,” Joe Martin Papers (privately held).

\textsuperscript{518} Interview with Tricia Deitz, December 14, 2011.

\textsuperscript{519} Robertson, “CINS: On the Pulse of Public Education.”
She went to the CINS Board to discuss her experience. They came to realize it was a common problem across the city’s neighborhoods. While the PTAs provided curriculum supplements in the areas of science, music, the arts, and physical education and CINS was supporting teachers through the Fund for Excellence in Teaching, changing citywide middle school policies was an entirely different undertaking and outside the scope of the grassroots strategies parents had adopted in the early eighties.

Invigorated by the success of their first open house and the mini-grants program, a small committee was formed to discuss the dissemination of magnet school information to all middle school students in the city. The Midtown Business Association hosted the committee’s first meeting on November 29, 1984. Committee members discussed how CINS could publicize and recruit students to the magnet schools. White families that might otherwise move outside the city or move their children to one of the city’s private schools might consider small, highly reputable magnet programs: North Fulton’s International Studies, Northside’s Performing Arts, or Grady’s Communication. They decided to focus on distributing informational brochures and organizing a middle school forum so that students and parents could learn about all their options. The Midtown Business Association offered to assist in the design and publication of the brochures.

After their immensely successful open house at Inman Middle School in March 1985, CINS took its ideas to the Atlanta Board of Education. They presented two proposals to the Board of Education: the publication and distribution of a magnet school brochure to all middle school students and a forum so that students could hear presentations by each magnet school. School board members responded enthusiastically. CINS president Nancy Hamilton, vice-president Kit Young, and Midtown Business Association executive director Susan Mendheim turned their attention to compiling information and writing the brochure with the hope that it could be distributed to students by May. However, they quickly ran into bureaucratic delays. Despite individual school board members’ support, getting official approval was a

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520 Ibid.
521 “CINS minutes,” November 15, 1984, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
struggle. While they waited on the administration’s go-ahead, the Midtown Business Association completed the type setting of the brochure. Other Midtown-based corporations that were community supporters of CINS offered their services; IBM provided the graphics, and Southern Bell agreed to print the brochure in the fall.  

Frustrated by the school system, the CINS board decided to make their primary objective for the 1985-1986 school year promoting Atlanta’s magnet schools. Ansley Park mother Tricia Deitz took over the publication of the magnet school brochures. When final approval was received, she coordinated the printing with Southern Bell and organized CINS members to put labels, which had been provided by the school system, on the brochures. Beginning in January 1986, the first mailing of magnet school brochures to all seventh and eighth graders was out. Deitz recalls, “The magnet program with APS was open to any student so the brochure became something that [magnet coordinator] Kay Earnhardt could take when she visited other schools and another way to get the word out about what was happening at Grady and the communications magnet. It was wonderful.” On the evening of March 20, 1986, CINS and the Inman Middle School parent-teacher association sponsored a magnet school forum. After listening to presentations on the twelve magnet programs, students and their parents signed up for sessions on the two or three they were interested in learning more about. Teachers and magnet school coordinators answered questions

522 The Midtown Business Association’s support and involvement in the intown public schools continued, and the following year the business group adopted Inman Middle School. “CINS minutes,” May 23, 1985, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); Nancy Hamilton, CINS president, Letter to Ms. Susan Mendheim, Executive Director, Midtown Business Association, CC: Dr. Elizabeth Feely, Mr. Joseph G. Martin, Ms. Ina Evans, January 15, 1986, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); Joseph G. Martin, Jr., District 3 School Board member, Memorandum to Dr. Alonzo A. Crim, March 3, 1986, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “Midtown Business Association adopts Inman Middle School,” Atlanta Daily World, June 18, 1987, page 6.

523 Tricia Deitz continued to oversee the mailing of the magnet school brochures each January for the next two years. “CINS agenda,” October 16, 1986, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); “CINS minutes,” January 21, 1988, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).

524 Interview with Tricia Deitz, December 14, 2011.

525 The invitation was also extended to all BOND families, which were being rezoned to Grady High School when Bass High School was closed at the end of the year. Joe Martin, “Update on our schools,” Inman Park Advocate, September 1986.
about the curriculum and admissions process. A year later, the magnet school forum for Inman Middle School students was expanded into a citywide magnet school fair held at Colonial Square in Midtown. Under the leadership of president Nancy Hamilton, the CINS board moved their open house from Inman Middle School back to Grady High School and from March to April so it could be held in conjunction with the two-year-old magnet school-sponsored Dionysia festival, at which students displayed their artwork and literary pieces and performed dramas and music from the four periods in art and literature that had spent a year studying: classical, medieval, renaissance, and modern. CINS members wanted the third annual open house to reach out to families that had moved into the gentrifying neighborhoods and demonstrate to the community that through innovative teaching and exciting curriculum opportunities the in-town schools were achieving excellence in the classroom. The very best of public education could be found at the Grady School of Communications, which had grown to 131 students. They distributed new CINS brochures with invitations to the open house (Figure 15 and Figure 16).

On April 13, 1986, parents and children from the CINS schools walked the halls of the 1924 neoclassical building designed by noted Atlanta architect, Philip Shutze. They viewed school display boards and FET winners' exhibits and listened to the combined elementary, middle, and high school choruses perform against a backdrop of the magnet school students’ most notable projects and best performances.

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528 In 1986, the first theme, a “Commitment to Quality,” was replaced with “Images of Excellence.”
Six of the students had been selected to participate in the Governor’s Honors Program (GHP) that summer, which constituted the highest contingency of students from any Atlanta high school.\footnote{“CINS minutes,” May 15, 1986, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).} On that Sunday afternoon, hundreds of parents who might never consider public education beyond the early
elementary years learned that the Grady School of Communications had received a $35,000 grant for “Excellence in Education.” Families, like the Deitzs and the Moores, began to get a sense of what was offered within the Grady cluster beyond their neighborhood elementary schools. “I got involved early on

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when our kids were in elementary school, so that was a good way to see what we were going to be facing down the road and made me even more supportive…the CINS open house and Dionysia brought parents over to Grady” to showcase the school’s strong magnet program as the final destination.533 “We did a big celebration with Grady. I remember my children participating and being able to meet with all the schools. It was really an introduction into Inman and Grady. It was a good continuity.”534

In May 1986 CINS president-elect Chris Carlsten began putting together a proposal and in September applied for a Metropolitan Atlanta Foundation grant to bring the magnet school quality of instruction to the intown middle schools. The $1,400 grant enabled the organization to expand its annual open house and festival to include the Grady cluster’s two middle schools. Patterned after Dionysia, the new Walden Middle School and struggling Inman Middle School linked their curriculums to the Grady School of Communications magnet.535 As part of these efforts, in the week leading up to the April 26, 1987 open house, middle school students took field trips to Grady’s Dionysia festival where their classes attended Grady magnet student performances and spoke with the high school students about what they had learned. The students spent the month of May developing their own projects. The Walden festival focused on collecting and writing oral histories from the Sweet Auburn District, while the Inman festival developed around writing, dramas, and musical productions that answered the question, “Who am I?” The lead teachers in charge of planning worked with Inman Principal Ms. Betty Strickland and Walden principal Mr. Morrison to design the festivals as a model that could also be followed in the elementary schools the following year.536

533 Interview with Tricia Deitz, December 14, 2011.
534 Interview with Faye Moore, December 19, 2011.
535 “CINS minutes,” September 18, 1986, Joe Martin Papers (privately held).
By the late eighties, the impact of their efforts was beginning to show. Parent participation no longer precariously dropped off. The Inman Middle School PTA and the Grady High School PTSA actively worked with the principals and neighborhood associations to increase community support for both schools. The parents, like the Deitzs, that had been active in their elementary schools moved into the middle school parents’ organization and at the high school level became an essential ingredient for the success of the Grady School of Communication. “It was just this attitude. We didn’t feel like we were sacrificing our kids, that they were going to be in any danger, and it is just something that continues to be there. We believe in public schools.” Each year, new mothers were invited to join Tricia Deitz and her close group of friends at American Roadhouse on Wednesday mornings. “There were always those whose kids were just starting at Morningside. I think it helped strengthen their desire that this might work at Inman. A lot of the women in that group were pretty big movers and shakers.” The impact of the “same group” of mothers that first met through their neighborhoods’ babysitting co-ops, frequently joined the League of Women Voters, and became PTA president at Morningside, Mary Lin, or Inman before joining CINS or possibly the APPLE Corps board was shattering. Enrollment at Inman and Grady stabilized.

Then in 1988, Inman Middle School was recognized as a Georgia School of Excellence.

That same year a major $4.5 million renovation of Grady High School was completed, which added a 500-seat theater and auditorium, air-conditioning in the main building and Eighth Street wing, replaced and installed Urban Design Commission-approved windows, cleaned the historic façade, installed a closed circuit television system, improved the art room, new science labs, and added a communi-

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538 Interview with Tricia Deitz, December 14, 2011.

539 Ibid.

540 Ibid.

cations wing with a large darkroom and desktop publishing area. Under the guidance of the School of Communication, Grady High School’s literary magazine, The Unmasking, which was founded in 1988 and its newsletter, The Southerner, which has been published ever month since its founding in 1947, grew in acclaim. The Georgia Scholastic Press Association at the University of Georgia annually recognized both publications as the winners of the “General Excellence Award” and the “Best Newspaper-Small High School” in the state. Test scores also dramatically improved, and the average SAT score on the verbal section rose from 350 in 1986 to 422 in 1990. A decade of community support that followed the hiring of Dr. Thomas Adger, the establishment of the magnet program under the leadership of coordinator Kay Earnhardt, and CINS’ prioritizing of the magnet school in the mid-eighties, propelled Grady High School forward. In 1991, it was recognized as a Georgia School of Excellence. The school’s turnaround was a direct result of the intown neighborhood commitment to promote excellence and diversity within the Grady cluster.

5.4 A Precursor: the Neighborhood Movement’s Political Resurgence

The eighties were also immensely frustrating. The promise of the sixties-style activism that had defeated the first highway battle and elected Joe Martin to the Board of Education in 1977 did not transform politics the way intown residents had envisioned. The second generation of families that were becoming active in CINS in the late eighties and early nineties, saw the impact of the ineffective administration when they demanded curriculum reforms or faced inexcusable delays getting the magnet school brochure approved. They observed the contentious school board meetings, which were characterized by underlying racism and internal fighting.

542 “CINS minutes,” November 21, 1985, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Winter 1987, Page 12; Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1987, Page 15; Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1988, Page 11; School Talk, February 1988.
543 “CINS minutes,” May 15, 1986, Joe Martin Papers (privately held); Inman Park Advocator, October 1989.
544 “High Schools That Work.”
545 Marie Martin, “Grady Hailed as the Atlanta School of Excellence,” The Southerner, December 17, 1990.
546 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
As the 1989 elections approached, the neighborhoods that made up CAUTION were focused on continuing their efforts to block the presidential parkway, which threatened to destroy their historic community and parks. After securing a promise from both mayoral candidates to oppose the road, they began to believe that they could win. Their battle was doing much more than halting the construction of a high-speed, limited access highway; it had brought together the homeowners and parents and inspired them to create a better community. For Inman Park mother Midge Sweet, who had founded the Inman Park Cooperative Preschool, spent six years on the Mary Lin PTA, and actively protested the parkway, the next fight was the school board.547 “I just woke-up one morning and thought this is crazy. I’m going to call and find out how I plunk my money down. It was really an amazing adventure. I’m not quite sure how I had the gumption to do it. I was just inspired.”548 She had seen what parents and a neighborhood were capable of accomplishing. They had affected the parkway. They had created a preschool. They had fought for integration and taken on the quality of public education being offered at Mary Lin Elementary School. Why not the Board of Education? On August 15, Sweet officially kicked off her campaign with a neighborhood party. A long-time community activist the BOND neighborhoods rallied behind her.549 The Inman Park neighborhood newsletter’s endorsement captured the growing sentiment that community activism could change local politics:

You have a rare opportunity to help the community, to help our children and to save tax dollars all at the same time. Midge Sweet, a longtime leader in education efforts, is running for the school board. Midge has been a leader of the Inman Park Preschool and at Mary Lin Elementary School. She has worked tirelessly for the betterment of our community. The school board has a budget of over $300 million and half of your property taxes go to the Atlanta Board of Education. Midge’s election would put a neighbor and friend on this nine-member board, benefitting you as a resident of Inman Park, and giving you a greater voice in the operation of public schools.550

547 The efforts by CAUTION, Inc. influenced the size and scale of the presidential parkway. Instead of a high-speed, limited access expressway, the Georgia Department of Transportation and City of Atlanta agreed to build a winding, divided, four-lane residential street from the Carter Center to Ponce de Leon. As part of the agreement, the “Great Park,” or the condemned lots that had been bulldozed as part of the future right-of-way, became Freedom National Park, which connected the Martin Luther King historic district with the Carter Center and parks designed by Frederick law Olmsted along Ponce de Leon Avenue. CAUTION’s victory also included turning the proposed route of the presidential parkway, which was to run alongside Mary Lin Elementary School, into a bike path.
548 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
At “meet and greets” all across the district friends and neighbors signed-up to volunteer. They called every registered voter, put up 3,000 yard signs, and distributed 75,000 brochures. Sweet canvassed the intown neighborhoods. Every night she attended community, civic, and church meetings. She spoke about children and how they could make Mary Lin Elementary School, Inman Middle School, Grady High School, and the School of Communications great.

On October 23, 1989, she and her husband walked into the Little Five Points Community Center. Once the neighborhood elementary school, it now served as their voting precinct. All day long, cars were seen parking along Austen Avenue and by 5:30 pm a line had formed. It was a landslide victory. Sweet’s election to the Atlanta Board of Education by District 1 voters suggested just what intown neighborhood support for the public schools was capable of accomplishing and acted as a forerunner to what came to be titled the neighborhood-led “Erase the board” and Chamber of Commerce-backed EduPAC campaign in 1993. Sweet explains, “There was a movement to change the public schools, and it took two rounds to get there. When I got on there, there were some new folks. John Elger was elected by the Buckhead neighborhoods. Some folks had not succeeded. Bill Sumner had run for Ina Evans seat and lost, but then [Morningside parent] Aaron Watson came back and won.”

After identifying the experiences that attracted a new generation of families to move intown and commit to integration, this chapter traced the development of the grassroots campaign by CINS mothers to promote educational reforms, which enriched the curriculum and celebrated the community’s diversity. By strategically tying their efforts to the values that the second highway battle and gentrification of the intown neighborhoods represented, this second generation developed the community-based strategies needed to mount a political movement for the 1989 school board race. Their success implementing educational reforms and in the 1989 election inspired APPLE Corps to adopt CINS-inspired programs citywide and found a political action committee.

552 Scott Henry, “30 years of the good, the bad and the weird-as-hell; A special feature to celebrate CL’s 30th birthday,” Creative Loafing, June 5, 2002.
553 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
It was early in the morning on Wednesday, November 12, 1980 when Marcia Klenbort parked her car near the Georgia Hill Community Center building. She was the first person to arrive at the APPLE Corps office. Klenbort carried bags of groceries from her car, as other board members heated up the large electric skillets that they had both brought from home. “We all brought our electric frying pans and scrambled eggs as fast as we broke them. I can still see [us] scrambling those eggs. We ended up blowing the fuses on the third floor! But we had a wonderful time.”

By 7:30 am, parents, their families, and principals had started arriving. Klenbort and the other APPLE Corps members served breakfast while the M.L. King Middle School’s concert band and ensemble performed. Regional director for the U.S. Department of Education William Lewis offered the keynote speech on “The Importance of Parent and Community Involvement in Public Education.” The crowd applauded as he concluded, “Parents are the most important source of help to the school system.” APPLE Corps president Goldie Johnson then welcomed Atlanta superintendent, Dr. Alonzo Crim, who presented each honoree with an award and thanked them for their time and commitment to improving public education. Superintendent Crim ended the first Golden Apple Awards breakfast by proclaiming November “Visit Your School Month.”

Just over a year after coming on as interim director and while working on plans for APPLE Corps’ first major publication, Marcia Klenbort had come to believe that the still relatively new organization needed to be more than be a resource center for existing parent and community groups. She had seen the Chamber of Commerce’s “Want to volunteer?” billboards, and the calls were still coming. Citizens were not calling the phone number to volunteer but to complain about the school system. She knew from her own time volunteering in the classrooms at Frank L. Stanton Elementary and later through the CW Hill-Morningside pairing that the schools with strong PTAs had an abundance of support. She hoped APPLE Corps could promote community involvement beyond wrapping paper sales and the traditional PTA-approach, particularly in those neighborhoods where few if any parents were volunteering in their chil-

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554 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
dren’s schools. She proposed to the board that APPLE Corps organize an annual breakfast and distribute awards to recognize those citizens, who were having a remarkable impact on public education.556

This chapter traces the implementation of a series of APPLE Corps-sponsored programs during the eighties: the annual “Golden Apple Awards” breakfast, the “Making Schools Work” and “Speakers of Note” series, and a citywide “Grants to Teachers” program. By 1985, APPLE Corps had emerged as a national model for promoting community volunteerism. The organization’s growing credibility enabled it to shape budget policymaking and run a citywide, get-out-the-vote campaign for education reform, which supported the Chamber of Commerce’s efforts to endorse and elect a slate of pro-neighborhood school board candidates in 1993.

6.1 A Reception

On February 2, 1982, 135 parents, citizens, and educators gathered in First Presbyterian Church’s fellowship hall, where APPLE Corps secretary Nancy Cunningham was a member. The Golden Apple Awards had more than doubled in size, and APPLE Corps members rushed to prepare breakfast in the church’s kitchen before the wife of Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, Jean Young, gave the keynote speech on the impact parents’ time and energy could have on the school system.557 Over the next several years, the event expanded from a small breakfast honoring school volunteers, including NAPPS and CINS founders, to a formal celebration at the downtown Rich’s Magnolia Room. The expansion of the program re-

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556 The first five honorees were: Mary Roberta Allen, Peyton Forest Elementary PTA, Southwest High PTA, and Atlanta Council of PTAS leader; Grady Bridges, Collier Heights PTA president; Charlotte Hale, “Committee for an Open School” member, CW Hill Elementary PTA, Morningside Elementary PTA, and Inman Middle PTA member, CINS founder and president, and APPLE Corps board member; Edith Hammond, member of “Randy Taylor’s committee,” NAPPS founder, past-Garden Hills and North Fulton PTA/PTSA president, North Fulton Advisory Committee founder, and NPU-B chair; and A.B. Padgett, a member of the Carver Comprehensive High Interagency Advisory Council or a group of social service, business and community organizations serving students and parents in southeast Atlanta. “People making good schools better—Golden Apple awards say thanks!,” School Talk, November 1980.

557 The six honorees were: Reverend Bob Bevis, First Presbyterian Church’s outreach minister and director of the Atlanta Christian Council’s tutoring program; Brenda Griffin, NAPPS founder, past-Morris Brandon Elementary PTA president, Sutton Middle Community Council board member, current co-President Northside PTA, and education chair for the League of Women Voters of Atlanta-Fulton County; Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, past-president of the Atlanta School Board; Edith McGrew, past-Dobbs Elementary room mother, North Fulton High School PTA president, and Atlanta Council of PTAs president; Joseph Wingfield, Sr., Morehouse student and volunteer PE teacher for Peyton Forest Elementary School; and the M.L. King Middle School’s “PECE” class. “Annual Report: July 1, 1981-June 30, 1982” (Atlanta, GA: APPLE Corps), Susan Bledsoe Papers; School Talk, February/March 1982.
lected APPLE Corps’ growing reputation as a citywide organization for promoting parent and community volunteerism.\textsuperscript{558} Klenbort recalls:

The first Golden Apple Awards was wonderful. We gave out five awards; we later developed the organizational award and then a community award. When you think about where we started…in the meeting room at the Georgia Hill Building with our electric frying pans and then where it ended up, with speakers like the founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman [in 1985]…later, in the nineties, Mayor Shirley Franklin, Desmond Toto, and Jane Fonda. Now she really packed the house! We had hundreds of people that morning.\textsuperscript{559}

The Board of Directors found itself welcoming to Atlanta renowned speakers, ranging from political figures to famous activists.\textsuperscript{560} How did the organization, which continued to award Golden Apples every year until the office closed in 2003,\textsuperscript{561} evolve into a model for promoting volunteerism (Figure 17)?

\textsuperscript{558} The reception was held again at First Presbyterian Church on April 19, 1983 and May 17, 1984. Then in 1985, the fifth annual Golden Apple Awards Breakfast was moved to the Magnolia Room, where it was held every year until 1992. At the twelfth annual reception, the Board of Directors moved the event to the Ramada Hotel Capitol Plaza Downtown and then to the Ritz Carlton Downtown.

\textsuperscript{559} Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.

\textsuperscript{560} Honorees at the third annual Golden Apple Awards Breakfast included: Marilyn Holmes, NAPPS member, past-Warren T. Jackson Elementary School and Sutton Middle PTA president; Shelby Lewis, past-Oglethorpe Elementary School PTA president, director of the Women’s Institute of the Southeast (WISE), and political science professor at Atlanta University, Jean Oliver, long-time southeast Atlanta neighborhood children’s advocate, Bill Woodward, E. Rivers Elementary School volunteer since his retirement, Jim Zimmerman, as Rich Department Store’s chairman and chief executive officer of the organizational award and then a community award. When you think about where we started…in the meeting room at the Georgia Hill Building with our electric frying pans and then where it ended up, with speakers like the founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman [in 1985]…later, in the nineties, Mayor Shirley Franklin, Desmond Toto, and Jane Fonda. Now she really packed the house! We had hundreds of people that morning.\textsuperscript{559}

6.2 A Speakers’ Series

In April 1983, President Ronald Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education released its much-anticipated report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative For Educational Reform*.\(^{562}\) The report, which captured the nation’s growing belief that the public schools were failing, triggered a wave of educational reforms across the nation.\(^{563}\) APPLE Corps director Marcia Klenbort recalls citizens’ response to the report, “When *A Nation at Risk* came out…we reprinted it on long legal paper and passed it out within our distribution network to the libraries and schools because we thought it was something everyone should be reading. People all over the state were shaken.”\(^{564}\) Klenbort, who had testified before the

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\(^{563}\) Following the release of the report, the Atlanta Public School system’s immediate response was to schedule a public forum, which was held on June 22, 1983 at Georgia State University. Nearly 300 citizens attended to voice their concerns and demand local and state educational reforms. The report led to the implementation of a pupil progression policy. “APPLE Corps minutes,” June 8, 1983, APPLE Corps, Box 3; *School Talk*, July 1987.

\(^{564}\) Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
Secretary of Education Terrel Bell in 1982, traveled to Athens with a group from Atlanta to hear Secretary Bell speak on the report. As they drove back to Atlanta, she began to formulate an idea:

I came up with the idea…it began as a series of principal forums called “Making Schools Work.” We didn’t want to call it “Schools at Risk”…like the Golden Apple awards we wanted to showcase the principals that we thought were doing really effective jobs in not always easy situations. The idea was to let everyone know what our best principals were doing. It was great for them. They got to get publicity about what their schools were doing well. The talks were held over two years at different places. We did one at the downtown Rich’s Magnolia Room and one at Georgia State.

Klenbort hoped that by sponsoring a speaking series, in which local principals would talk with the community about what they were doing to promote excellence, APPLE Corps could showcase the city’s best schools.

The first of the principals’ forums was held at the downtown Rich’s department store on November 16, 1983. With tickets for the luncheon sold out, Marcia Klenbort turned her attention to promoting the second talk, which was to follow a month later. At eight o’clock on the morning of December 14, 1983, dozens of interested parents had made the cold walk from their cars through Georgia State University’s downtown campus. They gathered in the second floor conference room of the college’s Urban Life Building. After listening to the City of Savannah’s school superintendent Dr. Ron Etheridge offer the opening remarks, they turned their attention to three of Atlanta’s high school principals: Douglas High School principal Dr. Lester Butts, Carver Comprehensive High School principal Dr. Norris Hogans, and North Fulton High School principal James Krivich. By the second year, the principal talks were growing in acclaim. On the evening of January 18, 1984 parents and educators gathered in the Georgia State University Urban Life Auditorium. Sarah Smith Elementary School principal Charles Pepe, Bunche Middle School principal Alphonso Jones, Jr., and Benjamin E. Mays High School principal Rubye McLendon focused on answering questions about how to improve their students’ academic performance.

566 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
On February 2, 1984 following the third talk in the four-part “Making Schools Work” series, APPLE Corps sponsored a luncheon at the Georgia State University’s Urban Life Dining Room. Director Marcia Klenbort had asked Dr. Ernest Boyer, the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, to speak on making high schools a positive experience for all students.\(^\text{570}\) Sitting in the audience of over 300 parents, educators and citizens was CINS president Nancy Hamilton, who had become a school activist and leader in the neighborhood movement in the seventies when she urged Joe Martin to run for the school board and helped found Close-In Reviving Communities Linked for Education (CIRCLE). She had greatly enjoyed the lecture. Then at the very end, a Cobb County school superintendent stood up, “What do you do about the terrible teachers?” Dr. Boyer responded, “I find if you reward your best teachers, the other teachers will take care of themselves. It’s surprising what a small amount of money, put in the hands of a teacher can do.”\(^\text{571}\) Hamilton left the luncheon inspired. When Klenbort heard about the project Hamilton was pitching to CINS, a mini-grants program for teachers, she realized just how important it was to bring in new ideas and outside perspectives to Atlanta parents. She recalls how that realization prompted the idea for a second speakers’ series:

After the Terrel Bell manifesto came out, “A Nation at Risk”, and we did our principals series, “Making Schools Work,” I figured out that APPLE Corps could do a speakers’ series with nationally known speakers. We called it “Speakers of Note.” The way we could do it, we were such a low budget, grassroots organization, was we found the great speakers that were coming into the city to speak to other groups, which were paying their way and their transportation. I then called them up and asked them to come a half-day early and do a forum for us. It was a brilliant move. We had Al Shankar at the Grady High School gymnasium. We later had Robert Coles come. He was a well-known child psychologist and that was also in the Grady gym. I think we made a difference in that we opened up our little city to some ideas that were from other places.\(^\text{572}\)

The community’s response to Dr. Boyer was so enthusiastic that even before the final principals’ talk in the series was held on February 25, APPLE Corps director Marcia Kleinwort had begun organizing a second speaker’s series, the five-part “Speakers of Note”, to bring nationally recognized educators and policymakers to Atlanta.


\(^{571}\) Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.

\(^{572}\) Ibid.
Klenbort decided to begin the series by focusing on the state’s response to “A Nation at Risk.” In Georgia, Governor Joe Frank Harris had formed a forty-member Education Review Commission to conduct a sixteen-month study of K-12 public education in Georgia. At noon on November 20, 1984, Klenbort welcomed 262 citizens to the first “Speakers of Note” lecture. She introduced the chairman of Governor’s Education Review Commission, Ed Harris, and Gwinnett County Schools superintendent and chair of the Education Review Commission personnel committee, Dr. Alton Crews. Seated in the Georgia State University’s Urban Life Dining Room, the audience listened as chairmen Harris began the talk. This was the first opportunity Atlanta citizens and school professionals had to hear the commission report’s recommendations, which were to come before the 1985 Georgia General Assembly in January.573

Three month later, on the evening of February 28, 1985, hundreds of Atlanta teachers and interested parents gathered in the Grady High School gymnasium for the second “Speaker of Notes” forum. On the stage were seated the president of the American Federation of Teachers Albert Shankar, Atlanta superintendent Dr. Alonzo Crim, Clark College professor Dr. Barbara Jones, educator Dr. Tom Keating, Atlanta School Board member Joe Martin, and Warren T. Jackson Elementary School teacher Marsha Robertson, who had been named Atlanta’s Teacher of the Year.574 After introductions and a welcome, Shanker spoke to the audience on how the community could better support teachers (Figure 18).575

The “Speakers of Note” series brought metropolitan and statewide attention to APPLE Corps. Other groups from around the state began to form coalitions modeled after the Atlanta organization. As early as 1981, the Junior League of Augusta and the Augusta chapter of the League of Women Voters had sent a contingency to the APPLE Corps office to meet with director Marcia Klenbort. They hoped to

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573 Governor Joe Frank Harris requested that APPLE Corps help lobby the Georgia General Assembly, which passed the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act in March 1985, and then organize workshops in June 1985 to present the legislation to the state. The subsequent entitled “QBE and Me” was recognized by the National Association of State Education Department. “Recommendations On Education Heard Nov. 20th,” Atlanta Daily World, November 14, 1984; School Talk, December 1984. For a background on APPLE Corps’ role in the passage of the Quality Basic Education Act see “Education Workshop June 15th,” Atlanta Daily World, June 4, 1985.
574 Jennifer Delanty, Letter to APPLE Corps Board of Directors, February 19, 1985, Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education (APPLE Corps), Jean Childs Young Papers, Box 41.4, Archives Division, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System.
sponsor a similar project in their city. In 1984, DeKalb parents formed the DeKalb Coalition for Public Education. Two years later, the Junior League of DeKalb County joined APPLE Corps’ efforts to expand the CINS’ mini-grants program citywide. Across the United States, a grassroots, citizen-based movement was underway. Parent and neighborhood school groups, which had been founded in the seventies in response to white flight and desegregation, were forming coalitions and non-profit, education support groups in the eighties.

