



The Herald

September 2014
Page 1 of 2

A Publication of the MCA Office of
Advancement and Development



Honor at MCA

MCA stands on three pillars: Scholarship, Character, and Community. To promote, instill, and maintain the highest levels of each of these ideals, we have high expectations of all our students. The MCA Honor Code helps students and parents understand and reach those expectations. At the first of each school year, all students third grade and higher sign the MCA Honor Code. In the Upper School, students sign the honor code in front of their peers in a special ceremony that includes guest speakers who discuss the value of integrity and honor and how the concepts of such have played out in their lives. Recently, grades six through eight held their annual honor code signing, and our ninth grade class conducted our very first high school honor code signing in a candle-lighting ceremony.

The MCA Honor Code

As an individual with endowed worth and value, I will honor others with the same respect that I am due. I will uphold the high ideals of this institution with integrity by being respectful, honest, compassionate, responsible and courageous.

At the signing ceremony for sixth through eighth graders, members of our first freshman class spoke about the MCA Honor Code and what it meant to them. **Courtney Busick**, **Amber Golding**, and **Drew Morrow** each presented a short talk to inspire the underclassmen.

Courtney Busick told the students, "The honor code is more than just a large piece of paper. The Declaration of Independence was a large piece of paper. The Constitution was a large piece of paper with a bunch of famous names. What's so special about them? Each of those papers certified our independence in this country. The honor code in front of us is the promise that you will make to this school. The promise that you will give your best effort

throughout your middle school years. The promise that when you sign this, you will grow by its words. The honor code is able to grow with you; it changes with you, and sticks into your head. For example, it's easy to forget an answer to a test you studied so hard for, and then allow your eyes to take a peek at you neighbor's paper. The hardest thing to do is to say no, but it is the right thing to do."

Drew Morrow pointed out that, "Humans are not perfect, but we must try our best to improve. Be courageous and do the right thing, even if it seems difficult or unpopular." All, students and adults alike, left the ceremony inspired by these words.



Left: **Rayquan Brown** signs the honor code as his classmates look on. Center: **Courtney Busick** challenges the students with her inspiring words. Right: **Christopher Rutt** (left) and **Matthew Keaton** (right) sign the honor code. Signed honor codes are framed and hung in the upper school lobby as a permanent reminder of the high ideals expected of our students.





Dr. Michael K. Shields was the guest speaker for MCA's first high school honor code signing ceremony. Dr. Shields graduated from the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, with a BS in Electrical Engineering. He trained as a nuclear engineer and served in the US Navy Submarine Service where he qualified for command of a nuclear submarine. Dr. Shields earned his Ph D in Electrical and Computer Engineering, and served as a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, teaching undergraduate and graduate classes in electrical engineering and computer programming. He is currently the President, Chief Technical Officer, and Chief Scientist for Vigilant Cyber Systems, Inc.

Dr. Shields spoke to our freshmen about the importance of honor and integrity, taking the students on a walk through history with famous people who put honor above all else, including life itself. He challenged the students to ask themselves three questions before they took action on anything: 1) Will this action be deceitful to anyone, including myself? 2) Will this action give me an unfair advantage? 3) Would I be satisfied if someone were to treat me this way? Dr. Shields reminded the students that, even though they might forget procedures learned in Algebra, or forget facts memorized in biology class, what they would remember would be the character traits and values they learned, and that they should live by those high standards for the remainder of their lives.

Students participated in a candle-lighting ceremony in which each student lit the candle of a classmate while saying, "I respect and honor you because you are an individual endowed with worth and value." With candles still burning, the students recited the honor code. Following the candle-lighting ceremony, each student came forward to sign the honor code while a chime sounded after each signature.



Top left: Dr. Michael Shields addresses MCA freshmen about honor and integrity. Center: Students gather around the conference table as they prepare for the candle-lighting ceremony. Top right: Students light each other's candles all around the table. Bottom left: **Isabella Neal** (right) lights a candle for **Riley Cullen**. Bottom right: **Peyton Bowman** (left) lights a candle for **Damien Ratley**.