

# ZELMA LENORE WICKERSON HUTSELL

September 20, 1904 to May 12, 1973



Zelma Hutsell Elementary School, which opened its doors to students in August, 1978, was named for Zelma Lenore Hutsell. Mrs. Hutsell had been a teacher and administrator in the Katy school system for twenty-four years when she retired in 1967. Her first year of teaching in the Katy district began in September, 1943.

Mrs. Hutsell was born in Lone Rock, Arkansas, on September 20, 1904. At an early age she moved with her parents to Mangum, a small town in the southwestern part of Oklahoma. Her parents were Frank and Lillie Sword Wickersham and Zelma was the first child of a family of three boys and four girls.

Zelma attended school in Mangum, Oklahoma, from first grade through eleventh grade. She graduated as valedictorian of her Mangum High School class of 1923 at the age of eighteen years.

During her school years, she was very active as a member of Christian Endeavor, a youth organization of the Central Christian Church in her hometown. As the eldest child in her family, she took a great interest in the welfare of her brothers and sisters and was given much responsibility in their care.

Her artistic interests developed early in life and as teenager she began teaching painting in her home on Saturdays. She stated that she did not make much money in this activity, but taught because she loved teaching. One of her students paid with canary birds, she said.

In the fall of 1923, she began teaching in her hometown of Mangum. She attended college at night and during summers at Teacher's College in Weatherford, Oklahoma, and at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. Her Bachelor's Degree was not completed until May 23, 1943, when she graduated from Southwestern State University in San Marcos, Texas. Her Master's Degree was conferred on May 30, 1959, by the University of Houston. She was listed in Who's Who in Colleges and Universities and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

At the age of twenty-one, Zelma accepted a teaching position in the Winslo, Arizona, Elementary School. It was in Winslo that she met Gratton McKinley Hutsell whom she married on May 27, 1932. Two children, Charles and Mary Ann, were born of this marriage. Both of these children eventually taught for a number of years in Texas schools.

On July 4, 1941, the Hutsell family came to Katy, Texas. Zelma began teaching in the Katy school system in the fall of 1943. During her tenure in this system, she served as a classroom teacher and, for a time, as principal of the old Katy Elementary School.

Zelma Hutsell was a kind and caring teacher. She spent much time with lesson planning and paper grading. She loved and respect her students and received their love and respect in return. She taught with firmness, always expecting her students to do their best. Students recognized her care and concern and responded with enthusiasm and effort. Her students profited from her dedicated interest in their total development and received many advantages from her knowledge of a wide variety of subject areas.

Mrs. Hutsell retired as a fourth grade teacher at Katy Elementary School at the end of the 1966-1967 school term. Failing health was the primary reason for this decision. Everyone was sad to see that she was leaving the field of education. During her retirement years she busied herself with art activities, her family, and with frequent substitute teaching. She and her husband loved to travel, and her retirement gave them the opportunity to make a number of trips exploring parts of the United States and Canada which they had not seen before. They especially loved traveling in the Western and Southwestern states and had been in twenty-two states in the US and Canada. They had returned to their home in Katy from a two-week trip the day before her death.

Zelma Hutsell's love and professional ability touched the lives of many people in the Katy area. It is altogether fitting that a school in the Katy Independent School District should bear the name "Zelma Hutsell Elementary School" in honor of this gracious lady who had dedicated so many years of her life to education.

Robert E. King