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Romeoville School Namesakes: Kenneth L. Hermansen

Kenneth L. Hermansen Elementary School opened in 2001. But who was Ken Hermansen?

He was born in northern Indiana and served three years in the U.S. Army during World War II. After teaching sixth graders in Freeport, IL, he moved to the Romeoville area in 1953 with a master's degree in education. He was hired as the principal at Hillside School, a one room school house near the intersection of Boughton Road and Naperville Road. He was also named Valley View School District's first superintendent, a position he would hold for 20 years.

During his two decades as superintendent, he oversaw the growth of the district and, when the growth outpaced the available facilities and finances, he instituted the state's first year-round school year, the 45-15 plan. In it, students were divided into four groups. Each group of students would stay home for 15 consecutive school days and then go to school for 45 consecutive school days while a different group stayed home. This program gained national attention.

Additional contributions included starting gifted and special education programs before they were legally required, bringing the middle school concept to the district, and modernizing the district through additions to Valley View School and the planning and construction of five elementary schools.

He eventually stepped down as superintendent and returned to the classroom: teaching social studies at Romeoville High School during the day and psychology classes at Joliet Junior College at night. He retired



from education in 1984 with 31 years of service to Valley View School District. He went on to serve four years as a Village of Romeoville Trustee and sat on the boards of the Fountaindale Library and the Romeoville Chamber of Commerce. He was also a member of the Jaycees and Lions Club.

Hermansen moved to Florida in 1991 and passed away in 1999 at the age of 75. When a new elementary school was built in 2001, it was named after Ken Hermansen, the innovative administrator who brought so much growth and success to Valley View School District.

This is the last in a series of six articles that explore the people the Romeoville Valley View Schools are named after.