

## **Students Research History of Irvington High School Site**

Irvington High School students conducted extensive research on the history of the middle/high school campus, under the direction of social studies teacher and local historian Dr. Erik Weiselberg. They created a walking-tour map, detailing the history of the site, and a brochure, identifying various memorial markers on site.

“We decided on researching the history of the school site because it is a site in Irvington that we have spent a lot of time in, but, surprisingly, don’t know all that much about,” said senior Rasikh Shaukat, who worked alongside senior Jonathan Kroop to draw upon old newspaper articles, historic aerial photographs and other sources to compile a chronology of the campus.

Following their research, the students created a trifold brochure for a walking tour of the campus. The current Irvington High School building is located on the former site of Cedar Lawn, the home of Isaac Stern, who was a founder of Stern’s Department Store. In 1886, Stern purchased the property, transforming the existing structure into a castle and renaming it “Cedar Lawn.” The main residence burnt in a fire in 1963 and its remnants were taken down to make space for the new high school, completed in 1965. In 2003, to accommodate expanding school enrollment, the science and music wings were built, as well as the cafeteria, which are shared with the new middle school, which was formerly at the Main Street School. The improved track and field were dedicated in 2016.

“The students’ tour brochure informs participants about the site’s history as well as the amazing individuals for whom many spaces on campus are named, including the Scott W. Mosenthal Library, Gina Maher Gym, Harold F. Meszaros Field and Peter K. Oley Track,” Dr. Weiselberg said.

Kroop said that throughout the process, he was able to further develop his research skills and learn more about an important part of his community while also exploring his interest in history.

For his project, junior Jabari Domingo researched the history behind several physical memorials on campus, including markers and plaques dedicated to the memory of students, alumni, faculty and staff members who have passed away. The earliest record of memorial markers that Domingo uncovered was a newspaper article stating that in 1966 trees were planted in memory of three students. Dr. Weiselberg said Domingo’s research is the first step in an ongoing effort to conduct additional research on any memorials with missing nameplates, restoring memorials with plaques in need of repair and producing a polished version of an informative walking-tour brochure.

“These were people who lived good lives, and it is important to remember them,” Domingo said. “We hope that this brochure has done its part to keep their memories alive and makes you more curious about the local history of Irvington.”