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Wright, Deng honored for school naming

By John Kelleher - Managing Editor

DeKALB - Paul T. Wright, the man for whom the old



Henry Deng of DeKalb shakes hands with a school board member before the board's meeting Tuesday in DeKalb. Deng and Paul Wright (sitting to Deng's right) were honored at the meeting. Chronicle photo HOLLY LUNDH

Malta High School is being renamed, and Henry Deng, the Lincoln Elementary School fourth-grader who proposed naming the school after Wright, were honored by the DeKalb School Board Tuesday night.

Wright, his wife, Claire, and his family sat in the front row during the board's meeting as board President Tom Teresinski and Superintendent Brian Ali praised Wright for donating the land on which the school was built.

"This is more than I expected," Wright said, addressing the board.

He noted that the school opened 40 years ago.

"My family and I got a lot of use out of it," he said, pointing to family members who accompanied him to the meeting.

"This is very much appreciated by my whole family," he said.

The school will reopen in the fall as a partnership school operated by the district with the help of Northern Illinois University.

Tired of hearing the building called "the old Malta High School," school officials created an essay contest to find a new name. Henry checked with the Malta library to find out the school's history. There he learned that Wright and his family donated the land for the school. The board chose Henry's essay over 50 other entries.

After accepting a \$25 gift certificate from Borders, Henry briefly addressed the crowd.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank my principal, Mr. Burski, my teacher, Mrs. Horn, and my special teacher, Ms. Greenacre, for encouraging me," he said.

Wright School principal Scott Kubelka said 222 students have applied for admission to the school. The school hopes it will have attracted 275 students by the middle of March.

Students from every elementary school in the district and St. Mary School have applied, he said.

Should more students apply than there is room for, a lottery will be held to determine who will be admitted, Kubelka added.

The school will have preschool and after-school programs for students. The early morning and late afternoon programs will concentrate on arts and technology, he said.

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