

# History of

## Grayson Elementary School

The founder of Grayson is the late James P. McConnell. In about 1880, he bought 80 acres of land from his Uncle Stephen Billue and built his home and a frame store-building near the intersection which is now the center of Grayson. On April 5, 1881, he was able to establish a post office with himself as the first postmaster. At the suggestion of J. D. Spence, a leading merchant and public figure in Lawrenceville, it was given the name "Tripp."

While the late John E. Jacobs was postmaster, he wrote to the Postal Department requesting the town's name be changed to Berkely. An Act by the General Assembly of Georgia approved the change, and Berkely was incorporated on December 16, 1901.

Almost immediately, the Post Office Department informed Mr. Jacobs that another Berkely was incorporated in Georgia. Mr. Jacobs suggested Graymont because of the clear view of Stone Mountain from the center of town. Another Graymont already existed. Mrs. Jacobs was visiting McConnell relatives in Grayson County, Texas. The name 'Grayson' interested Mr. Jacobs. Act No. 182, by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, approved December 17, 1902, changed the name to Grayson.

In the spring of 1882, Grayson's first school was built and named Tripp Academy. Prior to 1882, the only education provided for the children in the Grayson area was done so in a log cabin which served as the Chestnut Grove Baptist Church. It stood near the present church on Rosebud Road.

In 1900, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows joined with others to erect a two-story frame structure on the same lot where Grayson Elementary School now stands at 460 Highway 84. The lot for the school was given by the late Moses McConnell "for as long as the land was used for school purposes." Book 49, page 186 of Gwinnett County Records describes part of the property as "All that tract or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Gwinnett, State of Georgia in the town of Grayson, lying on the west side of formerly the Seaboard Air Line Railway, and bounded as follows: North by public road; East by lands formerly of Seaboard Air Line Railway; South by formerly Seaboard Air Line Railway; West by the Grayson School House Lot, and being the same tract of land conveyed to H. T. Williams and R. D. Williams by Ms. Susie

### FAST FACTS

**Address:** 460 Grayson Parkway  
Grayson, GA 30017

The following have served as principals of Grayson School and Grayson Elementary School:

1916-?	T. P. Tribble
1924-1925	T. F. Herring
1925-1926	Mr. James
1926-1929	J. J. Salter
1929-1933	R. C. Wilbanks
1933-1935	Grady Gower
1935-1936	Mr. Eddingfield
1936-1938	R. B. Booth
1938-1942	Carl Johnson
1942-1949	Albert Henderson
1949-1950	J. R. Kessler
1950-1951	E. N. Brady
1951-1957	J. G. Dyer
1957-1962	J. Neal Timms
1962-1964	Doyle Moulder
1964-1976	James Caples
1976-1979	Howard Torbett
1979-1996	Herb Burrell
1996-2004	Jim Curtiss
2004-Feb., 2011	Dr. Christopher Ray
Feb. 2011-Present	Christopher "Chris" Brown

**School Colors:** Green and Gold

**School Mascot:** Grayson Ram

McConnell, Administratrix of J. P. McConnell, by deed dated April 3, 1928." The School House Lot was bordered on the west by the G. W. Gouge property, as it still is today.

In 1913, a bond issue by the citizens of Grayson provided funds for a two-story, brick-vener building, which was the beginning of the first high school in Grayson. In 1917, Grayson High School had its first graduation. The five persons graduating were Alba Ethridge, Ruth Johnson, Ruth Petty, George Jacobs, and Waymon Gower.

A March 1918 newspaper article had this to say about Grayson School: "The Grayson Public Schools are in the

charge of Prof. T. P. Tribble, who holds an A. M. Degree and who has taken special training at the University of Georgia, University of Tennessee, and the University of Chicago. Within a period of two years he has increased the enrollment of the Grayson School from an average attendance of 125 to over 200. The school at Grayson is now on the accredited list. He has paid for 500 opera chairs for the school auditorium and raised over \$50 for the library of the school within the last year. That he has the physical welfare of the pupils at heart is evidenced by the fine athletic teams put by this school. And we will add by way of parenthesis that Jim Ford, Insurance man, was the first boy to ever get a whipping in school.”

In 1930, several other elementary schools in the area consolidated with Grayson. (Some of these schools were Bay Creek, Roberts Academy, Harris Academy, Ozora, and Midway.) As growth increased, another building was erected in 1942 in back of the existing building. It burned in the 1940s and was immediately rebuilt by the local citizens with donated materials and labor.

