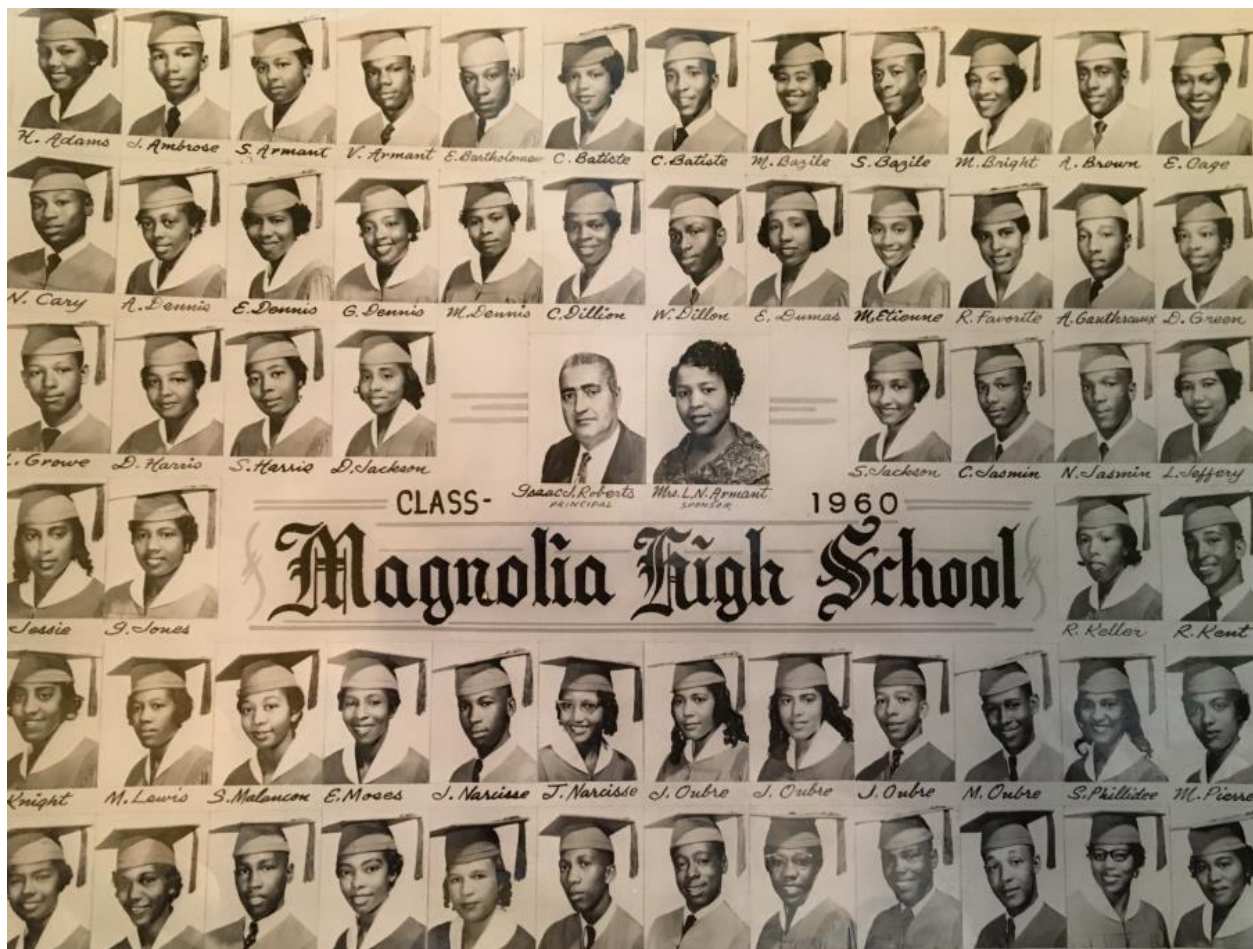


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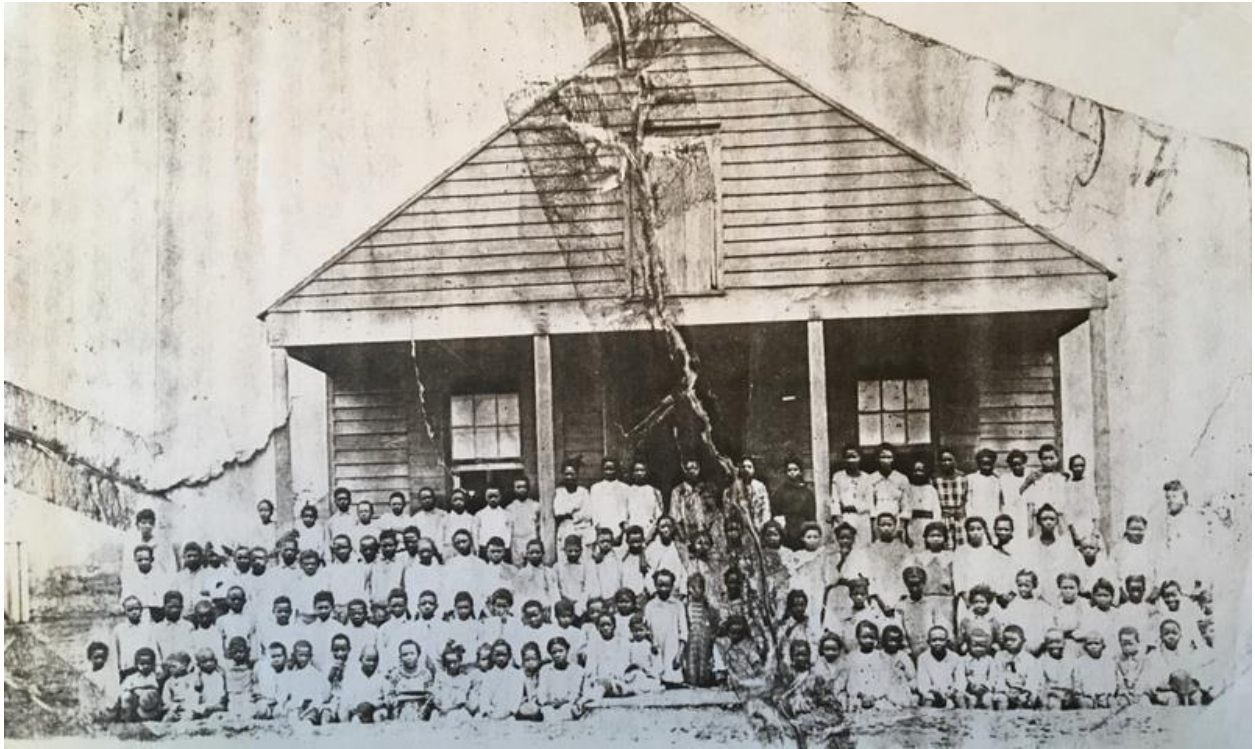
## Magnolia High School

"Magnolia Senior High School was located in Vacherie, Louisiana, a rural area on the west bank of the Mississippi River as it passes through St. James Parish between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. It operated as a school for African American (Negro) students for approximately twenty-five years. The first class graduated in 1951. The diploma had a descriptive notation: "Approved Negro High School" included in its body. The 1952 class had nine graduates. Magnolia's history is primarily transmitted orally by the many former students who attended it between 1947 and 1970.



The school was housed for about ten years in an elementary school which educated "Negroes" by parish mandate up to the eighth grade. Those who wanted to extend their education had to leave the parish. When the non-farm population grew and the war ended residents demanded an education equal to that of the white residents of the parish. The elementary school was remodeled to accommodate high schoolers. At this point the building housed grades three through twelve. Since Magnolia was the only Black (Negro) high school on the west bank and served all of the small parish community schools

including Shell Mound, Burton Lane, Baytree, Cedar Grove, and St. Louis it became necessary in 1952 to advocate for a stand-alone larger high school.



The new school opened in 1958 about three miles from its original Church Street location in the middle of the nearly all Black Community called Magnolia. The new site was a pasture-like piece of ground on Highway 18 adjacent to the abandoned "Les Petite Aimee" historical plantation. Nearly all the students (less than 300) were bussed to the school. Today the school remains in use, but it has been repurposed and renamed.



# THE OFFICIAL BOARD

## OF THE LOCAL COLORED SCHOOL BOARD OF VACHERIE

Whose Term Expires January 15, 1923

REV. G. JAMES, General Manager ;  
GENTIL DUMAS, Vice-President ;  
LOUIS LEMIEUX, Assistant-Secretary ;

FLORESTAL OUBRE, President ;  
VICTOR JONES, Secretary ;  
EDWARD PHILIP, Treasurer ;

WM. HOLMES, Janitor.

