

# CAMPUS SNAPSHOT

Written by Noreen Stavinoha

## MORTON RANCH HIGH SCHOOL

**R**ecently, the halls of Morton Ranch High School, located at 21000 Franz Road, became a sea of purple and white, the school colors. Teachers and students alike were wearing purple tee shirts, all bearing the same logo: "Make yourself have a great day." That phrase has been a part of the morning announcements by Principal Joseph Cammarata since its beginning, so it was an appropriate way to tell him goodbye and good luck as he leaves for a new job as Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Flourney (near Dallas).

Cammarata says "I am a strong believer in the concept that attitude is everything, so if you are committed to make yourself successful each and every day, you have a better chance of making that take place."

### MORTON RANCH ROOTS

It's altogether possible that that philosophy was shared by Elbert M. Morton and his wife Margaret when they moved their family from Missouri to

Katy in 1896. They established the Morton Family Ranch, for which the school was named. The family developed a strong attachment to Katy, as evidenced by the fact that today, a fifth generation Morton is in line to be a Katy ISD graduate.

It took a mere five years for MRHS to grow from 1,200 9th and 10th grade students to this year's population of 2,900 students attending grades 9 through 12. Cammarata is understandably proud of the accomplishments of his students and faculty during that time. "Every single time a kid comes to school and does his very best, that's an accomplishment," says Cammarata. That's what you want out of your kids every day. To accomplish that, Morton Ranch teachers stand out in their ability to develop relationships with their students. They are exceptional classroom teachers who work very hard, are dedicated, and child centered."

Morton Ranch HS PTSO supports teachers by bringing snacks



The 2008-2009 yearbook staff



The Future Business Leaders of America at district competition







The Morton Ranch Maverick Belles

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

MRHS has thirty clubs and organizations where a student can find his or her niche, so it's no wonder the dropout rate is a low 1.7 percent. State, regional, and national awards have been secured by students in a wide variety of endeavors. FFA exhibitors have produced two area champions and six district champions in 2008-2009, and numerous honors in skills competitions. The MRHS team in the Academic Decathlon was a state qualifier in 2008, and received a third place medal in music.

Band and orchestra musicians have advanced to the All Region Band, All Region Orchestra, and All State Orchestra over the last several years. Athletes in every sport have received enough honors to make the student body proud. The cheerleaders have been national champions, and were part of the HEB Thanksgiving Day Parade in 2006, and the Maverick Belles Dance Team were National Champions in two categories in 2006.

Maverick Star Newspaper and Amaranthine Yearbook won First Place in the American Scholastic Press Association competition. This national award puts MRHS publications in the top 15 percent of high school yearbooks and newspapers in the US.

Morton Ranch Thespians advanced to Region III contest in 2008 UIL One Act Play competition, and students received individual awards at district, Area, and Regional levels. Out of eleven Tommy Tune nominations in 2007, MRHS boasted the winner in Best Featured Performer Division, and the winner of the Best Light Design that same year. There were nine Tommy Tune nominations in 2008, and they recently learned of two more nominations this year.

Cammarata returned to share graduation honors with his replacement, Mark Grisdale, former principal of Morton Ranch Junior High.



Students recently attended a career and education fair at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston



The volleyball team supported breast cancer awareness and 'played for the cure'

Cammarata and Grisdale worked closely for a smooth transition, and share the view that having a staff of teachers who connect with their students and love to teach is the key to a successful school. KM



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