



McMenamins KENNEDY SCHOOL

A Walking Tour of Art and History

You are invited to immerse yourself in the river of art and history that flows through Kennedy School's storied hallways. Virtually all of the images you'll see originated from the memories and mementos of hundreds of students, teachers, and neighbors. This "art history" guide provides some details about a selection of images. Yet there is so much more to discover on your own!

Portland Public School architect, Floyd A. Naramore, designed Kennedy Elementary School in the Italian Renaissance revival style in 1915. Embellished archways and sculpted borders decorate the entrances and hallways of the school. The single-story layout was also innovative for the era (and considered safer for children).

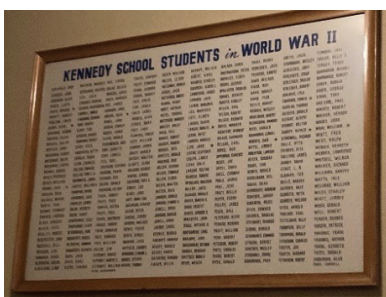
MAIN ENTRANCE



1. LOOK UP! These four bas-relief panels are full size reproductions of Luca della Robbia's 15th-century masterworks done for the cathedral in Florence, Italy. They were crafted in Boston and John Daniel Kennedy (land owner and the school's namesake) gifted them to the school for

its 1916 dedication. Children are depicted dancing, playing trumpets, drums, and reading. These bas-reliefs were displayed at the Portland Art Museum, prior to their placement at Kennedy School. As part of the Kennedy School's 1997 renovation, the panels were restored and reinstalled in their original location in the entrance hall. The plaque next to the gift shop provides more background info.

2. On the right and left side of the school's entrance, these two beautiful black and white paintings are part of a set of four. For the 2001 Black History Month, art students in David Lochtie's class at Rowe Middle School in Milwaukie, Oregon painted stunning tributes to some of the greatest jazz legends in musical history. Two paintings featuring Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and Charlie Parker are displayed here, and the other two paintings with portraits of Count Basie, Lester Young and Thelonius Monk are in the Kennedy School Theater. The students' remarkable artwork had initially been displayed while the Milwaukie High School Jazz Band performed compositions by the featured artists. Additionally, several students gave speeches on the important cultural impact of these musical icons. McMenamins coordinated with the school to permanently display these remarkable paintings at Kennedy School for all to enjoy and admire. Credits for all students who contributed are listed on the wall by the main entrance.



3. This World War II plaque commemorates the Kennedy School students who served in WWII (the stars denote those from the neighborhood who were killed in action). Had it not been for caring friends of the school, the plaque itself would have been lost. The large piece was removed from the school in 1986 to escape the building's uncertain fate. Over the next 11 years, the plaque passed through at least five hands. Finally, the memorial returned to the school for McMenamins grand opening in 1997, where it now hangs proudly.

4. Kennedy School and its rural surroundings are depicted as they were in the late 1910s in Jennifer Joyce's large pastoral landscape. This mural is filled with fun details extracted from the stories of the school's earliest students.

Five portable classrooms stood on the site prior to the present building's construction (and were not removed until the early 1920s). In its early years, Northeast Portland was practically the countryside, before the city expanded electricity,

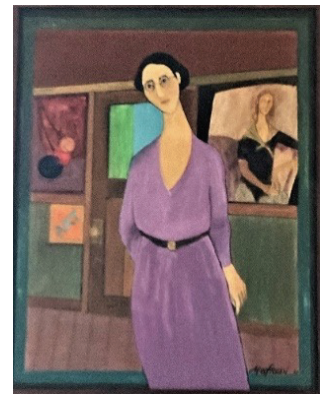


telephone, and water services to areas where many students lived. Notice the dirt roads, expansive farms, orchards, water pumps, clothes lines, and few utility poles. To the left of the school appears The Firs, home of the Kennedy family, for whom the school was named. To the right of the school are two corner stores where much of students' spare change went to buy Lucky Bites and toddies. Kids on the playground, an early airplane, and gatherings on the future site of Fern Hill Park enliven the scene.

