



THE OLIVE CHAPEL ELEMENTARY

Wave

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The Wave Interview: Jan Hargrove, OCE's First Principal

by *The Wave staff*

During a recent club meeting, we wondered what it was be like to be the very first principal of Olive Chapel Elementary. Lucky for us, Ms. Jan Hargrove, OCE's first principal, was willing to answer our questions.

What was it like being the first principal of a new school?

As a principal, opening Olive Chapel was a dream come true! It was a lot of work, but it was exciting at the same time. There were many meetings with the faculty and staff, students, parents and the greater Apex community to create a shared vision, select a mascot and PTA board to help us kick off the 1997-1998 school year.

How long were you the principal?

I was the principal from March 1997 (before the school opened officially) until February 2004, when I left to open Turner Creek Elementary. I was at OCE for almost seven years.

What inspired you to be a principal?

I always loved being a teacher and taught special education students for nine years. After teaching for several years, a mentor inspired me to go into school administration. I felt a calling to influence education in a different way. I wanted to have the best of both worlds - working with students and working with the adults who served them in the classroom.

When you were the principal, how many staff and students were at OCE?

I like this question as it challenges my memory. We grew so much and so fast during my time at OCE. We opened the school with 500 students and ended the year with 650. The next year we ended with 1050 students. At one point, we had 120 staff members.

What's your favorite memory from being the principal here?

You have great questions! I have wonderful memories of my time at Olive Chapel. Art-a-Palooza holds a special place in my heart. This event was a celebration of the visual and performing arts along with a silent auction to support our school. We had international festivals, grade level plays and concerts as well.



Photos of Mrs. Hargrove from the 1997-1998 OCE yearbook

I really enjoyed the April 1998 building dedication, too. We decided to wait until we had a little bit of history as a school community before we dedicated the building. Students created tiles during art class, which were installed down the main hallway.

Another activity I am proud of was our involvement in the KidsTowne/Kelly Road Park playground. We helped raise money for the playground by selling bricks and stock in the venue. This playground still exists today.

What kind of assemblies did you have?

Students experienced plays, musical events, writer in residence programs, puppet shows, African dance and drummer shows, and so much more. I imagine these are like what you have seen at Olive Chapel over the past few years. In addition, students participated in field trips to the Museum of Life and Science, Old Salem, and a Sound to Sea trip for 5th graders.

Was it hard being the principal and if so, did you ever want to give up?

It was a LOT of work to put together a new school. It meant many long days, weekend work, and nights away from my own children who were almost six and 10 at the time.

Over my career, there have been challenges and changes in education, but my underlying commitment to teaching and learning, mentoring others, and being part of a school community has never wavered. At times I have been tired, overwhelmed and discouraged, but once I step into a school, I find my energy from the teachers, students, staff, parents, colleagues and community to continue this important work.

Ready for Fun? Come to the OCE Carnival!

by Addie MacNaughton

This is Olive Chapel's 25th Anniversary Carnival. This is only the second carnival at Olive Chapel since 2020 due to Covid. Did you know our school has been around since 1997?! Well, it has. There are going to be some special events from April 17th through the 20th. The last day, the 20th, is going to be the carnival. The carnival opens at 5:00 p.m. and ends at 7:00 p.m.

There are over 20 games (including prizes). Also, there are four inflatable games! Then there is also face paint! Don't worry about getting food before the carnival because there are two food trucks serving dinner and, for dessert, two dessert trucks! Who helps run the games at the carnival? There are 42 volunteers per hour to help make all this fun possible. There are sign-up sheets for volunteers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, but also in the OCE newsletter. Teachers and staff volunteer too. And for our last part of volunteers, some teenagers from Cary Teen Council help. They are a volunteer service group.



If you have been to the carnival before or not, you should come this year because it is the 25th anniversary carnival! Caleb Bourne, who has gone to the carnival said, "I like all the fun games! My favorite game from last year was balloon popping. I can't wait for the 2 dessert trucks. I love dessert!!!!!" Kids and their families love the carnival.

The OCE Carnival is so much fun! We are so delighted to have the help that we do. Any one can come to the O.C.E carnival! Try to come, if you can. We hope to see you there!

Staff Members Who Have Decades of Service at OCE

by Avni Patel

There are some staff members who have been here for a very long time at OCE and those people are Ms. Davis, Ms. Duke, Ms. Ruiz, and Ms. Decker they all have helped OCE improve to where this awesome school is now. Here are some questions that I asked them.

Have you taught all grades since you have been at OCE?

Ms. Duke replied "I have supported K-2. I have also worked on every track since becoming year-around."



L to R: Ms. Decker, Ms. Davis, Ms. Duke & Ms. Ruiz

What made you come to OCE?

