

# History of

# Simonton Elementary School

Richard Caldwell Simonton gave more than his name to Simonton Elementary. Indeed, the Barrow County administrator and Lilburn Elementary School teacher who would eventually serve as Gwinnett County superintendent left a legacy. His love for learning and determination to succeed would permeate the walls of an elementary school not even built until 28 years after his death.

Simonton Elementary School has known three principals since its 1993 founding. Betty Robinson served from 1993 to 2002; Dr. Carolyn Ford from 2002 to 2004; and Dr. Dot Schoeller from August 2004 to present. For all of these leaders, the commitment to educating children well has been of paramount importance.

Simonton is located on 17 acres just outside Lawrenceville's city limits. It is on this property that a story of great change and opportunity has unfolded within the past 13 years. From a beginning enrollment of 900 students in 1993, the population increased 24 percent to 1,183 by 1998. The resulting lack of space meant 10 classrooms had to be situated in trailers. By 2002, the school's enrollment had skyrocketed 29 percent to 1,657 students. Additionally, a 63 percent increase in the number of modular units took the school from 10

FAST FACTS	
<b>Address:</b> 275 Simonton Road Lawrenceville, GA 30045	
The following have served as principals of Simonton Elementary School:	
1993-2002	Betty Robinson
2002-04	Dr. Carolyn Ford
2004-2010	Dr. Dot Schoeller
2010–Present	Dr. Chandra Young
<b>School Colors:</b> Black and Gold	
<b>School Mascot:</b> Black Knights	

trailers to 27. That year, a 10-classroom building addition inclusive of a computer lab and resource classrooms reduced the number of trailers from 27 to 15. While a 1996-97 rezoning relocated approximately 40 students to another cluster, a continuous influx of people into the community resulted in a 2003-2004 enrollment of 2,100 students with 46 classes located in portable classrooms. A new elementary school, Margaret Winn Holt, opened in August 2004, and redistricting relieved Simonton of 900 students.



The Simonton community is highly diverse, both demographically and professionally. Parent education levels vary from those with only some high school to those with graduate degrees. Since 1999, the number of ethnicities comprising Simonton's student population has changed considerably. Indeed, the increase in ethnic and cultural diversity is a hallmark of the school Simonton has become. In 1993, 88 percent of the students were Caucasian, with the remaining 12 percent of African-American and Asian decent. Since 1998, the school has experienced substantial demographic changes. Simonton's international population speaks 47 different languages. In 1998, Simonton served 65 ESOL students with one-and-a-half teachers. By 2001–02, 173 ESOL students were served by four teachers. This trend continues in 2006 with six ESOL teachers serving 283 students.

To foster community involvement, Simonton offers a variety of opportunities for parents. Parents are invited to participate in conferences, parent groups, and workshops that are offered at varying times of the day and evening. Community nights are held monthly as way of helping families feel like part of the school.

Simonton's motto is "helping every child learn." A canvas of possibility, the school that bears the name of a dedicated educator cherishes each child that passes through her portals. At the end of the day, no matter the inevitable challenges, if the children have been helped, nurtured, and educated, that's what matters.

Ah, yes. Teach the children well. Mr. Simonton would be proud.