Season of new beginnings

Students shed red and white

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DENTON — Winds of spring are whistling a new tune for students and staff at Denton Junior/Senior High School.

By Friday, the 700 middle and high school students will have shed their red and white Red Raider mascot for the royal blue and grey of the South Davidson Wildcats.

Teachers and administrators will also have made a trade — flaking chalkboards, warped floorboards and cramped quarters for atriums, teacher workrooms and a "cafelobatorium."

"We're looking forward to the move with great anticipation," said Principal Jim Carpenter. "There's a measure of nostalgia about the old building and deservedly so, but we're ready to go."

The South Davidson transition begins Thursday, with middle school students loading up and moving to the new school two miles north on Highway 100. High schoolers will join them Friday.

To many, the closing of Denton High marks the end of an era.

A Denton high school has existed for over a century, with generations of residents graduating from the present 60-year-old red brick school.

"I've attended this school for 12 years," said senior Chad Gallimore. "My grandma, daddy and sister graduated from here and I thought I would too."

Instead, he will spend his last two months of school at South Davidson, leaving the large elegance arching windows of Denton High to graduate a Wildcat.

But just as some see doors closing on the past, others are looking to the future, viewing the new building and name change as symbols of a new beginning.

"I'm excited about the move," said junior Stephanie Fine. "It's a new start, a chance to set our own traditions."

Miss Fine and her cousin Julianna, a sophomore, admitted they will miss the sound of shoe soles tapping down the narrow hardwood hallways and walking outside to classes scattered in the school's seven buildings.

"Denton High has the best memories," said Julianna. "You can't replace that."

However, the allure of South Davidson includes air conditioning and reliable heat, new equipment and furniture and spacious classrooms, all under one roof.

"I'm going to be the first in my family to graduate from the new school," added Stephanie, "and that's exciting."

The new building, which was completed under budget, features a combination cafeteria, lobby and auditorium area that Mr. Carpenter likes to call the "cafelobatorium."
DENTON High looks out over the city’s Main Street, which students cross daily to attend classes in the home economics building. The main building, constructed in 1929, is one of seven structures that make up the school.

STUDENTS are bidding a fond farewell to the red and white of Denton’s Red Raiders.

SOUTH Davidson’s coat of arms showcases the school’s mascot, the wildcat, the school’s colors, royal blue and silver grey, and symbols for strength and protection.

LOCKERS line the long, narrow hallways of Denton High School, built in a U around a central courtyard.
ALTHOUGH paint flakes from the large front windows, and several panes of glass are missing, the structures add character and elegance to the 60-year-old school with their gentle arches.
A typical Denton classroom features such amenities as flaking blackboards, pealing paint and warped floorboards.

OLD-FASHIONED radiators erratically supply heat to Denton High School.