Klenbort discussed with the Board of Directors the possibility of APPLE Corps hosting a national conference as part of its “Speaker of Note” series. She wanted to bring these groups “together and tell their stories: what they were doing, what strategies do they use with the school district, all the things they had in common.” In March 1985, forty activists that represented urban school support groups from

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578 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
across the United States traveled to the Calvin Conference Center in rural Hampton, Georgia for the Na-
tional Conference of Urban School Support Groups (Figure 19).\footnote{Located twenty miles south of Hartsfield Airport, the Calvin Center is a 548-acre conference center set in rural Georgia and owned by the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta PC (USA). Attendees included: APPLE, Corps-Atlanta, GA; Citizens Education Center Northwest-Seattle, WA; Citizens for Responsive Education-Grand Rapids, MI; Citywide Educational Coalition-Boston, MA; Coalition for Quality Education-Toledo, OH; Conference on Educa-
tion-St. Louis, MO; Institute for Responsive Education-Boston, MA; Los Angeles Public School Coalition-Los An-
geles, CA; National Committee for Citizens in Education-Columbia, MD; Parents Union for Public Schools-
Philadelphia, PA; Parents United for the DC Public Schools-Washington, DC; Public Education Association-New York, NY; San Francisco Center for Public Education-San Francisco, CA; School Advisory Assistance Center-
Kansas City, MO. \textit{School Talk}, April 1985.} For two days, the teachers, parents, and citizens came together around their commitment to public education. They traded ideas about how they were making a positive impact on the quality of public education in their cities by increasing parental and community involvement and discovered that they all faced the same frustrations: too little money and too few volunteers. By the end of the conference, they had all learned new strategies for promoting community volunteerism.\footnote{Bulletin, “A Gala Atlanta Night celebrating the ways cities can support and nourish their public schools,” March 28, 1985, Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education (APPLE Corps), Jean Childs Young Papers, Box 41.4, Archives Division, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton}
The national conference, which Marcia Klenbort and the Board of Directors had envisioned as furthering communication between the growing grassroots, community-based movement, brought national attention to the APPLE Corps. The weekly schools newspaper, *Education Week*, published an edition devoted to the conference and alerted education leaders all across the nation to the Atlanta-model for promoting parent and community involvement in the schools.\(^{581}\) Klenbort recalls what happened next:

> About the time we began the speakers’ series, *Education Week* began coming out, and all of a sudden we had a national newspaper of note that was paying attention to big school issues. It made our day when we got into *Education Week*…the conference we had was a notable [achievement] that put us on the map nationally. We were doing something that got heralded by *Education Week*. That gave rise to Neal Peirce’s article.\(^{582}\)

Journalist Neal Peirce had picked up on the publicity surrounding APPLE Corps after its conference. The more he discovered, the more he wanted to write about this new type of grassroots, parent-citizen activism. He decided to feature the organization in his December column, and the resulting article was circulated among newspapers nationwide. He described how the Atlanta-based APPLE Corps, along with its counterparts that were founded in the late seventies and early eighties in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Kansas City and Boston, brought two groups of parents together. “One group had experienced the heartbreak of neighborhood schools closing, while another had struggled to save the school system from discord as bureaucrats clumsily carried out court-ordered racial desegregation.” Director Marcia Klenbort was bombarded with requests for more information about the organization.\(^{583}\)

The week after the conference, the “Speaker of Note” series concluded with a visit by South Carolina’s first lady and deputy superintendent, who spoke at the Downtown Holiday Inn on their state’s new parental involvement program.\(^{584}\) With the national recognition brought by the Neal Peirce article, APPLE Corps was able to continue to bring in acclaimed speakers. In 1986, Brown University’s Dr. Ted

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582 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
584 “APPLE Corps minutes,” March 20, 1985, APPLE Corps Papers.
Sizer addressed the city’s principals at the Grady gymnasium.\textsuperscript{585} Six months later, Marcia Klenbort was in the APPLE Corps office at the Georgia Hill Building when she received a phone call that left her stunned. Congressman Augustus Hawkins, who was chair of the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee, wanted to visit Atlanta.\textsuperscript{586} His assistant had not called the superintendent or the president of the Atlanta Board of Education. He had called the APPLE Corps office. On November 20, 1986, Marcia Klenbort greeted Congressman Hawkins at Hartsfield Airport. They drove to Benteen Elementary School and met the school’s principal Eunice Robinson, who took them on a tour of the Title I school. From there, the group also visited the Martin Luther King Center and Grady High School, before enjoying lunch at the APPLE Corps office. Klenbort remembers the visit:

Representative Augustus Hawkins, who was the chair of the Education Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives…was known as the father of the Title I program. His office called us up. He wanted to come to Atlanta and see an effective Title I school. They called APPLE Corp! Now that was different from day one in the office! We sent them to Eunice Robinson’s school. She retired in 2008 as principal of M. Agnes Jones, but at the time was the principal of Benteen Elementary, a lovely little school. She had been one of our speaker’s in the principals’ series and spoke so highly of her teachers. I accompanied them [on the tour]. Augustus Hawkins had a wonderful time at her school, and then we had a little reception for him afterwards at the Georgia Hill building.\textsuperscript{587}

At the APPLE Corps office, Congressman Hawkins spoke to thirty community and school leaders, who had been invited to the reception. He emphasized to the audience that the problems associated with public education were going to be best addressed by promoting parent involvement in the schools.\textsuperscript{588} A year after Dr. Ted Sizer had spoken with Atlanta principals, APPLE Corps organized a second forum at the Grady High School gymnasium for the evening of April 20, 1987. Harvard psychiatrist and Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Coles was invited to speak on “the moral and political life of children.”\textsuperscript{589} Between 1983 and 1987, APPLE Corps had firmly established a pattern of bringing in outside speakers, ranging from Dr.

\textsuperscript{585} School Talk, February 1986; School Talk, March 1986.
\textsuperscript{586} Congressman Augustus Hawkins was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1984 to 1991.
\textsuperscript{587} Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
Ernest Boyer to Dr. Robert Coles, who brought in new perspectives and challenged parent, educators, politicians, and citizens to talk about educational issues as a community.

6.3 A Citywide Program

On March 20, 1985, Marcia Klenbort, who was beginning her sixth year as APPLE Corps director, spoke to the Board of Directors at their monthly meeting about initiating a new project. She proposed that APPLE Corps coordinate and administer a citywide program modeled after the CINS teacher grants. As an Ansley Park resident, she had read about the new “Fund for Excellence in Teaching” in the neighborhood newsletter, *Ansley Parkside*. Her civic association had joined the other gentrifying neighborhoods and Midtown businesses in raising over $4,000 to award nine mini-grants in October 1984.\(^{590}\) Despite the success of the speakers’ series, since joining the Junior League-initiated steering committee meetings back in 1978 and coming on as director in 1979, Marcia Klenbort had struggled with the same question:

> How is this going to benefit the kids that don’t normally benefit? How do we benefit the people that need the benefiting the most? We found that when you have a resource, the people who have access to that resource are the people closest to it and who have lots of experience organizing…I think the Golden Apples and more so the Grants to Teachers broke down a lot of barriers because they were citywide.\(^{591}\)

She hoped that a citywide grants program could highlight community support for innovative teaching. Grant recipients could then share the project ideas with other teachers in their school and system wide through grade-level coordination. With board approval, she started contacting the presidents of CINS, NAPPS, and the Junior League about raising funds.\(^{592}\) During the 1985-1986 school year, the organizations copied the CINS model and provided grants to forty-two schools.\(^{593}\) The following year, the “Grants to Teachers” program was expanded to cover sixty-four schools.

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\(^{590}\) Between 1984 and 1985, CINS expanded the program from nine to nineteen grants and included all of the schools in the Grady cluster.

\(^{591}\) Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.

\(^{592}\) “APPLE Corps minutes,” March 20, 1985, APPLE Corps Papers.

With fundraising consuming her workday, Klenbort decided to hire a grants coordinator to assist her (Figure 20). “I brought Nancy Hamilton in so she could run the Grants to Teachers program. She had already founded the program at CINS.”\(^{594}\) Having spent the past year serving as CINS president and representative to the board of directors, Hamilton was familiar with APPLE Corps. She was eager to introduce the CINS model to all of the city’s schools. That fall, Nancy Hamilton coordinated the application process and raised funds for nineteen schools directly. She worked closely with the other governing organizations, which included Atlanta University Optimist Club, CINS, NAPPS, and the Junior Leagues of Atlanta and DeKalb County, to promote the program. The organizations collectively raised over $20,000 from neighborhood associations, local businesses, and major corporations headquartered in Atlanta.\(^{595}\) APPLE Corps had created a model for increasing community support for public school teachers, particularly in those low-income neighborhoods where parents were unable to devote the time, energy and

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\(^{594}\) Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.

financial support that a NAPPS or CINS parent-teacher association was able to offer the school (Figure 21 and 22). Klenbort recalls the impact, “Afterwards people would say to me that was the best program you did. Teachers felt this great amount of support.”

At the urging of Nancy Hamilton, APPLE Corps also added a pilot art grants program. With the arts curriculum almost entirely cut from most schools’ budgets, the arts grants offered teachers the opportunity to foster an appreciation for art through lessons and projects. The first year, third, fourth, and

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596 “Remarks for the Foxfire Class at Georgia State University,” speech, November 4, 1987, APPLE Corps, Box 3; Presentation for Congressman Richard Ray’s Forum, December 12, 1987, Georgia Southwestern College, APPLE Corps, Box 3.
597 Interview with Marcia Klenbort, February 2, 2009.
598 Northside and intown parents, like Carroll Lindseth and Midge Sweet, started by volunteering in their children’s schools teaching art and creative movement, and by the early 1980s the parent-teacher associations at the NAPPS and CINS schools were supplementing the arts curriculum.
grade teachers were able to apply for $100 grants, which included free admissions to a one-day workshop being put on by artist Mary Cofer and provided them with an art kit for their class-room. Twenty-six teachers received grants. The following school year, APPLE Corps expanded the “Grants to Teachers” to 100 schools and extended the art grants program to all Atlanta elementary school teachers.

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By 1988, over $30,000 was being awarded to the more than 400 teachers that applied each November for the $250 or $100 grants (Figure 23).

6.4 Becoming Politicized?

On April 5, 1986, the APPLE Corps Board of Directors gathered at Nancy Cunningham’s home for a planning day. Board members spent a long morning debating the future of APPLE, Corps. They had gained statewide and national recognition as a grassroots model for promoting community involvement in the public schools. But with the implementation of two major citywide programs, in addition to continuing its function as a resource center, APPLE Corps found its financial obligations increasing. They needed to make changes to the organization’s governing board, staff, and mission. Board president Frank

Howard explained to the other board members that he believed one of the major hurdles facing the organization’s programmatic piece was the “strong apathy regarding public education on the part of the business community.”

At the urging of APPLE Corps president Frank Howard, the Board of Directors founded an Advisory Board. The chairman and chief executive officer of Rich’s department store, James Zimmerman, who had been awarded a “Golden Apple” three years earlier for his work in public education and with his wife Alison was increasingly involved in the Warren T. Jackson PTA and NAPPS, accepted the chairmanship. He put together the second board, whose membership was made up many of the city’s business and civic leaders. Howard and Zimmerman hoped the new Advisory Board could bring in city stakeholders, who had the resources and connections to orchestrate annual fundraising campaigns.

The staff was also expanded. In 1986, in addition to hiring grants coordinator Nancy Hamilton, director Marcia Klenbort brought on Sallie Weddell to write the monthly newsletter, School Talk.

Klenbort had first gotten to know Weddell when she was the League of Women Voters’ representative to

603 “APPLE Corps planning day minutes,” April 5, 1986, APPLE Corps, Box 3.
604 The first Advisory Board included: James Zimmerman (chairman of Rich’s, Inc.), Arthur C. Baxter (executive vice-president of First National Bank of Atlanta), Tobe Johnson (Political Science Department chair at Morehouse College and former APPLE Corps Board of Directors member), John Cox (vice-president at Delta Air Lines), Michael Lomax (Fulton County Commission), Margaret Cox (executive director of the Coca-Cola Foundation), John Lupton, III (Georgia House of Representative and former APPLE Corps Board), David Easterly (president of Cox Newspapers), A.B. Padgett (retired vice-president of Trust Company Bank), Anna English (retired principal and former APPLE Corps board member), Robert Petty (senior vice-president of Trust Company Bank), William Farr (executive vice-president at First National Bank of Atlanta), Georganna Sinkfield (Georgia House of Representative), Andrew Fisher (vice-president and general manager of WSB-Channel 2), Mary Stimmel (vice-president of WAGA-Channel 5), Travis Halford (vice-president of Equifax), Dan Sweat (president of Central Atlanta Progress), Edward Harris (Partner in Change, Price Waterhouse), Jean Young (chair of the Mayor’s Task Force on Public Education and former APPLE Corps Board member), Susan Bledsoe (member of Board of Directors member and liaison between Advisory Board and staff of APPLE Corps), Susan Graves replaced Susan Bledsoe as the Junior League representative on the APPLE Corps Board of Directors in May 1985. “APPLE Corps minutes,” May 29, 1985, APPLE Corps Papers; Marshall D. Orson, Memorandum to APPLE Corps. Planning Committee members, CC: Frank Howard, president, Board of Directors; Betsey Stone, executive director, APPLE Corps, “RE: Work plan for long-range planning,” September 28, 1988, Susan Bledsoe Papers; Susan Bledsoe, Response to Memorandum (handwritten notes), November 17, 1988, Susan Bledsoe Papers.
606 Sallie Weddell brought to APPLE Corps an understanding of policymaking, which she had gained through her work as a member of the League of Women Voters of Atlanta-Fulton County, and her experience on the Ansley Park Civic Association’s education committee and as a long-time writer for the Ansley Parkside. A decade earlier, Sallie Weddell had been a member of the Ansley Park Education Committee, which had helped bring white, middle-class families back to their neighborhood public school by organizing a bus tour of CW Hill Elementary School and founded CINS’ predecessor, the Close-In, Reviving Communities Linked for Education (CIRCLE) coalition.
the Board of Directors in 1984. She was immensely impressed by her work on a League of Women Voters’ study, “Teachers, Tenure and Pay.”607 Weddell recalls how her involvement on the APPLE Corps board led to a part-time job in September 1986:

I was a volunteer with the League of Women Voters and took on the education agenda portfolio. I became a member of the board of APPLE Corp because of my role with the League. It was automatic. This would have been in 1984-1985; it was a very diverse board, lots of parents on it and some educators from the colleges…I learned about APPLE Corp and all it was doing then, which was a good experience. As a League person I did research on teacher incentives and developed a position paper…I published the study in the 1985 edition of Facts and Issues, and Marcia Klenbort was impressed with it. And as a result, Marcia asked me to come on in 1986 and do the newsletter at APPLE Corp, which was a part-time job and worked fine with having young children at home.608

After being hired, Weddell immediately began working on ideas for future editions of School Talk. “It was really a collaborative discussion on the part of the APPLE Corp staff. We sat around the office, and I would say, ‘I’m thinking of this.’ Then Marcia would say how great of an idea that was and also suggest another point of view.”609 Weddell explains how her perspective evolved:

When I first started working at APPLE Corp, I would go to observe school board meetings and report on them and what struck me was no one else was there from an overall community-objective background. There were union members with a specific ax to grind, rarely the media and generally no neighborhood groups, unless there was a specific issue to be discussed. I thought this is what my role is, to report to the community.610

In October, the improved publication came out new a new format and the first of what became monthly feature articles on the issues confronting the school board.611

The staff changes continued, and on June 15, 1987, Marcia Klenbort, after eight years as director of APPLE Corps, left the office at the Georgia Hill building for the last time. She had taken APPLE Corps from being a resource center to a statewide and national model for promoting community involvement.612 The Board of Directors hired Betsey Stone, NAPPS founder, past-president of the League of

608 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
609 Ibid.
610 Ibid.
611 School Talk, October 1986.
612 In 1986, APPLE Corps received the League of Women Voters’ Sidney Marcus Award for Leadership in Educational Issues, which recognized Marcia Klenbort for her leadership in bringing citywide attention to public educa-
Women Voters, and director of Christians against Hunger in Georgia, as the organization’s new executive
director. Clare Richardson, who had agreed to serve a second term on the board of directors, recalls
why the board selected Stone and the impact she had on APPLE Corps:

Betsey was the best thing to happen to APPLE Corps. She had been provided tremendous
leadership at the League of Women Voters, and [brought that to APPLE Corps]…we had both come through NAPPS, and we understood the focus of each individual group, like NAPPS or CINS. We came to see APPLE Corps as a much more citywide effort to enhance the public schools. It had the ability to do research and to collect stats, which the neighborhood groups did but were focused on the marketing impact. Under Betsey Stone, APPLE Corps began to have much more of a broader remnant [and] impact on the quality of education and legislative issues.

In August, Stone, who had been at APPLE Corps for less than two months, requested that the board conduct a review of APPLE Corps. The debate that had started at the planning meeting a year and a half earlier picked up again in earnest. Stone pushed the board to move towards becoming more policy-oriented, while continuing its citywide programs, which brought to APPLE Corps the authenticity needed within the community to influence the Board of Education on policy and budget issues. Two months later, on Saturday November 22, 1986, APPLE Corps, in conjunction with the Atlanta Council of PTAs, dove headfirst into influencing legislation. The two organizations hosted the city’s first annual budget workshop, which was designed to introduce parents and citizens to the budget process.

614 Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011. The 1986-1987 Board of Directors included: Frank Howard, president and State Board of Post Secondary Vocational Education; Frank Cummings, vice-president and chair of the Chemistry Department at Atlanta University; Pam Brown, secretary, Sutton Middle and Northside High parent, past-president of NAPPS, and co-director of the Family Outreach Center; Charles Hooper, treasurer and Sylvan Hills Elementary School PTA president; Ed Shartar finance co-chair and Vice-President of Citicorp; John Stewart finance co-chair; Nancy Cunningham past-president and teacher at Sutton Middle School; Russell Dennis at-large member; Edwina Hill at-large member and Oglesethorpe Elementary School principal; Marilyn Holmes at-large member and Northside High School parent; Susan Bledsoe; Chris Carlsten, CINS president; Joyce Daniels, representative for the Chamber of Commerce; Tricia Deitz, League of Women Voters of Atlanta-Fulton County representative and CINS member; Jennifer Delanty, former APPLE Corps staff member and teacher at Inman Middle School; Carol Edwards, Citywide League of Neighborhoods representative; Barbara Jones, Economics professor at Clark College and Mays High School PTA president; Carroll Lindseth, Northside PTA and past-president of NAPPS; Clare Richardson, Executive Director of the Friends of Zoo Atlanta; Susan Graves, Junior League representative; Margaret Johnson, Junior League representative; Jennifer Fiorenza; Charles Hawk; Willie Heard; Pilar Kirkpatrick; Paul McPhail; Al McWilliams; Claudette Richardson; Liz Robertson; Neil Shorthouse; Shirely Williams; David York; James Zimmerman, chairman of the Advisory Board.
Stone’s idea was to have representatives from the city’s neighborhood-based groups partner with APPLE Corps during the budget writing process and after examining the proposed APS budget in detail, go to the school system with questions and requests (Figure 24).\(^{616}\) Grants coordinator Nancy Hamilton recalls how they anticipated the workshops would work, “I was developing the grants program and all the other good things we did to support the school system. Then we would spend all the social capital we created through the programs and advocate on the budget.”\(^{617}\)

After being welcomed by Betsey Stone and Atlanta PTA Council president Andy Fellers (Figure 25), school board member and finance committee chair Joe Martin (Figure 26) walked participants through the budget process. Hamilton recalls, “When Joe Martin became chair of the finance committee,
Figure 25: Betsey Stone and Andy Fellers, Atlanta Council of PTAs president

Figure 26: Joe Martin presenting at budget workshop
he didn’t see any reason you couldn’t print out a budget for a school. So if you showed up at the budget workshop you could actually pick-up the budget for your school, and then you could begin to understand what money was discretionary and which was locked into salaries.” After Martin answered parents’ questions on the 1987-1988 budget, including concerns over cuts in the funding for the Challenge program, magnet programs, and art teachers, Sallie Weddell ran a breakout session.

At our budget workshops, we broke the budget down into dollars and then we broke down the community members who came to the workshop. We gave them a $100…we then told them you have to cut this much, so what are you going to do? So they could experience first hand the kind of decisions that had to be made.

The response of the participants, many of whom represented parents’ groups or PTAs, was tremendous. APPLE Corps distributed 300 copies of the budget that first year. With education support groups across the city taking a more active role in the budget writing process, APPLE Corps scheduled the workshop again for the following year. Finance chair Joe Martin’s encouragement of the school system to include citizen participation resulted in budget recommendations and several specific community requests from APPLE Corps, the Atlanta Council of PTAs, CINS, and NAPPS, which ranged from adding computer technology and art programs to assistant principals and counselors at the elementary schools. Over two decades later, Hamilton remembers the impact that the budget workshops had on the community:

We believed that parents could influence what goes on, but parents needed to know where in the budget for the entire system they could actually make an impact. In my parents group, CINS, we would look at the budgets and say for this cluster of schools, this is a place where we could make a request. We would then focus our attention on lobbying for spending in that area.

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618 Interview with Nancy Hamilton, February 16, 2009.
620 The second annual budget workshop was held on November 22, 1987 from 9 am to noon. “History of APPLE Corps” in “Annual Report July 1, 1987-June 30, 1988” (Atlanta, GA: APPLE Corps), Susan Bledsoe Papers.
The budget workshops continued into the nineties. Yet the workshops began at a time when actual budgetary discretion was shrinking.

The cost of salaries and employee benefits was steadily rising, and by the end of the decade, between eighty and eighty-five percent of the system’s total operating budget was going towards employees. At the same time, the school system’s aging facilities demanded renovation. Martin, who had been elected in 1977 as a public school parents and pro-neighborhood candidate with a strong finance and business background, struggled as finance chair to shift spending away from top-heavy administration back to the schools. Martin explains why the system faced a budgetary shortfall:

We were so top heavy…the desegregation settlement [in 1973] had called for a balancing of the administrative hierarchy of the school system. Well what really happened was virtually a doubling of the administrative structure of the Atlanta School System to achieve this fifty-fifty balance. So the school system had this huge superstructure, which it never could afford and then once the financial pressures hit, it sure couldn’t afford it. So there I was, that’s why I called “Simon the Green,” because I always was pushing to remove the administrative structure and spend the money at the school level.

In 1988, the school system proposed a $150 million bond referendum, the first since 1968, to renovate and construct new facilities. Atlantans lack of faith in the school system was clear; sixty-two percent of voters opposed the bill.

As a temporary solution to the 118 portable classrooms and dozens of schools without air conditioning, Martin proposed a lend-lease back program. Made possible by the passage of House Bill 1441, which had been sponsored by school board member Joe Martin’s younger brother and Georgia representative Jim Martin, bonds were sold to a non-profit corporation, School Buildings, Inc., of which CINS

624 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009.
president Jimi Moore served as one of five directors, that in turn contracted with the school system to finance the construction of new additions on the existing facilities. Moore explains, “Joe Martin asked me to sit on the board…we sold the footprint of the school back.” In actuality, the school system was leasing the campus and building from the corporation, which used the annual rent to repay the certificates of participation that had been sold at the outset to obtain the funds for the construction projects. After the certificates were repaid in full the title to the land, including the improvements, reverted back to the school system.

The growing budget crisis signaled the beginning of a decade of upheaval and turmoil. The immediate financing of additions was particularly important in the city’s gentrifying neighborhoods. Overcrowding at Morningside and Mary Lin Elementary Schools need to be eased and temporary classrooms replaced. The school board also made the decision to begin closing schools where enrollment was below capacity, which generated an outcry of community protest. The search for a new Atlanta superintendent in 1988 to replace Dr. Alonzo Crim, who was retiring after fifteen years of leading the school system, and the subsequent firing of his replacement Dr. Jerome Harris after less than two years, left a school system that was consumed by internal fighting and a increasingly racially divided and ineffective school board searching for leadership.

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626 Interview with Faye Moore, December 19, 2011.
Sallie Weddell, who was assigned with monitoring and reporting on the school board, recalls the situation, “The meetings were absolutely outrageous with a lot of political attacks and grandstanding. It was embarrassing.” Board members repeatedly interrupted one another and refused to recognize motions or call members by their name during meetings. School board members Dr. D.F. Glover and Ina Evans directed their attacks at school board member Joe Martin. Glover laid the blame for the “former prejudicial practices” that were creeping back into the system on Martin, who was white and in his capacity the chair of the finance committee represented the interests of the business community and not the African-American educators. Martin recalls how the meetings worsened after he took over as board president:

We had some terrible antics on the board. I remember one meeting a board member, Dr. Glover, started calling me Bull Conner. Well during the meeting I was presiding, and he kept calling me Bull Conner, [who was the police commissioner in Birmingham, Alabama and ordered that hoses and police dogs be used to stop civil rights marchers in 1963]. Did you see what Bull Conner did? Isn’t he just like Bull Conner? That went on and on…our meetings were so bad that we had a special workshop to study parliamentary procedure. I thought if we at least used parliamentary procedure the meetings might be civilized. After this meeting was all over with we had another meeting just to sort of to expose our inner feelings. And I was so happy because we really made some headway. People had expressed their deepest concerns, and we had gotten to know each other. So as we were leaving, I was going around giving everyone a peck or a hug. “Oh, isn’t this great that we’re going to be good friends from now on.” And my colleague, Ina Evans, who just really disliked me, I went over to her and gave her a bit of a little kiss on the cheek. Then she looked at me and said very calmly, “May your soul rot in hell.” I’ll never forget it, “May your soul rot in hell!” The school system was in chaos. It was in financial trouble and losing students. The real cause was a growing racial split [by the late eighties]. This part of town, the northside and intown neighborhoods, were doing well, while other parts of the city were not.

The growth of the 1980s, which had supported the redevelopment of Buckhead and Midtown and the gentrification of the intown neighborhoods, had brought middle-class families, who were able to provide re-

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lanta Journal-Constitution, February 10, 1994, 16N; ---, “Canada teaches change 1010; New school superintendent’s past efforts revamped system, ruffled some teachers,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, August 7, 1994, 1G.

630 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.

631 The most contentious of the school board meetings took place between 1987 and 1993. School Talk, January 1987; Bernadette Burden, “Battling image problems; Last week’s events in Atlanta schools don’t help, critics say,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, September 1, 1992, 8C.

632 Henig, The Color School Reform, 90-93.


634 Interview with Joe Martin, April 2, 2009. For an account of this incident in Atlanta’s local newspaper see Bernadette Burden and Betsy White, “School board’s antics hurt its image; Members say televised infighting, bickering portray it as incompetent,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, September 20, 1992, 3E.
sources, both time and money, to the public schools. The emerging inequalities and sense that the southside of the city was losing political power heightened racial tensions on the school board. The situation grew increasingly contentious and ineffective.

Then Betsey Stone announced that she was moving to North Carolina. The APPLE Corps board immediately began a job search for a new executive director and made the decision to hire Morningside-Lenox Park parent and League of Women Voters member, Mary Anne Gaunt, in August 1989.635 Like the women, who had founded APPLE Corps, Gaunt was a college-educated, stay-at-home mother when Maynard Jackson was elected as mayor in 1973 (Figure 27).636

I was a stay at home mom with a small child, probably ten months old, in 1973. Somebody called me and said would you like to come to a meeting with women who are talking about an important community issue. Oh and they have childcare. Yes! Thank you; it was my lifesaver because I wasn’t a homemaker...for years I sat at the foot of women who were bright and intelligent. I became a program person first and then a unit chair. Then I was on the committee working on criminal justice, and volunteered to monitor the court system. I became justice chair, program vice-president, and moved into the presidency from 1983 to 1985.637

Having just moved into the Morningside neighborhood from an apartment on Buford Highway, the League of Women Voters provided Gaunt with a group of friends that included Trisha Senterfitt, who went on to become the second president of CINS, and Sallie Weddell, who began working for APPLE Corps in 1986. Through Senterfitt, Weddell, and the other women she met, Gaunt also found out about the Morningside baby-sitting cooperative. As their children got older, the same group of mothers joined the earlier urban pioneers, who had started holding meetings at the American Roadhouse every

635 School Talk, October 1989;
636 Mary Anne Gaunt grew up in Michigan and attended the University Kentucky, which she graduated from in 1965 with a Bachelor of Arts in sociology. She married her husband Bruce and moved from Washington, DC to Atlanta in 1970. After moving, she worked as an administrative assistant/librarian for the Southern Regional Education Board from 1970 to 1973. She then decided to stay at home and raise their two children, Nathan and Hillary, who were born in 1973 and 1976. Mary Anne Gaunt, interview by Amanda Brown, 28 March, 2006, Mary Anne Gaunt, Georgia Women’s Movement Oral History Project, Women’s Collection, Woo8, Special Collections & Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta. For the resume submitted to the APPLE Corps board see William Farr, III, Advisory Board chair, Letter to APPLE Corps Board of Directors, October 11, 1989, Atlanta Parents and Public Linked for Education (APPLE Corps), Jean Childs Young Papers, Box 41.4, Archives Division, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System.
637 Interview with Mary Anne Gaunt, February 24, 2009. For more on Mary Anne Gaunt’s work in the League of Women Voters of Atlanta-Fulton County see Mary Anne Gaunt papers, W080, Women’s Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.
Wednesday. While the breakfast group propelled some women into leadership roles in CINS, for Gaunt, the weekly coffees introduced her to an important network of women, who were interested in local politics.

With a young family, Mary Anne Gaunt and her husband almost immediately upon moving had also begun to search for a church community that was politically active and very liberal. They joined the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, which was the first congregation in the city to integrate. As part of the church’s progressive mission it founded a small, cooperative preschool in 1966. Both of Mary Anne Gaunt’s children attended the Cliff Valley School, where she served as the volunteer director. Once her children reached kindergarten, she became involved in the PTA.

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638 The Phoenix Rises: Rebirth of Unitarian Universalism in Atlanta, DVD, directed by Michael and Mria Dangerfield (Atlanta, GA: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, 2004).
639 Interview with Mary Anne Gaunt, February 24, 2009. Mary Anne and Bruce Gaunt were co-presidents at Morningside Elementary School from 1985 to 1986 and he was president at Grady High School from 1990-1991. Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Spring 1986; Marie Martin, “Grady Hailed as the Atlanta School of Excellence,” The Southerner, December 17, 1990.
As a member of the League of Women Voters she had heard reports from the League’s representative to APPLE Corps at their monthly meetings and read about what APPLE Corps was up to in the League newsletter, but unlike the other staff members she had not been active in NAPPS or CINS. Instead, Gaunt, who saw herself as “this little, pushy white lady,” brought to APPLE Corps the perspective of someone who had learned about policymaking from the League of Women Voters. “One of the things that concerned me when I came on was that the two women before me were very hands on program people. Marcia Klenbort and Betsey Stone were always out there doing something.” She spent the first few weeks trying to figure out what exactly Nancy Hamilton and Sallie Weddell were working on, and then began to think about how their work related to what she thought the organization ought to be doing. That first summer she hired her daughter, Hillary, and a friend to clean out the storage room so they could create another office. They found stacks and stacks of posters that had been paid for by the Chamber of Commerce and bumper stickers that promoted public education. Having moved to Atlanta from outside the South in the seventies, she had learned the history of the school system and her intown neighborhood from the Wednesday breakfast group and League of Women Voters. She explained to her daughter that all these community groups had come together and founded APPLE Corps to “advocate on behalf of public education and public schools in Atlanta to make sure they were a viable alternative.”

They also came across some of very first, brightly colored newsletters that Marcia Klenbort had put together in the early eighties. “I read some of those very first newsletters, and thought I know these people, these principals and PTA presidents.” By assisting parents in those early years, APPLE Corps had helped build community support for the public schools when their was so little faith in the city’s middle-class neighborhoods that their children could receive a quality education in the public school system. Gaunt thought about the capabilities of the women that had preceded her. As editor of School Talk, Sallie Weddell had built community support on a citywide, system level. Nancy Hamilton brought with her

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640 Interview with Mary Anne Gaunt, February 24, 2009.
641 Ibid.
642 “Inside APPLE Corps: Who steers the organization?,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, December 6, 1992, 4E.
643 Interview with Mary Anne Gaunt, February 24, 2009.
644 Ibid.
from CINS the grants program. When APPLE Corps was getting off the ground, the Board of Directors had no affiliation with the school system or credibility within the community and these small programs had developed a relationship with the school system and the community.

We were a program-oriented organization. We seemed to be programs, but the programs are all to feed the advocacy engine. So it wasn’t that we just gave grants to teachers for art projects or community service projects. It was also because when we see them modeled well, there are excellent advantages for children and for the schools to offer a better education. So at the same time we were trying to promote through advocacy arts education. We advocated on those kinds of things that enhanced curriculum...so yes, it was great to be program organization.  

