



HOOFBEATiNg

Class of 1963

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2007 Spring Issue

Classmates' Home Destroyed by Tornado



Severe thunderstorms and at least one tornado left a trail of destruction and at least 19 people dead in Florida. The storms hit during the night of Friday, February 2, 2007, at about 3:15, when most residents were sleeping.

This is the news that I heard when I woke up just hours later. What follows are emails between the Mockbees and Penny Dunn Schooner (MHS '65) Connie Dunn Overby's sister. Also, you will remember that the 2006-2007 winter edition of *HOOFBEATiNg* featured Connie and Billy Overby and excerpts from their Christmas card on pages 13 and 19. This newsletter is still available at www.ongulf.com/mhs. Estelle Noel Mockbee

Area where tornado touched down February 2, 2007

Hi Estelle, I am Penny Dunn Schooner, Connie's little sister, and she asked me to contact you to let you know they took their message recorder to someone's home and heard your message. They are not hurt, which is a miracle itself since they were asleep. Billy woke up and heard stuff hitting their home, told everyone (even a couple visiting from Atlanta) to go to the hall bath. Connie started through the hall toward the living room when the windows blew, and all hell broke loose. She held onto a doorknob for her life. The Atlanta couple's car was found blocks away. Insurance companies must be paying attention to Katrina's issues, because they have moving vans and moving folks there today, going





through the stuff. Billy and Connie have rented another house in the same area; their home is almost a total loss. I think they were told that the house would be torn down to the outside walls (cinder blocks) and slab, and then rebuilt. I spoke with Connie this a.m., and she asked me to contact you. She had already forwarded the *HOOFBEATING*. Communications is absolutely awful, so I am just letting them get in touch with me, and I contact Billy's mother, and others. I will continue to give you updates. Please keep them in your prayers. I worry about Connie - I just told her to "hold on", that each day will be better. I'll

stay in touch. My home phone is 601-825-5645, and email is schoolerp@bellsouth.net. Penny

Penny, thank you so much for the update, though it is not at all what I wanted to hear. When I woke up the other morning (5:00 a.m.), I heard the reports of a tornado and just had a terrible feeling. But all the first reports kept saying Lady Lake, Florida. Then around noon I heard how badly The Villages was hit and started trying to get Connie's cell phone - I knew because of Katrina that there was no use in even trying a landline phone. I am so glad they are physically safe, but I can't imagine the loss. Connie and Billy's Christmas letter was so cute, and they sounded so glad to be where they are - happy with the place, delighted with their house. That's why we were so glad to publish excerpts in the *HOOFBEATING* - and those wonderful then-and-now pictures of Connie and Billy (40 years!). Thanks for including Mike and me in the updates - we'll keep Connie and Billy in our prayers. Estelle

They are moving into the "rental" but will retain their current mailing address. They would probably appreciate some "Thinking about you" cards. Billy will try to get his office up and running tomorrow. They have emptied out their home except the attic - if there is anything left in it. I am really impressed so far with their "Travelers" insurance. You know, we in Mississippi are quite guarded about insurance companies. They won't have their phone in until late next week. As far as I know they lost living room, dining room, dinette, bedroom furniture...quite a lot. But they will rebuild and replace. I heard that someone had talked with Jimmy Breland. We'll stay in touch. Penny

Mike and I received the email from Billy and Connie today with the three photos of their house. I am stunned! That they made it out of there without someone being killed is a miracle. And the house next door looks as if it collapsed. How is Connie doing now? Estelle and Mike



She seems to be okay. They are not used to being so busy with things like I am. I have three grandchildren, a really old house, and volunteer work in community and church, so life is always busy. Now they have to work with contractors



and insurance adjusters while getting the debris picked up, since they missed the FEMA pickup - just stuff like that. I am quite sure they will make it through everything. They are in a rental in the Villages with very little furniture, but Billy is determined not to buy furniture until they settle with insurance and contractor. Billy is back to work, so at least something is "normal". I know the photos look really bad. The neighbors on both sides did get hurt somewhat. I told Sis that the Lord has a plan for her - it was surely a miracle that they survived. Have a great week. I'll try to give you more updates as we receive them. Penny

This morning, June 16, 2007, I spoke with Connie. Things are looking much better now. She and Billy are still in the rental property but should be back in their home in late July. As Connie pointed out, things seem to slow down as the house nears completion. Billy was actually at the home site with friends and other workers doing cleanup chores. As far as furniture goes, they have bought some of the necessities but are waiting to finish up when they get in and settled. She said that the furniture stores have been very accommodating about holding their furniture in their warehouses as it comes in – so much better than having to move it multiple times. A bright spot as well as a new “job” for Connie and Billy has been Remington Steele, a yellow Lab puppy (an almost beige coat with ears a little darker). They call him Remy or Remy depending on which one you ask. He came to them as a 14-week-old, 26-pound puppy. So in addition to everything else, they are house breaking Remy(ie) and teaching him not to chew everything in sight. They have not had a dog in about 10 years, but Connie said that she was persuaded to go along when she saw how completely relaxed Billy became when he was around friends’ dogs. If anyone needs a cure for stress, these two do! Billy said in his email when he sent their dog’s photo that they will send pictures of their “new” house when it is finished .

Miss Breland Update

The Class received the following update on Miss Breland from Hap Owen who is involved with the reward money collected on her behalf.

