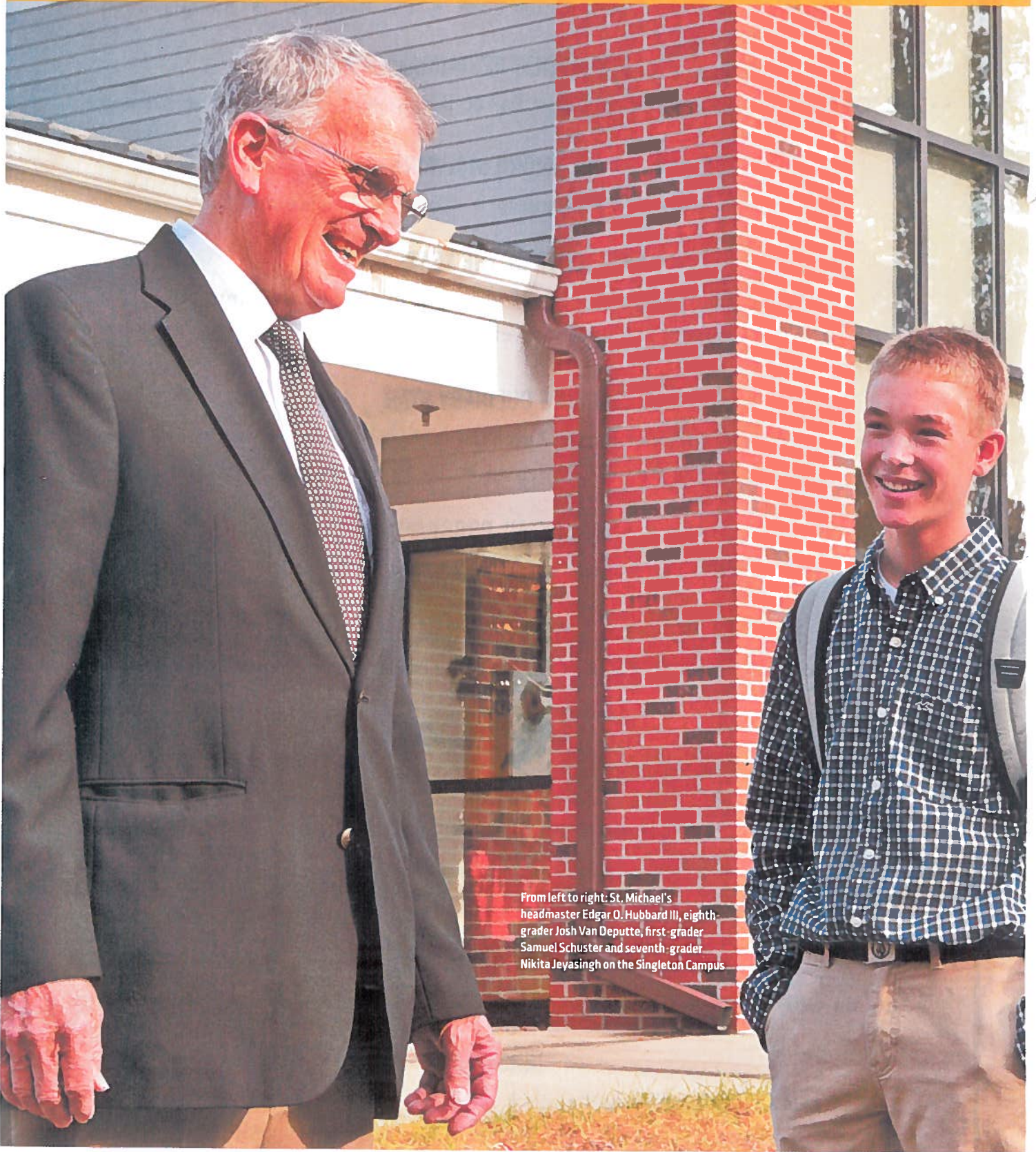


# A 'WONDERFUL



From left to right: St. Michael's headmaster Edgar O. Hubbard III, eighth-grader Josh Van Deputte, first-grader Samuel Schuster and seventh-grader Nikita Jeyasingh on the Singleton Campus

# LEGACY'

After nearly half a century at the helm, St. Michael's headmaster will retire  
*By Nicole Cohen • Photography by Jay Paul*

**T**he hallways of St. Michael's are quiet, with classes in session. Poised in a conference room chair, the school's headmaster, Edgar O. Hubbard III, reflects on a career spanning nearly half a century. "Good schools continue to grow and evolve, and I think we've succeeded in doing that, which has made this an enjoyable place not only for me to work, but for all of the faculty as well," he says. →



Colleagues, parents and former students will tell you Hubbard's words are an understatement, but he truly doesn't want the credit for the strides the school has made under his leadership.

After a 47-year tenure as headmaster of St. Michael's Episcopal School, Hubbard will retire at the end of the 2014-15 school year. To put his longevity in perspective, the average tenure for a head of an independent school in the United States is eight years, according to the National Association of Independent Schools.

St. Michael's, a kindergarten-through-eighth grade, independent coeducational school opened in 1957 by St. Michael's Episcopal Church, has enjoyed considerable growth during Hubbard's time as headmaster. Today there are two schools, the Lower School located at the original location in Bon Air, and the Middle School on the W.E. and Dale Harman Singleton Campus, which opened in 2008 just three miles away from the Lower School. The schools have a combined enrollment of more than 375 students. More than 13 construction projects have been completed during Hubbard's tenure, including the Singleton Campus, which has also earned authorization as an International Baccalaureate World School. However, Hubbard insists the accomplishments the school has made over the years are in no way a direct result of his actions, but rather the culmination of the efforts of the faculty, staff, parents and students.

