



The Master's Academy

*celebrates founding
steering committee member*

Paul West



Back in 1986, some godly men and women had a dream. Their dream was to put together a non-denominational, yet distinctively Christian, community school. Clearly the Lord was behind this work, as this labor was not in vain. The dream was for a Christ-centered school with the best academic standards, a good testimony, and an opportunity to serve. Just as all big dreams need many different talents, this dream required many different people with varied kinds of expertise to make it happen. Many people dreamed and many people were involved - one of those dedicated servants was Paul West.

TMA had humble beginnings. When the founders initially got together, they had no buildings, no desks, no lockers, no equipment, no endowments, and no athletic fields. They created a search committee, looking for a location that would house The Master's Academy. Before they had their first student they started with a \$10,000 donation and three dedicated and visionary staff members: Headmaster Pat Mennenga, Principal Shirley Cashion, and Athletic Director Brad Couch.

Paul had served on the school board at Pine Hills Christian Academy, had been a successful real estate and mortgage broker, and had boundless enthusiasm. His dedication to excellence in all areas of life made him a natural fit with the rest of the founders. His real estate office was the location for many of those early meetings. His negotiation with the public school system and large companies for less expensive supplies was very important in those early years. His dedication to finding people committed to the Scriptures and excellence in education was also imperative. After he helped negotiate the use of two local churches to house TMA, Paul worked with nine other men and a local banker to underwrite the acquisition of modular classroom buildings for our upper campus. Included were a science lab, a library, and administrative offices as well.



Paul's dedication certainly did not end when the doors were open. He poured countless hours into building the school after it was opened. For the first several years of the school, he played a vital role in bookkeeping and fundraising. TMA's first national award came in 1989 when the TMA Bible Quiz Team, under his tutelage, won its first of four national titles. This was an integral part of building the reputation and name that brought several teachers to the school. He coached many sports teams for TMA, taught different classes, worked in administration, and served on the Board of Directors. Later, Paul worked with the founders of Central Florida's Citadel of Faith and Freedom in their gifting of a fifteen acre campus that was to become TMA's Middle School campus. This is what could be called his 'crowning achievement' on behalf of TMA.



Yes, the landscape has certainly changed since those first ten years when Paul walked the halls of TMA. TMA's success is the result of many sacrificial men and women working in concert. We are proud that Paul's thumbprint can be seen in almost every aspect of the school!