

## Oral History

The following interview was conducted on behalf of the oral history program of Century High School. The interviewee is Mrs. Mabry. The interviewer is Brittney Richards. The interview took place at 12:05, May 21, 2002.

BRITTNEY: Mrs. Mabry, I was told you were on the planning team for Century High School.

MABRY: Yes, that's true.

BRITTNEY: what was your first involvement with CHS.

MABRY: A personal interview with Phil Barnekoff when I applied.

BRITTNEY: what made you want to apply to Century High School?

MABRY: Because it was going to be a brand new school with lots of innovative, creative, ideas to make a ultimate P.E. department and program.

BRITTNEY: how did you become a part of the planning team?

MABRY: I made an application and submitted it to the school district.

BRITTNEY: So Mr. Barnekoff interviewed you, what kind of questions did he ask you?

MABRY: what kind of program I could in vision if I had a choice to create one.

BRITTNEY: so you came to Century High School to make a P.E department, to create the best P.E. department in the district?

MABRY: and to make a great opportunity for students.

BRITTNEY: What other schools have you been involved with?

MABRY: Well I started out teaching adaptive P.E at Thomas and Poyner. And later moved to teaching adaptive and regular P.E at Poyner full time and then I moved to the district office and did the adaptive P.E program for grades K-6 and then I coached volleyball at Glencoe High School and then I applied to come here.

BRITTNEY: How would you compare your experience teaching at other school to Century?

MABRY: Well I think Century had a real innovative staff, I think that the teachers here are real capable and creative and look for ways to deliver education to students in a more creative, positive and energetic way.

BRITTNEY: how did the planning team make the decisions?

MABRY: It was a democratic process, I don't really remember much about it other than we would group and we would have great discussions and then we would make a decision.

BRITTNEY: What role did the principle play?

MABRY: well was kind of the organizer, he would take all of our ideas and get them organized and do research and what not so for the next meeting we would have what we needed to make the next step whatever that was. So he was kind of like a ...organizer, coach, cheerleader, team player as well. He was one of us but yet he did all the extra roles.

BRITTNEY: what were some of the biggest challenges you faced on the Planning Team?

MABRY: There was a lot of power in that room, I mean there's just really innovative, creative, strong, positive people, I mean there is just a ton of energy in the room.

BRITTNEY: So what was the challenge that you faced?

MABRY: the challenge was I mean so much energy in the room how did you focus that and whose you know I mean everybody had a little bit of a twist to what they were thinking and how do you accept all of those ideas and all of that energy and focus it and channel it to where it was real productive and that you moved forward.

BRITTNEY: How did you resolve these problems, how did you move forward?

MABRY: well I think we got through the biggest phase that we needed to do as a group first and then we started to break down into smaller groups and we got to channel narrow enough to where we kind of branched out, in other words we finally divvied up some jobs that we had to do and moved them in smaller groups.

BRITTNEY: where the groups sectioned by department like there was a P.E. group and a social studies group of more than one...

MABRY: sometimes we did and sometimes, well there was no P.E. group at that time. It really wasn't until later that we got the P.E. staff. I was the only P.E. person. There was one social studies, one English so there wasn't like there were departments when we started the planning team, but when we added our staff, then we did some more work in departments as to how the P.E. department would work together but we were kind of blended and all together. There was only like 13 or 14, how many were all together?

BRITTNEY: 13

MABRY: yes.

BRITTNEY: what were some of the greatest satisfactions you had as a member of the team?

MABRY: Just being able to work with the most creative people I have ever worked with and everybody wanted what was best for kids and everyone was on the top of their game plan. There were people who were real thoughtful and real up on their curricular areas and were energetic and enthusiastic. It was just a real joy to work with them and see them everyday and talk about how we were going to do this or that. Everyone had a can-do attitude. Everything was possible.

BRITTNEY: where there ever a time you thought that things might not be possible that you or the school would not be everything you wanted it to be because there was so many different points of view?

MABRY: No, because everybody in the group was willing to do what it took to get where we needed to go for the kids.

BRITTNEY: how did you hire staff?

MABRY: well I looked at people in our district that I knew or had looked at or thought about after we got all the applications and interviewed them I looked at people that had a lot of the same skills that we had as the group of planning team members. People that were good team players, that were cooperative, that were creative, that were willing to try new things, to stretch, you know to learn new things.

BRITTNEY: did you get a lot of applications?

MABRY: we got a lot of applications yes.

BRITTNEY: what was your initial vision of CHS?

MABRY: I think my initial vision was what came to be I just think that this school is so open and diverse and the high technology that we utilized in our educational process here, the cooperative in the staff as far as people working together in different departments, different areas of the school. I see that today.

BRITTNEY: how much of that vision has been realized? Is there any parts of the vision that did not come true for you?

MABRY: well no I can't think of one the only thing I didn't know was that we would basically out grow our school in two years. That we would be over capacity in two years so I didn't foresee that of happening. The space issue here has been a problem since the second year, but I could never foresee that so I can't say it interfered with my vision. But when Liberty opens in the fall of 2003 then the space issue won't be an issue.

BRITTNEY: so there weren't very many barriers in the way of your vision, you saw it and you got there.

MABRY: Yes

BRITTNEY: Based on your experiences on the planning team, what is some advise you would give the Liberty planning team?

MABRY: to pick people for their planning team that are very positive, that work well with other people, that are...that can stretch, that can look and things and then do them in innovative ways, that they haven't done in the past, that are willing to change with the current educational currents and the financial restrictions that we are going to have to face.

BRITTNEY: what are some of the most significant changes you've seen at Century since you've been here?

MABRY: Just population, the explosion of being overcrowded and the lack of space.

BRITTNEY: how would you describe the culture of CHS? You said it had a lot of diversity and a great staff. How would you describe it?

MABRY: I think the culture of Century High School is awesome because it is diverse. I love it when I look at my classes and they are all laughing and playing hard and working together. There are kids from all over the world in those classes and we are making it work.

BRITTNEY: when you had the vision of Century, was one of your major points to be diverse.

MABRY: yes

BRITTNEY: you having an office here away from the other teacher's offices, do you think this is better or would you rather have you office be in an office where there are social studies teachers and math teachers all together?

MABRY: well I think that would be wonderful for me personally. I think that would be great having a chance to network with other staff and to keep up with what is going on and bounce things off of them for ideas and what not. But that would really be a heart ship for students because when I am here then any student that has any lock problems, issues or things they need done or they need to call on the phone or whatever the issues are I can deal with them when I am here. If I were not here there would be no supervision, no one to address those things that kids need.

BRITTNEY: when you became a part of the planning team, how did it make you feel knowing that you where going to be a part of making a new school?

MABRY: It was a great feeling but it also created a great amount of responsibility.

BRITTNEY: Where you surprised when you got the call back to have an interview with Mr. Barnekoff.

MABRY: Delighted was probably more the way I would phrase it, delighted. I don't know if I was surprised, but I was delighted.

BRITTNEY: what did you think of Mr. Barnekoff being a principle? You saw him as a planning team leader but could you really see him as a principle for Century High School?

MABRY: He always had a presence in the room as a principle.

BRITTNEY: where you surprised when he left?

MABRY: I think so but he had to leave due to health reasons but I think he would have stayed and been the principle for many more years if that not happen.

BRITTNEY: Well thank you very much for this interview, it will be recorded for history and I am glad I got to interview you and I hope you enjoyed being apart of the planning team for Century.