

# Alumni recollections

the PEC now stands and was "also great for dances. And for getting everybody in the school together in one place," Sharpe said.

A couple of years later, students were brought together in a larger way. The Class of '92 lived through the Gulf War at NCSSM. Mary Pat Campbell recalled student activity during this time. "There was a big peace rally on the lawn - people sat luminaries out in the shape of a peace sign and sang various songs, got their pics taken and I bet we all have FBI files now."

John Dervin, also class of '92, recalled a pair of events sparked by the Rodney King acquittal. "Hundreds of students gathered in the gym around an open mike as students spoke and expressed their dismay at the verdict and racism in society," he said. In the other event, students marched on Watts Lawn, "protesting the years of institutional racism which students of color and particularly African-American students endured at NCSSM." The result of these events was the creation of the MPCs.

Other problems also existed at the school at the time. Marcela Musgrove, class of '92, recalled a number of student muggings. "Several muggings happened in Walltown when people were walking to the mall and they were held at gunpoint or threatened with a knife. . . . Shortly after all this they started having the van runs to Ninth Street and the mall and warning us about security since we had not been previously informed about the muggings [from] previous years."

Student life at Science and Math has changed drastically throughout the years, despite the fact that the buildings and much of the staff has stayed the same. With plans to complete the ETC and remodel Wyche, it seems that more changes will be here soon. It remains to be seen what student life will be like in years to come.

## Something strange is in the neighborhood

CAROLINE HON

Formerly a hospital, the buildings of the NCSSM campus are certainly familiar with death, and possibly the ghosts of the dead. Many places at NCSSM are rumored to be haunted.

"I have a photo from 1930 of the lobby of Watts Hall, which clearly shows the ghost image of a nurse..." says Joe Liles, an NCSSM art teacher who has an interest in the history of Watts Hospital. He also adds that the photo may have been exposed too long, making the nurse appear ghost-like.

The art studio was the old surgery area. More deaths occurred in the art classrooms than in any other place on campus. The art studio is also the site where a Watts Hospital employee, the only one to be killed in the hospital, met his untimely death. Mr. Hester, one of the most popular Watts Hospital employees, was running tests on an autoclave, a sterilizing machine that implements intense heat and pressure, when it exploded, killing him and blowing out most of the windows in the present art studio.

An even more disconcerting story that Liles tells occurred in the early days of NCSSM. The rooms on the north end of the Biology floor were the delivery rooms in Watts Hospital. In the washroom, a room next to the delivery rooms, nurses cleaned the newborn babies before returning them to their mothers. Because the washroom was already equipped with sinks and long counters, Liles decided to set up NCSSM's first darkroom there. However, blood was spattered across the cabinets above the sinks. Noting the unattractiveness of the blood stains, Liles painted over the blood, attempting to cover it. Yet, when the paint dried, the blood stains came back, showing through the paint. Liles painted the cabinets with a second coat. Again, the blood stains came through. Liles added many more coats of paint, but the blood kept returning. He never completely succeeded in covering it.

The first time students used the darkroom, they heard the cries of a baby while loading film. Faced with the option of turning on the lights and exposing their film or

ignoring the cries and finishing loading their film, the students listened to the baby cry. When they finally turned on the lights, the crying stopped. Liles says he believes the crying came from "the spirit of a baby that was taken into the washroom that didn't make it out alive."

Liles says that he has never experienced encounters with ghosts at our school, but he has had unexplainable experiences that, when combined with knowledge of Watts Hospital and his colorful imagination, seem like experiences with the supernatural.

Liles is not the only person who has had inexplicable experiences on NCSSM's campus. Bobby Jackson, an NCSSM security guard of 11 years, has many eerie stories to tell.

One stormy night, Jackson was in his car, making his rounds on campus. About 2:20 am, he spotted "two small white things moving near Hill House," a pair of shoes. Thinking that he had found one of the students trying to sneak out, he pulled over next to the person and saw a woman with

a beige or pink sweater, holding her collar, looking down. He asked her if she was a student and she replied, "No, I'm not," then walked off. Jackson continued to follow her in his car. However, when he followed her around the corner of the PEC, he could not find her. He looked everywhere for the mysterious lady, but she had disappeared.

Students have also reported strange encounters. Senior Robin Armstrong says that she heard someone in high heels walking up and down the halls in the middle of the night when no one was around.

Senior Sabra Smith tells of an experience she had a weekend night, around 9:00 or 10:00 on first Watts. She was waiting for the elevator when she heard a distinct whistling coming from Watts Lobby, which was dark and locked. In fact, all the offices were empty. She ran up the stairs, screaming.

While the atmosphere and history of the school campus make these ghost stories very believable, many say they are imagined. However, as Jackson says, "It's not everybody's imagination all the time. Everybody can't be wrong."

*"[Mysterious crying] came from the spirit of a baby that was taken into the washroom that didn't come out alive."*

*-Joe Liles*

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

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Michael Wlodek and the  
Communications Department