I have spoken with Hinds County Sheriff Malcolm McMillin who tells me that they are pretty sure they have the person who mugged her in custody. The sheriff further explains that they do not have enough evidence to convict this person on Miss Breland's mugging and subsequent death but that they do have him on another convictable charge that is going to send him to jail for many years. Hap goes on to say that the reward fund, therefore, needs to be distributed to some worthy cause in Irene Breland's memory. He has been in the process of contacting those donors to get their input.



One of the last reunion activities Miss Breland attended was the one held by the Central High School Class of 1950 at the Hilton Hotel on County Line Road.

Miss Irene Breland was truly a class act

*The following article was written by Walter Redden, a resident of the northeast section of Jackson, better known as the "Class of MHS 1963's stomping grounds". It was published on the "Opinion Page" of **The Northside Sun**, January 8, 2007. Note: there has been some additional editing. During the time period referenced in this article, Mr. Redden was a representative for a publisher of school textbooks.*

Miss Irene Breland grew up in Leakesville in Greene County only a few miles north of Mobile. She was a dedicated Mississippian. Miss Breland was well known in the Jackson community and as an outstanding teacher of English and an exact grammarian. She was a class act. I was not a student in her classroom but wished I had been. She taught me many things. My story goes back many years ago. Miss Breland was a distinguished member of the State Textbook Purchasing Board. The governor appointed her to the board, and she served with pride and charisma.

First, [I should] mention the function of the board. Members of the board were charged with the selection, the adoption and the purchase of all textbooks for public school students in the state of Mississippi - from the Tennessee state line on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south.

Members, though appointed by the governor, were not political pawns, but held a very important position, that of selecting textbooks for 500,000 public school students - an awesome and most responsible task.

Years ago, the board chose only three textbooks for each specific curriculum course. As an example, for the 12th grade literature course, only three textbooks from three different publishers were approved. There may have been as many as 10 publishers submitting bids, but only three were placed on the state adopted list. So seven publishers were given the pink slip.



Miss Breland was charged with oversight in high school language arts - her expertise was both grammar and literature for grades eight - 12. She was to read and to review textbooks in this curriculum category and select the top three texts. This was a very serious matter, and Miss Breland gave her undivided attention to this review and selection process.

All books that were bid and submitted were not chosen. Since only three texts were chosen, mathematically, several books did not make the adopted list. Oral presentations, before the board, were a major part of the adoption process. Low bid prices were taken into consideration, but the oral presentation was a large ingredient. Long before the electronic age and today's power point presentation, most all publishers used flow charts before the board for sales aids. These charts might have a spot on the left margin with a sales statement to follow. The sales representative, making the presentation, would devote two or three minutes to each sales statement and would give specific references and specific details. These statements had better be accurate, or Miss Breland would chime in and make the correction. A total of 20 minutes was set aside for the presentation - only five books being reviewed, but thousands of selections in the series being considered.

As you might guess, this was a huge responsibility for each member. Though each member was appointed by the governor, each member served without pay. Each person had to be devoted to making the best selection for the students in Mississippi. Miss Breland took a very serious position on the board as a true professional; often times, she would interrupt the speaker with questions. Being a staunch conservative and a good Methodist, she would inquire about negative editorial comments about the South and also about Mississippi. One specific question was, "Do you have any profanity in your textbooks?"

I assured Miss Breland there was no epithetical language and certainly [there was] no street profanity in our books even within the modern American drama series. With a calm, but blank stare, Miss Breland said, "Are you aware that 'Out Out, damned spot' appears in your textbook?" After I caught my breath, I again assured Miss Breland that the line was from Shakespeare. Miss Breland smiled and said, "Yes, I know." After a long day of sitting and listening to good and to bad speakers, she just wanted to have some fun with me. The governor spoke up and asked, "How long has that line been in print?" Miss Breland came to my rescue and confronted the governor explaining that line had been in print more than 400 years and had stood the test of time. Case closed. Next presenter! As I left the boardroom, Miss Breland smiled and said, "You won your case."

Class never runs scared. It is sure-footed and confident. Class never makes excuses. Class is considerate of others - it knows good manners. Class never tries to build up by tearing others down. Class can "Walk with kings and keep its virtue, and talk with crowds and keep the common touch." If you have class, you do not need much of anything else. She was a class act.

Bio Updates

Thad and Alice* **Amacker**'s son Drew continues to excel at Jackson Academy. Having just finished his senior year, he was recently inducted into the Cum Laude society. Remember, Alice is **Don Holder**'s sister.

Carole Chase Harvey and her husband Jim went to east Asia last year on a missionary trip with their church in Little Rock. Carole emailed the following: We will be gone for two weeks this time, with only 5 of us, Jim and me plus three more women! Even our two translators are women, so he has already been talking about his "harem" - bringing laughter at church. We are going to the same small town, but ending in Chengdu rather than Beijing, which should be interesting. I'll go through the photos when we get home and forward some you might like. We are really excited about going back, especially after reading Brother Yun's "The Heavenly Man," found at Christian bookstores. It's a fascinating book to read.

Bob and Jeannie (Johnson) Chunn emailed more news about their house: A while ago author Alan Huffman, who moved, restored, and lives in an antebellum house in the nearby Bolton area, wrote an article for the *NY Times* about houses which are moved to be saved. He included ours and two others in Raymond. The publisher of the brand new Jackson area magazine, *Portico Jackson*, asked him to rewrite it to focus on Raymond homes, which he did; and, unlike the *NY Times* article, this one has pictures of our house.