The mural is framed by a decorative iron brace salvaged from the old Portland Hotel, one of three displayed at Kennedy School. These artifacts, including chandeliers and wall sconces, were donated by Lawrence Verl Miller and Dorothy Hallin Miller, who salvaged pieces from the grand Portland Hotel before the historic landmark was razed in 1951 to make room for a parking lot (developed as Pioneer Courthouse Square in 1984).



5. "My Modigliani" was painted by artist Carol (Frank) Manfredi, who graduated from Kennedy School in 1949. Her piece is a tribute to her Kennedy School art teacher, Mrs. Stella Pietila. Carol realized in her later art education that Mrs. Pietila, with her tall frame and long neck, resembled figures characteristic of Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani. Carol included a replica of his work just over Mrs. Pietila's left shoulder. Carol wrote the name of her former classmate and friend, Harlan L., beneath the swinging pendulum of primary colors.



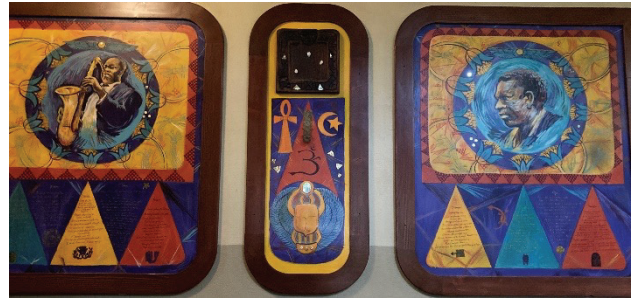
adoring families made up the audience. Today the auditorium is Kennedy School's movie theater.

7. Amo DeBernadis was a rebellious and bright Kennedy School graduate of 1928, seen in this photo astride his Indian motorbike with a friend (name unknown). They are standing in front of his family home on NE 33rd Ave, near the school. DeBernadis went on to become the founding president of Portland Community College. He kindly donated his personal photographs for McMenamins grand re-opening of Kennedy School in 1997. The Amo DeBernadis guest room is dedicated to him and his lasting contributions to Portland.

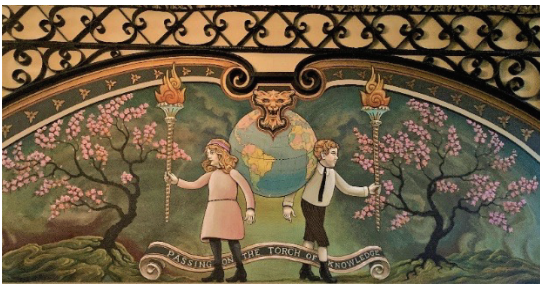
6. Teachers and students regularly put on school-wide performances in the auditorium, built in 1924. Music teacher and pianist Miss Hazel Radabaugh directed over 150 elementary age students in their school production of the musical, Brownie's Whispers, written in 1911. The newspaper article displayed describes the children dressed in flower costumes and as "brownies", a Scottish term for an elf-like spirit (seen in photo). Students sang their hearts out as their



8. This stunning and dynamic triptych was created in the 1990s by the late Portland artist, Charlotte Lewis. It is both a tribute to the Yoruba religion and a portrait of jazz legend and saxophonist John Coltrane. Coltrane's free jazz piece, "Ogunde", is the opening track on his 1967 posthumous album, *Expression*. The music is based on "Ogunde Varere", an Afro-Brazilian folk song whose title translates to "Prayer of the Gods" and is dedicated to the Yoruba god of iron and metal.



