



MOUNTAIN VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By Carole Grosch

Beginning the journey up the mountain

Mountain View Elementary's beginnings can actually be traced 2.7 miles southeast from its permanent home at Maple and Alluvial avenues to Clovis Unified's Pinedale Elementary School. During the 1989-90 school year, this temporary location was home to more than 650 Mountain View students while they waited on the completion of their new school.

The Fresno architectural firm of Temple Andersen Moore designed the buildings and construction was completed in September 1990 in time for the 1990-91 school year. Enrollment had grown the summer leading up to that school year, and when the new school facility officially began operation, 843 students filled its classrooms.

Mountain View opened the same year as Fancher Creek Elementary, located about 18 miles to the southeast. "This was part of a series of schools to be built in response to increasing enrollment at both ends of the district," said Mountain View's first principal, Dave Derby.

Enrollment for Mountain View was formed by combining students from Cole, Lincoln and Fort Washington elementary schools. "There was a little bit of a struggle bringing those parents on board at the very beginning," said Derby. "But once the decision was made final, I received a great deal of support from even those who did not want to move. They quickly became a part of something very exciting in opening a new school."

Prior to the official opening, the school's mascot, Golden Bears, was chosen by popular vote of the school community. A contest was held to name the mascot; "Rocky" was the winning name. School colors of royal blue, Kelly green, gold and white were also chosen by vote.

Students, parents and teachers submitted suggestions for the school name, including Golden View, but according to Derby, that name was out of the running quickly as many members of the school community noted that it conjured up images of a rest home. "Mountain View

was eventually chosen as our recommendation to give the CUSD Governing Board after a great deal of input from parents and students alike," said Derby. "We were captured by the view of the mountains from the location on Maple and Alluvial and so the name was adopted. At that time there was not much else between us, the foothills, and the Sierra Nevada Mountains."

The name of Mountain View was adopted "with a challenge that I later gave to the students," said Derby. "That challenge was that when our students left Mountain View, how would they ensure that we would actually be able to see the mountains (from the school campus) twenty years from then? The challenge was perhaps the first 'green' message of their lives. It was a dream and vision of the future."

ESTABLISHED: 1989

GRADES: K-6

MASCOT: Golden Bears

COLORS: Blue, green,
gold and white

MOTTO: "Golden Bears
Lead with Heart, Spirit
and Pride"

LOCATION: 2002 E.
Alluvial, Fresno

ACREAGE: 15

Derby's vision was to create a place for children where they could be the best they could be, where they could be loved, cared

for and challenged. This was to be achieved by staff, parents and students, coming and working together as a community for teaching and learning. A strong emphasis was put on college as a future goal.

A casual get-acquainted meeting, sponsored by the Parent Teacher Club (PTC), was held at Woodward Park in the summer of 1989. Staff and PTC introductions were made, and Derby presented the school theme, "Begin the Journey up the Mountain," highlighting his goals and vision for the school community.

Kid Country

With the completion of the new school buildings, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in September 1990 for the grand opening. It was important that students feel Mountain View was a place that was made and built especially for them — Kid Country, as it was to be known. Students were to "climb their own mountain, overcome their own obstacles...and really understand the joy of accomplishment, of challenge, and of excellence." They were excited to have their own "home."

The finished campus had a separate kindergarten building, a multipurpose room and two special education rooms. There were also 20 self-contained classrooms arranged in three groups with each group containing two grade levels. The faculty workroom and library were located in the administration building.

A computer laboratory was an exciting feature of the new school, as it was the first of its kind in the school district. It was called WICAT, named after the company that provided the program, and was used as a diagnostic tool to assess students' levels in math and reading. It

operated like a fancy workbook: Once assessed, students were placed into an individualized instruction program and then used spreadsheets at their ability level.

Participation in sports was encouraged. There were courts for basketball, tennis and volleyball, as well as a baseball diamonds and a football/soccer field. After a slow beginning during the first year, Mountain View coaches and student athletes became very competitive. By year three, the Golden Bears began capturing first place rankings in area and district events including volleyball, cross-country, baseball and football. Mountain View would witness the beginning career of David Carr, then a sixth grade student, who went on to star as quarterback of the Fresno State Bulldogs and is now a professional football player with the National Football League.

The official ribbon cutting and cornerstone laying ceremony with members of the state-wide Masonic Lodge were held the morning of November 30, 1990. A time capsule, containing school memorabilia, was placed in a cavity behind the school's dedication plaque, and the buildings "dedicated to the young people who are our future." Mountain View's first cheerleaders participated in the ceremony by performing and shoveling dirt for pictures.

Principals

After Derby, only three others have held the role of principal at Mountain View: Kristie Wiens, Ricci Ulrich and the school's current principal, Monica Everson.

Recognized Excellence

Mountain View Elementary has received:

- >> National Blue Ribbon School Award (1994, 2001)
- >> State Distinguished School Award (1993, 1997, 2006)
- >> California Blue Ribbon Nominee (1994)
- >> California Business for Education Excellence Foundation's Star Schools Award (2009)
- >> CSU Fresno's Bonner Center Character for Education's Virtues and Character Education Award (2000)