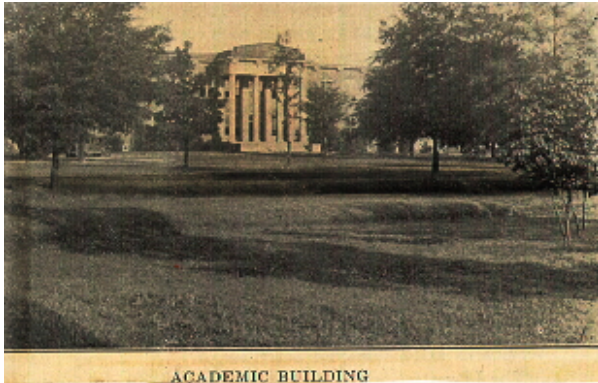


# The History of John McEachern High School

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## 1908-1969 Academic Building

John Newton McEachern, co-founder of the Life of Georgia Insurance Company, displayed an early interest in the education of young people. Mr. McEachern's financial support and his donation of 240 acres of land enabled the establishment of a new school in the Macland community.

His endeavors inspired further donations for the school from civic-minded citizens. From these efforts an ambitious building project began. As a

result of the work and dedication of Mr. McEachern and the community, the Seventh District Agricultural and Mechanical School opened in February 1908.

Constructed in 1908, the first structure was a large two-story academic building with large white columns, a building that remained in use until it was razed in 1969.



## 1912 - 1942 Girls' Dormitory for the A & M School

In 1909, the current Russell Hall was built to be used as a boys' dormitory. It was rebuilt in 1912 after a fire.

The girls' dormitory was completed in 1912 on the site of the present John McEachern Hall. Next door to the girls' dormitory, a dining hall and the home for the principal were constructed.

The current principal's home was also constructed during the early years of the A & M School. The top floor was used as a senior hall, and the bottom floor

contained the shop. The students paid tuition and lived on campus.

Aside from academics, part of the curriculum included farming. For their meals, students grew vegetables that were cooked by the female students. Other farming activities included raising livestock; students also grew cotton.

In addition, students made the bricks for several buildings. Students could also participate in a variety of co-curricular activities including clubs and sports. The diverse education received at the A & M School prepared the students to be productive and responsible citizens.

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which opened in October 1933.

### **? - 1968 Cabin**

With the establishment of the University System of Georgia in 1933, the state program of Congressional District A & M Schools was abandoned, and all schools were closed. The Macland community insisted that the three large two-story buildings continue to be used for education.

Five small Cobb County public schools (Corner, Macland, Due West, Talley's, and Mt. Zion) were incorporated into the Macland Consolidated School,

Once again, the McEachern family contributed very generously toward the education of young people in the community. Their money was used for scholarships, textbooks, library books, and other school supplies. It seems natural that shortly thereafter the community, through the local Board of Trustees, petitioned the Cobb County Board of Education to change the name of the school to the John McEachern Schools.



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### **1939 - 1979 Gymnasium/Auditorium Building**

After this petition was approved in 1938, the school included students from first through eleventh grades. During this time, students graduated after the eleventh grade.

The McEachern family's involvement continued through the 1940's. Not only did John N. McEachern, Jr., help match subscriptions made by citizens of the community when a fire destroyed the old A & M girls' dormitory in 1942, but also his mother, Lula Dobbs McEachern, and his sister, Christine McEachern Smith, made donations.

After Mrs. McEachern's death in 1948, the John McEachern Endowment Fund was established with eighty percent of Mrs. McEachern's stock in the Life of Georgia Insurance Company. At this time, the John McEachern Trust Fund Board was organized to administer this fund.

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### **1948 - 2007 John McEachern Hall**

The school experienced its next expansion project in 1948 with the construction and opening of the elementary school building now known as John McEachern Hall. During this time, the old shop building was renovated into a spacious home for the principal.

In 1957, a new gymnasium was built. A new wood shop and band room opened in 1962; after an addition to this building in 1963, it became the junior high school in what is presently Macland Hall.

The boys' dormitory from the A & M years was renovated in 1964 into a classroom facility and renamed Russell Hall in honor of former Governor of Georgia and United States Senator Richard B. Russell (Class of 1914).