Grayson was proud to have one of the first gymnasiums in the county. It was erected sometime prior to 1925. It was replaced in 1939 by a rock building located where the present gymnasium now stands. Before 1939, the rock building had been a warehouse for the storage of cotton and fertilizer. The present gymnasium replaced the rock building after it burned in 1960.

Grayson High School reached prominence in the community during the years following the Great Depression. From 1930 to 1957, the school also became a source of economic aid in the community by offering training programs for children and adults. The program consisted first of a cannery which was established in 1930.

It was located in the Grayson Depot of the Seaboard Railroad property, which was later purchased for the school. Through the Agriculture Department, the school taught farm families how to preserve their products. The children learned how to operate a cannery and maintain the equipment of the plant.

Following the cannery, a blacksmith shop, a carpentry shop, a sawmill, a pole-treating plant, and a potato-treating and storage house were established. The plants were educational means through which the school taught agriculture and home economics.

In 1957, Grayson High School was consolidated with Snellville High School to form South Gwinnett High School. The two-story brick building was replaced with the present structure and renamed Grayson Elementary School. The rock building was kept intact. The bell on the front lawn was a 1915 gift to the school from Ninth District Congressman Thomas M. Bell. One of Grayson Elementary’s proudest moments was the building and reestablishment of Grayson High School. It opened its doors in August, 2000 and several mementoes from the original high school that had been housed at Grayson Elementary school were returned to the high school. The school and the cluster voted to make the Grayson ram the mascot.

Grayson’s growth mirrored Gwinnett County’s growth and during the 1980s the school experienced a population explosion. Trailers became the norm and Grayson’s students were rezoned numerous times as Grayson sent students to Norton, Magill, Pharr, and Cooper elementary schools. The school has had numerous additions built, with the latest addition coming in 1998. The county gutted and remodeled the “Rock” Building while keeping the outside



facade in its original form. Grayson is one of the few elementary schools in the county with a huge gym with a wooden floor and full stage. Many sports teams in the community use the gym. The school added an outdoor classroom in the 1990s. The students enjoy the pond and the various “gardens” in it. The school also has a complete television studio and the students produce a live television show each day.

Several special awards are still remembered from the school’s history. In 1925, the boys’ basketball team won the state championship and went on to play in the nationals in Chicago. In 1936, Coach Avery Graves took eight players to the state FFA Invitational Championship, where they defeated the Roberta team for the championship. Attorney Tom Moore was only 16 years old at the time, yet was named to the all-state team. He received a scholarship to Furman University as a result.

In the 1990’s Grayson sent a Future Problem Solving team to the World Finals and currently the Odyssey of the Mind teams are winning regional competitions. Grayson has received recognition from Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution for its recycling programs. Enrollment increased almost 300 percent during a five-year period.

During the late 2000s, Trip Elementary and Starling Elementary schools opened nearby to relieve overcrowding in the Grayson Cluster. By the 2009-10 school year, Grayson Elementary’s student population had reached approximately 750, where it is expected to remain for several years.

Throughout the years, Grayson students have participated in a wide variety of school clubs and activities. Grayson students enjoy Chess Club, Student Council, Safety Patrol, Recycling Rams, Drama, Odyssey of the Mind, Running Club, Grayson Peer Leaders, Reading Club, Chorus, and Red Cross. Grayson students and teachers always participate in Relay for Life and are always well represented at Grayson Days.

Grayson teachers strive for excellence each and every day. They are active in the Grayson community as well as vital participants in numerous educational endeavors. Grayson has had the county’s Gifted Program Teacher of the Year and the Nation’s Counselor of the Year. Grayson features a noted Technology program that enhances the curriculum for the Grayson students. Grayson teachers write grants, lead county organizations, are constantly involved in higher education, and are always seeking better methods to teach Grayson students.

Grayson Elementary has won numerous PTA awards throughout its history. The membership committee has had 100 percent membership, the scrapbook committee has placed in competition, and other committees have earned state recognition for distinctive planning and achievement. The PTA, an integral part of the school, supports the students and the staff of the school in many different ways.

Through Grayson’s long and interesting past, one thing has never changed. The elementary school is the hub of the Grayson community. The school has a reputation for being a “family.”

