



THROUGH THESE HALLS

(Recollections of a Grand Old School)

Compiled by Jim Black

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Lovingly dedicated to Mary Lee Crowley Hawkins

3/25/1917 – 1/27/2019

For twenty-two years, she taught her students high school English;

For the next forty-two years, she taught us about life.

PREFACE

I first began this venture in 2015 as the old Archer City High School building was being torn down to make way for a new one. Although I received many wonderful memories from people, I didn't feel I had enough to move forward and reluctantly shelved the project. Six years later, in December of 2021, I was reading through some of those memories, became inspired, and decided to give it another try. Again I reached out through the Archer County News, email and Facebook for submissions. I would love to have received a great many more than I did, but the ones you'll find on the following pages still paint a nice portrait of life in the old school that is no more.

As Oscar Wilde once said, "Memory is the diary we all carry with us." For many, our time spent in that old, red brick building was a defining chapter in our lives.

Sadly, some of the individuals who contributed memories to this compilation have passed away as have some others mentioned herein. They are all greatly missed, and their absence makes this retrospective even more sentimental.

I decided to arrange the submissions in alphabetical order—with one exception. It's only fitting this collection of remembrances begin with those of the person this work is dedicated to.

Enjoy the journey, everyone!

First, A brief history . . .

The first school in Archer City was opened in 1880, the same year Archer County was organized. A wooden framed building at the south end of the town square, purchased by progressive-minded citizens, served as a school on weekdays and as the town's only church on Sundays.

According to the abstract, the land which is now situated at the corner of South Mulberry and West Plum streets was deeded on August 3, 1893, by J.P. Boyd to the Archer City School District. A two-room school was first built on the property facing south on West Plum, and in a few years a two-story framed building was erected on the corner of the two named streets.

The latter building was used until the fall of 1910, at which time the seven teachers and approximately 200 students proudly moved to the new two-story sandstone building which had been erected on the present campus located on S. Ash Street. During the summer of 1925, the sandstone building was torn down and the stone was used to add the third story to the courthouse.

In 1925-1926, school was held in churches and downtown buildings during construction of the south wing of the three-story red brick building. Ten years later a north wing was added. This structure stood until the summer of 2015.*

*From *Archer City School – A Brief History*, compiled by Hazel Mullis and presented by the 1975 Homecoming Committee comprised of Jack Loftin, Bobby Williams, JoAnn McDaniel, Earlene Hulse and Hazel Mullis.

*Archer High we love you.
Love you ever so grand;
We will always be loyal,
And we'll cheer you to a man.
In defeat or victory,
We will always be true;
Dear old Archer we love you
And we'll always fight for you.*

From *The Wildcat* – February 8, 1946

The following question was asked of a representative group of students:

“What is your purpose in attending high school?”

Frank Netherlain: “My mother makes me.”

Kenneth Self: “I don’t have any other place to go.”

Dorothy Heard: “Goodness only knows.”

Halley Knox: “I’m just killing time till my uncle hollers.”

Marie Pryor: “It’s a compulsory habit.”

Laverne Wilhoit: “I’d stay out but my Ma and Pa say NO CAN DO!”

Bob Lewis: “Because when I was little and had less sense, I let my mother talk me into the notion of starting and I haven’t found a good place to quit.”

Charles Mathews: “To look at the girls.”

Tom Morgan: “I don’t know.

Memories

Mary Lee Crowley Hawkins – Teacher 1939-1944, 1958-1977

In 1939/1940, everyone had to start the day off in the study hall. In those years, it was a hard, fast rule that boys and girls could not sit together in the big, roomy desks. It was my first year to teach at ACHS, and my name was Miss Sapp. I had morning duty. Charlie McDaniel came in study hall and sat down with a female classmate. When I looked up I said, “Charlie, you need to move!” He said, “Aw, Teach! I’m reading the Cat’s Claw with Perry Jane!” I said, “You need to move NOW!” “OK, in a minute,” he said, smiling. About that time Mr. Huey walked by just in time to hear him arguing with me. Mr. Huey stepped in and asked both of us to follow him to the office of the superintendent, Mr. Sandlin. Mr. Sandlin said, “Charles, I’ve told you that if you caused one more disturbance, you would spend the rest of your senior year at home. Get your books and assignments, and you are suspended from school for the rest of the year. It was near the end of school, and he DID get to graduate, however.

In the 70’s I had a Sr. English class of mostly boys. One day I walked into class to find they had moved my teacher’s desk to the back of the room facing the backs of the students’ desks. Instead of throwing a fit, I calmly walked to my desk and proceeded to teach the lesson to their backs. It was dead quiet as they were stunned into silence. At the end of class they sheepishly moved my desk back to the front of the room.

One day as classes were changing in the busy, noisy hall, I was standing at my door when I overheard a commotion between our superintendent, Mr. Gerron, and two boys, L.K. Hyer and John Purcell. Mr. Gerron was angrily raking them over the coals and L.K. was staring back at him rather disrespectfully. Mr. Gerron angrily said, “And get

that LOOK off your face before I slap it off!” They went separate ways, and I overheard L.K. say, “Not only can you not DO what you want to, you can’t even LOOK like you want to!!”

You don’t mess with tradition! Mr. Bailey learned this on a couple of decisions he made when he first came to ACHS. Both had to do with seniors.

Seniors ALWAYS occupied the row of seats next to the windows in the huge study hall. Mr. Bailey thought he would do the seniors a BIG favor and move them to the row by the doors so they would be the first out. BAD IDEA! That row was for freshmen, and the seniors wanted their traditional seats by the windows! And so it was!

Seniors also had always been able to vote on their senior sponsors for the years. Mr. Bailey mistakenly appointed the sponsors UNTIL the seniors hit the office door in protest. Needless to say, tradition held fast!

Jolene Bell – Teacher 1964-1974

I served as a substitute teacher for Archer City ISD for almost ten years, 1964-1974. My salary started at ten dollars per day. Sometime during that period, it was raised to fifteen dollars.

One day I had a class on the north end of the hall on the third floor. The fire escape is attached to that classroom. I happened to look out the window and see Gene Dooley, son of Lonnie Dooley, band director, standing on the landing at the third floor level. Gene was a toddler, probably about three years old. The Dooley’s lived in the little

house owned by the school located next to the school on the north. He had slipped away from his mom to explore. I called for Eddie Morris, high school principle, who came in and easily lifted the window and coaxed him inside, and called his mother.

Dean Fisher's classroom was just across the hall from the teacher's lounge. Every free moment he had he would go to the lounge and flop down in an old overstuffed chair and close his eyes. When we thought he was sleeping, and would talk about him, he would speak up and say, "I'm not sleeping. I am just checking my eyelids for holes."

One day between classes on the Junior High level hallway, Nell Trent was guarding the hall just outside her class room. She had been washing blackboards with a wet rag, when a "hot flash" came over her. She took that old nasty rag and began to bath her neck and face. She was desperate!

The day Mr. Adams hired me, I was told that I did not have to worry with discipline. He said, "Just send them to me, and I will take care of that," and he did. One incident was when I was in the agriculture building, Preston called out to the class that the bell had rung, and they all dashed out of class. The bell had not rung. This was reported to Mr. Adams. The next time Preston was in my class, he was a perfect gentleman. He told the class he was doing so, since he had been called before the "board" for misbehaving before, and he was not about to do anything wrong.

I enjoyed most of the classes I was called to fill in for, but did not enjoy first grade when there was snow on the ground, and the students couldn't get out for recess. That meant you were with them every minute of the day, without even having time to go to the restroom. The only break you got was when they went to music on certain days.

The students all called me Mrs. Bell in the classroom, and to this day, when I see them, I am Mrs. Bell. As a couple, we are John and Mrs. Bell. The students still have a special place in my heart.

Alice Brothers Blanco – Class of 1962

Archer City High School’s First-ever Foreign-language Class and Spanish Club.

Before the beginning of the school year in 1960, it was not possible to sign up for a foreign-language class at Archer City High School. No such class had ever been offered. However, as a few of us scheduled to graduate in the spring of 1962 noted, some college admission forms required that applicants’ high-school records show two years of credits in a foreign language.

Figuring that the only way to meet that requirement was to create our own foreign-language class, we recruited a couple of adventurous classmates to join in our efforts, and together we persuaded our high-school principal, Mr. McPhearson, to add a Spanish class to the curriculum. Next we recruited our teacher, Ms. Cearly, the only faculty member to be found who had ever taken a foreign-language class (Spanish) herself. We each purchased two Spanish-language text books. (There was no allowance in the school budget for superfluous purchases; according to policy, we already had plenty of state-issued free books.)

Eight members of the “Class of 1962” (Joe Bledsoe, Alice Brothers, Linda Crowley, Hugh Dorris, Malinda Morris, Billie Morrison, Mary Sue Perdue, and Donny

Small) enrolled in Archer City High School's first Spanish class. The first thing we learned in Ms. Cearly's class was that conjugating Spanish verbs was difficult. As a counterweight to the hard work of memorizing hundreds of unfamiliar vocabulary words, an inspiration struck our class like a bolt of lightning (*relampago* in Spanish): launch a "Spanish Club"—the primary purposes of which would be to advertise to the student body the fun and benefits of foreign-language study and to raise funding for an "educational experience," a trip to Six Flags Over Texas.

Our Spanish Club's special projects included decking ourselves out in Mexican-style cheerleader costumes and conducting football pep rallies in Spanish. "Vivan los Gatos!" Of course no one knew (including ourselves) whether the words were correct, but the student body caught the spirit of it and cheered wildly at appropriate moments. The Spanish Club authored and produced several original comic Spanish-language stage productions (again, the language was understood by none, but the humor shone through to be enjoyed by all). My favorite play told the story of Santa Claus's escapades after being kidnapped by a band of bandidos during his Christmas Eve sleigh flight over Mexico. His bag of toys was held for ransom. Elaborate heroics ensued to rescue Santa and the toys, and save Christmas. "Feliz Navidad!"

Other Spanish Club projects, such as homecoming mum-corsage sales and a sales booth in the school hallway for sending Valentine's Day telegram greetings to other students, raised funds to cover our Spanish Club trip expenses to Six Flags Over Texas in the spring of our senior year, 1962. Park admission price that year was \$2.75; parking was 50 cents, a hamburger 35 cents, and a soft drink 10 cents. We were excited to make the trip. Construction on the Six Flags park had commenced in August of 1960 and was

completed one year later in August of 1961. And because the name "Six Flags Over Texas" refers to the flags of the six different nations that have governed Texas (Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, and the Confederate States of America), the park was divided into six themed sections. Obviously, the Spain and Mexico sections were specifically pertinent to our studies.

The Six Flags over Texas was the nation's first Six Flags park, and was certainly unfamiliar territory to us. Regarding our trip to this brand new place as a very special occasion, and being completely uninformed as to what to expect, we all dressed up in our Sunday-best outfits—the girls in straight-cut wool skirts and guys in nicely pressed slacks. Mistake! “El error!” Dressed as we were, riding burros along Mexico's “el Camino Real” and helping Spanish explorers fend off alligator attacks on the Lavaca River proved to be exceptionally challenging. Jeans and tee-shirts would have been more comfortable attire.

“Si!” Spanish Club membership exploded from our tiny group of eight students in that first year to a sizable group of 42 members in the second. It must have looked like we were having a good time. We were. However, I do not know whether all 42 of the second-year Spanish Club members also enrolled in the Spanish class itself. Perhaps not.

Speaking for myself 54 years later, I cannot claim to have retained any Spanish-language skills whatsoever. Therefore, I asked my daughter, a bilingual speech therapist certified in both Spanish and English, to translate into Spanish the following thought for me:

“Cuando era una niña, estudiar Espanol, entonces ahora no puedo hablarle.”

When I was young, I studied Spanish, but now I cannot speak it.

Mazie Johnston Berend – Class of 1965

There was a bar dividing the study hall and the library. The school furnished ink for all the students. Ink wells were on the bar so that students in the library and study hall had access to them. One day a couple of mischievous students (I won't name names) put Alka Seltzer in the ink wells. What a mess! That was the end of the school furnishing ink! Study hall has lots of memories!

If you were passing all subjects and weren't in any trouble, you were issued a library card. When you were in study hall and wanted to go to the library, all you had to do was raise your library card and whoever the teacher was keeping the study hall would nod that it was okay for you to go. Coach McCown was keeping study hall one day when Ross Glenn raised up a card. Coach asked, "Ross, whose card do you have?" Ross looked at it and said, "A.J. Morris." Everyone in study hall burst out laughing! A little later Ross raised another card. Coach asked him again, "Whose card do you have?" Ross looked at the card and said, "Donnie Linscott." Once again the study hall erupted in laughter! As I recall, there was never a lot of studying going on in study hall, but lots of talking, gum chewing, telling jokes, and laughter.

When I was a junior, I took my little brother Nubbin Johnston, age three, to the Senior Play. Before the play ever started, he ran away from me, ran down in front of the stage and back up the opposite aisle. I had on high heels and was trying to catch him. The audience roared with laughter, and I was so embarrassed!

Mrs. Crowley and Coach McCown were the directors for our Senior Play. Mrs. Crowley had always told us that we needed to stay in character, no matter what happens. Our play was *The Cannibal Queen*. I had the part of JuJu, the Cannibal Queen and Mike Stewart was one of the cannibals. Mike and I were onstage together in a scene, and he had a very large Camp Fire bead stuck in his belly button. During this scene the Camp Fire bead popped out and rolled across the stage. Needless to say, we completely lost it and so did the audience! We like to have never regained our composure so that we could go on with the play. Mike never admitted it, but I'm pretty sure he did it on purpose!

Another great memory was sitting out front on the steps before the bell rang in the morning before school started, and also at lunchtime. That is when we caught up with what everyone had done the evening or weekend before.

Amelia Mooney Brackett - Class of 1995

Smell. It's the sense most closely linked to memory. For me, I will always love the way the building smelled . . . like old books. I'm a shameless book sniffer. I remember the first time I got to go in the "big building" was for my 3 older siblings' open house. I couldn't wait until it was my turn to walk those halls and smell that building all day. After I graduated, the building underwent some changes. I was so worried about the integrity of the school's scent. Would it smell like fresh paint and new construction materials??? Thankfully nothing changed except the aesthetics. I know the tearing down of the school has broken many hearts. I am sad to see it go as well, but the beautiful

memories still remain. My hope for future generations is that they will love the new ACHS as much as past graduates love the old one. And it won't hurt if it smells like old books. ☺

Andrea Burkhart – Moved from AC in Jan 1956, but the Class of '59 is still MY Class!!

I started kindergarten in the old school and went through the 9th grade there. It housed all the grades in the beginning with the exception of the cafeteria and the home ec building.

I would have been the 5th Burkhart girl to graduate from that old three-story red brick building if my father had not been transferred to Lovington, NM in 1956. My parents were Robert M. and Edna Burkhart. The Burkhart Girls:

1. Evelyn Geraldine “Jerry” Burkhart - Class of '39. She married A. J. "Hefty" Morris, Sr. Jerry and Hefty are both deceased. R. Burk Morris (son) still lives in AC and is an attorney there and Julie Morris Eckard (daughter) lives there, also.

2. Elizabeth Anne Burkhart - Class of '40. She graduated from UT Austin - '44 or '45 (was the first independent Sweetheart of UT) (it wasn't called that back then!) and went to NYC and never looked back. She married a "Yankee"- Thomas O. Boucher and remained in "Yankee Land". She and Tom are both deceased.

3. Peggy Jane Burkhart - Class of '43. I came to AC to celebrate her 50th Reunion with her. She married L. J. Cathey. Son T. Lee Cathey used to live in McKinney, TX but is traveling the country in an RV. Peggy and L. J. are both deceased.

4. Nancye Gaye Burkhart - Class of '51. I attended her 50th Reunion also! She graduated from UT Austin and taught several years at ACHS before moving to Lovington, NM and then to Knoxville, TN. She married W. Fleming Reeder. Fleming is deceased, but Nancye is still living in TN.

5. Andrea McDonald Burkhart - Class of '59. (I moved from AC in Jan 1956 but the Class of '59 is still MY class!!) I did attend my own 50th Reunion in AC. I was married a long time and then I got divorced. I am still alive and live in Austin, TX.!

My friend Besia Green still lives in AC. She is called Besia because I couldn't say Bethalice! Her son is Abby Abernathy. There was one house between her house and mine and we were born two weeks apart. She always likes to say that I am older than she! By two weeks!!! We lived just up the street from the school house. We were always playing together like sisters. Anyway, I digress. When we were about 5 (kindergarten age) we dressed up and I mean dressed to the nines! Marie Trigg (Mrs. Ed Trigg) was our neighbor in the middle of our houses and she was small and had small feet and her shoes were to die for!! And she would give us her old shoes to have for our dress up closet so we had REALLY gorgeous high heels to wear that actually FIT us! (This was before the advent of Barbie shoes, etc.) We dressed up to the nines—dresses, pearls, hats, gloves, purses and of course some of Marie's high heels—we looked gorgeous! (can't remember if we had makeup on or not) and decided to “visit” our siblings at the high school—my sister Nancye, on the third floor and Buford Berry, Besia's brother, on the second floor in Miss Hawkins class (north end of the second floor with the fire escape outside the windows). We knew where Buford's class was and we made it to that class okay. Miss Hawkins was such a wonderful hostess that the class sang a song for us.

Anyway, they did something for us. Buford was ready to kill us but he couldn't touch us in front of everyone!!! He was sooooo embarrassed that these two "brats" had come to school to visit him. He was not honored by our visit at all! So, next we were on our way to the 3rd floor to visit Nancye, but we didn't know about the stairway toward the north end of the second floor and near to Miss Hawkins' room. We could see the stairway leading to the third floor at the end of the long hall. We started toward it and got to just about Mr. J. F. Gerron's office (the superintendent) when he came out of his office and "encountered " us. (I still don't know how we managed to do all of this without being discovered by someone in the halls before then.) He asked us what we were doing and where we were going and we told him we were going to visit my sister in high school on the third floor. He said he was worried about our going up the stairs and maybe we should wait in his office instead. Of course, our mothers did not have a clue where we were. They thought we were still playing dress-up in one of our rooms. In fact, they had called the sheriff, Claude Morrison, and they were looking all over for us—checking the lake to see that we had not gone there and probably drowned or been kidnapped by someone. Our mothers were frantic, to say the least, and quite relieved when Mr. Gerron called to tell them that he had us in his office and maybe they could come get us. Our parents were so glad we were alive and had not been harmed that we didn't get a spanking that day much to Buford's dismay! My sister Nancye was spared that day from a wonderful visit from two very darling young ladies dressed to the nines.

Besia and I reminisce about this little excursion every time we get together. It is a pretty cute story or at least we think so!! I just wish we had a picture of us in our fine regalia! I do have a picture in my mind and I can "play that video" in my head anytime I

want to remember. Where else but a small town could two little girls go on such an adventure dressed so elegantly and return home safe and sound?

On another note, someone always hung the new car signs from the top of the building at Halloween time and put all sorts of things on the lawn and the building and in the street in front of the school. Also, a great many teachers and the band director would receive an outhouse on their lawns and they would usually fire a shotgun in the air to scare us off! And it did, too!

Celie (Ceil) Slack Cleveland - Class of '54

Dear Big Red School House,

Or so you seemed to me when I first set foot inside you in the fifth grade. I loved moving into you from Crockett Elementary School in Wichita Falls. My grandmother (Mary Ellen Gowdy) had taught in you. My mother (Margaret Ellen Slack) had been a substitute teacher for you. My aunt (Mary Lois Gowdy) had graduated from you, as had my rowdy Uncle Hank Gowdy. My Uncle Hud (yeah, the real original Hud, not the fictional one) had played football for you, but was killed in an accident before he graduated. So I felt like I was coming home. And I came right into the arms of Mrs. Gann, my teacher I loved so much I once dreamed of rescuing her from a burning building, so I could be her hero.

