

Press Clippings 2/25/2018

---Courier News--- 2/25/18

Scores drop for U-46 5th grade, high school students

8th graders' results on state science test rise from '16 to '17

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

State science test scores for U46 fifth-grade students and high school biology students dropped between 2016 and 2017 but eighth-grade students showed improvement, new data shows.

The numbers from the Next Generation Science Standards exam were released just one month after the Illinois State Board of Education made public long-delayed scores from 2016, giving school officials the data needed to compare how students did from one year to the next on the new test that was implemented in 2016.

In 2017, 44 percent of U46 fifth-grade students tested at the proficient or higher level, compared to 48 percent in 2016. U46 high school biology students fared even worse, with just 26 percent testing proficient or better compared to 32 percent a year earlier.

The one bright spot was the results of U46 eighth-graders, who tested at 55 percent proficient or better in 2017, up from 53 percent in 2016.

Statewide, tests scores also declined from one year to the next.

About 40 percent of high school biology students met or exceeded proficiency standards, down from 41 percent in 2016. In fifth grade, 54 percent of students statewide were found to be proficient in 2017, compared to 58 percent in 2016. In eighth grade, 59 percent of students were proficient in 2017, down from 61 percent in 2016.

In Illinois, the Next Generation Science Standards exam gives fifth- and eighth-grade students unlimited time to take the test. High school biology students typically complete the exam in about an hour.

U46 spokeswoman Mary Fergus said it is too early to adequately analyze how U46 students performed. She called the data a baseline since there are only two years of tests with which to work.

“I don’t think our team has had time to delve into the nuances in it,” she said. “And it’s so new, we need more time to dig deeper into it and look more closely.”

The district is committed to promoting science in the classroom, Fergus said, citing the STEM Expo held at Bartlett High School and the series of biodiversity webinars offered to students in February.

U46 officials were pleased the state sped up the release of 2017 test results after waiting almost two years for 2016 numbers, she added. The delay was caused by a number of factors, including the state’s budget impasse.

---Courier News--- 2/25/18

'Do you remember how much he loved Elgin?'

Son, others share stories at memorial service about businessman's philanthropy, love of life

BY GLORIA CASAS



Family, friends and community leaders remember Jack Shales, a lifelong Elgin resident known for his philanthropy who died Jan. 26. (Gloria Casas/Courier-News)

Jack Shales' own words filled Judson University's chapel during a memorial service for the native Elgin resident, whose death sparked people to erect "Thanks, Jack" signs throughout the community in gratitude for his legacy of giving.

"It's been a good run," Shales said in a taped interview he and his wife, Marlene, did for Gail Borden Public Library's oral history project in 2010. "It's been a good life."

The interview, along with family photos, was part of the service Judson University hosted Saturday for the businessman and philanthropist, who died Jan. 26.

The service included performances by the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, George Holmes and Murna Hansemann.

Shales' four children shared memories of their father, and Mike Shales asked the audience what they remembered about Jack Shales.

"Do you remember the twinkle in his eyes as he teased you? Do you remember his hyena laugh?" Mike Shales said. "Do you remember how much he loved Elgin?"

He said the one time his father lost his temper was when a Realtor stopped by the office and started badmouthing the city of Elgin and **School District U46**.

His dad quickly pushed the real estate agent out the door, Mike Shales said.

He also said his father loved bringing his family together for holidays.

The family had a tradition for more than 50 years in which family members would gather for brunch at the Walnut Room in the former Marshall Field's on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, his son said.

There would be some complaints about having to get up early on a Saturday, but everyone would go, he said.



Jack Shales, an Elgin businessman and philanthropist, was active in numerous civic organizations for many years. (Chicago Tribune 2015)

“Do you remember how much Jack loved Marlene?” Mike Shales said. “How she was his constant companion, his moral compass, his sounding board, his soul mate in every sense of the word?”

The high school sweethearts were married for 62 years.

Jack Shales said in the video that “we never needed an argument because she always got her way.”

Marlene Shales said she didn’t like getting into arguments.

Her best memory, she said, was “in high school, falling in love with the cutest boy. It was you.”

Jack and Marlene Shales pledged to give 10 percent of their income to help others in the early 1960s. While it was a hardship at times, they received many blessings, Jack Shales said in the video.

He was active in numerous civic organizations, including the United Way of Elgin for more than 50 years.

Community members recognized his philanthropy after his death by placing signs thanking him throughout the city.