"Anything that has been accomplished here has been accomplished because this has been a collaborative effort," Hubbard says. "I can have all the great ideas in the world, but without the support of my board of directors and without the support of the faculty here—and in many ways without the support of the students—none of these things take place."

After graduating from Virginia Commonwealth University, formerly Richmond Professional Institute, where he received his master of education degree, Hubbard took his first job at St. Michael's as a seventh-and-eighth grade English, history and physical education teacher who also coached basketball. He was unsure whether teaching would be his permanent career choice and considered attending law school down the road, but he found that the St. Michael's community was a great place to work and quickly developed a passion for education. In 1967, Hubbard became the school's fifth headmaster.

"Every day has its own set of challenges here," Hubbard says. "I



Hubbard (left) outside of Saint Michael's in 1970.

guess the part that I enjoy is being a problem solver, and there are certainly problems to be solved and contributions to be made, and that's the part of it that's kept the job fresh."

If there was ever a time for Hubbard to be a problem-solver, it was in 1970, when 23 square miles of Chesterfield County were annexed to the city of Richmond. It was a hot-button issue not only because of school desegregation, but because residents from around the region were concerned about their children being bused to distant neighborhoods, as a plan was considered to merge all of the school systems in the area into one.

"I think the most significant time in the school's history occurred during the annexation years," Hubbard says. "There ... was a great deal of angst."

The anxiety fueled increased enrollment in all of Richmond's independent schools, including St. Michael's. But even with the spike in student population, the school was able to carefully manage its growth and avoid some of the problems associated with rapid expansion.

Hubbard says that few minority students were enrolled in private institutions at that time, but the numbers have increased over the years. "We [currently] have a 9 percent diversity rate, and we certainly didn't have one at that point in our existence," he says. "I'm glad to see that trend has changed."

After Hubbard announced his retirement, a board search committee was formed to choose the school's sixth headmaster. After careful deliberation, Michael G. Turner was chosen to succeed →

## ← A 'WONDERFUL LEGACY'

Hubbard, beginning next July. Hubbard says that Turner will develop his own leadership style for the school in addition to learning the basics of the school.

Currently, Turner is serving as head-elect, in which he pulls double-duty with Hubbard, taking on the responsibilities of headmaster. Turner has a background in independent and private schooling. Most recently, he has served as the director of Upper and Middle School admission at St. Christopher's School, where he also taught history and was the head coach of the varsity football team. Even so, he admits replacing Hubbard is a bit daunting.

"Russell Fleetwood, our board chair, the other day it was back-to-school night, and he said, 'Well I get to say something that no one in the last 47 years has said — I'd like to introduce to you our new headmaster'... it does boggle the mind; Lyndon Johnson was president when Ed Hubbard started," Turner says.

For Turner, having Hubbard across the hallway has been an invaluable resource for learning about the institutional history of St. Michael's and the day-to-day tasks as headmaster. "He's been wonderful in helping me learn the ropes, not just in terms of basics but ... thoughtful insights on the various cast of characters that are involved, the institutional knowledge and the background behind

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—Michael Turner, St. Michael's headmaster-elect

Michael Turner will replace Hubbard as Saint Michael's headmaster in July 2015.



things, how we ended up where we ended up, what the decisions were to get us to that point," Turner says.

Hubbard and his wife, Camille, have two daughters of their own, who are both now married with children. One of his grandchildren is an eighth-grader at St. Michael's and will depart the school at the same time as Hubbard.

Like Hubbard's daughter, many former students-turned-parents enroll their own children at the school. Alison Smith Roussy is one such student. She graduated from St. Michael's in 1992. Now married with two sons attending the school, she knew that St. Michael's was where she wanted them to be educated. She recalls fond memories of Hubbard checking in on classes and attending school functions and plays. She says it never felt like the principal was coming, that she was always happy to see him. "I'm thrilled that he's having the chance to relax after all these years and I hope he feels ... that he is leaving St. Michael's with this wonderful legacy and in really great hands," Roussy says. "It will be sad to not see him in the halls."

Bob Archuleta, a parent whose two children attended St. Michael's, has developed a friendship with Hubbard because of his involvement with the school.

"I think the most compelling thing that I remember is him telling parents that for children to learn they needed to be allowed to make their own mistakes and that children learn best from doing their own work and making mistakes, and I think that is such a critical lesson that parents need to hear," Archuleta says.

Merrill Geier, a fourth-grade teacher and Lower School coordinator, has worked with Hubbard at St. Michael's for more than a decade. She remembers how hard Hubbard worked to make sure the transition to the Singleton Campus was as seamless as possible for the students. "If there were some really horrendous glitches, they dealt with it really well. Mr. Hubbard dealt with it really well, because we didn't see it, at least not in the classrooms," Geier says.

Asked if there was anything of significance he would like to point out, Hubbard mentioned W.E. Singleton for his generosity in donating the land used for the Middle School campus. Without Singleton's support the Middle School would never have opened, Hubbard says. "He has literally been the school's greatest benefactor, and he has been a true friend to me and to the school."

Hubbard says he isn't sure what retirement will be like, but he believes the school is poised to achieve great things under Turner's leadership.

"The true mark of whether I have left a legacy or not is how well the school does in the future," Hubbard says. "If I've done my job, the school will be able to function quite nicely without me."

That said, not being at the school is going to be an adjustment for Hubbard, he adds. "I'm feeling like I'm giving [Turner] the keys to a Mercedes — I just don't want him to drive it off the road." ■