

## **THE STORY OF ISAAC LITTON HIGH SCHOOL**

On October 25, 1930, the new ISAAC LITTON HIGH SCHOOL was formally opened with impressive ceremonies attended by all the prominent Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee authorities.

Prior to this auspicious opening, there was on Gallatin Road a tract of land which belonged to Jere Baxter, a prominent and respected politician in the area and founder of the Tennessee Central Railroad. His other achievements included serving in the State Senate and seeking (unsuccessfully) the Democratic Party nomination for Governor. On this land was erected a four-room brick building that would become Isaac Litton High School.



Jere Baxter

In a very short time, this tiny building was bursting at the seams. The algebra teacher was conducting classes in the hall, and at lunch time, the students were marched quietly to the cafeteria so they would not disturb the classes being ceremoniously taught around and among them.

The Board of Education, realizing the inadequacy of the space and the growing need for something more, purchased another tract of land of about eleven acres for the sum of \$10,000. The building planned for the property was not completed until late fall of 1930, so in the meantime, the teachers and students met in the basement of the Inglewood Methodist Church.

The newly built school was named Isaac Litton, in memory of the grandfather of Judge Litton Hickman, who had been a respected judge in Davidson County for many years.



Judge Litton Hickman

In the years that followed, the school grew by leaps and bounds, making a name for itself for which the entire state could be proud. Isaac Litton High School closed in 1971. By 1990, the building had deteriorated to such an extent that it was razed, leaving only the gymnasium building. After the formation of the Alumni Association, this revered landmark was restored to usefulness for the entire community. Grounds are now owned by Metropolitan Nashville Parks and Recreation.



The only remaining vestige of Isaac Litton High School is the gymnasium building. In partnership with MNPS, the Alumni Association has restored and is maintaining this building for the benefit and use of the community in Inglewood. To the west end of the gym is Litton Park, so named for its founding patronage.

During World War II, over 500 of its boys fought in both the European and Pacific conflicts, leaving thirty-one gold stars to shine on its Service Flag to remind all that Litton too had made the supreme sacrifice. The construction of a Memorial Wall still actively accepts requests to honor our graduates who have passed away, as well as to recognize other alumni.



Its name is also familiar on championship lists among forensic leagues, debating societies, all sports, and band associations.

Our record has been one of constant progress and traditionally one with a stellar reputation.

Around 2001, Jimmy Howell (Class of '47) had a dream to completely renovate the old gym on Gallatin Road as a facility for the alumni to use as a meeting place, where alumni activities could take place, and where work and support of at-risk area children could take place. After more than a decade of fund raising, construction, and even blood, sweat and tears, the old gym has been transformed into the Isaac Litton Alumni Center. Activities supported are:

- Sports and educational activities for area at-risk children in cooperation with Metro Nashville Public Schools and other non-profit agencies approved by MNPS; and
- Alumni functions such as board meetings and other meetings such as are appropriate and necessary for the continued involvement of the alumni with MNPS.

ILAA is grateful to every individual and organization which donated funds for the completion of the gym renovation. Total cost was approximately \$2,000,000. Thanks to Jimmy Howell and his dream, Litton alumni now have a place to call home.

The Isaac Litton Alumni Association (ILAA) was formed in 2001 and officially incorporated in April of 2005 as a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation. The purposes of the ILAA, as stated in its bylaws are:

- To perpetuate the heritage and traditions of Isaac Litton High School

- To select and support those projects that would accomplish the purposes as outlined in the bylaws, as determined by the Board of Directors
- To conduct such events or programs as may, in the discretion of the Board of Directors, from time to time be designed to generate revenues for said projects
- To conduct such other business as is legal within the State of Tennessee

### Our Vision

The Vision of the Isaac Litton Alumni Association is that our heritage and ideals will be preserved and passed on to future generations.

### Mission Statement

The Mission of the Isaac Litton Alumni Association is to preserve the rich heritage of our former school, to provide support to the present Isaac Litton Middle School, and be a positive influence in the lives of ALL the children in our community. We do this with effective communication that continually reaches out to bring the alumni and the community together to promote our programs and services.

### Goals for Outreach

- To foster pride, loyalty, and a life-long connection to the Isaac Litton schools among alumni, students, parents, community and friends.
- To encourage alumni to contribute their time, talent, and financial support to Isaac Litton schools.
- To communicate needs and news, and celebrate the innovative accomplishments of Isaac Litton students and its alumni.
- To provide and promote opportunities for volunteer engagement, professional association, leadership, and fellowship among alumni.
- To cultivate a culture of alma mater within Isaac Litton's global community.
- To create sustainable lifelong connections to and between the schools and to each other.