At the same time, Mary Anne Gaunt began to challenge the staff and the Board of Directors to think differently about the organization. Other groups in the city were carrying on many of the programs that APPLE Corps had started in the eighties. The grants for teachers, which demanded an almost year round fundraising campaign, were consuming too many resources. It was well enough established that the governing organizations could continue the program. The magnet school fair at Colony Square, which has begun as a CINS project, was another program that entailed tremendous coordination, and when the magnet programs were new it was needed. By the nineties, the reputation of the magnet schools alone brought in applicants. Mary Anne Gaunt did not want to see APPLE Corps continually perpetuating the same projects over and over because they had always done them. Instead, she began to direct the organization away from small programs and towards “advocacy through example, research-based kind of work.”

Then the 1989 elections brought to office two new board members, who had been elected by their districts in a grassroots effort to improve board relations and revert funding back to the schools, particularly in the areas of curriculum and facilities. On the northside, John Elger was elected to the District 4 seat, while the BOND neighborhoods in the overwhelmingly African-American District 1 elected white, middle-class mother Midge Sweet to the Board of Education. Sweet explains why Atlanta voters rallied behind her:

645 Ibid. See also H.M. Cauley, “Art grants help teachers bring lessons to life,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 15, 1997, 6D.
646 Ibid.
There was a movement to change the public schools, and it took two rounds to get there. I was part of the first round, and the thing about my election was I was running in an African-American district, and I was beating an African-American incumbent. I just think people had not been paying attention, and [then they realized] it could not continue. It had to change...when I got on the school board, [some board members] did not take to me. I know I looked young. To me, I looked old and tired! That’s how I felt. But I was in my early thirties, and I was white. I was really blonde...D.F. Glover would always say, “That white bitch.”

Sallie Weddell and newly hired executive director Mary Anne Gaunt were determined to improve the situation and to support change by monitoring the school board.

Three years later, the board’s second attempt at a bond referendum provided Gaunt with the opening she needed. APPLE Corps orchestrated a grassroots, citywide campaign in support of the $94 million bond. Gaunt explained to reporters that one-third of the city’s schools were over fifty years old and 50 of the 111 schools did not have air-conditioning. Many of those same schools were literally collapsing around the students. She and Sallie Weddell published articles in every neighborhood newspaper to which they had access. APPLE Corps’ message was clear. It had been twenty-four years since Atlantans passed a bond referendum. It was time citizens supported the public schools again. Citizens should not tolerate the unacceptable conditions in which the city’s children were being educated, nor should it tolerate waste by the administration. Gaunt pledged that APPLE Corps would monitor the school system and ensure that the money raised by the bond went directly to the construction projects. On November 3, 1992 the response of the city was overwhelming. The bond referendum passed.

With its first lobbying efforts concluded, APPLE Corps turned its attention to Atlanta’s parents, citizens, civic leaders, and businessmen, who were loudly demanding better leadership on the Atlanta Board of Education. Gaunt reached out to APPLE Corps member organizations and proposed that they

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647 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
launch a citywide, get-out-the-vote campaign. As part of these efforts, APPLE Corps, in conjunction with the League of Women Voters and 100 Black Men of Atlanta, sponsored a series of community forums and three televised debates on Channel 30. Alongside the newspaper, radio and television advertisements that called on voters to turnout and shape the future of the city on November 3, 1993, a political movement swept through the city’s neighborhoods. Alliances and coalitions were formed, which merged business and neighborhood interests and crossed racial and class lines. Ranging from the Chamber of Commerce-backed political action committee (EduPAC) to the ad hoc group Erase the Board, the slates of endorsements varied dramatically, but they all demanded change. The election results, in large part due to APPLE Corps’ campaign, brought to office school board members that recommitted the city to a grassroots, neighborhood movement.

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650 In 1993, the get-out-the-vote campaign was funded by a coalition of education and community groups. The resulting Alliance for Education included APPLE Corps, the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Atlanta Committee for Public Education, Atlanta Council of PTAs, 100 Black Women of Metro Atlanta, Concerned Black Clergy, Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools, League of Women Voters, and 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc.


652 The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce sent out questionnaires to the 44 candidates running and through its newly founded political action committee (EduPAC) raised funds to coordinate a get-out-the-vote effort and in-kind contributions to the candidates it endorsed: incumbents Joe Martin (District 3), Midge Sweet (District 1), and Carolyn Yancey (District 9) and Mitzi Bickers for District 2, Anne Harper for District 4, Emmett Johnson for District 5, Sadie Jo Dennard for District 6, Norman Johnson for District 7, and Aaron Watson for District 8. Erase the Board’s slate of endorsements included no incumbents: Brenda Muhammad (District 1), Mitzi Bickers (District 2), Yvonne Fuller-Jones (District 3), Anne Harper (District 4), Jean Dodd (District 5), Rose Sloan (District 6), Nisha Simama (District 7) and Charles Mason (District 9).

653 EduPAC endorsed three incumbents for re-election: Joe Martin, Midge Sweet, and Carolyn Yancey.
By tracing the development of APPLE Corps as a program-oriented organization, this chapter explained why APPLE Corps emerged as a national model for promoting community volunteerism in the eighties. The recognition generated the credibility needed to orchestrate a citywide campaign to reform the Board of Education. However, on the city’s far northside, the budget shortfalls and subsequent school closings agreed upon by the school board generated a crisis that splintered the Buckhead community.

7 NAPPS: Selling the Public-Private Schools

On the morning of June 6, 1990, northside residents were startled by the headlines of their weekly community newspaper, the *Northside Neighbor*. The front page announced in bold lettering “Buckhead School closing planned.” The community’s response to the announcement was immediate. Parents that had invested time and energy into supporting their neighborhood schools were devastated by the news.

This chapter looks at the impact of the 1991 North Fulton and Northside merger on the Buckhead community. The three-year crisis that followed revealed the extent racial and class prejudices persisted among Atlanta’s seemingly progressive, white middle-class. With NAPPS splintered and faltering, a third generation of northside parents came together around a shared commitment to public education. These mothers strategically organized a full-fledged campaign in the nineties, which through massive fundraising enabled the PTAs to compete with the city’s most exclusive private schools and sold the public schools to families that were moving into the north Buckhead neighborhoods following the opening of GA-400. As the mothers carried their campaign to Sutton and took on leadership roles in NAPPS, they embraced a language of community, which in 1999 won them the support of the city’s new superintendent.

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7.1 The High School Crisis

In June 1990, the State Board of Education recommended eleven, aging schools that were in need of extensive renovations be closed due to enrollment levels, which had fallen below the standards set by the 1985 Quality Basic Education Act.\(^{655}\) If the Atlanta Board of Education did not vote to close the schools, then the city would be out of compliance and lose state funding. In the midst of growing budget shortfalls, the school board recognized that financially it could not continue to operate small, neighborhood schools and without community input began discussing the proposed school closures.\(^{656}\)

In the midst of the turmoil that followed, Anne Harper took up the reigns of the NAPPS presidency.\(^{657}\) Only the year before, the NAPPS board had formed an ad hoc committee to expand its public relations campaign to include Northside and North Fulton.\(^{658}\) Harper recalls the agenda:

> We turned our attention to supporting the high schools. Here I was with my kids [coming from Morris] Brandon, but it was all about solving the problems at Sutton, the transition to the two high schools and how could we support the Northside School of the Performing Arts and North Fulton’s International Studies program, [which were to attract white families that otherwise were not considering public education].\(^{659}\)

The sharp decline in enrollment identified by the state was a result of a moratorium on transfers except through the magnet programs, which had been put in place following the 1986 meeting between the Lindseths, Browns, and Superintendent Crim in an effort to support the NAPPS campaign to stabilize enrollment from the neighborhoods. However, as news broke that North Fulton and Northside, were on the list of schools to be closed, the campaign was forgotten. Dozens of families withdrew their children midyear,

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\(^{655}\) Henry, “Buckhead School closing planned.”

\(^{656}\) The campaign by West End parents, who had been fighting since 1975 to keep Brown High open, paralleled efforts by NAPPS members. They had pushed to add a health-care magnet program in 1988 and tied the reputation of the program to the revitalization of the neighborhood, which had been recognized as a national historic district in 1991. Brown PTA parents and members of the West End Neighborhood Development, Inc, led by president Janice Sikes, argued that the revitalization of the West End depended upon young families returning to the neighborhood and supporting the school. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 15, 1990, 1A; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 21, 1992, 1B. See “WEND Education Committee, 1984-1993,” Janice White Sikes collection on Southern culture, Archives Division, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System.

\(^{657}\) After her daughters finished elementary school, Anne Harper made a decision that was atypical for most Buckhead mothers and in 1988 returned to work at McKinsey & Company. During this same period, she served on the Board of Directors for the Women’s Feminist Health Center and two terms on the Atlanta school board. See Anne L. Harper papers, W054, Women’s Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta.


\(^{659}\) Interview with Anne Harper, August 14, 2009.
Table 9: Enrollment at the Northside Secondary Schools, 1986-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sutton Middle</th>
<th>North Atlanta</th>
<th>Northside</th>
<th>North Fulton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1,011</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
<td>1,269</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
<td>1,095</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>1,458</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>1,479</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>1,453</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>1,592</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>1,529</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td>Merged</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>1,376</td>
<td>Merged</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>1,426</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1,296</td>
<td>Merged</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td>Merged</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>1,179</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>1,211</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>Merged</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,199</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>Merged</td>
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</tr>
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</table>


and enrollment fell to 593 and 970 students (Table 9). With Harper’s oldest daughter, Phoebe Nobles, getting ready to start her freshmen year at North Fulton, the high school crisis consumed both her family life and her work with NAPPS. When her daughter tried to register for classes, Harper saw the impact of two decades of white flight. There were now too few students to offer advanced foreign language electives. “We had been fighting really hard to support both of the schools. But we just kept losing people, and when you lose students, you lose faculty. Then all of a sudden, we could not offer French IV and Spanish IV.”

Equally as important in attracting families from the neighborhoods was “the ability of the

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660 Henry, “Buckhead School closing planned.”
661 Interview with Anne Harper, August 14, 2009.
faculty to offer extracurricular activities and the success of the athletic teams,” which suffered as enrollment fell.  

Harper scheduled a meeting with Buckhead’s school board representative John Elger, who had been elected in 1989 as part of the first wave of pro-neighborhood candidates and whose wife Jan had served as NAPPS president two years earlier. At the next monthly NAPPS meeting, Elger shared with the board the advantages of consolidating the high schools, “I [saw it] as an extraordinary opportunity for the northside area. Instead of two good schools in need of renovation and repair, we’d have one fixed-up powerhouse. A school the entire Buckhead community could focus its attention on…the best high school in the area.” Convincing by the argument for “the economics of scale,” NAPPS began to negotiate for the merger of the two high schools. Harper recalls:

We switched from supporting our two high schools to the dawning realization, on the part of a lot of us, that we could not keep two quality high schools open. We just couldn’t justify it. So the whole argument among some of us became let’s voluntarily propose the merger of the schools, the two schools, and demand a lot of money out of the school board, [which was already in negotiations to close a dozen schools,] before they forced it on us. I remember that whole conversation was let’s get out in front, let’s not wait until they tell us, and we get some bad decision [without input from the community]. We really tried to negotiate with John Elger as our school board member.

However, the majority of NAPPS leaders were not old Atlanta. They did not understand the community’s loyalty to either school. Over the next three years, they came to regret their decision.

Northside parents called Harper at home. They were shocked. How could this be happening? “People who had been faithfully building both high schools…were very unhappy with those of us who said this isn’t going to work. So the group really was sadly very divided over it.” She tried to explain to parents that the full-time equivalent (FTE) equations, which allocated the number of teachers to be hired based on student enrollment, limited the ability of North Fulton to offer courses. She stressed, the merger

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662 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
663 “NAPPS minutes,” February 17, 1989, Anne Harper Papers (privately held).
664 Henry, “Buckhead School closing planned.”
665 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
666 Interview with Anne Harper, August 14, 2009.
667 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009. The fight to keep North Fulton High School opened stretched back to the early eighties. Again and again, northside parents were able to keep their school open. “City school closings postponed until 1983: Board votes 7-2 to review situation,” Atlanta Daily World, December 16, 1982.
could be good for the northside. They would get a new modern building and could concentrate their efforts on creating arguably the best high school in the city. The parents, whose children were most often enrolled in advanced placement courses or the International Studies magnet at North Fulton, then argued with her. Their school, which was perceived within the Buckhead community as offering the superior academic track, was going to suffer when merged with Northside because the Performing Arts magnet largely pulled in poor, African-American children from outside the district. When asked two decades later why parents opposed the merger, Harper recalls those conversations:

The performing arts drew more from outside the neighborhood. It had been led for many years by a charismatic guy named Billy Densmore...what he did was magnificent in terms of how he believed in the kids, in bringing them up to the northside, and working to integrate them into this community to make a really strong program. Jasmine Guy, [who went on to gain national fame in the television show, “A Different World,”] and numerous other actors came out of that program...people coming from the northside were largely in the international magnet. IB was a very academically demanding program...if they were not in the magnet a lot, like my daughter, were in AP courses at North Fulton, which was perceived to be a superior school academically. So those people felt they had absolutely zero to gain by going over to that building on Northside Drive. What were they going to get? Performing Arts was going to have their stage and an enhanced performing arts facility. But what were you going to give IB? Another set of classrooms? They weren’t going to gain; they could not see that they gained anything.

Unable to understand the argument being made by Elger or Harper, most of the Buckhead parents, who had committed to public education because of the magnet and the Advanced Placement program at North Fulton, saw the board’s decision as an assault on their commitment to integration and belief that public schools could provide the best education in the city with the highest test scores and expansive college placement electives. African-American parents, whose children were voluntarily bused to the northside, also opposed the merger. At a community meeting in October 1990, the testimony by black and white parents was heated and emotional. One African-American mother explained that merging would “destroy what North Fulton has worked so hard for: racial and cultural balance, high academics, and the IB program.” Another mother, whose oldest child had just started fourth grade at Garden Hills Elementary School and who lived two blocks from North Fulton High School, recalls the community meeting and why white, northside parents were fighting to keep both high schools open:

668 Ibid.
It really seemed to be a done deal though they held community meetings, which I went to and even made a speech...they were going to do this no matter what but were pretending to give the community this opportunity to talk and impact the decision that in reality had already been made. My feeling and I think the feeling of a lot of people was that John Elger, who was on the school board and resigned to become president of Piedmont College, gave up the ghost and just agreed that the schools were going to merge. A lot of us did not want that. The perspective was that a lot of [Buckhead] people were afraid of the black-white thing. It was going to mean a lot more black families, particularly for those parents that had their kids at North Fulton and my children would have gone there because it’s two blocks from our home. But it was not a black-white thing. It was that Northside did not have the academic excellence that North Fulton had because of the original International Studies program...I was against the merger of the schools for academic reasons. I wanted a really strong academic school for my son and eventually my daughter.  

Former Atlanta mayor Sam Massell and state senator Mike Eagan also spoke and appealed to the school board on behalf of the Buckhead community. Through their magnet programs, North Fulton and Northside had achieved integration with small student bodies that were forty percent white, forty percent black, and twenty percent Hispanic. They were Atlanta’s success stories and proof that public education offered high academics and diversity.  

On November 12, 1990, the Board of Education, after looking at the suitability, property values, and costs of expanding for each site, voted at their legislative meeting to locate both magnet programs in the Northside High School building. Anne Harper had lost the last point of concession that might have held many of the northside families to the merger. Harper explains:

> We didn’t know for sure when we went into negotiations which campus it would be at. For a long time there was a hope that it would be at North Fulton, but my recollection is there were state regulations about the amount of land you had to have per student. Neither site met them, but Northside had a little more land. Somehow ultimately in the long run the important decision was for it to be on the Northside property and that of course made everyone at North Fulton even angrier.

Despite the community’s outrage, plans continued. School board member John Elger encouraged NAPPS members to attend Board of Education meetings that spring. Thanks in large part to the proactive lobbying of NAPPS, the school board voted to spend $15 million to renovate and expand the former Northside

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669 Interview with Judith Bozarth, December 14, 2011.
672 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
building. The new high school was to have a state-of-the-art facility in a little over a year. Temporarily, the newly renamed North Atlanta High School was to begin the 1991-1992 school year on the former North Fulton campus.673

That summer, Anne Harper, who was beginning her second year as NAPPS president, worked closely with her friend Pam Brown, who along with her husband Robbie had agreed to serve as the first presidents of the North Atlanta PTA. Their youngest daughter Allison was a rising junior and a year ahead of Harper’s daughter, Phoebe Nobles. They wanted to make the students feel welcome despite the divided community. They ignored the lack of air-conditioning, pushed aside the fact that the building was falling down around them, and worked with other parent volunteers to get the school ready.674 “We spent weeks painting the classrooms and the front doors to the school. We said at the very least let the kids arrive to a fresh building. Every weekend we were up there, ten or twelve of us at a time. We bought the paint ourselves.”675 As they worked, they watched as portable classrooms were hauled into the back parking lot. It was going to take seventeen trailers to accommodate the combined student body. After painting, they helped the teachers, who were moving the theater, dance, and art equipment from Northside into empty classrooms or in the case of former North Fulton faculty members shifting classroom materials to their new room assignments.

On the first day of the 1991-1992 school year, interim principal Ann Burch welcomed the students as they arrived at the crowded campus. She had temporarily taken over the job in February after principal Joe Carpenter’s unit was called up and deployed to the Persian Gulf.676 The first year was rough

674 “Back to school; Students from pair of schools prepare to pull off a merger,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, August 8, 1991, 15S.
675 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
676 Joe Carpenter, principal of North Fulton High School, was named principal of the new school and was hired by the Board of Education in the fall of 1990 to begin planning for North Atlanta. The school’s assistant principal, Geraldine Wright, took over his duties at North Fulton. When Joe Carpenter returned from active duty in May 1991,
for everyone. Despite the parents’ best efforts, the building was falling down around them. On the outside, paint was peeling away. Inside, blinds were broken and the outdated bathrooms were dark and dingy. They ended up blocking off sections where the plaster ceiling was collapsing. When it rained, the halls were filled with mud as the student body sloshed back and forth from the main building to the portables. The stairwells were packed shoulder to shoulder between bells. The faculty and students far exceeded the building’s capacity, yet the teachers were creative. They shared classrooms and met in every space available. The students, “after a few scuffles with one another and a little competitiveness about mascots and colors,” sought to bring the school together. They formed new clubs and held try-outs for the sports teams. Pam and Robbie Brown’s daughter, Allison, made the varsity cheerleading team. That first year, Homecoming weekend was kicked off with a parade down Peachtree on Friday, November 8, 1991. The initial optimism of the diehard parent activists, the better members of the faculty, and the leaders of the student body faded. By the end of the year, dozens of families from the neighborhoods had withdrawn their children. Allison Brown ended the year as the only white cheerleader for North Atlanta. Many of the white, northside parents just “couldn’t see past the peeling paint.” “There was huge community uproar…and hundreds of parents pulled their kids. White families, particularly the North Fulton parents, pulled their kids out of the merged schools and that was strictly for racial reasons, though no one would ever really admit to that. They left for the private schools.” A second wave of white, northside families fled the public schools for good.

It wasn’t just the poor facilities or a tip in the racial balance that was pushing parents from North Atlanta. The Board of Education could not find the leadership that was needed to get the community behind the new high school. NAPPS tried to bring stability to the situation while the school board searched

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677 Interview with Anne Harper, August 14, 2009. For a description of the conditions see also Gail Hagans, “Checking the pulse of education; 2 magnet programs eager for better space,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 17, 1994, 14N.
678 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
680 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
681 Interview with Judith Bozarth, December 14, 2011.
for Joe Carpenter’s replacement. The North Atlanta liaison committee of Sutton Middle School principal David York, interim principal Ann Burch, and NAPPS past-president Peggy Ledbetter worked with parent representatives to organize informational meetings for parents of rising eighth graders and even invited students from North Atlanta to speak about their experiences in the combined magnet programs so that PTA presidents and school representatives could report back to the elementary schools. By the beginning of the second year, the board had hired the new school’s third principal. Brown recalls:

I remember when North Atlanta opened [for the 1992-1993 school year] at North Fulton with seventeen trailers out in the back. We had a brand new principal coming from Gwinnett, Judith Rogers, the wife of Werner Rogers who was the state school superintendent. We were able to hang on to her for only seven months. She could not believe how Atlanta Public Schools compared to Gwinnett…Judy’s frustration was she’d put in a request for toilet paper or some sort of maintenance thing. She’d spend days working on that when she wanted to focus on instructional issues. She wanted to focus on education, and she got extremely frustrated. When you look back…the victims really were the kids and the community.

Judith Rogers, who had been greatly liked by the faculty and parents, had lasted only seven months.

North Atlanta PTA president Pam Brown, NAPPS president Anne Harper, and NAPPS president-elect Ann Cochran were beyond disheartened. Harper explains their frustration:

We had huge leadership problems at North Atlanta once we merged the school. It was something I had totally supported, and then we went through a string of principals. We couldn’t keep a principal for more than a year. It was a disaster and really set the tone of progress for the merger back tremendously.

Even the most committed of the northside parent activists were beginning to believe that the school system did not care if their new high school succeeded.

As the search began for North Atlanta’s fourth principal in less than three years, the uncertainty left northside parents, who had stayed and remained committed to making the two magnet programs excel under one roof, upset and angry. A growing lack of trust heightened by the frequent principal turnovers,

683 Judith Rogers came from Norcross, where she was a middle school principal and resigned to take over their new high school. Betsy White, “N. Atlanta principal announces resignation; Will take job at Norcross High,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 23, 1993, 2D.
684 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
construction delays, and the subsequent resignation of several key teachers and loss of the international business community’s support, pushed them from the public schools. As part of its effort to sell the merger that no one had wanted, the school board had promised parents the new high school would have both magnet programs. It continued to offer the performing arts magnet and the International Baccalaureate program. In addition, the school kept the Advanced Placement track, which had been a separate part of North Fulton. Each brought a whole set of teachers. “It was a nightmare to run.” When the school’s third principal left and it became clear that they were going to spend another year on the overcrowded North Fulton campus due to construction piling up on Northside Drive, several of the schools’ teachers decided to resign. At the same time, the international business community, which had under program director Ann Gellner been a tremendous backer of the magnet at North Fulton, began shifting its support to the private Atlanta International School, which had a built a campus in the suburb of Sandy Springs. The original promise made by Elger and Harper of a powerhouse…the best high school in the area had failed to bear out. Harper, who at the time had thought she was making “the right decision, the smart decision, the fiscally and academically responsible decision,” began to receive “a lot of anonymous and signed letters about her role and leadership” in the merger. The parents after spending the “better part of two years…in trauma and turmoil” simply had enough. “The exodus of northside families from the high school escalated. It was horrible, and one that was harder because I saw the struggle the kids and teachers were having. The teachers were so disheartened; the moral was terrible.” The wave of withdrawals continued, and North Atlanta High School’s enrollment dropped from 1,458 students in 1991 to 1,264 students in 1993, beginning a decade long decline in northside parents’ commitment to their public high school.

North Atlanta’s fourth principal, Dr. John Culbreath, came from Glynn County where he had been an associate superintendent. After taking the job, he found himself facing a student and parent body

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687 “Meeting notes about the problems at NAHS,” date unknown, Anne Harper Papers (privately held).
688 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
689 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
that was exhausted. He listened as parents complained to him that the once rigorous demands of the International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement curriculums were slipping. Though both magnets continued to attract students from all over the city to the northside, teachers and students explained that many would-be students had not enrolled at North Atlanta or already transferred out because of the overcrowded, dilapidated building. The first week, the senior class started off the year by skipping classes to organize a protest rally. They had been promised that the new, renovated building was to be open in time for their last year of high school. Instead, as a result of contract disputes with the Board of Education, they found themselves returning to the dilapidated and overcrowding North Fulton campus. The North Atlanta Class of 1994 believed that the merger was a costly mistake and the reputation of their award-winning magnet programs had suffered.

Less than a month later, school board member John Elger resigned to take over the presidency of Piedmont College. Long-time member of the board Joe Martin approached past-NAPPS president and North Atlanta’s first PTA president Pam Brown. He asked her to serve as the interim District 4 board member for the next three and a half months. The Board of Education just barely voted her in over the former director of the United Negro College Fund, Hugh Fordyce. The vote was inescapably split along racial lines. Brown found herself confronted head on with problems at North Atlanta. She sat and listened to the senior class. They wanted action. The students, their parents, and the faculty were justifiably distraught over the delays. Pam Brown’s youngest child had graduated from the public schools the year before. She knew just how painful the situation was for everyone involved.
Pam Brown also began attending closed-door meetings with Joe Martin, Midge Sweet, and representatives from the Atlanta International School. Brown recalls:

When I came on to the school board, right after John left, they had just begun discussions with the Atlanta International School as the potential renter or purchaser of the property…there were these quiet meetings that were taking place. It was Joe Martin, Midge Sweet, and I. Sometimes, a few other board members attended. We met with Egbert Perry, who was a very prominent black businessman in Atlanta and on the Board of Trustees at the International School, Alex Horsley, the headmaster of the International School, and a couple of other parent and business representatives from the school.694

When the news that the private international school was seeking to lease or purchase the former North Fulton campus began to circulate, the northside community was again stirred up. Brown was outraged at those citizens, who came to voice their protests over the future of the property.

We had people coming to the school board meetings who were graduates of North Fulton, who were just sick over the thought of losing the identity of that school. They were just so passionate in their defense of keeping the school, and I’m thinking where in the hell have you been for the last fifteen years! Your children are not in these schools. These schools are closing because there is no need for two of them. There is no demand for them in the community, and you contributed to that. How dare you be here crying crocodile tears, and I said to one of them, “Where have you been? I’m sorry, but you’re too late.”695

The decision about what to do with the property was too controversial, and the Board of Education made the decision to table any motions until after the 1993 election.696

At the same time, Anne Harper, who had rolled off the NAPPS board that fall, began to seriously consider running for the District 4 seat. She had thrown her name out four years earlier, but when John Elger agreed to run, she had stepped down. Up against two other candidates in 1993, Harper’s leadership on NAPPS and her campaign promise to shift decision-making from the central office back to principals, teachers, and parents earned her the endorsement of Erase the Board and EduPAC.697 With overwhelming support, Anne Harper joined the other six new members of the Board of Education, who had been elected as part of the political movement that had swept the 1993 election.

694 Interview with Pam Brown, August 14, 2009.
695 Ibid.
697 Betsy White, “Key issue: How to get more bang for the buck,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, October 14, 1993, 18E.
She inherited from Pam Brown the problems at North Atlanta and the controversial postponement over what to do with the former North Fulton property. In January, after being sworn in, the school board voted to fire the original contractors for failing to meet their September deadline. They then hired Metric-Johnson to finish the building by late July or early August. For Harper, it was a very sad time. She had pushed for the merger of the two high schools while serving as president of NAPPS. Three years of turmoil had swallowed up the fifteen years of grassroots efforts by parents to build up the community’s commitment to the public schools. Back on the crowded campus, new principal Dr. John Culbreath worked to bolster the morale of the faculty and the increasingly diverse student body. He called on families to hold in there, give it one more year and “wait and see.” For Harper, that wait was also personal:

By the time I got on the board, we were dealing with an incredible nightmare over the building of the school, the cost over runs, and suing the builder. We ended up having to fire the contractor…my daughter hated me. She was in trailers for three years on the North Fulton campus. She never set foot in the new building and would not have wanted to anyway. It was a source of tremendous personal problems in my family because my daughter was opposed to what I was doing. It was very sad and hard for me. She was absolutely opposed to it.

Meanwhile, the newly elected Board of Education sought to move past the outrageously contentious behavior and antics of the previous school board, which had split so frequently down racial lines when Dr. Glover and Ina Evans attacked Joe Martin or Midge Sweet. Determined to work together, the North Fulton property became their first success. Harper remembers the vote:

After being elected in 1993 we came together as a school board and decided we were…going to work to get compromises and a unified vote. The vote for that fifty-year lease to the International School at North Fulton was 9 to 0…it was important for that not to become a huge divisive, black-white division.

On January 10, 1994, the school board leased the former North Fulton campus to the nine-year-old, private Atlanta International School.

699 Hagans, “Checking the pulse of education.”
700 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
701 Interview with Anne Harper, August 14, 2009.
702 Bernadette Burden, “International School proposes 50-year lease on North Fulton High,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 14, 1993, 22N. For more on the community’s support of the lease to the Atlanta International
Table 10: North Atlanta Enrollment by Race

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black Students North Atlanta</th>
<th>White Students North Atlanta</th>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>194</td>
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On August 29, 1994, after three years of construction delays and setbacks, the state-of-the-art North Atlanta High School opened. Expanded and renovated at a final cost of $16 million, students from all over the city that had been accepted into one of the two magnet programs entered the building. The contrast with the overcrowding and falling down North Fulton campus was overwhelming. New floors and brightly painted walls replaced the peeling paint. Large classrooms with graphing blackboards, science labs with prep rooms, music rooms, two theaters, dance studios, and language labs had replaced the seventeen portables. The exodus of white, northside parents did not reverse itself because of a new building, and North Atlanta’s fourth principal left exhausted by the dismal failure of the merger (Table 10).

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704 In 1996, North Atlanta High School’s enrollment was sixty-nine percent African-American with fifty-seven percent of the student body being bused to the northside through out-of-zone transfers. Ninety-two percent of the students coming from the white, northside neighborhoods were enrolled in the magnet or advanced placement program.
### Table 11: Enrollment at the Northside Elementary Schools, 1986-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Garden Hills</th>
<th>E. Rivers</th>
<th>Morris Brandon</th>
<th>Sarah Smith</th>
<th>Warren T. Jackson</th>
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<td>932</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>1,141</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Warren T. Jackson primary campus opened in 2007 at the Tuxedo Park school
*Morris Brandon primary campus opened in 2009 at the Margaret Mitchell School
*Sarah Smith intermediate campus moved to new building in January 2010, kindergarten moved from local church


#### 7.2 Competing with the Private Schools

In the midst of a second exodus from North Atlanta High School, enrollment at three of the northside elementary schools, Warren T. Jackson, Morris Brandon, and Sarah Smith, began climbing (Table 11). Anne Cochran, who took over the NAPPS presidency from Anne Harper in 1992, had six children...

This overwhelming draw suggests that the magnet programs, which had been founded to attract white families to the public schools in 1981, did continue on a smaller scale to effectively attract would-be private school students from Buckhead and integrate the public high school. Doug Cumming, “Community; Public schools trying to hold on to upperclassmen,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 26, 1996, 3E; “North Atlanta principal accepts new position,” *Northside Neighbor*, May 3, 1995.

