

IDS-CC Community Celebrates Dedication Of The Farish Center: A Teachable Moment

While academic lessons about the order of operations or the Industrial Revolution can be integrated into math and social studies curriculums, some of the most valuable “life” lessons are most effectively taught outside a syllabus.

For example, how do you teach about dignity and respect or concern for others in a way that is both real and memorable? For a school such as Independent Day School-Corbett Campus (IDS-CC), which is committed to addressing the needs of the “whole” child including the development of strong character and firm values, it’s a significant question. One of the ways IDS-CC accomplishes that goal is by taking advantage of teachable moments as these invaluable opportunities present themselves.

For example, the school’s recent dedication of its new teacher training facility and theater, The Farish Center, was a unique opportunity for students to learn about generosity and expressing appreciation.



Cornelia Corbett (l) and sister, Libbie Farish Gerry

“In the fall of last year, the board of trustees unanimously decided to dedicate our showcase building on the lake to honor longtime IDS-CC parent and former President of the Board of Trustees Cornelia Corbett and her family: her parents Edward Harriman and Martha Farish Gerry and her grandparents William Stamps and Libbie Rice Farish,” said IDS-CC Board of Trustees President Jim Conlin. “This decision was based on the model leadership and generosity Mrs. Corbett has extended to our school for over 20 years.”

At the center’s dedication, the entire IDS-CC community of students, faculty, staff, trustees represented by Mr. Conlin, and parents, represented by board member Kim Rogers, celebrated her generosity. Heartfelt words, musical performances and an abundance of colorful posters and signs that students enthusiastically waved and pumped up and down during the assembly were a sincere show of appreciation and tribute.

“What makes a person decide to give to others?” asked Headmaster Dr. Joyce Burick Swarzman as she introduced Mrs. Corbett. “What is the secret of generosity?”

Mrs. Corbett provided the answer to that question as she read a tender and affectionate letter she had written to her grandmother for the occasion. The excited and celebratory community gathered in Corbett Hall fell silent as a Mrs. Corbett “spoke” to a much loved grandmother delivering her own words of appreciation for lessons given to her as a child. They were lessons learned from family members who were personally involved in their communities, giving of themselves and their time as well as their financial resources, to grow and strengthen institutions and individuals.

It was her fun-loving and gracious grandmother, however, who had the most “vivid” influence on a young and admiring granddaughter, modeling for her the legacy of generosity that she would, in return, model for others in her life.

“What you did that influenced me the most,” read Mrs. Corbett “was what you did for other people. Your gentle generosity. Your dignity and grace. You gave without fanfare because it was the right thing to do. And you never wanted recognition for yourself. That’s why I’m recognizing you and grandpa in the Farish Center.”

“Cornelia Corbett has been a model trustee and board president” said Mr. Conlin during the dedication. “To positively impact others. To give back. To make a place better than one found it. These have been her daily mantras. Yet she told me once that she has had her own models: her parents, her grandfather, and, of course, her grandmother. The Farish Center is a tribute that will serve as a symbol of the difference one family can make in the lives of thousands of students and their families as they go forward and positively impact others.”