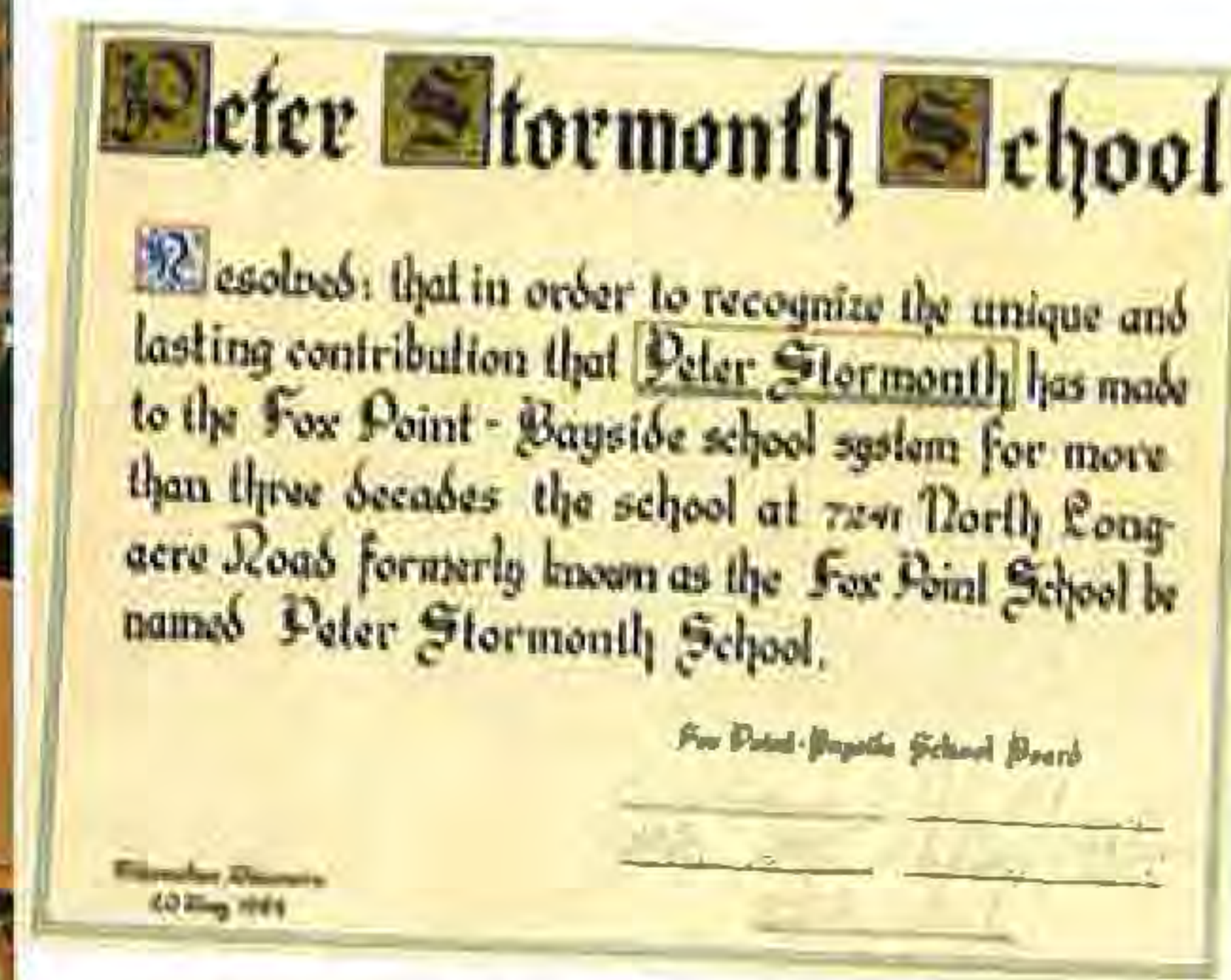




Nancy Konrad and David Hase



Peter Stormonth School Resolution Changing the name of Fox Point School to Peter Stormonth School

PETER STORMONTH AND HIS LEGACY IN FOX POINT

Part Two

Peter Stormonth was a man of firsts. He was the first principal of the new Fox Point School on Longacre Road and later the first superintendent of the Fox Point-Bayside School District. Most of all, he was first and foremost a teacher. Education, he said, “is not so much a matter of excellence in one subject. It’s the mental training and discipline to meet the problems of life.” Stormonth’s gift was to combine the classical ideas of teaching brought over from his native Scotland with modern American instructional methods.

It started with class management. Stormonth believed that children feel secure and happy when control is firm but kind. Students respect the teacher who commands the classroom situation yet remains approachable and open to reasonable requests and suggestion.

Student attention and concentration are absolutely necessary to a real learning situation, Stormonth wrote. “Never begin to explain anything until you have the undivided attention of your pupils.”

