

Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation honors Alma Irene Aitch at STEM Center open house

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation held an open house at the Alma Irene Aitch Stem Center Wednesday afternoon at 1310 N. Main Street in Edwardsville.

Named in memory of Alma Irene Aitch, a former educator at Lincoln Grammar School, the center will educate students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics through programs like the digital humanities club, the math games league, urban gardening, water education and robotics.

Mannie Jackson, President of the Center for the Humanities Foundation, said the STEM Center is incredibly important for the future of the community as a huge crowd honored Ms. Aitch and her 27-year career in education.

“This is a historic day,” Jackson said. “Ms. Aitch was the first teacher I had and arguably the last great teacher I had. The center itself is all about creating an environment where people are comfortable talking to each other. This is something the

community is investing in, this is a smart community, nothing but good is coming from this.”

Dr. Harry Shaw, Ms. Aitch’s nephew, recalled how his aunt and former educator was able to turn something as simple as a car ride into a chance to learn by reading road signs and counting vehicles.

“This kind of homage to family and tying school to community, were hallmarks of the career and life of Alma Irene Aitch,” Dr. Shaw said. “It’s a source of great pride that the name Alma Irene Aitch for years to come will be associated with the preservation and rebirth of Lincoln School in its new form, this new vibrant form,”

Mayor Hal Patton also commented on important role the center will play in educating the community, much like Ms. Aitch had done.

“We are so thankful to have this center, for what it means to the youth of this community and for the future jobs that it will generate,” Mayor Hal Patton said. “North Main Street and how it’s being transformed with Mannie's investment to his home town, and Dr. Chapman and Lewis and Clark's commitment to Edwardsville, we just can’t be thankful enough.”

