



**Anna Harding - Teacher 1972-1993;
Accounting, Typing, Business**

Education and Career

I graduated from East High School in 1961 and from college in 1965. My first teaching position was at Van Horn in 1965. I was there for 8 years. Then I was required to take an involuntary transfer to Southeast. I was very unhappy about this transfer. Van Horn was closer to my home; I lived in the East High School area. Also, it was an all-white school. Southeast had very few white students or teachers. Mr. Herron said he was going to keep me at Southeast, and there was no way to transfer without the principal's approval. It was a difficult time for me, but after a while I grew to like it. I was at Southeast for 21 years.

Southeast Memories

There were challenges being a white female teacher at a black school. One student said he was going to put a match in my gas tank. He said, "White teachers like you need to learn not to give so much homework." I told him to go ahead if he thought he could do it without hurting himself. You just had to stand up to things like that. Anyway, I had a locking gas tank. After that, we became good friends. He even sent me Christmas cards for years.

While I was at Southeast, we had over 2000 students. There was not enough space in the high school building. The building between Southeast Junior and the church at 63rd and Swope Parkway was the "senior annex." Seniors would go over there for most of their classes. One day Lester Dickey (a student) was going to leave early to get to his classes at the

senior annex. I told him, "You are going to leave early over me or through me. You better go sit down." He did, and we got along fine after that.

School spirit changed quite a bit over the years. It actually went down in later years when Southeast changed from a neighborhood school to a health care magnet school. It also changed to a partially white school during that time.

I was the Tower sponsor for 2-3 years. However, my best memories are of the 14 years I was the cheerleader coach. We had cheerleader practice after school and 2-3 days a week during the summer and Sunday afternoons. We went to summer camp at William Jewell College and won the Spirit Stick 13 of the 14 years. I made the cheerleader uniforms. We were the only team that had hand knitted sweater vests. The girls raised money for their uniforms, and my aunt hand knit the sweater vests. We also were the first squad to include boys. I hand picked the boys, but the girls had to try out. The faculty, cheerleader company representatives and former cheerleaders voted on the girls.

Jeanne Finter was a special friend. She taught homemaking. She helped me a lot. In fact, she helped make the first set of cheerleader uniforms.

Jim and Clare Julian both taught math. I think Clare was the first female athletic director in the Kansas City School District.

After Mr. Herron died, Mr. Cooper became principal. I continued to sponsor the cheerleaders for a couple of years, but Mr. Cooper rubbed me the wrong way. He didn't back me, so I quit as cheerleader coach.

After Southeast

Mr. Buckner was the vice-principal at Southeast, and he became the principal at Metro. That is when I transferred to Metro on Truman Road as a counselor. When Metro changed to a vocational school, I transferred to Central as a counselor. I retired from Central in 2002 after 36 ½ years in the school district.