**Auditors :** ANDREW OUBRE, PAUL DUMAS, BART KELLER.

**Banking Committee :** EDWARD PHILIP, JR., GENTIL DUMAS, STANISLAS PHILIP

**Board Members :** DAVIS LOURENT, URSIN DUMAS, LOUIS DUMAS, ULYSSES  
FIFEE, THOMAS PHILIP, HORACE LEMIEUX.

**Charter Members :** EPHRIAM DUMAS, CYRILL DUMAS, EDWARD SAUL, AMELUCE  
STEIB, PAUL JESSIE, WILLIE JAMES, ROSAMOND STEIB,  
AMELUCHE OUBRE.

### FELLOW CITIZENS OF VACHERIE :

This brings us across the eventful field of another twelve months of school history. It is, indeed, a moment of life so inspired with the consciousness of gratitude that distant future can easily recall true obligation.

During the interval of the past twelve months, we incorporated your local school board for a period of 99 years, and also secured true copy of the deed for the school property. The building is absolutely covered with insurance, and we have striven to improve the property and make it so that the people of Vacherie should be proud to own, provided the mortgage lien against it be definitely cancelled.

Our services in this particular have always tended to the promotion of good feeling towards the people of the community, and it is a very delightful pleasure for us to come before you with the confidence that you will appreciate our statement and help us to raise about \$140.00 to pay off the debt on the property.

There will be a Grand Christmas Tree Exhibition in the school house, Sunday night, January 14th, 1923. The tree will be decorated by the President and members of the Women's Auxiliary, for social amusement of the people in general. Come papa, come mamma, come boys and girls, prepared to give what you can from a 25 cents to \$10. If you love your children, come and let us raise the money to pay off this debt.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD.

Respectfully,

G. JAMES

General Manager.

Magnolia held its last graduation with the class of 1969-70. The school was integrated and became a part of the all-white St. James High school which was located about five miles upriver.



**Our School**



Of course the process was long, tedious, and painful. People have a lot of love and respect for those who fought to keep the school open and to keep its memory alive. In 2018 the class of 1968 held its 50th reunion. The class of 1967 held its 50th reunion in 2017 as well. The class of 1957 held its 60th reunion in 2017.



*Queen*



There is still talk about the school's startup such as the football, baseball and softball games. They talk especially of the tiny football players whose games had to be played on an available Laura Plantation lot which was upriver on Highway 18. With little equipment and accessories, they competed with other Negro schools up and down the river. Sometimes the schools shared their gloves and other equipment with each other.