Here, in Charlotte's artwork, a Yoruba prayer is inscribed on six triangles in beautiful gold script. According to *The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts* by Baba Ifa Karade: "The Yoruba nation of West Africa was an ancient and vast civilization. In the diaspora caused by the slave trade, the guiding concepts of the Yoruba spiritual tradition took root in Haiti, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Brazil, and the United States." Referencing the mysticism of North Africa, Charlotte also incorporated ancient Egyptian symbols into her piece.



9. The mural, "Passing on the Torch of Knowledge," is the creative work of artist Lyle Hehn. Lyle packed many school symbols into this dramatic, celestial scene. He gave complete bodies to the boy and girl cherub heads that adorn the school's edifice. These figures shoulder the world and pass the proverbial torch of knowledge from one to another. Included are the 60-year-old Japanese cherry trees donated to the school by the Nakamura family in 1939. Two of the school's architectural motifs, a lion head and a trillium, are highlighted in the mural. Another intricate iron brace from the Portland Hotel provides an impressive frame.

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10. This is the decorative façade of a Dutch street organ. The middle panel, "Educating Tomorrow's Leaders" was painted by artist Lyle Hehn. Street organs large and small became popular across Europe in the late 1700s to early 1800s, and in the United States during the mid-19th century. These wheeled street pipe organs were operated by turning a crank, and later on, by a small motor. The organ grinders often rented them out and performed on the street for loose change, sometimes with a pet monkey, as the carnival-like music played. However, there were always a few people who lived or worked nearby the organ grinder's street corner who did not enjoy these loud, repetitive tunes and would pay the organ grinders to stop playing their mechanical music. During WWII, street organs were banned by the occupying Nazis and many of these decorative pipe organs were destroyed or scrapped. This antique piece is quite a rare find, and brightens the walls at Kennedy School.



11. Jimmy Boyer was the front man of the Freak Mountain Ramblers and musician in countless other Pacific Northwest bands. During his lifetime, Boyer played thousands of shows in Portland and on the West Coast (many of these performances were at McMenamins venues). This cowboy style shirt was given to Boyer by musician friend, Pete Krebs, and presented to Mike McMenin for display at Kennedy School as a permanent tribute to Jimmy Boyer and his musical legacy. Boyer had sadly passed from cancer at the too-young age of 47. McMenamins Kennedy School hosted a tribute concert in 2016 to celebrate the life and music of Jimmy Boyer. His Freak Mountain Rambler bandmates as well as Kevin "Bingo" Richey, Lewi Longmire, and many other Portland musicians performed in Boyer's honor at the event.



12. The Gym is an addition built in 1924, nine years after the school's original construction, and has been the site of tug-of-war, dodgeball, and basketball games. Many kids struggled to climb the peg board, do a set of push-ups, and ring the bell at the top of the rope, all to satisfy the president's fitness program. Photos from Kennedy School recess and games can be spotted up and down the hallways. Today, the gym is an event space for meetings, wedding receptions, and concerts.



13. This framed 1936 article from the Portland News-Telegram highlights Kennedy School students and their boat-making project. Under the direction of industrial arts teacher, William Milne, each student built a scaled model of a real boat from history. The National Education Association Convention met in Portland during June of that year, and the students' model ships were a popular exhibit with educators from around the country. After the convention, the boats were kept on display at the school. One model boat made by Kennedy shop teacher, H.C. McCormick, in the 1940s, can still be seen today in the east display case. Several paintings around the school reference students of Mr. Milne and Mr. McCormick constructing boats and birdhouses.



14. The Maypole dance was a Kennedy School tradition for many years. The first was at the school's dedication in 1916. Margaret Schneider Mead, class of 1921, was one of the school girls twining the crepe paper ribbons. At Kennedy School's re-opening in 1997, Margaret was present for the reintroduction of the Maypole dance, a celebration that continued here for decades.