Irene Gayden Mangum's husband, Buddy, was featured in the April 2007 issue of *Mississippi Gardener*. He authored and took the photographs for an article entitled "Living Art: Bromeliads nestled into driftwood become natural botanical art". The magazine's editors describe him as follows: "Buddy Mangum is a retired businessman and bromeliad enthusiast. He lives at Lake Cavalier in Madison County. He works from his shop/studio in his home and raises plants in his nearby greenhouse." Buddy himself says that he first became fascinated with bromeliads when he saw them in the New Orleans French Market some 30 years ago. At that time he bought a handsome piece of driftwood which had a bromeliad nestled in it. Today he spends his former hunting camp dues on extended trips to deserted Gulf Coast areas, collecting driftwood for the bromeliads he cultivates in his greenhouse. He estimates that he has created at least 200 pieces of what he terms "Botanical Wood Art".

After soaking up the world's best golf during Master's Week in Augusta, Georgia, with friends, **Pat Hatch** Palmer spent a week at Camp Coast Care. The Monday after Easter she began her "road trip" back to Mississippi once again to help with the rebuilding of the "Katrina Coast". She reminds us that their website is still www.campcoastcare.com and points out that their permanent facility for ongoing relief and recovery is almost completed.

Evan Marble, son of Carol and **Ron Marble**, has been promoted to project engineer for Gold Kist's poultry engineering department. Evan (2002 graduate of Mississippi State) and his family live in Ellijay, Georgia.

Genrose Mullen Lashinger came to Jackson during the third week of April to participate in “A Tribute to Leland and Louise Byler: A Reunion of Millsaps Singers”. Mr. Byler was the long-time choir director for the Millsaps Singers as well as the Chancel and Youth Choirs at Galloway Memorial United Methodist Church. He had directed the music program at Murrah prior to his joining the faculty at Millsaps in 1959. Mrs. Byler directed Galloway Methodist's Children's Choir and was the traveling music teacher for the elementary schools in the Jackson Separate School District. Mr. Byler died July 3, 2003, having been predeceased by his wife. **George Pickett** and his wife Lynn were instrumental in organizing this event of tribute to the Bylers at Millsaps College. Some of you may remember that Genrose retired after teaching elementary music for 34 years at a school in Williamsburg, Virginia. She then completed the Master Gardener course. In addition, she continues to direct church and retirement home choirs.

John Tanner who with wife Kathy still lives in Mannford, Oklahoma, writes:

Thought I would send you an update. I tried retirement and found that I missed the day-to-day challenge of keeping my sanity in an insane world. After a month of idleness I took on a consulting job for a company in Oklahoma City, about 90 miles from where I live. The project took about 2 months and then I took off another few weeks. Didn't take long for the itch to return, and I took on another short project for a local company. The itch persisted, and I went back to work full-time last December. Retirement is not easy to adjust to.

I went out on the website to get [the class] e-mail and noticed a new link to the class of '57, my sister's class. Looks like they have a big shindig planned for their 50th reunion this month. I like their idea of a Resume' with a short letter from each member on their thoughts other than politics, religion and the current mess the world is in. I've attached the letter my sister submitted on being a teenager in the 50s. Doesn't take much imagination to stretch that into being a teenager in the 60s. As a reminder of what we all have to look forward to, my sister is about to become a “GREAT” grandmother. Now that's a scary thought.

John's sister's letter: “We can't possibly be old enough to have a 50th reunion, can we? Time flies when you are having fun, and I have been having fun. Some sadness, but the good outweighs the bad. I have grandchildren in high school, and when I see and hear what is going on with them, I become more and more convinced that we were teenagers at the best possible time in the history of the world to be teenagers. There is so much pressure on our children and grandchildren now – from their peers, school, athletic competitions, etc., I don't know how they survive with a smile on their face.

I made poodle skirts for three of my granddaughters for their 50s day at school last fall. We are having a 50s day at our staff retreat at my law firm this month. What good memories we have and we share with others who weren't fortunate enough to be teens in the 50s. And the movie Grease will be a favorite forever.

So, classmates, I feel very privileged to have been part of Central and Murrah High School with all of you. I hope to see you all at our 60th. Lynn Tanner Lovell

Jan Tumasz Foregger got back home on Saturday, June 16, 2007, from a week at Ole Miss where she was training at the Croft Center. The Mississippi Geographic Alliance is sending teachers all over the state to train teachers for the new Geography requirement for 2008.

Clem Wright, who has multiple sclerosis, is still a patient in a hospice-type facility in California but is getting better everyday. For a while it was touch and go for him. His wife Suzette said at one time that she did not expect for him to be able to come back home. But that may have changed now. He is still going through physical therapy. The class appreciates this report from Larry Sanders who talked with both Suzette and Clem in early May. You may write Clem at Evergreen La Jolla Health and Rehabilitation Center, Room 5A, 2552 Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla CA 92037, or you may call him in his room at 1-858-824-1924.

Edsel Caine's Father Loses Plane to Fire.

*The following article is an edited version of one written by Andy Kanengiser and printed in the Tuesday, June 11, 2007, edition of **The Clarion Ledger**.*

Dr. Curtis Caine, 86, and his wife Lyn emerged without injury after the hard landing of their single-engine plane which then burst into flames just 10 minutes after landing at a Madison, Mississippi, airport. The Caines are classmate Edsel's parents.

