

Those who love the old building on Warren Avenue soon will bid

# Farewell to a Memorable School

By LUCILE McDONALD

**F**RIDAY evening, May 15, former pupils, former teachers and the staff of Warren Avenue School will gather at the 57-year-old building for a reunion and farewell to the structure. The school, near the Civic Auditorium, is scheduled for demolition to make way for the Century 21 Exposition and the future Civic Center.

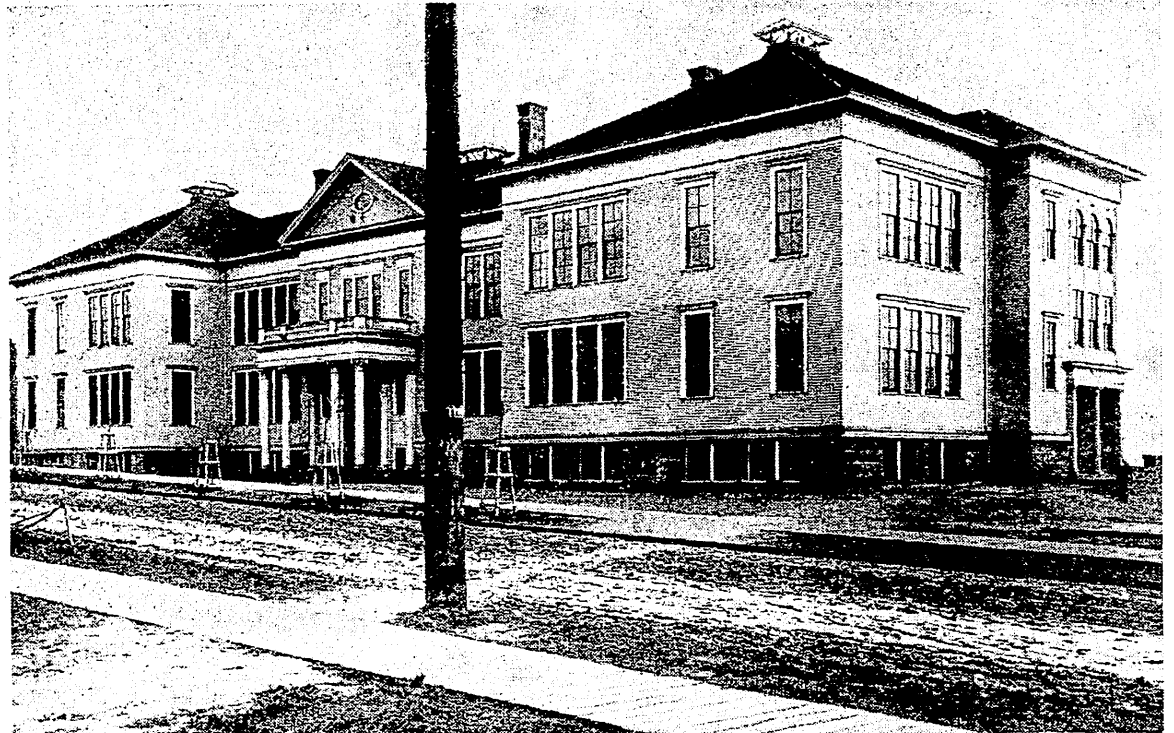
No other school in Seattle has had so important a humanitarian role as Warren Avenue.

With its abandonment the special classes at present housed under its roof will be decentralized and scattered to several other buildings. The cerebral-palsy group will go to Lowell School, the blind to John Hay, the sight-saving class to Coe and the hard-of-hearing to Green Lake.

Pupils in the nine regular rooms will transfer to West Queen Anne and John Hay.

The neighborhood school attendance of Warren Avenue has shrunk from a peak of 800 to 250 children. It decreased by 40 pupils in the present school year alone, said the principal, Miss Theona Flick. Formerly the community boasted a stable population; now a great percentage of families are transient occupants of houses soon to be cleared away.