To the right of the Maypole festivities, Myrna painted J. D. and Agnes O'Brien Kennedy, whose home stood just a block north of the school. The herd of cattle rumbling along the unpaved 33rd Avenue alludes to the road's use as a route for driving livestock to the slaughter houses that operated north of the school on Columbia Boulevard. The young girl standing by the flag pole is Ceasa Ok-guma, a Japanese-American girl who attended Kennedy Elementary in the 'teens. She belonged to one of about two dozen Japanese-American families that settled along Columbia Boulevard by 1930. Marian (Lumm) Worsham ('22) and Ceasa were best friends who often rode bikes together. Down the hallways, you will find a few other paintings of the Maypole dance and photos from the 1916 celebration.

15. The Boiler Room Bar opened in 2008, but when Kennedy School opened in 1997, it was still the former domain of the old janitor, Steve Hutton. Students of the late 1920s-30s remember the bagpipe-playing Scotsman who told tales of the Old World and taught two school girls the intricate steps of the Highland Fling for a talent show. He generously gave janitorial assistant jobs to kids needing money and once, he showed a young southpaw named Don Johnson, who had just shattered his left wrist, how to throw right handed (a few years later, Johnson, as a fire-balling right hander, was signed by the New York Yankees).



In 2008, Jeff Allen, plumber and artist, had been collecting interesting pipes and fixtures for years. Unique plumbing and heating parts from other McMenamins buildings, including the Crystal Hotel, Bagdad Theater, Grand Lodge, and Edgefield, were also salvaged and repurposed for this multi-level, 2,800 square ft. space. Jeff welded together a multitude of pipes, valves and radiators to create one-of-a-kind railings on the stairs and balconies. It's one of the school's most unique spaces to enjoy a drink and play a game of shuffleboard.



16. Concordia Brewery is an artistic showcase with several playful and historical allusions. Artwork on the brew kettles portray two stern principals, two early students, the design for Concordia Ale (a name that commemorates the surrounding neighborhood) and the African “goddesses” of hops and barley malt. The space was originally the girl’s restroom and the pink tiling was left as evidence of its past life. A rite of passage for Kennedy boys was to throw open the entry door, make a mad dash through the unusually long room and, with luck, escape out the opposite door without being nabbed by a teacher. The excitement is recreated in paint high on the wall in the brewery’s southwest corner.

17. Kennedy School alumni Pete Ward and Don Johnson went from playing sandlot games with their classmates to the big leagues as professional baseball players. This collage features photos and newspaper announcements of some of their most celebrated victories. (Their donated baseball memorabilia can be found in the west display case.)



Don Johnson, a Portland native and 1940 graduate of Kennedy Elementary School, was drafted into the New York Yankees farm system while he was still a sophomore at Jefferson High School. In 1947, he got the call up to the House that Ruth Built for the Big Show! Don’s new teammates included a couple of his heroes, Joe DiMaggio and Yogi Berra. He went on to play for several MLB teams, and was called back by the Yanks in 2010 for Old Timers’ Day, as part of the celebrated 1950 team that beat the Phillies in the World Series.

Pete Ward and his family moved to Portland in 1944, where he started school at Kennedy Elementary. After playing ball for Jefferson High School and Lewis & Clark College, his athletic career took off. In 1958, Pete was recruited at age 20 to play professionally, and over the course of his baseball career of nine seasons, he played for the Baltimore Orioles, the Chicago White Sox, and the New York Yankees and was inducted into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame, the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and the Chicagoland Sports Hall of Fame.

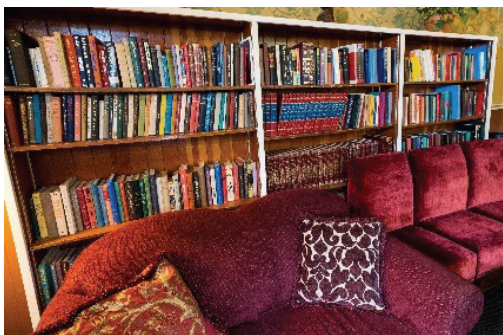


18. The Mina Parsons Room is named for Kennedy School’s first principal (1913-1920s). Mrs. Parsons was one of the first three original teachers. A Norwegian immigrant and champion of the temperance and women’s rights movements, she proudly marched with other suffragists through downtown Portland. At Kennedy, Principal Parsons administered, taught, disciplined, nurtured, even carted in wood to fuel the stoves. Mina Parson’s resolute leadership proved a valuable asset during the school’s rather humble beginnings. (Mrs. Parsons can be found, sporting a stylish fur muff, in a photo near the south exit past the Gym).