I lived only a few blocks from you, so my siblings and I walked to school every day, home at noon for lunch, then back for the day. You were then a three-

story, red-brick school, housing grades one through twelve. Nobody went to kindergarten in those days, and hardly anyone went beyond grade twelve. A lot fewer would probably have got that far, had it not been for high school football and cheerleading teams. High school football was at the core of this small town's values. Signs, "Home of a Wildcat" sprang up in the front yard of footballers houses, and cheerleaders houses were often festooned with pompons. A lighted billboard, shaped liked a football, announced that the Wildcats had won the state Class A Championship in 1964, some years after I graduated, but I saw it when I came back from college.

Inside you, Big Red, was a wide front staircase with a shiny wood bannister that someone, probably your caretaker, Mr. Ensey, had nailed empty spools into about every ten inches to discourage the sliding down thereon. And in front of you was a flag pole up which many odd items were run by prankish school boys—a skunk, a pair of great flapping pink drawers, and, incredibly, and upside-down pelican.

In your library, at the back of the study hall upstairs, you had a limited amount of books that grew even fewer as the school board took them home to scrutinize when people complained about their content and its possible damage to youthful moral fiber. As a writer for the school newspaper, "The Cat's Claw," I cleverly named my column "Just Horsing Around," and was scolded by the librarian, Mrs. Mullis, who, not appreciating my cleverness, renamed it blandly "Around Campus," and told me my word choices were crude.

Dear Miss Ida Hawkins: Speaking of crude, you told me my mother and grandmother would be ashamed of my behavior, because I fiddled with the pencils in the slot on my desk while I recited the definition of a dangling participle. You made me go

stand in the hall for the rest of the class period. You scared me to death. But you know what, dear Miss Ida? You certainly taught me English grammar, and I dedicated one of my first textbooks to you.

Dear Mrs. Frances Cassell: You were the first person, besides my mother, who thought I had any academic or literary promise. You took patience and care in going over my papers with me and suggesting how I might improve them. I adored you—even though to “broaden” my “horizons,” you took me to a couple of boxing matches in Wichita Falls, where I cringed at every punch. You were my first teacher who was also a friend.

Dear Mrs. James: Thank you for letting me make a pillow case with ears in your Domestic Science class and telling me you thought I was not quite up to making a pair of jodhpurs, when I told you my next project idea. (I’m still not.)

Dear Mr. Prentice: I told you and told you that I didn’t like to play my French Horn in marching season, because all I did was go “Um pa, Um, pa” and that band uniform was unbecoming to boot. So you gave me good parts to play in concert season, like “Finlandia,” which at least had a tune. (I still know the fingering.)

Dear Buford, Bobby, Larry, Faye, Barbara, Sue, Joan, JoAnne, Margaret Ann, Patsy, Tissa: Thank you for being my friends, even though I was probably a twit and had too many opinions. It was just hard for me to sit still, legs crossed at the ankles, and smile pretty like girls were supposed to do in those days. (PS. It isn’t any easier now!)

And Dear Big Red School House: I'm sorry to hear you are going down and won't be around much longer, like so many of my teachers and friends who lived and learned within you as I did. You don't seem so Big to me now. But you had a Big effect on my life.

You will be replaced with a more up-to-date model, as we have been or soon will be, and so it goes. . . .

Kimbra O'Keefe Danley – Class of 1968

My mom and dad both went to Archer High. I was told (long after he died) that at his senior prom my dad, Newt O'Keefe, wore gloves . . . so not to leave any fingerprints!

My favorite memory was just sometime in high school (64-68) We had a big snow and Mr. Adams came on the loud speaker and told all of us to leave the building and come to the front yard. This was highly unusual, as I'm sure we had all been hoping school might be cancelled but it seldom happened, especially in the middle of the day. As we entered the front grounds, we were met with lots and lots of snowballs! Mr. Adams had made them before the announcement and started one of the largest and best snowball fights in the history of AC. We were allowed to leave school afterwards, so unusual, and everyone found their own way of playing in the snow for the rest of the day. I went with a group who pulled an old slide down a dirt road, but the fun of that huge snowball fight still delights me. I loved Mr. James Adams.

Cathy Morrison Dobson - Class of 1978

As a high school cheerleader, the beginning of the school year meant football season!! It also meant for us as cheerleaders, the decorating of the 3rd floor halls and stairwells. Mr. Adams was always such a faithful supporter of our job to get the halls looking spirited and supportive of the Wildcats! There were countless hot hours involved in painting signs and banners and taping up streamers and a few hours before school would never have been enough so Mr. Adams allowed us to go by his home and get the keys to the school to accomplish all this hard work well into the night. We would always drop the keys off after we were done for the evening. We did this before school was in session at the beginning of fall classes. The high ceilings (there was no air conditioning at this time) were so majestic! The cement floors were always cool and shiny. Of course, his office was air conditioned, and maybe once or twice, we did "sneak" in there to cool down. :) He had respect for us and trust. We never crossed that line. I will always remember dear old Archer High as the most beautiful red brick building ever!!

We are neat

We are great

Senior Class of '78!!!

Betsy Gene Stewart Gibson – Class of 1974

In 1961 I began first grade. Mrs. Elmore would be my teacher. Mama took me to the school to meet her and look at the classroom. She was so nice to me and I was comfortable with her so I opened up and talked my head off. I was really shy. There were some pictures still hanging on her walls from the students from the class ahead of me had colored. Since I could already read (learned from singing hymns at church) I saw Denise Trent's name on one of the pictures. I told Mrs. Elmore that I knew Denise and that we rode horses all the time. Apparently Denise had given Mrs. Elmore a run for her money because she looked at Mama and with a worried frown she said, "Oh dear!"

In second grade I got a spanking for telling everybody in class all the answers to a test. Kenny McMahon was my boyfriend. He's Gary Tepfer's half-brother. My cousin Kathy Wright asked me how I knew he was my boyfriend and I told her that he helps me spend my nickel at Ruby's store every day!

I loved walking across the playground going to music in what turned out to be Mr. Fisher's Science class. Especially when it rained. I can still smell warm dirt and gravel. And the novelty of getting out in the rain. I never knew they made galoshes for high heels! Miss Duran had a pair.

My freshman year I was scared to death. All of us girls joined FHA. Future Homemakers of America. During initiation week we had to do goofy things like not shave our legs or armpits, wear out father's clothes to school, one shoe different from the other. This caused one girl's back to hurt because she wore one house shoe and one western boot. The end of the week was a slumber party in the old gym. The upper

classmen *really* hazed us then. Mrs. Hornady was there with her lawn chair and sleeping bag. They worked on me pretty good trying to embarrass me to see if I would cry. Tina Morris got into a hair pulling fight with Janet Bacon I think. Anyway, she got the baby doll meant for me. HA! After they all got tired of torturing us (Karen Luig kept trying to give me hints on how to stay out of the way) the really mean girls went up in the bleachers to sleep. It was really cold and about halfway sleeting that night. This girl and I snuck up the stairs and opened the windows right above the hazers. The next morning they all had head colds. On Monday we were in home-ec class standing around Mrs. Hornady while she demonstrated the proper way to whip meringue. Everybody in school was talking about how prro Diane and Jackie were sick because some mean, awful, hateful people opened the gym windows during a sleet storm. This was brought up for the umpteenth time in home-ec. Everyone was wondering who would pull such an awful prank. Mrs. Hornady raised her head and looked right at me. I know I turned white as the meringue. She never said a word—just smiled this little kitty cat smile and winked! Then went on whipping egg whites. I loved Mrs. Hornady. Her class was where the old gym was down on the 5th grade floor.

My junior year I used to insist on taking out the trash to the janitor closet across the hall. There was a certain boy that came around picking up attendance slips from a clothes pin nailed to the door facing. We would sneak into the janitor closet and kiss until one day Mrs. Hornady missed me. She yanked open the home-ec door and yelled, “Betsy Gene Stewart! *Where the hell are you?*” Then she jerked open the closet door, hauled me out by my apron and, needless to say, I never got to “take out the trash” again.

They decided to paint the high school one summer and Karen McPherson and I spent several weeks playing in the building. We would go up to the 3rd floor library lie on the floor reading *The Black Stallion* series. We spent the night at each other's house a lot. Her brothers Jeff and Brian would set their tent up in the backyard and we would camp out. If the high school was having a dance we would sneak over to the old gym and peek through the windows. We learned a lot of new dances, some of which weren't very nice! One year I borrowed my cousin Jodie's Shetland and pony cart for Ranch Week. Karen and I drove it to school. Our picture made the annual.

Not only was the town our family but the school was too. Most of the teachers taught our entire families. Mrs. Crowley taught both my parents all the way down to me. They knew us by our first and middle names and you knew you were in BIG trouble when both were used. For the longest, I was called Gayle, Mike, no Betsy by Mrs. Brothers and Coach Ray!

The school was a landmark. I'm heartbroken. Jan King Graves saved a brick for me before Mike could get one and I'm grateful.

Charley Goforth – Class of 1968

A very good friend of mine in school had a very difficult time with History under Mr. Henderson. He was one of the smartest people I knew, but schoolwork was definitely not his forte and history was his worst subject. I never studied for anything in school, with the exception of English later on, but I tried to help my friend with History because he was making grades like 29 and 15 on his tests. We started with me spending the night with him before a test and studying together. That really did great things for me since I had never studied before and my grades immediately went from the 70's to the 90's from quizzing my friend the night before the test. Unfortunately, it still was not sticking for him so he devised the next step. He would break into the school, steal the test and I would fill out the answers for him to study. The school was a piece of cake to burglarize in those days. All he did was go to a window and open it, climb in and make his way to the file cabinet that held the tests. That night, I spent the night with him again and filled out all the answers on the test for him to study. Believe it or not, he failed the test the next day. His grade did go up to fifty-something as I recall but nowhere near where he wanted to be or where he needed to be. As I said though, he was smart and later in life he did run a successful business. Stage 3 involved another burglary of the school and theft of the next test. This time, he got two copies of the test and I filled one out that evening and he copied my answers onto the second copy in his handwriting. He took that filled out test to class the next day and about midway through the test, he switched his completed test with the new one he had been given. He knew there would be an investigation if he did too well on the test so he had intentionally missed several. When the graded tests were

returned, Mr. Henderson complimented his efforts in front of the class. He had made an 80 something on that test. For the rest of that year, a burglary occurred each Thursday night before the Friday History test and my buddy moved onto high school with the rest of us.

To all of you who want to scold me for this, remember, I am 61 years old now and I know what we did was wrong. I have to blame it on that 14 year old brain again. For those very few who know who my friend was in this story you have to agree that extraordinary steps were necessary to get him through History and that he was worth it.

I have to share a story on my favorite Coach and Driver's Ed teacher, Coach Williams. It must have been 1963-64 when we were 14 years old, or about to turn 14, and ready to get our training for our licenses. There was not but a year or two window when kids, with Driver's Ed, could get their Driver's License at such a young age and I am convinced that we probably caused the repeal of law. Coach Williams took 3 or 4 of us at a time so you could get your required driving and observing time completed. I am not sure why he did it but I don't think it was limited to our group...every day, he would have us stop at some point and back up really fast. The faster we were able to go, and control the car in reverse, the better he liked it. He also had us back up to a curb and try to get both back tires to touch the curb without running upon to it. That is kind of hard to do but it was part of our driving. Weeks or months after finishing Driver's Ed, we all showed up at the Courthouse on the day the DPS Trooper was in Archer to give driving tests. No names again, but the first of our group, during his test, scared the hell out of the Trooper. During the test, the Trooper prepared him that up ahead he wanted him to stop the car rapidly, then the Trooper gave the command to stop. Our classmate complied. The

Trooper then told him to back up on the roadway. Because of the training, our classmate carefully checked his mirrors, put the car in reverse, turned to look back, then rapidly accelerated in reverse. After the excited Trooper got him to stop, by yelling “STOP, STOP, STOP!” He asked him why he backed up so fast and told him that was normally enough to fail the driving test. After our buddy explained to the Trooper that his Driver's Ed teacher had taught him to back up fast, the Trooper let him continue and did give him a passing grade. By the time I took my test, I think the same thing had happened at least one other time and the Trooper told me, before I backed up, about the first incident and that he did not want to see how fast I could go in reverse but rather that I could safely back the vehicle up. Funny thing is that years later when I took a High Speed Pursuit Driver Training Course, I was by far the best driver in reverse maneuvers.

One more story with unnamed co-conspirators. Somewhere around our sophomore year about 4 of us hatched a plan to make home brew beer. Seemed like a good idea at the time. Obviously it was pre-Internet so it took some research to come up with the recipe but our project manager was resourceful and came through. We acquired all the ingredients and a 5 gallon water bottle and followed the recipe. I can't remember how long we were supposed to let our concoction ferment but something around 2 weeks, I think. The best we came up with for a location to store it while fermenting was a vacant lot, at the time, next to the Lumber Yard. We put a cover over the bottle and nestled it underneath a mesquite tree. This stuff looked exactly like beer almost immediately and we checked on it every day just to see how it was coming along. We just couldn't wait two weeks and convinced ourselves that since it looked and smelled like beer that it must be ready. I can assure everyone that its similarity to beer ended at the “looks and smell”.

It was a nasty tasting liquid and even weeks later, it was not good. That is not to say that we did not drink it because that 5 gallons did disappear. We had agreed, when making this batch to keep its location secret. That agreement was broken shortly after hiding it and a lot of kids had the chance to taste our brew before the bottle was emptied.

My buddy Bob Gaines drove a 1950 Ford back in our youth and one night we were again out by the old iron bridge and decided to scour the area for “drip” gas around some of the many oil wells. For any young ones, “drip is a natural condensate of gas that occurs at the casing head of oil and natural gas wells” and the old cars did pretty well on burning the stuff. We found a 55 gallon drum at one oil well and thought we had found a great supply of drip gas. We filled Bob's Ford up with the stuff and headed back to AC. The old Ford did not have the zip it had before the fill up but hey, it was free gas. Bob drove the old Ford around town for the next couple of weeks and everywhere he went he left a trail of smoke. Interestingly, his gas gauge wasn't going down much so whatever we had put in the tank increased his mileage and put out a smoke screen. Worried about his car, he finally decided that we should drain the tank and start it over on a real gasoline diet. As we drained the tank we realized we had filled his car up with kerosene.

Growing up in Archer City included some traditions that seem a bit scary today. One was driving to our 8th grade graduation banquet. At thirteen or so, none of us had a license but on this night, everyone looked the other way as these kids picked up their dates and attended the celebration. I had been driving for a couple of years at the time so it didn't seem unusual to me at the time to be driving but it was my first time to pick up a date and that was nerve wracking. The plan was that it was to be a double date that evening so I got an early start and drove to Scotland to pick up Pat Schlabs then back to

AC to pick up the girls. We picked up Pat's date first, Patricia Holder without any incidents and drove around the block to pick up my date, Carol Jane Harvey. At Patricia's house, I had just pulled up in front of the house and parked on the street while Pat went to the door to get Patricia. When we got to Carol Jane's house, I pulled into her driveway. Part of the tradition, at the time, was for the guys to wear a white jacket, which Pat and I complied with that night. Our two beautiful dates were in formal dresses and high heels. I was a nervous wreck at this point. Not because of the driving but picking up a girl was intimidating. I was driving a green 1956 Ford Fairlane and I had worked hard to get new seat covers installed prior to this big date. The old car was sparkling clean this evening as I opened the passenger door to let Carol Jane in. I walked around the car to the driver's side and started the Ford up for our 2 block drive to the school. This old Ford was a standard shift (3 on the tree) transmission and it had occasionally had an issue where it got stuck in a gear. That's exactly what happened. Right there in Carol Jane's driveway, the Ford was stuck in reverse. No amount of jiggling the gear shifter was helping so, in my white coat, I got out to see if I could mess with the linkage under the hood to get it unlocked. I succeeded only in getting my hands greasy. The transmission was not coming out of reverse. Undaunted, we took off to the banquet in reverse. Remember, we are only a couple of blocks away so what can go wrong? Only three turns stand between us and a lovely evening at the banquet. Our first turn was uneventful and we continued backing alongside the football practice field. Our next turn to head towards the school cafeteria was a bit different. Something went wrong and I ended up driving us into the ditch. The ditch there was pretty deep and with the car stuck in reverse, it was not coming out easy. The angle of the car in the ditch was such that the passenger side was high and the

driver's side was low. Both the girls, in their formals and heels were sitting at about a thirty degree angle hanging on to what they could. It's funny as obviously there were no cell phones but the Archer grapevine somehow got information to my Dad to come and rescue us. I'm not sure exactly how we got to the school, walked or caught a ride, but we made it. My Dad was able to get the Ford out of reverse which let him pull it forward out of the ditch. He was kind enough to leave mother's car in the parking lot for us to have when the banquet ended.

Once we made our way back to town after being dumped by Barry Morrison and Barney Oliver, it was time to get with the girls again. A lot of the girls were spending the night just outside of town at the Maag's place. Gayle Maag was in our class and she was hosting a slumber party of sort in furtherance of the graduation celebration. When we got to the Maag's, we found the girls outside in a kinda of an open-sided barn. I'm not sure what they were doing as we arrived but I did manage to locate Carol Jane. It was such a magical moment for me but I was too damn shy to take advantage of the moment and maybe try to steal a kiss. Instead we just sit on the blankets that had been spread out, without saying too much. At some point, one of us got the nerve up to hold hands which far overshadowed my car issues and getting dumped 10 miles out of town. It had to be 2:00 a.m. or so when the girls had to go into the house and the boys all had to leave

Malena Martin Gough – Class of 1958

MISS HAWKINS

Miss Ida Hawkins was the epitome of the “old maid schoolteacher.” She was also something of an institution in our town. She had taught my daddy in the seventh grade, the last year of his formal education. (I am not quite sure what part, if any, she played in that fact, but I have always suspected there was some connection.) For several years leading up to my attaining the seventh grade level, I had looked forward to being in her class with a feeling of reverence coupled with dread. Miss Hawkins was “hard”; seventh grad was “hard”; and I, who had always made good grades in school, had dire premonitions of disgracing my family and humiliating myself by making the lowest grades on record in the history of the Archer City, Texas, Independent School District.

It seems strange that the one who inspired all that awe was a small, gray-haired lady of quite ordinary aspect. She had no horns protruding through her silver hair. She was, in fact, very prim and proper. I never once saw her breath fire; indeed, I do not recall ever hearing her even raise her voice. What, then, is the explanation for the longstanding veneration she enjoyed during her tenure as seventh grade teacher? One factor, I think, was simply her age. From my first recollection of her, she was *old*. She had taught practically every adult in town by the time I came along, and not one of them ever quite got over his awe of her. I had the feeling that she had either been born old, or that she simply had been teaching school forever, and had never been born at all. She was also old-fashioned. There was none of that “let the students run the class” philosophy about

her. She was the teacher; she knew the material. We were the students; we didn't know the material. It was her job to teach. It was our job to learn.

She was strait-laced. I rarely saw her smile, but she was not unpleasant. Hers was a strictly no-nonsense approach to education. She would brook no interference or interruptions. I still quail at the recollection of the day I interrupted class with an irrelevant remark instigated by the fact that I had been wool-gathering, rather than paying attention. She advised me that my observation was ill-timed, and consequently unnecessary. There were no threats, no shouting; but I took pains from that time forward not to make that mistake again. I recall no discipline problems in her class. I think she would have been astonished if anyone had had the temerity to deliberately disrupt class or misbehave in any way.

Those were the days of the self-contained classroom in junior high school; therefore, Miss Hawkins taught every subject. She taught everything well, but she incited an unusually high degree of zeal among her students in the areas of history and geography. Her favorite aphorism, "I think that's interesting, don't you?" was one we gleefully quoted in a mockery of her decorous tone; nevertheless, her innocent delight in discovery was apparently contagious, for we often *did* find more and more things that interested us.