"This is just one of those things you want to cry about," said Dr. Caine, who was returning Sunday afternoon with his wife, Lyn, from a weekend trip to Nashville for her brother's 50th wedding anniversary. They dropped off a grandson in Starkville before coming to the Madison airport.

A former medical missionary, Caine traveled around the globe in the plane he purchased for \$21,000 from the manufacturer in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, in 1959. One of the couple's favorite memories is of taking the plane to Alaska in 1959 soon after that state entered the union. The 1959 Piper Comanche had made more than 3,500 safe landings. Authorities said Monday that the force of the landing might have caused the fuel line to break, leading to the fire. "The landing gear was not down. It could have been a mechanical problem," Caine said, terming the incident a "mishap," rather than a crash. "It was just sad looking at that beautiful airplane go up in smoke."

Caine, who retired after practicing anesthesiology for 60 years, estimates he has flown the plane 6,500 hours. The New Orleans native began piloting planes in 1938 at age 17 under a government program to train civilians.

Although the Navy veteran is upset that his only plane has gone up in smoke, the couple, who have been married 67 years, don't appear shaken. "Other pilots there said they were both really lucky to get out," Caine didn't dispute that. "I'm thankful to God. It could have been bad. It was just amazing." Despite the mishap, Caine isn't going to retire from flying. He plans to rent a plane next time. He loves flying too much. "A pilot is a rare bird. It's a privilege to be up in space."



First buck

Nine-year-old Sam Bates killed his first buck recently at Little Lake Lodge in Greenwood. He is a third-grader at St Andrew's Episcopal School and the grandson of Lyle and Cela Scott Bates.

Class of 1963 News Clippings

THE MERIDIAN STAR
Tuesday, April 24, 2007

SPORTS

SUBMITTED PHOTO

HEADED TO STATE TOURNAMENT

The ladies 3.0 senior tennis team from Northeast Park will be representing Meridian in the state tennis tournament to be played in Laurel May 4 -6. The team advanced to the state tournament by winning both the Pinebelt and East Central leagues. Members of the team pictured above are, from left: (Front) Karen Gambill, Shirley Nell Goodman, Nancy Boswell and Linda Bruister. (Back) Diane King, Marilyn Nicholson, Melinda Mahone, Amelia Huddleston, Debra Fryery, Geri Sullivan and team captain MarLynne Moore.



Marilyn Nicholson is the wife of class member Mike Nicholson.

Page 12A THE NORTHSIDE SUN, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI Thursday, September 28, 2006



CFA officers

The CFA Society of Mississippi recently held the first board meeting of the year. The society's mission is to foster a community of investment and financial professionals in Mississippi with the highest levels of ethics and competence. Shown are (from left, back) Tony Edwards, CFA, past president; Roger Munds, CFA, president; Arthur Finkelberg, CFA, past president; Alan Smith, CFA, vice president; (front) Elee Reeves,

public awareness; Heath Jordan, CFA, secretary / membership chairman; Betsy McLean, CFA, assistant public awareness; Walter Neely, CFA, education chairman; Gene Morse, board member-at-large. Not pictured: Zach Wasson, CFA, treasurer. For more information about membership in the society, call Jordan, 601-208-2926.

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Classmates' or Teachers' Family-Deaths

Patti Bruner Kelly's mother, Geraldine Davis Hunter, 86, died Tuesday, April 24, 2007, at her home in Plano, Texas. Mrs. Hunter had recently moved to Plano after having lived most of her life in Jackson and Ridgeland, Mississippi. A member of the Methodist Church, she was a 40-year employee of Mississippi Power and Light Company (now Entergy). Mrs. Hunter is survived by her daughter Patti of Plano and son Fred Carr of New York City, as well as four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Sandra Clement Richardson's mother, Cecil Caperton Clement, 91, died Saturday, March 17, at her home. Born in Noxapater, Mississippi, to Henry and Edna Caperton, she graduated from Noxapater High School and attended M.S.C.W. She and her family moved to Jackson in 1956, where they were charter members of Wesley Methodist Church. Mrs. Clement has been a member, since its inception, of St. Matthews United Methodist Church in Madison, Mississippi. Retired from the Admissions Department of the University Medical Center, she was preceded in death by her husband W. Fred Clement and granddaughter Lauren Ann Clement. Survivors include her daughter Sandra of Arlington, Texas, and son Bill Clement (MHS '64) of Jackson as well as three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

George Donovan's father George E. Donovan, 91, died Saturday, April 14, 2007, in Jackson at the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center. A Jackson native, he was born to George E. and Annie Nelson Donovan and attended the city's public schools, graduating from Jackson High School in 1933. A graduate of the University of Mississippi, and later the Graduate School of Banking at L.S.U. he wed Katie Bell Holmes to whom he was married for 64 years. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy, following work with the Department of the Treasury and the Office of Price Administration. After the war, he joined Scharff and Jones brokerage house, leaving in the 1950s to concentrate on a career in banking. He was the head of First National Bank's (now Trustmark) Correspondent Bank Department. He handled several bank mergers throughout Mississippi for First National as well as negotiating the relocation to the Jackson area of such major industrial projects as Packard Electric (now Delphi) and Allis-Chalmers (now Siemens). In addition to being active in his church (St. Andrew's Cathedral), he participated as a member and leader in numerous civic and social organizations. Mr. Donovan was predeceased by his wife Katie and is survived by his sons George III and Carl, three grandchildren [one of whom (Katie) is married to classmate Bobby Burkett's son Wes], and one great-granddaughter.

