

Mrs. Ritchie and Mrs. Hardin Two-Day Two's
By Tiffany Husack



How fortunate our little ones have been to begin their academic careers with two wonderful and exceptionally talented teachers! Mrs. Ritchie is concluding her career after 30 years of teaching, most of them with two-year olds at DMWS, and Mrs. Hardin has been going strong for eight years. Together they have a lifetime of experience with little ones to help ease them into their pre-school years in a stimulating and exciting environment.

The classroom is filled with lots of fun things to do as our children free play with their choice of items such as puzzles, train table, large blocks, barn, kitchen and cookware, dolls and their accessories. Then they're off to for some physical activity and fresh air. Back inside, its snack time, reading, and art. Once a month the class is visited by the science teacher, Rae Ann



Baker, who during start their day with farm animals and the playground songs & dance,

her last visit taught them how some things float on the water while other sink to the bottom.

As we enter spring, the classroom walls are blooming with butterflies of all kinds. With a butterfly kit, the kids are witnessing the slow transformation of caterpillars to cocoons to butterflies. When all the butterflies have bloomed, they will take them to the playground and release them into the fresh air!

As the school year winds down Mrs. Ritchie and Mrs. Hardin are working hard to prepare the kids for success in the children skills such share, and take are now playing in a specific station playing at the train table.



three-year-old classroom. They have been teaching as how to recognize their written name, follow direction, responsibility for the toys in the room. Finally, the children "centers", small groups of 3-4 where they must stay at for a period of time, i.e. working with puzzles, painting, or



With this fabulous year behind them, our children have gained a firm foundation from which to launch into the exciting world of the three-year old classroom.

Mrs. Ritchie and Mrs. Allen's 2 day 2's
By Susan Fitzgerald



Early in the year, Mrs. Ritchie had told me her class is the quietest in the school. Quiet!? If you have a two-year-old, you probably don't have a lot of quiet. So can it be true that a class full of almost 3-year-olds is quiet? I had to investigate.

Outside the classroom, the halls were ringing with the sounds of footsteps, children laughing, and teachers greeting people. But inside Mrs. Ritchie and Mrs. Allen's two-day-two's class, it was quiet!

The children in the classroom were happily occupied with puzzles, books, animal figures, blocks, and trains. Charlotte made a sandwich in the kitchen and brought it to Mrs. Allen who pretended to eat it. Maya and Emily clustered around Mrs. Ritchie to listen to a book. Seth played with trucks while Charlie and Eli assembled puzzles. Only Henley noticed me and asked, "What's your name? Why are you here?"

Soon it was time to go to Fitness with Mrs. Baker. Mrs. Ritchie blinked the lights briefly and the children looked up and within a minute were lined up to go out the door. Wow! Would this work at home?! Somehow I doubted it! The kids traipsed down the hall in a line behind the teachers and headed upstairs to the fitness room. The kids knew the routine and loved it. The only thing they seemed to love more than the routine was Mrs. Ritchie and Mrs. Allen. What a great way for two-year-olds to start their school experience!



Bolen/Powell 3 day 3's
By Liz Stankavage

I stopped in today to see what was happening in Mrs. Bolen's 3 day 3 class and Mrs. Powell said it the best..."You know with Mrs. Bolen, there is always something exciting happening!". The kids were just arriving to school, hanging up their book bags, washing their hands and then checking out what was



waiting for them on the tables. As Millie walked in she confidently informed Mrs. Powell and I that she could spell her name...MILLIE. Then as Chandlee came in she informed us and demonstrated to us that she could zip her coat all by herself!! My how they have grown this year.

The theme this week is "BUGS, BUGS, BUGS". Brooks, Dylan and Cameron started their day by playing a worm eating game and a fishing for bugs game. Everybody checked out the 2 butterfly cages with hopes of an seeing a butterfly...not yet. Aiden confidently told me that the caterpillars spun the cocoons and there were butterflies growing in them and he was sure that this was going to be the week that they would come out. How smart these children are!

A potato masher, yellow paper, google eyes and black paint sat waiting on the craft table...bees were soon to be created followed by ant placemats made with an apple stamp.

Circle time always includes some great books and today was no different. "The Very Greedy Bee" and "The Very Lazy Lady Bug" were waiting for the children at the end of their very busy bug filled day.



Goodbye, Mrs. Ritchie!

Sadly for us, but happily for her, our beloved Mrs. Ritchie is retiring at the end of this year. We have been truly blessed to have such a wonderful teacher for our 2 year olds. She has gently guided them into the exciting and wonderful world of preschool. For the last 30 years, Dotty Ritchie has been shaping the minds of our little ones. A lot has changed in the past 30 years. Here is a glimpse at what things were like in 1978 when Mrs. Ritchie began her exciting career here at Duke Memorial.

Prices in 1978:

Tuition for DMWS -- \$25/month

Gallon of milk -- \$1.71

Gallon of regular gas -- \$.63 (Ah....the good old days! Remember regular gas?!)

Dozen eggs -- \$.82

Dow-Jones High -- 893

Dow-Jones Low -- 807

Cost of a new house -- \$62,500

Super Bowl Champions -- Pittsburgh Steelers over Dallas Cowboys

World Series Champions -- New York Yankees over LA Dodgers (Go Yanks!)



Not only has Mrs. Ritchie touched the lives of hundreds of children, she has also had an impact on those she worked with. Here is what some of them have to say:

I will miss Dotty and her beautiful smile as I start each day. She has been such a great influence in the lives of many children and parents at DMWS. Her constant care and love for the children will be greatly missed. I know she will enjoy her time with her family and grandchildren!