The culminating activity of my seventh grade year was a class trip to the Lawton, Oklahoma, area. We visited the museum at Fort Sill, the Easter Pageant grounds, and Craterville Park. We had a wonderful time, and Miss Hawkins had as much fun as any of us, I think. She found a myriad of things "interesting, don't you?" We youngsters saw her

as a human being for the first time that day, and our day's experiences drew us closer to her and to each other than anything else had up to that point.

Miss Hawkins retired from teaching at about the same time I graduated from high school. She lived quietly in her home for several years. Then, a good many years ago, she had the great good sense and practicality to realize that she would need someone to look after her, so she sold her house and moved into the Archer Nursing Home. She lived there, apparently quite content, until her death a few years later. I visited her in the nursing home whenever I could, and even though she usually didn't remember me, I always found her much like the teacher I had known—orderly, serene, and self-contained. I felt a pang of sadness when I read of her death in the Archer County News. Miss Hawkins enriched my childhood, and thereby enriched my life. I think that could be said of everyone she ever taught.

I maintain that each of us has a sphere of influence that reaches far beyond anything we can imagine. I touch someone's life, for better or for worse, and that person, under my influence, touches the lives of others, and on and on. If my theory is correct, then Miss Hawkins, though she had been gone for many years, is still imparting her values to her former students and to their descendants.

That's not such a bad legacy for one little, old maid schoolteacher, is it?

Archer City, Texas is my hometown. Except for a couple of years in Vancouver, Washington, when I was a small child, I lived in—and loved—Archer until I was nineteen years old. Life has taken me far afield since then, but it hasn't diminished my love for the place of my birth.

Eight or nine years ago Mary Slack Webb, then jolly old innkeeper at the Lonesome Dove Inn, hosted a reunion for the group of our childhood friends Fran Harvey Russell, Sue Peyton Metzger, Lenn Young Tucker, Ann Horany Risk, Mary Slack Webb, and me. (We now call ourselves the Archer City Girls, and as far as I'm concerned, it's a title of honor.) The theme for that particular reunion was "You Can Go Home Again."

In a way, I guess Thomas Wolfe was right when he said you can't go home again—in the same sense that Louis L'Amour said no man steps into the same river twice; but in another sense, home is always with us. It's in our skin, in our way of walking and talking and thinking and dreaming. The Archer City I left so long ago isn't the Archer City of 2015, but it's still with me...and very real. In my skin and in my way of walking and talking and thinking and dreaming. So, along with a lot of other people, I'd like to share my Archer City with you.

The Archer City Girls, my best friends, Lenn Young, Mary Slack, Ann Horany, Sue Ann Peyton, and Frances Ann Harvey, and I, along with several of our boy buddies, would have after-church sessions on Sunday nights at the corner of Silk Stocking Avenue (aka South Ash St.) and South, where Ann's house was. We'd string six or eight or more extension cords together, plug them into a socket in the Horany living room, set up a portable record player, play records, and square dance under the streetlights. For the life of me, I can't remember who we got to call the dances; about the only thing I can figure out is that the callers were "built in" on the records. It was great fun! Think of it! A bunch of high schoolers dancing in the streets on Sunday nights!

Now this same group of girls, I'm sorry to say, dipped into heathenism from time to time. They were (and still are, of course!) significantly older than I, but thank goodness I wasn't too susceptible to their wicked blandishments....most of the time, anyway. During their junior year, there was much discussion among them (Okay. Among us.), about the plausibility of playing hooky for a day sometime near the end of their senior year. All kinds of plans were floated. They mostly revolved around going to Wichita Falls and seeing a movie. Everyone thought that was a cool idea—except yours truly. One of my outstanding character traits is unalloyed cowardice, and I had a big picture of facing my parents' wrath, not to mention disappointment, and spending the rest of my life grounded and maybe being expelled from school. But I was also too cowardly to voice any objections to my friends' devious plots. Much to my relief, however, I guess everyone sort of lost their enthusiasm, so it never happened.

My sophomore year we had a new band director. Fresh out of college, I think, and very determined to make good, he came into Archer City High School like gangbusters. In retrospect after a thirty-one year stint teaching high schools kids myself, I'm sure he was probably a very nice young man who was just trying to do his job well. Unfortunately for him, we band members at ACHS were capable of being know-it-all horses' patoots at times. (And incidentally, I was the president of that club!) Also unfortunately for him, he adopted a kind of adversarial stance with us at the beginning of the year. So we were horrible to him. I mean we were real stinkers.

Mr. Seaman, I imagine, discovered that he was out of his depth fairly early on, but he was stuck with us, so about all he could do was try to get a bunch of recalcitrant teenagers to produce some kind of music and march the length of a football field at the

same time without falling down. Some of the boys, I think, came up with the idea of calling him “Seaboy,” a sobriquet the rest of us gleefully adopted. So from then on, whenever he wasn’t around, he was called Seaboy.

Actually, I’m too ashamed of our behavior to relate any specifics, but as I recall, Mr. Seaman lasted only a year with us...maybe less. So let’s fast-forward three or four years. I’d graduated from high school and was attending Midwestern University. One day I walked into the UC and almost collided with Mr. Seaman. I expect he wasn’t especially thrilled to encounter me, but we were both cordial enough as we exchanged a few pleasantries. All the while we chatted, my inner voice was saying *Do not call him Mr. Seaboy. DO NOT CALL HIM MR. SEABOY!* So as we took our leave of each other, I said, “It was nice to see you, Mr. Seaboy.” Arrrrgggh!

Nell Trent was my fifth grade teacher. Benjamin Buerger sat behind me in class. One day Ben was up to his usual tricks—bugging the stuffings out of me...I don’t know, dipping my pigtail into ink or something along those lines. Finally, I’d had enough. I grabbed my ruler and turned around and started beating him over the head with it. I can still see him holding his arms up trying to fend off my assault. I stopped when the ruler broke. All I remember about Mrs. Trent’s reaction was that she just stood there regarding me with a look of mild astonishment. I don’t remember that she even said anything to either of us. I suppose she thought Ben had been punished enough, and I’m sure she realized that I would never have attacked him without provocation....

Then there was the time in Nell’s class that we were having a discussion—presumably about something gory. Maybe we were describing injuries we’d sustained along the road of life at that point. Anyway, someone mentioned blood, and the next

thing I or anyone else in the room knew, I was face down in the floor beside my desk. Fainted dead away; however, I seem to have recovered pretty quickly. Again, Nell Trent looked at me with mild astonishment; then I got back up into my desk and we continued with class. As far as I know, she didn't call my parents to report the incident; I think I told them about it at the supper table that night. And we all just went on eating....

I'm not sure whether this was junior high or upper elementary, but there was a kid in the class below me who was a bit on the chubby side. His nickname around school was "Snack Bar." That may have been his real name; I don't know. I never heard him called anything else...except the day we were in line in front of the building on some occasion. Maybe we were going in after lunch or something. Mr. Gerron, our superintendent, was out amongst us and for some reason chose to speak to this boy. He knew the nickname had to do with food, but he didn't get it quite right. Mr. Gerron called the lad "Lunch Counter." Oh, well. Not that much difference.

Mary Slack and Lenn Young were making sand tarts in home ec class. According to the story they tell, someone put two cups of baking powder into the mixture instead of two cups of flour. Everything was already mixed in, and they didn't dare tell the teacher they'd wasted a cup or two of chopped pecans. So they solved the problem pretty creatively: They disassembled the dough and washed the pecans, then remade the cookies!

Home Ec was one of my favorite subjects in high school. Our teacher would divide us into groups of five or six girls to work together when we cooked. On this particular day we were making cakes. I was the designated stirrer for this project, and we were doing all this by hand. No electric mixers for us, no sirree. So I was standing over

the bowl of cake batter with a wad of Dentyne in my mouth and a big spoon in my hand. Although it was foreign to my nature as a rule, on this occasion I happened to be talking and chomping on that Dentyne, when the gum fell into the batter. I was never one to let a little thing like that slow me down, so I just fished it out of the bowl, stuck it back into my mouth, and kept on stirring. A couple of the others in the group recoiled in horror, but there were no fatalities—that I know of.

We were always very proud of the Archer City Wildcat football teams, and through the years we had some mighty fine players. Way too many to mention here. But a couple of them have interesting sidelines to their stories, and I'd like to relate them here. Warren Robertson must have graduated from ACHS in the early fifties. Whether or not he ever played high school football, I can't remember. He graduated from the University of Texas, where the closest he ever came to a college football game was, to quote him "Row 28 of Section E in the bleachers." After finishing college, he fulfilled his duty to his country with a two-year stint in the U.S. Army. Because of an Army snafu while he was in basic training, he was mistakenly identified as George Robinson, who had been a halfback for UT. The upshot was that Warren spent two years in Japan playing on a leading Far East Army football team. He wrote a delightful account of this unlikely adventure in an article entitled "Ten Football Stars and Yours Truly" for SPORTS ILLUSTRATED in the early sixties. READER'S DIGEST picked it up and included it in their anthology FUN AND LAUGHTER: A TREASURE HOUSE OF HUMOR, published in 1967.

Another Wildcat player who has a most interesting story is Joe Douglas. Joe was maybe five foot two, and the fastest thing on two feet. If you looked away for ten

seconds, you'd miss him. The coach would set up a single wing offence, somebody would throw him the ball, and all you'd see would be a black-and-gold streak flashing down the field. It was a beautiful thing to behold, if you could look that fast. Joe's athletic career continued after high school, not as a football player, but as an outstanding track star. In 1972, Joe founded the Santa Monica Track Club, where he is still producing Olympians. He's kind of lost count of just how many. He said that he doesn't seek out athletes; they come to him, in spite of the fact that he's "a dictator," by his own description. In the 1980s and '90s, Joe worked as Carl Lewis's coach/manager and took him to the Olympics, where Lewis won nine Olympic gold medals and one silver during the years Joe was coaching him.

This is a very special memory for me—maybe not for anyone else. My daddy became seriously ill sometime during my later years of high school. By the time I graduated, he'd been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I was to give the valedictory speech at my commencement exercise. Somehow, someone in town, possibly Dr. Harold Smitson, helped Mother arrange for him to be transported in an ambulance to the high school auditorium for the occasion. His gurney was placed in the aisle about halfway down to my right as I faced the audience. Everyone was so kind and solicitous to us during those sad and difficult days; it meant more to me than I could ever say. So my daddy got to hear my valedictory address. Then when football season started the next fall, he got to sit (recline, really) on that same gurney on the sidelines at the end of the Wildcats' bench at one or two home games before his illness became so debilitating that he wasn't able to attend. Of course, the players would get very involved in the game and would stand up and move up and down the sidelines to keep up with the action,

sometimes obscuring his view of the field. But when any one of them noticed, he'd nudge the others and they'd clear a way for Daddy to watch the game. How does anyone even begin to calculate that type of kindness? I think it was typical of my hometown, and is probably one of the reasons I love Archer City as much as I do.

During the mid-fifties, an exemption plan was implemented in ACHS. The guidelines were as follows: In order to be exempt from mid-term and finals exams, students could have two excused absences if their average was at least 90. A student with an average of 80 or more could be exempt with no more than one excused absence. Astonishingly, a kid with a 70 could still be exempt if he or she had no absences. It may or may not have been especially good educational theory, but we kids loved it! And I wouldn't be surprised if the teachers were pretty fond of it themselves!

The elementary playground of my halcyon days contained some wonderful items! There was a merry-go-round, a gizmo we called "traveling rings," see-saws, monkey bars, johnny-strides, and a couple of slides. Back then, store-bought bread came wrapped in some kind of waxed paper. The paper wrappers were invaluable to us when a slide became sticky and pretty painful to go down. One day I was dispatched to the cafeteria to beseech the lunchroom ladies for a bread wrapper or two so we could "slick up the slide." They kindly granted my request; as I left the confines of the cafeteria, I heard a couple of them giggling at my terminology "slick up the slide."

I don't remember eating lunch in the cafeteria very many times as an elementary student, though I suppose I ate there just about every day. And every day, it seemed to me, one of the menu items was hominy. Never mind how old I am now, but I'm just now

getting to the point of being able to eat hominy without gagging. And I've talked with a few people who still can't eat the stuff!

Looking back, it now seems to me that we Archer City kids were extraordinarily blessed in the teachers we had during the twelve years of my attendance. Of course, not all of them were wonderful, but an amazing lot of them were. Here are a few of the ones I remember with special fondness. Mrs. Wilma Lasater was my first grade teacher; she provided a really good educational foundation for no-telling- how many generations of children. One of her requirements was that each of us write the numerals 1 through 1,000, in order to pass her class. I guess she had special mercy on me—or she couldn't bear the thought of having me in her class for another year, or I misunderstood her about this assignment's being life-or-death, but I never managed to get that done! I'd get started, then lose the sheets I'd written them on—or something. I honestly don't know how many times I tried to write those dadgummed numbers, but it never happened. I was a nervous wreck for about half of that year, terrified that I was going to fail first grade because I hadn't turned in my work.

Mrs. Otis Moore was the elementary school music teacher. I credit her with being the one who instilled in me—and, I hope, in many other of her students, an appreciation for classical music. Under her tutelage we listened to things like *Peter and the Wolf*, *The Nutcracker Suite*, and *Tales of Vienna Woods*. We learned to harmonize and to read music (at least to some degree). And she had endless patience and a great sense of humor. Many years later I tried to locate Mrs. Moore so that I could tell her how much her teaching enriched my life, but I was never able to find her.

John English came to Archer as a first-year teacher, and my sixth grade class got to break him into the education game. He was a wonderful teacher, enthusiastic and fun, and we loved him! It didn't hurt anything that he was also drop-dead gorgeous. We had just entered that delicious stage of life where we were beginning to discover that boys and girls were different. We weren't quite sure about the particulars, but we were plenty happy about what we did understand! Junior high football was a big deal for us, partly, I am sure, because Mr. English was a junior high coach. I remember that year as a time of rollicking fun, and Mr. English played a huge part in that!

He later told me that he considered his school day a success if he could figure out a way to keep Junior Bitner out of music class. Junior would beg and plead and offer to do anything: clean blackboards, dust erasers, anything if only Mr. English would get him excused from music!

I remember a daily test we took one time. I'm pretty sure it the subject was science. We'd asked at the beginning if he was going to count off for spelling. He said he wouldn't. Well, on one particular fill-in-the-blank question, I had no idea what the correct answer was, but I was pretty sure it started with e and ended with s. So I just wrote a long, made-up word that started and ended with the required letters. Turned out that the answer was supposed to be "esophagus." Neither he nor I can remember whether or not he gave me credit, but we've certainly had a lot of fun down all the years recalling the incident!

Virgil Wilson was another great teacher. The eighth grade was his bailiwick. I have no idea why I remember this, but his favorite expression was, "The fact of the matter is...." Helen Taylor recalls that one of her pastimes was constructing paper

airplanes, a forbidden activity in Mr. Wilson's class. On one particular day she'd just completed her magnum opus, her masterpiece, the best paper airplane she'd ever made, and had launched it from her desk. It flew right out the window. However, there was a slight hitch: The takeoff occurred just as Mr. Wilson walked into the room. Her punishment was to write "I will not throw paper airplanes in class" one hundred times. She didn't especially enjoy the experience, but I guess "the fact of the matter" was that Mr. Wilson didn't like paper airplanes flying around his room.

Mary Lee Crowley came onboard the second semester of my senior year as a replacement for our senior English teacher who didn't complete the year. Mrs. Crowley must have had nerves of steel to tackle a bunch of second-semester seniors. But she did her job with a lively spirit and a great good humor. One of the main projects for that term was the research paper. I don't know how she managed it, but she made even that at least bearable, if not fun. I had a chance to visit with Mary Lee at a class reunion a few years ago, and she told me one memorable moment she had with me as a student was the time I corrected her pronunciation of some word. Unfortunately, she can't remember what the word was. I was and still am horrified! I apologized profusely and repeatedly! At first it was hard for me to believe I could have done such a thing. But then I reflected on what an insufferable little smarty britches I was; and even though I have no recollection of this incident, it sounds just like something I would have done. I hope that it will be of some comfort to my former teachers, wherever they may be, that when I became a teacher, I got everything back in spades! The saying really is true: What goes around comes around.

It appears to have been another tradition in the Archer City school system to indulge in what was called “initiation,” but is now called “hazing” for various segments of the student body when the occasion seemed to call for it. One of those occasions was eighth grade graduation. T.J. Taylor remembers that when he graduated from eighth grade, he was hauled off to the country about fifteen miles out of town and had to walk back—in the middle of the night. And I’ve heard from others that sometimes these poor kids would be allowed to walk most of the way back to town, and then be captured again and taken back to the location where they were put out in the first place and forced to start over.

Now every town has its share of kids who for some reason or another don’t seem to catch on as quickly as everyone else. We certainly had a few of those when I was growing up in Archer. The following episode features one of them in a starring role. I’m just going to call this guy “Bubba,” just in case he or some of his kith and kin should read this and take offense. I’m not clear on the details, so please bear with me. On this particular night, Bubba, and, I suppose, some of his cohorts, decided it was their turn to perform the initiation rite of passage for the soon-to-be-freshman boys. It’s something of a mystery as to why Bubba felt a need to participate, since he’d completed his formal education in about the third or fourth grade, as I recall. Nonetheless, he was onsite at the end of the eighth grade graduation ceremony that year. There’s some speculation that perhaps the initiators had been partaking of something a bit stronger than lemonade; I have no idea about this. Bubba was on the roof of the high school auditorium for whatever reason. Anyway, sometime during the evening something apparently spooked him, because he started running. You’ve probably seen some of those Roadrunner

cartoons or something of that sort where a character runs off the edge of a cliff and doesn't fall immediately, but keeps running for a second or two before he realized he's no longer in contact with the ground. I wasn't a witness to the drama that occurred at this point, but that's how I picture Bubba's Big Moment. In any event, he just ran off the top of the building. Broke a leg, I've heard, and spent some time, I would imagine, in the hospital. I have no idea what happened to him after that. Maybe he moved away, or maybe he just stayed around town and became one of those beloved old town coots like you see in the movies.

Another teacher in the annals of ACHS history wasn't one of the very successful ones. I believe she came in as the music teacher after Mrs. Moore left. Her name was Miss Chloe Byers, and bless her heart. There must have been a high school choral club in those days, because Mary Slack and I decided to join something that involved singing by high school students and was led by the music teacher. At the first meeting, Miss Byers sent around a sign-up sheet. There were a few upper-class boys (And I use that term only in the context of the grade they were in; they certainly displayed no other kind of class!) who apparently had come in with the sole purpose of seeing how much devilment they could get into; as far as I know none of them could carry a tune in a bucket! Herby Neas, who must have considered himself a devastating wit, signed the sheet "Eddie Fisher." Poor Miss Byers called out the name Eddie Fisher several times while the boys went into paroxysms of laughter. How childish! Mary and I, on the other hand, took our responsibilities as musicians very seriously. Experts that we were, we decided that Miss Byers had a tin ear, and we'd take advantage of that. So we made it our mission to sing just slightly off key, which, as Mary recently pointed out, is harder than you might think.

Harder by a long shot than singing on key. Well, that may not be exactly true; singing off key for me these days is alarmingly easy and singing on key next to impossible.

Lonnie Wilson recalls one of the stunts he and his partners-in-crime pulled. They inserted a potato into the exhaust pipe of Mr. Wilson's car, then took cover someplace where they could enjoy watching the coughing and sputtering this feat produced. Mr. Wilson did not take this in the spirit of good fun, as I'm sure it was intended. And apparently he intuited that one of the perpetrators was Lonnie, but he couldn't pin anything on him. Well, never mind. He bided his time until a week or so later when he was having his eighth graders read aloud in class. Lonnie was in his customary condition—several thousand miles away in dreamland. Mr. Wilson called on him to read, and he had no idea where the person before him had left off.