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### **1968 - 1994 Recreation Building**

The students selected the Indians for their school mascot under Principal Julian Garrison in the early 1950's. In 1960, McEachern fielded its first varsity football team with the first football stadium being constructed in 1965. Two other facilities, originally housing administrative offices, business education, mathematics, school library, and a biology lab, were built in 1967; these are presently known as Senior Hall and Junior Hall.

Between 1970 and 1975, enrollment at all grade levels increased to the point that a transfer of first through eighth grades to other schools in the area was necessary.

The campus became one school known as John McEachern High School in 1975. During this time, the stadium was expanded, and a new field house was added.

The music department also moved into a new building that still houses band classes, art classes, and a small theater.



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### **1975 - Present Bell Tower**

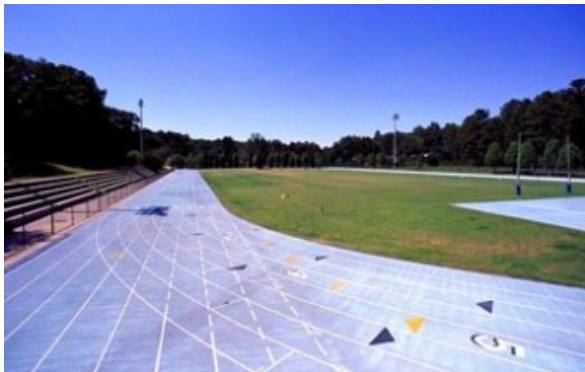
As a tribute to the McEachern family and their generosity, the Bell Tower was built on the site of the first structure on campus, more recently known as the old high school building. The forty-foot brick and steel tower encloses four bronze forged bells that ring every half-hour. The name of a Trustee is engraved on each bell in recognition of his service to the school and community.

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**1964 - Present Russell Hall as it Looks Today**

At this time, Russell Hall acquired a new façade featuring four thirty-foot white columns and an expanded portico. Rescued from demolition by Principal Ralph Williams, the interior was gutted and reconstructed; the building then became the focal point of the campus. It houses the Office of the Principal, the Board Room, and a school museum. The second floor houses the Guidance Department. Another highlight of this period was the opening of Dobbs Hall. Named in honor of Lula Dobbs McEachern, wife of John McEachern, Sr., Dobbs Hall includes a state-of-the-art media center and an up-to-date science facility. Fully equipped to handle the information age and move students into the curricula of the future, the media center's facilities include an in-house television station and the latest research tools. Complementing the lower level media center is the upper level science floor that offers increased laboratory space and the latest equipment and resources to help students explore all areas of the science discipline.



**1991 - Present Ralph D. Williams Sports Complex**

Progress continued as the 1989 school year saw McEachern move toward the twenty-first century. Two computer learning labs were installed for mathematics. The media center computerized research materials and brought the information age to the student's desktop.

In the 1990's, the face of the campus continues to change and adapt to meet the needs of the students

who attend John McEachern High School. Two new writing labs serve students and supplement the English curriculum.

In 1991, the Ralph D. Williams Sports Complex was dedicated for competition in track and field events.

Opened in 1992, the Business Technology Building is a facility with six computer labs built for the modern and expanded curriculum in technology. Also located in this building are the foreign language labs for group and individual study.

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### **1994 – Present Nature Center Pavilion**

The Nature Center at McEachern opened in 1994 and includes nature trails, a pavilion, a cottage, and the restored pond from early A & M years.



### **1996 – Present Interior of J. Alton Keith Theater**

The J. Alton Keith Theater, opened in 1996, is considered to be one of the finest performing arts centers in Georgia.



### **1996 – Present Jack D. Hall Freshman Center**

In the Fall of 2000, the Jack D. Hall Freshman Center opened. This building is the largest one on campus and is vital to the “Freshman Experience” where freshman get eased into the high school community by having a main building for most of their classes.

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The Administration and Trust Fund Board of John McEachern High School believe that stepping ahead to meet the future is the challenge John McEachern

and Lula Dobbs McEachern assumed when they first supported the concept that education can make an important difference in one’s life. The faculty and staff of John McEachern High School remain committed to meeting the challenge of providing the very best education possible for all students.

In 1908, the Seventh District A & M School began with fifty students. As John McEachern High School moves through the next century, student enrollment exceeds three thousand.

For almost a century, the tradition continues...