-Susan Grubbs

Dotty Ritchie is the epitome of Duke Memorial. She may be leaving the school, but her legacy will always remain. I am quite sure that the majority of all the past students and their parents do not think about Duke Memorial without thinking of Dotty Ritchie. She will be missed tremendously by all.

-Robin Moore

Dotty Ritchie was my son Jimmy's very first teacher! What a great start she has given to so many 2 year olds. I am personally grateful to have known her as my son's teacher as well as a co-worker and a good friend. We love you.

-Lisa Pagett

Dotty,

I will miss your wit and enthusiasm. You have a gift in working with children that the staff and parents will remember forever. The playground will never be the same without you.

-Jackie Bolen

Dear Dotty,

You have given many children a wonderful start here at Duke Memorial. You will be missed. Enjoy your retirement.

-Connie and Dawn

Duke Memorial will never be the same, especially the office! With Dotty's classroom beside the office, I know at the beginning of each year there would be upset, screaming two year olds. I also knew I could count on Dotty to work her magic on those two year olds, and in a few days all was right with the world! Dotty will be greatly missed. Enjoy retirement.

-Judy

When I first came to DMWS, I got the impression that Dotty Ritchie was a bit scary. She's not. She is a person of substance who feels a genuine connection to others and cares enough to say what she thinks. She is always wonderfully kind and supportive; she sees the positive in everyone and everything. She is one of my favorite people at DMWS and I shall miss her terribly, but I know that wherever Dotty is, there is love and laughter.

-Wendy White-Hensen

Dear Mrs. Ritchie,

Duke Memorial Weekday School will not be the same without you! I feel so lucky that all three of my children were able to have you as their first teacher. I am so grateful for all you did for my children. I hope you enjoy your time with your grandchildren and time for yourself. We will miss you!

-Lou

When I hear the sound of Dotty's car coming into the parking lot, I know that, at least for four hours, all is right in my world. That sound is as unique as the person who arrives with it. I am very lucky to have had them in my life for over 20 years and I will really miss them.

-Pat Bartlett

What do the following items have in common?

- Jimmy Carter was President of the United States
- Affirmed won the Kentucky Derby
- People listened to "Hotel California" by the Eagles and "Rumours" by Fleetwood Mac on the radio
- The price of a first-class stamp went from \$0.13 to \$0.15

If you guessed they all were true in May, 1978, just as Dotty Ritchie was finishing her first year of teaching 2's at Duke Memorial Weekday School then you'd be correct! Mrs. Ritchie (sometimes called Mrs. Witchie by her students) is now completing her 30th year of loving and guiding 2's. Mrs. Ritchie was already an icon by the time my two girls were in her class in the late 1990's. It amazes me to think of all the lives she has positively impacted during her tenure. Over the years, she has spent many days on our playground, helped hundreds of little hands learn to cut with scissors, sung thousands of songs (over and over and over again), and changed an astronomical number of diapers. For the last eight years, I have had the incredible good fortune to work as Mrs. Ritchie's assistant. Her energy and devotion to the children is boundless. She has taught me so much and I am grateful. Thanks, Mrs. Ritchie for all you have done for DMWS!

-Julie Allen

Dotty,

Thank you for your enduring commitment and love for young children that you have so faithfully demonstrated by your lengthy service at Duke Memorial Weekday School. Your compassion and uplifting attitude are a blessing to me and, I am certain, to many students and their parents. God bless you in your retirement!

-Jim Bell

Dotty,

We will miss your expert mulch sweeping on the playground so much next year! As well as your dedication to all the young children who come through our doors each day.

-Holly and Leslie

When I think of Mrs. Ritchie, I remember all the quiet things she has done for the school. She has shoveled snow, picked up trash, and cleaned tops of door frames. She lives as she speaks. Thanks for your example and enjoy your retirement!

-Lyleen Collins

Dear Dotty,

Thank you very much for making my son's first year of preschool such a wonderful experience. Thanks for your 30 years of dedication to Duke Memorial. You will be greatly missed!

-Leslie Alkins

As a former parent and current teacher at DMWS, Dotty Ritchie has exemplified to me a genuine example of someone who is a cornerstone of this preschool. Through her great example of service, patience, and unconditional love she has been a true witness of God's desire for everyone – "to love the little children". I will personally miss her and know without a shadow of doubt that she has left her handprints on the hearts of all who have been associated with her at DMWS.

-Kathy Powell

Dotty,

While we will miss your wit and wisdom, you are forever irreplaceable in our hearts and will always be a touchstone for Duke Memorial Weekday School. We love you!

-Peggy and Sharon

Dear Dotty,

I have several great memories of you. When my son was your student (11 years ago!), I was a nervous, over-protective mother. You were so patient with my endless calls to you to ask you how he was doing. You helped to guide us on what to do in so many ways. Then came that more than slightly spoiled daughter of mine and to make matters worse, her mother was there in the building. Again, there you were to guide me not only as a parent but as a co-worker. I remember a story you told me once about Jacob. He had gotten hurt on the playground and came running to you. You said to me, any safe port in a storm. That is you Dotty, a safe port and I cannot begin to express how much I will miss you.

-Cristen Chappell

(Jacob and Julia's mom)

It is difficult for me to imagine Duke Memorial Weekday School without Dotty Ritchie on our staff. I love to walk past her classroom and see her two year old students sitting in their tiny chairs, listening to Mrs. Ritchie giving them instructions, or leading them in a song. Her voice is always quiet, and she expects full attention from her young pupils. There are many adults in the world whose lives are enriched because their education began with this special teacher, who remained dedicated to her career for thirty years. I wish Dotty a wonderful retirement – filled with lots of adventures with her Grandchildren and some WELL EARNED REST! Dotty, I will miss you.

-Pam Wheeler