

Carol Burleson Holt

Alton, Illinois, a historic town on the Mississippi River, is a long way from Texas. Little did Carol Holt know, however, that her experiences in babysitting and working with children in Vacation Bible school, in the seventh grade, would eventually lead her here. She enjoyed working with children so much that she decided early that she wanted to make teaching her career. In high school she joined and participated in Future Teachers of America and was a member of the National Honor Society.

In the fall of 1963 she began her freshman year at Illinois State University where she eventually earned her bachelor's degree in August, 1966 as a special education major. While working on her degree, she met and later married her husband, Bill Holt, who was majoring in English. After graduation the couple began their teaching careers in Illinois. But in the hot August of 1969, they moved to Texas, where he began teaching at Tarrant County College and she began teaching special needs children in Everman. While their sons were young, she taught in several schools, both private and public, until August of 1980 when she came to Mansfield as a teacher of special needs children at Tarver-Rendon Elementary.

With the encouragement of Martha Reid, her principal, she began graduate work in educational administration at Texas Woman's University, earning a master's degree and administrative certification in August, 1985. Also in 1985 she was invited to join the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, in which she held several offices and was still active as of 2007. In the fall of 1986, she became assistant principal of both Tarver-Rendon Elementary and the new Charlotte Anderson Elementary. In 1989, she became principal of Charlotte Anderson Elementary until her retirement in May 1999.

Her time at Anderson Elementary was rewarding both professionally and personally. She wrote, "I was fortunate to work with excellent teachers, enthusiastic parents, and hard working children, and any success I achieved was entirely a result of cooperative effort. Our school family enjoyed a positive and productive work and play ethic. I especially enjoyed sharing Valentine's Day with the children because they enjoyed giving and receiving valentines, and February 14 is also my birthday." During her tenure at Anderson Elementary the school was the first in Mansfield ISD to be given an Exemplary rating by the Texas Education Agency.

Working in Texas schools had a special meaning for Carol Holt. Her great-grandfather's uncle was Dr. Rufus C. Burleson, a founder and twice the president of Baylor University, the same man for whom the town of Burleson was named. She feels honored to have worked as an educator in Texas and to have carried on the tradition of educational excellence that he helped establish.