“It is not wise to talk, or lecture more than absolutely necessary. It is a waste of valuable educational time and anyway children learn mostly by doing, not by listening.”

Stormonth emphasized standards of achievement. “Careless and untidy work,” he said, “that is handed in to you by your pupils is a very obvious index of their respect for your standards. Do not accept any kind of work that is clearly below the pupil’s ability.”

Children, he believed, should be given only as much freedom as they can reasonably handle at their specific ages. “[Children] cannot be treated as adults until they can reason as adults and you are not doing any child a favor by treating him beyond his maturity level. Never let conditions in the classroom continue to the point where you are losing the respect and obedience of your class.”

Stormonth elucidated his pedagogical theories in a speech to the Parent Teachers Association of Fox Point in December of 1934. He emphasized the importance of discipline in the school setting.

What we want first and foremost is to instill into our children respect for and obedience to grown-up people. I do not mean the blind obedience that submerges all sense of justice in that respect that comes through the fear of punishment but the fine respect and loyal obedience to us as worthy examples of all things they consider ideal.

From personal classroom experience, I can assure you that I welcome polite contradiction where any question is in doubt. [As] I say, when it is a debatable question, we thrash about in a perfectly friendly way and through gentle guidance to solve the problem.

Good study habits, good health habits, love of good books, neatness, sportsmanship, cooperation, and courtesy are some of the important character traits which we are trying to instill. These are the things that bring success and happiness in the end. With these as a background, I believe that any child can produce to a surprising degree. The elementary grades are the most vital ones. These are the years in which good and bad foundations are laid.

Residents created the Fox Point-Bayside School District during the thirty years of Stormonth’s tenure. It grew from one school with seven classrooms and seven teachers—including Stormonth—to 70 classrooms with 1,750 pupils in three schools, a \$1.5 million budget and 100 teachers. The pedagogical principles, however, stayed the same. Education, Stormonth believed, cannot be made too easy. “Education means getting the mental training and discipline so you can use your head to solve life’s problems.” Of the many

children Stormonth guided, he said he knew of no failures.

In a 1978 interview, Stormonth took issue with the modern curriculum. “What is needed is more imagination in teaching the ‘3R’s’. If grammar can be made fun, imagine how lively other subjects can be taught.”

Nancy Konrad, Peter Stormonth’s daughter, graduated from the Fox Point School in 1952. When she was growing up the family lived at 404 East Bradley Road. She remembers walking to the Fox Point School on a cow path next to the railroad tracks down to Calumet Road. Nancy recalls the many extracurricular activities her father introduced to the school: field hockey for the girls, and cricket and soccer for the boys.

David Hase, later a lawyer and deputy attorney general for the State of Wisconsin, graduated from the Fox Point School in 1954. “Under Stormonth’s leadership,” said Hase, “the Fox Point School had the finest gathering of educators I have had the privilege of being associated with.” Hase went on to graduate from Nicolet High School, Dartmouth College, and the University of Wisconsin Law School. It all started with Peter Stormonth, said Hase, and it was a package: the education and the sports. Hase remembers the tennis and ice skating, and annual football game at the end of the year with the 8th graders taking on the male teachers.

Peter Stormonth died in 1985. As the Village approaches its centennial in 2026, I predict Stormonth will have another first: the most influential individual in our village’s first one hundred years. His legacy endures.

Douglas H. Frazer is a Fox Point resident and neighborhood contributor as well as the village president. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the Village, the village board, other village board members, or Best Version Media, LLC.

Thank you from retiring superintendent Peter Stormonth

A “THANK YOU”

From Retiring Superintendent Peter Stormonth

Dear Friends,

I trust that you will pardon my using this method of expressing my deepest thanks to the great number of folks who participated so generously in such heart-warming farewells to yours truly. It was an overwhelming experience and one which I shall cherish always. It was especially heart-warming to meet again so many parents and pupils of my early days in Fox Point and to recall so many happy memories.

I hope to be able to answer personally the many nice letters that I received from far and wide. Meanwhile please know that I shall always feel blest that I spent so many happy years as a teacher in this friendly and generous community.

Mrs. Stormonth and I thank you all for your great thoughtfulness and kindness in filling our cup of happiness to the brim.

For Auld Lang Syne,
PETER STORMONTH

The immortality of influence

The Immortality of Influence.

*I took a piece of plastic clay
And mildly fashioned it one day.
And as my fingers crushed it still
It moved and yielded to my will.*

*I came again when days were past
The bit of clay was hard at last
The form I gave it still it bore
But I could change it never more*

*I took a piece of living clay
And gently formed it day by day
And molded with my power and art
A young child’s soft and yielding heart.*

*I came again when years were gone
It was a man I looked upon
He still that early impress bore
And I could change him never more.*