

# History of

## Starling Elementary School

Starling Elementary School opened in the Grayson Cluster in 2009. It was named for Ann Cooper Starling who taught at Grayson ES for 25 years and whose family had lived in the area since 1813.

Ann Cooper Starling was born in Grayson, Georgia, in 1936. She attended Grayson Elementary as a child and graduated from Grayson High School in 1954. Ann went on to attend Young Harris College and the University of Georgia, graduating from both institutions with honors. She spent the first eight years of her teaching career with Atlanta Public Schools, then returned to Grayson Elementary as a teacher, where she remained until she retired 25 years later.

A product of the “old school,” Ann taught with love and discipline, while also emphasizing values and manners. She expected nothing less than 100 percent effort from each child. During her years of teaching, she inspired countless young students, and mentored many new teachers. Ann often brought in items from her farm, where she lived with her husband, Voight, and her two sons, Walton and Steven. These items not only enhanced her instructional units, but also brought the world into her classroom years before the Internet. She helped her students realize the importance of reading every day. Outside of her classroom was a sign— “Starling’s

### FAST FACTS

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**Address:** 1725 Grayson Highway  
Grayson, GA 30017

The following have served as principals of Starling Elementary School:

|                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 2009–June 2017    | Donna Ledford |
| July 2017–Present | Rachel Ernst  |

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**School Colors:** Green, Gold, and Navy  
**School Mascot:** Grayson Ram

Darlings.” When a child entered Ann’s classroom, that child became part of her family and she took great joy and pride in watching her “darlings” grow.

Ann frequently commented that she taught second grade in the same room where she had attended second grade. She always thought it was a privilege to come back and teach at the school she cherished. Ann Starling passed away in 2004 at her farm in Grayson. Her legacy and the importance of community, family, friends, and teaching continue at Starling Elementary School *Where Excellence is the Expectation.*

On November 1, 2009, the Grayson community gathered to formally dedicate Starling Elementary School.



### Starling Elementary School

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Gwinnett County Board of Education  
Louise Radloff - Chairman  
Carole Boyce - Vice Chairman  
Dr. Robert McClure  
Dr. Mary Kay Murphy  
Daniel D. Seckinger

CEO/Superintendent  
J. Alvin Wilbanks

Architect  
CDH Partners, Inc.

Contractor  
Hensler & Beavers General Contractors, Inc.

## 2009

Highlighting the event were tributes provided by Walton Starling, Ann's son, and Doug Drummond who was a former student of Ann Starling.

Ann's student-centered focus remains a central theme of the school which has a mission to cultivate a community of lifelong learners by empowering students to achieve excellence by participating in diverse experiences. The vision of Starling Elementary School is to provide a safe, nurturing environment while engaging students in rigorous and relevant educational experiences through quality instruction and community collaboration.

That vision comes to life each and every day in classrooms and in the many opportunities made available to students. The school offers a variety of student clubs, including LEGO Robotics, VEX Robotics, Chess, Recycling/Outdoor Classroom, LEGO, Running, Chorus, Recorder, Drama, Safety Patrols, Student Council, Witzzle Pro Math, Cooking, Geek Squad Computer Club, Readers Rally team and more. In addition, the school's focus on technology and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) benefits students and teachers in many ways. Students participate in Computer Science as a special, learning coding and programming. In addition, students actually have led professional learning in technology for teachers at the Grayson Cluster Technology Playdate.

Over the years many things have changed as Starling Elementary has grown and matured. However, some things remain constant... the school's commitment to excellence and to the students it serves.



ANN C. STARLING

1936-2004