19. The Martha Jordan Room is named for kindergarten teacher, Martha Jordan, who taught at Kennedy School from 1948-1962. Mrs. Jordan came to Kennedy in the wake of the Vanport flood of ‘48, which had destroyed her home and the school where she taught. Most Portland schools refused to hire the veteran teacher because Black educators were banned from teaching in the city’s predominately white schools. However, after Mrs. Jordan spoke with Kennedy School Principal David Wright, he accepted her application and thereby Martha Jordan became the first African-American teacher to teach in an integrated school in Oregon.



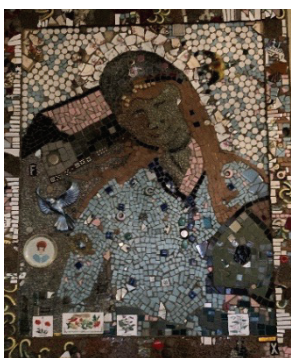
Artist Charlotte Lewis’ painting is displayed on the wall outside the Jordan Room, and the piano-playing teacher is surrounded by her adoring and lively students.



20. Agnes White Library is named for the oldest daughter of J. D. and Agnes Kennedy. Much of her long life was spent in the family house across the street from the school named for her father. She saw the school open in 1915 and, 60 years later, stood up to protest its closing. In between, she stayed actively involved in the school's operation as her three children, Sheila, John, and Bernie, each rose through its eight grades. Agnes' love for the building and anger for its closure inspired a young friend and historical preservationist named Melissa Darby to take action. Darby's efforts to get the school on the National Register

of Historic Places were a critical step in saving the building from demolition. Mrs. White passed away in 1992, not knowing the fate of the school. Her family, however, is certain that her presence endures at Kennedy School, thrilled with the rejuvenation of the 1915 landmark.

MOSAICS AROUND KENNEDY SCHOOL



Throughout the many hallways, artist Mary Tapogna created an enchanting series of mixed media mosaic portraits of teachers and students. They incorporate a selection of playful school notes that were written in the autograph books of Lois Erickson Elliott ('37) in the 1930s. Mary also included photographs of Kennedy students and teachers of various periods.



The outdoor soaking pool features mosaic work by artists Charles Lucas, Jeannie Ralston and Alan Kennard. They created the intricate tile work surrounding the pool, as well as the multicolored, ceramic ribbon that runs high on the school's interior corridor walls. Their waving, rolling, serpentine patterns create a soothing mood, perfect for a warm, relaxing respite.



The Courtyard Restaurant was originally built as the girls' play court. Then in the late '20s, the enclosed space was converted into a cafeteria. The restaurant opens onto a garden courtyard highlighted by a mammoth outdoor fire place capped with Tudor-looking flues. Ceramic artists, Charles Lucas and Jeannie Ralston, decorated the impressive piece with brick-colored tiling and blue ceramic chips that create a pattern of a climbing vine.

Thanks to artists Guy Drennan, Lyle Hehn, Jennifer Joyce, Alan Kennard, Charlotte Lewis, Charles Lucas, Carol Manfredi, Marilyn Maricle, Jeannie Ralston, Isaka Shamsud-Din, Mary Tapogna, Myrna Yoder, Scott Young, and Cathie Joy Young, whose creations transformed the school's hallways into galleries, with each piece creatively chronicling a slice of Kennedy's past.