Ms. Duke said "I was driving a bus for the district already. My son and daughter got re-districted when OCE opened. I started volunteering and applied for the first year, and got hired to start the following year."

What is your favorite memory at OCE?

Ms. Decker replied "I love how we celebrate one another with parades and "clap outs." As a kindergarten teacher I will always treasure the moments when my class starts to gel as a team and care for one another. I also love when the kiddos start to read and get so excited."

What has made you stay at Olive Chapel?

Ms. Ruiz explained "I've stayed here because of the welcoming staff and the great team they are. I love that we all help and support each other whenever we need."

What are some changes you have seen?

Ms. Davis Said "The biggest change for me was when we converted from a traditional school to a year-around school back in 2007. Now I have met new students and developed forever relationships with them and their families."

All of those staff members have been here for a long time and this is what they have done to make this school the best school possible. Ms. Duke, Ms. Davis, Ms. Decker, and Ms. Ruiz have really helped.

From Students to Staff Members

by Mariella Orthober

Do you ever think about what you will be doing in 10 or 15 years or what OCE might be like in the future? Some of our very own teachers used to be students here at OCE. I got a chance to interview two of them, Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Norman! In this article you will learn more about Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Norman and what OCE was like when they were students here.



Ms. Norman & Ms. Sullivan

What made you want to become a teacher at OCE?

Ms. Norman: I wanted to always do something to help people and my mom knew that there was an opening here where they needed help in the CCR room, and she was like why don't you apply and I did.

Ms. Sullivan: They had an opening available and I was excited to apply for the job.

How long have you been teaching at OCE?

Ms. Norman: A year and a couple of months.

Ms. Sullivan: Six years.

Have you always taught at OCE or did you teach somewhere else?

Ms. Norman: I have always been here.

Ms. Sullivan: I have only ever taught here:

Was the school any different now than it was when you went here if so how?

Ms. Norman: There are more specials. The grades that were in the trailers were a little bit different. When I was in 5th grade I actually got to be in the building.

Ms. Sullivan: The biggest visible difference is that the hallways used to be carpeted.

What's your favorite memory from when you went to OCE?

Ms. Norman: I think my favorite memory would have to be my 5th grade celebration after my Sail Up Ceremony where me and my friends just got to hang out and I got to see some old teachers and it was kinda like the last goodbye.

Ms. Sullivan: In fourth grade me and my class would play down on the field and we would play just our class, soccer every single day.

Were you in any clubs when you went here? If so, which ones?

Ms. Norman: I was in a jump rope club and a knitting club and I was also in safety patrol.

Ms. Sullivan: I did safety patrol when I was in fifth grade and we used to have a mail system where kids could write letters to other kids in other classrooms and I was a mail carrier.

What is your favorite thing to do with your students? Did your teacher do those things with you?

Ms. Norman: When I do get to sub and we have some free time and we get to do like a game or something I do love to play heads up seven up, that is a game that I used to play when I was younger.

Ms. Sullivan: I feel like just getting to know them and building the relationship with them and then having time where we just get to enjoy each other's company and I feel like my teachers did a really good job of that.

What's your favorite thing about OCE?

Ms. Norman: My favorite thing about OCE is the people and the community that's here they really make this place what it is, it's what makes this place home and it's the reason why I came back.

Ms. Sullivan: The feeling that you get when you walk in it feels like family, you're comfortable and you're happy to be here. I feel like that's special and that's not necessarily the case everywhere.

**DON'T WORRY ABOUT FAILURE.
WORRY ABOUT THE CHANCES YOU MISS WHEN YOU DON'T EVEN TRY.
- SHERMAN FINESILVER**

A Trio of Principals Share Their Memories of OCE

by Amit Pandya

Have you ever wondered who the former principals of the school were, and how they felt about being the principal? Well, we're about to find out!

In reflecting, what are some accomplishments you feel proud of in your time as principal?

Dr. Ruth Steidinger: I am incredibly proud of the hard work all of the staff executed in order to repurpose our school as a school of distinction. We rebuilt the school in its physical appearance, the culture, and the academic performance of our students. The staff and community worked extremely hard and for that I am very proud.

I am also very proud of the way we pivoted during a time of crises, the onset of Covid. We transformed our school from a brick and mortar setting to a virtual setting in a very short time frame. I was beyond impressed with the way everyone rallied to ensure quality instruction continued during a challenging time. This time showed the great resiliency of the OCE staff. This is when we coined the phrase OCEstrong. We came out on the other side stronger and better.

