

Roosevelt

Name:	Roosevelt High School	Enrollment:	1,715
Address:	1410 NE 66th Street	Nickname:	Rough Riders
Configuration:	9-12	Colors:	Green and gold
Newspaper:	<i>Roosevelt News</i>	Annual:	<i>Strenuous Life</i>



Roosevelt, 1963 SPSA 017-1

Name:	Roosevelt High School
Location:	1410 NE 66th Street
Building:	57-room brick and reinforced concrete
Architect:	Floyd A. Naramore
Site:	6.9 acres

1920:	Named on August 20
1922:	Opened in September
1928:	Addition (Naramore)
1960:	Addition (Ralph E. Decker)
1961:	Site expanded to 9.5 acres
1965:	Addition (Decker)

In 1917, Lincoln High School was ten years old and already overcrowded, and the northeast section of the city was continuing to grow. That year, the Seattle School District purchased property a little more than a mile north of the University of Washington for a new high school. During the planning stages, it was referred to as Northeast High School but in 1920, the board voted to name the school after President Theodore Roosevelt.

When plans for the new school were unveiled, the public called them “extravagant” and questioned whether Seattle needed a school at the outer limits of the district. In particular, critics objected to the cost of the 1,500-seat auditorium and stage (at the time one of the largest on the West Coast) and the dual gymnasiums for boys and girls. The district defended its plans by pointing to the city’s steadily increasing high school enrollment, the benefits of the modern auditorium to the whole community, and state requirements for physical education. World War I delayed the launch of construction until 1921.

In September 1922, Roosevelt High School, dubbed the “million dollar school,” opened to nearly 1,300 students and 47 teachers, led by Principal V.K. Froula. A dedication ceremony took place on October 27, Theodore Roosevelt’s birthday.

The school honored its namesake by adopting the nickname Rough Riders in reference to the volunteer cavalry led by Roosevelt during the Spanish-American War in 1898. Black walnut trees from Roosevelt’s Oyster Bay Estate in New York were planted on the front lawn. A mosaic seal donated by the Class of 1932 displays the school’s motto, “What I am to be I am now becoming.” Above the front entrance are two stone owls symbolizing knowledge and wisdom.

Many student activities got their start during the first decade, including opera, play revues, concerts, and the award-winning newspaper, *The News*. The annual, named *Strenuous Life* in reference to the hardships faced by Roosevelt during his lifetime, launched publication in 1923.

The Associated Students of Roosevelt began under the direction of Froula and consisted of a student government with broad legislative, executive, and judicial powers. During the early years of the athletic program, the Teddies distinguished themselves by winning the University of Washington’s “All Sports Trophy” several times.

By 1927, enrollment had reached nearly 2,000 in a building designed for 1,450 students. A new north wing, designed to accommodate 450 more students, opened in September 1928 with 13 rooms, including specialized laboratories and classrooms. Enrollment continued to grow and, by 1938, Roosevelt had 2,500 students. That year saw the death of the popular “V.K.,” and in his memory a beautiful pipe organ was purchased and installed in the auditorium.

The goal of the new principal, H.N. Gridley, was to provide students with optimal preparation for the career or college education that they would pursue after graduation. In 1951, Reed Fulton succeeded



Roosevelt, ca. 1940 SPSA 017-5

Gridley as principal and instituted a three-year study, which showed Roosevelt students performing well above national academic averages, with many ranked in the 95th percentile. The challenge presented by the Soviet Union's 1957 launching of Sputnik stimulated the expansion of honors classes in all subjects.

In 1957, with enrollment at 2,700 students, seven portables were added to the grounds. A new gymnasium (Building B) opened in 1960 to the west of the main building. Further remodeling in the mid-1960s facilitated such innovations as team teaching, independent study, and flexible scheduling. At this time, the school received a new library, music rooms, and home economics laboratories. An annex (Building C) was constructed in 1965 where the portables had been and housed a cafeteria, as well as classrooms for industrial arts and art.

In September 1971 Roosevelt became a four-year high school. Because enrollment exceeded building capacity, 9th graders were housed at John Marshall Junior High, located six blocks to the west. This building was then known as Roosevelt M (for Marshall) and continued to operate as a 9th grade center through June 1975. In September 1975, all classes were held in the main Roosevelt buildings once more, except two Special Education classes, which remained at Marshall.

Highlights of the 1970s included winning of the state basketball championship in 1972–73 and regional awards for debate teams and two musical groups, the Swing Choir and the Chamber Orchestra.

In 1983, Waldo King (the "Swing King") retired after 14 years in the music department. Through his efforts, jazz had become an accepted part of Seattle public school curriculum. The orchestra won the sweepstakes at the 1987 Northwest Orchestra Festival. Music continues to bring acclaim to Roosevelt under the directorship of Scott Brown. In May 2000, the Jazz Ensemble won third place in the nationwide Essentially Ellington competition in New York city.

Academic acclaim has also come Roosevelt's way. A 1985 newspaper article reported that of the 65 Roosevelt students taking the National Latin Examination, two-thirds received awards for superior scores. Roosevelt's drama program has also been voted one of the ten best in the nation. Each year drama students produce an elaborate Broadway-style musical as well as a Drama Fest and winter production.

Today Roosevelt is the second largest high school in the district, with enrollment increasing 25 percent over the past five years. A new humanities-language arts program for 9th graders began in fall 1998. The addition of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing program has led to the use of two new portables on the west side of the building.