Judy Drew Myrick's stepdaughter Myra Myrick Nelson, 52, died of cancer Monday, January 22, 2007, at Hospice Ministries in Ridgeland, Mississippi. Born April 27, 1954, in Richton, Mississippi, Myra was a graduate of Wingfield High School in Jackson. She was preceded in death by an infant daughter. Survivors include her mother, Hazel Rawls, of Raymond; father and stepmother, James and Judy Myrick of Ridgeland; sisters, Linda Myrick and Carla Shores; as well as other members of her extended family. Burial was in Lakewood Memorial Park.

Betty Owens Allen's mother Alice Ruth Carr Owens, 85, died Thursday, May 31, 2007, in Jackson, Mississippi. Having moved to Jackson from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in the 1930s, she

met and fell in love with John Drew Owens to whom she was married for over sixty years. In 1949 they moved to Normandy Drive in the GI subdivision known as Broadmoor. A founding member of the Hemerocallis Garden Club in the 1950s, she was always active in community and family oriented activities. Perhaps female class members knew her best as the Mrs. Owens who worked at the Meadowbrook McRae's Department Store for 40 years, 3 months, and 2 days and who dressed us all, mothers and daughters! She was preceded in death by her son John Drew Owens, Jr. and by her beloved spouse who died in 2001. She is survived by her daughters Betty Gwen Owens Allen of Flora, Mississippi, and Cheryl Ann Owens Whitehead of Chattanooga, Tennessee as well as a daughter-in-law, five grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, three sisters, and one brother.

Charles Tannehill's father, Clarence Deveaux Tannehill, 90, died Sunday, March 18, 2007, in Kosciusko, Mississippi. Born to Alonzo and Sadie Tisdale Tannehill on May 23, 1916, he lived most of his life in Jackson and Florence, Mississippi. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II aboard some of the first submarines of WWII as well as the aircraft carrier "The Wasp" and other naval carriers. He was predeceased by his second wife Frances and his son (our classmate) Charles who died in action in Viet Nam where he was serving as a U.S. Marine. His survivors include his daughter Stella Tannehill and son Dabney Tannehill as well as seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Susan Webber Rodgers' nephew, Key Martin Webber, 20, died Monday, May 14, 2007, of injuries he received in an automobile accident on Eastover Drive near Meadowbrook Road. Born in Jackson to Dr. Charles Martin Webber and Sylvia Ferrell Webber, he was a K-12 graduate of Jackson Academy. Key was an outstanding student who held membership in academic honoraries and received awards in both math and art. He graduated with honors in 2005 and attended Mississippi State University his freshman year. He transferred to Ole Miss and was majoring in pre-med. Key was a member of Kappa Alpha Order and a Dean's List scholar. He is survived by his parents as well as brother, Brad Stringer; sister, Blair Stringer Snuggs; and grandmother Lillian Webber.



Jim and Suzanne (Riley) Brown with their grandchildren this past Christmas: (Hunter Cate (6), Gabe (2), Peyton (18 mos.), Kice (9)



In Memoriam

The following feature story was published in The Tennessean on Thursday, May 10, 2007, and was written by staff writer, Peter Cooper. It has been edited but very little from the original printing.

Keyboard Ace Carson Whitsett Was Known for Talent, Humor

[Country] singer Kathy Mattea and songwriter-producer Jon Vezner were visiting their ailing friend, renowned keyboard player Carson Whitsett. Mattea made a joke of some sort, and the keyboard man laughed a little. "Hey, I'm dying over here," he said, both because it was kind of a funny thing to say and because it was true.

Mr. Whitsett died on Tuesday [May 8, 2007] at his Nashville home after battling brain cancer for 16 months. He'll be remembered by his friends for boundless humor and boundless talent, and he'll be remembered by music fans as a key contributor to works by Mattea, Paul Simon, Tony Joe White, Patti Page, Conway Twitty, Solomon Burke and others.

"He was the most amazing musical guy I've met in my life, and in some ways he was the best kept secret in town," said Vezner, who wrote songs with Mr. Whitsett and who, with wife Mattea, was a near-constant presence in the Whitsett household during Mr. Whitsett's cancer struggle. "He never jockeyed for position and he never played the game," Vezner said. "He just did what he did, and there was nobody like him. He'd send an arrow through your heart with three notes. They were the *right* three notes."

A Mississippi native, Mr. Whitsett played on albums ranging from the elegant pop of Paul Simon's *There Goes Rhymin' Simon* to the swampy blues of Tony Joe White's *Heroines* to Webb Wilder's Music City rock manifesto *It Came From Nashville*. Mr. Whitsett's songs were recorded by The Staple Singers, B.B. King, Conway Twitty, Lorrie Morgan (her first hit, "Dear Me"), Solomon Burke and, recently, Joe Cocker.

Mr. Whitsett took Booker T. Jones' place when Booker T. & The MGs became The MGs, and he spent about a decade playing keyboards in Mattea's band. "When he would accompany a singer, he intuitively knew where to make the music breathe," Mattea said. "It felt like he was in your head." A master improviser, Mr. Whitsett played piano and Hammond organ with nuance and invention.



