



Mr. & Mrs. F. L. Schlagle Library
Wyandotte County Lake Park

Speech given by School Board President Gloria Willis at Groundbreaking Ceremony 12/16/99

Where we are standing today will be transformed into a beautiful environmental learning center in just a few short months. Thanks to the generosity and foresight of Mr. and Mrs. F.L. Schlagle, and the partnership forged between the KCK school district, the Unified Government of KCK and Wyandotte County, the Wyandotte County Parks Board Foundation, the United Missouri Bank, who manage the Schlagle trust, young and old alike will learn to appreciate the outdoors, wildlife and our environment at this beautiful lake facility.

The environmental learning center will be named for Mr. and Mrs. Schlagle. Although many of us pass nearly every day, a high school along Parallel Avenue that is named in his honor, how many of us know anything about these two generous people? I would like to take just a few minutes to let you know something about Frank and Doris Schlagle.

Some have described Mr. Schlagle as a visionary. He devoted nearly 50 years of his life to public education in our community.

After teaching in Syracuse and Wolcott, Kansas, for three years, Frank Schlagle became the principal at Kerr Elementary School in KCK in 1913. Next he served as vice principal at Central Junior High School from 1916 to 1918. He became principal at Argentine High school in 1919, and then assistant superintendent of schools in 1924. For 30 years, from 1932 to 1962, when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70, Mr. Schlagle served as superintendent of schools.

He was active in local civic affairs, and also served at the state and national levels. Frank Schlagle was a consultant on education when the United Nations was organized and also helped set up UNESCO.

Frank Schlagle was the first Kansan to have been president of the National Education Association. He was the only president in the organization's 100-year history to 1957 to serve two terms.

Finding out information about Doris Schlagle was a harder task. She was truly his life-long partner and stalwart supporter.

The former Doris Willson was a graduate of Argentine High School and was a secretary in the Board of Education offices. They married; some say eloped, when Mr. Schlagle was serving as assistant superintendent of schools.

An avid reader, Mrs. Schlagle kept Superintendent Schlagle knowledgeable of local and current events and was truly his support at home. She was a homemaker and made sure that the superintendent made a "good impression" in the community and in his professional life.

In the school district's historic files are more than 35 letters from individuals and organizations recommending that a new high school being built at 59th Street and Parallel Avenue be named in honor of Frank Schlagle. Some of the other suggested names for the school: Isaac Munday High School for one of the counties first settlers; Eleven Fifty-Nine High School, a composite for Leavenworth Road and 59th and Parallel; Edwin A. Hosking High School, named for a music teacher at Wyandotte; Pioneer High School; Peace High School; George Patton High School; Dwight Eisenhower High School; and Indian Springs High School.

June 15, 1971, Superintendent of Schools O.L. Plucker sent a letter to Mr. Schlagle informing him that the Board of Education would name the school in his honor. His letter stated: "I am confident that there is no individual in this district who has dedicated himself as fully and completely to the cause of public education as have you. Not only are the years of service which you have given unmatched, but the quality of that service exceeds all reasonable expectations. This community, this state and this nation are forever indebted to you for the conscientious and firm leadership which you have provided."

On a personal note, I am proud to say that Mr. Schlagle hired me as a teacher in this school district. I have had the extraordinary opportunity to serve in some capacity with every superintendent of schools from Mr. Schlagle to Dr. Daniels.

As president of the Kansas City Kansas Board of Education, I am proud to welcome you here today to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for this wonderful treasure that will become the Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Schlagle Library and Environmental Learning Center.