So down to the office they went. Lonnie remembers the licks Mr. Wilson administered that day as fifteen of the juiciest he ever received—in a longish career of getting licks from just about every teacher who was unfortunate enough to have him in class.

Years later, when I was teaching sophomore English at Abernathy High School in Abernathy, Texas. I told my sophs the potato-in-the-tailpipe story just because I've always thought it was funny. I always went home for lunch in those days. A couple of days after I'd told my students this story, I discovered a potato in my exhaust pipe when I got ready to return to school after lunch. And a bunch of my sophomore boys were packed into a car across the street, hooting and catcalling. Laughing, I shook my fist at them, removed the potato, then drove back to school and resumed business as usual. And nobody got any licks for that.

My class, the ACHS Class of '58, had what may have been a unique distinction: Over the years, and not all at the same time, we had four sets of brothers and sisters among us. They were JoAnn and Wayne Dugan, Bennie Marie and John Downing, Virginia and Gary Lyles, and Martha Jean and Clyde Worley. The Worleys were the only intact pair that graduated with us.

John English had a theory that in most cases the boys started out at least a year ahead of their sisters, but the vicissitudes of their educational experience caused them to, shall we say, "slow down" in their progress, so their sisters caught up with them.

Grady Graves - Head Football Coach, Athletic Director, Teacher 1961 - 1965

The building had a lot of personality.

One year after one of our faculty meetings, Mr. Wallace, our principal, and I were leaving the third floor by the stairway when we met the popular Coach Williams coming up the stairs from the first floor. Mr. Wallace told Coach Williams that we had had a faculty meeting that morning. Coach Williams said, "You did!" That was the end of the conversation.

Jan King Graves – Class of 1973

A funny memory for me is Dean Fisher sleeping during class and saying “Quiet Please” when we interrupted his nap!

Berry Ann (Findley) Greer

I remember coming into school at the beginning of the year, and the student council had gone from \$.05 up to \$.06 on a bottle of coke. I think this was in 1960 or 1961.

We moved away in March of 1962. If we had stayed, I would have been in the Class of '65. We lived at 208 S. Ash Street. Our home burned in early 1962. We moved to Houston, but I've attended more AC Reunions than Houston Reunions.

Clarence (Butch) Hannah – Class of 1966

When I was in the 7th grade, Mr. Fisher, the math teacher at that time, would sit on the south steps during lunch and tell stories.

James Harris

When I was in either the 1st or 2nd grade, they had two people sitting at each desk. Janis Harvey and Donna Horany were sitting across from me. Janis winked at me and I ran all the way home and told my mother I had a girlfriend.

I quit school in 1958 along with Gerald Smith and we joined the army.

Mary Ballowe Heydon - Class of 1967

Our family and others lived in the northern part of Archer County, and for years we were bussed to schools in Wichita Falls because they were closer. About 1961, the county discovered they were losing tax dollars because about 30 children were going to Wichita schools, so they required us to go to Archer. We were on the bus before daylight for an hour ride to school each way. This became an opportunity to study and do homework or some just slept. For other bored kids, it was cut-up time. Poor Mr. Priebe, our driver, had his hands full with them and once stopped the bus along the empty highway and threatened to put them all off the bus.

The day John Kennedy was assassinated, it was lunchtime and I was sitting on the front steps of the school when I heard the news. Everyone was upset and many were crying. What a sad day.

In the mornings, all the high school students gathered in a large room on the third floor for announcements and attendance. Adjacent to that room was a small library where

students could come and go, do research, and check out their own books. There were only books - no electronic media.

The cafeteria was in an annex on the west side of the building. I was starting my senior year in 1966 when the school offered me an opportunity I couldn't pass up. I had PE (physical education) just before lunch, and they said if I would give up PE and work in the cafeteria during that period and through lunch, they would give me an A in PE, \$10 a month, and free lunches. Who could refuse that, especially since I hated PE! So I scraped trays and cleaned tables and saved the money for the senior trip the following May. Back then the wonderful ladies in the lunchroom made tasty home-style meals, and I think lunch was 30 cents and you could get seconds. Two of us workers scraped food into tubs after removing toothpicks and trash. The scrapings were sold to a pig farmer. I really enjoyed that money on our senior trip to California. It was a great lesson in work ethic and saving for the future.

I took Home Economics with Joyce Hornady during a time when people were worried about "The Bomb" and surviving an attack by the Russians. (Aren't we doing that again today??) Mrs. Hornady was showing us girls a slide show on emergency medical procedures, and we had just reached the section on childbirth when a male teacher came in with a message for Mrs. Hornady. We were all embarrassed at the explicit slide we were viewing so the girl who was changing slides immediately advanced it to the next slide. But that one was even worse! So she advanced again with the same result. Finally she turned the projector off. All of us, including the male teacher, were red faced.

Mrs. Hornady taught me many life skills needed for homemaking including cooking and sewing. Boys didn't take Home Economics and girls didn't take Shop - I think it was a social policy, not a school policy. Either way, it was a shame.

I took business classes with Nell Barton who taught me the skills I needed to be a secretary. I still used shorthand occasionally when I retired in 2011. Mrs. Barton had blue ribbons for several consecutive years for Shorthand in the State competition. Her Bookkeeping class fared me well over the years when I worked for a CPA firm doing billing and accounts receivable along with secretarial duties. As for keyboarding, there were manual typewriters on the desks, and I can still hear Mrs. Barton rhythmically calling out the keys for us to type to teach us proper keyboard use and typing by touch (F F space J J J space). Those who habitually looked at the keys she would place at typewriters with blank caps on the keys to teach us touch typing. It worked for me! There were two electric typewriters which were a luxury to use.

Mrs. Barton was in charge of the Cat's Claw newspaper, and I contributed some articles, typed the masters on the blue wax stencils, and assisted in production and delivery to lockers. School "lockers" were actually open bins in the hallway with coat hooks below. Theft was not a problem. One of the tasks of working on the paper was proofreading. I used this skill at my job at the CPA firm all the time because it was critical there be no mistakes. The CPAs did the tax returns but it was my task to make sure the mechanics were perfect - spelling, punctuation, account numbers, etc.

Mary Lee Crowley and Barbara Ledbetter taught English classes. Mrs. Crowley taught an appreciation of reading and literature that has stayed with me, even Shakespeare though I didn't like it much at the time. She had us memorize certain lines,

and I can still quote a few. My favorite was "Out damned spot" because we got to use a cuss word in school without being punished. Reading for pleasure as well as for meaning is a habit that Mrs. Crowley tried to develop in all her students. I think it was she who taught Spanish, but I avoided that class, which was a big mistake. I started college in 1967 but continued it many years later and had to take a foreign language. How I wish I had studied Spanish in high school!

Mrs. Ledbetter once assigned us students to interview an older family member and write down their story. I interviewed my grandmother on how she met my grandfather. It was a fascinating story and I learned the shocking news that he had been married before! I saved that report for decades until I discovered genealogy and included her story in my family tree. As for the first wife, all I knew about her was her name Gussie, and 50 years after that interview I found the record of their marriage and her death and learned the whole sad story. Mrs. Ledbetter told me that we were related, and also about 50 years later I discovered the connection. Because of the spark she ignited, I now have about 50,000 members in my tree. I learned that she was an historian par excellence.

Mr. Gardiner taught math and instilled an appreciation of algebra and geometry. In fact, I used a particular algebraic formula when typing tables of numbers at work, back before we had computers to manage it. Geometry was more fun, though. The solid basis in math skills Mr. Gardiner developed helped me get an A in algebra for calculus in college.

There was a gym on the bottom floor of the school which students used for PE on rainy days or after lunch. One day we girls were practicing a PE move where one person

is on hands and knees and the others use her as a springboard to do a flip. One girl (name withheld) lost her nerve and crashed into me so I got a broken collarbone. There was no paperwork, and my parents had to pay for x-rays and treatment. Can you imagine the paperwork that would ensue if it happened today!

Our graduating class had 32 students, but I recall only 28 got to participate in the ceremony. I think one dropped out, two got married and one got pregnant so those were barred from the ceremony. When we selected our senior ring, we all had to agree on the same design. I think my ring cost \$35, which was a princely sum. We had to rent our caps and gowns, and once again we all had to agree on the same color. School curriculum was established so that all who graduated high school were scholastically eligible for college. This is different from today when students have to decide in 9th grade their graduation goal, whether they get only the basic diploma or go to trade school, the military, or college. At least it is that way in Florida.

The senior class got to go on a senior trip each year. Location and activities depended on the money collected from fund raising. Some of the money came from tickets to the junior and senior plays. Seniors sold “spirit ribbons” during football season for ten cents each, and everyone was given ten ribbons to sell. Ten cents sounds cheap, but you could buy a bottle of soda or two candy bars with a dime, or even a gallon of gas! Schools still sell them, but the price has gone up to a dollar or more. In my junior year we had a fundraiser when the senior class was away on its trip. We had a powderpuff football game which was supposed to be flag, but since the principal was away, we played tackle. We didn’t bother with helmets, pads, or any safety equipment, so it’s amazing that any of us survived. I was quite good at rushing the quarterback, so the other

team's linemen (well, lines WOMEN) focused on me, which made it easy for other tacklers to take down the quarterback. We won the game! But my exercise-induced asthma kicked in around the end of the game and I could barely move. Also, it was May, and in Texas that means it was hot, even at night, and no one thought about hydration. By the time the game was over, I drank a good two quarts of soda until my belly couldn't hold any more. It's amazing we survived!

Our class had enough money to go to California on the senior trip. We got a charter bus to Los Angeles, and it was the first long trip ever for many of us. On the way, James Adams, the principal and one of the chaperones, would tell us corny jokes along the way. One was when we were passing some distant hills, and, with a straight face, he told us they were known for their weird vibrations. He said, if you put your hand against the bus window, you can feel the "pane." Of course, I'm one of the idiots that got caught putting my hand on the glass until I caught onto the pun. We stopped at Las Vegas when the Strip was all there was. It was still an amazing place to see. We weren't allowed to gamble, but we could give money to our chaperones to put in the slot machine for us. I gave a chaperone (I think it was Joyce Hornady) a quarter and won 35 cents, so I figure I left Las Vegas a winner. We arrived in California and were so excited to see our first palm tree. (Today I know that a palm tree is just a big weed.) In Los Angeles, we went to Knotts Berry Farm and Disney Land and China Town where I had my fortune told from my signature by an ancient Chinaman. I don't recall what he said. We ate at an authentic Mexican restaurant, and my food was so hot it almost made me ill. I ate it anyway, not wanting to waste it, and drank glass after glass of water. (I didn't know that a teaspoon of sugar or glass of milk cuts the heat better.)

Years later after high school when I returned to the work force after child-rearing, my employment counselor said she had greatest success placing adults of my generation because we had an excellent educational background and the best work ethic. The years I spent at Archer City High School benefitted me all my life.

Our bus driver, Mr. Preibe, was a long-suffering man. From time to time he would threaten to put misbehaving boys off the bus out in the middle of nowhere. One cold day we deployed a stink bomb made at home out of a ballpoint pen. You replace the ink cartridge with a bobby pin run through the spring, put the ends through the tip and bend the tips over for handles. Then you put a sulphur match in the clicker end and put the pen back together. You pull the bobby pin out and let it go. It strikes the sulphur match which causes it to smoke but doesn't ignite. Gather the smoke in a jar with a lid. Do this several times until you have a lot of sulphur smoke in the jar. It ripens with age. On a really cold morning we secretly put the jar in the rack above the seats and opened the lid. Before long the sulphur smell permeated the whole bus. With the windows closed, it was quite pungent and smelled like the worst fart anyone ever let. Eventually it reached Mr. Preibe who stopped the bus and said, "If you boys can't control yourselves, you can walk." No one said a word but opened the windows in spite of the cold, and we all had a silent ride to school.

Bus rides at daybreak in the winter reveal that fresh cow pies produce steam. Our route often took us through cow pastures to reach rural riders. The roads were slick clay on rainy days, and sometimes poor Mr. Priebe had a long walk to the nearest farm house to ask the farmer to use his tractor to pull the bus out of a deep rut. One morning the bus broke down a long way from a phone, and Mr. Priebe had a long walk and a long wait

until another bus could be dispatched. That day we arrived at school at lunch. None of us minded for we missed the first half of the day and were not penalized with an absence since we were bus riders. One morning we arrived at school on a very blustery day. As petite Debbie (I think Jentsch) got off the bus, the wind caught her and knocked her to the ground.

The high school had a policy to reduce absenteeism. If you have no more than three absences in a semester and a certain grade in the class, you didn't have to take the final exam. I never missed a day no matter how sick I was and never took a final exam. Of course, this was actually a bad idea for I shared my germs with others.

Mrs. Crowley assigned us to write poetry one time. I don't remember what my poem was, but I'll never forget Danny Brewer's which ended with the memorable lines:

Little birdie in the sky

Why'd you doo doo in my eye?

The 1960's included the President Kennedy's physical fitness program. Students had to do a broad jump, sit-ups, pull-ups, run 50 and 600 yard dashes, and throw a softball. It was an annual horror, though probably preferable to Michelle Obama's lunch-horror program. I didn't realize it, but I had exercise-induced asthma, and the 600-yard run was torture.

The 1960's were also the time of integration. About my junior year was the first time there was a black student in the high school. I felt sorry for him as he seemed to keep to himself. To my knowledge, we classmates never made an issue of race.

We're the best this side of Heaven - Senior Class of sixty-seven.

Bill Holder – Class of 1967

Fights

Over the years that I was in school there were several fights. Boy and girls alike. The first fight I remember was in 1963 Tommy Eustace was a senior and we had heard a rumor that a large group of boy's from Wichita Falls was coming over to beat Tommy Eustace up. Why, I didn't ever hear. but it seem that in this group of boys 's had someone in their group that was a bull and he use to go out to Shepherd Air-force Base on the week end and fight 2 or 3 at a time. So the night this was to take place we got our baseball bats and made the circle looking for the group. About 9:00pm Jim Horany and I were stopped by Jack , Jims dad the deputy Sheriff , he made me open the back door of my car and he took my bat and gave me 10 minutes to take Jim home and then for me to get home. I never saw that bat again. The on Monday at school we all saw Tommy with a black eye and a busted lip. The story was that Tommy was at the drive in—the Wildcatter or Troy's—and the boys showed up and Tommy ended up under a car or the might have not be able to go to school. In 2005 I had become friend with a man who wife was the daughter of a wealthy oil man. The family was a good customer and I was told that this man Sonny Gossett was the boy who used to love to fight. So I ask him about that night in Archer City. He gave me a big smile and said her really didn't remember but I'm sure that Tommy remembers.

The second fight I remember was about two boys an 7th grade boy and 6th grade boy that got mad at each other right after the last class before lunch and the stairs on the third floor and Mr. Alex Crowder was watching the whole thing. He grabbed each boy by

the arms and took them to the gym which we call the new gym. He went into the coach's office and brought out two sets of boxing gloves and put it on the two boys. He told them to have at it. I took about 15 minutes to get over the anger and they have been good friends ever since. I understand if was over a girl. Who would have taught?

There was a fight also over a girl on the road we called around the world, at least that is what I remember the two boys from the Graduating Class of 1965, the girl was one of the beauty queens of the school. Both had black eyes and both who were friends but I believe neither boy ended up with the girl she started going with someone else.

The Girl fight was between Virginia Wylie and Donna Vickers, at the Rodeo grounds after school. It was around 1963. Everyone thought Virginia would win but she was the one left on the ground. I was not there and I never knew what it was about. I think Donna left school at the end of that year.

Coach Toby Woods started a club called the A Club my senior year. He set up a initiation, the starters had to show the boys that wanted to be on the A club, we had to jump off the bleachers at the new gym onto a mat and then duck walk all around the gym for 30 minutes, so forth and so on, the stupid thing just so he could be yelling at them. So at the end of the year the night before my class senior trip, we all had to fight someone and he chose me to fight Charley Goforth. He told me that if I didn't fight I would be expelled from school and I would not be able graduate. Charles was a much better boxer that I was. I had two black eyes and a busted lip. The first two days of my senior trip was not much fun

Class Clown

Hal Bobbitt was always the class clown. We were all in the large room about the old gym on the third floor before the first bell to start classes. Hal was always coming in late. He came in barefooted one day and Mr. Adams called him to his office, and in a few minutes we heard the sound of the school's paddle and Hal then came into the room holding his rear. He said that he was not allowed to come into school with something on his feet. The next day Hal was late and he came into the study hall with only socks. Mr. Adams called him to his office. The paddle was singing again. The next day Hal came in late with no socks and only shoes. You can guess what happened next. This is the way I remember it. Mr. Adams was standing in the hall with a smile on his face and the paddle for many days, wondering what Hal would do next.

Teachers

When I was in the 4th grade I became very sick, it was like 11:00 am, so my teacher took me over to the Big red brick building and told me to lay down until I felt better. I remember there were two small rooms right at the middle hall that comes in from the front on the north end of the building and goes west to the cafeteria. The next thing I remember I was being woken by Mr. John Hopkins. The day had been one of those cold rainy days as the room was dark and the school was very quiet. It was about 4:30 in the afternoon and I guess the teacher had forgotten that I was there or she might have told someone to call my mother to come and get me. Mr. Hopkins asked me what had happened and realized that I had not had lunch. If you remember him, he was a big man. So he took me to the cafeteria and opened up several cans and we ate our lunch with

crackers. Then He took me home. After that he always stopped me to ask me how I was. He was a great man. At least in my eyes. I understand the he went to Wichita Falls and was a good friend with Coach Deerinwater, Roger's dad.

We had a junior high Coach named C.O. Harcrow, He had a rule that if you failed any paper during football season you received licks with his special board, I think it was a bed slat, and you remember how thin the football pants were. I had my share of failing grades that year. I don't remember him being at AC very long.

Gary Boren was probably the most soft-spoken guy in my class. He never did anything wrong but for some reason he got mad at A.C. Wallace and locked himself in His office opened His window and throw everything on His desk out the second floor window. I think he was suspended for three day.

Coach Bobby Rexrode was the first teach that saw us the paddle on a girl, Sue Brock was always talking back to him almost daring him us the paddler on her. Well he did, and when her mother found out about it, she was Mr. Wallace's secretary Mrs. Brock, I thing she came an used the paddle on her also.

My freshman year I started on the varsity football team. We were playing the Henrietta bearcats at home. After the game the visiting team bus was always at west end of the field, they have almost the same colors as we had. Our bus was always near the locker room next to the stands on the South side, all so a sudden I could not recognize anyone on the bus. I had followed the bearcats to their bus. Watching the films the next day of the game I no recollection of the game. I played but I had been hit on the kick off and did not remember the game.

I remember this first time I got to go to the Youth Center, which I guess has always been the American Legion Hall. I saw Donny Linscott and Ann Howington dance, they moved around the dance floor like they were sliding on ice. I never learned to dance like that.

My junior year we had a new coach. Grady Graves had left and they got a man who had only been a coach on time in his life, so with winning state the year before we had a lot of boys come out for football, one was Butch Knox, He had played one year maybe his 6th grade. Butch was always known for his toughness, He called me on night to bail him out of jail in Wichita Falls, he had been in a fight at the Bar-L Drive-In and had stitches in his forehead and very hung over. We went to Seymour for a practice game. While he was on the bench, he saw that one of their plays had caught a pass and was running down the sideline near our team bench and he came off the bench and tackled him. The new coach Broderon always smoked a big nasty cigar, so on our way home Butch set behind Him and smoked his on cigar. Butch would also bring beer to out of town game and drink on the way back from the game.

