

BARBARA ROTHKOPF

- o Resident since 1965
- o Eaton parent from 1968 to 1978
- o 46 years old

We moved to Cleveland Park because there was something about the architecture and the jumble of different kinds of houses that we liked. But mostly it was because of John Eaton School. John Eaton has always had an excellent reputation. My husband and I were very interested in public schools for our children.

There is a warmth about the community that I think is quite unusual. I remember when we moved here, a friend of mine said as she looked at an unraked front yard of someone's house in the Fall, "Gosh, if that isn't Cleveland Park. Nobody ever keeps their houses up." We all live happily together whether or not it is orderly. And actually there are a lot of very different kinds of people living in Cleveland Park... people with and without money, people of different races and religions, and a lot of very creative people....journalists, lawyers, teachers, librarians, doctors. And all that really appealed to us....we all care about each other.

When I was President of the PTA, from 1969-71, my Vice-Presidents were Fritz Mondale the first year, and John Walker, now Bishop of the National Cathedral, the second year. The presidency was a very time-consuming and exciting job and I really loved it. I met a lot of people who remain my very dear friends to this day. In those days, there were a lot of volunteers working in the school, probably sixty to seventy parents. John Eaton was special because it was a community school, and everybody cared so much about it. I feel that we really helped kids learn and enjoy themselves.

In 1970, with the help of our then Principal, Nita Pickett, we compiled a list of all the repairs necessary for the school to send to the D.C. government to request renovation. My friend and co-worker, Joan Habib, and I both testified at the City Council hearings, and I testified at a Senate Committee on Capitol Hill about how important it was to put John Eaton renovation in the capital outlay budget for 1971. We worked like dogs on it, but it wasn't until 1983, thirteen years later, that it was done. We had a very active group of neighbors and school representatives, the Committee of 21, who followed the renovation through from the time the community became involved.

We also started something during that period called the Cleveland Park Community Committee, which ran after-school activities. The Block Party, Cleveland Park Community Committee, and the After-School Program, all started around 1970. We all worked very hard to think of lots of imaginative things to keep kids interested and happy.

Johnson's Flower Center has moved from the corner of Van Ness and Wisconsin where the Tenley Mall is now to the old Best & Co. building on Wisconsin. Johnson's took it over and turned it into a very special kind of nursery. And I think the people there are among the nicest of anybody in the city. I learned everything I know about plants from the people at Johnson's Flower Center.

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