



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pershing Elementary School Prepares for a Four-Star Celebration of General Pershing's Birthday

University City, MO – (Sept. 12, 2018) On Thursday, September 13, the 400 students of Pershing Elementary will celebrate the birthday of General John J. Pershing; the WWI (1914-1918) hero who famously came to St. Louis in December 1919 to lay the cornerstone of the new Pershing Elementary School.

The program involves a specially developed curriculum inspired by local historian and sponsor, University City resident Mark Winer and created by the school's teaching team. According to Winer, "I wanted Pershing students to learn about Pershing's life and legacy and how important he was to the rise of African-American soldiers in WWI." He added, "It's also a great excuse to have cake and ice cream!" Winer has arranged a party featuring a series of cakes bearing the likenesses of Pershing and his troops!

Students will explore details of the day the great General, who hailed from Laclede, Mo., stopped for 18 hours of celebration and ceremony in St. Louis. His heavy itinerary of speeches, dinners and dedications included a stop at Pershing Elementary on Bartmer where he laid the cornerstone of the new school with an engraved trowel that is part of the school's history collection today. Although the school was completely rebuilt and rededicated in August 2012, the 1919 cornerstone remains.

In addition to Pershing's strategic military skills, he is also credited with inventing – the jumping jacks! And, thanks to the students at Pershing Elementary in St. Joseph, Mo., the jumping jacks became Missouri's official exercise in 2014. Honoring that, our Pershing students will have a contest as they attempt to set some records in efforts led by physical education staff and Jim Adams, owner of Catalyst Strength and Functional Nutrition.

Thomas Hoff, Museum Educator for the History Department of St. Louis County Parks, will make grade-level presentations throughout the afternoon on Sept. 13, connecting with the students through the General's work with troops in WWI. Principal Herbert Buie said, "Although our school has changed over these 100 years, the name Pershing, still carries a special meaning and we are excited to explore the General's legacy with our students."

continued



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
UNIVERSITY CITY
Transform the Life of Every Student Every Day!

NewsRelease

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About General John Pershing

After graduating high school, Pershing attended Truman State University in Kirksville, Mo. He taught basic studies to African-American students until, upon invitation from West Point, he decided to pursue the military. He tested highly on the exam and enrolled. In addition to his military and strategic fighting skills, Pershing was a true leader. He cleared the way for highly-trained African American troops, like the Buffalo Soldiers and the Harlem Hell Fighters of Harlem, New York, to rise as American troops fighting alongside France. The Hell Fighters heroically fought on the front lines and were among the most decorated soldiers of WWI.

Pershing proved to be a true hero of World War I, reaching the rank of General of the Armies. He was allowed to pick his insignia – four stars. He is the only living General to have received this honor.

Adding to the excitement, 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI and of the creation of Irving Berlin's song "God Bless America." Both will be explored in the school program, which will culminate with birthday cake and ice cream – of course!

Special thanks to sponsor and historian Mark Winer; Sue Rehkopf, archivist for the Historical Society of University City; Tom Hoff, Museum Educator for the History Department, St. Louis County; Jim Adams, owner of Catalyst Strength and Functional Nutrition, and Chef Robert Rusan of Ruff's catering in partnership with Letishia Robinson baker.

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On February 21, 1911, with a City population of only 2,417, The School District of University City was officially established. Classes began in September 1912 with a total school population of 769. Today, you will find outstanding educational programs serving a student population of approximately 2,800 with a preschool, four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. In May 2018, University City High School held its 101st formal Commencement Ceremony.



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A Four Star Celebration at Pershing Elementary!

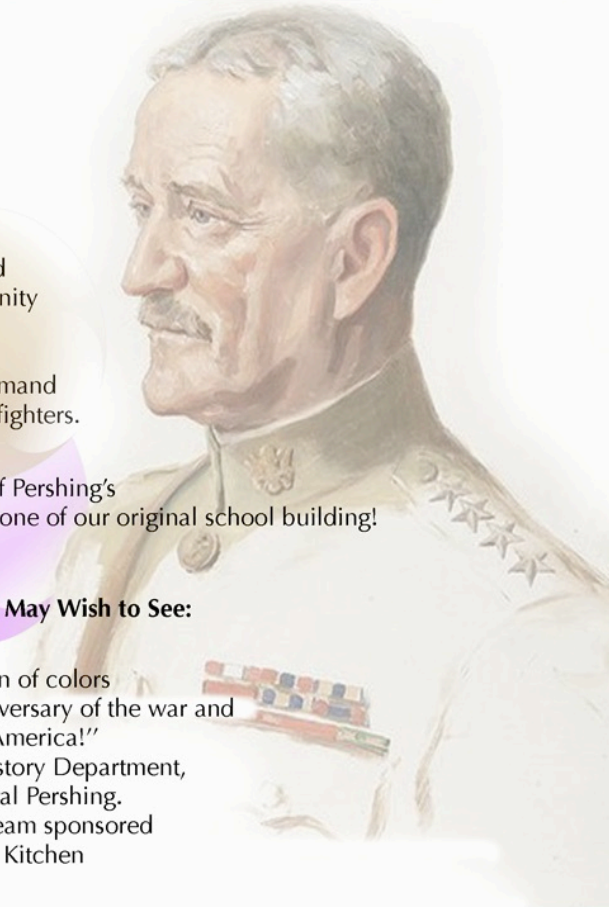
September 13, 2018 is General John J. Pershing's Birthday!

Celebrating the late West Point cadet and WWI hero is a cross-curriculum opportunity for the school that bears his name. Classes are learning about Pershing's contributions in WWI including his command of the 10th Cavalry and the Harlem Hellfighters.

Next year marks the 100th anniversary of Pershing's visit to University City to lay the cornerstone of our original school building!

Highlights of the Parents and Guardians May Wish to See:

- UCHS JROTC Color Guard presentation of colors
- Music classes celebrate the 100th anniversary of the war and the birth of Irving Berlin's "God Bless America!"
- **Tom Hoff**, Museum Educator of the History Department, St. Louis County tells the story of general Pershing.
- All students will enjoy cake and ice cream sponsored by Mark Winer and produced by Ruff's Kitchen



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