

From the 1954 Crusader:

## **Knights Make Fine Athletic Record**

### **Mr. McMillan Keeps His Promise**

Mr. McMillan promised to get the goalposts from the Blues Stadium and give each student a piece. He secured the goalposts and presented them to the student body at the football assembly.



The following paragraphs are from the book *Paris of the Plains* by John Simonson. In his section on the 1950s, the author includes a description of this 1953 event under the heading “Once Upon a Time in the Castle.” The book is available at the Kansas City Public Library.

“Be a member of the construction gang and not the wrecking crew,” said Harry McMillan, who became principal here in 1940, when it was Southeast High School. It was an admonishment heard every year by the knights and ladies of the castle. And despite the noble motifs, Mr. McMillan’s homily suggested his familiarity with at least the potential for bad behavior.

It was surely on his mind in the fall of 1953 as the big game approached.

The football Knights were a juggernaut that year. It was the era of two-position players, helmets with no face protection and 150-pound linemen. But Southeast excelled at the running game, with six first-team all-leaguers and an all-American tailback.

They were undefeated in the regular season, with five shutouts in eight games and a 40-0 romp over Southwest for the Interscholastic League championship at Blues Stadium. Even before their final game, the Knights were being called one of the best teams in area history. For the mythical city championship, they would play Rockhurst, champs of the Catholic League, on November 12 on Rockhurst's own field.

Prepared for victory and perhaps anxious about what might happen on another school's campus, Mr. McMillan made a pregame promise to his knights and ladies. If they would remain orderly after the game - leaving the goalposts standing - he would buy the goalposts for them.

It was a world of glee clubs and letter sweaters, chaperons and cherry phosphates, white-buck shoes and cuffed blue jeans, chili suppers and Teen Town Dances and victory bonfires.

Outside the castle the night after Southeast beat Rockhurst 48-13, four hundred knights and ladies snake-danced and sang as their champions set torches to a pile of brush, made speeches and Mr. McMillan vowed to keep his promise.

And despite a temporary setback - Rockhurst's goalposts turned out to be iron - he delivered. Wooden goalposts from Blues Stadium arrived at Southeast the next week, where the woodworking class processed them into 1,400 pieces - one for each knight and lady.