The Lexington School

proudly introduces

ROBERT ELLER DAVIS

Headmaster 1995

This time last year, the search was on for a new head of school. The Search Committee provided candidates for the position with a profile describing what the TLS community was looking for if an "ideal match" could be made. Two months into the 1995-96 school year, it appears that Robert Eller Davis might just as well have served as the model for that profile.



The school's new head must be someone who cares deeply about children.

Mr. Davis shares the story of a difficult time in his own growing up when he enrolled at McCallie after seven years in public school in Georgia. The finer points of Algebra I escaped him, resulting in a stint in summer school. Bob recalls feeling like he was dying on the vine, but he took the message that he was deficient when it came to math (translated, if you can't learn it this way, than there is something wrong with you) as a challenge to beat the system. He left McCallie an excellent student with some intuitive perspectives about education which influence his thinking to this day.

It is well recognized in educational circles that people do not learn in the same way or at the same rate. Mr. Davis feels that teachers have a responsibility to the young people entrusted to them to develop flexible and sensitive strategies to facilitate and maximize their learning. This certainly involves using traditionally effective methods, but it also demands a student-centered approach which allows children to progress through tasks as they are ready. He believes that fundamental practice, as well as activities for enrichment, offered in an environment of security and trust, will assure every student at The Lexington School the opportunity to pursue excellence in academics.

The school was looking for a leader with a penchant for hands-on administration.

Since day 1, Bob Davis has been working closely with the faculty. He's learning the ropes, getting a picture of what he thinks works well and what areas might need

amendment. By attending meetings and, above all, listening, Mr. Davis conveys his caring. In turn, the teachers feel free to approach him with their concerns. Several comments have been made by members of the faculty that Bob is a "gentle" leader whose "affirmation of our gifts reinforces the joy of working in a school."

"Proactive" is one of the adjectives which appeared in the ideal profile. According to the faculty, this word fits Mr. Davis to a T. "The new head is everywhere," said more than one person, "... interested in what the children are doing and in what we are doing to help them." Another remark, "I feel that Bob brings out the best in me, not only as a professional, but also as a person," seems to be a common theme among the teachers.

Bob has made it clear to everyone that he wants to see enthusiasm in the classroom. Teachers and students share responsibility for creating that climate. Other climate controls include the faculty setting and maintaining high standards for academic achievement. An uncompromising expectation that every student will put forth the maximum effort is a "given." The headmaster is doing his part to help each student and teacher bring out his or her personal best by being a supporting presence in the classrooms, in the halls, and on the playing fields.

"I feel that Bob brings out the best in me, not only as a professional, but also as a person."



Bob and his wife Marsha are the parents of Ben, grade 8, and Katherine, grade 5. This family photo would not be complete without their dog Millie.

TLS wants an educator whose experience with elementary and middle school students will have prepared him to work closely with the faculty on curriculum development.

Mr. Davis is a former classroom teacher, school psychologist, division head, and headmaster. This varied background has provided him with multiple ways of looking at the learning process.

Two of the things which attracted Bob to TLS are its multi-sensory learning environment and the interdisciplinary, or thematic, approach already in place in many areas of the curriculum. He is excited about the opportunity to bring new insights into methodology which will help develop an even stronger program. "I believe," he said, "that in school we have the privilege of creating an environment of wonder. We have the obligation to do everything we can to maintain the excitement about learning with which every preschooler arrives on the first day, and to preserve it until the day we say good-bye to the graduating class."

"So far, Mr. Davis has not said one word that I disagree with," said one member of the faculty who continued, "He obviously has his priorities in order ... with students at the top."

Robert Eller Davis

Education

University of Georgia, B.A., English, 1974
University of Tennessee, M.S., School Psychology, 1978
University of Tennessee, Ed.S., Administration and Supervision, 1980

Administrative Experience

The Hammond School—Columbia, SC
Lower School Head, 1992-1995
Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, Rabun Gap, GA
Director, Admissions and Marketing, 1990-1992
The Saint Nicholas School, Chattanooga, TN
Headmaster, 1980-1986
Jefferson County Schools, Dandridge, TN
Director, Psychological Services, 1978-1980
The McCallie School, Chattanooga, TN
Teacher, Dormitory Counselor, Coach, 1974-1976

Activities (selected)

Sources for Growth Opportunities
Treasurer, Board of Trustees
Trenholm Road United Methodist Church
Columbia, SC
Chairman, Council on Ministries
United Way of Chattanooga
The McCallie School
The Siskin Foundation
The Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga
Volunteer, Fund-raising

working in a dreary lifeless place. I will do some crazy things because it will be good for everyone." True to his word, the headmaster wore a Santa Claus tie on September 7. This is mild compared to a history which includes wearing scuba gear to school one low-down day last winter.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire school community, I welcome Mr. Davis to The Lexington School," said chair Betty Kenan. She continued, "The key ingredients in his appointment to the position of headmaster are his personal qualities and professional accomplishments. His arrival marks an exciting point in the history of the school. Bob will bring new energy and insights to TLS which will help us develop an even stronger program. We look forward to working with him in this very worthwhile endeavor."

"I believe, that in school we have the privilege of creating an environment of wonder."

Bob Davis

Mr. Davis enjoyed meeting other new families at a reception in their honor.



The successful candidate will possess the following qualities: personal warmth, energy, and a sense of humor.

Mr. Davis' personal style contributed to his appointment as headmaster. Already, the word has spread among the children that he's "just plain nice." He doesn't like not knowing their names, and he does appreciate an invitation to sit at their lunch table. He just might pop into the classroom, take a seat, and learn something new right along with them. He even walks the carline!

In an early communication to the faculty, Mr. Davis promised, "...We will laugh together because I hate the thought of

ROBERT ELLER DAVIS

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

I believe that learning is maximized in an environment of mutual trust where students are not afraid to make mistakes, and teachers do not hesitate to demand the best of their students. Since we know that people learn in different ways and at different rates, as educators we must develop a variety of teaching strategies designed to maximize learning. Children cannot learn without trial and error; they must experience challenge in order to grow. With increasing levels of independence and decision-making, students demonstrate more responsibility, more ownership of their products, and more assurance about their work. They will rise to our level of expectation. High standards and high morale do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, I believe that humor plays a significant role in the development of joy throughout the school. We often underestimate its power. Humor creates a climate which allows a community to work together with confidence at a maximum level.

I believe in engaging faculty members in the development of the school program. When a school's faculty is nurtured, cultivated, and encouraged, there is a direct, positive result in the lives of students.

THE LEXINGTON SCHOOL
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