HP PULSE
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TODAY'S LEARNERS, TOMORROW'S LEADERS

THOMAS' LEGACY WILL LIVE ON AT HPS

'My dad was such an inspiration to me and he touched a lot of lives with everything he did'

Part of Terry Thomas' legacy was his willingness to work in the community to give back to anyone in need.

Now his legacy will live on forever at Hazel Park Schools.

On Wednesday, at halftime of the Vikings' varsity boys basketball game against Monroe Jefferson, the district honored the late HPS graduate by naming the court after him.

"My dad was always in the community working with special needs children," said Cody Thomas, Terry's youngest son. "He always wanted to give back."

CONTINUED "COURT" PAGE 2

The basketball court at the High School was renamed Terry Thomas Court in honor of the former Viking great, who also played for the Detroit Pistons.

Board Member Salute

Thank you for your years of service

Q&A WITH LAURA ADKINS

1. Why did you want to serve on the board? I was active in the Hoover PTA for many years before making the decision to run for the school board. I was interested in expanding my sphere of influence and making a difference in the Hazel Park School District which is my alma mater and where my kids attend(ed) school.

2. What was most rewarding about your service? It is very rewarding to see some of the suggestions for improvements become realized and seeing students being offered wonderful opportunities. Participating in the various graduation ceremonies is always the most rewarding though!

CONTINUED "ADKINS" PAGE 3

Justin Thomas (right) speaks at halftime of a recent game regarding the renaming of the basketball court in his late father's honor.

COURT

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"Our dad was an inspiration to his family and in the Hazel Park community," said Justin Thomas, whose father passed away at the age of 45 from cardiac arrest in October of 1998.

Terry Thomas' name appears twice on the court located in the corner on each end.

There is also a plaque that will hang in the gym to explain his ties to Hazel Park Schools.

"We want this to inspire future generations," said Justin Thomas, who was nine when his father passed away. "This is what we did this for. We want people to look at the court, see his name and then go and look at the type of person he was in the community."

Along with the naming of the court, the Thomas' have set up an annual scholarship that will go to a graduating senior each year moving forward.

"We learned a lot about our dad through family members, friends, students, and former teammates," said Cody Thomas, who was five when his father passed away. "Hearing all the good things he did in the community we're now able to translate that into keeping his legacy alive for future generations."

You don't need to be an athlete at HPS in order to apply for the scholarship. To apply, students need to write an essay as to why they would like the scholarship and what they plan on using it for, including references that speak of their character and finally include all the community service they have done.

One of his former teachers, Geri Fuhr, spoke at the event.

"I remember when I first started teaching and coaching at Hazel Park High School in 1989," said Fuhr, who donated the plaque that will hang in the gymnasium. "Terry came into the gym and I remember playing three-on-three with him. What a talent.

"I have been blessed to have the opportunity to coach four of his six children as well as one of his nephews," Fuhr continued. "I wanted to honor Terry and his family in a special way with this plaque."

On the plaque it reads at the end, "Terry Thomas has left a legacy that will inspire past, present, and future Hazel Park students to excel at the highest level as scholars, athletes, and citizens."

Terry Thomas graduated from Hazel Park High School in 1971 where he earned all-state honors in basketball. He went on to play for Dick Vitale at the University of Detroit-Mercy. After his celebrated college career, he was drafted by the Detroit Pistons with the 151st overall pick in the 1975 NBA Draft.

"My dad was such an inspiration to me and he touched a lot of lives with everything he did," Justin Thomas said.

Board Member Salute

Thank you for your years of service

Q&A WITH RACHEL NOTH

1. Why did you want to serve on the board?
I wanted to serve on the board to strengthen programs and take an active role in monitoring finances and policy to work better for the community and kiddos at all levels.

2. What was most rewarding about your service?
Seeing how board decisions directly help students succeed at the things they are most interested and passionate about. It is always rewarding seeing how something like the implementation of new sports/band uniforms helps our students feel pride. As well as seeing how bringing in new programs and materials help our students master subjects and grow.

3. What advice would you offer new board members?
Board service is not about an individual, it is about how your service can guide and support students, staff, and the community. Focus on the big overall picture for everyone in the community and never stop advocating for equal education for all.

4. Is there anything you would do differently after your experience serving on the board?
When I came to the board we were so far in deficit that we were at risk of being shut down. This was an extremely stressful time for everyone as we were laser-focused on doing the very best for the district's future.
I'm sure there are a lot of things that I could have done differently or better because of being dropped into such a seemingly terrible situation, but I wouldn't go back and change them because those experiences have made me a better person, board member and I believe a stronger community overall.

5. How have you made a difference in your time serving and how would you like to continue staying involved?
I have had the opportunity to be involved in many great things in my 8 years. One of the biggest is getting the district out of deficit. As well as drafting/implementing policy, helping start new programs, increasing the selection of classes, and getting back to old traditions like bands and sports teams visiting other schools to mentor younger students. Post board I would like to possibly get involved with a committee as well as continue to participate in events and watch board meetings.

Closing Thoughts: I would sincerely like to thank my family and community for their support and trust over the past 8 years. I hope my service has been an example of grace under fire and overall has had a positive impact.

ADKINS

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3. What advice would you offer new board members? There is a lot to learn about how a school district is run. I recommend observing and learning. I highly recommend the MASB Training that is offered for school board members. Also, make decisions based on data and listen to those that have been around for a while!
4. Is there anything you would do differently after your experience serving on the board? Not much, I wish I would have taken school board training sooner. There are a few decisions that could have been handled better in hindsight, but overall I am proud of all that has been accomplished.
5. How have you made a difference in your time serving and how would you like to continue staying involved? I am most proud of getting the HP School District out of deficit. The first few years, while the district was in deficit, included many tough decisions. I am proud that we have established a fund balance and have balanced our budget for the last 3 years. I am also proud to have brought back the offering of AP classes and choices of electives at our High School. I hope to continue to stay involved with Community Engagement activities and volunteer in the schools.
Closing Thoughts: I am proud to come from a family with strong Hazel Park roots. My grandfather, John Hitchcock, and uncle, Bill Hitchcock, both served on the Hazel Park School Board. Also, my father-in-law, Clint Adkins, served on the board for about 28 years! My heart is always rooting for Hazel Park which includes seeing the city and schools thrive.