

FACILITY, FACULTY, & FORTITUDE

NORTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL MURAL

INSPIRATION:









ARTIST STATEMENT



Northside High School, originally Fort Smith High School, was founded in 1885, and has ever been a major component in the long rich history of Fort Smith, Arkansas. When thinking about this storied institution, three words rise to the forefront—Facility, Faculty, and Fortitude.

Facility in this work carries a double meaning. Northside has encompassed a variety of structures beginning with the original campus described as one of the "Seven Wonders of Fort Smith" with its English castle-style, buff-brick and grey-stone, that stood until a deadly tornado nearly destroyed the structure three months later, in January, 1898. The current location of the school was established in 1928 with architecture and brick patterns that have become a part of the visual iconography of the campus. Lincoln High School is also represented in the work as an important part of the history of Northside, integrating and enriching the student body in 1966.

These structures are represented in the work as a reminder of this long history, but more importantly, they represent facility as a word of support and empowerment to the students of Northside. These halls and all that they contain foster learning in all of its faceted variety.

Faculty in this work speaks of inherit mental and physical power. It is capability, capacity, potential, preparedness, reason, and intelligence. It is the goal of the institution to impart these qualities to every student that enters. Whether it be academic, artistic, or athletic, Northside strives to bring out the best in the young minds that engage in study there. This faculty is represented by a football player dressed in a uniform from the mid-forties and a contemporary graduating senior, holding her diploma aloft and looking to her future with determination.

All of this culminates in the image of the grizzly. Set against the western sun above the Arkansas river is Northside's stoic animal mascot. Here, the grizzly is striding forward through time as history swirls around. It is determined, and serious. The grizzly bear is an excellent choice of mascot, not just for its impressive size and strength that makes for an inspiring team icon.

The grizzly bear is known for its intelligence, adaptability, and ability to learn. They are not only agile and surprisingly fast but have great memories. The grizzly bear is a picture of fortitude, bravery, and endurance. What a wonderful representation of the thousands of people who have in someway been connected to Northside High School.

THANK YOU!