About a month ago, he knew he would have to be moved to a downstairs area where there was no piano. He asked to play the instrument for what turned out to be the last time. According to Vezner, he sat down and was shaking and then started to play. "He plays this beautiful thing, and I said, 'What's that? That's gorgeous.' He said, 'I don't know, I'm just doodling.' "

A stream of famous visitors came to see Mr. Whitsett in the final months of his life, with White, Michael McDonald and many others conveying love and thanks. He was amazed at the gestures, wondering aloud what he'd done to deserve such kindnesses. Last weekend, Vezner had run an errand and upon his return to Mr. Whitsett's house he asked, "What are you doing now?" The response: "Just enjoying life," both because it was kind of a funny thing to say and because it was true.

Carson Whitsett Left Mark on Music Scene

The following feature story was published in The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, Tennessee, on May 9, 2007, and presents a little different perspective on Carson's talents. It was written by Bob Mehr. It has been edited from the original printing.

Southern music figure Carson Whitsett early on earned a reputation as a gifted keyboardist and songwriter. Mr. Whitsett died early Tuesday at home in Nashville following a long battle with brain cancer. He was 62.

Born in Jackson, Mississippi, Mr. Whitsett began performing as part of his older brother Tim Whitsett's Imperial Show Band. The R&B group was a popular draw on the Southern fraternity circuit in the 1960s, and released a number of singles on Imperial and Rim Records. In the late 1960s, the younger Whitsett left to play with Canadian singer Eric Mercury.

In the early '70s, Tim Whitsett became head of Stax Records' publishing arms, East Memphis and Birdees Music, and Carson briefly joined the Stax family himself. He stepped in for Booker T. Jones, playing organ and helping launch a new version of the MGs. The reconstituted MGs released a self-titled album in 1973, that was well-received and spawned the funky single "Sugar Cane." "There was some reservations going into that situation," said guitarist Bobby Manuel of stepping into such legendary shoes. "Especially since the lead instrument was the organ. But I tell you, people did not know the difference with Carson. [He] was such a great melodic player, ... the same style as Booker, nobody could tell. I just loved him to death. He was reserved but had a great sense of humor," added Manuel. "He was always focused on trying to get the songs right and very creative with his writing and his playing."

Mr. Whitsett went on to anchor the Malaco Records house band for much of the '70s and '80s, appearing on a number of successful recordings, including Paul Simon's *There Goes Rhymin' Simon* and albums by Z.Z. Hill and Bobby "Blue" Bland. "He wrote, produced and played," said Malaco vice president Gerald "Wolf" Stephenson. "He was a key part of our studio rhythm section for many, many years. And he was involved with our hits from the early days, all the way back to Dorothy Moore's 'Misty Blue' and all the way up until Johnny Taylor [and] Little Milton,"

Mr. Whitsett moved to Nashville in the late '80s, where he continued to be an in-demand session musician, writer and producer, working with Webb Wilder, Kathy Mattea and Tony Joe White. A gifted and versatile songsmith, he also wrote or co-wrote material for R&B stars Etta



James and Irma Thomas, blues singers Joe Louis Walker and Johnny Adams, as well as country acts such as Lorrie Morgan and John Anderson. Along with his longtime friend Dan Penn, Mr. Whitsett wrote the title track to Solomon Burke's 2002 comeback album *Don't Give Up On Me*.

Mr. Whitsett, the husband of Kirsten Whitsett, also leaves three children, Carson Whitsett Jr., Christopher Whitsett and Nicole Bailey, and his brother Tim Whitsett.

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The Taylor family held a reunion in April 2006 at DeSoto State Park on Lookout Mountain in northeast Alabama. Barbara Taylor Sherburne is front and almost center in the photo and dressed in black.

Barbara Taylor Sherburne Family Reunion

Barbara Taylor Sherburne recently sent in the following article describing a family reunion held at Desoto State Park just outside of Mentone, Alabama, atop Lookout Mountain.

In July 2005, I was visiting my sisters, Elizabeth Taylor Cossar and Mary Margaret Taylor Hickman, in Jackson. We were having a glass of wine and visiting on Elizabeth's porch at Lake Cavalier. One thing led to another, and we decided it would be a lot of fun to have a family reunion away from Jackson. We wanted somewhere halfway between Jackson and Virginia. Since most of the family had been to Camp DeSoto and Alpine Camp for Boys in Alabama, we decided on DeSoto State Park. We went the end of April, 2006. The Cossars, Hickmans, [my husband] Paul and I arrived on Wednesday, and the children and grandchildren came on Thursday night and Friday. There were lots of activities: fishing, shopping, etc. Most of the families stayed in chalets, and we had a central area outside of several of the chalets where we could gather. We took riding toys, balls, music, bikes and lots of things to keep the children occupied. One of the highlights of the weekend was Brenda Lee singing "Sweet Nothings". I was Brenda and Mary Margaret and her two daughters were the back-up singers. Elizabeth was too chicken to join us. The reason we chose Brenda Lee was because Elizabeth, Mary Margaret and I had taken a trip to Wilmington, Delaware, to see Brenda in concert the October before, and we wanted to share with the family. Needless to say, they were not that impressed, but we had fun anyway. All but two in the family came. My son and Mary Margaret's son were unable to be there. We hope to do this every couple of years.

This year, we [scheduled] two mini reunions. First, Mary Margaret's son, Gantt Hickman, [got] married in Oxford, Mississippi, in May, and then in July, I am having Elizabeth and her three daughters as well as Mary Margaret and her two daughters for a long weekend in Lynchburg. My daughter lives in Lynchburg, so there will be nine of us girls. My husband hasn't decided whether he is going to stay home or not!