The Shales’ brother-in-law, Randy Gauger, said Jack Shales followed direction from God to do what is good, be merciful and walk humbly with him.

“Jack did what was good and right in helping others. He loved being merciful. He loved walking humbly with God,” said Gauger, who led prayers during the service. “Some people preach sermons, but there are some people whose life is a sermon. Jack was a living sermon. He challenged me, and my guess would be he challenged every (everyone) here with his love, his care for others and his exemplary generosity. I think Jack had the gift of giving. It is a rare gift.”

---Daily Herald--- 2/25/18

Shales recalled with tears and laughter

BY DAVE GATHMAN

Philanthropist and omnipresent fundraiser Jack Shales of Elgin was remembered this week as "a guy who would reach into his pocket to be the change he wanted," a Marine who learned never to retreat, a model of Christian life -- and perhaps the most famous and widely beloved resident of the city.

Shales, co-owner of Shales McNutt Construction, died Jan. 26 at the age of 87. He was remembered Thursday in a memorial service attended by 200 family members and friends at Cornerstone United Methodist Church in Plato Center, and again on Saturday morning in a public service attended by 450 people at Judson University.

"My dad often quoted a Winston Churchill saying that 'we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give,'" his son Mike said.

Some of the biggest crowd reaction was generated by words from Jack Shales himself. The services included a 20-minute video that paired family photos with part of an hourlong "StoryCorps" oral history talk that Shales and his wife, Marlene, recorded in 2010 at Gail Borden Public Library.

Jack recalled how after returning from the Korean War he married his Elgin High School sweetheart and went to work for Melvin "Pete" Rakow at Illinois Hydraulic Construction Co.

One day Rakow invited him to organize a United Way pledge campaign among that company's employees. Besides donating major portions of their own income, Jack and Marlene ended up working on United Way campaigns for 63 more years. They also helped raise millions for Elgin nonprofits including not only Gail Borden, Cornerstone and Judson but also the Community Crisis Center, the YMCA and its Camp Edwards, the YWCA, the Elgin Symphony, Jayne Shover Easter Seals Center, the Boys and Girls Club, and others.

"In 1962, Marlene and I sat down and decided we were going to give back financially. And it never hurt us," Jack Shales said. But speaking frankly, he also told how he was a lousy high school student, split with his first business partner and failed to recognize that his sister was about to kill herself.

Eulogies were delivered by his four children -- son John speaking from a Christian perspective, Mike with comical overtones based on the theme "do you remember ... ," daughter Kris Durham from a family viewpoint and daughter Heidi Baudry through tears.

Quoting Jesus' commandment to "love your neighbor as you love yourself," John said everyone should look at how they spend their money, time and talents, and "see if someone could convict you of loving others based on that evidence."

"The only time he ever lost his temper was when a Realtor stopped by the office and started bad-mouthing the city of Elgin and **School District U-46**," Mike Shales said. "(Jack) said that 'the only thing stupid and incompetent around here is you' and pushed that Realtor out the door."

Durham recalled how her father would go to meetings almost every night but first would always eat dinner with the family precisely at 6 p.m. She recalled her parents dressing as clowns for the ice cream socials at Washington Elementary School, which she "thought was cool when I was little" but "as I got older was very embarrassing."

"He always had this bigger-than-life persona that I thought could never be extinguished," Durham said.

"He devoted himself to lifting others up with his money and his laughter and his actions," said Baudry.

At the Thursday service, Cornerstone Pastor Jim Bell challenged anyone to remember a time when Shales called himself "a self-made man," even though he grew up in a poor working-class family on Elgin's Slop Hill and ended up heading one of the biggest construction firms in Kane County.

"Jack always gave God the credit," Bell said. "It is our shame as a community that there aren't more of us who are like Jack Shales."

Delivering the sermon Saturday was Baptist pastor Randy Gauger, who is married to Marlene Shales' sister and served with Jack on the Judson University board.

"There are some people who speak sermons. There are others whose life is a sermon," Gauger said. "Those of us who follow Christ never say goodbye for the last time."

During the Thursday service Jack's grandson John Franklin Shales, who also goes by the nickname "Jack," sang a folk song he had written about Jack and Marlene's life. Titled "Forward," the song ends with:

"Then the winter came and he grew weary in his bed but

As long as people think of you, you're never really dead.

Look to the light you rise toward,

Lift up your arms and go forward."