I went to the old red brick building for the last time while it was in the middle of being torn down. I went into Dean Fisher's room and looked at the desks that we use to sit in I could not get even halfway in them, I could almost hear his stern voice, "Class, be quite!" and see him, eyes closed, ears wide open. I walked into the auditorium. It looked so small. The last time I had been in it was when Barry Corbin had done a one-man show called "The Tales of the West" there. It was at night and the place was full of kids, parents, and teachers. I sang my first solo there in the 5th Grade Thanksgiving program.

“We gather to gather to ask the Lord’s Blessings.” I was so nerves, Trecie Trigg was the only one I remember seeing sitting in the audience.

When I lived down near the post office 1954-1959 Tommy Goodwin lived next to Nell Trent and she was across the street on the south side. Tommy and I would ride out bikes just around the neighborhood. One time we got many blocks away from home and the Ant Hill Gang, chased us home, saying that we were on their territory. The Ant’s leader was Barry Morrison, at least we thought he was he seemed a leader since he was twice a tall as we were. I’ll have to ask him who was the rest of the gang.

Sandra Dugan House – Class of 1984

Here is one of my favorite memories from high school in Archer City:

During the 1981-82 school year it was tradition to decorate the football boys’ lockers with signs and fill them with snacks and candy on game day. All the girls would draw names for their assigned “guy” and the only rule was that you couldn’t decorate your boyfriend’s locker. This particular rule was in place in the event of a break-up mid-season. Every Friday during football season the girls would arrive early for school and sneak to their football player’s locker and hang hand-made clever signs decorated with candy and snacks to take on the road trip or stash for pre-game later that day. It was a big deal. I remember spending my entire allowance on the best snacks and candy and worked steadily to make the cutest, cleverest, and memorable signs for my guy. I felt he was one of the lucky ones and didn’t want to be out-done by any of the other girls. The season

passed and along came basketball season. It wasn't quite as big a deal as football season but that year the girls' team made the playoffs. Much to our surprise on game day of the big play-off game with Boyd we arrived at school to find our lockers all decorated by the football guys. It was awful. They bought the cheapest 10 for a dollar generic snacks that no one would feed to anyone they loved, but it was the best day of my life up to that point. I can't even tell you how messy the signs were – they looked like the first graders made them and some of the words were misspelled and didn't make sense. They gave it their best shot and failed miserably. And they didn't stop there. All the football guys sat together at the game and actually cheered for us just as we had for them at every game. We lost that play-off game but every girl on the team felt so proud and honored that day.

Marcia Farmer McGriff Mahler – Class of 1957

In the year of 1945 I, Marcia Ann Farmer, started to school in Archer City at the age of six in the first grade. At that time there was no kindergarten in the Archer City School. I began my education in Archer City and graduated from ACHS in May of 1957, attending all twelve years in the old building. Mr. J.F. Gerron was the superintendent all the years I attended there. He was very firm and had a lot of rules, but was a very good administrator. The boys walked on the left sidewalk leading to the front door and the girls walked on the right sidewalk.

In elementary we walked in lines in the hallways with each class following the class leader chosen that day by our teacher. By the way—no talking in line!

In junior high and high school, boys walked on the left side of the hallway and the girls on the right. The high school principal was Mr. W.D. Jeter and he carried out the rules of Mr. Gerron plus he added few of his own—no holding hands, no talking—disobey and stand in the hall. We learned lots of lessons that taught us how to get ready for the world of life.

Several students either got engaged or married in high school and quit school while others finished high school and went on to college. Times have really changed today compared to how students were treated in the 50s. When you married and started a family, you could not attend classes if you began to show you were going to have a baby. You had to go home and send your lessons to school by a classmate. And you still had to attend the required number of days to pass to the next grade. Now none of Mr. Gerron's rules apply. Time changes things.

I married in 1954 to Bobby Ross McGriff and graduated in 1957. The Class of 1957 has had a class reunion every five years since graduation. Our 60th reunion will be in the year 2017. We have stayed very close all these years. Some of the students who attended ACHS have come back in later years to be teachers, coaches, principals, school board members and employees of the school system.

One of my favorite stories was told by Janet Shields Stubbs, a friend and graduate of Archer City High School and an employee of the school. She was a secretary for the junior high principal and elementary combined. Later she became secretary for the superintendent. When you were secretary, you were a jack of all trades—part time eye examiner, babysitter for those who were sick and nurse for them as there were no hired nurses in the 60s and 70s. Nurses were not hired until the 1980s. Janet told the story of an

elementary boy that had gotten sick in class and the teacher sent him to Mrs. Stubbs' office for her help. Janet was always so kind and a very funny and happy person. As the young boy walked into her office he said, "Mrs. Stubbs, I think my bowels have melted." In telling the story, Janet said, "Had they ever!" The school called the child's parents and she tended to him before they arrived making the boy feel loved and cared for. What a blessing to have had employees like her to care for our children.

When I think of ACHS or Archer City, I see a loving family, great friends, funny experiences, and a caring dependable community that responds to all kinds of needs. ACHS reminds me of the great teachers and administrators I had over the years like Mrs. Trent, Mrs. Lassiter, Miss Clark, Mrs. Mullis, Mrs. Beard, Mrs. Spencer, Mrs. Finks, Mr. Wilson, Miss Stout, Mr. Jeter and Mr. Gerron. I see a lifetime of Dreams and Hopes for the future!

Our 50th class reunion was held at the *Lonesome Dove Inn* in Archer City owned by our classmate Mary Slack Webb. There were seventeen classmates present. The class purchased a granite bench with "Class of 1957" engraved on it and put it at the school at one of the entries into the gym for use by visitors. The Class of '57 had lost four classmates at the time of that reunion. The Book of Memories created was dedicated to Bobby Hickman, Betty Martin Tarno, Bernard Hilbers and Henry Vieth.

Thanks, ACHS for the memories!

Carol Lewis – Class of 1964

The most important memory I want to share is about Mrs. Crowley Hawkins. When I was a senior we were all in study hall at the beginning of school—it might have been the first day. Back in the day, they would announce who was on annual staff and the paper, etc. from study hall and that is when you knew what position each person had been put on. I had never been on anything nor did I ever expect to be on anything. Mrs. Crowley picked me to be head of the annual. You cannot imagine how surprised I was. No one had ever acted like I was capable of doing anything that was important. She gave confidence in myself and helped my self-esteem more than anyone ever had. I have no idea why she picked me and have never asked, but I will always remember how much that meant to me.

Now moving on to my sister, if she was here she could tell some good ones. The one I remember most was when Jane was in 10th or 11th grade and had Mr. Lambert for an English teacher. I don't know whose idea it was but several people in her English class decided to roll Mr. Lambert's house with toilet paper. I think David Wright was also involved in this. Anyway, I guess in the getting away David and Jane were seen and got into trouble. The next day the Superintendent called and made an appointment to come to the house to talk to mother and daddy after daddy got off work. When he drove up, Jane had a fit and told daddy that if her let him come into the house, she would leave and never come back. Daddy, knowing Jane tended to do what she threatened, went outside on the porch and talked to him there. I just remember Jane and her threat and don't

remember if they (she and David) were punished or not and I'm sure daddy was mortified.

Now a story about me. In the 6th grade, Ross Glen was held back for six weeks and if he passed then he could move up to 7th grade. I sat beside him in the back of the room in Mr. Fisher's class. Ross had an active imagination and would play cowboys and Indians on his desk. I had to watch or talk to him as it was just my nature. Mr. Fisher finally got fed up with us and said if we were so interested in what we were doing we could just sit in the same desk. Thankfully, he only made us sit like that for part of the day. Still, I was glad when Ross moved up to the 7th grade and I finally got out of trouble. I will say in passing, Mr. Fisher was always really nice to me and of course I enjoyed his class.

Jane hated school from the very beginning. Mother would take us to school and we would get out and I would go to class and Jane would beat Mother home. I don't know how long that went on. It was funny to me but mother didn't see the humor in it.

My brother, John, (who never did anything wrong) had to take something to study hall for a teacher when he was in junior high. David Wright said, "There's Jane's brother," and Coach McCown, who was the study hall teacher that day, said, "Oh no. You mean there is another one of them?" John was suitably upset with me and Jane.

The teachers couldn't tell Jane and me apart, especially if they didn't know us very well. Jane was in junior high and I was in high school and many times we got in trouble because they thought we were on the wrong floor.

I looked in the yearbook and found that when I was a senior there was at least one, if not four, cousins in every grade but the 8th and 9th grade. Don't know what

happened those years but anyway, there were so many kin folks you had to know anything you did wrong was going to get told and your mother would find out.

One more Ross Glen story. I don't know if he got mad at a kid named Milford Dilday or he just did it to aggravate him. He picked him up in his chair and hung him out the third floor window. I'm sure someone made him stop, but I don't remember who.

Jim Lewis – Class of 1973

We always took one bus for both boys and girls basketball teams to district games. Coming home from the games the girls would always sing. It was 1970 and Tammy Wynette was particularly popular - *D I V O R C E* and *Your Good Girl Is Gonna Go Bad* are two that leap to mind. We went to Petrolia and the girls were playing for the district championship. It was a very important game. Unfortunately they lost badly. As the boys got on the bus after the game the girls were very subdued and quiet. There were still some tears. As we started back to Archer City one of the boys asked if there would be any singing. One of the girls curtly replied, "If you want songs, you do the singing!" To which Johnny Hudson promptly jumped up and started singing, "Waterloo, Waterloo, where did you meet your Waterloo?"

Marie Pryor Loftin – Class of 1946

Archer City, the first school in District 1, was started in 1881 in the middle of the block on the south side of the square. Katy Ingalls taught the first school in Archer City. Earlier, a man by the name of Parks, after having cut trees on the west fork of the Trinity River and hauling them to a little saw mill, hauled the lumber to Archer City and there built a one-room box house to be used as a saloon. An election was ordered and it was voted that the sale of liquor be prohibited in 1880. The property was sold. The building was moved. Another building was erected and used until 1886. –taken from *Trails Through Archer* by Jack Loftin

When school began in the fall of 1941, each class skipped up to the next grade, thereby making the first eight years “grade school”. Curriculum was added at the first grade—not the eighth. “High School” was still four years, making twelve years to graduate. Anarene came over in 1942.

During World War II, knitting of war scarves could be done by those in study hall (later library). Some busses couldn’t run during part of the War era and students had to provide their own transportation, especially in 1945 & 1946. War stamps and bonds were bought by students on designated days. Once there was enough money spent to buy two jeeps.

The 1946 Class enrolled sixty-five students at the beginning of 1945 fall season, but graduated only twenty-one, with one of those being a veteran returning to finish. The band was not offered between fall of 1944 and spring of 1946 because of shortage of tires

and instruments. Yearbooks began with the 1946 senior year in 1945. Teachers are listed in *Trails Through Archer* by Jack Loftin.

The gymnasium was in the older south part of the main building. Its height reached through the 2nd floor. A stage was at the north end. Windows were on the 2nd floor inside the building west of the N/S hall where sports could be viewed.

Connie Atchley Martin – Class of 1966

Old Memories of school days, some great and some . . . not so much, but I loved them all the same!

I did not attend kindergarten, but my brother, Mike, did. Something I meant to ask my parents about because I'm sure I probably needed it more than he.

First grade was a real eye opener for me. Nothing I could have imagined or been told about school could have prepared me for first grade. The first day of school, I remember getting up extra early to get ready and not be late. I was overly excited because it was my first day of *real* school! My first grade teacher was named Mrs. Bennett. I can still see her holding up that ping pong "paddle" the first day along with the ultimate, verbal warnings! I listened to her every word because I was told by my parents if I were spanked at school that I would have another one to look forward to when I came home. And spankings were not something I treasured.

All was going well or at least I thought until Mrs. Bennett asked me if I had an aunt named Maurine (my dad's youngest sister)? "Yes," I answered proudly! I remember

how excited I was thinking that she already knew someone in my family. But, the next thing she said was, "Well, you look a lot like her minus the light brown hair (she had fiery, red hair), so I hope you don't act like she did when I was her teacher in East Texas. I think I wore out several of these paddles on her!"

After the shock of the first hour and hearing of all the things that could happen to you if you didn't go by her rules, I was horrified and wanted to go home which I knew was not an option. Believe me—I had no intention of doing anything to make Mrs. Bennett unhappy. Next, she began calling the names of all the students in her new first grade class. I observed two things immediately: One, I did not go by two names, and number two, I wasn't kin to anyone in the class or Archer City which my mother would confirm later. I just remember how cute all of their names sounded, e.g. Kathy Jane, Pamela Sue, Betty Jo, Jack Luke, Joe Bob, Billy Wayne. When she got to my name, she asked, "Is this really your middle name, or did the office make a mistake?" I did know my name and how to spell it, and I knew it was correct. Believe me, it did cross my mind to say there was a mistake because I could tell she didn't like it, and no way was she going to call me 'Connie Maurice' every day. I nodded that it was correct, and then she wanted to know if I knew **why** my parents chose 'Maurice' for my middle name? (Oh God, just please go on to the next name.) "Yes, ma'am; it's my daddy's middle name," I said. "Really," she answered. "Do you know that you have a masculine middle name?" "No ma'am, but thank you for telling me!" Finally, there was relief. She quickly began moving us to what would be our desk and desk partner for the year. She put me and Kathy Jane Seay together. I, already knew that this was a huge mistake because we were more like chatty Kathy and Connie.

Day two of first grade: My mother told me I had to go to school and without question, I went back. The next day Kathy Jane and I were in deep discussion about how we would share the upper and lower level shelves in our desk that held our supplies and books. Of course, we BOTH wanted the top shelf because you didn't have to bend down to floor to get your supplies/books. We were almost to the details as to how long we would each get to have the top shelf (which was the easiest to reach) before taking our turn with the lower shelf when low and behold, we were taken out in the hall. We were informed that talking and not paying attention and, especially, not listening to Mrs. Bennett was UNACCEPTABLE. She did warn us that while we were out in the hall that she hoped Mr. Hopkins, the principal, would come by with his big paddle and swat us for not paying attention and talking when she was trying to teach. We both sat down and waited and then, we both began to cry. Then, we saw Mr. Hopkins coming our way, so we cried louder. Mr. Hopkins looked like a giant to us. He was big, tall, and muscular with dark, black curly hair. Of course, to first graders everyone looks huge! He asked us why we were in the hall. We told him why and that we were sooo sorry and would never talk or be rude to Mrs. Bennett again. We promised to sit quietly and listen until the last day of school. Mr. Hopkins began to laugh. Then, he bent down and whispered, "I'm going to turn you a flip over my shoulder, and when I do, you yell, 'OUCH' as loud as you can." There was no mention of a spanking. What a relief! I was, already, dreading telling my parents that I had gotten a spanking after two days in first grade knowing I would have another one coming. I was the first one to be flipped over his shoulder. But, in all honesty, I was so terrified of heights that when he flipped me over his shoulder, I

was pretty sure I was going to die! At that time, I wasn't sure if a spanking might have worked best for me.

On to high school . . .

It's true that you never leave your high school memories, and yet, there's no going back. And, sadly, not everyone has the nostalgic, sentimental memories of those glorious four years. I have a difficult time understanding this because I assumed that everyone had the same, wonderful memories that I did at ACHS. And, I cannot imagine going anywhere else to school but in my hometown of Archer City.

The irony is that even your classmates have a different perspective of the same "happenings" that all of you experienced during high school. Discussing a weekend slumber party at one of my old A.C. friend's house a few years back I began to see that my observations were not the same as others in attendance. Truth is always shocking. Ok, I do remember, freezing our bras and putting them on the flag pole in front of the court house that night during a slumber party. I don't remember someone in our group owning an expensive, lace bra that was so damaged from being frozen that her mother was threatening to call our parents to ask them to pay for a replacement. I do remember seeing the court house flag pole from the window of my mother's dress shop across the street. And, I, definitely, remember my mother's comments that included, "those girls should be ashamed of themselves because they are not growing up to be young ladies that parents could be proud of and not to mention what the community must think of them when they saw bras flying on our nation's flag pole." I did begin praying really hard and making some pretty outrageous promises to God on a daily basis that she would not find out that I was a part of that group of girls.

I was pretty sure that God probably remembered me begging for forgiveness early on in second grade when another little friend and I were walking around the block smoking stolen cigarettes taken right from my mother's purse. My mother had gone to work at the dress shop, and, why oh why, did we choose to walk down the middle of the street smoking? Low and behold, a neighbor pulled over in her car and told us she was going straight to town and tell my mother. Thinking I could discourage her, I immediately spoke up and said, "Oh, that's fine. She doesn't care that we're smoking because she gave the cigarettes to us before she went to work." Lying or smoking was not acceptable, and I got what I deserved.

The emotional ties that come from getting to know everyone and their families on a personal basis in a small town are comparable to nothing else I know. And best of all, you keep in contact with them for a lifetime. As I age, I have grown more gracious, and I appreciate seeing my oldest, dearest friends from time to time. Those high school classmates that we share the deepest common bond to this day, and there is no one on earth that can share those memories with you except them. It is bittersweet to see my old high school being torn down, but having grandchildren, I am well aware of the need for mandatory technology changes that happen daily. I might not be able to see the brick building, but I know I will never, ever forget the joy that took place inside there. Moreover, the most wonderful friends and friendships that are still thriving today are irreplaceable because I attended school in Archer City for twelve, wonderful years. As the old saying goes, "Change is inevitable, but misery is optional." I choose to keep my memories and my friends close to my heart. I am positive that attending Archer City High

School and living in Archer City, Texas, have provided me with lifetime memories that are, to this day, some of the biggest blessings in my life!

K Lynn Lewis Martin - Class of 1979

My favorite memory was when I was in the 8th grade and had Mrs. Trent for English. Back in those days there was no A/C and our teachers really dressed up back then. In the late part of May it would get so hot. She always kept a vase of flowers on her desk and at times she would pour that water from the vase down her cleavage.....the menopause years. I loved her to death. She was so funny.

I also have so many great memories of Mrs. Hornady in Home Ec. One day we were making baked Alaska and she reached into the oven to pull one out without remembering to put an oven mitt on first. She threw that thing in the air and shouted the worst obscenities you have ever heard! Another teacher I loved to death. When she would leave the room, some of those less behaved than me would go into those kitchen areas and turn on the water and use those hoses as sprayers and have water fights. Mrs. Hornady would come back into the biggest mess. We also had a stabbing during sewing season when one of my friends (Karen Hoff) stabbed another friend (Mary Beth Gage) in the hand over a nasty comment Mary Beth had made over Karen's sewing. Today they would probably put you in jail for such things.

Once we were in high school and reached the third floor, the teachers would leave the room and return to always find someone locked out on one of the ledges.

My other favorite memory was in Mrs. Smallwood's class. We would start those timed typing tests and Bev Crow would always reach down and unplug Mary Beth's typewriter right before we would start and then when it was over she would plug it back in. I don't think Mary Beth ever figured out what was wrong with her typewriter.

Also Mrs. Smallwood was actually very small. I bet she wasn't 5 feet tall in heels. Remember, we didn't have air conditioning, and the windows would always be open, so Bev Crow would come into the room before Mrs. Smallwood would get there and she would pop those shades to go all the way to the top. Mrs. Smallwood couldn't have reached them on a ladder.

Do you see a pattern of the trouble makers in my class?

One day in band, Debbie Abshier was talking and we were all laughing because she was a hoot. Mr. Dooley stopped us and he looked at Debbie and said, "Debbie, do you think you are funny?" He was steaming mad. Debbie said, "Well, Mr. Dooley, I DO think I'm funny!" Off she went to JB's office. Of course he told her she would never amount to anything.

