

## Wilson



Wilson, ca. 1974 SPSA 136-124

The Shoreline School District No. 412 sponsored an essay contest in fall 1947 to name two new junior high schools soon to be constructed. Students in grades 6-8 were given a list of American Nobel Prize winners. The winning entry for the school to be constructed north of Green Lake was Woodrow Wilson Junior High School, honoring Thomas Woodrow Wilson, the 28th president of the United States. Darlene Taylor, a pupil at Lake City School, submitted the winning entry. The other school named in this contest was Jane Addams Junior High School.

While Wilson was originally planned to be a junior high school, in its first year it operated as an intermediate school, with 750 students in grades 5-7.

The Shoreline district had bond money earmarked to complete the school, but did not have the opportunity to take action. In 1954, a large territory south of 145th Street and largely north of 85th Street was annexed into the City of Seattle and the school became part of the Seattle School District. The grade configuration was changed to grades 7-9.

The Seattle School District completed the school with two additions, which opened in fall 1957 (gymnasiums plus metal, wood, and craft shops) and spring 1959 (13 classrooms in a music and science building, plus lunchroom). Situated on nearly 17 acres, Wilson was one of the largest school sites in the district. The school was comprised of various buildings that were numbered to help navigate the sprawling complex. The design of the school was based on “California” model school plans developed for the Shoreline School District by Mallis and DeHart. Seattle School District never utilized a “California” model school design, but through annexation,

## Details:

Name: **Woodrow Wilson  
Junior High School**

Location: 1330 N 90th Street

Building: 27-room brick

Architect: Mallis & DeHart

Site: 16.7 acres

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- 1953: Opened in September by Shoreline School District
  - 1954: Annexed into Seattle School District on July 1
  - 1957: Addition (Mallis & DeHart)
  - 1959: Addition (Mallis & DeHart)
  - 1971: Became Woodrow Wilson Middle School on September 1
  - 1978: Closed as middle school in June; reopened as Wilson-Pacific School in September
  - 1989: Closed as school for students with disabilities in June; became administrative annex; opened as alternative school site in September
  - 1989: Indian Heritage School relocated to Wilson-Pacific School
  - 2000: American Indian Heritage Middle College relocated to North Seattle Community College
  - 2001: Home School Resource Center relocated from Crown Hill
  - 2002: Site developed for athletic fields
  - 2004: American Indian Heritage Middle College returned to Wilson-Pacific School
  - 2009: Home School Resource Center changed name to Cascade Parent Partnership
  - 2013: American Indian Heritage Middle College closed; Middle College program opened at North Seattle Community College.
  - 2014: Designated as a City of Seattle landmark; Seattle School District won an appeal – site not subjected to landmark controls
  - 2014: Cascade Parent Partnership relocated to North Queen Anne School

two other schools designed in this style were added to the district's portfolio (see Pinehurst and Viewlands). Enrollment peaked at 1,347 in 1959-60.

The Wilson property is distinctive because of the water features in the area that play such a significant role in the neighborhood. On the south end of the property, on N 90th Street, there is a section of privately owned land that breaks up the school property and is home to Pillings Pond, a privately owned urban waterfowl reserve and breeding ground. The pond was created in 1924 by Charles A. Pilling, who dug out a pond to care for injured Mallard ducks. The pond has since expanded to 100 feet by 50 feet. It is fed fresh water by diverting one of the other well-known water features in the area, Licton Springs (see Eagle Staff). Licton Springs, though mostly diverted, culverted, channelized, or underground, is still used as a harvesting and recreation destination. In October 2019, the spring and the park that surrounds it were designated a city landmark, the first Native cultural site to be so designated.

In fall 1971, Wilson became a middle school and was included in the district's middle school desegregation plan implemented that year. To advance the goal to desegregate schools, the plan involved reassigning middle school students between the north end and the central area of the city. In 1972, slightly over 100 African American students were bused to Wilson, while white students from Wilson were taken to Meany/Madrona Middle School.

Enrollment declined district-wide in the 1970s. Of the 996 students enrolled at Wilson in 1974, 146 students had disabilities. Generally, these students attended separate classes and were assigned to general education classes on an individual basis.

When Wilson closed at the end of the 1977-78 school year, enrollment was down to 556 students. Students were reassigned to Thomson, Hamilton, and, for those from the Oak Lake School area, Sharples. At that time, work began to renovate Wilson to house the Pacific School program for students with disabilities, temporarily housed at Washington. What became known as the Wilson-Pacific program maintained its prevocational emphasis while serving about 200 students with disabilities, most middle school or high school age. The program closed in June 1989, and students transferred to other schools.