Nanette Lavery: Responding to the staff input for their new principal implementing PBIS at OCE. SAIL was adopted and embraced! Working with PTA to create the OCE Clipper Ship logo. Changing 5th grade "graduation" to 5th grade SAIL UP ceremony! Transitioning carpool to numbers from names in response to parent safety concerns. Continuing to be a school with high academic standards! Hiring Erin May as an assistant principal!

Were there any major school changes that occurred during your time as principal?

Dr. Steidinger: We rebranded the school as a Growth Mindset school. It was important that we create a culture where students and staff believed they could take risk, fail, and learn from their failures. The vision statement we created as a staff pushed all of us to ensure we were helping every child reach his/her greatest potential.

Melissa Burns: Successfully converting our school from a traditional schedule to year-round

Please tell us any fun facts about your time as principal

Dr. Steidinger: I never thought I would dress up in costumes so many times. Mrs. May was quite persuasive. We were Thing 1 and Thing 2, I believe a fried egg and bacon, PacMan costumes and on and on. I also really loved the Tik Tok dances Mr. Arce, Mrs. May and I created in the empty halls of OCE to inspire our families during Covid.



Dr. Steidinger, Ms. Lavery & Ms. Burns

Ms. Lavery: Kindergarten orientation! One of my former students introducing me to her incoming kindergartener! It was a joy to be able to teach his mother and then be his principal! Having June Atkinson, North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction, visit our school and read to the students!

Melissa Burns: We utilized the school for an emergency Red Cross shelter when there was a gas leak at a local company in Apex. Four assistant principals or interns went on to become principals in their career!

Final Thoughts

Dr. Steidinger: When I left Olive Chapel I told the staff and community many times that my years at OCE were my absolute best. While I was by no means perfect, I believe that I was supported in being the best leader I had been in my 32 years in WCPSS. There is no greater feeling than to be that supported in a job that is as challenging as being a principal. The OCE staff and community are outstanding and I feel honored and blessed to have worked there.

Ms. Lavery:

My time at OCE was filled with wonderful memories and growth. I'm proud to have been a part of the history of OCE!

Ms. Burns:

We had the best, fun teams with our staff! We had great trips to Washington, D.C. & Sound to Sea field trips with our students. I LOVED my years at OCE and have many fond memories!

School Calendar

April 17 - OCE Anniversary Parade & Celebration

April 18 - Royalty Day

April 19 - Wacky Wednesday

April 20 - Color Wars

April 20 - School Carnival

April 21 - NO SCHOOL

April 24 - NO SCHOOL for tracks 1, 2 & 3 ONLY

The Mystery of OCE Gonzo

by Conley Tierney & Preston Erichsen

OCE Gonzo has been at our school since almost the beginning, but who is Gonzo and where did he come from? Who brought him to OCE? What has happened to Gonzo since he came to OCE?

Gonzo is from the Muppets. The Muppets launched in late 1967. Later, Gonzo joined the Muppets and made his first appearance in 1970, Gonzo began as a minor puppet but soon was one of the Muppets' franchises greatest puppets.

Twenty-seven years later our school opened in 1997. Since our school has been around for 25 years, it's hard to talk to someone who has been here almost 25 years and saw the entry of Gonzo.

Luckily we were able to talk to Ms. Duke who told us how it's hard to remember when Gonzo came but he came to Olive Chapel somewhere in the first 10 years. Later, Ms. Duke told us the story of how Gonzo ended up in the front office.

She said Gonzo was in the janitor's closet for a long time. Later she heard that Gonzo was going to be thrown away so she took Gonzo and put him in her classroom storage closet. Once she cleaned out the music room storage closet she put Gonzo in there. A few years later Ms. Duke gave Gonzo to Ms. Newberger when she started teaching drama. We don't know exactly what happened next, but we do know Gonzo ended up in the music room storage closet again.