*Northside Neighbor*, August 12, 1992, 1A. At E. Rivers, Garden Hills, and Margaret Mitchell, the parent-teacher associations were also strong, but these three northside schools did not achieve the same degree of support and...
working their way through the public schools to North Atlanta High School. She first began volunteering at Garden Hills Elementary. From the classroom, she moved into the PTA leadership. During the 1988-1989 school year, Anne Cochran offered to be school’s representative to the NAPPS board, while also helping to organize Garden Hills’ first fundraising event. That spring over fifty parents gathered at the Garden Hills swimming pool for an “Evening in the Garden,” where they raised $8,000 for the school’s arts programs. Three years later when she took over as NAPPS president, Anne Cochran could see that the situation in the schools was changing dramatically. “The changes in principals at North Atlanta had made some parents uncomfortable. There was a small but vocal group of strong supporters but their kids weren’t in high school yet.” It was these parents that were pouring time and energy into the northside elementary schools.

At the monthly NAPPS meetings, Anne Cochran met other Buckhead mothers. Like her, they had first became active in the their elementary school’s parent-teacher association and were now volunteering to serve as their school’s representative. She listened as they reported on the condition of the buildings. “Before the renovations, Garden Hills Elementary School was a lovely building but quite dated with no air-conditioning. It was rather dreary and definitely needed renovating.” The elementary school facilities were all outdated. Floors needed to be replaced, and ceilings repaired. There were concerns over the wiring. Many of the schools had been constructed before central air-conditioning. Parents also wanted modern media centers and additional classrooms for their PTA-funded physical education, foreign lan-

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706 All of the Cochran children attended Garden Hills Elementary School, and five of the children went on to Sutton Middle School and North Atlanta High School. Anne Cochran, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, October 10, 2011.


708 The original idea for an “Evening in the Garden” came from a 1987 fundraiser at the Terrace Garden Inn on Lenox Road. The school’s parent-teacher association brought the event back two years later. After a neighbor complained that the school fundraiser was serving wine, they moved it to the private homes of John Peiffer and Debi Lee. It remains an annual event and now raises over $30,000 for the school’s cultural arts program. John Schaffiner, “Garden Hills raises $30,000,” Buckhead Reporter, May 1, 2009; “Garden Hills Elementary to host Evening in the Garden,” Northside Neighbor, April 13, 2010; “School holds party to fund arts,” Buckhead Reporter, April 21, 2011.

709 Anne Cochran, Email to Elizabeth Egan Henry, October 10, 2011.

710 Ibid.
guage, music, and art teachers.\footnote{Warren T. Jackson was the newest of the northside schools, built in 1967. North Fulton High School had opened in 1920, and Garden Hills Elementary in 1938. The rest of the schools were built as part of the postwar growth of city’s northside suburbs: Morris Brandon Elementary in 1947, E. River Elementary in 1950, Northside High School in 1950, Sarah R. Smith Elementary in 1952, Margaret Mitchell Elementary in 1954, and Dykes (later Sutton) Middle School in 1959.} North Atlanta parents were beginning their second year on the temporary former-North Fulton campus and reported that the building was falling down around their children. They hoped that if funding for a state-of-the-art facility could be secured, the exodus from the school would slow, while the active elementary school parents saw facilities as a way to improve the schools and attract more families from the neighborhood to the public schools. These two generations of parents came together to rally support for what they hoped was to be the first school bond referendum passed by the City of Atlanta in twenty-four years. Joined by parents from their counterpart the Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools, NAPPS members and PTA presidents lobbied the Buckhead community to vote in favor of the $94 million bond.\footnote{The bond pledged $15 million to the new North Atlanta campus on Northside Drive in addition to renovations at Garden Hills Elementary, E. Rivers Elementary, Warren T. Jackson Elementary, Morris Brandon Elementary, Sarah Smith Elementary, Mary Lin Elementary, Morningside Elementary, and Sutton Middle School. \textit{Northside Neighbor}, October 28, 1992, 1A. For more on the efforts by Morningside parents and CINS see Carol Pierannunzi, “Forum: Vote tests community values; Misconceptions persist about school bonds,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constiution}, October 4, 1992, 2F; Peter Scott, “Mayor urges support for school bond issue,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constiution}, October 28, 1992, 2C.} The parents’ efforts brought voters to the polls in overwhelming support for the bond. A week after the vote, comptroller Lawrence Thompson wrote a note to Sutton PTA president, Clara Hackney, thanking the parent activists for their lobbying. “It was truly a grassroots campaign and show[ed] what could be done with a small amount of money and a large amount of resolve from a dedicated group.”\footnote{J. Lawrence Thompson, Atlanta Public Schools comptroller, Letter to Clara Hackney, Sutton Middle School PTSA President, November 9, 1992, Willis A. Sutton Middle School folder, Atlanta Public School Archives (closed).}

Just a few weeks after the November 3, 1992 bond referendum vote, Sarah Smith Elementary School hosted its fourth annual coffee and tour for Brookhaven, North Buckhead, Buckhead Forest, and Ridgedale Park parents of toddlers and preschool-aged children. Over sixty prospective parents gathered in the school’s media center to mingle and enjoy the coffee provided by the parent-teacher organization. At 9:30, principal Lee Friedman welcomed them to Sarah Smith and presented a short talk on the school,
which emphasized that Sarah Smith was competitive with any of the city’s private schools. “I'm very honest. What I tell parents is you have to feel comfortable where you're sending your child. I think we have a product that certainly compares to private schools, and it's really just a matter of what you want for your child.” He spoke of the future renovation and expansion of the school’s campus. Tours by current parents followed. It gave prospective parents “an opportunity to ask questions. More importantly, we were trying to let people see what we had to offer and raise their comfort level. Many people in our neighborhoods had a choice. They could go to public or private schools…the coffee was a nice situation because you had parents who did the tours and could give others their perspective.”

Three years earlier, after being hired as Sarah Smith’s principal, Lee Friedman had realized that most northside parents started school shopping well before their children reached kindergarten. These parents were not considering Sarah Smith Elementary School as they began the intensely competitive application process. Two Brookhaven mothers, whose children started at Sarah Smith in the nineties explain, “During the turmoil, they had been sent to private school and so it never was part of who they were.” “People want[ed] their children to be educated like they were educated. Since everybody, most of the people that are parents today, were pulled out, they don’t want to do something different from what they had. So that was what we were battling against.” Each October, parents attended private schools’ information sessions and tours and, as the February deadline approached, compiled stacks of information on each of the schools that they were considering. In a process that was more akin to applying for college, they attended lecture series at their churches, hired tutors to help their children prepare for the wave of admissions testing, and paid consultants, who advised parents on how to fill out the applications and insure that their child secured a spot during the limited expansion years of kindergarten and sixth or seventh grade. In March, when the acceptance lists came out, northside parents often found themselves scram-

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714 Denise Maloof, “Elementary school hosts coffee to tell parents about its program,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 11, 1993, 11E; ---, “Sarah Smith tries to sell itself to parents; Area private schools provide competition,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 11, 1993, 14N.


716 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.

717 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011.
bling. Every year the number of applicants was rising, and the families that were moving into Buckhead found themselves on one of the long waiting lists.\textsuperscript{718}

Lee Friedman decided that if Sarah Smith was going to compete with the nearby private schools, then he needed to start selling the school to parents. Shortly after being hired he sat down with the school’s PTO president to discuss how they could improve their efforts to reach North Buckhead families earlier in the year and starting at a younger age. At the August 24, 1989 NAPPS meeting, he presented his idea.\textsuperscript{719} The same Brookhaven mother recalls the story:

Dr. Friedman told me once that he sat down with this mom and said, “Give me the name of every preschool family in your neighborhood.” He took it upon himself because he knew the school was in a good area with tremendous capacity. So he called all of them, one by one and said, “I’m Lee Friedman. I heard you have a preschooler, and I want you to come to Sarah Smith. I certainly understand if you are going to private school but come by and say hello.”\textsuperscript{720}

Much like the northside private schools that conducted tours and information sessions each fall, Sarah Smith Elementary School was going to begin marketing itself to prospective parents.

The campaign developed by Lee Friedman and Sarah Smith’s PTO coincided with the defeat of the North Buckhead Civic Association-led ten-year effort to block a 6.4-mile extension of Georgia-400 from cutting through their neighborhoods and the Sarah Smith School district. Many parents feared that the toll road was going to trigger a swell in the exodus of families from the public schools.\textsuperscript{721} Other Buckhead homeowners were concerned that GA-400 threatened to expand the Peachtree corridor of high-rise developments and encroach upon their neighborhoods’ single-family, residential character. In June 1990, the federal appeals court ruled against the neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{722}

\textsuperscript{718} Carlos Campos, “Private schools feel pinch; As area’s population grows, class space gets tighter,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, November 3, 1994, 1H; “Series helps parents make good school decisions,” \textit{Northside Neighbor}, August 7, 2001, 4B.
\textsuperscript{719} “NAPPS minutes,” August 24, 1989, Anne Harper Papers (privately held).
\textsuperscript{720} Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
\textsuperscript{721} Lillian Lee Kim, “The Georgia 400 Road; Road voices; Businesses can’t wait, but residents resigned,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, June 20, 1993, 6D.
\textsuperscript{722} Some neighborhoods groups were successful in gaining concessions during the highway fight. To establish a buffer, the Peachtree Park Civic Association sought historic status, which it won in 1986, and the closing of East Paces Ferry to halt the increase in cut-through traffic, which was completed in 1989. Other sections of north Buckhead, including the Pine Hills and Buckhead Forest neighborhoods, saw home values and sales drop, with up to one-third of the homes on streets near the proposed route sold to speculators. The neighborhoods were not all unified in
Parents and homeowners that had fiercely opposed the highway’s extension were shocked by the changes that the road brought to Buckhead.\(^{723}\) Construction on the toll road, which had started after the court’s ruling in the summer of 1990, continued for three years and cranes loomed over North Buckhead and Peachtree Park. From their backyards, residents could hear the bulldozers at work. On August 1, 1993, the first cars made their way through the newly opened GA-400 tollbooth. Many of the daily commuters were shoppers coming from the northern suburbs of Sandy Springs, Roswell, and Alpharetta. The upscale Phipps Plaza had reopened the year before after a massive renovation and expansion added a third wing and a new anchor, Parisian’s. With retail sales on the rise following the opening of GA-400, Lenox Square announced plans in 1994 to build a second floor. Within months, Phipps executives began negotiations to bring another anchor, Bloomingdale’s, to Atlanta by the end of the decade.\(^{724}\)

Despite the well-organized efforts by homeowners to protect the single-family residential character of their neighborhoods, the opening of the toll road and a new surface access street, the Buckhead their opposition to the extension. Many residents “saw it as a major artery to bring more people into” the region’s major retail district and to relieve the congested surface streets. Interview with Clare Richardson, April 30, 2011. See also H.M. Cauley, “Highway restores the peace of optimistic Buckhead area,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 5, 1992, 6H; David Pendered, “GA 400 extension: One year later; Tug of war brewing over area’s identity,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 31, 1994, 4G; Jill Vejnoska, “GA 400 extension: One year later; Neighborhoods growing pains in Buckhead; Residents press fight against development,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 31, 1994, 5G.


Loop, fueled a commercial construction boom that backed up to their neighborhoods. From their quiet, tree-lined streets, North Buckhead and Buckhead Forest homeowners watched as the skyline of office, condominium and hotel towers rose upward. Each year, traffic congestion grew more and more unbearable. In the mornings on their way to work or during the day when out running errands, parents had to adjust their commute time as they sat in their cars, waiting to exit their neighborhoods for one of the backed-up thoroughfares of Peachtree, Piedmont, or Roswell roads. By the end of the decade, the Peachtree corridor had been rebuilt.

The opening of GA-400 also brought over 11,000 empty nesters, young professionals, and couples to the newly constructed high-rise condominiums, apartment complexes, and northside neighborhoods. Across north Buckhead, families that had purchased their homes in the eighties found that they loved their neighbors, their peaceful, enclosed neighborhoods, and their small schools. As their families

725 The Buckhead Loop was built to provide access to GA-400 and extended Lenox Road to connect Phipps Boulevard and Piedmont Road. Mike Morris, “Essential traffic corridor was 41 years in the making,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, July 25, 1993, 5F.


grew, they often added on to their two-or-three-bedroom bungalow or ranch-style homes by “popping” off the roof to create a second story. In Ridgedale Park just east of Georgia 400’s path through north Buckhead, Trisha and James Williamson purchased their 1941 Colonial Revival-style home on Cantrell Road in 1986 and then decided to remodel and update the exterior and interior in 1990. Across the north-side other families were following their example, and in the midst of renovations, they found themselves also welcoming new neighbors to the street. Many of the retired, empty nesters that had been a part of the neighborhood for two decades were selling and moving into luxury condominiums and apartment complexes. The families that were moving to Buckhead in the nineties often had small children. As the affluence of Buckhead households rose, they paid twice, even triple, what couples had paid for houses on the same winding street in the seventies and eighties.

To the north of Ridgedale Park on the other side of Peachtree Road, newly married couples like Katy and Bob Pattillo and Martha and Mark Fair were settling into their homes on Club Drive in Brookhaven. In 1990, the Pattillos, who had gotten married in 1988, bought their home just down the street because of the reputation of Sarah Smith Elementary. Their first child, Kathlyn Pattillo, had been born that year. “We moved [to Brookhaven] for a good public school…and through word of mouth had heard that Sarah Smith was a good school. It had just started turning.” Martha Reid had moved to Atlanta after graduating from Wake Forest in 1985 to be near her parents, who had moved to the South after her father retired from the military. Not long after starting her new job, she met her future husband Mark Fair, who was buying and renovating homes. After getting married, they realized that they really liked Brookhaven and decided to move into the home he had bought. “He was renovating houses before we got married and bought one in Brookhaven. It was right before everybody started moving to Brookhaven. He renovated it and was planning on selling. But we met the neighbors and realized we liked the neighborhood…yet all

730 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011.
these people were telling me that you could not send your kids to public school.” When their first child Andrew was born in 1992, most northside families were still sending their children to one of the city’s private schools.

Just to the north of Morris Brandon Elementary on Howell Mill Road, Cynthia and Jim Brown purchased their second home in 1994. After graduating from Vanderbilt and Emory’s law schools in 1986, the native Atlantans, who had met at Davidson College, returned to the city and purchased a starter home in Morningside. Brown recalls why they decided to move to Buckhead:

We were living [in Morningside] when our daughter was born in 1992. In early 1994, we began thinking about a larger house…we started looking around, and at that time we were very comfortable with Morningside Elementary, which would have been our local elementary school. We were very concerned about Inman Middle School, and Grady was not the kind of place we wanted to send our precious baby daughter. Honestly, we always assumed that our children would someday go to Westminster, but as what Westminster calls an alpha omega, from the beginning to the end, I didn’t think 13 years was a good idea. So we knew we needed to get into a school system where we could do public schools at least through elementary school. After looking at our housing choices in Morningside and in Buckhead, we decided that we needed to move to either the Morris Brandon or Sarah Smith school district. Very intentionally, we chose the house that we are in because it was in the Morris Brandon district.

Young families, like the Williamson’s, Pattillos, Fairs, and Browns, were moving to the quiet, northside neighborhoods because of the growing reputation of the public elementary schools. Many of them started their house hunt by narrowing their list down to homes in the Warren T. Jackson, Morris Brandon, or Sarah Smith school districts, sometimes even before having children. It was these young families,

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731 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
732 Interview with Cynthia Briscoe Brown, June 8, 2011. In 1991, when she was pregnant with her first child attorney Cynthia Brown’s Junior League’s placement for the year was the representative to the APPLE Corps board.
734 Rochelle Carter, “Reading, writing, revitalizing; Schools become key target of reform as migration reshapes city’s neighborhoods,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 29, 2000, 1C.
whose arrival signaled the reversal of two decades of white flight, that the campaigns at Jackson, Brandon and Sarah Smith were going after.\footnote{This increase in population corresponded to the addition of 5,259 households. \textit{Buckhead Guidebook}, 115. See also Holly Crenshaw, “Atlanta’s population uptick reverses years of decline,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, July 15, 1999, 1JD.}

In 1992, Ridgedale Park homeowner Trisha Williamson agreed to serve as co-president for the Sarah Smith parent-teacher organization with North Buckhead mother Aletta Weitz. After overseeing the fourth annual prospective parents’ coffee and tour in November, they turned their attention to fundraising. Since the early eighties, the school’s PTO has sponsored an annual wrapping paper sale.\footnote{Diane Loupe, “School fundraisers; ‘Tis the season to sell, sell, sell,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, September 13, 1993, 3E; H.M. Cauley, “Volunteers; Duo sends chaos packing,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, June 13, 1996, 10D; Bo Emerson, “Lady on a roll; Sally Foster’s gift wrap business a leading player in school fund-raising,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, October 13, 2002, 1KS.} The money raised was used to supplement the curriculum and put on the annual eight-to-ten-weeklong “Time Travelers” program, which through the dedicated efforts of dozens of parent volunteers took each grade through a different period in history. Williamson and Weitz decided that they wanted to do more. A larger PTO budget could fund enrichment programs and field trip opportunities that were typically associated with the city’s private schools.

That spring, the Sarah Smith parent-teacher organization organized its first annual Buckhead/Brookhaven Tour of Homes. The fundraising committee had proposed the idea in December and suggested that they model it after the annual tour of homes put on by the nearby private Holy Innocents’ Episcopal School. The committee co-chairs started by putting out a request to Sarah Smith parents to volunteer their homes for the tour. News traveled by word-of-mouth and parents suggested neighbors, who had recently renovated their homes. Soon they had six North Buckhead homes, which were constructed between 1929 and 1950, to showcase how families were renovating and expanding the bungalows and ranch-style homes. Harry Norman Realtors, whose real estate agents had listened to Anne Harper’s “dog and pony show” a decade earlier, offered to sponsor the event. The tour was a hit. Each April, Atlantans purchased a ticket at the prestigious Capitol City Club in Brookhaven. Then they wound their way west, through the neighborhoods of north Buckhead. By the third annual tour, the \textit{Northside Neighbor} was fea-
turing Sarah Smith’s fundraiser alongside the Holy Innocents’ tour of homes, which was in its sixth year. With all proceeds to benefit Sarah Smith, parents were selling both their renovated homes and their elementary school.737

With the time and money to volunteer,738 the tour of homes was only just the beginning. PTO president Williamson was seeing a lot more parents at Sarah Smith that “really got involved in developing programs.”739 The Sally Foster wrapping paper sale alone was raising over $100,000 a year. It was this parental involvement that remade the school’s image and brought the Buckhead community back to the public schools after two decades. In Brookhaven, Katy Pattillo joined a neighborhood playgroup with six other families from the neighborhood. “There were some real pioneers in Brookhaven before me, but I was in a playgroup of six families. They all said they were going to public schools, but when the time came, only two of us went.” In November 1994, she and her husband attended an open house and tour at Sarah Smith. “I was pretty satisfied. I visited the campus and looked at the education of the teachers. I couldn’t see any difference…then that first year with my child in kindergarten I chaired gift-wrap. I don’t know how I did that the first year? Right off the bat, I was a chair. The PTO was very active…I learned a lot from that experience.”740 “I learned the various ways parents could be involved in the schools and what was most effective.”741 “Then we really started raising a lot of money.”742 After chairing Sally Fos-

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738 Rochelle Carter, “Needed: Help from home; Atlanta schools say parents can make a difference, but for some, it’s hard,” Atlanta Constitution, October 26, 1999, 1B; “It takes community to raise a school,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 14, 1999, 6D.

739 Leslie Brice, “North Buckhead; Residents are learning to live with the extension of Georgia 400; GA. 400 fight fails to diminish enthusiasm of area residents,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 30, 1993.

740 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011. Katy Pattillo went on to chair the Sarah Smith PTA for a year and a half in 1999.

741 “Board member sees shared vision,” The Atlanta Educator (Fall 2009): 3.

742 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011.
ter, Pattillo went on to chair the annual Buckhead/Brookhaven Tour of Homes and served for a year and a half as PTO president beginning in January 1999.

In August 1997, two years after Katy Pattillo had joined the Sarah Smith PTO, Cynthia and Jim Brown’s oldest child Caroline started kindergarten at Morris Brandon Elementary School. Brown recalls:

I showed up at the kindergarten coffee the fall before Caroline was to start. That would have been in 1996. Brandon was holding a coffee for new mothers. I walked into the room and there were fourteen of us, who had prospective kindergarteners the following year that had been within a three-year range of being at Westminster together. It was like a mini-Westminster alumni reunion every time we had a PTA meeting! At the time, I was working full-time and had a toddler so I was not as involved or present as many of the other parents. I use to joke that every stay-at-home mother in Atlanta had to have a child at Morris Brandon…because the place was just full of moms who could show up every Thursday morning at 11 am to easel paint with their kindergartener…I got involved peripherally through committees, the kinds of things I could do on my own time or show up for a particular weekend event and work for a couple of hours. By the time Caroline was in third grade, I had taken over the cultural arts program, which is assembly programs and field trips.743

As chair of the cultural arts committee, Cynthia Brown, who had started college as a theater major and through the Junior League volunteered with Young Audiences, brought new arts education programs to Morris Brandon. With little money for the arts coming from the school system, the programs were entirely funded by the PTA.

The following year, Martha Fair’s oldest son Andrew started kindergarten at Sarah Smith. For the Fairs, who had sent their son to the nearby, private Galloway School for preschool, the idea of a neighborhood school appealed to them. “After two years of preschool, I just wanted that sense of community. I saw the school bus going up and down the street…I thought, ‘That’s what I want to do. I want to be a part of this neighborhood and this public school.’ So then I got involved at Sarah Smith, where I felt you either became part of the problem or part of the solution.”744 “The education my children got was equal to any that they could find in a local private school…a private school might draw children from all over the city, so your child’s best friend might live 30 miles away. My children's best friends lived within a mile of

743 Interview with Cynthia Briscoe Brown, June 8, 2011. After her daughter started at Sutton, Brown continued her work on the middle school cultural arts committee. From there she served as vice-president of the Sutton PTA and secretary for the North Atlanta PTSA, before taking over as NAPPS president in 2009.
744 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
Two years later, with her sons in first and second grade Fair chaired Sarah Smith Elementary School’s “Hands on Atlanta Day 2000,” which brought over ninety volunteers to clean up the grounds, landscape the playground and lower fields, install bulletin boards, and paint the interior.

By the 2000-2001 school year, the Sarah Smith PTO and Morris Brandon PTA were raising over a quarter million dollars a year. Across the northside, the six-figure PTA budgets provided the funding for enrichment programs in the arts, field trips to the High Museum of Art, additional French teachers, and at Sarah Smith a week in Paris for the school’s fifth grade students. At the elementary schools, PTA committee chairs could draw from a volunteer list that numbered well over three hundred parents.

As homes in the Sarah Smith and Morris Brandon school districts became increasingly sought after, principals Lee Friedman and Connie York, who had worked as Morris Brandon’s curriculum specialist before being promoted in 1992, found themselves speaking at annual forums hosted by area churches alongside the admission coordinators and heads of the lower schools for Trinity, Westminster, Lovett, and Pace. They both started off by explaining to the audience that their schools were the best performing in the city because of the unique level of parent participation. Parents that could not attend the schools’ cof-

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745 Paul Donsky, “Public schools’ popularity climbs,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 10, 2002, 1C.
746 “Many hands improve Sarah Smith school,” NBCA Newsletter (November 2000): 10. Fair became NAPPS president in 2004. After making the decision to keep both of their boys in the public schools, she also served as PTA president at Sutton Middle School in 2008 and at North Atlanta High School in 2010.
fees were calling their secretaries and scheduling special appointments in order to ask questions and tour their neighborhood school.748

By the mid-nineties, the topic of discussion among young mothers at Buckhead cocktail parties and church coffee hours, as it had been for the past two decades, was education. They discussed the application process and which schools they had visited. However, more and more frequently mothers were asking one another in half-whispered tones, what do you think about Jackson? Morris Brandon? Sarah Smith? Have you seen the test scores? But what happens when you reach fourth and fifth grade? Can you still get in to Westminster? That spring, as Buckhead parents explored their educational options many looked at the northside elementary schools, or what at parties were being referred to as the city’s “public-private schools.” The list of possible school choices was dramatically shifting.749

During the sweltering summer days of August 1995, major construction projects were started at the three most popular northside elementary schools: Warren T. Jackson Elementary, Morris Brandon Elementary, and Sarah Smith Elementary. Portables were hauled on to the schools’ parking lots and playgrounds so that classes could continue in the midst of bulldozers and trucks. While in the case of North Atlanta, construction delays and missed deadlines heightened the trauma that already surrounded the merger, the renovations and additions at the elementary schools became a major selling point within the Buckhead community. “You build these things, and then it happens…the convergence of really changing...”

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748 After turning Sarah Smith Elementary School into one of the state’s best public schools, principal Dr. Lee Friedman retired from the school system in May 2000. He went on to become the head of the lower school at what many believed to be Atlanta’s most prestigious private school, The Westminster Schools. Selected from a nationwide search, the decision was welcomed by Westminster parents, many of whom had children attend Sarah Smith before applying out in fifth grade. Morris Brandon principal Connie York also retired in 2000, after serving as the successful school’s principal for eight years. Warren T. Jackson Elementary School experienced a major change in leadership during this period when longtime principal, Cheryl Sarvis, was rotated to Adamsville Elementary and Dr. Lorraine Reich was moved from Adamsville to Jackson. Rochelle Carter, “20 principals get transfer orders; In-system moves upset many parents,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, July 30, 1998, 8JD; ---, “Change at Sarah Smith; Highly regarded principal retires to direct Westminster’s elementary; School Watch,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 23, 2000, 4JD.

749 Doug Cumming, “Sutton takes on private schools; To avoid losing students with high test scores, a Buckhead public school is courting their parents,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, December 17, 1996, 9D.
the look of the facility because that is big to people…along with the neighborhood being appealing”
changed the perception of what the public-private schools were offering north Buckhead families.750

On Old Ivy Drive, Sarah Smith principal Lee Friedman arrived at the school each morning and
took in the progress. The dust and noise from the work crews that were pouring concrete and laying
bricks was worth the frustrations of running a school in the midst of a construction site. Friedman could
envision what Sarah Smith was going to offer parents. Once completed, the $1.3 million renovation of the
main building and the $2.4 million addition was going to add ten classrooms, a new administration wing,
a new media center, and a music room.751 This was a building that he could sell to prospective families.

7.3 Selling the Public Schools

In the fall of 1995 as enrollment at the elementary schools rose, Northside Atlanta Parents for
Public Schools was on the verge of disintegrating. One parent recalls, “After the merger, there was no
credibility in North Atlanta.”752 Construction delays and a lack of leadership due to the repeated turnover
of principals had been the tipping point for the families that had committed to public education, and with
the exodus that followed, Buckhead father and Atlanta businessman Dub Anderson volunteered to take on
the presidency of NAPPS. “NAPPS was hardly surviving. There was no one else so I agreed to be presi-
dent in 1995. There were three other women, including Judy Bozarth and Sandy Driscoll, so we stood in
the gap and turned it around.”753

Anderson had been involved in the schools since his two boys had started at Morris Brandon
Elementary School. He had served as treasurer of the parent-teacher association and run unsuccessfully

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750 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011.
751 In addition to the construction at Sarah Smith Elementary School, Morris Brandon underwent a $1.7 million
renovation and E. Rivers a $1.4 million renovation. Sutton Middle School and Warren T. Jackson Elementary
School, whose school district split the growing North Buckhead neighborhoods with Sarah Smith, were both ex-
panded at a cost of $2.5 million. The intown parents that had lobbied with NAPPS in support of the bond referen-
dum saw renovations at Morningside Elementary, Mary Lin Elementary, and John Hope Elementary. Denise
Maloof, “Hitting the books in the hard-hat zone; Work at three schools will go on throughout the year,” Atlanta
Journal-Constitution, August 24, 1995, 5D; Gail Hagans Towns, “Schools drawing ‘incompletes’; Shortages of
funds, contractors have building programs falling behind,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, January 4, 1996, 2E.
752 Interview with Dub Anderson, November 15, 2011.
753 Ibid.
for the at-large District 9 school board seat in 1993. Soon after the election, his oldest son, who had been unhappy at The Westminster Schools, returned to the public schools. Now with both his sons making their way to North Atlanta, he looked around as NAPPS president and was frustrated by the number of families from the Buckhead neighborhoods who were leaving the public schools when their children reached fifth grade.

Everyone was happy with Morris Brandon…the elementary schools were all strong…yet Sutton was the weak point. Parents believed that had to get into Westminster, Marist or one of the other private schools by fifth grade or they would get stuck at North Atlanta. They were afraid. So we got aggressive about getting people to stay in the system, and we started with Sutton. Trying to get families to go to Sutton. It was the next door they had to walk through.

Warren T. Jackson, Morris Brandon, and Sarah Smith were all strong. Why not stick with the public schools? Why not encourage families to follow through to Sutton?

With children already at Sutton, Garden Hill neighbors Judy Bozarth and Sandy Driscoll were similarly concerned about parents continuing to apply out when their children reached fourth or fifth grade. Both women had served as PTA presidents as their children moved from Garden Hill to Sutton and then on to North Atlanta and hosted gatherings at their homes and the Garden Hills Recreation Center encouraging parents to consider Sutton and North Atlanta. Bozarth recalls, “I was PTA president five times in the public schools…I hosted a number of gatherings [and] people still say to me, ‘I went to that thing at your house, and I sent my kid to Sutton.’” The Bozarths had returned to Atlanta in 1988 after living in Germany for four years and decided to buy their next home in the city. “We had first moved to Atlanta in 1977 because of a job promotion that Bill got [at IBM]. We lived in east Cobb County…I’m a city person. I grew up in New York City, and we had always found ourselves going into the city for movies and plays. So when we came back from Germany in 1988, we looked for houses in the city…Garden Hills was a beautiful neighborhood and seemed like a nice place to raise a family.”

754 Dub Anderson ran in the 1993 election for the District 8 seat against incumbent Ina Evans and was defeated by Aaron Watson. “Atlanta Elections ’93,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, September 30, 1993, 17E.
755 Interview with Dub Anderson, November 15, 2011.
756 Interview with Judith Bozarth, December 14, 2011.
757 Ibid.
the neighborhood, they heard over and over from neighbors that they could not send their children to the public schools and if they did use Garden Hills Elementary School, they would need to transfer for middle and high school. So with their son already fluent in German, they made the decision to enroll him at the Atlanta International School. Despite the strong foreign language program, they were unhappy. In 1989, the Bozarths moved their oldest child to Garden Hills for third grade. Four years later, their daughter followed her brother and started kindergarten just down the street from their home on Brentwood Drive. Bozarth recalls how she then became involved in NAPPS:

At the first or second Garden Hills PTA meeting that I went to when Alex started there in third grade somebody mentioned NAPPS. I raised my hand and said, “What’s NAPPS?” Somebody gave a little synopsis, “It’s Northside Atlanta Parents for Public Schools and got started in the days of anti-integration and white parents fleeing the public schools.” I decided to go to a meeting…I had grown up in New York City and went to the public schools. My husband grew up in Little Rock during the time of integration. We both survived and did really well.758

Bozarth came to realize that a lot of parents in Buckhead were not comfortable sending their children to school with kids from what they perceived as being deprived backgrounds. The parents that were “already at Brandon, Jackson, and Sarah Smith did a really good sales job convincing other people in their neighborhoods that those schools were perfectly safe, academically strong, and were at the top of all the rankings. Their numbers continued to increase…but not a lot of those parents were going on to Sutton in the years that my son was at Sutton from the fall of 1993 to spring 1996.”759 During the late nineties, mothers like Judy Bozarth joined the Sutton PTA and with younger children still at Garden Hills began working with the elementary schools’ PTAs to organize a series of morning coffees for the mothers of fifth graders. In 1996, they decided to collectively open up their homes to prospective parents.

