

Alumni of Dallas' Sunset High return once-prized trophy to its former glory



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For years the Sanger Trophy was a coveted prize, awarded annually to the Dallas high school with the best record in varsity sports.

It often could be found at Sunset High School, winner of the trophy more than any of the five other schools that competed for the award from 1929 into the 1950s. It was forgotten for years, boxed away in disrespect at the [Oak Cliff](#) school.

It's now the centerpiece of a restoration project coming to fruition March 10.

Former Sunset students will gather that day to dedicate the trophy and its new place of honor at the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture.

Also on hand will be alumni from the other trophy competitors: Woodrow Wilson, Adamson and [North Dallas](#) as well as former high schools Crozier Tech and Forest Avenue. The museum display will include plaques recognizing the schools.

Project organizers hope they have found a permanent home for a piece of the city's past, one that was left to Sunset for good keeping.

In 1954, the school's name was the last one engraved on the silver-plated loving cup, a donation from Sanger Bros. Department Store to, as a newspaper report put it, "encourage a high standard of competition and interest in athletics."

The school was given permanent possession of the trophy. And it remained on display there until 1979, when hundreds of Sunset keepsakes were stored during a renovation. They weren't returned to display. Most were thrown away. But Sunset's 1950 state football championship trophy and the Sanger Trophy were found at the school in 2001.

"It was beat all to living hell," [Don Martin](#), a 1952 Sunset graduate, said of the Sanger piece.

He and other Sunset alumni raised about \$2,500 to remove its dents, restore its finish and replace its missing wooden base and metal cap, Goddess of Victory figure and all. "We figured it was our responsibility," Martin said.

And they began looking for a display site — away from the school that had failed history.

Leaders of the Old Red Museum accepted the trophy in 2006, but for whatever reason it remained in storage. Last year the museum offered a used display case. Alumni raised about \$4,000 to retrofit it. And all will come together March 10 with an unveiling on the museum's first floor.

"It's really an honored place for the trophy," said Roy Kinslow, a 1942 Sunset graduate.

The 38-inch-tall trophy will ride on a rotating pedestal. Plaques will include facts about each of the six high schools and names of influential alumni.

"We've been looking forward to having it on exhibit," said Kerry Adams, the museum's curator and exhibits director. "We're grateful for the partnership" with the alumni.

The display will add to the museum's story of Dallas. "We're also hopeful other people will come forward with material related to education," said Adams, citing such items as yearbooks, letter jackets and photographs.

"And we're hoping alumni will come here and reminisce," he said.

Don Martin is one for reminiscing and honoring Sunset High School's past. And he was among those who were disturbed to learn that trophies from their time and earlier had been relegated to nothing.

Martin said he tracked down a school janitor who told him a teacher involved in the school's renovation had told him to dump the old trophies instead of returning them to the new display cases. Luckily, the state championship trophy had been saved for a drama class skit, he said. He doesn't know why the Sanger Trophy wasn't tossed.

Martin said he tracked down the teacher, who confirmed his direction to the janitor.

"He said they were a bunch of relics," Martin recalled. "I came unglued. If I'd been facing him I'd probably have hit him."