Another funny story about Mr. Dooley. . . When he was hired, he was very young. Daddy was president of the school board so he decided to pop by Mr. Dooley's house to introduce himself. Mr. Dooley came to the door and my dad said, "Is your dad home?" Mr. Dooley had to explain that he was the new band director and my dad felt a little foolish. When I was in junior high, I HATED band. I played the clarinet, the sound was awful to my ears and of course Mr. Dooley was always getting on to me for being so awful. I'd come home and slam that clarinet on the dryer that sat just inside the door and would yell to my dad, "I HATE Mr. Dooley, Can't your fire him?" Of course the answer

was no and I would beg to quit which was also not an option to my dad. In his wit, as you know my dad had, he said, "I tell you what. I'll just get even with Mr. Dooley and make you stay in band. That'll get even with him" Then in high school I switched to tenor saxophone which I loved and to this day I thank Mr. Dooley for teaching me discipline, teamwork, and integrity.

When in high school, I was the head basketball cheerleader. Sometimes during a time out, Fuzzy (Coach Ray) would scream at those boys at the top of his lungs in that high pitched voice that he had. Cora Ann would look at me and say, "Start a chant, start a chant!" in our best attempts to drown him out.

And then there's my Mr. Gray story . . . in high school I just happened to be a pretty good prose and poetry speaker. And of course, Judd was in charge of the math team. Jud would always drive the bus to the UIL meets and every year before the Lubbock trip he would call me up to his desk and say, "K Lynn, I'm sorry, but you're not going with us to Lubbock." I would be horrified and ask why. His response was always the same, "You're just like a little puppy. You're either peeing or puking and I don't have time to make all those stops along the way." I'd have to go get Mrs. Crowley to fuss at him so I could go.

I remember on pep rally days how the band would always march thru the halls and the drumline would be loud and the students would leave class to follow us over to the old gym for the pep rally.

Speaking of pep rallies, one night Arlina Campbell, Lori Stubbs, and I were up at the old gym painting signs for the pep rally. It was about 9:00 p.m. in the fall, so it was dark. Ricky Graves and Jackie Mueller snuck in through a window in the coaches' office

and turned all the lights off to scare us. And it did for sure! With all the windows painted in, you could not see your hand in front of your face; it was pitch dark. We had to find the lids to the paint, and then somehow make our way over to the door which was always locked when we were up there late. We had to get down on our hands and knees because we always threw the keys in the floor when we came in. We found the key ring. It had so many keys but we finally found the right one, got out of there and ran to Ruby Campbell's house as fast as we could. We were scared to death.

I would be remiss not to mention Janet Stubbs. She took care of every kid that came through that school. I remember being in grade school going into the cafeteria; we'd stop and she would punch a hole in our lunch ticket and if a kid didn't have any money or a ticket, she'd say, "Go on through, it'll be fine."

Those are the best memories I can think of for now. It was certainly a place where we felt safe, had great teachers for such a small southern town and our teachers not only taught us subjects, they taught us values. I will always be grateful to every one of those teachers. They were like other parents to us—great people—all of them.

Barbara Shearmire McCown

Some boys were messing around the three-story building and killed an owl. The owl was a female with a nest of fledglings over the south door. J. B. Adams found out who the guilty parties were and made them responsible for the welfare of the owlets. They had to feed them daily until they were able to leave the nest. The nest was too high to reach from the ground, and the only way they were able to get food to them was from the 2nd story window by lowering or dropping it. They kept them alive until they were able to leave the nest. Don took me to the 2nd story window and I got to see them in their nest. He always had the utmost admiration for J.B.

My husband, Donald Shearmire, was hired in 1970 as school superintendent, and I remember going to our first school function. While standing out in the breezeway waiting to enter the cafeteria, Martha McCurrin walked up to Don and asked if he was the janitor or maintenance man, to whom he promptly answered, "Yes I am." She needed to be let into an area that was locked, so Don took her and she retrieved whatever it was she was after. I chided him about his response, but he just laughed it off saying he didn't want to embarrass her. (She later told me how embarrassed she was when she found out who he was.) When it came time to go into the cafeteria, Don needed to go in ahead of the crowd, and he walked right straight into the glass partition separating the glass doors, so his introduction to the people of Archer City was with a speech given with an ever growing bloody bump on his forehead. I told him it was "Payback" for what he did earlier.

Jo Ann (Jody) Patrick McDaniel – Class of 1958

I remember the old radiators in our classrooms that kept us warm (real warm if your desk was next to them) but, oh, how cold we'd get if we were sitting on the other side of the room!

I remember going to many football games as my brother Bobby Patrick (graduated in 1950) was a “star” player. He later became football coach for the Wildcats in 1958 – 1960. We also went to basketball games in the old, old gym. If we got there early we could sit on the stage—if not, we went to the 2nd floor of the school and watched the games through “window like” openings. What fun!!!!

Bobby, my two daughters, Mitzi McDaniel McMurray (Class of '81) and Teresa McDaniel Robertson (Class of '83) and I all graduated in the same auditorium. Wooden seats, long aisles, maroon curtain. Lots of plays, band concerts, pep rallies, Miss Archer County contests, etc.

Many sweet memories, good teachers and lots of friends. I am very sad to see the old ACHS building destroyed, but it's only a building; here today, gone tomorrow—but *always* good memories. AND THAT CAN'T BE DESTROYED!!!!

Larry McMurtry - Class of 1954

I lived just two blocks from Archer High during the whole twelve years of my primary education. Only the 6th grade caused me problems. That was the year my sister Sue entered the portals of academe.

Only she didn't enter. She would walk one of the blocks with me—getting her to school had somehow become my responsibility. At the midpoint of our walk she invariably balked. She seemed to have chosen the path of resistance, which she has even now not entirely abandoned. The potency of her resistance was one of the few things I remember about my years at Archer High.

Brian McPherson – Class of 1972

The Old Red Brick School

The old red brick school looms large in my own memory of Archer City. Indeed, it actually loomed over my house. My dad, Tim, was superintendent of schools and we lived in a “teacherage” or school-owned house. Our house at 604 South Ash street was directly across the street. Indeed, it was so close that in the summer, the shadow of the building fell on our house, offering much welcomed shade from the late afternoon sun. The school was the first thing I saw from my window in the mornings, and during the school year, the traffic of parents dropping off children, and school buses rumbling by

our front door was just part of the soundtrack of my life. It's sound that I particularly remember about that building. We could hear the wind whistle around the corners of the school, or rustle the large cedar bushes on the north end, particularly in winter. But, it was the windows that stir often in my memories. If you remember, the school had those eight foot, double sash, double throw windows which allowed opening from the top as well as the bottom. Windows that big by necessity could not be precise, and so on windy days, the windows, rattled, creaked and boomed. I came to know these sounds very well as one of my childhood chores was to let folks into the school after hours, A forgotten book or homework assignment, maybe a jacket I would let people out of the building, and sometimes stayed behind to check on things (yes, I did that. I would make money as a school janitor later on and never got past the habit of checking doors and lights.) As I walked through the concrete floored halls, I would hear the windows creak, crack, groan and boom with whatever wind was blowing. At first, it sort of creeped me out, chills up my spine and all that. Through the years, I became familiar with the sound. It was like the school breathed and pulsed, with motion and sound. In a way those familiar sounds became almost comforting. I never forgot that. The brick-clad concrete walls seemed so immovable, as if the building had been and would be standing forever. It was the looming shadows and the sounds of the windows rattling that rest in my memory. It seemed that building was like a character in my story, a place and a personality. Not just concrete and bricks, but a place and time of my life in Archer and I do miss it.

Barry Morrison – Class of 1965

One of my favorite memories occurred in Chemistry class: We were doing a lab experiment with our teacher, Ed Harvill, at the blackboard writing compound formulas. My seat was mid-row next to the blackboard facing him. We all had Bunsen burners out with gas hoses attached preparing to heat something. The sinks each had two long neck water spigots spanning over into the sink. I thought (maybe in error) *wonder what would happen if the gas hose from the burner was attached to each of those water spigots and turned on? I bet that hose would swell like a balloon and how cool would that be.* Of course with his back to the class I had the full attention of everyone, except the teacher, with my own little experiment. One of my buddies turned on one spigot and I the other. Well, obviously that wasn't very well thought out as one end of the hose came off and started flopping around sending a stream of water down the blackboard across the small of the Mr. Harvill's back. I guess it gave him a start because he sucked in enough air to deplete the supply for the rest of us. It took just a sec to get the water turned off, but the damage had been done. My reward from Mr. Adams was nine licks. However it must have been pretty cool because two of my buddies—Steve Parsley and Barney Oliver—agreed to share the licks and Mr. Adams agreed with each recipient receiving three each. Coach Graves didn't find out so the punishment ended there.

Judy Glenn Nichols - Class of 1961

I started the first grade at Archer City and graduated from Archer City High School in 1961. Mrs. Lassiter, later known as Mrs. Elmore, was my first grade teacher. Every morning she would check to see if our fingernails were clean and if our shoes were polished and our hair combed and our teeth brushed. I always got good marks on all of that.

At some point in those early years, we had to take sack lunches to school. I believe the cafeteria had burned. Somebody may want to verify that. The playground was so much fun at recess. There were always groups playing jacks and jumping ropes. Those were two of my favorite things to do at recess. I always thought my second grade teacher, Mrs. June Clark, was so pretty and nice. I can remember sitting at my desk and looking out the window at people picking up paper on the school yard, as punishment. Guess that was better than getting “licks” which some people managed to do. I was always afraid I would get into some kind of trouble. But that was saved for my brother Ross Glenn.

My third grade teacher was Mrs. Wilson. I learned how to read a ruler in her class. Also, she was an artist and she taught us how to sketch trees and mountains. My trees and mountains never did and still don't look very good. But it was fun. One memory from that class is the day Mrs. Wilson hooked a pair of pliers on one of Jimmy Pitts' front teeth and told him if he ever bit anybody again, she would pull his teeth out. It worked. Teachers cannot get by with that type of effective threats today.

Then on to Mrs. Nell Trent. Oh, boy, nobody messed with her either. She believed in the paddle. She probably would have been a good batter on a softball team. I never received any of her wrath, but several did.

I ate lunch in the cafeteria every day. We had lunch cards that Mrs. Gerron would “punch” each day that you ate there. That was my first experience with smothered liver and onions. Cannot remember who the teacher was, but she made me eat that awful smelling dish and much to my amazement, I liked it. Does anybody remember the graham crackers and peanut butter desserts we had? Yum yum.

Junior high brought on Mrs. Hawkins. Very stern but thorough teacher. I guess I will have to give her kudos for piquing my interest in geography. Thanks to that interest, I have been very fortunate to have traveled to several countries in this world. Two good experiences in junior high were the teachers, Mr. Waldrip and Mr. English.

On to high school. I was scared to death of all those people I had never been around in my life. To this day, I cannot figure out why Mrs. Crowley made us dress up a doll from a Shakespeare Play. My mother had to make my doll’s clothes. I never could sew. Thought I was going to fail Home-Ec because of that. I had to take a zipper out of a dress so many times, the material would not hold the zipper. Some of my friends joined band. Well, that was not for me. Every day at lunch, there were serious ping pong games and volley ball games in the “old” gym. There were coke machines and candy machines in the hallway on the ground floor on the way to the cafeteria. Those Dr. Peppers with peanuts crammed down the bottle were so good. Lunch time was the “playground time” for high school. I have often wondered how in the world all of us managed to fit into that old gym in the old building. Some of the best memories I have of high school were

outside the school house and most of those stories cannot be printed. But all those stories were made with friends from inside the school. The basketball game bus trips were always fun—more fun than sitting on the bench. As a cheerleader, my senior year, we rode with the band to the football games. There were four of us and we made up our own routines and our mothers made our “cheerleading” costumes. We had one costume for pep rallies and one for the games. There was not a cheerleading school to go to back in “them thar days.” As you know from reading Tommye Jane Wright’s tales, most of us that ran around together, still run around together. I will never forget the time we were discussing “modern” day schools that have exchange students. Somebody said, “Well we never did have anything like that.” I said, “Oh, yes we did, we exchanged Dottie Murphy for Carlton Deen. She went up a grade and he came down a grade.” I was on the Cat’s Claw paper staff. I wrote a column called “Cat Tales.” A gossip column that was highly censored by Mrs. Barton, darn it. Well, I could go on and on but it would take too much time and space. So in closing, all I can say now is Thanks for the Memories.

Glenda Nelson Martin – Class of 1948

There is a lot of sadness as I watch the old red brick building going down. The Archer School has been an important part of mine and my family’s life for many years. Our story started in 1914 when Thelma Pickering, my future mother-in-law, enrolled in the first grade in Archer school, graduating in 1926 in a class of ten. Her son, Charlie Lee Martin, attended first grade in 1933 and graduated in 1944 in a class of thirty-seven.

I started Archer School in the first grade in 1938 with Mrs. French, a tiny little lady I remember well. I graduated in 1948. My brother Travis Nelson had graduated in 1947 and our sister, Patsie Ann, in 1951. Hers was the first class to attend twelve years and she always reminded us she had to go longer than we did. That was the same year our younger brother Ronnie started first grade. The youngest, Lee, started in 1953. Ronnie Nelson graduated in 1963 which made my dad, Artie Nelson, have from one to three enrolled in Archer School every year for twenty-five years

Charlie Martin and I had three daughters who were very active in ACHS. They played on the same playground, skated on the same sidewalk, sat in the same desks and walked the same halls as their parents had years before. Debie started the first grade in 1958 and graduated in 1970. Cindy attended from 1960 to 1972 and Pam from 1963 to 1975. To make the story interesting, Pam started first grade in 1963, the same year Ronnie graduated. So going to Archer School was an ongoing thing for my family. From 1914 until 1975 there were only seven years we had no one enrolled there.

Many things happened during my years in school, but one memory I still laugh about is the cold day we came to school to find a very strong, offensive odor. Several high school boys—who shall remain nameless—had slipped into the study hall the night before and deposited skunk bags in empty desks and behind the radiators. With the radiators going full blast to keep us warm, the smell was unbearable. The boys had hoped for school closing, but Mr. Gerron was not about to do that, so while they worked to find the cause and take care of it our seventh grade class below the study hall was suffering. Our teacher Mary Sue Conner was about to be sick so she wet her hankie in the water

fountain and covered her nose and mouth. Well, we students had no wet hankies to help us so it was a miserable day, but one we all remember and laughed about for many years.

Telling the old red brick school goodbye will be hard for many of us, but my hope is that the new building will be even better and will echo with the sounds of children's laughter for many years to come.

Cammi Hargis Parks - Class of 1991

The "Big Building"

My first memories were from elementary school when we would get to walk over to the big building to watch the high school present their One Act Plays and variety shows. I remember feeling so excited sitting there watching everything that was happening on that stage!

By the fifth grade, we were in junior high and FINALLY in the big building! We thought we were something in those two rooms on the first floor! 6th-8th grade we got to have classes on the second floor—moving on up! I remember watching the upper classmen roaming the halls in between classes, thinking how I couldn't wait to be where they are! We had open campus for lunch back then and junior high was let out about 15 minutes before the high school kids. As soon as that lunch bell rang, we would run as fast as we could down the street to Curtis' to get in line for the "good food" before the high-schoolers with cars beat us to it.

So many memories from high school. I had the best time during those four years. I was never one of the popular kids, but I was okay with that. I was friends with everyone and I enjoyed the fact that I didn't have to stress about being popular. I was able to have a high school experience from a well-rounded, yet neutral view. I wasn't the best student I could have been, but more has stuck with me after all these years than I could ever imagine . . . and not just from the educational side.

I could possibly write forever about all the memories I have from my time at ACHS. My friends were, and still are, like family to me. We have so many memories of our years together. Good and bad, the loyalty and love stays strong. Mr. Gray's eccentric teaching methods and chalk mark on his forehead, Mrs. Campbell's bringing out my love of literature and the arts, Coach Wolf's amazing US History class, and Mrs. Bowles' (who is to this day, my second mom) Home-EC classes and that loud cackling laugh of hers. They are just a few of the many people and memories I carry with me.

My favorite place on campus was the auditorium. I always thought that if you stood on that stage and listened really hard, you could hear the stories of all the years past in the whispers in the folds of the stage curtain, the creaks of the old stage floors, and all those names scribbled on the dressing room walls. To me, it was a sacred place. Participating in OAP was one of the best things I ever did. I was able to step outside of myself and all my insecurities and become another person who made people laugh and smile.

My love for the theater has never stopped. I just wish my life would slow down enough for me to have the time to get involved in community theater programs. Instead, I have used my experience to further my career. I have had the nerve to stand on stages as

part of the Paul Mitchell team and do hair shows in front of hundreds of people. I have taught workshops and have given many presentations to the hair industry all the while calming my nerves by telling myself "All the world's a stage . . . MY stage."

The memories are endless. As sad as it is to think of the demolition, nothing will ever take away what lives in me to this day. Everything that happened in my years there has shaped me into who I am today, and I will forever be grateful to that "Big Building."

Blaine Purcell - Oldest Son of G.B. Purcell, Jr

I have a memory of my dear ol' dad, Graham Purcell, Jr., that will be hard to top. I do not know how far along in his education this occurred, but it was with his sidekick, Joe Shelton, I believe.

While Graham Purcell, Sr. was Chairman of the AC School Board, my dad and his sidekick and maybe a few others took one of my Granddad's dairy cows on a Friday evening and placed it in the Superintendent's office on the second floor of the High School and left it there for the weekend. (Between 1934-1937). I am not sure of the name of the Superintendent.

Needless to say, there was quite a mess come Monday morning. Not only was there a mess someone had to clean up but my dad asked in telling, "Have you ever tried to get a Holstein dairy cow to go down a steep set of stairs? Much easier to get her to go up the stairs." Also, it did not take long to discover who the culprits were with a dairy cow missing from my granddad's herd.

My dad spent most of his time cowboying or thinking of unique activities. This may be the reason he finished 23rd out of 23 in his senior class. He carried these talents to Agricultural & Mechanical College of Texas now known as Texas A&M University where he later got more focused on education.

Bennie Lou (Be-Bo) Williams Shelton – Class of 1956

In 1993 I was asked by Abby Abernathy and Cindi Schenk to give the welcoming address at the Homecoming pep rally honoring all Wildcat ex-cheerleaders. Thinking of them, I wrote this poem.

HOMECOMING 1993

Let's go back to the fall of 1953
There was Sue, Schenk, Freda and me.
In the olden days we numbered four
With those four mouths we sounded like many more.

We were oh so loud and oh so bold
Back in those days we yelled for the black and gold
We looked well enough or so we were told.
The sweaters were warm enough for any cold night
To keep us comfortable yelling "Fight, Team, Fight!"

Then along comes the fall and football season of 1954
There was Schenk, Tissa, Pat and me
We still numbered four but sounded like many more.
This was the last year for those three
But I had high hopes for another year for me.
This particular year our uniforms were black and long
But we stood proud and tall singing that old school song.

Now comes the fall and football season of 1955
And the four of us made it come alive.
There was Sarah, Janice, Kirby and me
This was my last year you see.
Count the names, they still number four
Can you finish the rest? We still sounded like more.

I look back on those years as something truly great
I consider myself lucky or was it fate?
The bow I might have once worn in my hair
I now wear in my back.
And that spur is no longer on my boot
But in my heel and feels just like a tack.
I enjoy homecoming and visiting my friends
And to each and every one of you, my love I send.

Sylvester, My Story

My design began in 1946, in Detroit, Michigan. My model was called a 1947 Dodge, hunter green, one-ton Pickup.

My personality changed in about 1951. I went to live the next few years of my life with Ben L. Williams, Lou and Be-Bo. I was given the name Sylvester. We lived three and one-half miles in the country, but soon we all moved to town.

It was some time after we moved to town, Be-Bo and her friends went to Wilson's Variety Store and purchased a stencil. Not thinking they needed permission, they stenciled in white on my dark green cab: SYLVESTER

In 1954 the cheerleaders needed to wrap the goalposts at the rodeo grounds (that was where the boys played football.) So Ben and Sylvester to the rescue! Ben put side boards on the sides and put a 2'x12' long board across. Be-Bo had learned to drive me pretty good so she would back it and they could wrap the entire goal post with one move. More about the football field later.