Note: Barbara enclosed two photos; one was taken at the reunion in Alabama. The other was taken a month before near Jackson. Barbara describes the circumstances as follows: One of my friends in Lynchburg loves Jill Conner Browne's books [author of the best-selling Sweet Potato Queens tomes]. So, last March, three friends and I went on a road trip to Jackson to participate in Jill Conner Browne fever. My sisters, Mary Margaret and Elizabeth, showed us a wonderful time. We went to the [Sweet Potato Queens] lunch at Bravo's Restaurant in Highland Village Shopping Center and to the St. Patrick's Day parade in downtown Jackson. For those classmates who no longer live in Jackson, you may not realize that the city's St. Paddy's Day Parade is one of the largest in the United States!

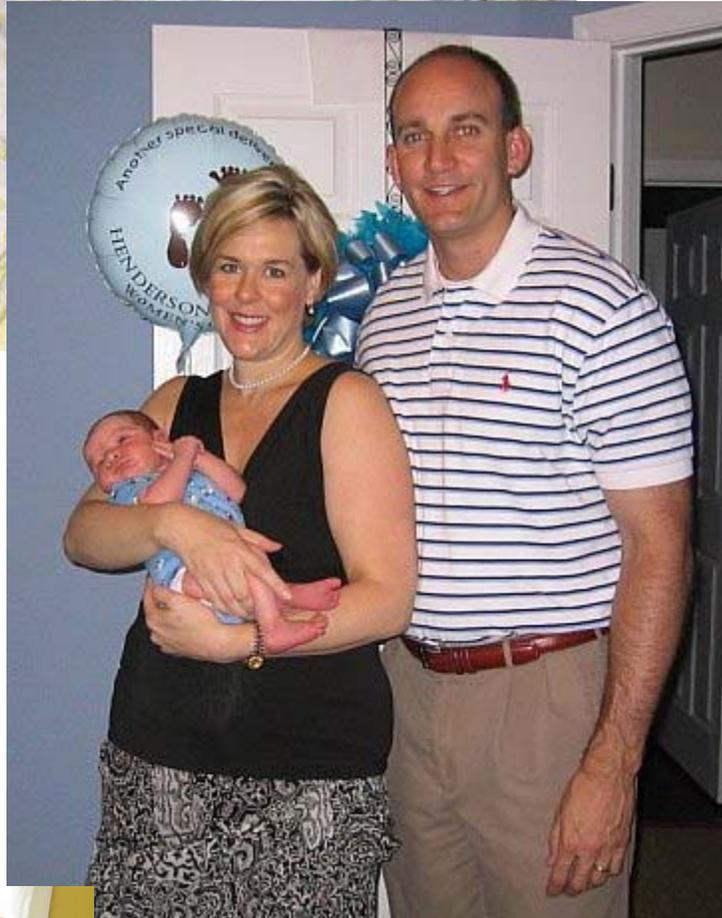


The “Taylor Sisters” and friends before a boat ride at Lake Cavalier outside of Jackson in March 2006. Elizabeth is pictured on the far left, Barbara is second from the right, and Mary Margaret is on the far right. The six had gathered to participate in St. Paddy's Day and Sweet Potato Queens activities in Jackson.

Class of 1963 Photo Gallery



Ladene Butts Strong's grandson Matthew Bradley Hilsmier was born May 28, 2006. He weighed in at 10 pounds, 1 ounce and was 21.5 inches long.



Ladene Butts Strong's daughter Mandy, grandson Matthew Brady, and son-in-law Brad Hilsmier are at home in Birmingham, Alabama.



Tom Murphree and wife Cindy are enthusiastic fans of their grandchildren, known as the Gatlin Girls: Nan (age 5 and wonderful mother's helper), Meg (loves to dress up), and Ann Elise (8 weeks old when this photo was taken).

Tom and Cindy Murphree's youngest grandchild is Ann Elise Gatlin, born December 12, 2006 (7 lbs., 6 oz. and 20 1/2 in. long). Parents are Elise (Murphree) and Greg Gatlin.

Class of 1963 Photo Gallery



A trip in February to Hot Springs, Arkansas, included Kit Cooper (MHS '62), Jeannie Johnson Chunn, Estelle Noel Mockbee, Mike Mockbee, Jackie Ledbetter Cooper, Cathy Stephens Estes, Donald Estes, and Bob Chunn.

Steve Waldron's grandson Jamison, aka Critter



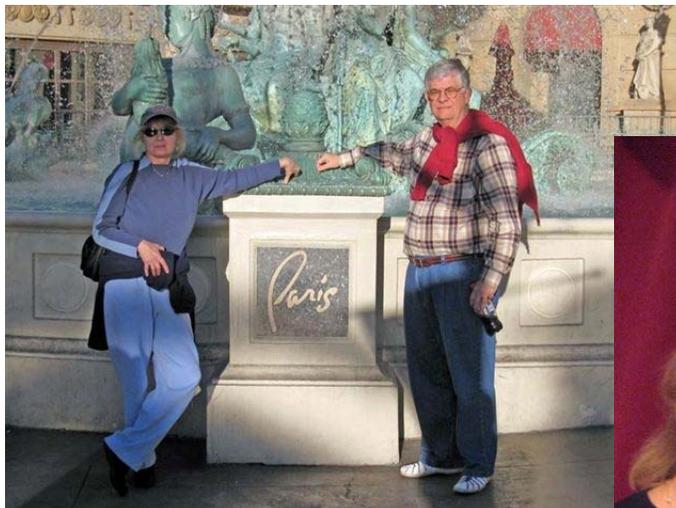
Sandra Scott Salvo's son Frederick and his wife Jennifer recently won St. Joseph Catholic School's annual draw down, held on February 10, 2007. In addition, Jennifer became an associate of the long-time Jackson law firm of Wise Carter Child & Carraway, P.A. She specializes in regulatory, corporate, and general health law matters.