Press Clippings 2/24/2018

---Daily Herald--- 2/24/18

River Forest District 90 finds 'right fit,' names new special education director

BY STEVE SCHERING

River Forest School District 90 announced the appointment of Denise Matthews as its new director of special education, a hire approved by the school board Feb. 19.

Matthews will begin her new role on July 1 and will fill a position that had been held by long-time River Forest administrator Karen Boozell, who will retire after the current school year.

Matthews currently serves as the assistant director of specialized student services for compliance for **District U-46 in Elgin**. She previously served as an assistant principal at both Westmont High School and Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School in Oak Park.

"I am very excited about joining District 90 and the opportunity to work with such a well-respected school district," Matthews said. "There is such a strong fit between District 90 and my personal philosophy about student learning and achievement, professional development and collaborative professional relationships. I look forward to working together with faculty and parents to meet our students' needs."

The appointment comes after an extensive search that included groups of faculty, staff, administrators, parents and school board members.

"After conducting an elaborate search for this position, I believe that Denise Matthews has the appropriate experience and approachable temperament that is the right fit for the district and our students, staff and families," Superintendent Ed Condon said. "Her extensive experiences with student services and school administration, along with her commitment to professional growth for faculty, and facilitating a collaborative work environment, made her stand out among other candidates."

Following school board approval, Matthews received a two-year contract with District 90 at an annual salary of \$127,816.

Matthews is also a two-time winner of the special education teacher of the year award from the Supported Education Association of Oak Park-River Forest.

Matthews holds two master's degrees from DePaul University, one in educational leadership and administration and the other in language, literacy and specialized instruction. She received a third bachelor's degree from the University of Belize.

SPORTS

---Daily Herald--- 2/24/18

Boston's bucket a moment South Elgin won't forget

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK

The final score of Metea Valley's 83-73 win at South Elgin is not what fans will remember about Friday's nonconference boys basketball game.

Those in the gym will remember the human moment that unfolded in the final 20 seconds after autistic South Elgin manager Geoffrey Boston entered the Senior Night lineup.

Metea Valley (15-11) led South Elgin (16-12) by 10 points when Storm coach Brett Johnson looked to his bench and pointed to Boston, the team's loyal manager who plays for District U-46's Blue Stars basketball team.

Cheers went up from the South Elgin student section as soon as Boston doffed his warmup. They had been chanting his name for minutes.

"He's really cool," South Elgin cheerleader Claire Walters said. "We don't even think of him like that (autistic). He's just one of us. We all hang out with him. And that's all he wants to do is play. He literally is here when all the boys are practicing so seeing him play was so awesome."

Boston's teammates directed him to stand near the South Elgin basket as they inbounded at the other end. Point guard Kyle Sy crossed midcourt and sent a pass to Boston, who was unguarded in the post.

Metea Valley coach Matt Walpole is a former special education teacher who is now that school's dean of students. Johnson spoke with him before the game and mentioned Boston might enter under the right circumstance.

It was the right circumstance with 20 seconds left so the Mustangs gave Boston plenty of room to operate. The senior caught the pass, turned to the basket and banked home the only shot of his varsity career with 12 seconds left, thereby triggering the loudest ovation of the night from the supportive home crowd.

The game was stopped as Boston's teammates enveloped him and began jumping around in celebration. The score didn't matter in that moment. Geoffrey Boston did.

"To be out there on the court is just an honor," Boston said. "Being able to score is an even greater honor for me. Everyone on this team, they know how much I love the sport of basketball. So, to get out there is just a great feeling."

It was a basket Metea Valley didn't mind giving up.

"To be able to shine the light on him for a little bit ... I mean, he's going to remember that moment for the rest of his life," Walpole said. "It was touching. It was touching to my kids. They were pleased to be a part of something like that."

As for the game itself, the Mustangs jumped to a 23-10 lead and generally maintained a double-digit cushion throughout. Metea received balanced contributions from junior guard Ethan Helwig (23 points), senior guard Cory Adams (21 points), Brad Hartje (17 points) and Veonte Ballard (16 points).

No question, the biggest 2 points of the night were scored by Boston, who reflected on the moment.

"Once I got to middle school my life completely took a detour and turned around," he said. "I started work with the basketball team. Then once I got into high school I got better and better and started making more relationships with people. They started realizing maybe he has autism but it doesn't matter. He's still a person. He's still a student. We're not going to treat him any less. He's just one of us. Maybe he's different. We've got to treat him like he's a student.

"Now, I'm the highest person at this high school."