A one-ton truck, the seats were wider, so a thin little friend sat on the left of the driver and gave the hand signals. There was also a knob on the dash—when I turned—the windshield would roll out at the bottom.

Now let's get to our senior year. The seniors had the concession stand—oh how you would snicker if you could see what we called a concession stand. Better yet—everything had to be prepared at the school house and transported to the football field in Sylvester. The Friday of our last game he had a flat. When I called my mother to see if it was fixed, she shared the heartbreaking news: Sylvester had been sold. There were a few tears when that was announced in study hall.

There was a neat story that was almost forgotten. His keys were never removed from the ignition. So if we went out of town and came back home and found Sylvester was gone, my family knew that somebody needed a pickup to move or haul something.

They usually brought him back full of gas. That was a shock to his gas tank—usually three to five gallons was our purchase limit.

I only saw him one time after that. I passed him coming into Wichita Falls and motioned for him to pull over. I pretended that I thought I may have left a pair of earrings in the glove box. With tears streaming down my cheeks I asked the man to take good care of him. My mother said, “I bet he thinks you are a complete and total nut case.”

There has never been another Sylvester in my life.

A few tears were shed in recalling these memories.

Judy Crowley Stewart – Class of 1965

We lived a block from school when I was a first grader. Therefore, I always walked home for lunch. I was dying to get to eat in the cafeteria where I could push my own tray and be served by the ladies and eat with my friends. Mom told me if it were ever raining, I could eat at school. So, the first day there was the lightest sprinkle, I allowed how that qualified me for a cafeteria lunch! I proudly proceeded through the line and sat with my friends to enjoy my lunch. I don't remember the whole fare that day, but I do remember the green beans. *I loved* green beans and ate them often at home. So, I started with a nice big bite of those on my fork. Holy Cow! Those were NOT my mom's green beans! My biggest dilemma now was to decide what I was going to do with them. I knew better than to spit them out on my tray, and I sure as heck didn't want to swallow them! Finally, I

managed to use my napkin to dispose of them. I was never in a big hurry to eat in the cafeteria again!

When I was in elementary school in the 50's, at lunch recess we were allowed to cross the street to the "Little Store" on the corner. One could take a dime and come back with a whole little sack of goodies. *Some* things were "two for a penny". I always purchased a Banaba Bike for Mom, licorice for Daddy, peppermint for Mammaw, and then assorted treats (usually Lick-um-aid or wax Kool-Aid sticks) for me and my siblings. What fun-filled memories!

The elementary playground holds many wonderful memories. There was the big old merry-go-round with a top, Johnny Strides, a tall slide, and the monkey rings that I remember the most. Seems like every time I climbed up on the platform to start the monkey rings, that's when the bell rang to go in. Of course, I *had* to start the "several ring trip", sometimes getting reprimanded for not coming immediately when the bell rang.

In the fifth grade, we started Beginner's Band. We were *so* excited, and Judy Mc, Trecie, Janis, Mavis, Phyllis, and I all wanted to play the saxophone. On the first day, we were assembled in the band hall. The band director explained to us that he wanted to make sure the instrument we had chosen was a good choice for our mouth structures. So, he asked each one of us to come forward to where he sat on a stool and open our mouths wide so he could check this out. Well, there was no way on God's green earth that Judy Mc and I were going to embarrass ourselves in front of the whole group. So, when our time came, we both blurted out, "DRUMS!" She opted out later and went back to the saxophone, and I played the drums for the next eight years!!

Mr. Gerron was superintendent of Archer High School during the late 1930's, 40's, and 50's. he ruled with a stern hand. What I remember most was his steadfast rule that the north sidewalk leading up to the high school building was the "GIRLS" sidewalk, and the south sidewalk was the "BOYS". Heaven help you if you *dared* walked up the wrong one! So, naturally there was absolutely *no* PDA allowed in the halls or anywhere else on campus!

My sister, Linda Sue, was a very smart, talented young lady who excelled in many areas, but basketball was not one of them. However, as a seventh grader, she decided to try her hand at athletics. After a few days of working out, she decided it wasn't her forte when the coach said, "Linda Sue! You do *not* have to say, 'Excuse me!' every time you bump into someone on the court!"

One day in the early 60's, Miss Hawkins was overseeing the huge study hall which housed all the high school classes for early morning announcements. Announcements were completed, and Miss Hawkins was standing on the platform behind the desk quietening the large group with shouts of her own. Once she had accomplished this, she proceeded to sit down in her chair which slipped off the back of the platform. This caused her chair to be thrown back against the wall causing her feet in her little orthopedic shoes to wind up sticking right straight up high in the air! There was an undeniable "GASP" emitted by all the students, but everyone was frozen! We didn't dare laugh! Then came Miss Hawkins's stern voice, "Don't just SIT there, *someone* come help me!" Whereas, several scurried to her assistance!

One can't remember school days, without remembering favorite teachers. Mrs. Crowley (even if she *is* my mother!) was one of those special people. She loved life and

her students. If it were Ranch Week, she wore six-shooters (two belts laced together to fit around her) and little pistols-in-holster earrings. If it were a football play-off game in frigid weather, she wore long handles under her dress since, at that time, teachers didn't wear pants. At the Halloween Carnival, she volunteered to dress in bloomers and sit in the dunking booth. For several years, the seniors voted for her to be their senior trip sponsor because they knew she was loads of fun and good for a laugh. It might be her running down the bus aisle squirting kids with water guns or shaving cream! Whatever the event, you could count on Mrs. Crowley to make it memorable!

I know much has been said about the '64 Wildcats' journey from their freshman year to the State game, but that era consumed my high school years. As a cheerleader my Jr/Sr years, we painted signs, went to cheer camp at SMU, practiced for pep rallies and skits, and loved the Friday night games. Our senior year, we cheerleaders made an 8-ft paper maché football player body and connected it to a giant Wildcat head. All was well until a strong wind knocked it over at the Wildcat stadium and crushed it. But nothing could crush our spirit and love for those Wildcats.

Mike Stewart – Class of 1965

In sixth grade, we were having a question/answer activity standing up by the windows. I grabbed the window shade cord and absent-mindedly started making knots in it until it was over my head. Mrs. Lytle saw it and said, "You better start untying those knots right now!" Well, since they were slip-knots, I just yanked on it and they fell out immediately

and everyone laughed. This made her angry, and she sent me out in the hall. Mrs. Trent had taken her class for a break, and she was standing by the sixth grade door when I came out. We looked far down the hall, and here came the principal headed in our direction. Mrs. Trent was wearing a big raincoat. She opened up one side of it, shoved me inside, and closed it up. The principal got to us and walked on by. At that point she opened up her coat and released me saying, “Now, get your hiney back in there and BEHAVE!”

My dad, Gene, had a job before school called “firing the boiler.” He was to get there early to help in the furnace room to get the heat going for the classroom radiators. He was late one day, and classes had started before it got warm. Finally, the radiators started sputtering, and things warmed up. The only problem was the boys who had hunted and killed skunks all night and put them next to the radiators. The smell was so horrible, in fact, they were sent home—which was probably the plan to begin with!!

In 1961, I was a freshman sitting on the last seat of the freshman row of study hall students right next to the library counter. The librarian always kept two glass ink wells full of ink to fill our fountain pens with. One morning my good friend and trickster, Ross Glenn, winked at me and jabbed me in the ribs. I turned to see what he was up to just as he dropped Alka Seltzers into the ink wells. You can only imagine how they fizzed and bubbled up about a foot high! About then, the principal came walking by and assumed since I was the closest one around, that I had pulled the prank. Even though I, for once, was perfectly innocent, I got hauled to the office and got licks for the dastardly deed!

Shortly after we had received our football jackets I was sitting in my seat proudly wearing mine when in walks Ross Glenn, ink pen in hand, and squirted ink on my white letter “A”. Being an underclassman I knew better than to confront him, but I was

extremely upset that my good buddy would do that to my new football jacket! As I sat there fuming for a few minutes, I looked down to realize nothing was showing. Ross had squirted me with disappearing ink!

Jodie Wright Tepfer – Class of 1966

I have to start with my mother, Lorene Wright. She graduated from ACHS in 1941. My Aunt Eunice Wright was in the first graduating class. One of my sisters, Phyllis or Kathy, has her annual. Mom was an identical twin with my Aunt Judy. My granddad, Zeddy Watts, was the high school custodian when Mom was growing up. He thought the teachers were the finest people on earth, so my sisters, one of my daughters, and I all became teachers. When Mom and Aunt Judy were in first grade, the teachers decided to put them in separate classes. Mom and Aunt Judy started crying so hard, they called Granddad. He came down and held Mom and Aunt Judy and said, “Aww, I guess you better keep these girls together,” so they were in the same room all the way through graduation. Mom was a strong believer in education. I never remember a day in my life not thinking I was going to college when I got out of high school. I also knew I was going to teach. Mom said I was. She did let all three of us decide what we wanted to teach, though.

Where do I begin with so many memories?

In 3rd grade I had on my new winter coat. I don't know if Mom made it, I'm pretty sure she did, but it had quarter-sized buttons with metal rounded edges on it. Why and

how I had one of those in my mouth, I'll never know, but then I'm not sure why I did 90% of the things I've done most of my life, but I did. And of course, I swallowed that button. Mrs. Wells looked at me and said, "Did you swallow that?" Googled-eyed I answered, "Yes, ma'am." She took me straight to the office (a phrase that will be repeated often in my stories) and called my mother. Mom picked me up and took me instantly to the hospital, but not before she told Mrs. Wells told me that button cost 50 cents. (In 1955 when one cent would buy five pieces of candy at Ruby's.) I can still remember seeing that button in my tummy on the x-ray. Of course everything was fine until I got home.

In 5th grade Buddy Knox was my boyfriend. I knew because he threw a Fire Stick at me every day at lunch. (Five cents at Ruby's). I told mom I had a boyfriend. She asked whom. I said Buddy Knox; she said, "Oh Lord." (Mom went to school with Buddy's dad in AC). She saw Buddy at school one day and said, "Well, no wonder, he's the cutest kid up there!"

We learned our directions in 5th grade, Mrs. Gann's class. To this day when I get turned around, I put myself in her classroom—teacher's desk *west*, back wall *east*, windows *south*, lockers *north*. I'm 68 years old!

Mr. Fisher spanked me in 6th grade for failing a spelling test. I had an ear infection; I couldn't hear...why I didn't tell him is unclear. Mom came to school, gave Mr. Fisher a tongue lashing, then took me home. That's the ONLY time she came to school because I'd gotten in trouble that I wasn't in 10 times more trouble when I got home.

In 8th grade I had Nell Trent. She belonged to the Christian Church, so we saw her every Sunday. I wasn't about to do anything wrong in her class because I didn't want

Mom to know. Consequentially, I taught English for most of my teaching life. I majored in Physical Education because basketball was my love, and I wanted to coach, but I minored in and got my Master's (Go, TCU) in English.

In Mr. Weaver's 8th grade class for some reason my friends—we called ourselves a Click (not clique—which is what we were) decided to dump our purses (we carried large ones that looked like overnight bags) when the clock hit 10:35. When the clock hit 10:35, we dumped them one after another. We were sent to the office; we all got sent home. Mom was not kind when we got home.

My Click consisted of Dana Burkett, Melissa Powell, Kathy Seay, Connie Atchley and me. We got into lots of mischief in and out of school. I enjoyed every minute of my high school years.

I went to the 8th grade banquet with Mickey Horany. We laughed and talked and danced the night away. That was Mickey's and my first date. I still count Mickey as one of my best friends ever. Today I know if I need something, Mickey will be here. He's a forever friend.

I made the varsity basketball team when I was a freshman. For a while I was on the varsity and junior varsity, so I got to play twice as much. I loved it. I even loved practice. I also loved off season because Bobby Ray worked with us, and I absolutely worshiped him. I hung on to every word he said most of my life. He coached at Richland High School when I coached at Watauga JH both in the Birdville District. My kids didn't feed to Richland, but I never missed a game Coach Ray coached because I learned so much. I went to Jeff and Mike Ray's games when they were in AC and in college because I knew Coach Ray would be there. I would sit as close to him as

possible, so I could hear every word he said. He was so good with Mike and Jeff. He was truly a great man and a great teacher.

I played in the band, piccolo, when Ellen Campbell graduated. I played the flute until then. I loved and hated band. All my friends were band, so I enjoyed that. I didn't practice and didn't try very hard...one of many of my life's regrets. We all loved Dick Perot when he was our band director. I was mortally afraid of him, so I behaved in class, and he was awesome. Band was the most fun with Mr. Perot. My junior year Phyllis was nominated for band sweetheart. I sat in the front of the band, and nobody in front of me but my friends were voting for Phyl. My heart sank; I looked behind me and Joe David Cameron had the entire brass section standing up for Phyllis. I loved Joe David more from that moment on...

We had basketball 5th period, so we had about five minutes to get dressed and ready for class. We had one shower that worked, and Virginia Wylie and I showered everyday together in that one shower. We were confused because nobody else showered....guess there was no room in the shower.

The high school was on the third story of the building, so at lunch, the entire high school would go up the stairs together. When my poor little shy baby sister, Kathy, was a freshman, she unfortunately was walking in front of Melissa Powell and me. One of us, I think it was Melissa, and she's not here to defend herself (Gosh, I miss her.) reached up and pulled Kathy's half-slip down to her ankles. We held on to each other we laughed so hard while little shy Kathy sneaked into the typing room and pulled her slip up. I've been apologizing for fifty years for that.

I got cheerleader my junior year, and that is one of the best years of my life. In 1964 I was the Archer County Rodeo Queen, then my junior year started. All the guys Coach Graves started as freshmen were now seniors, and he said we were going to win state. We all know the story of that...there's a book about it—"Miracle on the Gridiron." It's a great read. I highly recommend it.

As cheerleaders we did something special every week to get our spirit up for each game. One week we baked a cake (I'm sure Trecie baked or Judy Ann baked). The 50th person to say, "Beat the Crowell Wildcats" to our mystery person (Vickie Perdue) would win the cake. Gary Tepfer won it. I said I got to give him the cake. Trecie said, "Oh, no, we're going to draw straws. Whoever gets the short straw gets to give Gary his cake." I don't remember who prepared the straws, but, of course, I got the short one. And Coach Graves who demanded stoicism from the football team said Gary could come get it during the pep rally. As luck would have it, Coach Graves also belonged to the Christian Church, so mom was elected to ask him if we could give Gary the cake. She asked him at church; he acquiesced. Gary got the cake. I gave it to him. Good times...

Austin was awesome when we played there. Gary got knocked out right after half time, I think. We were all petrified he was seriously hurt. Of course we were worried about his health, but it would have been a long second half without Gary. He played the entire half and didn't remember it all. He even tucked me under his arm and carried me off the field. They said they'd turn the sprinklers on if the crowd came on the field. We did, and they did. We were all soaking wet. Gary was named All State Fullback that year. The entire town was at the game, and I think everybody in town was in our hotel. Mike and Judy, Barry and Trecie, Barney and Sue Ann, and Gary and I got to eat at the iHop at

two in the morning. I had enchiladas. I still remember how good they were. Everything we did was new and different and such a great experience.

Football ruled that year. Words cannot tell you the fun we had. Then to play in Austin for state and WIN...wow. Who could ask for a better high school life than that?

I had Mrs. Crowley for English my sophomore, junior and senior years. Mom said it was about time I got lucky! She worried about Phyl and Kathy, though when they didn't have Mrs. Crowley. Our senior year she required we write an original short story. Mine was about Jack Daniels and Jim Beam, and it involved a gun fight. Great stuff. Mom typed it for me; she made mistakes. Mrs. Crowley said we couldn't have any mistakes, including typographical one. When mom handed it to me, she said, "Tell Mrs. Crowley she better not take off for typographical errors because she taught me to type." I, hesitantly, reminded Mrs. Crowley had taught Mom to type. She let me correct it with ink and did not count off for typing. I remember Jack Kirkland skipping when it was his turn to hang out the attendance slip. I remember giving my oral report on mythology and calling Romulus' and Remus' mother a dumb broad, and Mrs. Crowley laying her head on her desk and repeating, "Sit down, Jodie. Sit down, Jodie. Sit down, Jodie."

Beer and vodka we will mix, senior Class of '66 was my senior class motto. We thought we were bad. We all talked too much, laughed too loud, and had a blast. If we were together, we had fun. We still do when Connie Atchley or Phyl and Kathy host us all at their homes for reunions.

Mary Slack Webb – Class of 1957

If nothing else, the suggestion that a book about the trials and tribulations, joys and sorrows, laughter and tears (not to mention learning experiences) suffered and shared as students at Archer City Elementary, Junior High and/or High School, in the building, on the field, in the gym or band hall, or in the old white house that served as a cafeteria and homemaking room has garnered a torrent of stories, many of which are remembered differently by various "story tellers" over the past few months. Seems like anytime two or more of "us" get together the stories begin.

My grandmother, Mollie Gowdy, and my mother, Margaret Ellen Slack taught in that building and my grandfather helped build the tall, stately structure as could be attested by his family name being inscribed on a block of the sidewalk leading to the "girls" entrance at the north end of the building. Woe to the boy that stepped on that walk or entered that door or to the girl that did the same on the "boys" walk or entrance at the south end. During the eleven years that I was a student there, Mr. Gerron, the superintendent commanded a very tight ship and most of us were scared to death to buck him---in the daytime that is. Some of the boys in my class report having expressed their sentiments by decorating a white sheet with Nazi symbols and hanging it between the two front doors under the light of the moon by holding the ankles of one of their classmates and dangling him off the roof so that he could attach it to the building. I understand Mr. Ensey had a heck of a time trying to figure out how it got there and how to get it down. This was primarily a protest over not being allowed in the "new" gym (now the school library in the elementary building) on weekends or holidays to practice hook shots or

whatever. Also the mandate that not a foot could touch the grass in front of the building and that before school and after recesses and after lunch boys lined up in a straight line in front of their door and girls in front of their door with NO talking, pushing, pinching or tripping waiting for the bell to indicate time to enter the building. I was also reminded of a trip to Mr. Gerron's office that six or eight of "us girls" had to make after having, again, by the light of the moon, painted the wooden fence that surrounded the football stadium/rodeo grounds. How were the culprits identified? Well, silly us, the paint depicted our basketball numbers!

When I was really young I used to love to go visit Sook and Andy at the "Little Store" that stood where Head Start is now. I lived a block and a half from the school and remember numerous times that Dad would give me a quarter to go buy him a pack of Camels and I could spend the change. i could actually buy something with the two pennies left over. But as I got a little older I hated going in there because high school boys hung out there and the smoke was so thick it fogged my glasses and I couldn't see to buy my dad's cigarettes or spend my change. That was before Ruby Campbell had her store on farther down the street. That was the place kids hung out when I came back years later to teach elementary school music, and later as school counselor and then still later, diagnostician. During one of those later years when computers were just becoming a tool at school I was walking up the sidewalk toward school and noticed on the sidewalk a mouse pad that someone must have tossed from the upstairs window. So remembering Mr. Gerron's rule that we didn't clutter the schoolyard, I picked it up and took it straight to the principal's office. I'm not sure if it was Mr. Venhouse, Tom Little, Tony Daniel or Steve Harris that sat behind the desk that year but it was Jane Taliaferro who let out a

screech that brought him running with a bottle of hand sanitizer. Heck, what did I know? I'd never been in the boy's john or seen or even heard of a urinal pad!

Once when Mrs. Heard held a recital held at the ACHS auditorium, my sister Ceil played a very show-off piece called *Falling Waters* or *Rippling Waters* or something that was all over the piano in fast time and ended in a big glissando. At the end, we thought the audience would clap, but they laughed. (then clapped) She asked Mother why they laughed. "Because," she said, "after all that showing off it looked like you flipped your nose at the audience." "I didn't!" Ceil cried. "A fly had landed on my nose and I couldn't wait to finish so I could brush it off, so I just played faster and faster..."