**W**ARREN AVENUE SCHOOL was erected in a period when enrollments were increasing at a rate of 2,000 children annually in Seattle. Six new elementary buildings and Broadway High School were completed in 1902. Of these structures, Edison Technical School, formerly Broadway, Thomas Mann and Edmond Meany Junior High Schools



THE WARREN AVENUE SCHOOL, which is to make way for the Century 21 Exposition and Civic Center, was built in 1902. In this early photo the building was above the level of Warren Avenue; now the street grade is higher.

and University Heights Elementary still are in use. The junior highs respectively once were the Walla Walla and Longfellow Elementary Schools.

Albert Wickersham, the architect who designed Warren Avenue School, was from Arkansas, says his daughter, Mrs. Helen Scharr of Mercer Island. He gave the building a classical arched-front entry with four detached columns and four built-in

columns supporting a railed roof. The railing disappeared years ago and the dignity of the entrance is marred by boxlike parts of the ventilating system.

Roofed cupolas are oddities on top of the two-story structure. Three chimneys indicate there were several furnaces.

A 12-room unit costing \$45,000 constituted the original building. Eight rooms were added in 1914 and portables were set up on the grounds in 1944.

**T**HE school opened Monday, February 16, 1903, with 350 pupils, transferred from the congested Mercer and Denny Schools.

"Warren Avenue School," observed a writer in *The Seattle Times*, "is a much-needed addition in a part of the city where present crowded conditions are most felt . . ."

"It embodies all the improved methods of heating and ventilating found in the new high school and six other buildings erected in the past year.

"Ventilation is provided by a large revolving fan located in the cellar that draws fresh air from out of doors through a warming chamber and then forces it into the rooms above. This results in a constantly changing atmosphere in the school rooms without recourse to doors or windows with accompanying draughts. The temperature is held at 70 degrees by a thermostat device that acts automatically upon the heating arrangements of the different rooms."

A photograph taken at that time shows the building above the level of Warren Avenue, whereas one now must descend seven steps to enter. The ground across the street has been elevated and the large trees growing there were planted at a later date. Trees planted in the parking strip on the school side were removed when roots damaged paving and sidewalks.

Throughout the building are reminders of old-type construction. The cloakrooms were in arcades in

the halls, the arches closed with metal grilles. High wainscoting of dark wood offered no temptation to children to scribble on the walls. A cast-iron corner sink coated with white enamel in a second-floor storage room looks like an antique.

Principals' offices in buildings of 1902 vintage always were on the second floor over the entrance. The space at Warren Avenue in recent years was allotted to the school nurse and the office was moved to the main floor.

Near the old principal's office is a well-worn ladder leading to a trap door in the attic floor. Modern schools do not have attics.

On each floor of the building is a pull device to sound a fire gong. This was superseded by electric alarm signals. Coal bins of yore are today's storage rooms and the trap door through which the coal was unloaded is boarded.

Mrs. William Friedli, chairman of the reunion for the Warren Avenue Parent-Teacher Association, was graduated from the school in 1941. She has two children attending there this year.

"I wouldn't have traded living in the Warren Avenue neighborhood for anything," said Mrs. Friedli. "It had so many advantages. Industry was close by and our classes could walk down to visit the waterfront and go through the Washington Co-operative plant and bakeries. There were cable cars on the Queen Anne Hill counter-balance and the Civic Stadium was on the Auditorium site. Kids used to climb fences to peek at games. There was always something going on."

**T**HE peak of enrollment at Warren Avenue was passed in 1929. Industry gradually spread northward and little by little residences gave way to business. The school, no longer crowded, was a central place where school administrative heads could channel exceptional children, if not too handicapped, into regular classrooms for participation.

A class for cerebral-palsy victims



ALLAN MIETTUNEN, speech therapist, supervised a game of shuffleboard among members of a cerebral-palsy group now attending the school. In recent years Warren Avenue has housed special classes for handicapped children of Seattle, as well as regular classes.