In 1988, when considering the future of Wilson-Pacific, Superintendent Kendrick had recommended consolidating all alternative programs there. For the next 25 years, the site served various functions and hosted various programs. An Administrative Center was established at Wilson-Pacific in 1989. In September 1996, the

COHO elementary option school program came to Wilson from Broadview-Thomson, only to leave for Monroe after June 1999. In December 1999, the Seattle Public School Archives moved to the building from Boren until its new home at a new district administrative center was completed in 2001. At different times, Wilson-Pacific was also home to an enrollment service center, Skills Center classes, a Head Start program, Huchoosedah Native American Resource Center, and a driver's education program.

Indian Heritage School moved five times before coming to Wilson-Pacific in 1989, when the name of the program changed to American Indian Heritage School. It began in 1974 as a unique program with an emphasis on the arts, customs, and experiences of Native American cultures, while meeting all state and district academic requirements. Approximately 75 percent of students were Native American or Native Alaskan. Because of its small size and focus on Native American cultures, "students feel empowered at this school as a majority rather than a minority," according to the late principal Robert Eaglestaff. Students received more individualized attention and were less likely to drop out of school.

In 1990, American Indian Heritage School changed its name to Indian Heritage School, but six years later, the name reverted back to American Indian Heritage School. In 1994, the school celebrated its 20th year with 100 percent of graduates from the previous two years enrolled in colleges. An annual pow-wow that began in 1988 attracted visitors from throughout the area. In 2000, the American Indian Heritage School relocated to North Seattle Community College and was renamed American Indian Heritage Middle College for 9th to 12th grade students. In 2004, the program returned to Wilson-Pacific, where it remained until 2013, when the program effectively closed. Middle College High School relocated to North Seattle Community College that year, but the program no longer emphasized Native American cultures.

In 2001, the Home School Resource Center moved to Wilson-Pacific from Crown Hill. The program was renamed Cascade Parent Partnership in 2009, before it was relocated in 2014 to its current home at North Queen Anne School.

In 1999, the BTA I Levy was passed, which focused on the development and improvement of athletic fields at five locations, including the playfield on the east side of the Wilson-Pacific site. In 2002, a natural turf multipurpose field was constructed that could be used as either two soccer fields or a baseball/softball field. A walking track was constructed around the edge. The field served as the practice field and the 'home' field for junior varsity games for the secondary schools that were temporarily housed at Lincoln: Roosevelt (2004-06), Garfield (2006-08), and Hamilton (2008-10). The field was also used by the community as part of the

### **Details, continued:**

- 2015: Wilson-Pacific School demolished; Construction began on new schools
- 2017: Cascadia Elementary School and Robert Eagle Staff Middle School opened on former Wilson-Pacific site (Mahlum Architects; BEX IV)



Wilson, 1955 SPSA 136-125

joint-use agreement between the district and the Seattle Parks Department. In 2015, the field was updated as a lighted synthetic multi-purpose field as part of a larger construction project that impacted the site.

From 2001-2013, local artist and Apache and Haida tribal member Andrew Morrison created a series of onsite murals depicting Native American luminaries, including Chief Seattle, Chief Joseph, Geronimo, and Sitting Bull. Each mural is 25 feet high and 20 feet wide.

In 2013, the BEX IV Capital Levy was passed by voters. Included were plans to transform the Wilson-Pacific School site through the construction of two new replacement schools expanding student capacity.

However, in July 2014, the Seattle Landmarks Board designated Wilson-Pacific School a landmark site because the school was significantly associated with an important person and was significantly associated with the cultural heritage of the community. One of the reasons the Wilson-Pacific school site is significant to Seattle's Native community is because it is the site of a spring, called Licton (Liq'tid), historically and culturally significant to the Duwamish people. The Seattle School District filed a motion in King County Superior Court to review the designation, and ultimately, an agreement was reached to move forward with the levy's original plans while honoring the cultural heritage of the site. Though the site is landmarked, there are no landmark controls imposed on the site.

Following preservation efforts led by the artist Andrew Morrison and a community petition, the murals were protected and removed. Johnpaul Jones (American Indian, Cherokee/Choctaw) of Jones & Jones Architects and lead designer for the National Museum of the American Indian of the Smithsonian Institution, was the project designer for the relocation of the murals from the Wilson-Pacific school, demolished in 2015, to Cascadia and Eagle Staff, the two new schools that opened on the site in 2017 (see Eagle Staff and Cascadia).