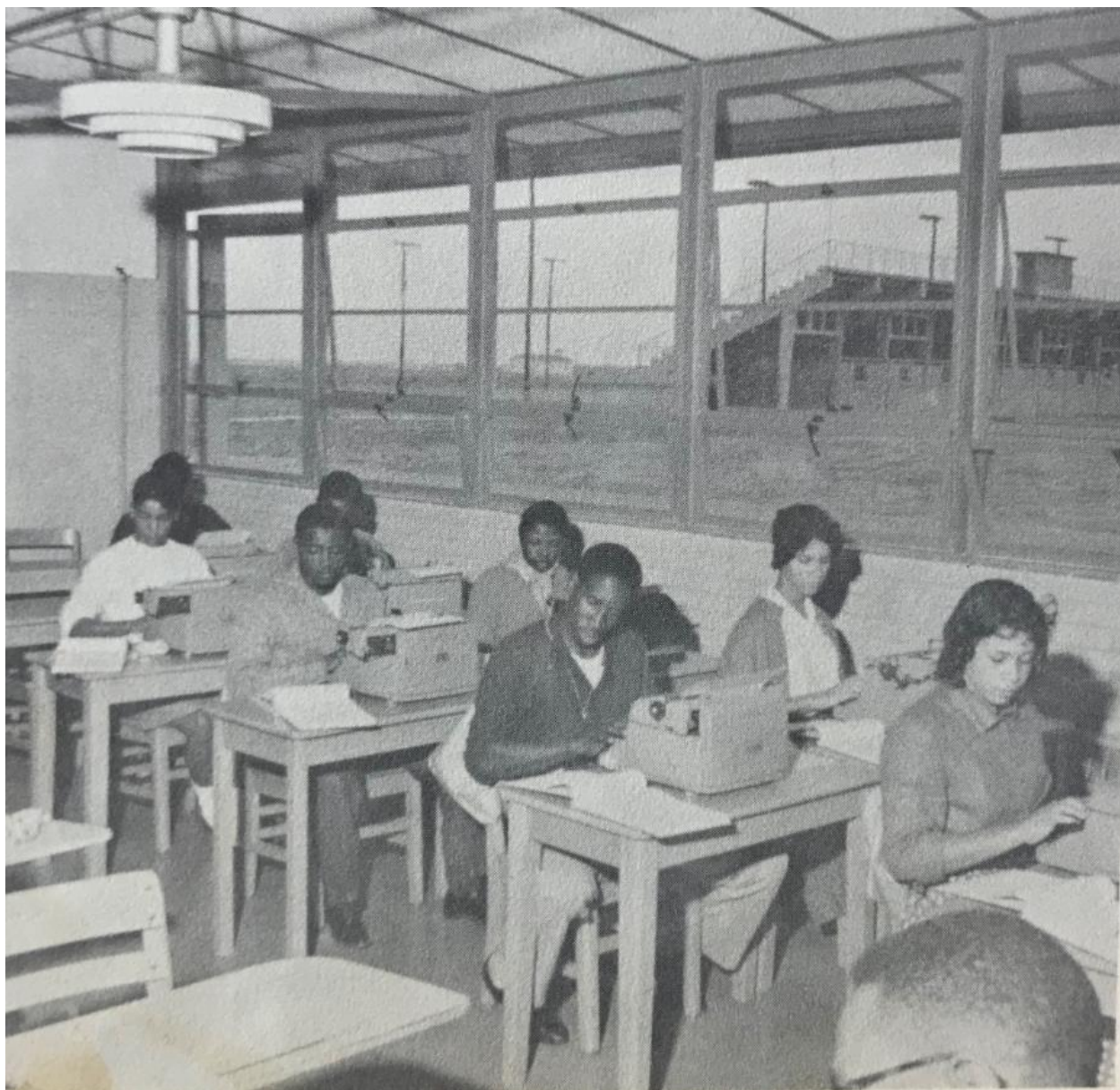


Several of the homecoming queens, especially the first one, Mary Ann Braud (Class of 1953), are still very active in 2018. The school had it all: Track Teams, Academic Teams, Clubs, Student Council, Plays, Operettas, and other growth activities due to dedicated and mostly imported teachers as well as strong parental support. The school had one principal Mr. Issiac J. Roberts, who served his adopted community admirably.