In November 1996 the last in the series, the Morris Brandon coffee, was held at an antique-filled mansion just around the corner from Pace Academy. One of the mothers in attendance explained, the elegant invitation and the setting made the message clear, “money was not the issue” for families who were considering choosing Sutton over the nearby private Pace Academy or one of the other independent

758 Ibid. Bozarth never took on a leadership role in NAPPS, though she did serve as secretary in the early nineties and worked on revisions of the by-laws, which were implemented in 2011.
759 Ibid.
northside schools. The year before, forty-nine of the eighty children in the fifth grade class had gone on from Morris Brandon to Sutton Middle, and several of these parents shared how their children were now thriving. Among the wives of Atlanta businessmen and lawyers, who listened to the Sutton parents, was the wife of Georgia’s lieutenant governor, Nancy Howard. A week later, many of those same Morris Brandon mothers attended a ribbon-cutting reception at Sutton Middle School with their spouses and potential parents from the other northside elementary schools. This time Nancy Howard attended with her husband, Lieutenant Governor Pierre Howard, who told the press, “We’re pretty favorably impressed.” They toured the newly completed $2.5 million-addition to the school and mingled around the lavish buffet, which had been put together by the Sutton PTA. They appreciatively listened to the school’s orchestra perform Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. A few days later, NAPPS-paid-for buses brought Buckhead’s fifth grade classes to Sutton for the morning. The children took student-led tours of the school and enjoyed a play, “The Sutton Experience,” prepared for them by current Sutton classes. While the student tours of Sutton had been a part of the campaign to attract families from the neighborhoods back to the public schools since the mid-eighties, the efforts by the Sutton PTA and the elementary schools had pushed the field trips up from the spring to fall so that they were scheduled before the private schools’ February application deadline.760

Much like the original grassroots campaign to halt white flight, the movement to sell prospective parents on the middle school years was measured one family at a time. At those same cocktail parties and church coffee hours where mothers were seeking advice, Buckhead families that had committed to public education when their children were young discussed what to do for middle school. In hushed tones the parents quietly concurred that in principle they preferred to stay in the public schools. They supported public education. Sutton had seemed impressive at the ribbon cutting, but they hesitated. They were not yet sold.

NAPPS president Dub Anderson, who had pushed for the 1996-1997 agenda to focus on the middle school, listened as parents expressed to him their concerns regarding electives and discipline. They

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760 Cumming, “Sutton takes on private schools.”
were worried that the middle school was not safe. He frustratingly denied the reports of fights or weapons and explained they were misinformed rumors.\textsuperscript{761} He decided that NAPPS needed to broaden its marketing strategy beyond admissions to parent education. On January 22, 1997, NAPPS hosted the first talk in a new lecture series for the “Middle School Parent.” They asked Dr. Joy Masey, who had recently been voted Atlanta’s top pediatrician, to speak on stress and adolescents. Held monthly at Sutton Middle School, the series was free and continued for the rest of the year.\textsuperscript{762}

It was what prospective parents were not saying to him that was significant. “They don’t want to say that race is an issue, so they say, oh, (Sutton) doesn’t teach French in sixth grade…a lot of it is parent-driven. A parent wants to go to a cocktail party and say, ‘My child got in Westminster.’”\textsuperscript{763} Anderson recognized that the marketing surrounding Sutton was butting up against a deeply entrenched mentality, which was rooted in two decades of white flight and caught up in the growing affluence of Buckhead.

Parents wanted what they perceived to be the best for their children. In fact, they were probably perceiving what was best for them too…they saw children from the other side of town coming here and reflecting on their life experiences, biases and prejudices said, “These are not going to be quality families that I want my kids to be mixed up with…I won’t see them at the club…I want my child to go to school with kids that are going to be successful and have parents that I want to know and we can hang out with and network with.” So a lot of it was how do you perceive yourself socioeconomically? Plus your love for your child, and you want them to have a good life. That’s what it all captured really. It’s all about a perception and culture and how we perceive others. I don’t think people were being intolerant of black people, as much as they just didn’t think the schools themselves were super quality. It didn’t matter what child was sitting next to your child if your child is getting great teaching. The two components, what kind of education your child is going to get and what kind of socialization they will get.\textsuperscript{764}

The truth was that parents’ unease grew with the sudden change in the school’s racial and socio-economic make-up (Table 12).\textsuperscript{765} As the percentage of out-of-district children rose, parental

\textsuperscript{761} The perception that the school was unsafe seems to have originated in the brief installation of cameras at Sutton Middle School during the 1994-1995 school year. The cameras were part of a state-funded program to deter school violence, but heavily opposed by parents were deemed a violation of students’ privacy and removed less than a month into the school year. “Security cameras removed at Sutton,” \textit{Atlanta Daily World}, September 4, 1994, page 1.


\textsuperscript{763} Cumming, “Sutton takes on private schools.”

\textsuperscript{764} Interview with Dub Anderson, November 15, 2011.

\textsuperscript{765} During the 1996-1997 school year, the percentage of students voluntarily bused from outside attendance zones to the six elementary schools was its lowest, 8 percent, at Sarah Smith Elementary and averaged 19 percent. At Sutton Middle School the rate of cross-town busing jumped to 27 percent, which had been significantly lowered by the lim-
Table 12: Percentage Out-of-zone enrollment, 1996-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of Black Students</th>
<th>Percentage attending out-of-zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garden Hills</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Rivers</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris Brandon</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Smith</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren T. Jackson</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Mitchell</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Atlanta</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Doug Cumming, “Community; Public schools trying to hold on to upperclassmen,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, December 26, 1996, 3E.

involvement suffered. Northside parents looked at their neighborhood elementary schools, which by the nineties “were so embedded in the Buckhead mind as the places to go in part because their principals were so well respected and the teachers were just terrific. Quality was just written all over them. They had tremendous turnout at PTA meetings. You could hardly find a seat in either one of those places.” Then they saw Sutton and North Atlanta and their perception was entirely different. Good schools needed the support of the community, parents, and businesses. The merger had sought to create an entirely new school. Construction delays, a lack of leadership from the loss of a principal that was entrenched in the neighborhoods, and the loss of great teachers had pushed the community from North Atlanta. Corresponding competition over the limited number of spots in the northside private schools and parents’ fear that if they stayed at Sutton, their children would not be able to get into one of the top private schools had the same effect on Sutton.766

Yet a small group of parents stuck with the public schools and moved their children from the thriving elementary schools to Sutton and then North Atlanta. Deterred by the rising costs of tuition and the resulting lack of diversity found at the northside private schools, they were parents that were committed to creating a “community school.”767 What gave the NAPPS agenda impact that first year was the initiating of transfers that August. At North Atlanta, the percent of non-Northside students rose again to 57 percent. Largely because of the racial geography of Atlanta, the rise in out-of-zone percentages roughly followed a rise in the percentage of African-American students in the higher grades. Cumming, “Public schools trying to hold on to upperclassmen.”

766 Interview with Dub Anderson, November 15, 2011.
767 Ibid.
direct support the group began to receive from the school system. With the number of northside families increasing at Warren T. Jackson Elementary, Morris Brandon Elementary, and Sarah Smith Elementary, black students that had participated in the voluntary transfer program were gradually being crowded out (Table 13).

Beginning in 1996, when African-American parents of rising sixth graders applied for a voluntary administrative transfer to Sutton Middle School their applications were denied.

The decision had been heated, and at the school board level invoked a great deal of discussion about race. Anne Harper was nearing the end of her first term when the debate began. “There was still [voluntary transfers and busing] and that was the whole debate. If your child had been on the minority-to-majority program in elementary school, would they automatically qualify for Sutton? We went through a whole policy deal.”

Black parents from outside the neighborhoods were outraged. The middle schools on the city’s southside were all overcrowded. Why should Sutton be treated differently? With the controversy surrounding the proposed closing of Margaret Mitchell Elementary School, only just starting to die down, the implication was clear. Were the last vestiges of racism rearing?

Buckhead parents had vocally opposed the closing of Margaret Mitchell because the rezoning of the largely poor, black student body

768 Impressed by Dr. Benjamin Canada’s success in Jackson, Mississippi, NAPPS had supported his hiring as superintendent and hosted a reception for him on October 17, 1994. Having come to Atlanta with the support of Jackson’s Parents for Public Schools, which had been founded in 1986 by parents to bring middle-class families back to the public schools, Anderson believed that they had hired a superintendent, who had a lot of work ahead of him but one who also supported their efforts to put more local control in the hands of parents. Almost immediately, Canada was criticized by several Atlanta sectors, including the teacher unions and a growing portion of the city’s black civic leaders. Within a year of being hired he had lost the support of many southside parent and community activists when in August 1995 he proposed closing thirteen schools, all but one located south of Ponce de Leon Avenue, due to low enrollment and struggling academic programs. At the board meeting, civil rights leaders Hosea Williams had led the crowd of parents in chanting, “Send Canada back to Mississippi!” Within a year, the school board backed off on closing three of the most controversial schools, including the northside’s Margaret Mitchell Elementary. Gail Hagans, “Canada teaches Change 101; New school superintendent’s past efforts revamped system, ruffled some teachers,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, August 7, 1994, 1G; “Photograph: New Supt. Canada introduced at reception,” Northside Neighbor, November 23, 1994; Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 30, 1995, 3JD; Gail Hagans Towns, “A year after the arrival of the city school system’s new chief, some members of the community point to accomplishments, others a lack of advancement,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, August 28, 1995, 5C; ---, “School board backs off on closing three schools,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 22, 1996, 11E.
769 Interview with Anne Harper, May 6, 2009.
770 Cumming, “Sutton takes on private schools”; ---, “Public schools trying to hold on to upperclassmen.”
771 Ibid.
772 Margaret Mitchell Elementary was the only northside school that the administration had proposed to close in 1995. With few of the of the predominantly black and Hispanic students attending the school actually coming from the neighborhoods near Moore’s Mill and West Wesley, school officials believed it to be more cost-effective to close the school and divide up the district between E. Rivers, Scott, Pitts, Boyd and Warren T. Jackson elementary
Table 13: Northside Elementary Schools Enrollment by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Garden Hills</th>
<th>E. Rivers</th>
<th>Morris Brandon</th>
<th>Sarah Smith</th>
<th>Warren T. Jackson</th>
<th>Margaret Mitchell</th>
<th>Bolton Academy</th>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>332</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>416</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>274</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>330</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>377</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>333</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>293</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>160</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>280</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>273</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Garden Hills</th>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Not opened</td>
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<td>156</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>373</td>
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<td>429</td>
<td>417</td>
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<td>454</td>
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<td>419</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>520</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>132</td>
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<td>557</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<td>136</td>
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<td>588</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>607</td>
<td>624</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>621</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<td>777</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>Merged</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
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meant the busing of young children across the far northside from outside the neighborhoods to elementary schools where enrollment was already on the rise. For citizens from outside the community and for school board members the opposition was “all about race.” NAPPS president Dub Anderson recalls:

We got into a big thing about changing the zoning where Margaret Mitchell was going to be folded over into Jackson. Anne Harper was pushing that on the board, and people didn’t know it at the time. When they found out, she almost got physically attacked at Morris Brandon. People went nuts. She accused them, and I couldn’t believe she said it in front of all those people, that in affect they were just racists because they didn’t want those black children from Margaret Mitchell to be bused. They were elitist because they didn’t want them coming over. I never will forget that moment. She is a very liberal person, which is fine. But when she started trying social engineering, which is what people perceived that to be, they went crazy. She was pretty brave and courageous to stand up in front of people and say what she believed.

Anderson resisted the insinuation that racism was driving the decision to keep Mitchell open. “White parents wouldn't be in the school system if that were the case.” The northside schools were clearly integrated.

For school officials, the numbers were solid. Enrollment at the Buckhead elementary schools was on the rise. The board backed off on the recommendation to close Mitchell, and out-of-zone transfers to Sutton were continued. Initially, enrollment at Sutton Middle School fell, but each year more and more Buckhead families continued on to Sutton. In 1998, with the hiring of a new principal, Mark MyGrant, the turn around of Sutton really began (Table 14). Following a marketing campaign akin to Dr. Friedman at Sarah Smith and Connie York at Morris Brandon, the question became, would parents that had been active in the PTA at Garden Hills, E. Rivers, Warren T. Jackson, Morris Brandon, and Sarah Smith find Sutton Middle School to be comparable with the city’s most expensive private schools? Did Sutton offer opportunities for parental involvement and integration that were not available in the private schools?

773 Interview with Dub Anderson, November 15, 2011.
774 Ibid.
775 Towns, “School board backs off on closing three schools.”
776 Interview with Dub Anderson, November 15, 2011.
777 Larry Conley, “These young people have a lesson to teach; They make it seem so easy: Students at North Atlanta High School ignore skin color and see people as just people,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, April 27, 1998, 5E.
As the nineties drew to a close, more and more northside families purchased their north Buckhead home in order to send their children to one of the other northside elementary schools. On Saturday afternoons, when young couples drove through the north Buckhead neighborhoods checking out the homes that had come on the market, they often stopped in front of “For Sale” signs. The real estate fliers in the mailbox listed the sales price, which could range from a half-million to a million dollar, and the most important selling point, the public school that the property was zoned for. With northside private schools’ waiting lists growing and tuition continuing to soar, parents moving from out of town frantically called principals to make sure that the homes they were considering were in the school districts.  

Housing demand pushed the northside elementary schools over capacity. In the decade following the opening of GA-400, Sarah Smith Elementary School’s enrollment grew by 259 students, while

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778 Pace Academy’s headmaster, Mike Murphy, estimated that the school had seen a forty percent increase in applications to the Lower School and a thirty percent increase for the Upper School by 2000. Campos, “Private schools feel pinch.” See also Matt Monroe, “Demand for private school spots soars,” Atlanta Business Chronicle, April 3, 2000; “Shortage of space in schools coincides with resurgence of public education,” Northside Neighbor, February 21, 2001, 1A; Erin Moriarty, “Boom being felt by private schools; Pressure on public schools has parents considering options,” Atlanta Business Chronicle, January 15, 2007.
other 242 students were enrolled at Jackson and Brandon.\textsuperscript{779} The most crowded of the five schools, Sarah Smith Elementary School started the school year with 165 students more than it could seat. The additions built in 1996 by the bond referendum were not large enough, and portables were hauled in. Along with Warren T. Jackson Elementary School, Sarah Smith was required to begin serving lunch at 10:30 am to feed all of the students before the end of the school day. At all five of the elementary schools, the foreign language teachers were moved to carts, while Challenge, art, music, and science classes met in auditoriums, closets, or shared space with other teachers.\textsuperscript{780} Northside parents, many who had children in preschool, waited anxiously for the details of the system’s master facilities plan to be released.

On Wednesday, November 10, 1999 at 6:30 pm, over 400 Buckhead and Midtown residents and parents crammed into the North Atlanta High School auditorium. The temperature seemed to rise as parents fired off questions at the APS staff members. These were well-organized and politically conscious parents. Despite the high property taxes, they had moved to their neighborhood because of the reputation of the public schools and as members of the parent-teacher associations had fought to make the Buckhead schools comparable with the area's private schools. They arrived at the second in a series of public meetings, which were scheduled at high schools across the city that November, riled over the possible redrawing of attendance zones. They loudly voiced their concerns about overcrowding. The APS officials promised to take their concerns into account.\textsuperscript{781}

Garden Hills mother Sandy Driscoll, who had three children in the public schools, took over as president-elect of the North Atlanta Parents for Public Schools in 1999. From the day her children had started at Garden Hills Elementary School, she had passionately believed in public education and as a parent-volunteer campaigned to get other parents to send their children to the public schools. Her energy

\textsuperscript{779} By 2002, no administrative transfers were being granted to parents from outside the district for E. Rivers Elementary, Garden Hills Elementary, Warren T. Jackson Elementary, Morris Brandon Elementary, or Sarah Smith Elementary. Donsky, “Public schools’ popularity climbs.”


\textsuperscript{781} Rochelle Carter, “Atlantans get say on school plan,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, November 8, 1999, 1D; Rochelle Carter, “Build Smart plans draw questions; Public meetings: School officials lay out program for assuring that facilities operate efficiently and equitably,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, November 18, 1999, 13JD; Paul Donsky, “Fit for young learners; State-of-the-art schools tells kids city ‘care about them’,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, September 22, 2005, 1C.
and commitment brought improvements to all three of the public schools her children attended. As PTA president at Garden Hills School, Sutton Middle School and North Atlanta High School, she got to know the northside public schools inside and out. She had started monitoring the Build Smart program as it was developed and hoped that that the master facilities plan was going to address the overcrowding.

When Build Smart was released, the only northside school listed as part of the twenty-seven proposed projects was an addition for Garden Hills Elementary. Two other northside schools were to be affected by closing: Margaret Mitchell Elementary was to be closed and the North Atlanta’s attendance zone was to be broadened to include the far northwest Bolton Road corridor. The demographic study had concluded that the northside population was actually declining.

NAPPS mobilized. They conducted their own “Capacity Assessment” that challenged the enrollment and census data of the APS study. Sandy Driscoll wrote letters and scheduled meetings with new Superintendent Dr. Beverly Hall. She went over the enrollment at northside preschools and their waiting lists and argued that NAPPS anticipated an even larger incoming kindergarten class as young families continued to move back into the northern part of the city. They could not understand why APS had to wait for children to start kindergarten before developing a plan to address overcrowding in the Buckhead cluster. Build Smart became the first contentious cluster issue that NAPPS had faced since the high

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783 Despite public outrage, Margaret Mitchell parents were unable to prevent the closing of their school, which had been postponed since 1995. In 2003, the school, whose enrollment had continued to decline, was merged with the shrinking Pitts Elementary, whose attendance zone had included children from the demolished Perry Homes Public Housing project, to form the new Bolton Academy, on the site of the original Bolton Elementary. The under-enrolled and dilapidated Harper-Archer High School in northwest Atlanta was similarly closed in 2002, with 22% of the predominately poor, African-American students rezoned to North Atlanta High School. Rochelle Carter, “Decisions ahead; Harper-Archer High School is one of several being considered for closure as the system develops long-range plan,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, December 9, 1999, 12JD; Dub Anderson, North Atlanta High School PTSA co-president, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 18, 2000, 3JD; Rochelle Carter, “Magnet won’t move, parents told; ‘Damage control’: Performing arts report upstages school closings,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, June 9, 2000, 3D; Paul Donsky, “Harper-Archer High to close in 3 months,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 28, 2002, 1JN; “Margaret Mitchell closes doors,” Northside Neighbor, May 28, 2003, 2A.
784 Sandy Driscoll, NAPPS president, Letter to Dr. Beverly Hall, superintendent, February 27, 2001, Anne Harper Papers (privately held); “2004 CDP: Education” (Atlanta, GA: City of Atlanta, 2004). June 2002. See also “Parents found to be satisfied with public schools according to study,” Northside Neighbor, February 28, 2001, 2A.
school crisis, yet the nineties had brought a third generation of parents to the leadership of PTAs. The question was where to direct their efforts?

For many of the young mothers, “NAPPS had never really taken off.” Katy Pattillo was serving as PTO president at Sarah Smith and the school’s NAPPS representative when Build Smart was announced. “Sandy [Driscoll] was great. She was president when I was at Sarah Smith…but it had never been a force because everybody was putting their energy into the PTA and their school. There just wasn’t this progressive nature on the northside.” Fellow Sarah Smith mother and neighbor Martha Fair had “from the get go been going to NAPPS meetings…and I would meet these really interesting women that had kids in other schools in our community. But most of them were not sending their kids to North Atlanta.” The distinctive feeling among parents was dissociation. “You did not think of yourself as an Atlanta Public Schools parent.” Though serving as school representatives, the new generation of mothers did not see NAPPS as progressive or providing the leadership that was needed.

Throughout the nineties, the northside elementary schools had “spent a huge amount of energy flying under the radar of downtown.” Parents at the thriving northside elementary schools really did not feel that the school system had offered them any support. By 2000, when it came time for the Pattillos to make a decision about where to send their oldest daughter Kathlyn Pattillo for sixth grade, they transferred her to The Westminster Schools. “As Kathlyn got to fifth grade…I looked at a lot of schools, from the Girls School and Marist to Pace, Lovett, and Westminster. My primary concern was academics [and] I just didn’t feel like Sutton was ready.”

All that began to change in 1999 with the arrival of the city’s fifth superintendent since the retirement of Dr. Alonzo Crim in 1988. The year before the Pattillos decided to transfer their oldest daugh-

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785 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011.
786 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
787 Interview with Cynthia Briscoe Brown, June 8, 2011.
788 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011. Katy and Bob Pattillo’s next two children, Gus and Ali, both attended Sutton Middle School before transferring to the McCallie School and The Westminster School respectively.
ter to The Westminster Schools for sixth grade, Cynthia Brown’s husband Jim was at a Dad’s Pancake
Breakfast at Morris Brandon when he heard the new superintendent speak for the first time.

Dr. Beverly Hall showed up at a Morris Brandon Dad’s pancake breakfast that my husband was at. It was either the spring before she officially started the job or very early in her tenure. She later told me that she had never been to a dad’s event before so she was pretty intimidated. My husband talks about sitting there in the auditorium with his Styrofoam plate, one pancake covered in sticky syrup, and the little paper cup with orange juice, trying not to get syrup on his tie. Of course his plate and knees are up to his chin because he’s sitting in those child-size chairs. And she gets up on the stage and says, “We are tired of educating your children for the private schools. We are tired of putting our energy into your kids only to see them leave. Tell us what you need? If you’ll become part of us, we will do the same. And we will work together. I commit that we will do that, but you have to commit that if we do it, you will stay.” We had always assumed that at some point we would have to retreat to the private schools because that’s what everybody did...Jim came from that Dad’s pancake breakfast and said, “You know, I really like this new superintendent. If she does what she says, we might be able to stay.”

One of the other fathers sitting in the Morris Brandon auditorium was Richard Gard, who was also the editor of the monthly Georgia law newsletter, the Fulton Daily Report. He went home and wrote an open letter in the Daily Report to Dr. Hall and the school board. He pledged that the Buckhead community would take the new superintendent up on her offer. “Dr. Hall read that letter and picked up the phone. She called him that afternoon. “You put together a task force, and y’all figure it out. You have everything in my office at your disposal. Let’s work this out.” It [was] those two events that really started the ball rolling.”

Then in November 2001, Buckhead parents like the Fairs, McCauleys, and Browns rallied to elect Katy Pattillo to the District 4 school board seat. She seemed an unlikely candidate to defeat incumbent Anne Harper, who since being elected to the school board had seen the Buckhead community return to the public schools. Pattillo explains her decision, “I ran because I felt like I had a unique perspective. My oldest daughter was already in private school, which was quite controversial. I caught a lot of grief for it, but I felt like I was in a position to really examine both types of schools.” Northside voters clearly agreed with her. These were parents that had already shown what parent-teacher associations could ac-

789 Interview with Cynthia Briscoe Brown, June 8, 2011.
790 Ibid.
791 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011.
complish. As did the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, which having reformed EduPAC due to concerns over the Build Smart plan, made the decision to endorse Katy Pattillo. The Chamber hoped that a new slate of school board candidates could bring the support Dr. Hall needed to begin reforming the system’s infrastructure. Pattillo recalls the endorsement:

Dr. Hall came here in 1999 from Newark and they had a hard time getting her here. First of all the building the school board was in was dismal, and they didn’t want her meeting certain board members because the board was acting up so bad. A lot of it was done behind closed doors, and she’d been here for about six or eight months and said, “I’m out of here.” Governor Barnes and the Chamber realized that we were going to lose her so they came in and said we’ve got to recruit good people for the school board. So John Ahmann, who was with the Chamber, started recruiting. He worked on me for two years to get me to run for the school board. I wasn’t sure and everybody I asked said I was crazy if I ran. Yet I decided to run. I felt really called to do it. When I did people just started stepping forward to help.  

Over the next two months, Pattillo received donations from executives at Georgia Power, Georgia-Pacific, and SunTrust Bank and raised more in political contributions than any school board candidate in the history of Atlanta Public Schools. On Tuesday, November 6, 2001, the results were overwhelming. Buckhead voters elected Katy Pattillo to the school board by a three-to-one margin.

My goal was to really represent the entire city, recognizing that the northside had some unique challenges. We weren’t entitled, but we needed to meet them…the biggest challenge on the northside was changing the perception of what the public schools were all about, that your children would be safe and get a good education. Really trying to keep people in middle and high school that had not been staying.

The first thing that newly elected school board members, Katy Pattillo and Mark Reilly, did was to form the Retention Task Force that Dr. Hall had discussed with Richard Gard. “The Retention Task Force met...
for a year and a half. We had representatives from the community, parents, and APS…and we looked at
the northside and how we could keep people K through 12. We developed all these bullet points, a range
of things that we wanted done, both by the system and by the parents. That’s when the parent recruiting
really picked up.” 796 Dr. Hall listened to all of their recommendations, including the ending of administra-
tive transfers, making the northside cluster an International Baccalaureate (IB) program from kindergarten
through twelfth grade, and supporting community-based schools. At North Atlanta High School, former
NAPPS president and current PTSA co-president Dub Anderson could not believe when the new superinten-
tendent showed up at a meeting at North Atlanta High School. She pledged to work with the parents and
bring families from the neighborhoods through Sutton to North Atlanta. “She got behind us creating a
community school.” 797

In fall 2001 with their oldest children starting third grade, Martha Fair and her close friend Kim
McCuailey also decided that they wanted change. They were both tired of sitting in PTA meetings at Sarah
Smith Elementary School and listening as the president stood up and said, “We want to make sure that
you know how to apply out.” The PTA was even sending out information about tutors that would help
families prepare their children for the SSAT. The obvious lack of leadership tore at both Buckhead moth-
ners, and they became determined to galvanize a movement. Fair recalls:

There was so much social pressure…after asking, “Why is nobody going to this middle
school or this high school?” We decided, “Let’s start early.” Going into third grade, Kim
was saying, “This is already too late. We need to be working on this now.” So she and I
started coming up with ideas and ways to really market Sutton because at that point our
school was sending less than ten percent of its fifth grade class on to the middle school
and even fewer on to high school at North Atlanta. 798

They started by attending one of the coffees at Sutton Middle School. “Mr. MyGrant will tell you, he used
to look at us and say who are these parents with third graders? He just thought we were nuts…but it be-

796 Ibid. In 2009, Katy Pattillo made the decision not to run for a third term. Nancy Meister, who had served as PTA
president at Sutton Middle School and North Atlanta High School before following Martha Fair as NAPPS president
in 2006, defeated former At-Larger school board member Mark Reilly for the District 4 seat. Dan Whisenhunt,
“Meister: ‘The work we are doing is improving our relationships’,” Buckhead Reporter, July 28, 2011.
797 Interview with Dub Anderson, November 15, 2011.
798 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
came our mission.”\textsuperscript{799} The mothers knew how important acceptance day was at Sarah Smith, when children came to school jumping up and down ready to share with their classmates and teachers from what schools they had received letters. So they decided to make those children that were going on to Sutton feel special. They had heard that MyGrant gave out candy bars at Friday assemblies to any students wearing their school shirt, so they had candy bars made up that said “Follow me to Sutton.” Then they got together with a few other parents and all pitched in to pay for “SMS” t-shirts. “We had an assembly at school and brought some cheerleaders over from Sutton that gave out t-shirts…from that day on, those Sutton shirts were all over Buckhead. Even kids that were going to private school wanted a shirt! It was a marketing thing, and it became cool to wear a Sutton shirt.”\textsuperscript{800} Over the next three years, they recruited hard for Sutton. “School tours, open houses, giving them folders with professionally printed materials when they walked through the door, we created all that, and we modeled it after what the private schools were doing.”\textsuperscript{801}

In 2003, Cynthia and Jim Brown’s decision to send their oldest daughter Caroline from Morris Brandon to Sutton Middle School signaled a dramatic shift in Buckhead parents’ perception of the public schools. Brown was a graduate of The Westminster Schools, and they had both fully expected to send their children there. Their neighbors Betsy and Joe Hodges had formed a small informal group, which they called PSCS, or Parents Seriously Considering Sutton. The Hodges ended up sending their oldest son to Westminster, and yet as Caroline started fifth grade, the Browns began considering their options. They knew she would benefit from a Westminster education but decided to also tour the Atlanta Girls School and Pace Academy. Then Caroline visited Sutton Middle School with her Morris Brandon classmates. She came home and could not stop talking about the teachers. Brown had already met with Judy Harrison, whose husband Ponder had been at Westminster with her and had children at Sutton. She encouraged the Browns to visit Sutton, so they scheduled a meeting with principal Mark MyGrant.

\textsuperscript{799} Ibid.\textsuperscript{800} Ibid.\textsuperscript{801} Ibid.
I made an appointment for just us to go over there with Caroline. Mary MyGrant was masterful. He looked at her and said, “We need you. We want you to come and these are all the things we can offer you.” He had already figured out she was passionate about French, which she got at Morris Brandon from kindergarten on. And he talked about the French program and brought in Madame Bruce, who is the senior French teacher. He sent her down to the Challenge social studies teacher, Ms. Sansom’s classroom, which was the neatest classroom I have ever seen. She had created a medieval city in her classroom. By the time we finished and I got home that night, I said, “Let’s try this for sixth grade.”

Across the northside, the concurrent campaign to bring Sarah Smith families to Sutton Middle, which Martha Fair and Kim McCauley had initiated in 2001, culminated with a “Girls Night Out.” Held at the Chastain Horse Park across the street from Sutton Middle School, the mothers printed up invitations. They invited mothers to come hear a panel discussion by a child psychiatrist, church youth group leader, and other speakers on what to expect in the teenage years.

You got there and if you took the tour of Sutton your name got put in the raffle for a nice piece of jewelry. So we got every single person to walk through the school and when they walked into the building, there were these huge pictures of Sutton kids doing sports and cheerleading. It was all about community…all these members of the panel were saying the number one things you can do to help your teenager is let them feel a part of the community and the best way to do that is to send them to public school. It was this wonderful evening.

Martha Fair and Kim McCauley’s children started sixth grade at Sutton Middle School together. The year before only ten percent of Sarah Smith fifth graders had stuck with the public schools; now eighty percent were going to Sutton. “That was just a little bit of effort by some volunteers.”

By tracing how the merger of North Fulton and Northside generated a crisis, which splintered the Buckhead community and NAPPS, this chapter explored how a third generation of parents moving into north Buckhead came together to strengthen the network of parent-teacher associations and organize fundraising and recruiting campaigns, which were modeled after the city’s private schools. As enrollment at the northside elementary schools rose and attention was shifted to Sutton, a new language of community participation emerged that sold the public schools back to the Buckhead community. Just to the south, the intown community was experiencing a similar upsurge in population, which brought more af-

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802 Interview with Cynthia Briscoe Brown, June 8, 2011.
803 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
804 Ibid.
fluent families to the gentrified neighborhoods and American Roadhouse group. This new generation of mothers, who became leaders in CINS, also developed a language of community involvement to defeat the racism that surrounded their own high school crisis and the shortcomings of the BuildSmart plan.

