



'Chartering' a course into York's future

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Two stories, adapted from my [yorktownsquare.com](#) blog, tell about a changing York County . . .

York Academy, later York County Academy, produced generations of graduates in its late-1700s North Beaver Street schoolhouse.

In the 20th century, that name passed from public view and eventually evolved, along with York Collegiate Institute, into York College.

In 2011, a school will open again with the York Academy name, only around the corner in the old Smyser-Royer Variety Iron Works complex.

That's the York Academy Regional Charter School. That school -- operating in cooperation with the York City, Suburban and Central school districts -- will offer the respected International Baccalaureate curriculum. The school will combine city and suburban students, drawing on the idea that peers aid in the academic development of young people.

Not only did the school borrow its name from the past, but its Smyser-Royer site dates before the Industrial Revolution. But now it's part of the

developing service industry sector, the Northwest Triangle project.

It's all very interesting.

The old York County Academy came down in the 1960s era, but the nearby Smyser-Royer factory survived.

Factory work trumped education.

For decades in the York area, relatively plentiful factory and farm jobs meant that post-secondary education often was not a family priority.

Indeed, a four-year college did not operate in York County until 1968, when York College gained status to grant four-year degrees.

Now, leaders in the York area, at the recommendation of urban planner David Rusk and with backing from YorkCounts, are addressing the concentration of poverty and concerns about quality education options in the city by turning a former industrial building into a schoolhouse.

Education now is trumping factory work.

A towered symbol of industrial prowess, that venerable part of York's past, is being transformed into a symbol of York's future, an emphasis on the education of city children.

Classes will be filled with students from suburbia, children from the old city

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neighborhoods and those of young professionals living in the new city neighborhoods, in condominiums in the Northwest Triangle, Codo and 30 SoHo.

The first four-year class graduated from York College in 1971, marking a major historical moment.

The start of classes at the new York Academy 40 years later -- in the fall of 2011 -- will be, too.

Lutheran Social Services effectively put multi-generation family contributions under the spotlight in recently awarding father and son Dan and David Meckley its Cornerstone Award.

That wonderful moment brings forth a couple of insightful points about York County.

In his Cornerstone speech, Dan Meckley contrasted his hometown with the Mansfield, Ohio, community in which he lived for 10 years.

The difference was that leading families in York back up their ideas with their financial contributions.

"While we sometimes think we are not moving forward in York, by comparison to Mansfield, we have," he said. "Not only do many of our wealthy families contribute money, but they also contribute a great deal of time."

Further, the community leadership handoff exemplified by the Meckleys is indicative of what

is going on throughout the York community. The leadership and wealth of the Greatest Generation is giving way to the executive abilities and strategies of the Boomers.

An enlightening step in that progression came at another recent event, the annual YorkCounts summit.

YorkCounts is the most progressive and effective connecting group in the York area. So to see several of its most effective people -- David Meckley, Eric Menzer, Larry Miller, all Boomers -- rotate off that board at this annual meeting was a bit disconcerting.

This is particularly so because some key pieces of YorkCounts' work are just emerging -- the York Academy Charter School, for example. Of course, these leaders are not gone from the community, and their engagement will continue. And YorkCounts continues with strong leadership.

But that YorkCounts board change underscores David Meckley's point in his Cornerstone speech about the children of boomers: This younger generation must be entrusted to lead because their contributions are needed.

Somehow, the York Academy Regional Charter School ties into that.

Logos Academy

A high tower west of the Codorus Creek will join

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that marking the Smyser-Royer complex as a tall symbol for educational improvement in York City.

Logos Academy -- a Christian, intercultural, classical school -- is set for occupancy on the former First Capital Fibers property in the fall of 2010.

The 250 W. King St. location for Logos creates an interesting link with the nearby 300 block of West Princess Street, a predominantly black neighborhood, recognized earlier this year for the many achievers who grew up there in the post-World War II era.

Three Logos representatives attended a recent evening at the York County Heritage Trust at which former residents of that West Princess Street neighborhood told how family, faith, neighbors and education worked together to propel them to achievement.

Logos officials clearly share those themes. The 11-year-old school's Web site states: "The whole child is developed spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually."

Iron works history

Historian June Lloyd has written that the Smyser-Royer Variety Iron Works complex grew from a small stove manufacturer to a huge fabricator of mill gears and turbines; garden benches, fountains, and statuary; cast iron building fronts; light posts; lacy iron railings, such as the familiar grill work at the French

Quarter in New Orleans; and iron bridge parts. For more, see Lloyd's blog: yorkblog.com/universal.

Award winners

Lutheran Social Services Cornerstone awardees provide a snapshot of the most respected community leaders of the first decade of this century, similar to honors given at York Manufacturers' Association events 100 years ago.

Someday, historians will find those on the Cornerstone list worthy of study, as they do now with people like Thomas Shipley, S. Forry Laucks and John C. Schmidt, community leaders at the turn of the 20th century.

Interestingly, in a positive sign of the times, the Cornerstone Awards at the turn of the 21st century recognize women and families, too:

Cornerstone awardees:

- Bill and Judy Simpson, 2004
- Bob and Anne Kinsley, 2005
- Tom and Joan Norris, 2006
- Ryan and Joan Sattler, 2007
- Coni Wolf, 2008
- Tony and Stef Campisi, 2009.

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--- Dan and David Meckley, 2010.

James McClure, editor of the York Daily Record/Sunday New, blogs daily at yorktownsquare.com . To contact him, e-mail jem@ydr.com .

Also of interest

. Towered Logos building west of Codorus Creek another beacon of educational progress in York.

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