

Schmitz Park

Name:	Schmitz Park Elementary School	Enrollment:	341
Address:	5000 SW Spokane Street	Nickname:	The Red Fox
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	Green and gold
Motto:	"Smart as a fox"		

The only virgin forest in any Western Washington city lies in a park above Alki in West Seattle. Former Seattle Parks Commissioner Ferdinand Schmitz and his wife Emma donated 38 acres to the city in 1908 and 1912. Another 7.5 acres were purchased by the city from the Alki Street Car Line. The resulting site, named Schmitz Park, is considered to be one of the most beautiful natural parks in a U.S. urban area. One of the Schmitz's sons, Dietrich, served on the Seattle School Board from 1928-61 and was its president eight times, making him the longest serving board member.

The first Schmitz Park School was an all-portable facility developed in the early 1950s to relieve crowding at Genesee Hill and Lafayette. More portables were added annually from 1954 to 1956 until there was an office, 10 classroom portables, a double-portable lunchroom, and a utility portable. Starting with K-3, the highest grade was retained until it became a K-6 facility in its fourth year of operation.

A permanent single-story building of fire-resistant materials and laminated beams was erected on the enlarged site in 1962. Enrollment the first year was 380, the largest student body in the school's history.

Since the mid-1970s, a highlight of the annual fall opening of the school is the flag-raising ceremony, in which members of the Schmitz family participate, most recently Alan Schmitz.

Under the district's desegregation plan, Schmitz Park served as a



Schmitz Park, ca. 1970 SPSA 270-23

Name: **Schmitz Park School**

Location: 50th Avenue SW
& W Hinds Street

Building: Portables

Site: 3.5 acres

1953: Opened September 21
as annex to Genesee Hill

1954: Officially named on April 16

1956: Became independent school

1960: Site increased to 7 acres

1962: Closed in June

Name: **Schmitz Park
Elementary School**

Location: 5000 SW Spokane Street

Building: 12-room

Architect: Durham, Anderson & Freed

Site: 7.6 acres

1962: Opened in September

K-3 facility from 1978-1988, forming a triad with Genesee Hill (K-3) and Beacon Hill (K,4-6). In September 1979, parents voiced their disapproval of a district proposal that would have eliminated the regular school program at Schmitz Park. Instead, they suggested that Schmitz Park be enlarged and nearby Genesee Hill closed. Schmitz Park remained open and Genesee Hill was closed in 1989, then later reopened as an alternative school site.

Schmitz Park students received the President's Challenge Physical Fitness Award in 1998 and 1999, and their instructor, Barbara McEwan, was named state PE teacher of the year. Unique programs in bicycle safety and water safety are offered.

Throughout the school's history, the adjacent park has provided an outdoor classroom for nature studies, science, and conservation. The school's mascot, The Red Fox, was inspired by a real fox family that visits the playground each fall and spring and inhabits the nearby woods.



Schmitz Park, 1965 SPSA 270-24