

Memories of Pancho (1950 - 1954)

There were always one or two dogs at Midland in 1949-54, when only faculty members could have dogs. Ben Rich adopted a mixed-breed dog, "Pancho," shortly after his previous dog died. Pancho quickly became friends with nearly everyone at Midland, except a Mexican hairless that belonged to Mr. Wood. Pancho nearly always was around Lower Yard, and during Morning Assembly in Stillman Hall after third period, was often waiting for us between Stillman, the Chapel, and Main House. After the First Prefects dismissed the Assembly, we would meander out into the Lower Yard where Pancho would greet us. Usually there was a big box of fruit, like oranges or apples, and sometimes pieces of toast, waiting for us just outside the Dish House (which was attached to Main House). Pancho was waiting for a piece of toast.

We would usually grab an apple, orange, or piece of toast, and lounge around until the next period started. Sometimes Pancho got lucky. Then he would lie down in the morning sun, guarding the toast between his front paws, and enjoy the camaraderie. Magpies were often around, hoping that they could also share in our morning snack. One morning, I watched as a magpie approached Pancho, taunting him. After a while, Pancho left his toast to frighten him away. A second magpie quickly swooped down out of the tree and grabbed the toast. Did the two magpies conspire to do this? Did they share in their treasure? I don't know. Magpies (Corvids) are very clever birds. Sometimes they may even be smarter than dogs, like Pancho.

Bob Shafer Class of '54