Alumni dues and generous donations from supporters like you are the key to our success and make it possible for us to continue our services to the community, the Isaac Litton Middle School and all of our Alumni. Our revitalized gymnasium building serves as a meeting place for our alumni holding class reunions, for the community and neighborhood associations to meet and find solutions to the many problems facing some inner-city areas today, and also houses the "Lions' Den," a fully viewable area filled with memorabilia of the proud 40+ year history of ISAAC LITTON HIGH SCHOOL.



Additionally, the Alumni Association is very proud of the designation by the American Red Cross to be a “mustering” location in the event of a community disaster. When a situation requires our neighborhood residents to evacuate their homes for any reason, the American Red Cross will set up a “command center” in our Lion’s Hall to serve the purpose of assigning these displaced community members to the appropriate facility to

best assist them. (While they will not be housed or fed at our facility, the Red Cross has deemed this as a vital step in their ability to quickly help those in need.)

Of special focus for the ILAA is the participation in the BACKFIELD IN MOTION (BIM) program. BIM is a nonprofit organization that combines academics and athletics to inspire inner-city boys to reach their maximum potential in order to become significant contributors to society. Funds provided by the ILAA are used to support tutorial programs offering academic remediation and homework assistance for these most vulnerable youth. BIM, in partnership with the Isaac Litton Alumni Association, provides a permanent facility to offer the classes at our Lions Hall, in the lower level of the gym. {Gym only is used now.}

Also, with a special place in our hearts, we support and assist in any way possible, those students now attending the Isaac Litton Middle School (which for the High School alumni, will forever be remembered as our Junior High School.) For the year ending 2018, our support to the ILMS included the following:

The ILMS Bands (not only grade-level bands, but also the Pep Band, the Rock Band, and the Honor Band) were granted a total of \$2,500 to upgrade equipment and continue to provide an excellent music education with little or no cost to the students' families.

Also, the ELA (English Language Arts) Department was granted \$1,770 to cover costs for one hundred and twenty 8th Grade students to see the World Premiere Production of Ghost at the Nashville Children's Theater. These students have studied the book upon which this production was based and for many of them will be their first opportunity to see a professional performance of this stature. Our funding provided 2 buses for the day and tickets for the performance.

And, lastly, the Competitive Math Club was granted \$1,500 to provide support for the Math Team to enjoy a year-end field trip.

In addition, our Helping Hands program granted \$1,000 to the PTSO for use in their "Invest in Our Pride" program.

Last year, the ILAA donated \$2,500 to support the ILMS Band Competition and the athletic department was donated a new concession stand. With our mutual goal of supporting the students and faculty at Litton, we have formed a great working relationship, and there is a lot more to do.

It is from donations from our Isaac Litton High School alumni that we are able to continue our work in these areas and more. Thank you so very much for your continued support.

Some startling statistics that touch our hearts are:



- 61.48% of the student population is economically disadvantaged (students qualify for free and reduced lunch)
- 2.05% are English Language Learners
- 17% (about 80 students) live in a shelter or transitional housing program, on the couch at a friend's or family member's house because they do not have a house of their own. Some live in a motel or campground because they cannot find or afford housing; some live in a car, abandoned building or a place not normally fit and designed for sleeping
- Isaac Litton Middle School is an open enrollment school with 475 students from more than 20 elementary schools across the county

It is with the constant and untiring effort of the ILAA Board of Directors that each year an All-Alumni banquet is held, with the primary goal being to raise funds to continue our operation and perpetuate the love its alumni have for our alma mater and its community. At these annual functions, it is not uncommon to see the last living member of earlier graduating classes or to see the children of more recent graduates enjoying the same bond of friendship and support so profound among us all.



The Alumni Association has diligently accumulated and recreated composites of every graduating class from 1932 until 1970. These treasures, along with other memorabilia are on display in the "Lion's Den", where Alumni can gather and recall interesting facts (and fiction) about our illustrious alumni and our contributions to the community.

The Isaac Litton Alumni Association Board meets throughout the year to conduct its business. The annual meeting of the alumni association occurs each spring as part of a luncheon to which all alumni are invited. At this annual meeting, new members of the Board as well as the new ILAA officers are elected.

If you would like to be a volunteer or a member of the Board, contact any current Board member listed on the directory, elsewhere on this website. Annual costs for gym upkeep and operation will continue now that renovations are complete. Alumni dues and donations will significantly help ILAA continue its mission. We sincerely appreciate any contributions from alumni and friends of Isaac Litton High School.

Today, we are very proud of our accumulated database of over 4,100 alumni with whom we are able to correspond regularly. This number represents approximately half of the total graduates from the first graduating class through the last.

(If your contact information changes or if you have information on any alumni that we do not have shown here on this website in the "Classes" section, please submit it to us. Thank you for your support.)

**LITTON HIGH FOREVER !**