







School History

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, several young African American entrepreneurs settled in Mamou, Louisiana. Joseph Celestine, Sr., his son-in-law, Arthur Thomas, Mark Frank, Zan Matthew and others played an important role in the education and business of the African American community.

Before a formal school was acquired, the students were taught at St. Paul Baptist Church, which was located in the country near Mamou. Later, St. Paul Church relocated in the town of Mamou, where it currently stands.

The school board's record shows the first school was a 25'x12' building at the corner of 5th and Oak street, currently where Sam Thomas' family home stands.

Booker T. Washington was the principal at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, which is now known as Tuskegee University. He requested help from John Rosenwald, President of Sears Roebuck and Company. Washington asked Rosenwald to help fund school buildings for African American students in the rural South. Many of the students were being taught in churches. Beginning with school year 1923-1924, the Rosenwald Foundation gave a grant to add to the funds raised for a three teacher school house. Many African American schools in the South started with grants from the Rosenwald Foundation and therefore, many of the schools were named Rosenwald.

As the number of students grew, the young African American entrepreneurs continued to work hard raising money to buy the two story building which was formally occupied by white students. Arthur Thomas allowed the use of his property for the school, and Joseph Celestine Sr. was the co-signer on the loan. The building was purchased around 1934 and was moved to the location where the Shell gas station now stands, between 5th and 6th streets. The building at its new location became Rosenwald Elementary School. Students who wished to continue their education beyond 8th grade had to attend school at James Stephens High School in Ville Platte, or Charles Drew High School in Eunice. Some students went as far as Lake Charles. After reaching out to adjoining towns for students to meet the enrollment requirement, the giant step of Joseph Celestine High School was made in the fall of 1955 - A great historical event and an accomplishment worth celebrating.

President H. E. W. Jones, President of Grambling College delivered the commencement address to fourteen (14) graduates on May 25, 1956. He awarded two scholarships: John Guillory, Valedictorian, and Bertha Frank, Salutatorian. The last graduating class was in 1969. Twelve (12) students graduated. As the integration laws were enacted, Joseph Celestine High School became Mamou Upper Elementary School for African American and white students. In 2004, the name was changed to what is now Mamou Elementary School - grades Pre-K to 4th grades.

Some of the students of Joseph Celestine High School rank among the most outstanding and prominent American citizens. Joseph Celestine High School occupies an historical mark in Mamou's history.



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JOSEPH CELESTINE
HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

FROM THE PAST
TO THE FUTURE



Julius
Rosenwald



Joseph
Celestine, Sr.



Mrs. Litel
Frank



Bennie
Reynolds







Principal's Message



America is often thought of and referred to as the land of opportunity, and truly it is. Opportunity is present everywhere, although we are not always able to see it. It is limited only to the extent that the individual fails to recognize it and take advantage of it. The more education one has and the more intense his training, the more apt he will be to see opportunities and to grasp them. There are opportunities unlimited for any person who is willing to pay the price in study and preparation so that he will be ready to step up as the way opens. There are opportunities at the top in every field of endeavor.

Let me urge you to take advantage of these opportunities that are yours for the taking. By all means, continue your schooling if at all possible. Be ready for the opportunities that come your way.

FACULTY



Mrs. A. Celestine



Mr. W. Celestine



Mr. V. Charles



Mr. S. Colbert



Mrs. L. H. Frank



Miss V. Frank



Mr. G. Guillory



Mrs. H. Guillory



Mrs. G. Guillory



Mrs. M. Guillory



Miss M. Noel



Mr. J. Johnson



Miss C. Jones



Miss H. Jones



Mrs. J. Jones



Mrs. B. Arvie



Mrs. E. Kleinpeter



Mrs. C. Mack



Mrs. L. Frank



Mrs. B. Reynolds



Mr. Q. Williams



Mr. J. Guillory



Mr. Don B. Dillon



Mr. Jack Johnson

*Mrs. Carrie Jones
Mrs. Beatrice Arvie
*Mrs. Lizzy Frank
*Mr. John Guillory

Miss Hilda Jones
*Mrs. Essie Kleinpeter
*Mrs. Bennie Reynolds

*Mrs. Josphine Jones
Mrs. C. Mack
Mr. Quince Williams



Row 1: Mrs. Josephine Jones, 2nd Grade, Mrs. Beatrice Arvie, 5th Grade
 Mrs. Essie Klempeter, 1st Grade, Mrs. Hazel M Guillory, 5th Grade,
 Mrs. Dacie Frank, Home Economics, Mrs. Madlle Guillory 1st Grade.

Row 2: Mrs. Hilda J Guillory, English, Mrs. Carrie Johnson, 4th Grade;
 Miss D Williams (Student Teacher, Southern Univ., Baton Rouge, La.) English;
 Mrs. Bennie Reynolds, 3rd Grade, Mrs. Lezy P Frank, 2nd; Mrs. Litell P Frank,
 Mrs. Alice Celestine, 3rd Grade, Mrs. Gertie Guillory, 1st Grade.

Row 3: Mr. Albert Reed, Music; Rev. George Guillory, Social Studies,
 Mr. Don Dillon, Band, Mr. Turland Deville, Coach, Mr. Vernon Charles, Science And
 Math, Miss Viola I. Frank, 4th Grade.



Mr. Wilson B. Celestine, 6th Grade