8 CINS: Parents Reforming the Schools

On October 27, 1992, parents with children enrolled at Morningside Elementary School gathered in front of City Hall. As the press set up, they joined Atlanta superintendent Lester Butts and past president of the Atlanta Council of the PTAs Andrew Fellers on the steps. From their work with the Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools, they knew the superintendent well and exchanged greetings. Mayor Maynard Jackson had invited them all to stand with him at the press conference. In less than a week, Atlanta voters were to go to the polls to vote on a $94 million bond referendum to renovate and repair the city’s public schools. Standing before the cameras, Mayor Jackson urged Atlantans to cast a vote in support of the bond and public schools. 805

This chapter looks at the new generation of families moving into the intown neighborhoods. More affluent and farther along in their careers, the mothers joined the American Roadhouse group and learned from the older mothers about the fundraising and recruiting efforts at Morningside, Mary Lin, and Inman. As their children entered Grady High School, the mothers, who had been pioneers in the eighties, organized the city’s first charter school movement. The crisis that followed shook the CINS group and revealed the extent that racism, fear, and distrust persisted among the white and black parents and teachers. Out of the failed movement, emerged a new language of community, which embraced the diversity of Grady and the gentrified neighborhoods and became the foundation for intown parents’ lobbying efforts against BuildSmart.

805 Maynard Jackson was elected to office in 1973 as the city’s first African-American Mayor. He served two terms from 1974 to 1982 and a third term from 1990 to 1994. Scott, “Mayor urges support for school bond issue.”
8.1 Schools Attract the Next Generation of Atlantans

On February 3, 1991 the feature article in the *Atlanta Journal- Constitution*’s weekly insert caught the interest of families that were house hunting in Atlanta. Stamped across the *Sunday Homefinder*, the heading “Morningside: Schools, parks attract a new generation of Atlantans” and photographs of the mothers interviewed told the story.\(^{806}\) For the first time in two decades, white, middle-class couples were debating the benefits of living in the city. By the nineties, homebuyers were more likely to be two-income professional couples. They were often physicians or attorneys and farther along in their careers than the urban pioneers that had moved into the neighborhoods in the sixties and seventies.\(^{807}\) They paid more for the renovated intown bungalows and Victorians than couples had a generation before.\(^{808}\) Frequently after purchasing their homes, they like the families that had moved into the neighborhoods in the eighties, began extensive renovations and added second stories to their Morningside, Virginia-Highland, or Candler Park bungalows.\(^{809}\) Couples were also attracted to the infill homes that were popping up across the ring of close-in, northeast neighborhoods. Modern and dwarfing over their neighbors, those that could afford the new developments eagerly put in offers.\(^{810}\)

Middle-class couples felt good about buying a home in the intown neighborhoods. They were tired of the city’s congested highways and ever-growing commute time from the suburbs. They were willing to pay more for what was often less square footage because the diverse and historic, intown

\(^{806}\) Anderson, “Morningside: Schools, parks attract a new generation of Atlantans.”
\(^{807}\) Richard Bono, “Home Report; Fewer homes are up for grabs,” *Atlanta Journal- Constitution*, November 2, 1995, 5D.
\(^{808}\) Elizabeth Lee, “Look! That house is for…SOLD! With prices inside I-285 soaring and listings selling the same day, home buyers border on desperate,” *Atlanta Journal- Constitution*, June 29, 1998, 1B.
\(^{809}\) H.M. Cauley, “Urban expansions; Intowners building up, not moving out, to gain room,” *Atlanta Journal- Constitution*, November 8, 1999, 5G.
Table 15: Enrollment at the Intown Elementary Schools, 1986-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Morningside</th>
<th>Mary Lin</th>
<th>John Hope</th>
<th>CW Hill</th>
<th>Fowler Street</th>
<th>Centennial Place</th>
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<td>349</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>497</td>
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<td>435</td>
<td>498</td>
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<td>Not opened</td>
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<tr>
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<td>442</td>
<td>471</td>
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<td>413</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>389</td>
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<td>Not opened</td>
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<td>390</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>416</td>
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<td>449</td>
<td>368</td>
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<td>694</td>
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<td>409</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>Merged</td>
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</table>


neighborhoods offered convenience to work.811 The opening of Freedom Parkway in 1994, like GA-400 on the northside, increased the accessibility of the historic intown neighborhoods and furthered the surge in home sales.812 Couples were also buying the amenities of intown living: cultural opportunities, parks,


812 Holly Crenshaw, “Urban oasis; A trail that came with the Freedom Parkway is the tie that bind the Carter Center to its neighborhood,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, September 21, 1995, 7D; Jingle Davis, “Freedom Parkway anniversary: A road less traveled by; Area won smaller parkway, more green space,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Sep-
Table 16: Morningside and Mary Lin Enrollment by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morningside</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mary Lin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14</td>
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small shops, and local restaurants, all of which were walking distance from their homes.813 By the nineties, the real selling point when they decided to make an offer was the home’s location within the Morningside or Mary Lin school district. As hundreds of more children were squeezed into both elementary schools, the demographics at Morningside and Mary Lin dramatically shifted (Table 15 and Table 16).

During the sixties and seventies purchasing a home and choosing to enroll one’s children in either of the intown elementary schools had meant taking a political stance. Where only ten years earlier CINS parents had tirelessly organized open houses in an effort to keep families from leaving the public schools, a new

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813 The boom of the nineties raised a number of concerns among residents in Virginia-Highland, Candler Park, and Inman Park, who feared that the strip of businesses along Highland Avenue and in Little Five Points was going to be turned into another Buckhead. They fought through their neighborhood associations and city council to preserve their neighborhoods’ residential character, which had initially attracted them to move intown. Judy Hotchkiss, “Intown neighborhoods seek ways to park their car problems,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, September 1, 1994, 16D; Holly Crenshaw, “Morningside ever-vigilant; Active neighborhood association keeps area looking good,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 6, 1999, 7JD; Julie Bookman, ‘Fears of being ‘another Buckhead’; Crime-wary intown neighborhoods opposed to more bars,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 10, 2000, 12JA.
generation of white, middleclass parents were moving in. As the nineties flew by, the families just kept coming. By the end of the decade, the intown neighborhoods had added over 9,000 new residents.\textsuperscript{814}

At the start of the 1990-1991 school year three doublewide trailers were hauled onto Morningside Elementary School’s campus to accommodate the overflow of students, including the addition of a fifth kindergarten class.\textsuperscript{815} Two years later, third graders at Mary Lin were moved to portable classrooms and the Spanish classes shifted to the teacher’s lounge. At both schools, art and music teachers shuffled from classroom to classroom on rolling carts.

When their children started kindergarten, the new, more affluent generation of intown mothers joined the Morningside and Mary Lin PTAs. Soon after that, they were invited by mothers with older children to join them for Wednesday morning breakfasts, which continued to meet at the American Roadhouse restaurant on North Highland Avenue. There, they got to know other women, who similarly had joined the PTA, were active in the neighborhood associations, and now with children at Inman and Grady were taking over the leadership of CINS. One Morningside-Lenox Park mother, who moved into the neighborhood in 1989, recalls her experience:

\begin{quote}
The reason I got involved was because there is a group of women, and the composition of the group has changed over the years, that has been meeting for breakfast for well over twenty years at the American Roadhouse every Wednesday. It’s quite an interesting group of women. I had people who were asking, “Do you want to come to breakfast at the Roadhouse?” I started going to breakfast and meeting parents who had kids not only at Morningside but Inman and Grady. We’d sit around, and I would hear about things going on at this PTA or this happening at this school. I thought, “This is where you get all your news.” And it’s true. When my older daughter was ready to go to middle school, I could say who are the good teachers, whom should I lobby for, and breakfast is still going
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{815}Anderson, “Morningside: Schools, parks attract a new generation of Atlantans.” The lend-lease back program that school board member and CINS founder Joe Martin, with the lobbying by his brother Georgia Representative Jim Martin at the state legislature and the support of CINS president Jimi Moore, had designed to ease overcrowding at Morningside and Mary Lin after the 1988 bond referendum failed to pass simply could not keep pace with the intown neighborhoods’ swelling population.
on. It’s really quite an influential group of women, very bright women who are involved politically and in community activism.\textsuperscript{816}

From the get go, this new generation of mothers was caught up in a two-decade-old tradition of neighborhood and parent activism when they arrived at the American Roadhouse.\textsuperscript{817}

On Wednesday mornings, the main topic of discussion among the mothers over breakfast was what to do about the overcrowding and the condition of the buildings at Morningside and Mary Lin. Those that were just joining the group learned from the other mothers how the school system worked and were introduced to the CINS model of organizing. These women, four years after voters had resoundingly rejected a bond referendum, became the key rallying force in support of the school system’s second attempt to renovate its aging schools. They spoke at neighborhood meetings and wrote letters to the editor encouraging Atlantans to go to the polls on November 3, 1992. On the day of the election, they stood in front of the polling places. With the backing of Mayor Jackson, voters overwhelmingly passed the bond referendum, which promised must needed renovations and expansions to both intown elementary schools.\textsuperscript{818}

On June 14, 1993 principal Elaine Dowis watched as crews broke ground on a new addition for Morningside Elementary School. Since taking over as principal in 1991, she had watched enrollment rise. The new classrooms, state-of-the-art media center, and art and music suite could not be completed soon enough. When Syd Janney’s children had started kindergarten in 1988 and 1990, she had worked with other parents to clean up the building. “I got together with some other parents, and we painted the bathroom and classrooms…I remember painting Taylor’s kindergarten classroom yellow. That is how down and dirty we got with things! But it was needed; it really was a pretty bad situation. We had peeling paint, and the building was old. Not withstanding that we didn’t have air-conditioning, the heat often didn’t work property.”\textsuperscript{819} That same summer, the Morningside PTA had as a temporary solution through a crea-

\textsuperscript{816} Interview with Barbara Feinberg, February 19, 2009.
\textsuperscript{817} Jay Bookman, “Intown: Urban dwellers get to know the neighbors,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, July 27, 2000, 1GE.
\textsuperscript{818} Carol Pianunnizi, “Forum: Vote tests community values; Misconceptions persist about school bonds.”
\textsuperscript{819} Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
tive fundraiser that entailed buckets filled with ice and fans on display, paid for window air-conditioning units to be installed.\textsuperscript{820} The following spring, construction workers began work on the school’s main building, which after sixty-six years was going to re-open with central air-conditioning.\textsuperscript{821} Yet delays persisted and in August 1994, children like Ansley Park mother Tricia Deitz’s youngest son Jacob started second grade in a portable classrooms. Mary Lin parents were equally frustrated. Having been temporarily moved to the old Bass High School building in June 1994 when construction began, they expected to be back in their building the following year.\textsuperscript{822}

Despite persisting delays at both construction sites, Morningside and Mary Lin parents continued to spend their time and energy volunteering in the schools.\textsuperscript{823} The same year that the bond referendum was passed, Morningside parent Sarah Bryant read for twenty minutes to her son Sam’s fourth grade class each week and taught art to her daughter Rachel’s kindergarten class every Friday. She planned kindergarten visitations for prospective preschool-aged children and their parents, which were to be held at 9:00 am on the first Wednesday of each month through May. Like Syd Janney and Tricia Deitz, whose youngest children were now at Morningside Elementary School, she had joined the PTA when her oldest child had started kindergarten.\textsuperscript{824} “So you joined the PTA and saw the motivational and organizational skills, there were such talented people that came up with all these fundraising ideas.”\textsuperscript{825} At Morningside Elementary School, the PTA’s annual wrapping paper sale alone raised over $135,000.\textsuperscript{826} Mary Lin parents organized an auction and Manuel’s Tavern-sponsored golf tournament to raise $30,000 for a new state-of-

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{AnsleyParkside} *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Summer 1993, page 10.
\bibitem{AnsleyParkside2} *Ansley Parkside*, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Fall 1994.
\bibitem{Janney} In 1997, Syd Janney and Sarah Bryant served as CINS co-presidents. Morningside mother Sarah Bryant took over the presidency for three years, from 1996 to 1999.
\bibitem{Interview} Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
\end{thebibliography}
the-art playground. The parents were so successful that they began a “Capital Campaign ‘96” with a goal of establishing a $60,000 Mary Lin Trust by the end of the year. This became the story of CINS in the nineties. The women that had moved to the intown neighborhoods in the late eighties and early nineties, campaigned for the bond referendum in 1992, and volunteered in their children’s classrooms at Morningside and Mary Lin, moved from the PTAs into CINS. Mothers like Sarah Bryant were meeting women like themselves. Together, they captured a new sense of community.

One of the women that Syd Janney brought to the coffee group and ultimately became a leader in CINS was Barbara Feinberg, who already had a successful career with HBO. In 1989, she and her husband Ken decided to buy her parents’ 1952 home on Wildwood Road. When her oldest daughter Lily started kindergarten at Morningside Elementary School, she joined the PTA and volunteered in her daughter’s classroom. The following year while at home with her youngest child Rachel, her neighbor Debbie Griffiths asked her to help publish the neighborhood association’s newsletter. “When Lily was in first grade, my friend Sarah Fedota and I were asked by Debbi Griffiths, who as a past president of the Morningside PTA and Morningside Lenox Park Civic Association was a wonderful leader, to be co-editors for the Morningside Lenox Park Civic Association newsletter. We did that for two years [from 1995 to 1997].” The first year while volunteering as co-editors of the MLPA News, she and Sarah Fedota worked with fellow Morningside and Inman parent and historic preservationist Syd Janney on a walking tour of the historic neighborhood that they included as an insert in the fall 1995 edition. In 1997, with their daughters getting older, Barbara and Ken Feinberg decided to add on to their home. “We ended up investing an awful lot into this house to enlarge it and update it,” and worried that they “were going to be in the valley of the shadow of the chateaus” as more and more homes on their street were

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828 An accountant, Debbie Griffith moved into her 1950s home on Wildwood with her husband Richard in 1988 and served as the Morningside-Lenox Park Neighborhood Association president from 1993 to 1994. With three children, Hanna, David, and Ian, making their way through the public schools, she served as Morningside Elementary School PTA president before taking over the CINS presidency from 2002 to 2005.
829 Interview with Barbara Feinberg, February 19, 2009.
830 Holly Crenshaw, “Neighborhood Network; Morningside maps out its past; Neighborhoods plot historic path,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 9, 1995, 5A.
Table 17: Inman Middle School Enrollment by Race

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>377</td>
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remodeled.\textsuperscript{831} That same year, the Morningside mothers that she had met through the neighborhood association invited her to breakfast at the American Roadhouse. There she got to know other women, whose children were already at Inman Middle School.

With the “new” Morningside and Mary Lin campuses open, the real concern among parents in the elementary school was what to do about middle school. The rumors persisted that Inman was dangerous because it pulled from the public housing projects (Table 17). Morningside mother Syd Janney recalls, “It got more diverse as our kids went through middle school and into Grady High School.”\textsuperscript{832} Parents continued to transfer to private school after fifth grade, despite the continued persistence of a core group of committed intown parents that believed the academics offered by the public schools was as good as any of the nearby private schools and their children were getting to experience the richness of attending the city’s most integrated schools. “There was something about that ideal, which fueled our passion for it all. I really think that. CINS, the coffee group on Wednesday morning…the PTA meetings, there were any number of organizational and meeting-type forums that all played together into this heightened advocacy

\textsuperscript{831} Interview with Barbara Feinberg, February 19, 2009.
\textsuperscript{832} Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
for public education, which grew in this neighborhood…out of a grassroots effort.”833 As more and more families moved into the intown neighborhoods and sent their children to Morningside or Mary Lin, the question became would they join this core group of parents that made up the leadership of CINS and the Inman or Grady PTAs or would they follow their neighbors to the nearly all-white Paideia School, which was less than a mile from Morningside, the prestigious Woodward Academy, which privately bused students from all across the city’s northside to its historic campus in College Park, or one of the other long-standing and prestigious northside private schools?834

At the Wednesday breakfasts, young mothers like Sarah Bryant and Barbara Feinberg heard wonderful things about Inman Middle School from Tricia Deitz and Syd Janney. They told her about the PTA’s successful fundraising efforts and CINS-sponsored programs that targeted the school. In 1994 the Inman PTA raised $11,400 for a new “Field of Dreams.” Three years later parents raised an additional $25,000 to improve the school’s library.835 Janney recalls the massive fundraising drive:

My kids were in middle school, and we came up with this idea because the media center at Inman Middle School didn’t have any resources. We got this small group of parents together, and we came up with a fundraising plan that we called “Fill the Shelves.” We got families to donate, and Georgia Power gave $10,000. We ultimately raised $25,000 to reinvigorate the media center. Well Joe Martin, our school board representative was outraged that public school parents had to raise money. The outgrowth of that fundraising project was Joe Martin was able to get the per student media center allocation doubled…we saw that as a wonderful way where parents saw a need that the school system wasn’t funding to the level appropriate, initiated a project, and then our school board representative took it as a means by which to rationalize upping the system-wide funding level allocation. We had an impact far beyond Inman Middle School.836

833 Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
835 The Inman, Grady, Mary Lin, and Morningside PTAs and business and community groups, including the Midtown Alliance, Georgia Power, Southern Bell, BellSouth, Federal Home Loan Bank, Virginia-Highland Civic Association, and the Morningside-Lenox Park Association provided major contributions to both fundraising drives. Julie Bookman, “Inman Middle seeds a level playing field,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, April 7, 1994, 1N; Ruth Caproni, PTA president, “Inman Middle,” Inman Park Advocator, September 1994; Larrie del Martin, “CINS & Inman Middle School + Start-up Education=Success,” Inman Park Advocate, April 1995; Colin Campbell, “Midtown middle school whiz kids break through; Inman wins state Academic Bowl,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 26, 1998, 3D.
They also talked about the impact principal Barbara Naylor was having on making Inman a true neighborhood school. After arriving at Inman, she began working with parents that were coming in from Morningside and Mary Lin’s active PTAs, who knew one another through CINS and their Wednesday morning breakfasts, to encourage more families to not transfer out of the public schools. Janney remembers their recruiting efforts:

Those of us that had made the decision that we were going to keep on going, keep on plugging through, we started making overtures to Inman from Morningside…I remember getting up at one PTA meeting and basically made an appeal for those parents who like me had fifth grade students to really give Inman a thoughtful chance…CINS was really helpful because the leadership types there would be the ones that were going to make the effort to keep on going through the system. We started trying to convince parents and kids that it could be a very good choice. We tried to expose kids and parents to the next level up by having representatives from Inman come talk to fifth graders at Morningside or making events at Inman known to the Morningside community through the neighborhood newsletters.

The push in the community brought a surge in enrollment, and in September 1994, when Syd Janney’s son started at Inman over 100 out-of-zone transfers were turned away.

The following spring, children from the elementary schools were bused to Inman Middle School, where they toured the school and asked questions. Principal Barbara Naylor realized that the tours were easing the fears of middle-class parents that were trying to decide public or private. Janney elaborates:

When you have a good principal, a band, the debate team, the athletic program needed to be worked on, those could be drawing cards for different students…but we first had to convince parents that their kids were going to be safe and in a learning environment where the smart kids were going to keep getting pushed and the kids that might not have all the advantages in life were also going to benefit. You had to keep convincing everybody and tend to things as parents to actually make it happen.

837 Barbara Naylor, who had been at Mary Lin Elementary School since 1987, replaced long-time Inman Middle School principal Dr. Betty Strickland in 1991. She served as principal from 1991 to 1997, before accepting an administrative position at Fulton County. Don Doran was hired in August and remained at Inman until 2009.
838 Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
840 Gail Hagans, “Where the big kids play; Elementary students take a peek at life in middle school,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 27, 1995, 13D.
841 Interview with Syd Janney, December 19, 2011.
The question became how to best sell Inman to neighborhood parents? The tours evolved into coffees for parents of fifth graders that allowed them to meet the principal and counselors and hear presentations by teachers and parents of current Inman students.

Morningside always had high enrollment, but the question was, “Will the kids who come out of Morningside stay in public schools? Will they go on to Inman or are they going to go on to private school?” One of the things we did at Morningside, we had a couple of parents long before I had my kids in the fourth or fifth grade, they had a chair position on the PTA board which was for the transition and these parents were responsible for working with fifth graders and with Inman to create open houses and opportunities for parents and students at Morningside to learn more about Inman, how middle school worked and essentially eliminate negative impressions or rumors.  

In 1997, with her daughter finishing her sixth grade year at Inman, Syd Janney worked with other parents to implement a formal transition program. In addition to fifth grader tours in the spring, Inman students were also selected to go back to their elementary schools to answer the questions of fifth grade students while the series of coffees culminated in an open house designed to answer parents’ questions regarding course requirements, extracurricular activities, and highlights of Inman’s achievements. The goal was to insure that even before their children began attending Inman, parents were already active and enthusiastically involved in the school.

That same year, Sarah Bryant, whom Barbara Feinberg had met through the American Roadhouse breakfast group, asked her to join the CINS board. With both of her daughters at Morningside Elementary School and wanting to support the public schools beyond the elementary years, she agreed.

One of the mothers who was active in the group was a woman named Sarah Bryant. [She] was president of CINS from 1996 to 1999. She was also very active in the Inman PTA and subsequent to that the Grady PTA. For her second term, she asked if I would be on the board and provide some support. I said sure. So I came in and learned what the organization was about at that level. CINS is not an organization that has a lot of committees; it’s not that big. People might take on projects and every board member has some sort of job to do, that’s where everything functions. It’s not like the PTA…I started off there at

842 Interview with Barbara Feinberg, February 19, 2009.
843 These efforts coincided with Inman Middle School being recognized as a Georgia School of Excellence and a National Blue Ribbon School in 1997. The Inman transition program became the model for the ninth grade transition program proposed by the Grady charter school movement and implemented by principal Dr. Vincent Murray in 1999. Rochelle Carter, “Focus on middle school years; Transition time: Educators seeking new ways to smooth passage from elementary student to freshman,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 20, 1999, 8JD; Picucci, Brownson, Kahler and Sobel, “Driven to Succeed: High-Performing, High-Poverty, Turnaround Middle Schools” (Austin, TX: The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, 2002).
the board and met a number of women who I had never met before because these were mothers of kids went to Mary Lin. There wasn’t a big circle of people, but there were definitely folks I had never known before. I got to know the organization that way. I was asked to be on the nominating committee for the following year [and] worked with a friend of mine, Diane Terrell, who I had done volunteer work with over at Morningside.844

For the Morningside and Mary Lin mothers, who had moved to their neighborhoods and gotten involved in their neighborhood association and PTA and then found their circle of friends in the American Roadhouse group, they decided that they were going to make Inman an even better school.

I think so much of what was happening in our schools, our commitment to our schools, when our kids were young was focused on the elementary school level in all these neighborhoods. We had good schools. We were going to make those schools better. As the retention in public school moved to the middle school and on to the high school, that same group of parents stayed involved and that was good.845

The older, core group of women, whom they had met at the American Roadhouse and learned the CINS-style volunteerism, shifted their attention to Grady High School.

8.2 The Charter School Movement

In 1995, several parents with children at Grady High School started getting “together at somebody’s house to talk about the issues and their concerns...the whole neighborhood was changing from elementary to middle and high.”846 This core group of friends had first gotten to know one another when their children started at Morningside or Mary Lin. They included mothers like Trisha Senterfitt, who had been a bit younger than the other CINS founders and whose youngest was getting ready to graduate from Grady, Tricia Deitz, who had been involved with the schools on so many levels through the Wednesday morning breakfast group, and Midge Sweet and Judith Gott, who had gotten pulled into the revitalization of Mary Lin Elementary as their neighborhoods fought the presidential parkway. These women had watched as their gentrifying neighborhoods changed in the early nineties.847 When their children moved

844 Interview with Barbara Feinberg, February 19, 2009.
845 Ibid.
846 Interview with Judith Powell, October 11, 2007.
on to Inman, they had turned their attention to the middle school’s parent-teacher association and also became active in CINS. For the next two years, they met in each other’s living rooms and back patios.

The reputation of Grady High School’s communications and academic programs was continuing to grow. By the start of the 1994-1995 school year, the magnet program had expanded to almost 150 students, and the school’s newspaper, literary magazine, yearbook, and debate team continued to win award after award. Each year, the school posted the highest SAT scores in the city. These achievements were recognized citywide when Grady High School was honored for the second time as a “School of Excellence” in 1995.  

The intown parents believed that adherence to state and local guidelines was preventing them from fully addressing the needs of their diverse school community. The group began to rethink Grady’s governing structure and curriculum. As they considered the benefits of flexible scheduling, alternative student assessment formats, a more relevant curriculum, and the option to hire qualified staff that were not certified by the state, their discussion turned to the idea of seeking charter school status. They gathered and read materials on the movement, and in February 1996 several parents, administrators, and faculty members attended a League of Professional Schools seminar on charter schools. In April 1996, CINS organized a follow-up session and invited educators and parents of existing charter schools to come speak about their experiences. Afterwards, interested Grady parents met with Druid Hills High School parents, who were in the process of becoming a charter school. APPLe Corps also agreed to assist the parents and put together a committee to study charter schools, which published a paper in December and hosted a public forum on their findings in June 1997 at the Georgia Power Building’s auditorium.

848 Riki Bolster, “Grady a top school,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, July 14, 1994, 14N.
850 “APPLE Corps Study Committee on Charter Schools,” APPLe Corps, Box 1.
In September, the core group of intown parents sat down with Grady High School principal Dr. Vincent Murray. They agreed to form a charter school committee made up parents, students, faculty, and community members. Since taking over in 1991, Dr. Murray had been collecting and carefully analyzing data on Grady High School’s graduation rate and test scores. He was greatly disturbed by his findings. Only 38 percent of ninth-graders in the fall of 1994 made it to the 12th grade by the fall of 1997, yet the average SAT score for Grady’s seniors rose from 922 in 1991 to 1007 in 1997 and sixty-two percent of Grady students who took AP tests scored 3 or higher, which was almost three times higher than the system’s average of 27 percent. Grady’s principal concluded that the magnet students were succeeding but that Grady was failing to meet the needs of most of its students. He was ready to look at reforms, including converting Grady to a charter school, if it benefited every student. Mother Midge Sweet recalls the meeting, “My sense was that the principal was very supportive of being a charter school.” Dr. Murray appointed English and civics teacher Marybeth Clair to chair the new group. In December 1997 the committee received a $5,000 planning from the Georgia Department of Education to study whether or not Grady should consider becoming the city’s first charter school.

The committee began to put together its proposal. They formed sub-committees on restructuring, budget, curriculum, discipline, school services, building and grounds, personnel, and marketing and then came back together to meet with Grady High School’s volunteer coordinator Judy Powell and CINS representative Tricia Deitz for a day-long retreat on April 18, 1998 at the Timber Ridge Conference Center. Inman Park mother and former school board member Midge Sweet, who decided to stay at home while her son was in high school, had the time and agreed to chair the school services committee. “I took on one of the committees and was sort of everything else, not the curriculum. It was the guidance folks and

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851 Dr. Murray replaced Dr. Thomas Adger, who had been Grady’s principal since 1981. Two year later, the director of the communications magnet program, Kay Earnhardt, retired after thirteen years at Grady High School. Chair of the Social Studies Department, Naomi Grishman, took over as the magnet school’s second director.
853 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
school services...we really tried to address some of that and there was more attentiveness to the kids in
the social services aspect of what the school system was providing." Each sub-committee presented its
“Key Observation” reports to the staff, parents, and students present. Participants then discussed the cur-
rent strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing their school, before heading to breakout ses-
sions, in which small groups identified their goals for Grady. After lunch, the teachers, parents, and stu-
dents returned to the main conference room to hear presentations by Dr. John Rhodes from the Georgia
Department of Education’s Charter School Division and Dr. Regina Merriwether, assistant principal for
the new Druid Hills Charter High School. They concluded by developing a list of the questions that
needed to be answered to determine whether or not the charter school approach was appropriate for Grady
High School. The following Tuesday, April 21, 1998, at their faculty meeting, the teachers voted to
continue studying and investigating whether Grady High School should become a charter school.

Over the next school year the parents, faculty, and students began the process of writing Grady
High School’s charter proposal. Drawing on the 1997 study by the Southern Regional Education Board-
funded reform initiative, High Schools That Work (HSTW), which had identified curriculum and instruc-
tion weaknesses, the charter school proposal mapped out a list of academic and community objectives,
along with the structure of the new governing board that shifted decision-making from the school board
and administrative level back to the parents, faculty and community. With the proposal completed, the
subcommittee on parent concerns prepared to present to the broader community what becoming a charter
school meant for Grady. The eight-member parents group posted information on Grady High School’s

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855 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
856 The subcommittee chairs included: Marybeth Clark, Restructuring chair; Marlon Pilson, Budget chair; Naomi
Grishman, Curriculum chair; Larry McCurdy, Discipline & Rules chair; Midge Sweet, School Services chair; Boon
Boonyapat, Building, Grounds and Facilities chair; Eugene Bales, Personnel chair; and Karl Surber, Marketing
chair. “Subcommittee chairpersons committee minutes,” January 15, 1998, Judith Powell Papers (privately held);
held).
857 The vote was 44 yeas to 14 nays, with one abstention.
858 The charter school proposal listed the following objectives: to increase regular attendance, improve student writ-
ing, reading, and mathematics skills as reflected by the standardized test scores, focus on ninth grade transition and
retention rate, enhance curriculum through exploratory classes and academies, and increase parental and community
pers (privately held). For more on the HSTW study see Pardini, “Higher Expectations Challenge Teachers and Stu-
dents to Succeed,” 10-13.
website, distributed fliers, and hosted information sessions in March and April so that parents could voice concerns and ask questions.859

After two long years of studying and investigating and hundreds of meetings, the idea that had emerged from a discussion among parents one evening seemed to be almost a reality. The committee members hoped to take their proposal to the Atlanta Board of Education for approval in March and submit their application to the State Board of Education in May. At 7:00 pm on May 10, 1999, well over a hundred parents gathered in the Grady High School Theater. That Monday, faculty, parents, students, and community members were invited to “provide input about how charter school status would allow parents and the community to have a larger role in the school’s operations, and changes to be made to present rules and regulations in an effort to better meet the needs of all students at Grady.”860

As the meeting began, committee member Judy Powell, whose youngest daughter was an eleventh grader at Grady High School, listened in shock as objections were raised.861 African-American parents, many whose children were not part of the communications magnet program, strongly opposed the charter school movement. They argued that the governing board of the charter school was going to be dominated by white parents whose children were enrolled in the magnet program, the programs for students not enrolled in the magnet were going to be underfunded, and the majority of the school’s parents, generally the African-American parents, were not going to be able to attend governance meetings because of work obligations. The school was sharply divided along racial and class lines (Table 18). Powell recalls, “As far as an exclusive feeling, it was on the part of some of the African-American parents. They

859 Dr. Carla Schissel chaired the Parent Concerns subcommittee, which included Pat Cannon, Carolyn Deadwyler, Judith Gott, Natalie Kimball, Larry McCurdy, and Judy Powell. “Parent Concerns Subcommittee members,” Judith Powell Papers (privately held); Flier, “Grady High School Charter School FAQ,” Judith Powell Papers (privately held).
861 A mother of two daughters at Grady High School, Judy Powell was hired in 1995 as the school’s volunteer coordinator in addition to assisting with preparations for the 50th Anniversary Celebration. Ansley Parkside, the Ansley Park Civic Association Publication, Winter 1995.
Table 18: Grady Enrollment by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black Students</th>
<th>White Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>659</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>214</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>259</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>249</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>292</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Trisha Senterfitt, whose youngest child was at Grady, recalls being shocked by the racism that reared:

My last little bit at Grady we were talking about a charter school, and oh my gosh that was a huge divide…black parents felt like we were trying to make a private school out of it. Why would we do that? We’ve been with you the whole time. We did not want a private school…in the discussion it was definitely black-white and the school people, both teachers and administrators, were anti-charter.