Another time, my sister was standing in front of a shy kid for 10 minutes checking everyone's grades posted in the hall only to discover, when the kid went, "Umph" as she walked away, that she'd been standing on his toe the whole time.

And then there was the time Mr. Gerron sent me home at noon to ask Mom if she could teach that afternoon with my knowing full well that she was playing bridge at Elizabeth Prideaux's. I wanted to be accommodating so I prissed right on over to Elizabeth's and delivered the message not fully realizing that you can't just up and leave a bridge table in full swing. Mom said to tell him that she was sorry, but she was playing bridge with her bridge playing fanny nannies (my insertion) or something like that. Then, on second thought, she said to just tell him she wasn't at home, which was true. So I pranced right back to school as important as any 8-year-old can be and went right up to Mr. Gerron and announced that my mother wasn't at home; then as I turned to leave I said, "She said she was sorry."

There were a bunch of us in Mr. Wilson's eighth grade class back in the day (I hesitate to use that phrase because I think it's sappy but it does seem to be appropriate here) before students who learned in a different way were in special programs that were geared to their special needs, thus there were several students in most classes that just could not quite comprehend all that was going on most of the time. A storm was brewing and Mr. Wilson, in all his wisdom picked one of those not quite with it students to go to the homemaking cottage and get the girls so that they could come to the brick building and be safe from the storm. When Mr. Gerron found him wandering the halls and quizzed him on why he was in the hall between classes the kid got so nervous he could hardly speak and what Mr. Gerron heard was that Mr. Wilson sent him and when asked why Mr. Wilson had sent him it was because he hit the girls. So without further ado he whisked him into the office, gave him what he felt was a sufficient number of licks and took him back to Mr. Wilson's class. Poor kid never knew what that was all about, but then he rarely did.

One dark night when most of us were sound asleep six brave wildcats decided to climb the water tower in back of the school. After successfully making it to the top they sat there for a while patting themselves on the back for having been so brave and daring and just enjoying the view, the night and each other. Probably spitting a few times and telling a few wild tales. Then they began their descent. All were safely on the ground except Pat Cox who was about halfway there and happened to look down. This was a big mistake. He FROZE! Just could not move. It was as if his fingers were glued to the rungs of the ladder. No amount of teasing, coaxing, nor shaming from below could get him going again. Finally, one the boys climbed back up, crawled over him and began

loosening his grip while another climbed up below him and picking up one foot at a time and lowering it to the next rung they slowly managed to get him safely down, without calling the fire department for help. I don't think they invited him on their next high adventure.

In the late fifties, early sixties (maybe before and after but these are the years I know about) there was a rash of young marriages among ACHS students. Some of them lasted until the couple got back across the state line and dad found them. Others are still intact so I guess it just depends. One I remember in particular because everyone knew it wouldn't last and it didn't. Years later the couple came face to face in the post office. She was still a looker. He was still a flirt. His greeting in all sincerity was "Don't I know you?" Her response "Well, I guess. You married me about twenty years ago." Another was when a group of alumni were gathered at a homecoming reunion and a boy who was not in attendance was mentioned. Someone asked if he was still married. Which prompted a couple of chuckles and then a guessing game as to who they were and how many there had been. One innocent attendee asked "Who was that ole gal he married first?" Guess what! She just happened to be right handy and replied, "Well, that ole' gal would be me." Then there were those that didn't stand on ceremony, just had a good time. I remember walking home after a ballgame one blustery night when a car pulled over and the driver offered to give me a lift. Grateful to get in out of the cold I crawled in. He took off in the wrong direction from my house and began what I imagine was his favorite line saying that he was so sorry to report that Malena Martin and I were the only two virgins left in ACHS and he would be happy to remedy that awkward situation. Now I thought I knew what a virgin was at the time and I was sure I was one and was pretty

sure about my friend, Malena, but boy was I shocked about several of my other friends. My, my, what must go on behind the field house and under the stadiums and in the backseats of cars! Luckily we were not too far from my house, in fact nothing was too far from my house in Archer City, so out I hopped and the weather did not seem near a blustery as it had earlier.

Then there was the time when I first began teaching in AC when I was also a Camp Fire leader and was taking a group of girls on an overnight camp out and Dean Fisher looked me up and offered to "pitch our tents" but with his slight speech impediment or maybe just his sleepy slur it sounded somewhat ribald. I politely refused the offer. That same year some young man walked into my room between classes and said, "I bet you don't remember me" to which I blithely replied as I looked at his name tag which clearly had his name on it "Oh, yes Horace, of course I do" Imagine my dismay when he smiled and said "No, I'm John Walker and I went to school with you. Now I work for Horace Mann publishing Company." Then there was the time that I could tell, as I played "Carmen" for a group of 8th grade boys, that I was losing them so I hurried up with the story and said "She got stabbed in the end" I'm sure you know one smart response to that was, "Well, I guess she got the point." It was probably the only thing they heard me say all year. I can still hear that ringing in my ears!

And finally, Venita Adams Tarr (Class of '56) tells a great story that bears repeating. In 1944 when she was in the second grade with Mrs. Shelton teaching her to make perfect ovals over and over again in her Big Chief tablet so that she could one day master cursive handwriting, her grandparents, Andy and Sook Myers opened the Little Store adjacent to the school. The Head Start building now owns that corner. On the first

or second day after opening, Andy realized that after the kids finished eating in the cafeteria they came in droves for goodies from his store. Not only goodies but cigarettes that were displayed in a can and could be purchased for two cents apiece. He knew he and Sook couldn't handle it alone so he approached Mr. Geron and initiated what would eventually become the work/study program or distributive education or whatever schools called their program allowing students to work an hour or two a day as well as go to school. Thus, Venita, at age seven began her 11 years of selling penny candy, cokes and that wonderful Neiman Marrcus Chocolate cake iced with frothy seven minute frosting that Sook baked every day and cut into two inch squares to sell over the counter for a quarter a square. Venita did this every day from eleven to one for the next eleven years. She remembered her granddaddy Andy breaking up crap games high school boys engaged in and chasing them out of his trailer parked next to the store. She also told about the time Sook heard a commotion in the yard between her house and the store and discovered guys hosing one another down with her garden hose. She stepped out to scold them just as Ray Maxwell turned and the full force of water hit her square in the face. Sook was a little ole lady with a sharp tongue and fiery temper when vexed. That particular day she was plenty vexed! Picture Mammy Yoakum lighting into Lil Abner and you can reconstruct the scene. Sadly, in 1958 Sook became ill, Venita had finished school and gotten married and Andy couldn't do it alone, thus the Little Store closed its doors for the last time.

Karen Luig West – Class of 1972

I remember our 7th grade history class where we took “personal notes” and our teacher was quite the storyteller. One windy day he told us that while teaching in west Texas, the dust blew so hard he couldn’t see his students in the classroom past about 10 feet and had Richard Hill step out on the fire escape to demonstrate the length of how far he could see in a windstorm.

Thank you to our beloved Mrs. Trent for the extra time given in her class to get those “personal notes” prepared.

I thought about something in Ms. Hornady’s class when she took on a mixed class of males and females for “home economics”. I think there were quite a few stories about that class but I was not in it. I hope someone from my class wrote about some of those tales. Quite hilarious!!!

ReBecca Rickett Wikert – Class of 1994

I (along with classmates) have a good memory of our Coach coming into class, only to see that we had moved his classroom, desk and all outside. There is also a yearbook photo that was taken about it. The “Coach” we pulled the prank on is now the ACHS principal!

Toby Williams - Class of 1991

There are a lot of memories that I have from ACHS. From Coach Davis's Texas History class, Coach Wood's hunter safety class and letting us shoot guns, and Coach Hadderton hitting us in the back of the head with his ring as he walked down to his desk before class. And let's not forget me and Mike Wilson dead-legging each other in 8th grade history which we still talk about to this day. That was all in junior high.

Then there was high school. What journey!! From Coach Wolf's World History with World War II projects to the Golden age of Greece and Mr. Gray and all of his saying and special way of teaching. I will never forget the day he got his chair!!! Me and Scott as seniors, trying to sneak out of Mr. McCowan's class first thing in the morning and Scott making it and me getting caught. Toward the end of class Scott came back with apple turnovers and all was good.

I have shared a few stories of my adventures at ACHS, but I will tell you about my first day there and the first day of my senior year. Now I had been going to Holliday since kindergarten, but then we moved across the fence into the Archer ISD. However, my mom was working for Holliday ISD driving a bus for Holliday so my brother and I got to stay in school there. Mom eventually quit at the end of my sixth grade year, and so the following year he and I began school at Archer City.

So the first day I get off the bus and see all of these kids and not knowing any of them except for one. The funny thing is that I never could find him on that day. So the first thing I notice when I get off the bus is this cannon and I remember thinking, *Are you kidding? They got cannon. That is cool.* The second thing was that the building had

windows. When I was at Holliday there were no windows, so when I got to Archer and there was windows it was like, *This place is great!* You have to remember that Holliday and Archer were huge rivals back then and still are. At the time I was not aware of the Archer and Windthorst rivalry. I am now off the bus walking up to this building only knowing one other person other than my brother who at the time was at the elementary building, and as I walk up to the school I see all these names on the sidewalk. I had never heard of these people much less ever seen a school that had a walk of fame. So on the first day at a new school I walked both sidewalks and looked at all the names. At the end of the day my friend that lived next to me (who is the only person I knew at the time) asked me what I was doing. I said, "Just checking out the names."

My senior year I register for Mrs. Campbell's class and she immediately assigns us homework. On the first day of school we meet as a senior class at the front of the building. She tells us to look at the names on the sidewalks that we have to walk up and down since we attend ACHS. As I was looking at those names I could not help but think about my first day there. Only this time I was told what those names meant. She had told us to think about our time in high school and what it meant to be a going to Archer. Those names were of men and women who had helped build our school as well as the community. Some of those names were relatives of people in my class. It took me six years to finally find out what I had been wondering since the day I had first gotten to Archer. The assignment, if I am remembering correctly, was to reflect on our time in high school and what we thought was to come of our last year.

The one thing I can tell you for sure that is I helped build the extension onto the weight room my senior year and it is still standing. It was a General Construction class

project that year in Coach McCowan's class. There are so many stories to tell about the building and the fact that it was a nuclear fallout shelter which was news to me at the time.

I'll always remember classes in the old building, school pictures in front of it and in it, decorating it for football games, running laps in the old gym, and even sneaking out of it. Even when it's gone it will always hold a special place in the hearts of those of us lucky enough to live there.

Lori Brown Wilson – Teacher 1993 - 2003

I remember the morning of 9/11. My third floor journalism classroom was one of the only rooms with a TV because it had been the library. Mr. Knobloch rushed in and asked me to turn on the TV because a plane had flown into a building in New York. We turned it on just in time to see the second plane! Needless to say, there was no curriculum taught that day. My room was filled with people staring in horror and disbelief at a box. Our lesson that day came from the gut.

I taught from 1993-2003. First, at the elementary, and then at the high school. My classes made the annual in 2001, 2002, and 2003!! Good memories. Both of my sons went all through school at AC. Ellen Cox taught my youngest. That's why I love her so much.

Tommye Jane Mullis Lofland Wright – Class of 1961

To be a part of making history is an awesome thing. Archer City Schools, their buildings, faculties, activities, and students have done that since 1926. My family—including three generations of teachers and a bus driver—have been a small part of the story. The following is that story.

In the summer of 1948 the Mullis family—J. D., Hazel, Tommye Jane and Lucretia—moved to Archer City, Mother to continue her career as teacher and librarian and Daddy to pump leases on the Abercrombie east of town and work for Doug Strange in his hardware store. Housing in Archer City being scarce at the time, we lived the first year in Trula and Shorty Nelson’s two-room garage apartment. Lucretia and I loved it there because we had two boys to play with—Ronnie and Lee Nelson. With them, we climbed trees, played cowboys and Indians, and chased horned (“horny”) toads across the Nelsons’ concrete cellar.

In order to pursue her degree in library science, Mother attended summer classes at Texas State College for Women in Denton, taking us girls with her. The following summer—1949-- Daddy bought the house that became “home.” Located at 215 West Cherry, it was just across the street from the school, which was great for all of us. I started first grade that fall with Mrs. Lasater, later to be Mrs. Elmore (who died just this year at age 99). Mrs. Bennet had first graders also. Of these first graders, thirteen of us graduated—along with fourteen others—in the Class of 1961, including the following: Delava Jean Bratt, Harrell Cross, Donna Findley, Judy Ann Glenn, Lawrence Lowack,

Lemuel (Butch) McLemore, Tommye Jane Mullis, Jimmie Owen, Charles (Jimmy) Pitts, Brent Proffitt, Ronald Reed, Lee Roy Smith, and Jerry Wayne Walsh.

As the years passed, band and other extra-curricular activities took up much of my time. Of special delight was band because, for one thing, I could ride the bus to all out-of-town football games to play flute. Other activities included FHA, annual staff, UIL literary events, one-act play, and junior and senior class plays.

Undoubtedly the saddest event of our high school years came during freshman year when classmate Severine Frerich was injured at baseball practice and died a few days later. He was buried on his 15th birthday in St. Boniface Cemetery in Scotland. Our entire class was stunned. Our tender-hearted classmate, a teary-eyed Butch McLemore said this: “Why Severine, the best kid ever?”

Fast forward to senior year, 1960-61. In addition to the thirteen already mentioned, these graduated in the class: Suzy Abercrombie, Lena Petit, Carolene Allen, Glenda Alsup, Larry Canady, Carlton Deen, Rex Jarvis, Sandra Porter Deen, Eileen Marsh, Tony Pollock, David Schlabs, Gayle Stewart, Judy Thurber, and Gwen Yeager. Our year culminated with a class trip to California, including stops at Grand Canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, Knott’s Berry Farm and Disneyland—on a Greyhound bus, a first for most of us.

Following graduation came Baylor, Midwestern, marriage, family, divorce, and teaching jobs in Wichita Falls, Holliday and Wylie. I had no idea I would ever return to Archer City to teach, but that’s what happened in 1989 after marrying Bob Wright and returning to the area. In July Don Shearmire called, asking if I would consider teaching sixth and seventh grade language arts. Wow! My life had come full circle. The nine

years there turned out to be awesome, as I became reacquainted with the school itself and with former friends, teaching children and grandchildren of people I had known as a young person, and having an opportunity to write a new chapter in my story. Retirement came in 1998, the 30th year of my teaching career. I couldn't think of a better way to end it! The following year my son Scotty Lofland was hired at ACISD to teach and coach, becoming the third generation to be a part of a most wonderful place.

Our numbers have diminished over the years, beginning with Lee Roy Smith, who was killed soon after we graduated. The Class of 1961 celebrated its 50th reunion in fall 2010 with quite a few in attendance. Several of us continue to get together as often as we can to share a meal, take a trip, and gossip (just a little)!

Sadly, the building we called our home is no more. Our memories of those days, however, are in our hearts and often on our tongues as we reminisce about "The Good Ole Days."

WILDCATS forever!!!

Final Thoughts

My own memories are of wearing football ribbons on Fridays with sayings like, “Clobber the Cubs” and “Pound the Greyhounds”. Pep rallies. Junior and Senior plays. Student Council elections. Spanish Class. Typing Class. Cat’s Claw. Running laps in the old gym. Sitting in study hall in the library dreading football practice. “A” Club initiation night. The aquarium in the science lab. Fire drills. Tornado drills. Lunches at Ruby’s Grocery. Car washes and scrap metal drives to earn money for our senior trip. Getting licks from Neil Henderson. And, of course, graduation.

Like most, my schooling left indelible positive tracks on my life. Oh, there were bullies. And the occasional mean-spiritedness of others. But those were overshadowed by all the good times. Friends. And loves. The deepest tracks, however, were left by my teachers. Ruth Wallace. Chloe Byers. Dean Fisher. Rachel Patterson. Neil Henderson. Harry Gardiner, Helen Fall. Emma Barton. Colleen Wood. Linda Gray. And Coaches Mike Wood, Eddie Morris, Bobby Ray and Toby Wood.

Bobby Blackburn taught me how to behave. The science lab had countertops with holes in them, on which Gary Beesinger, Charles Luig, Myrle Metcalf, and I played many a game of golf using golf balls fashioned out of chewing gum. Eventually though, Mr. Blackburn won out, and we straightened up and flew right. At least in biology class.

Mary Lee Crowley Hawkins taught me how to write. Well enough that I’ve managed a few moderately successful books and plays.

And finally, Judd Gray and I had some humdinger discussions/arguments in algebra class. You see, I just never could grasp the concept of infinite numbers. Surely five divided by three has an answer you can put on a single sheet of paper, even if you have to use both sides. And if numbers can go on forever, why not some of the things in

life that really matter? I still wrestle with that today, but came away from there with something invaluable. More than anything, Judd Gray taught me to care.

I visited the school just after it had been gutted prior to demolition. I was accompanied by a reporter and a cameraman from KFDX TV who were doing a story on the subject. As we walked through the deserted halls, the reporter sounded like she was a thousand miles away. My mind was elsewhere. So was my heart. What I was thinking and feeling at the time was perfectly captured and put into words in a memory contributed by someone else. I'm happy to share it here.

Mark Mueller - Class of 1975

Boy, have I been getting ghost-bit lately! I've been inside the old high school building these last four days just before it's to be torn down, and at many times I'm the only one there. Tomorrow will be last day the public can be inside. After Sunday, a fence will be going up around the location. There are so many strange sounds coming from this building, it's like it has a soul of its own. It knows the end is near, but where do old buildings go when they die? I realize it's only a building, but it's also home to the spirits of persons who have returned to the place where they were their happiest.

Ghost-bit for sure.

Epilogue

I'm going to end this journey of ours with an amazing and insightful poem by Mary Ballowe Heydon (Class of '67) which first appeared in the April 7, 1967 edition of the *Cat's Claw*. Written nearly fifty years prior to the old school building being torn down, I was much moved by her words and astounded by just how prophetic they turned out to be. I know you will be too.

THOUGHTS ON REMODELING OUR OLD SCHOOL

On sight the school is old but grand—
Construction worn but braced anew.
Endangered now by new command,
This rustic building bids adieu.

Where once did grow the minds of youth,
The rooms will soon be modified.
Oh, where they walked in search of truth,
New halls will lie where old ones lied.

What mysteries the old building saw
In bygone days when men were young!
What tales it heard of ire and awe
And tales of glory so unsung!

Alas, it dies in hands of men,
Once cherished, loved, remembered so.
It goes unnoticed to its end;
The newer building leads the show.

“Oh, tell me, school house,” I implore,
“If you believe this step unwise.
Are men unjust in all their lore?
Tell me, please,” my heart then cries.

The building speaks, “Why do you cry?
Pray, tell me why you cry out thus.”
“I mourn your death,” I then reply.
“Your death is bad to all of us.”

“Your fellow students aren’t all sad,”
The building tells me cheerfully.
“No proof is there the plan is bad,
No cause to cry endearingly.”

“Pray open your eyes and try to see
The truths that I shall tell you of,
And bid your ears to listen to me,”
The building spoke with words of love.

“You’ve come to me in these long years
To gain, I know, enlightenment.
Through you’ve erased your fears
And fought unlearned detriment.

“You see how much you’ve been improved
In such a building of this age?
No, do not say you can disprove
This fact, nor go into a rage.

“Consider now what could be learned
In edifice of rich supplies,
Equipment that has long been yearned,
New courses to unbind closed eyes.”

“I think I see now what you mean,”
I tell the building happily.
“With great improvements it would seem
The students would learn rapidly!”

And with this thought I go to rest,
I know I have no need to fear
The loss of old ACHS.
In newer form, ‘twill still be here.

My sincere thanks to everyone who contributed. All of us who attended school in the old,
red brick building are connected by an invisible thread.

And always will be.

Jim Black - Class of 1971