

## **A journey through the past, a glimpse into the future**

Barbara Noisette Jackson experienced Pearl Harbor and the early years of World War II as a student at William S. Hackett Junior High School. Linda Jackson-Chalmers vividly remembers learning during her seventh-grade math class at Hackett that President Kennedy had been shot.

Mother and daughter returned to their alma mater together for the first time since the 1960s as the City School District of Albany reopened Hackett Middle School with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by more than 300 visitors.



*Visitors check out the refurbished auditorium during the grand opening event at Hackett Middle School.*

“I was just amazed,” said Ms. Jackson-Chalmers ’69 (Philip Schuyler High School), a 1966 Hackett alumna and now the district’s assistant superintendent for human resources and community relations. “What a beautiful job in restoring the historical aspects of the building.”

Three generations of Hackett graduates – from as nearby as the surrounding blocks and from as far away as California – took a journey through their past and a glimpse into the district’s future at the Aug. 27 event.

The 82-year-old school, one of the first junior high schools in America, got a complete update as part of the district’s facilities project for elementary and middle schools.

The restored and renovated building combines many of architect Marcus T. Reynolds’ original design elements – exquisite marble, ornate plasterwork and a stained-glass skylight above the majestic central staircase – with complete upgrades to the mechanical infrastructure and the academic wings on each floor.

The result is a state-of-the-art learning environment that preserves important pieces of Albany’s history while providing an outstanding educational facility for the city’s middle school students.

The completion of the project gives the district two brand new middle schools – Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School opened in 2005 – that will serve as the district’s main schools for students in grades 6-8 beginning with the 2009-10 school year.

North Albany Academy, the former Public School 20 that also was redone through the facilities project, will continue to serve middle school students as the district's only prekindergarten-grade 8 school.

The district now is looking forward to the reopening of another neighborhood fixture this winter – the renovated former Public School 19, now known as New Scotland Elementary School.

New Scotland Elementary will return to its familiar location at 369 New Scotland Ave. in January following the holiday break. It will be the 11<sup>th</sup> school completed through the current facilities project.

Giffen Memorial Elementary School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST) will be completed next summer, and the sweeping redesign of the district's elementary and middle school levels will be complete in September 2010 when Arbor Hill Elementary School returns to its fully updated home.

“As a school district, we have proved that we are contributing to Albany's stature as a historical city by restoring and rebuilding our schools,” Ms. Jackson-Chalmers said. “At the close of the facilities project, we will have reached our goal of new schools in every neighborhood.”