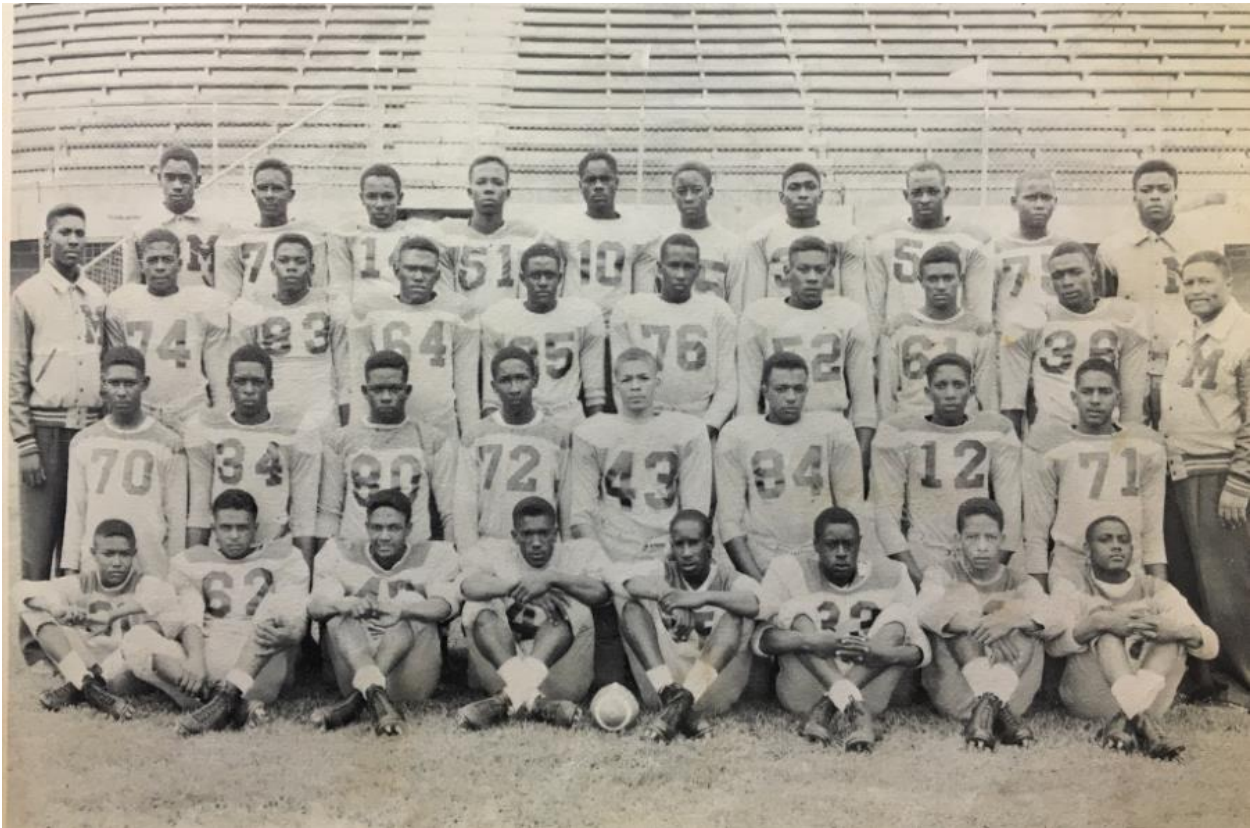


Magnolia High school's legacy is powerful and safe. A very common occurrence is to see graduates wearing blue and gold tee shirts and remade sports jackets with the Bulldog and a big "M" emblazoned on the chest or back. Pictures, yearbooks, jackets, and other memorabilia are cherished! "Magnolia! Magnolia! Your gold and blue" are the beginning words of the alma mater which is sung at appropriate gatherings.



Magnolia High was a good experience for the parish. Lots of doors opened for many people. From day one, its graduates went on to college. Most went to Southern University. One of its first graduates became a dietitian.





### **Magnolia High School Football District**

Magnolia	St. James
Cypress Grove	Lutcher
2 <sup>nd</sup> Ward	Edgard
Bethune	Destrehan
Carver High	Hahnville
5 <sup>th</sup> Ward	Reserve

As with many productive schools the graduates have become educators, (two became School Superintendents), lawyers, doctors, armed services personnel, small business owners, entrepreneurs, administrators, authors, international ministers, pastors, politicians, activists, musicians, family builders and bold contributors to society."

Article Source: <https://africanamericanhighschoolsinsouthernlouisianabefore1970.com/magnolia-high-school->



vacheriela/



## Principal's Message

In the pursuit of excellence several considerations must be kept in mind. Our conception of excellence must embrace many kinds of achievement at many levels—in intellectual activity, art, music, craftsmanship, human relations, and technical work. We must recognize that excellence is a product not only of native ability but of motivation and character. The more one observes high performance in daily life, the more one is impressed with the contribution made by the latter two ingredients.

May our character, dignity, and creativity be a shining symbol of the future.

Greetings and best wishes to all of you.

Sincerely,

L. J. ROBERTS

## **Isaac Roberts**

Principal of Magnolia High School

Isaac J. Roberts (1913-1981) was a WWII veteran (Army Sergeant) who became the principal of Magnolia High School and served in that capacity throughout its existence at its last site (1958-1970). He is the single person most identified with Magnolia High School and even in times of segregation, was highly respected by both the black and white communities.

His wife Gertrude passed away in 1990. They were childless and there are no remaining members of his family. One former Magnolia student said "Mr. Isaac Roberts was ahead of his time. He envisioned the possibilities of what his students could become, and he guided his teachers, staff, and students to expect the very best and to do their very best. He cared deeply about the students and he conveyed to them that the sky was the limit and that they could reach for the stars. The seeds he planted at Magnolia High School sprouted. The education the school provided took so many of us to college and pathways that included careers at home and around the world. That was no easy feat, given the time and the circumstances, but Mr. Roberts saw the possibilities.

He would be so proud of us today." Perhaps his greatest qualification for this honor are the hundreds of former Magnolia High students and teachers who went on to become great assets to St. James High.

Written By: Irving "Boo" Schexnayder, [bschex@sacspeed.com](mailto:bschex@sacspeed.com)