Class of 1963 Photo Gallery



Miss America 2007 was held at the Aladdin Resort and Casino on Monday, January 29, 2007. Attending this year were Bert and **Jan Tumasz** Foregger who traveled with friends Bruce and Peggy Peterson. Bruce, who was an Ole Miss graduate student at the same time as Bert, is a well-known pageant consultant and judge – therefore, the interest in the Miss America Pageant. Both Bert and Bruce are now retired and have ended up in the Jackson metro area only a block away from each other.

Miss America 2007 Pageant



In the surrounding photos Jan and Bruce are “chillin’ in Paris until the Miss America Pageant” while Jan’s husband Bert is being photographed with Peggy.. Jan also squeezes in time with another Mississippian named Elvis (Who said he left the building?).



Duling School Redevelopment Begins!

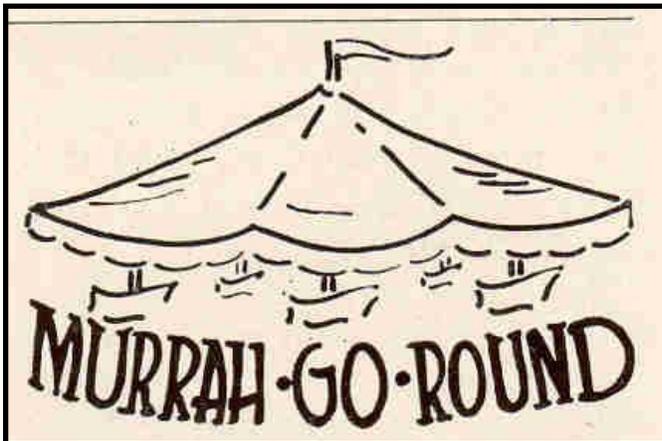
The following story appeared in the June 7, 2007 edition of The Northside Sun. It was authored by staff writer Elizabeth Ortega. What follows has been edited from the original publication.

Bulldozers and dirt, while not generally considered an attractive addition to a neighborhood, are signs of the progress that workers are making in transforming Duling School, which was built in 1927 into a new development called Fondren Place. The approximately \$25 million mixed-use development project will feature a combination of newly constructed buildings and the renovation of the existing Duling School building. Retail, restaurant, living and office space will all be included in the new construction and renovation.

The project's first phase includes the renovation of the 20,000 square foot school building and the creation of a new building at the corner of North State Street and Duling Avenue. Retail and residential space will join with two new businesses in the renovated school building. One of these commercial ventures is Bohemian Kitchens of Gozan Interiors, an interior design firm that specializes in kitchens and bathrooms. Jackson restaurant owner Nathan Glenn, who also owns Basil's and Roosters in Fondren, will open up a unique restaurant in Duling's former auditorium that aptly will be called The Auditorium. It will combine dining with live music and live dinner theater.

Both a BankPlus branch office and Starbucks will be located on the ground floor of the new 45,000 square foot three-story building that will be built, while the upper floor will house the offices of Cooke Douglass Farr Lemons, Ltd. Architects and Engineers PA, and the Ramey Agency, an advertising firm.

The second new building will be located at the corner of Old Canton Road and Duling Avenue next door to Woodland Hills Baptist Church and across the street from Fondren Presbyterian Church. It will be constructed as part of the second phase of the project, which won't begin until later this year. That building will contain condominiums costing from \$200,000 and up. Each phase of the project is expected to last 12 to 15 months. But the second phase will begin before the first is completed. To accommodate the increase in patronage the new development will attract, a parking deck will be built behind the school building; storefront parking also will be created.



Murrah-Go-Round

Dianne Allen Graham commented on Carson's illustrious career as a musician, then went on to note how many of our class have excelled in different professions. She said "I often brag on the number of National Merit semi-finalists our class had. In today's world the number is phenomenal."

*

John Tanner did like some things about his short retirement: going to Wal-Mart in the middle of the week, relaxing on the patio, watching the sunrise, catnapping on the sofa after lunch.

But he says retirement is like a looooooong vacation on a tighter budget Darn!

*

Steve Elson re: Miss Breland's death "She had a long, happy, and fruitful life. May she rest in peace, helping God make sure his English is grammatically and syntactically correct."

Class Member Websites

www.hayesjewelersonline.com

Charles and Kathy Butts Hayes

www.cedarwoodraymond.com

Bob and Jeannie Johnson Chunn's bed and breakfast in Raymond, Mississippi

www.galejohnson.com

Gale Johnson's photography, etc.

www.mississippideltabluesinfo.com

Ron and Carol Marble

www.docs-spots.com

Bill Ross

www.poorjuliaart.com

Julia Walter Allen's scrap metal art

If you have a personal website such as those listed above, that you would like to have included in an upcoming issue of *HOOFBEATING*, please send it to estelle@ongulf.com.

HOOFBEATING is published quarterly online by the Murrah High School Class of 1963.

The following classmates and friends contributed to this issue:

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