

# Comal Independent School District

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Huge turnout for CES farewell ceremony**

It might figure that most people wouldn't want to give up a Saturday afternoon saying goodbye to a school that's been around for more than 50 years.

That certainly wasn't the case on April 10 at Comal Elementary, as more than 300 current and former faculty and students filled the school's library, cafeteria and gym to say farewell to the CES campus that opened in 1958.

The school will officially close its doors at the end of May and will reopen full time as Pope John Paul II High School in the fall.

Most of CES' current students will attend the new Garden Ridge Elementary, which will open at the beginning of the 2010-11 school year.

"My three children all came through Comal Elementary," said Bill Swint, Comal ISD school board immediate past president. "They all had wonderful experiences here, so this school has meant a lot not only to our district but to my family."

Former faculty members met in the library and reminisced about the experiences they shared at the school before an official ceremony began in the cafeteria.

"You know, so many people had such a great time here over the years," said former CES principal Janice Tubb. "I've heard us described time and time again as one big family, and that's exactly what we were."



Superintendent Dr. Marc Walker, Swint, and current CES principal Joni Coker spoke at the ceremony to a near capacity crowd.

“If anyone questioned what this school meant to people, they just need to look around at the number of people here,” Walker said. “The demographics of the district told us it was time to open a new school in Garden Ridge, but Comal Elementary will never be forgotten.”

Coker read a poem titled “Goodbye School,” written by third-grade student Hailey Ballard.

The poem included the verses: “Goodbye playground, where we could be anything we wanted; Goodbye classrooms, where my first teacher welcomed me in; Goodbye music room, where all of us would sing like angels; Goodbye Comal Elementary, you will be missed.”

Pam Miller, the school’s music teacher from 1969-72 and 1980-2003, concluded the event and amazed many in attendance by playing beautiful songs using only her fingertips to gently touch glasses half-filled with water. The songs included “The Star Spangled Banner” and “Will you be my Valentine,” which was always a class favorite and had students that spanned five decades at the school singing aloud.

“I don’t think things could have gone any better than they did today,” Coker said. “I couldn’t have imagined a bigger turnout and it’s exactly the kind of day this school and everyone who’s passed through it over the years deserved.”

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IN PHOTOS: A large group of current and former Comal Elementary faculty members gathered in the school’s library before heading over to the cafeteria for a farewell ceremony on April 10.

Current and former Comal Elementary principals were on hand to bid the school farewell during a ceremony on April 10. Pictured (top row, l-r) Mike McFalls (1997-2002), and Joni Coker (2007-present); (Bottom row) Janice Tubb (2002-2007), and Barbara Miller (1973-1997).

Former music teacher Pam Miller played “The Star Spangled Banner” before the famous Comal Elementary song “Will you be my Valentine” using only her fingertips to gently touch glasses half-filled with water to help close out the CES farewell ceremony.

Comal Elementary principal Joni Coker congratulated third-grade student Hailey Ballard on a job very well done. Coker read Ballard’s poem, “Goodbye School” at the CES farewell ceremony on April 10.

