

Sweetwater High School

The speaker at the Jan. 22, 2015, meeting of the South Bay Historical Society was Laura R. Charles, longtime teacher at Sweetwater High School and the school's historian of the school.

[click here](#) to view the 2013 NBC news report on Laura R. Charles when she was named Inspirational Teacher of the Year.



The theater in the new front building of Sweetwater High School at 2900 Highland Avenue in National City was dedicated in 2013 in honor of Laura Charles.

Sweetwater Union High School District ... How It All Began.

Prior to the 1880's children of high school age living within the present Sweetwater District boundaries were obliged to travel to San Diego to Russ High School (now San Diego High) to complete grades 9-12. In 1882, high school students were taught in a two-story wooden building on 9th Street in National City. The National Union High School District was organized September 6, 1895, and the school was accredited to the State University in 1899. By 1907, the artistic, but not too comfortable concrete structure of Mission style architecture at 933 E Street, later site of Central Elementary School in National City, opened its doors to high school students. Increasing enrollments of secondary students generated interest in the formation of a separate high school district, one that would serve the geographical area between San Diego City line to the Mexican border. A public meeting was held in September, 1919, to discuss the move, and the eventual result was the creation of the National Union High School District through action of the County Board of Supervisors on January 6, 1920. However, at the organizational meeting of the National Union High School District on February 9, 1920, the trustees petitioned the Board of Supervisors to change the name to Sweetwater Union High School District. The Board of Supervisors ordered the name changed on March 15, 1920. Also, in the year 1920, the voters approved \$172,000 in bonds for the construction of a new high school. Bids were awarded for construction of buildings at 30th and Highland in National City to contractor L.E.C. Smith on May 7, 1921. The buildings were accepted by the Board of Trustees on March 8, 1922, and the students and staff moved into the new buildings on April 3, 1922, to start classes. Approximately 230 students attended Sweetwater High School. That year, the high school consisted of grades 9-12. The school Bulletin of Information for 1923-24 shows several course offerings that have since slipped from the curriculum: millinery (1/2 credit), housewifery, and home nursing. The California Taxpayers Association, reporting on educational expenditures for 1925-26, found the average cost for teaching each pupil to be \$186.52. Contrast that with today's cost per pupil of \$802.31. In 1928 the con

lying within the boundaries of the district voted to construct buildings for junior high school purposes, and the district, therefore, assumed the responsibility educating 7th and 8th grade students who previously attended schools of the elementary districts. In September 1929, classes started in three junior highs: N City Junior, Chula Vista Junior, and Southwest Junior. With the advent of the junior highs as part of the Sweetwater High School District, the 9th grade was from the high school to the junior high. Since that time the district has expanded in students and buildings to its present complement of nine junior high, sev high, and three adult schools. (from the Chula Vista Historical Society Bulletin, June 1982)



The National Ranch School District, formed in 1871, built the South Bay's first high school in 1882 at 9th Street and E Avenue, called the Academy.



The second National City High School building, known as "Old Central," was located at 933 E Street in National City 1907-1922.



The third high school building, with the new name of Sweetwater High School, was located at at 2900 Highland Avenue 1922-1985.



An aerial view of Sweetwater High School was pictured in the 1947 yearbook.



The fourth Sweetwater High School building at 2900 Highland Avenue 1985-2013.



The fifth Sweetwater High School building at 2900 Highland Avenue was built in 2013.

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