By the end of the school year, the charter school movement at Grady High School had effectively collapsed. Midge Sweet explains the defeat and what emerged from it:

When that vote occurred…I was really disappointed. So many of us worked really hard with the teachers, but it was a complex situation with lots of different parents and people. I knew several of the African-American parents from other places, so I was really comfortable with a lot of them. And yes, there were some terrible things that were said by black and white parents. I think that was fairly resolvable. But it was taken advantage of.

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862 Interview with Judith Powell, October 11, 2007.
863 Interview with Trisha Senterfitt, October 13, 2011. Following the defeat of the charter school movement, Trisha Senterfitt turned her attention to establishing the Grady Foundation.
in some ways. I think it was actually some of the teachers that did not want a charter school that really fueled the flames. There were some old guard teachers that just were afraid. Afraid of change. They just saw it as more work and were concerned about financial stability if it happened. I think also a lot more intrusion by parents. What was great about the process was it uncovered a lot of issues...you have to push these institutions from many different directions to get change, and we were always trying to model something new. The parents of these schools have pushed hard against the administrations to try and cultivate change and work with leaders in the school community itself, teachers and principals, where they can. Vincent is a good example of a principal really embracing the change…to get out in front and model change.  

The intense distrust and accusations among parents that the charter school movement was trying to turn Grady into a “white flight” school run by white parents, whose children were enrolled in the magnet program, gradually died away. The charter school review process had galvanized Grady High School’s administrators and faculty.  

Dr. Murray kicked off the 1999-2000 school year on August 18, 1999. A week before student returned, he had ordered the entire faculty to gather at Grace United Methodist Church to participate in a National Coalition Building Institute workshop, which had been designed to educate on the emotional and institutional impact of discrimination. He announced that the school was going to undertake a year–long initiative built around a new theme, “Individually we are different; together we are Grady.” Dr. Murray was determined to make what had been the challenge at Grady, its diversity, and remind the school it was in fact its strength. During the year, the faculty adopted a series of reforms from the High Schools That Work (HSTW) report, which had been mapped out as concrete objectives in the charter school proposal and included block scheduling, increased graduation requirements, special programs for ninth graders, and the use of test data to guide improved, research-based instructional practices. The goal was clear: all students at Grady were going to succeed. Over the next five years, the magnet program continued to grow, reaching just over 400 students at the start of the 2004-2005 school year. The number of students

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865 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
866 The term “white flight” school is first recorded being used in the newspaper after the Grady proposal failed. Three years later, when Grant Park parents from the gentrifying neighborhood located southeast of the downtown began their efforts to open a start-up charter, the Neighborhood Charter School, white and black parents from the surrounding neighborhoods referred to the proposal as a “white flight” school. Paul Donsky, “New life for old school as charter fixer-upper; Parents roll up sleeves, renovate Slaton campus,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 23, 2002, 1B.
taking the SAT almost doubled between 1998 and 2005, while the average verbal portion increased by 102 points and the mathematics score increased by 93 points. The most significant achievement, Grady High School’s graduation rate rose from 56 percent in 2001–2002 to 89 percent in 2004–2005.\(^{868}\)

### 8.3 Build Smart

While the Grady faculty began to implement a series of reforms, Morningside-Lenox Park homeowner and mother of two daughters Barbara Feinberg took over as co-president of the Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools with her friend Diane Terrell in August 1999. They had worked on the Morningside PTA together and were asked by Sarah Bryant, who had been CINS president since 1996, to serve on the nominating committee.

We became co-presidents in 1999-2000. Diane took it on for the year, and I agreed to take it on for two years. The concept was almost as if you had a president and a first vice-president. We were co-presidents with the knowledge that I would stay on, and then we would bring someone else on to be co-president with me. I would go off, and we would replace the new recruit volunteer…Diane and I became co-presidents of CINS for twelve months starting in 1999, and that was a very pivotal time for the organization and the school system.\(^{869}\)

They agreed to take on the presidency that fall. While working on the Morningside-Lenox Park Neighborhood Association’s newsletter two years earlier, Barbara Feinberg had worked closely with Mike Holiman and supported his campaign for the Board of Education in 1997.\(^{870}\)

We knew Mike Holiman, who was a member of the Board of Education and a past president of the Morningside PTA and the Morningside-Lenox Park Civic Association. Mike came to breakfast to talk with us. Prior to the school year starting, he suggested that we meet with Dr. Beverly Hall because she would be new. He thought it would be a great idea for her to get to know about CINS. We established a relationship with her that has been going on for the past ten years. Every school year the presidents of CINS sit down with Dr. Hall and talked to her about the issues that were coming up.\(^{871}\)

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\(^{868}\) “High Schools that Work.”
\(^{869}\) Interview with Barbara Feinberg, February 19, 2009.
\(^{870}\) Interview with Barbara Feinberg, February 19, 2009. After serving on the school board for twenty years, Joe Martin decided to not seek reelection and run for state superintendent. Syd Janney worked on his campaign staff as his director of communications in 1998 and again in 2002. Lobbyist Mike Holiman, who was elected in 1997, served for two terms until 2005. Then in November 2005, Morningside mother Cecily Harsch-Kinnane, who had served as CINS president from 2001 to 2003, was elected to the school board. Paul Donsky, “Parental involvement: Mother contributes leadership talent,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 28, 2005, 1SN.
Table 19: Enrollment at the Intown Secondary Schools, 1986-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Walden Middle</th>
<th>Inman Middle</th>
<th>Grady High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>838</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>851</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>800</td>
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<td>1991</td>
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<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>656</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>1,287</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>1,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>1,313</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>1,481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Before the meeting, Barbara Feinberg and Diane Terrell solicited questions and ideas from CINS members. The overwhelming concern that intown parents’ shared was the proposed five-year facilities assessment plan. With a series of community meetings planned for November and December, which were to rollout what the school system intended to do with attendance zones, the parents, who had watched enrollment rise at Morningside and Mary Lin in the nineties, were worried that the city’s top-performing Grady High School was going to be closed due to low enrollment just as families moving into the gentrifying intown neighborhoods were starting to continue on to Inman Middle School (Table 19).

On the evening of November 10, 1999, many of the parents that had first raised their concerns to CINS presidents Barbara Feinberg and Diane Terrell in August left their homes and drove north along Northside Drive. The first of the community meetings on Build Smart was being held at North Atlanta
High School. By 6:30 pm, over 400 Buckhead and Midtown residents and parents had gathered in the school’s auditorium. Some parents had children at Grady High School. Other families had bought their intown homes so that their preschool-aged children could one day attend one of the city’s top-tier schools, which the parents believed were comparable with the area’s private schools. The parents listened as the APS staff presented their recommendations for renovations, consolidations, and rezoning. Few of the questions the parents came with were answered. Instead, the school system people promised they would take into account parents’ wishes in the final recommendations, which were to be presented to the Board of Education at their February 14th meeting the following year.872

When the master facilities plan was released, parents were shocked. Of the 27 projects listed, the only intown schools included were John Hope Elementary, which was to be renovated and connected to the new, adjacent community center, and Walden Middle School, which was to be closed.873 The long-term plan failed to address the overcrowding at Morningside Elementary or Mary Lin Elementary. Feinberg recalls, “We were beginning to have a much higher retention rate of kids staying in the public schools…we were not happy with the plans to close Walden, and we were not real clear on what the plans were for Grady or Inman…even in the late nineties we could see the intown neighborhoods were vibrant, attractive places, where families wanted to move.”874 CINS presidents Barbara Feinberg and Diane Terrell organized a community forum at Morningside.

Build Smart became a catalyst for looking at issues. Dianne and I came in there in 1999 and [in early 2000] had a meeting about Build Smart in the Morningside media center. There were people standing out in the hall. It was absolutely packed. It was great because people had never gotten aroused before.875

873 Despite parent opposition, which delayed the decision, Walden Middle School was closed in 2008 and the international baccalaureate program moved to Sutton Middle School. For more on the fight to keep Walden open see “Threatened school closings thwarted,” Atlanta Daily World, June 15, 2000, page 1; S.A. Reid, “Walden’s fate moves onto board’s agenda; Action on conversion of school, consolidation of students will close out Build Smart decisions,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 1, 2001, 4JD; Laura Diamon, “Parents protest plans for school; Walden Middle will close if administrators have their way,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 22, 2008, 14JE.
874 Interview with Barbara Feinberg, February 19, 2009.
875 Ibid.
CINS membership swelled and conducted its own enrollment study, which tracked the gentrifying neighborhoods’ tremendous population growth. Feinberg went back to Atlanta superintendent Dr. Beverly Hall with their opposition to the recommendations made by the Build Smart plan. CINS members lobbied their supporters on the school board, including: their representative Mike Holiman; board president Aaron Watson, who lived in Morningside and had children at Morningside Elementary and Grady High School; and Buckhead representative Anne Harper, whose younger daughter was a student in the Grady magnet. At their meeting in April 2000, the school board voted to remove Walden Middle School from the list of schools to be closed.

We thought the plan was flawed, and as a result, when the vote came to pass Build Smart, we had five of the nine members of the Board of Education vote against it. Not that they were throwing it out all together. The point was they weren’t ready to vote for it because they had these other issues to address.

With the 5 to 4 vote in their favor, CINS began to push the school system to address the issues of overcrowding in their thriving public schools as more and more families with young children returned to the city. On November 20, 2002, intown parents and principals gathered in the Morningside Elementary School auditorium. Barbara Feinberg, Sarah Fedota, and Cecily Harsch-Kinnane had spent months planning the luncheon and celebration. Current CINS members listened as former school board member Joe Martin shared with them the history of the organization and its impact on the intown neighborhoods over the past twenty-five years. The room was quiet as Joe Martin remembered what it was like in 1976, when he and his wife Larrie Del Martin invited families to their home and encouraged them to consider enrolling their children at Morningside Elementary School. For parents that were beginning to think the

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876 Rochelle Carter, “Reading, writing, revitalizing; Schools become key target of reform as migration reshapes city’s neighborhoods,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 29, 2000, 1C.
877 Initially, Harper-Archer High School and Crim High School were also removed from the list. In January 2001, the Board of Education voted to close both high schools, and Harper-Archer was in part rezoned to the NAPPS clusters. In 2005, Crim was converted to a nontraditional school and students rezoned to Grady High School and Southside High School. Derrick Mahone, “One grim end at Crim; School has great sports legacy,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 27, 2005, 1D.
intown neighborhoods were going to need a second elementary school before their children reached fifth grade, imagining Morningside with less than 200 students was both a wonderful and heartbreaking moment. Their organization’s grassroots commitment to the revival of their public schools had transformed the intown neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{880}

By arguing that a new, more affluent generation of white families moved into the gentrified, intown neighborhoods because of the reputation of Morningside and Mary Lin, this chapter has traced the embracing of a language of community involvement by mothers, who joined the two-decade old American Roadhouse network of friends and neighbors. Though their charter school movement was defeated, the mothers used their network to challenge BuildSmart and push for the construction of a new elementary school to alleviate overcrowding. Unlike the northside and intown groups, in the nineties APPLE Corps sought to bring to the entire city a language of community empowerment.

9 APPLE Corps: Modeling Effective Programs

In May 1993, cheers erupted and rocked a packed Atlanta Board of Education meeting. Four weeks earlier the administration had proposed closing three schools: Blair Village Elementary, J.C. Harris Elementary, and Boyd Elementary. It was costing the school system over $300,000 to continue to run each of the three small, neighborhood schools. Parents and residents from the nearby Gilbert Homes, West End, and Atlanta University communities filled the school board meeting. They emotionally argued that closing the schools would ruin their neighborhoods and harm their children. Neither APPLE Corps nor the Chamber of Commerce’s recently formed Atlanta Committee for Public Education were present to counter that continuing to operate small schools affected the quality of education available. With the controversial 1993 election looming, the school board voted 6 to 1 against closing Boyd Elementary School.

\textsuperscript{880} Beginning in the early 2000s, CINS was viewed by parents in the southeast, gentrifying neighborhoods as a model for their campaign to bring middle-class parents to the public schools. Betsy Riley, “Can Atlanta public schools be saved? Maybe. After five years of reform under Dr. Beverly Hall, the system, if not yet robust, is showing definite signs of life,” \textit{Atlanta Magazine} (August 2005): 52-56; Kate Carter, “Atlanta Public Schools: Woo middle-class families; Highlight progress with a PR campaign,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, July 9, 2007, 13A.
and 8 to 0 against closing Blair Village Elementary. Community pressure had already resulted in school officials dropping the proposed closing of J.C. Harris Elementary. It appeared that the largely poor, African-American neighborhoods had emerged victorious.\footnote{Betsy White, “An open and shut case; Parents run interference to keep neighborhood schools from closing,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, May 20, 1993, 22D.}

This chapter examines the development of APPLE Corps programs following the 1993 election, which brought a citywide movement of educational reform to the city through a newly elected Board of Education. From its governance project, which was supposed to monitor the new school board members, to the securing of grant-funded, model programs, APPLE Corps was committed to empowering low-income parents. Unlike NAPPS and CINS, the school watchdog group was not able to reinvent itself. Having fit a distinct period in Atlanta history, the organization merged with its pro-business rival in 2003.

9.1 The Governance Project

During the spring of 1993, as business and civic leaders organized alliances and coalitions like the newly founded Chamber of Commerce’s political action committee to bring new leadership to the Board of Education and APPLE Corps was busy piecing together a citywide get-out-the-vote campaign that culminated in a series of televised debates, Sallie Weddell, who had taken over as editor of \textit{School Talk} in 1986, applied for and received a grant from the Public Education Fund Network and Lily Foundation. “The school board election [was] extremely important, but so was what happened after the elections.” Over the next two years, APPLE Corps partnered with the Atlanta Council of PTAs, the Southern Education Foundation, and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce’s new pro-business, educational advocacy group, the Atlanta Committee for Public Education, “to build the governing ability of the Atlanta Board through professional development and improve community support for the board’s governance role through community education.”\footnote{“Survey shows school board needs big improvement in community input,” \textit{Atlanta Daily World}, October 21, 1993.} As the first step in the School Governance project, APPLE Corps conducted a survey of 1,550 registered voters. Those polled were critical of the behavior of the current Board
of Education and found school board members to be entirely ineffective in building community support for the public schools. Weddell recalls the impact of the project:

The Atlanta Governance Project, which lasted from 1993 to 1995, really changed my job description…Apple Corps hired somebody to do a telephone survey of voters. Then we hired somebody at Georgia State to do the statistical analysis, and I wrote up the report. The survey helped us to determine the direction we were going to go and in leading the board through training, strategic planning, and pointing out the issues…the principal idea was to be able help educate the school board about their policy role and support them in being policymakers. Because at that time we had a new board [elected on a promise of reform], it was an opportunity we had never had before: to come together and actually offer them professional development. I put together workshops on various leadership development topics leading up to a strategic planning meeting.883

Over the next two years, Weddell, who directed the School Governance project, used the results of the survey to plan workshops for the new school board.884

The impact of the sessions on the school board, which had been elected to bring a change in leadership, was life-long and got the roots of the two decades of prejudices and fear. Midge Sweet, who had been endorsed by EduPAC and was reelected for a second term in 1993, remembers what they learned about one another and their city:

I was at a meeting a year ago of the old school board members that I served with, and I came to love them a lot. I sat down and one of them said, “What are you doing? You’ve got to sit here.” Because we’d had diversity training, and I felt very strongly that everything should be white-black-white-black and it also had to be recognizing of gender. Because what would happen is all the women would sit together. We had to separate the guys too. I was so tickled when Mitzi Bickers said this. It was also a further reminder of the self-consciousness that you have to continue to apply as we live in the world. It’s something that does send messages, and I felt real strongly about that on the school board because we had to. We were public, and people would see us. So it was not something that we could just ignore. We were sending messages all the time.885

As the school governance project wound down, Sallie Weddell turned her attention to the 1997 election.

APPLE Corps’s get-out-the-vote campaign had increased voter turnout by over twenty percent in addition

883 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
885 Interview with Midge Sweet, October 27, 2011.
to bringing a new Board of Education to office. The upcoming election presented an opportunity to again invite Atlanta voters to take a look at the key issues confronting public education and their communities. APPLE Corps reformed the nonpartisan, self-titled Alliance for Education to again involve the community in the school politics through sponsored televised candidate forums.886 Weddell recalls the planning for debates:

We came up with questions, decided what the debate would look like, and who would be the moderators. It was very bottom up. They were very difficult, sometimes very contentious, meetings and would take a long time. One of the important things I got from the experience was how everybody needed to be heard. While trying to have everybody at the table sometimes took longer, what you end up with was always better.887

That spring, as campaigns were being mobilized all across the city, it was evident that APPLE Corps had emerged as the city’s leading school watchdog group.

9.2 From Libraries to Computers

In addition to funding training for school board members, the School Governance project brought to the APPLE Corps staff additional information about grant funded opportunities available to local education funds (LEF’s). Weddell recalls, “When we got a grant from Lily for school governance it made a big difference in being able to get information.”888 Between 1993 and 1997, APPLE Corps applied for several national grants and moved from hands-on, small projects that benefited individual schools or teachers to larger, systemic efforts that were focused on changing system-wide policies by modeling effective programs, which served the city’s low-income students.

The three women running APPLE Corps had watched as the PTA budgets at the northside and in-town elementary schools reached six-figures and brought to children enrichment classes and field trips more often associated with private education. Through their citywide work with APPLE Corps, they saw the discrepancy in funding. How could APPLE Corps reach those children whose families and communities that could not donate time and energy to their neighborhood schools? Both executive director Mary

886 “Alliance For Education regroups for Nov. 4 vote,” Atlanta Daily World, September 18, 1997; “School Watch; Education Notebook; Candidates debate Sunday,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, October 23, 1997, 10D.
887 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
888 Ibid.
Anne Gaunt and issues director Sallie Weddell brought the “League-style” of organizing, which was needed to bring in fundraising and major initiatives, while program director Nancy Hamilton directed and managed the growing list of model programs that were concentrated on supporting parents and schools on the city’s southside.  

While Weddell was working on the Lily Foundation grant, Gaunt and Hamilton began to put together the first major grant proposal. In November 1993, they submitted to the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund a three-year proposal to revitalize school libraries, which served the students coming from low-income households. As part of their application, Gaunt also proposed that Atlanta Public Schools become one of six sites in the nation to be selected for the Public Education Fund Network-coordinated AmeriCorps program, whose volunteers would serve as technology coordinators in Atlanta’s Library Power schools. Gaunt recalls their application, “We were offered the opportunity to apply for the Library Power Wallace grant at the same time we were offered the opportunity to compete for an AmeriCorps program. So I wrote the grant that got us Project First (Fostering Instructional Reform through Service and Technology)...it was the technology piece.” In July 1994 Atlanta became one of seven cities that was awarded a grant under the fund’s National Library Power initiative. Hamilton remembers how she implemented the program and its impact:

We had the huge initiative titled Library Power and the Wallace-Reader’s Digest awarded us $1.2 million for the development of school libraries as a tool for school reform. Mary Anne Gaunt and I had written that grant, and then I implemented the programmatic piece. It lasted for three years, and then we were able to get additional money through the Public Education Network to impact schools. Change just takes so very long, but like the grant program it became a proven model and presented an opportunity to really impact a broad variety of people around the school. You had to have parent involvement, and you had to have the teachers, the principal, and the administrators. All these people came together, and then the librarian became a major teacher player. We introduced the concept

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889 Interview with Mary Anne Gaunt, February 24, 2009.
891 Interview with Mary Anne Gaunt, February 24, 2009.
892 The seven cities were awarded a total of $8.3 million: Atlanta, GA; Berea, KY; Nashville, TN; New Haven, CT; Philadelphia, PA; Raleigh, NC; and McKeesport, PA. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund was founded in 1987 and by 1994 had already distributed more than $40 million to thirty cities to improve the library services available to students attending 225 of the nation’s lowest income-serving schools. “Apple Corps awarded $1.2 million grant,” Atlanta Daily World, November 8, 1994; “Seven cities share $8.3M to improve school libraries,” Atlanta Daily World, November 22, 1994.
of a teacher-librarian, which was at the same time that this huge pedagogical move away from textbooks to authentic materials: the use of computers, the Internet, and how do you engage kids in critical thinking and research.893

That fall, Hamilton worked with teachers, librarians, and administrators to transform the libraries at ten elementary schools. Professional development was following by renovations that transformed the outdated spaces and worn collections into inviting, open media centers with reading corners and new materials. Inspired by the program aims, local corporations like Rich’s department store and TBS Productions offered to match the program funds and donated thousands of dollars in books that enabled the newly trained medial specialists and teachers to develop units, which targeted the needs of the school’s students and infused African-American studies into the curriculum.894

When Gaunt and Hamilton had sat down to write the grant, they had dreamed of bringing a pilot program to Atlanta that modeled exemplary practices and effective system-wide policy. Yet both programs arrived in Atlanta during a period of massive uncertainty. The hiring of Atlanta’s third superintendent in five years, Dr. Benjamin Canada, brought changes to the central office personnel and school principals. Moreover, as the gentrification of the nineties transformed the city’s demographics, the impact on Atlanta’s neighborhoods and schools that served them was as profound as the white flight of the seventies. During the first year of Library Power, six elementary schools were closed in response to declining student population, though northside neighborhood protests prevented Margaret Mitchell from becoming

893 Interview with Nancy Hamilton, February 16, 2009.
894 Ten elementary schools participated in Library Power during the 1994-1995 school year: Bethune, Cook, Continental Colony, Guice, Hutchinson, Mary Lin, Miles, Margaret Mitchell, F.L. Stanton, and Slaton. The program increased APPLE Corps’ annual operating budget from $150,000 to $700,000. The following year ten more elementary schools were added: Capitol View, Connally, Dobbs, East Lake, Gideons, Herndon, John Hope, Morningside, Sarah Smith, and Towns. During the 1996-1997 school year, the program was extended to ten more elementary schools and four middle schools: Adamsville, Arkwright, Benteen, Brandon, Cleveland Avenue, Collier Heights, Garden Hills, Howell, Perkerson and Peterson Elementary Schools; Price, Turner, Usher and Young Middle Schools. Gail Hagans, “Library Power brings benefits to city schools,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 9, 1995, 3D; ---, “Cyberspace awaits in the media center; $40 million program changing the way schools use libraries,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, September 28, 1995, 2D; ---, “Learning the art of communication,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 16, 1996; ---, “14 new Library Power sites,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, June 20, 1996, 2JE; ---, “Contest poses challenge to kids,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, September 19, 1996, 2D; “Tech Education Projects Cited,” Atlanta Daily World, June 1, 1997; Rochelle Carter, “Program takes research beyond textbooks; Look it up: School media specialists guide students through a maze of resources,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 14, 1998, 10JD.
one of them.\textsuperscript{895} “The big community crisis was the school closings. There was a budget crunch right after the new school board was elected, and they had to close a lot of schools. It was so difficult, so painful, for the communities…the school board would have an open school board meeting and people were just yelling and hurting.”\textsuperscript{896} Then after serving for eight years as APPLE Corps executive director, Mary Anne Gaunt resigned in 1997.

In November, the Board of Directors made the decision to bring in Dr. Dianne Sirna Mancus in as the organization’s new director. Unlike her predecessors, Marcia Klenbort, Betsey Stone, and Mary Anne Gaunt, whose activism could be traced to efforts by parents in Atlanta’s close-in southwest, Buckhead, and reviving intown neighborhoods to keep their public schools open in the face of massive white flight, Dianne Mancus was an outsider. She had been a clinical professor at Rice University and had worked with the Houston public schools to design a dual language, technology-rich charter school. The Board hoped that her knowledge and contacts could expand the programmatic reach of the grant-funded projects to increase parental involvement and access to technology in Atlanta’s low-income neighborhoods and schools.\textsuperscript{897}

The year before, as part of her work directing the School Governance project, Sallie Weddell had attended a Public Education Fund Network-sponsored workshop in Patterson, New Jersey. She returned to Atlanta inspired by a session on how to empower low-income parents through technology. Weddell recalls the initiative:

\begin{quote}
I went to a workshop sponsored by Education Network in Paterson, New Jersey, where they worked with low-income parents. By teaching them about computers, they empowered them to go into the schools and help teachers learn to use computers. This was when
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{895} Dianne Sirna Mancus, LEF Director, APPLE Corps, Inc., Letter to the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, March 25, 1998, APPLE Corps, Box 4. For more on the school closings see Gail Hagans, “Some voters feel duped by plans to close schools,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, March 30, 1995, 3D; ---, “School Closings; Master plan to get full airing.” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, April 13, 1995, 1D; D.F. Glover, “Some were recently renovated; Closing 18 Atlanta schools is not in the best interests of the community,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, May 1, 1995, 7A; Gail Hagans, Seth Coleman, and Bernadette Burden, “Atlanta board approves plan to close schools; Tense meeting: Hosea Williams urges taxpayers to fight back,” \textit{Atlanta Journal}, May 9, 1995, 1C; “Board passes school closings test,” \textit{Atlanta Constitution}, May 10, 1995, 10A.

\textsuperscript{896} Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.

technology was just being introduced, and teachers were reluctant to use it because they hadn’t gotten training on it in many cases and parents didn’t have computers at home, especially low-income parents. I thought this was a great idea. I brought it [back to Atlanta] and started it by getting donated computers. Then Nancy Hamilton ran it. At the Library Power schools we had AmeriCorps volunteers that could teach and help parents learn how to use the technology. The beauty of that program was we were empowering the parents to get involved in schools and at the same time we could give them something. That was really key. So many of the low-income parents were working but couldn’t afford technology at home. They were trying to be involved in their kids school and education but were so overburdened. It was wonderful to say, “This is your computer.” In exchange, we asked that they volunteer in the technology program at their children’s school…they would work with the teachers to help them learn how to use technology. We built the program from there into what I thought was a great model with workshops in the schools. I was not doing that, but the workshops were about how does your child need to learn. The very thing you needed to have at a grassroots level to empower parents.\(^8^{898}\)

Beginning in the fall of 1996, the program that Sallie Weddell had designed after attending the workshop, Technology Links, was initiated at eleven AmeriCorps-Project FIRST schools.\(^8^{899}\) After volunteering eight hours in their children’s school and attending a computer training workshop run by one of the AmeriCorps volunteers, parents received one of the donated computers. Newly hired executive director Dianne Sirna Mancus boasted of how Weddell’s vision of empowering low-income parents through access to technology was also promoting parental involvement in communities with a history of none. “Computer access remains a major equity issue among Atlanta's public school students. In a district where more than 70 percent of youngsters live in or near poverty, creating opportunities for kids to have home computers is paramount.”\(^9^{900}\) After two years, over seventy computers had been distributed across the city. With a waiting list of parents hoping to sign-up for one of the workshops, program director Nancy Hamilton solicited the Atlanta business community for greater support. “We were able to give 100 computers…our only problem has been finding enough donated computers and monitors to satisfy the demand.”\(^9^{901}\)

\(^8^{898}\) Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.  
\(^8^{899}\) The 1996-97 Technology Links schools included: Connally, Dobbs, Garden Hills, Gideons, Herndon, Howell, Perkerson, Peterson, Towns, and East Lake Elementary Schools and Young Middle School.  
\(^9^{900}\) Gail Towns, “A look at teaching parents about technology in the classroom; Bringing parents up to speed; AP-PLE Corps offers computer training,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, October 23, 1997, 10D. See also Diane Loupe, “Getting parents involved and into the building; Welcome mat out: Such programs as computer classes for adults help bring people to school,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, September 24, 1998, 5JA.  
\(^9^{901}\) Ernest Holsendolph, “ Helpers get free training; Volunteers can also earn their own computer,” \textit{Atlanta Journal-Constitution}, August 9, 1998, 1P.
Power, corporate funding from the Atlanta-based UPS Foundation and Turner Broadcasting extended the program’s reach to an additional 125 parents in low-income communities and began building community computer labs at five of the schools.\(^{902}\)

By the beginning of the program’s third year, the AppleCorps Institute, or a series of free workshops at seven schools, was added to the Technology Links initiative. Now in exchange for volunteering twelve hours in their children’s school, completing six hours of computer training, and attending six out of the seven workshops parents received a refurbished computer, modem, and email account. The purpose of the workshops, which included reading skills, evaluating school’s performance, technology in classroom, raising academic standards and expectations, and understanding APS fiscal budget, was “to develop parent leaders in seven Atlanta elementary schools” that did not have a history of strong parent-teacher associations.\(^{903}\) The Institute was so well received that Hamilton organized a special, citywide workshop that taught the basics of using computers, word processing, and navigating the Internet. In January 1999, over 600 hundred parents arrived attended the 2 ½ hour-long workshop held on the Martin Luther King holiday.\(^{904}\)

9.3 Empowering Parents

As APPLE Corps’ role in the community expanded with the grant-funded programs, executive director Dr. Dianne Sirna Mancus came to believe that the organization needed to conduct a community assessment of how it could become more effective in improving public education. Issues director Sallie


\(^{903}\) The AppleCorps Institute was held at East Lake, Burgess, Dobbs, Peterson, Cleveland Avenue, Fickett, and Centennial Elementary Schools. Rochelle Carter, “Apple Corps project aims to get parents involved,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 19, 1998, 8JD.

Weddell knew how much the organization had changed over the past decade. The 1993 political movement had brought national grant-funded, model programs to Atlanta and more groups promoting public education, including the Chamber of Commerce-backed Atlanta Committee for Public Education.

