

## Broad Ripple Rockets Forever

By Shawnta S. Barnes – May 11, 2018



Front row – BR student Chris Bishop, BR alumna and English teacher Nikia Garland, community member Shawnta Barnes, BR student Jashell McClenton, BR student Sterling Smith. Back Row – community member Kate Shoup, former BR English teacher Herb Budden.

On Thursday, May 10, 2018, from 3-8 p.m. Broad Ripple Magnet High School held its, “We Are the Rockets – The Farewell” open house. At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, Broad Ripple’s doors will close and lights will be turned off one last time. Nikia Garland, Broad Ripple English teacher and alumna, was the hostess and organizer of the open house. In addition to Ms. Garland, Broad Ripple magnet professional Martha Riley and science teacher

Brashon Porter, along with support from other staff and students, helped make the event a huge success.

The event drew a large crowd of over 2,000 alumni and community members. Attendees were able to play a Broad Ripple Trivia game, participate in an open gym game with the boys' varsity basketball team, create a painting of Rippy, the mascot, watch the dance magnet and choir perform, view the walk of fame of notable alumni, watch a documentary about Broad Ripple, purchase a letterman's jacket, tour the school with a student tour guide, write about memories of their time at Broad Ripple, have a keepsake photo taken, and enjoy a meal from Byrne's Pizza and The Grub House food trucks.

The best part was alumni reconnecting with classmates and former teachers and discussing fond memories. Larry McCloud, Garland's beloved principal during her time as a Broad Ripple student, as well as her English teacher, Herb Budden, were in attendance. While introducing her English teacher to some of her students, Garland stated, "This is the man who taught me how to teach English." One student then responded, "So you are the reason she is so hard on us!"

After the event came to a close Garland reflected:

*This event was simply wonderful. There was alumni from the class of 1950 to the present – all hues, classes, and walks of life came out to say farewell to our beloved school that has been a pillar of educational excellence in our Indianapolis community for 131 years. We are rockets for life and soar regardless of circumstance and that was proven last night.*

Many attendees shared the sentiment they couldn't believe the school closing was almost here. If the attendees take Garland's words to heart, they will know, after the doors close, the legacy of the school will live on in them.