



Thoughts at Midnight

By Seamus Hodgkinson, Doane Stuart Faculty since 1975

There is something in a mild March day that can touch us deeply. Just what it is can't be stated, but it must be compounded of sunlight, air, warmth and immeasurable mystery. Spring comes. Sometimes the heavy cold rains beat it back, and we are saddened - as we can be in the Fall when the leaves finally are gone - but the maybe-ness of March always gives way to April's assurance.

For over three decades I lived that magical journey through the seasons at a wondrous place called Kenwood, where a young school began a journey of immense hope and determined promise on ground hallowed by a generation of sacred educators and young minds. The buildings, tucked into the wooded hills below an uncaring highway and above a noxious port, shimmered with an ancient quiet, and gently offered the gifts of permanence and change which come with seasons turning. Seasons of uncertainty and promise, of people who came and went and stayed. Seasons of conflict and of compromise, of evolution and endurance, seasons of hurt and of healing.

Tonight it ended in a tragic way, and many hearts are heavy I know. I made my annual pilgrimage last June to reminisce those seasons of my life and sense the resilience I needed. It was sad to see such a tattered place and feel it's dignity slipping away, but at the same time the memories flowed back and became alive in who I am and in my years of wonder there. The sorry shell I walked through spoke to me of making sure that all that started and grew here, lives on. The fire erases so much that matters deeply, and yet at the same time it inspires a need to live out more fully all that is lost, as the only way to celebrate what it meant.

The Kenwood campus will always be an intangible reality. Take a journey with me! It is the magnolias blossoming in May. It is the sound of a soccer game on a crisp Fall afternoon. It is the elegance of the sunlit parlors and the ordinariness of the basement cafeteria. It is the quirky gym from another era, filled with energy and a fledgling chicken. It is the chapel at Christmas, and the leafy quiet of Rosary lane. It is the majestic Gingko tree losing its leaves in a single October afternoon, and Saint Agnes outside with snow topped book on a wintery morning. It is the fountain spraying rainbows through the sunshine, with the sweeping clock tower keeping watch....and it is always Ancient of Days and Spirit Seeking!

Our little school has endured many seasons by remembering the essential purpose of teaching and learning - to contribute mightily to a better world. As an important part of our heritage suffers tonight, it also reminds us that we are a school for all seasons.