



**HINDU SOCIETY**  
HARARE

## **Westridge High School History**

In early 1997 the Society's Executive Committee tabled a proposal to start planning for a High School. The first batch of pupils from Westridge Primary were scheduled to enter high school in 1999.

At the AGM Members approved the proposal to launch the High School under the auspices of the Hindu Society. Around May of 1997, a Steering Committee was formed to co-ordinate this project. The Committee comprised seasoned educationists and former teachers such as Late Ranjith Ramlaul, Mr Naran Kala and Mr N. Padyachee.

A few Members from the Executive and Westridge Primary School Sub Committee were also part of this Steering Committee. The Committee began its work with enthusiasm and met weekly to formulate the future school's ethos, operating guidelines and most importantly, decide on its location and the construction of buildings.

Coincidentally, at that time, the parcel of land adjacent to the Society bordering Ganges Road was in the process of being re-zoned for commercial and retail use by the City Council. This was brought to the attention of the President, Manubhai P. Patel who immediately lodged an objection to the City planning department. An application was made on behalf of the Society by Dr Shasikant Jogi (who advised the planning Commission) to re-zone the land for educational use instead, citing the urgent need for a High School for the Indian Community.

The Mayor at that time was the late Solomon Tawengwa. A prominent Community member, the late Senator Kantibhai G. Patel, together with Dr Jogi, were instrumental in acquiring the land to build the High School.

Society paid for the land in August 1997 and the Steering Committee was directed to move speedily with plans to begin construction of the school building on this parcel of land. The Mayor was invited to attend the Bhumi (Land) Puja ceremony in September/October. However the transfer of ownership of the land kept being delayed by Council politics and bureaucracy. Dr Jogi worked tirelessly to push the City Council to transfer title to the Hindu Society. This was finally accomplished eleven years later in 2010!

Meanwhile the Executive Committee approved the allocation of its capital reserve funds of ZW\$7 million to start the building project, prevailing high inflation and building costs created a sense of urgency to move quickly with construction to hold down the cost. The building contract was given to Mr Peerzada of Primcon Construction, who immediately commenced work under the direction of the Building Sub Committee towards the end of 1997. The Finance Committee simultaneously set out to seek donors to meet the total estimated costs by setting a target of raising \$181 000 per donor per classroom for the 18 classroom of Phase One (classrooms and specialist rooms block). With the Hindu Community Members' generosity, this target was steadily achieved without delaying construction.

The second phase of the project was the laboratories building. The Fundraising Committee set a new target of 21 donors of \$301 000 each and went out to the community again. Once again the generosity of the handful of donors from the community was overwhelming and building of the laboratories went ahead quickly towards the end of 1998. The Steering Committee meanwhile went ahead with the application to the Ministry of Education to register the High School, deciding on the proposed fees and operating budget. Mr Naran Kala was appointed Headmaster-designate in August 1998 and he immediately began the task to identifying and recruiting teachers.

Westridge High School opened its doors in January 1999 with two streams of Form One and Two. The majority of students entering Form One were from Westridge Primary School and Twin Rivers School which became the main feeder schools. The teaching staff included long time, experienced teachers such as Ranjith Ramlaul, Dilip Chouhan and Mr N. Padayachee. Mrs Pratima Bhardwaj (formerly Deputy at Queen Elizabeth High School) was appointed Deputy Headmistress.

The Laboratory block was completed in May 1999. Phase Three entailed building the Administration and Resources Building, and Library. By this time the Society's building funds had been depleted and 'donor fatigue' was beginning to set in among community members. Fortunately, two members of the Community, Vinu and Raju Manubhai Patel stepped forward and generously offered to fund the entire cost of this third phase of buildings. These were completed by the end of 1999.

Over the next few years the cricket, hockey/soccer fields and tennis courts were developed, the Hall was built, initially as an open structure and later completed fully, again through the generosity of a few community members and the Hindu Society. The swimming pool was completed in 2010/11.

The Late Ranjith Ramlaul was appointed the second Headmaster in 2006. He worked tirelessly to improve the education and teaching standards, and pushed the Board to develop the remaining infrastructure required for the extra-curricular activities and sports fields. His sudden passing away in 2010 was a great blow to the school and Community.

### **Westridge High Schools Educational Policy**

A principal objective is to provide quality all round education through a user friendly curriculum and selection of subjects that embrace human values, mould young boys into gentlemen and girls into ladies, and recognise that good conduct and behaviour impact positively on learning outcomes. Westridge High School's policy emanates from the twin pillars of human values based education and multi-racial/multiculturalism.

The broad objective is pursued within the context of:

- The overall mission and policy of the responsible authority (Hindu Society) which emphasises character building and personality enhancing
- The policy and requirements of the parent ministry (Ministry of education)
- Zimbabwe multi-racial /religious/cultural society where children's real racial, cultural and religious and linguistic backgrounds will be exploited to positive advantage.