

NICHOLS

FROM PAGE A1

experience. "My knight is holding a Dorito and a Light Saber because I like Star Wars and Dorito's are my favorite snack," said Harley Hux.

First graders also wore "ask me about" headbands with questions written on each for visitors to ask, which the students then answered. The artwork and questions promoted creativity and student voice along with school pride.

Paula Kimball's second graders interviewed family members about their Nichols experiences. They then created poster boards and Seesaw presentations to share the information, teaching them communication and collaboration skills while learning more about the history and meaning of Nichols.

Kaia Reid's third grade students honored Nichols teachers and staff members that helped shape them during their own school experiences. Presentations highlighted the selected individuals, with students interviewing others to further discuss them.

Amy Ferrell's fourth graders hosted a program called, "Make it a Landmark!" Students shared the school's legacy after researching Nichols' history and individuals, along with the school's lasting impact.

A few students dressed in period costume, telling the early history of the school, while others discussed the present status and its individuals. Some students built log cabins representing the first school building, and were designing a replica of the current building with Lego pieces.

For Nichols' future, the students created a makeshift historical plaque and encouraged guests to sign a petition to have an official marker placed at the site. Nichols is working with the Kentucky Heritage Council to make the location an official state landmark.

A testimony to the impact of Nichols Elementary on the community was in the number of past employees who attended the event, including former principals Sheri Hamilton and Anne Marie Landry.

Other familiar faces included long-time cafeteria worker Neida Warner, former principal and state representative Linda Belcher, and former student and magistrate Dennis Mitchell.

Many former Nichols teachers returned, including Rachel Hollensead, who served nine years as a Reading Recovery teacher as well as stints with first, second, and third grade classrooms.

"I was here when the school was still green," Hollensead recalled, noting her time prior to the 2009 renovations. "The school used to be a lovely shade of avocado green."

Hollensead also remembered "the dungeon," an old coal room in the building. She recalled students being a little nervous around that room.

"I have so many fond memories," she said. "I remember having car rider duty with some of the fifth graders, and they would just sit and talk with me about their day, and they would come in with all their stories."

Rosemary Jones served as lunchroom manager and substitute teacher, with 38 years in the Nichols kitchen. The thing she will miss most about Nichols is the students.

"I loved it here, and I loved all the children," Jones said. "And I love cooking. I had no children. These were my children... and they claimed me, too!"

Charlotte Ashby served 13 years with Nichols as a school aid, volunteer coordinator and secretary before moving on to the Central Office as board treasurer for 15 years.

"I tell everyone that the memories will always be in their hearts," Ashby said.



Stephen Thomas

Nichols photos and yearbooks were on display in the school library during the celebration.



Stephen Thomas

Donated items from each Nichols classroom, along with a few legacy items and a memento from the school's archery team, were collected in a time capsule.



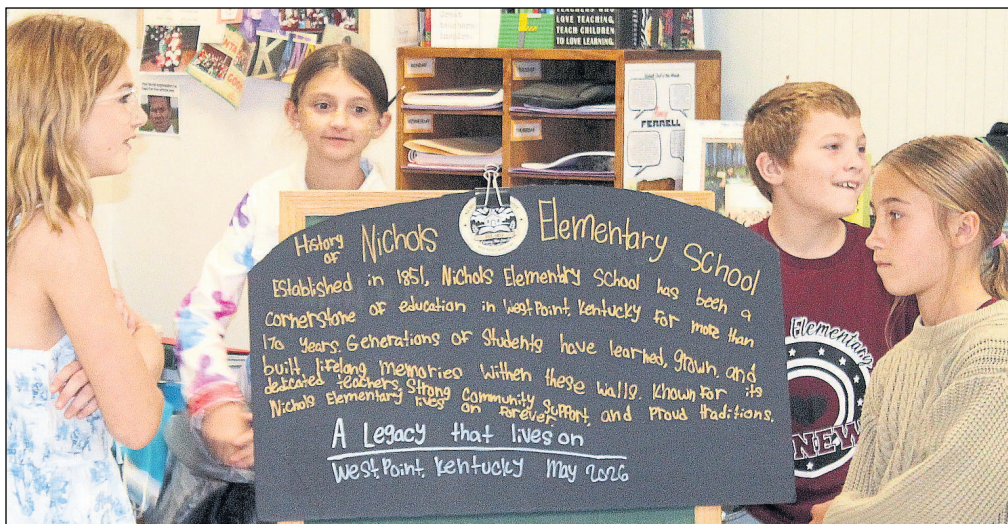
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Nichols first grade students answering questions for former school secretary Charlotte Ashby and former principal Linda Belcher.



Stephen Thomas

Long-time Nichols lunch room manager Rosemary Jones visited with old friends in the cafeteria.



Stephen Thomas

Nichols Elementary fourth graders display a makeshift historical marker representing a potential official marker for the school through the Kentucky Heritage Council.



Stephen Thomas

Nichols fifth grader Taelynn Warren showing a decorated eraser with a piece of her hair that was donated to the class' memory box.

"They can make you leave the building but they won't take away your memories."

Former Nichols employee Peggy Pace said school workers knew all of the students' families and neighbors. She recalled driving students home in her own vehicle on Cow Branch Road during snow days.

"It was just like doing for your own family," she said.

"I remember the closeness," said Ashby. "If a kid was sick, and their parents were unavailable, we knew the grandparents or the neighbors."

Pace summed up what Nichols Elementary is really all about: It is a community.

"It's not just the building," she said. "These people will carry that legacy with them."



Stephen Thomas

Nichols students wrapped up the celebration by singing the school's official theme song.



Stephen Thomas

Nichols third graders presented information on various individuals who made a difference during the school's history.



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Nichols fifth graders presenting the school's timeline to visitors.



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