



Obituary

Dr. Jacqueline C. Haas, Superintendent of the Harford County Public Schools, died at Harford Memorial Hospital on Tuesday, December 30, 2008. During her 36-year tenure in HCPS, Dr. Haas, 59, was a public school special education teacher, helping teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. The reigning Maryland Superintendent of the Year, Dr. Haas served on many state and national education committees and was a trusted advisor to State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick.

Dr. Haas was born and raised in Kansas City, Kansas, and moved to the Newark, Delaware area, graduating from high school there before enrolling at the University of Delaware, where she earned a degree in special education. She began her career as an educator in Delaware, working with students with severe and profound disabilities before coming to Harford County to teach at the John Archer Special School in 1977. Later, she was named a helping teacher in special education and was subsequently appointed assistant principal at Prospect Mill Elementary School in 1990, where she served for two years before being selected as principal at Edgewood Elementary School in 1992.

In 1997 she was named Assistant Superintendent for Education Services, a position in which she had oversight responsibilities for the instructional program in the Harford County Public Schools. In July 1999, she was named Interim Superintendent of the Harford Public Schools by the Board of Education of Harford County. In October of that year, the Board named her Superintendent and she was appointed to subsequent four year terms as Superintendent in 1999, 2003 and 2007. Dr. Haas, who earned her master's degree from the Johns Hopkins University and her Ed. D. from the University of Maryland, was in her eleventh year as Superintendent of Harford County Public Schools at the time of her death. Her third term as Superintendent was due to have been completed in June, 2011.

Under Dr. Haas' leadership, the Harford County Public Schools maintained its student achievement ranking in the upper quartile of school systems in Maryland. The school system made major advances in the areas of secondary school reform, curriculum revision, and leadership reorganization. The first ever countywide secondary school redistricting was recommended by the Superintendent, approved and implemented by the Board of Education in 2007. During her tenure as Superintendent, one new elementary school and a combined middle/high school were constructed and opened. In addition, several elementary schools and two high schools were modernized. The school system is in the midst of completing the replacement of two high schools, the construction of two new elementary schools, and the modernization/replacement of an elementary school. According to her husband Jim, she was most proud of establishing diversity among the senior level leadership and hoped that it would carry forward as her legacy.

Dr. Haas is survived by her husband, Jim, a retired Harford County Public School special education and social studies teacher; and their two sons, Rob, 26, and Steven, 23. Rob is a 1999 graduate of Aberdeen High School, while Steven is a 2003 graduate of Harford Technical High School. She is also survived by her brother Skip Cordes of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and sisters, Cathy Jo Zimmerman of Newark, Delaware, and Debbie Cordes of Aberdeen.

Donations may be made in Dr. Haas' memory to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, 1233 20th St., NW, Suite 402, Washington, DC 20036.