

## The Six Pillars of Peoria High School

Six people were very instrumental in setting the groundwork for Peoria High School. Throughout the website, we will introduce these six people and explain their contributions to the high school. They are not listed in any order of importance since they all were important in the history of Peoria High School. We present the Sixth Pillar:



**Dr. Raymond S. Kellis**  
**Superintendent**  
**Peoria Unified School District**

- Dr. Kellis began his career as a teacher at Peoria High School in 1956. He taught Biology and was a freshman football coach on Ray Mitokawa's staff.
- In the fall of 1959, Dr. Kellis left the school district to become an administrator in the Dysart School District.

- **After a short stint in the Dysart District, Dr. Kellis applied and became a Superintendent in the Snowflake School District.**
- **In 1974 Ira Murphy retired from his position as the Superintendent of the Peoria District and Melvin Huber was named the Superintendent.**
- **In 1975 Peoria became the Peoria Unified School District, as the elementary and high schools joined together into one district.**
- **When the district became a unified school district, Melvin Huber hired two people to be in charge of the elementary and high school portions of the district. These two people were Dick Craig who had long been in charge of Peoria Elementary School and the other person hired to be in charge of the high schools was Dr. Raymond Kellis.**
- **The early 70s was a period of growth with new schools being added and a period is known for the energy crisis with rising prices of gasoline. This is the period Melvin Huber had to navigate through and he did it with the help of Dick Craig and Dr. Kellis.**
- **In 1978, Cactus High School was about to open up and Melvin Huber had tired of the superintendency and wanted to go back and be with the kids. He applied and was named by the board as the new principal of Cactus High School.**
- **With Melvin Huber going to Cactus the board decided that they want Dr. Kellis as the next Superintendent of the Peoria Unified School District. He was named Superintendent and served in the district until 1995.**
- **Dr. Kellis was a consensus builder and a leader. He wanted the school board to be together on all decisions and his first concern was for the students of the district.**
- **He built and organized the curriculum from its foundations.**

- He took the district from a small-town mentality to become one of the most respected districts in the state.
- He tried to improve the ability of the district to compensate teachers.
- He was the leader that the district needed at the time for the growth and problems that confronted the district.
- We recognize him as a pillar for Peoria High School because of what he did in the 1980s to create an atmosphere at Peoria High School that led to a period by many who worked at the school as the golden years.
- Cactus had just opened as the second school and was new, Peoria was old, had small enrollment, and had a larger minority population. The kids wanted to go to the new school so new boundaries had to be drawn.
- Dr. Kellis drew the boundaries and sent most of the kids south of Thunderbird to Peoria High School to fill the campus. There was an uproar, with kids wanting to go to a new school and some didn't want to go to the minority school.
- Dr. Kellis said the boundaries were the boundaries and any variance request had to go through him. He didn't approve any and he stuck to the policy and in the 80s Peoria High School prospered academically and athletically and kids loved being there. All because a man of principle stood for what he believed. This is why he is our Sixth Pillar.
- Every year the Arizona School Board Association gives out the Dr. Raymond Kellis Leadership Award to an individual who falls under the following criteria:
  - Demonstrates a vision of a better life for children through education
  - Exhibits ethical conduct of the highest order

- Possesses strong moral convictions
- Participates actively as a civic leader
- Mentors aspiring, new, and veteran administrators
- Values and sees the best in others
- Nominated by other(s) and not by themselves
- Member of Arizona School Administrators

When Dr. Kellis retired from the Peoria Unified School District, we not only lost a leader but a friend of Peoria High School.

As a side note, Dr. Kellis has a son that is now the Superintendent of the Dysart Unified School District.