



# Lore School: Learning and Loving

by Jill Edwards

A squeal uttered from a small girl who has had her ponytail yanked as she steps off the school bus, and a giggle about the most recent knock-knock joke, both mark the beginning of a day at a very special school. Future leaders of the world are taught the "basics" here and develop a strong foundation upon which to build their knowledge. This special school is the Francis R. Lore Elementary School in Ewing Township, Trenton, New Jersey.

The school was named after Mr. Francis R. Lore, who was a

member of the Ewing Township Board of Education for more than eleven years from February, 1941 to August, 1952. Mr. Lore was also president of the Board for the last six years of his term and was president and chairman of the Building Committee when Ewing High School was planned and built. He was killed in an air crash during his presidency of the School Board. It was for his great contributions to the development of the school system in its time of rapid growth and his keen interest in its problems that this elementary

school was named after him.

An increase in student population in the district spurred the proposal of the new elementary school. A lot of involved, careful planning and budgeting took place before the school's construction on Westwood Drive in the Mountain View section of the township.

Francis R. Lore Elementary School was ready to open its doors to students from kindergarten through fifth grade for the 1963-64 school year. Enrollment was expected to soar as an estimated 5,295 boys and

girls would be registered in the seven elementary schools in the district. Many of them would be attending Lore.

The school has sixteen classrooms, an office, and a multi-purpose room which serves as a cafeteria, auditorium and gymnasium. The tables and benches fold right into the wall. Sixteen teachers teach there and there is a four hundred and twenty five student capacity. Although the road had not been constructed at the time of the school opening, pupils attending there were assured transportation.

A ceremony was held on October 29, 1963, at the new school. Mr. Jack Hirsch from the architectural firm of Kramer, Hirsch, and Carchidi presented a gold key to Mr. Charles Thorne, President of the Board of Education, who then gave it to Marjorie Matlack, the school principal. The formal dedication occurred on November eighteenth, with the laying of the cornerstone and the unveiling of the plaque. The widow of Francis R. Lore attended with their four children.

## Lore School is seen through a teacher's eyes.

An interview with Mrs. Theresa Papp, a fourth grade teacher who has been teaching at Lore for twenty-one years gave some good insights into the way Lore School functions.

The administration consists of one principal and one secretary. The present principal, Mr. Jack Heater, is very creative and always tries to integrate fun activities for the students to keep school interesting to them.

Special teachers include a nurse, librarian, gym teacher, vocal music teacher, instrumental music teacher, and teachers who come in for special pro-

grams. All of the teachers enjoy working with children and will go out of their way to help the students learn. A degree in elementary education or primary education is required to be one of these lucky people.

When Mrs. Papp first began teaching at Lore, there were thirty-two kids in her class. Over the years that number has gone down. It fluctuates every year, but there are approximately twenty-one children in each class. Two classes exist for each grade unless there is a class that is too large and must be split into three.

There was a need for extra space to accommodate the students some years; a room off the library and a storage closet have been used as teaching areas. The nurse's office is also partitioned off to make room for special service teachers. Two trailers outside are used for special groups.

The racial mixture of the school children has remained pretty constant but there are a few more Pakistani and Orientals. The students' attitudes towards school and their social activities has not drastically changed. The kids today though,

are a little more talkative and do not hold anything back. The parents are usually helpful, and they seem to be a bit more aware and supportive of their children these days. One of the most major changes in the student body was the addition of the sixth grade to the school six years ago.

The curriculum the students take part in is a comprehensive and expansive one that develops with their age; each year the program expands. Teachers are required to teach certain subject areas but it is left to the individual teacher what order the subjects are taught throughout

the year. In kindergarten the students learn how to get along with others and also colors, numbers, counting, the alphabet, and science and social studies at an elementary level. In first grade, math and reading is taught. More independent work is given in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. The pupils are given more responsibility with organized work, neat notebooks, and expanding the math and reading skills.

## A Comprehensive and Ever-growing Curriculum

A recent major addition to the curriculum has been the use of computers. Seven years ago, there was just one computer in a special room in the library that was not widely used by the pupils. Today, every classroom has a computer in it. All grades through fifth grade use various software programs. The sixth grades learn the Logo computer language two days a week for a half a day.

Another recent expansion has been the addition of Gifted and

Talented Art and Gifted and Talented Music to the existing Gifted and Talented Math program. To be admitted to the special art program, the student has to submit a portfolio of artwork to be judged by the art teacher. A music test is given for admission to the special music program. Gifted and Talented Math involves a teacher recommendation, IQ score, and California Achievement Test scores. The special math course is taught during the same time

period as other students learn math. They still learn the same level math but at an accelerated and more challenging pace. For the other two special subjects the students are pulled out of regular class time. They are responsible for all work missed.

The music program, which is certainly not new, has introduced the wonders of music to many of the children. There is a choir which is not mandatory but most choose to be in it. They can learn how to play an instrument as

early as the fourth grade and have a lesson once a week. In fifth and sixth grades orchestra rehearsals are attended as well as a weekly lesson.

Gym class is held twice a week and library visits are made regularly. Recently these special classes have been lengthened from thirty minutes to forty minutes.

Some programs are integrated to help those children who do not keep up with their peers or have other programs such as a speech

impediment. Many of these students are taught one on one. B.S.I.P. (Basic Skills Improvement Program) is a program designed to help those kids who need extra help as exhibited by their CAT scores. Special teachers come in to supplement their regular curriculum. They learn the regular math, reading, and writing skills, but are given extra help and practice.

## Taking Care of Leo the Lion

There exists at Lore School a very vibrant school spirit. One can see that spirit through the school mascot, Leo the Lion. Each day, the fifth graders are responsible for putting Leo out in the courtyard under his canopied picnic bench and making sure he is comfortable. He wears a scarf

and a hat on cold days and a raincoat on rainy days. Each class gets to decorate his "lair" at a different holiday. Any student who a teacher feels did an outstanding job on a project or did a good deed wins the honor of sitting out at his picnic bench for a half an hour to work.

This year the school project is an "I Love You" banquet. Each month a different grade is allowed to write one "I Love You" letter to a person they choose. This person is invited to lunch at the school. Later a program is put on by the grade and those who were not at the luncheon could attend.

Another school related activity is the Parents Association. They have fund raisers for whatever needs to be fixed or bought; they also sponsor activities such as ice skating parties.

Francis R. Lore Elementary School stands today as it did when it first opened in 1963. The

dreams and hopes of those who conceived it have more than come true. Lore School will always be a special part of the childhood years for any student who attended there and will be a beacon of the future for many generations yet to come.