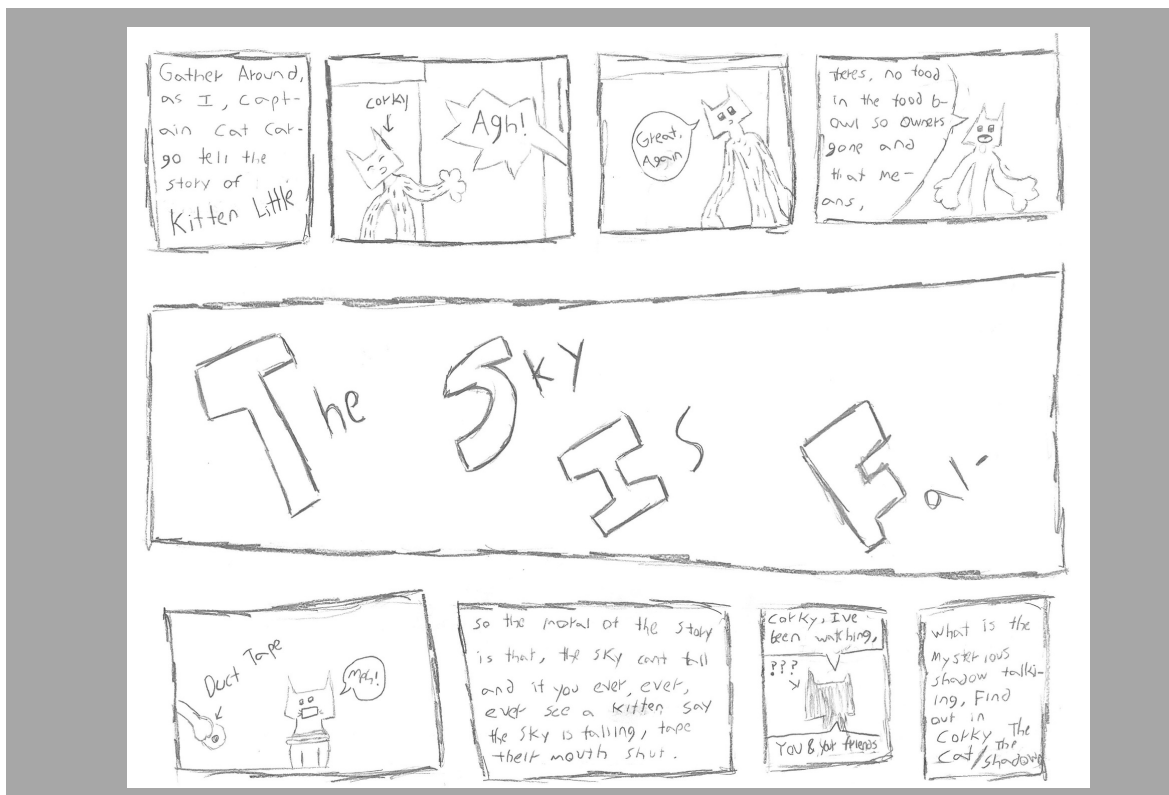


OCE Gonzo's yearbook photo. Can YOU solve the mystery?

Later on Ms. I, who was substitute teaching for music, cleaned out the closet and "found" Gonzo. After that, Gonzo was cleaned up and put in an OCE shirt and sat on a stool in the front office. Gonzo has a riddle on a whiteboard for you to solve.

Although the mystery of Gonzo's appearance has not been completely solved, we do think the first head custodian, Betty Monroe, brought him here since he was first found in the janitor's closet. We do know that Gonzo is a part of our school and even has his own yearbook picture. Maybe you will crack this case and discover who brought Gonzo to OCE.

A special thanks to Mrs. Davis for helping us figure out who the first head custodian was at OCE.



by Gio Valenzisi

What the World Was Up to in 1997

by Ekaaksh Manjunath

Olive Chapel Elementary opened in 1997, but what else was happening in the world?

Well, the most popular song that year was "Candle in the Wind" by Elton John. He wrote it for Princess Diana who died that year.

Bill Clinton was the president. Men in Black was the most popular movie. The Green Bay Packers won the Super Bowl and the halftime show was the Blues Brothers. The Florida Marlins won the World Series and the Detroit Red Wings won the Stanley Cup.

Beanie Babies were very popular. You needed a telephone to use the internet, and Facebook was started at Harvard University.

Then 1997-1998	Now 2022-2023
• 552 students	• 980 students
• One principal, one assistant principal	• One principal, two assistant principals
• Traditional school	• Year-round school
• Room for more students	• Capped school with a waitlist
• One building	• One building, 14 cottages
• 29 homerooms	• 50 homerooms
• 70 staff members	• 115 staff members
• Four clubs	• 14 clubs
• Three specials	• Eight specials

Build A Bear started in 1997 and the first Harry Potter book was published. And Mrs. May was a sophomore in high school!

All About Clippers

by the Wave staff

All of us at Olive Chapel are Clippers, but have you ever wondered exactly what a clipper is? You're about to find out!

A clipper can be any kind of ship, but it specifically means a ship designed to be fast. Some ships were designed to move people or transport goods, but clippers were made to move quickly through the water.

Most clipper ships were built in either the United States or in England in the 1800's. The front and back of clippers are sharp, which helps them with speed.

Baltimore clippers were very famous and you can still see examples of them if you go to Baltimore Harbor in Maryland.

When the economy got bad, people didn't build clipper ships much anymore. The last clipper ship was built in 1873.

The Los Angeles Clippers basketball team is named after clipper ships, just like Olive Chapel! They don't have a picture of a clipper in their logo like we do, but their colors are red and blue. We have a lot of red and blue in our logo, too!