We were doing some really exciting things at the end, and when I left in 1999 there was a spirit of having a lot of information from the outside. In 1993 when Dr. Canada came in and the Chamber of Commerce endorsed a slate of candidate, EduPAC, there was a lot of turmoil. The Lily School Governance project had brought a lot of information and energy into Atlanta. Somewhere around that same time the Atlanta Committee for Public Education, was formed [in 1993]…I felt that it was good to have competition and more players advocating for the school system…when it was completed the school system had lots of really strong parental and family involvement. It looked like all the work we had done was a real success. There was a lot more of really strong parental and family involvement and that was very positive.905

In July 1998, a $30,000 grant from the Ford Foundation funded a five-month study. After interviewing 216 stakeholders, including business leaders, parents, and teachers, the study concluded that the eighteen-year-old organization, which was founded in 1979 to promote grassroots community involvement and curb the outward movement of white, middle-class families from the Atlanta Public School system in the period following school integration, had in an effort to move away from its middle-class origins recently funneled its resources into programs and initiatives. As Dianne Mancus and Sallie Weddell put together a newsletter summarizing the study’s results,906 the view emerged that while APPLE Corps was good at getting parents more involved at the school level, it was not known in the city’s low-income, African-American community.907

When asked a decade later about the study’s conclusions, Hamilton explains why the criticism was valid, “The leadership looked like it was white because it was always white…I came from CINS, Betsey Stone came out of NAPPS, and Mary Anne Gaunt came out of the League of Women Voters. In

905 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
906 After directing the School Governance Project and starting Technology Links, Sallie Weddell felt that her job was changing too much, moving away from education to advocacy and she left APPLE Corps to focus on anti-poverty issues. She moved into fighting homelessness and started working at one of the downtown resource center. She remains dedicated to her volunteer work in the community, particularly with the Horizon Theater. Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
fact, Betsey Stone and Sallie Weddell were very involved in the League of Women Voters…there was never anyone in the black community that was interested in taking on the leadership of APPLE Corps…because it was white. I think because the rising tide of black leadership didn’t want to be a part of this minority, white community with better organization and brighter ideas. It was such a disappointment to Marcia Klenbort. It was a very frustrating situation because it was a race issue and a women’s issue.”

Weddell agrees, “That was the problem. APPLE Corps was a middle-class, white group founded and led by women from NAPPS, CINS, the League of Women Voters, and the Junior League. The executive director had always been a white, middle-class woman…even our African-American members were middle-class. The school system itself was largely low-income and certainly predominately African-American, so the voice of those, the low-income folks, was not represented at APPLE Corps.” The three-year plan that emerged from the study committed to reaching the city’s low-income, African-American parents. It would continuing expanding the school-based, effective model programs and Institute for Parents workshops, which with a recent turnout of 600 parents demonstrated that the city’s low-income, minority community wanted access to the technology that could empower them. APPLE Corps staff members also recognized that this expansion depended upon leveraging greater funding from the city’s business community. The three-year plan also committed to documenting student achievement through the initiatives, particularly in low-achieving schools, in order to better advocate for the school system and to improve APPLE Corps relationship with the business community.

So when reading scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic skills came out and fifty-five percent of the city’s third graders were reading below grade level, APPLE Corps redirected the attention of its monthly Parent Leadership workshop to training just under one-hundred volunteers, fifty of whom were parents that could teach other parent volunteers, how to help children improve their reading and comprehension

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908 Interview with Nancy Hamilton, February 16, 2009.
909 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
When not a single student from the city’s southside schools was accepted to the Summer Governor’s Honors Program in 1998, APPLE Corps created a new afterschool initiative, the South East Young Artists Enrichment program. Program director Nancy Hamilton secured funding from the Fulton County Arts Council and the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs for a pilot program that promoted arts education for twenty-three fourth and fifth grade students through three Saturday art workshops and tours of the High Museum. By the end of the decade, APPLE Corps staff members were confronted with the truth. Despite the tremendous impact of the massive grants, only a few children were really benefiting. The disparity in Atlanta parents’ ability to volunteer their money, time, and skills continued to sharply increase. More importantly, the grants were beginning to run out. Hamilton explains, “At the time, I was too wrapped up in implementing the programmatic pieces. I do not think we used it very effectively as leverage to move on the policy pieces or as a fundraising tool to really call people’s attention to APPLE Corps. The entire APPLE Corp board was blind to the fact that once we won the grant, the money problems were not over.”

Executive director Dianne Sirna Mancus left in August after only two years at the organization’s helm. It took the Board of Directors almost a full year to find a replacement, and in May 2000 they hired Dr. Paul Organ as the new executive director. Yet as APPLE Corps’ director, Organ found like...
his two predecessors that the organization didn’t have the leverage needed to secure funding from the business community, which was increasingly supporting the Chamber of Commerce-backed organization, the Atlanta Committee for Public Education, which had been formed in 1993 as a pro-business, educational advocacy group. Friends and former co-workers, Mary Anne Gaunt and Sallie Weddell, sadly watched the dynamics of activism shifted away from APPLE Corps. “The Atlanta Committee for Public Education had become our competitor in terms of funding. They had a lot of business backing…they sponsored some major conferences once a year and did some really good work with advocacy, purely advocacy.”917 “I wasn’t having much success leveraging those grants…the new organization, which was made up of presidents and CEOs, was going to get the money…and I viscerally came to understand, we were never going to be able to sustain a model of programs because grants run out.”918 The 1993 Chamber of Commerce-backed election, along with the massive demographic upheaval of gentrification in the nineties, had transformed local school board politics. These changes had made APPLE Corps ineffective. Past-executive director, Mary Anne Gaunt explains:

We filled a need for intelligent women to get involved in the community…APPLE Corps during those twenty years filled a niche that wasn’t there. It really made people who they are, and I think that a lot of our conversations took the best things about CINS and NAPPS and we translated that vision around the whole school system…there was opportunity for lots of people to grow into themselves and understand their vision for public schools and community organization…we built a lot of good friends for public schools in engaging all the people that we did. I think that was the original vision, engaging parents and the public. We really fulfilled the first mission of the organization…but I think we definitely fit a time.”919

Just after a year of being hired, Organ resigned. In March 2002, the Board of Directors hired Nancy Hamilton, who had served as APPLE Corps program director for more than fifteen years, to oversee the organization’s merger with the Atlanta Committee for Public Education in 2003.920

917 Interview with Sallie Weddell, February 20, 2009.
918 Interview with Mary Anne Gaunt, February 24, 2009.
919 Ibid.
920 After closing up the APPLE Corp. office, Nancy Hamilton turned her attention to her volunteer work. She had begun serving on the United Way Fulton County Advisory Board in 2001. Over the next eight years, she worked with United Way to bring attention to the city’s impoverished areas, in particularly the Howell Mill and Bankhead Highway corridor. She remained committed to getting the churches and community involved to supporting the public schools in these areas. “Close to home: Your schools; Hamilton promoted,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March
This chapter has examined the development of APPLE Corps-sponsored programs in the nineties. As APPLE Corps, shifted from grassroots school-based programs to grant funded initiatives, which ranged from the School Governance project to Library Power and Technology Links, the women, who led the organization, hoped to promote a language of community empowerment. As the decade came to a close, APPLE Corps staff members came to understand that their means of promoting volunteerism and involvement had been made obsolete. Unable to secure funding, APPLE Corps merged with its pro-business rival, the Atlanta Committee for Public Education (ACPE).

10 Conclusion

On March 15, 2010, the lead story on the front page of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution announced “More Kids Stick with Buckhead Schools.” The return of white, middle-class families from the northside neighborhoods to the public school system marked a reversal of three decades of white flight. The founders of NAPPS, CINS, and APPLE Corps would hardly recognize the public schools that they had fought to keep open.

In Buckhead three primary campuses have been opened at Warren T. Jackson, Morris Brandon, and Sarah Smith to accommodate the soaring enrollment. Even E. Rivers Elementary School, which Carroll Lindseth worked so hard to convince her neighbors along Peachtree Battle to support, has out-
grown its campus. Its growing parent-teacher association is working closely with NAPPS to address the mounting problems of overcrowding. Over the past decade, Buckhead has experienced a super-gentrification that blended the amenities of suburban living with an era of high density, high-rise development unlike anything the region has seen.

By 2010, northside parents were increasingly including Sutton Middle School on their list of prospective schools to tour. For many of the couples Sutton, unlike the city’s private schools, offered diversity and a highly sought after International Baccalaureate program, which since 2002 as suggested by the Retention Task Force has been expanded to all eight NAPPS schools and extended from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Four years earlier, the sole school created by the Atlanta Compromise was reopened after a $20 million renovation. Peggy Wright, who served as NAPPS co-president from 2002 to 2004, explained how she and her husband Scotland Wright decided to send their children on to Sutton from Morris Brandon, “Coming to Sutton was very refreshing. The diversity, getting to know the teachers, volunteering…we wanted to support the public schools in our neighborhood.”

For mother and Westminster alum Cynthia Briscoe Brown, who took over the presidency of NAPPS with her husband Jim Brown in 2009 after her close friend Nancy Meister decided to run for the school board, it was the reputation of the IB program that then convinced them to send their oldest daughter on to North Atlanta High School from Sutton. In 2005, she and her husband attended a NAPPS-sponsored event on the IB program at the Southern Center for International Studies that was organized by

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926 Patti Ghezzi, “A public choice; Parents who could send their kids to private middle schools find themselves drawn to newly renovated Sutton,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, October 15, 2006, 1E.
Martha Fair and Kim McCauley, who after hosing the “Girls Night Out” the year before had realized Sutton was no longer the problem. Fair recalls their idea for the IB open house:

I was comfortable with Sutton, but very nervous about North Atlanta. When it came time for him to go, it was purely based on my ideals and I believe in sticking to my ideals...by talking to people, we realized that they were looking at the high school, and they viewed the middle school and high school decision as linked...so we had an event for the IB program at North Atlanta, and we called it ‘All About IB.’ We got a panel of speakers that included admissions officers from Emory and UGA, a former North Atlanta student that was at Yale University, and a North Atlanta parent. It was magical. It was packed with all these people that wanted to know what’s IB all about. 927

Brown remembers the impact of the event, “That IB event was instrumental in getting us to continue from Sutton to North Atlanta...I knew something about the concept because we had also looked at the International School. It fit so well with our daughter’s interests. By that time, she was already speaking French at a very advanced level...I have to confess it was the hardest decision I’ve ever made because North Atlanta was still awfully scary, but we liked the philosophy that anybody could achieve the IB diploma.”928

What really made a difference in the number of families choosing to stick with the public schools past fifth grade was the decision by superintendent Dr. Beverly Hall to support the northside schools as community schools. She listened to NAPPS and worked with parents and the community to accommodate their wishes regarding future facility plans. Current NAPPS president Cynthia Briscoe Brown explains:

She gave us the facilities we needed as the schools grew. We’ve had more capital improvements on the northside than any other area of the city but that’s because our numbers have supported it. We are the only cluster in the city and every school in the cluster is experiencing explosive increases in enrollment. There are individual schools elsewhere that are seeing that kind of growth, Morningside, Springdale Park, and Mary Lin, but nowhere is the entire cluster going through growth like we are. And she responded appropriately. 929

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927 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
928 Interview with Cynthia Briscoe Brown, June 8, 2011. In 2010, North Atlanta, Grady, and Benjamin Mays became the last three public schools to complete the high school transformation, which ended the magnet programs that allowed for out-of-district attendance. At all three schools, their former magnet programs became the basis for the creation of four small learning communities (SLC’s). At North Atlanta, the SLC’s available to Buckhead families are The Center for Global Broadcasting and Journalism, The Center for International Business & Entrepreneurship, the Center for International Studies, and the Center for the Arts. At Grady, the SLC’s available to intown families are The Communications and Journalism Academy, the Public Policy and Justice Academy, the Business and Entrepreneurship Academy, and The Biomedical Sciences and Engineering Academy.
929 Ibid.
For many of the parents, from the day Dr. Hall showed up at a Dad’s pancake breakfast she brought a willingness to support the northside cluster and recognize their success.

Dr. Hall also understood that if the yield rate was going to increase from Sutton to North Atlanta, then immediate administrative changes were needed. Brown recalls how the principal played a huge role in deterring white, northside parents from continuing on to North Atlanta:

The then North Atlanta principal came to a sixth grade meeting at Sutton and had the nerve in the middle of a room of PTA moms, who by that time were mostly white and from Buckhead, to say that she would just as soon the Buckhead kids not come to North Atlanta because their parents were such troublemakers. They expected too much. She was standing in a room of people like me, who are exactly the people she’s talking about. Let’s face it the ones that come to a PTA coffee are exactly those parents, no matter what their color or socioeconomic class. Those are the one’s she perceived as the troublemakers…we would not have gone to North Atlanta if she’d still been there.930

Incidences like those became the reason that Buckhead mothers after seeing their children thrive at Sutton, continued to apply out. The real turning point for the high school came when Dr. Hall hired Scott Bursmith in 2005. In two years, the yield rate from Sutton to North Atlanta rose from fifty to eighty percent.931

Then in late April 2007 on the Friday morning that admission acceptance letters were due at Atlanta’s private schools, principal Scott Bursmith announced he was resigning to take a position in Cobb County. The suburban country located north of the city was opening a brand new high school and had offered him the opportunity to build the school from the ground up. Northside parents were left scrambling. Those that had decided to move from Sutton to North Fulton frantically began to call to see if they could still be admitted. Parents with children already at North Fulton, such as Cynthia Brown, wondered how she was going to get her daughter into The Westminster Schools after admissions had closed. NAPPS mothers Nancy Meister, Amy Durham, and Peggy Wright, who all had children at North Fulton, knew something had to be done or there would be no one left at the school by the end of the day. Brown recalls what happened next:

930 Ibid.
There was a group of moms, including Nancy Meister, Amy Durham, and Peggy Wright, who as soon as Scott [Bursmith] announced his resignation literally got in one of their cars, drove downtown, flew past all the levels of security, and walked right into Dr. Hall’s office. They sat down and said, “Scott Bursmith has just resigned.” It was 9 o’clock on a Friday morning. “If you don’t do something by noon, there’s not going to be anybody left by 3 o’clock.” This was April. Eighth grade parents at Sutton were having to make their decisions that day, and then they had all the people like me, who were trying to figure out how far through the Westminster campus I was going to have to crawl on my knees in order to get my daughter in as a sophomore. They said, “What you have to do is get Mark MyGrant to move up. You have to call Mark.” She said, “I’ll do better than that.” And God bless her. She did exactly what she should have. She picked up the phone and called her driver. She was in the car before she called Sutton and said, “I’m on the way.” One of the moms, Amy Durham, called the secretary Ms. Claudia Landers, and said, “Dr. Hall is on the way. You need to get Mark in his office.” She offered him the job on the spot.932

With that decision, Dr. Beverly Hall and principal Mark MyGrant brought a sense of bridge building between the community and the school system.

The decision was also made to adjust the North Atlanta school district so that it solely pulled from Sutton Middle School and shifted students that were being bused across town back to the nearby Douglass High School. Martha Fair recalls the impact of the redistricting:

The biggest thing that helped was when they rezoned. This one particular group that was at North Atlanta was from two really poor housing projects, [Perry Homes and Hollywood Courts]…my youngest Andrew was a freshman, and Dr. Hall decided to try and build up the community school. Some people thought that was a version of re-segregating schools, but I think from her perspective, she had that same understanding of community. You live in a community and you go to school in that community with your neighbors.933

The Buckhead parents that were keeping their children in the public schools were choosing to send their kids to Sutton and North Atlanta because they wanted the diversity as much as the opportunities offered by the touted IB program. “That was controversial, community-based schools, because you get back into how they set up the magnets and to bus children all over the city…it was dicey for Dr. Hall, but it didn’t make sense to bus children forty-five minutes.”934

As northside parents, the Wrights, the Meisters, and then the Browns, quietly handed off the presidency of NAPPS a close, working group of parents, teachers and principals came to be identified.

932 Interview with Cynthia Briscoe Brown, June 8, 2011.
933 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
934 Interview with Kathleen Barksdale, December 6, 2011.
The organization had reemerged from the nineties intact. First the high school merger and then the loss of long-time advocate and NAPPS president Sandy Driscoll to cancer in 2002 had left the group shaken.

“Katy Pattillo and Mark Reilly asked Peggy Wright and her husband if they would lead NAPPS. They were Sutton and North Atlanta parents that had gone to Brandon. Peggy became a really good friend…but at that time it was gasping for breath.”

Once a month members got together with the principals and PTA presidents to socialize and talk about what was going on in their schools. Fair remembers what NAPPS meetings were like when she took over as president from Wright in 2006:

It was just a monthly lunch at which people, usually the PTA presidents, got together and talk about what was happening at each of the schools. We started meeting before the monthly meetings with just the PTA presidents to talk. It was just a more casual meeting, and we had at lunch at the end of the year at Peggy Wright’s house to build relationships…I started trying to have a program and make it more substantive. We might bring in the head of the math curriculum or the state department from education. We had speakers and started the website.

By the time the economic downturn hit Atlanta, it was evident that the northside was going to need a second middle school. In the midst of controversial redistricting, current NAPPS co-presidents Cynthia and Jim Brown found themselves leading a public relations organization that was going to take on a much bigger role in the city than at any point in the organization’s history.

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935 Interview with Martha Fair, December 15, 2011.
936 Ibid.
Meanwhile, just to the south of Buckhead, Morningside Elementary School had become the most sought after school in metropolitan Atlanta. In 2007 as enrollment neared 1,000 children, kindergarten students began their first day of school at the new Morningside annex. Two years later, the historic Howard School site on Ponce de Leon was reopened as a new elementary school. The neighborhoods of Virginia-Highland, Poncey-Highland, Midtown, and Druid Hills were rezoned to Springdale Park Elementary.\(^939\) Across Ponce de Leon Avenue, CW Hill and John Hope were merged the same year that the new intown elementary school opened. The demolishing of Atlanta’s public housing, which began as the city prepared for the 1996 Olympics, had vastly altered the demographics of the intown neighborhoods and caused enrollment to decline in the schools that had served Techwood/Clark Howell Homes, U-Rescue Vista, and John Hope Homes.\(^940\) In 2010, after several years of hard work by a dedicated group of Midtown and Old Fourth Ward parents that had met through the Midtown Parents’ Group a new community-based charter school, The Intown Academy, opened in the former CW Hill school building.\(^941\) That same fall Mary Lin Elementary School, where Midge Sweet had fought to make the curriculum rival the city’s best private schools, hauled eight doublewide portable classrooms on to its playground to accommodate the crowded campus.\(^942\)

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By the end of the decade, it was increasingly apparent that redistricting was inevitable. The ring of reviving, close-in neighborhoods that once powerfully stood in the face of two highways and galvanized an entire community had extended to the southeast bungalow suburbs of Kirkwood, Edgewood, Reynoldstown, East Atlanta, Ormewood Park, and Grant Park. Chris Newman, who served as Grant Park Neighborhood Association president from 2004 to 2005, described how this new wave of gentrification was impacting the close-in, southeast neighborhoods and schools, “When the neighborhood was just beginning to turn around, you could get a fixer-upper in the $12,000 to $20,000 range. We lived with a wonderful, diverse group of people, but you sent your kids to private schools. About five years ago, families made the commitment to make a difference in the education system rather than move out when their kids hit school age.” In the late 1990s, parents from Grant Park Parents Network (GPPN) and Grant Park Cooperative Preschool (GPCP) gathered on the porch of Michelle and Doug Blackmon to discuss their educational options.

We were so thrust into starting the school that my whole experience with the neighborhood as it was changing was through that experience because we moved in and a year later my son was born. We had a porch party when he was six weeks old…we ended up with about thirty people on our porch that were either pregnant or had newborns or real little ones. That’s how we built our group in the community…our gentrification process was connected to the school.

Parents from the gentrifying neighborhoods of Grant Park, Ormewood Park, and East Atlanta made the decision that they did not want to sell their restored homes when their children reached kindergarten. They wanted to send their children to a neighborhood school that fostered academic excellence, extraordinary parental involvement, and a strong sense of community in what had emerged as Atlanta’s resurgent neighborhoods, yet white flight had devastated the southeast side of the city and forced the closing of the half dozen small neighborhood primary schools. Over the next five years the intensely motivated group

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945 Laura Raines, “Neighborhood of the Week: Grant Park; Historic Atlanta area revitalized with new development, more kids,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 22, 2004, 8HF.
946 Interview with Michelle Blackmon, November 8, 2007.
947 For more on the stages of gentrification Atlanta has experienced see Lesley Williams Reid and Robert Adelman, “The Double-edged Sword of Gentrification in Atlanta,” *Footnotes* (April 2003); Keating, “Resurgent Gentrifica-
of parents “got more organized and started exploring public school options. We did a lot of going to meetings, presentations, and going door-to-door handing out information and talking to people. And when I look back on it, it really blows me away. It’s crazy. We literally knocked on 2,500 doors.” In 2001, the Neighborhood Charter School was opened in the closed W.F. Slaton Elementary building. Four years later the Atlanta Charter Middle School was founded at Ann E. West Elementary. In 2011, the two schools were officially merged into the K-8, two-campus Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School serving NPU-W. A third charter school, Imagine Wesley International Academy, was similarly started by a small group of committed community activists that wanted to bring the International Baccalaureate curriculum to families moving into southeast Atlanta. Over the past five years, the Board of Directors has constructed an impressive campus around a former turn-of-the-century church sanctuary in Ormewood Park.

By the end of the decade, the waiting lists at both charter schools read like that of any one of the city’s private schools. In 2010, parents that had met through the neighborhood association and playgroups decided to form a new organization modeled after NAPPS and CINS, the Southeast Atlanta Communities
for Schools (SEACS). When the cheating scandal broke, NAPPS president Cynthia Briscoe Brown found herself sitting next to her counterparts at school board meetings. She soon got to know the new organization SEACS along with Abby Martin at CINS and Shawna Hayes-Tavares from Southwest and Northwest Atlanta Parents for Schools (SNAPPS), which was formed in 2008.\footnote{Janita Poe, “Group mobilizing Westside parents Thursday to respond to APS challenges,” Cascade Patch, February 16, 2011.}

Now as a result of this board mess, we are reaching out to our counterparts in the other parts of the city. I’ve been sitting in board meetings with Abby Martin at CINS, Shawna Hayes-Tavares at SNAPPS, and SEACS, which is brand new and our counterpart in the southeast part of the city. SNAPPS is Southwest and Northwest Atlanta Parents for Public Schools. [They] have challenges we have never faced. We have benefited from having a group of parents that are active and able to be supportive in every possible way.\footnote{Interview with Cynthia Briscoe Brown, June 8, 2011.}

NAPPS president Cynthia Brown found herself admiring the dynamite group of parent leaders and their commitment to public education and their resurgent neighborhoods.

In April 2011, SEACS invited representatives from the groups to Parkside Elementary to discuss with parents from the southeast neighborhoods how to bring the kindergarten to twelfth grade IB program to their cluster. Former NAPPS president Carroll Lindseth’s daughter, Sarah Lindseth Steely, who attended E. Rivers Elementary and Sutton Middle School before going on to Pace Academy, had moved back to Atlanta after college. She and her husband bought their first home in Ormewood Park.

I went to the very first SEACS meeting. They had been organizing through an email list and Google group for the past year. At the meeting, they identified our high school, Maynard Jackson, which used to be Southside, and all the feeder schools. They had a bunch of school people, board members and teachers, and the president of NAPPS, the president of CINS, and the president of SNAPPS. They were talking about turning Maynard Jackson into an International Baccalaureate school…the NAPPS representative, Julie Rief, talked for a bit [about the program], and then someone asked, “Well how many of the elementary schools in the NAPPS area are International Baccalaureate?” And she said, “All six of them, and Sutton has the middle years program.” I thought to myself, “Mom, all your hard work paid off!” That’s what we’re trying to build up now where I live. You all started NAPPS, now we’re trying to do that.\footnote{Interview with Carroll Lindseth, June 9, 2011. She asked her daughter, Sarah Lindseth Steely to talk about living in Ormewood Park and how she and her husband Brian Steely decided to send their children, Stella and Dylan Steely, to Parkside Elementary School for pre-K and then to Imagine Wesley to be a part of the International Baccalaureate program.}
The Steelys had started their daughter at the Pre-K program at Parkside Elementary School. They found the school and teachers to be great. Sarah Lindseth Steely wanted to keep their children there but was frustrated by the lack of parental involvement. Concerned that if they did not apply, their daughter would be unable to get into one of the two charter schools later on the Steelys toured both the Neighborhood Charter School and Imagine Wesley International Academy (IWIA). With the new IB program at Jackson, they liked the idea of their children moving through the IWIA program from the charter school back into their public high school. “I was at a birthday party and was describing to the other mothers how my mother and NAPPS really hunkered down back then. Now we are. It’s interesting to see it come full circle.”

In 2006, Chris Martin took over the presidency of CINS. The dream of the organization that her brother-in-law Joe Martin had founded was a reality. “CINS was a response to the demographic shift that followed desegregation, yet parents were committed to public schools and believed if they stayed strong, families would come back.”

I have argued that the return of white, middle-class families to Atlanta’s public schools originated in the neighborhood-based activism of the 1970s. Following the 1973 Compromise, two small, core groups of Atlanta parents came together around their commitment to integration, public education, and the future growth and revitalization of their neighborhoods. The largely women-led organizations that emerged were determined to halt white flight and saw their grassroots political activism as the second civil rights movement. The campaigns, which followed, took on the last vestiges of racism and transformed three generations’ understanding of what it took to build a community. The story that I have told broadens the trajectory of the long civil rights movement to include white, middle-class families that chose to move into the city. They were generally southerners that transcended racism or young professionals that migrated to the region and came to see themselves as Atlantans. In telling their story, I have challenged recent trends in the historiography, which has rooted the origins of the modern conservative movement in white families resistance to court-ordered integration. Not all white families fled the city.

955 Interview with Carroll Lindseth, June 9, 2011.
956 Interview with Chris Martin, February 4, 2009.
and the public schools in the seventies and eighties. The narrative of white flight has ignored the families that fought the turmoil and upheaval, which in Atlanta followed the 1973 Compromise. These families deeply believed in their cause. They envisioned public education being better than the city’s most exclusive private schools because the northside and intown neighborhoods schools could offer something that the private schools could not: diversity, parent volunteerism, and excellent curriculum opportunities through the gifted programs or the IB, arts, and communications programs. Three decades later, their determination has brought thousands of families to the northside and intown neighborhoods.

In many ways it’s a simple story; one in which parents wanted what was best for their children and their children’s classmates. Yet, what emerged was a type of grassroots organizing that fit a specific period in history. Couples that were inspired by the civil rights movement wanted to move intown in the face of white flight. They came to Atlanta believing they were a part of the change mechanism. Wives that were college graduates and stay-at-home mothers first got involved in their school’s parent-teacher association. Whether it was Buckhead and the mothers were taking a stand against white flight or the intown neighborhoods and the parents determined to take on the school system as they had the highways, they fought to support integration and public education. The small, core group of leaders was unwavering. For some their values were rooted in religion, and they had sought out progressive churches upon moving to Atlanta. For others, they learned what it meant to be political when they met women like themselves and became active in the League of Women Voters or the Junior League. Their optimism over what a committed group of parents and a community can achieve by empowering their schools and neighborhoods remains the legacy that NAPPS and CINS continue and model to their counterparts. The current redistricting crisis has once again revived the 1970s-model of neighborhood activism and carried the progressive values and principles, strategies for mobilizing, and language of community involvement and empowerment developed over three generations of NAPPS, CINS and APPLE Corps leaders across the city’s four quadrants of close-in neighborhoods.957

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THESES AND DISSERTATIONS


Appendices

Appendix A: Map of Buckhead
Appendix B: Map of the Intown Neighborhoods
Appendix C: Map of Atlanta
Appendix D: NAPPS Presidents

1975 – 1976
Informal meetings between PTA presidents

1976 – 1977
Lynn Westergaard (chairman)

1977 – 1978
Betsey Stone and Margaret Miller (co-chairmen)

1978 – 1979
Margaret Miller (president)

1979 – 1981
Clare Richardson

1981 – 1982
Florence Sumner

1982 – 1983
Pat McGuone

1983 – 1984
Carroll Lindseth

1984 – 1985
Pam Brown* (interim school board member 1993)

1985 – 1986
Sally Pickett

1986 – 1987

1987 – 1988
Jan Elger (husband John Elger school board member 1989-1993)

1988 – 1989
Peggy Ledbetter

1989 – 1990
Gmerice Turner

1990 – 1992
Anne Harper* (District 4 school board member 1993-2001)

1992 – 1993
Anne Cochran

1993 – 1995

1995 – 1998
Dub Anderson

1998 – 2000

2000 – 2002
Sandy Driscoll

2002 – 2004
Peggy & Scotland Wright

2004 – 2006
Martha Fair

2006 – 2009
Nancy* & Steve Meister (District 4 school board member 2009-present)

2009 – 2012
Cynthia Briscoe Brown & Jim Brown
Appendix E: CINS Presidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>President(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977 – 1978</td>
<td>CIRCLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978 – 1980</td>
<td>Charlotte Hale</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980 – 1983</td>
<td>Trisha Senterfitt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983 – 1986</td>
<td>Nancy Hamilton</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986 – 1988</td>
<td>Chris Carlsten</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988 – 1990</td>
<td>Tricia Deitz</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990 – 1992</td>
<td>Faye “Jimi” Moore</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994 – 1995</td>
<td>Becky Vaughn</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996 – 1997</td>
<td>Susan Brooks &amp; Sarah Bryant</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998 – 1999</td>
<td>Sarah Bryant</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999 – 2000</td>
<td>Diane Terrell &amp; Barbara Feinberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000 – 2001</td>
<td>Sarah Fedota &amp; Barbara Feinberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001 – 2002</td>
<td>Sarah Fedota &amp; Cecily Harsch-Kinnane* (District 3 2005-present)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003 – 2004</td>
<td>Debbie Griffiths &amp; Martha Rusche</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004 – 2005</td>
<td>Debbie Griffiths &amp; Liz Coyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005 – 2006</td>
<td>Susan Muntzing &amp; Liz Coyle</td>
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<td>2006 – 2008</td>
<td>Susan Muntzing &amp; Chris Martin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008 – 2009</td>
<td>Pam Revie-Petterson &amp; Chris Martin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 – 2011</td>
<td>Doug Wood &amp; Abby Martin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 – 2012</td>
<td>Doug Wood &amp; Abby Martin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: APPLE Corps Directors, Staff, and Presidents of the Board of Directors

1979 – 1979  Carolyn Graham, director
1979 – 1979  Marcia Klenbort, interim director
1979 – 1980  Camilla [last name unknown], secretary
1980 – 1987  Marcia Klenbort, director
1981 – 1982  Wayne Martin, writer and Mennonite volunteer
1985 – 1986  Jennifer Delaney, writer
1986 – 2002  Nancy Hamilton, Grants coordinator/program director
1986 - 1999  Sallie Weddell, editor/issues director
1987 – 1989  Betsey Stone, director
1988 – 1989  Nancy Peters, writer and Mennonite volunteer
1989 – 1997  Mary Anne Gaunt, executive director
1997 – 1999  Dianne Sirna Mancus, executive director
2000 - 2002  Dr. Paul Organ, executive director
2002 – 2003  Nancy Hamilton, executive director

1979 – 1980  Susan Bledsoe, President of the Board of Directors
1981 – 1983  Clare Richardson
1983 – 1985  Nancy Cunningham
1985 – 1989  Frank Howard
1985 – 1986  Jim Zimmerman, Advisory Board president
1989 – 1994  Al McWilliams
1997 – 2000  Henry Kelly