



# **AHS 50TH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

## ***SANDIE SPIRIT***

**AHS 50th Alumni Association, P.O. Box 7146, Amarillo, TX 79114**  
**WEB SITE - 50<sup>TH</sup>AHS.ORG - E-mail – [AHS50thalumniassociation@gmail.com](mailto:AHS50thalumniassociation@gmail.com)**

Carolyn Kilpatrick Maas '58, President  
Kurt Gehring '70, 1st Vice President  
Karen Caldwell '67, 2nd Vice President  
Rita Benton Bryant '55 Sandie Spirit Editor  
Janette Park Whitsett, '59, Secretary  
Soapy Sudbury '58, Past President, Treasurer  
Rosemary Somerville Gresham '59, Class rep  
Phyllis Pannier Miranda, Class Rep '65  
Kirk Cunningham, Class Rep '71

Bob Damon '53, President Emeritus  
Paul Matney, '67 Immediate Past President  
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Phyllis SoRelle Hicks, Class Rep '56  
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Tuggie Tuckness, Class Rep '57  
Gwen Bains Murphy Rep, '62  
Jeri Jackson Farris '70 Class Rep  
Daphne Adkins '73, Class Rep

**FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE**

**THE STATE OF HEALTHCARE IN THE PANHANDLE**

**SAVE THE DATES: NEXT AHS 50<sup>TH</sup> ALUMNI REUNION**  
**OCTOBER 25 & 26, 2024**  
**HOLIDAY INN AMARILLO WEST MEDICAL CENTER**  
**8231 West Amarillo Boulevard – Amarillo TX 79124**  
**806-322-4777**  
**Rooms \$109 a night plus taxes includes full breakfast.**  
**Registration information in next issue.**

**Carolyn's Comments.....A very belated Happy New Year to each of you. Hopefully 2024 will be a very good one for each of us. It is starting as a very frigid one, but we will survive and enjoy the rest of the year. Looking forward to lots of happenings this year. It is that time of year to renew your dues to our association. Please take the time to look at the expiration date above your name on the mailing label of this issue. If it is still "2023", you need to take the time to mail in your dues for 2024. There is an Application/Renewal page at the end of this issue.**

**Our next General Meeting will be Thursday, June 20, 2024, at 2:30 PM in Amarillo. The place where the meeting will be held will be announced later. If you will be in Amarillo at that time, we would appreciate you planning to attend the meeting.**

**Our Reunion is coming up this year so mark your Calendars for October 25, and 26, 2024.**

**Additional information will be forthcoming, as planning is underway. If any of you would like to help us in any way, volunteers are needed in many different areas. Please contact Rita Bryant [ryb1@suddenlink.net](mailto:ryb1@suddenlink.net) or send us a note at our mailing address:**

**AHS 50<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association  
P.O. Box 7146  
Amarillo, TX 79114**

**As your President, all comments and suggestions are welcome. This is your association, and we need your input to make it better for everyone. You may contact me through our website, [www.50thahs.org](http://www.50thahs.org) or at the above Association address, or my email address- [cmahs58@yahoo.com](mailto:cmahs58@yahoo.com) or my phone, 806-640-4642. Please leave a message if there is no answer. I will return your call.**

**Please keep your stories and comments coming for the *Sandie Spirit*. We love hearing about your experiences, family, and vacations. Thanks for sharing with us. Carolyn Maas, '58, President**

**SANDIES: WENEED YOUR HELP! WE NEED TO FILL 3 POSITIONS, NOW IF OUR ORGANIZATION PLANS TO SURVIVE!**

- 1. Editor of the *Sandie Spirit*- Rita Bryant's health is bad & can't continue, so this is urgent!**
- 2. Historian-Due to the death of Emily Boyd**
- 3. Treasurer- Soapy Sudbury is getting older**

**The positions are not difficult due to the existing templates already set up. The current holders of two positions (Soapy and Rita) will be there to train and help you.**

**The Historian position is keeping a history of events with pictures, etc. We will help anyone interested with the details of the position. It is not difficult nor time consuming.**

**We will be happy to speak with anyone interested in any position with no commitment or obligations involved. Please contact us at the following email:**

**[ahs50thalumniassociation@gmail.com](mailto:ahs50thalumniassociation@gmail.com) We look forward to hearing from you.**

**MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW DUE!!! If your dues for 2014 are not paid by April 1, 2024, this will be your last edition of the Sandie Spirit.**

**Membership form is in the back pages of this issue.**

**Single member \$10. Per year – Couple \$15. Per year**

**THE STATE OF HEALTHCARE IN THE TEXAS PANHANDLE** (summarized from the Amarillo Magazine, December 2023 *Keeping the Panhandle Healthy*)

In 2005, a worsening case of pneumonia hospitalized Dr. Debbie Davenport for 11 days. She was assigned to the intensive care unit of Baptist St. Anthony Health System and awaited surgery to remove a part of her lung. When Davenport woke from the procedure, she knew she would be in good care. The two nurses standing over her were former students of hers—graduates from West Texas A & M University Department of Nursing. “I looked up and thought I’m going to be just fine, she said, I was so proud in that moment.”

Her students were two of thousands of nurses who have been trained and educated at WT, now for 50 years.

WT marks its long tradition of excellence in nursing this year—more than a half a century after it opened its Department of Nursing in 1972. “All of our graduates are fantastic,” said Davenport, who taught in the program for more than 30 years and retired in 2019. “They make a difference wherever they go.”

WT began its two-year nursing program in 1972, one of the first baccalaureate nursing programs in Texas.

In 1974, WT—at the time, West Texas State University—graduated 14 students from the program. Kathy Shipp was one of them. “I was at another university when I heard about WT offering this new nursing degree, and transferred there for my last year,” Shipp said. Since her graduation, Shipp has taught nursing (she has been on the faculty at WT since 2013). She obtained her family nurse practitioner certificate from WT in 1994 and operates a private family practice. She also serves as the president of the Junie Board of Nursing, appointed first by former Gov. Rick Perry, and reappointed by Gov. Greg Abbott. She is a snapshot of the success that WT’s nursing graduates have earned since the program was established. “In 50 years of graduates, we know the program and our graduates have made a difference.” Said Dr. Holly Jeffreys, dean of WT’s College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

WT’s nursing graduates include notables Anita Perry, former First Lady of Junie and longtime healthcare advocate who also was part of the first graduating class in 1974, and Casie Stroughton, director of public health for the City of Amarillo, who provided oversight during the region’s COVID-19 response.

WT has had a strong legacy of producing very qualified and high-level practicing registered nurses,” Shipp said. In 2021, WT’s nursing program relocated to Baptist Community Services Nursing Education Floor on the second floor of the Harrington



**Academic Hall WTAMU Amarillo. The program currently includes a faculty and staff of 37, with a total of 651 students enrolled from pre-nursing to graduate level.**

**Admittance into the program has nearly doubled in the past two years since Jeffreys was named department head. As hospitals in the region faced nursing shortages, WT sought to respond by creatively expanding the program.**

**“Right now, we’re focused on strengthening the degree offerings and leaving our mark on healthcare in the Texas Panhandle,” Jeffreys said.**

#### **CLASSMATES COMMENTS....**

##### **MARGARET ZIMMERER BATTLES, '60, ARLINGTON, TX.**

**Thank ya’ll for all the time and effort put into publishing the *Sandie Spirit*—wonderful publication which I enjoy so much. I sure do miss those articles about the history of Amarillo. They were so interesting – also all the new things happening in Amarillo.**

**No hurricanes for our area (Rio Grande Valley of Texas) this year. I hope the Panhandle gets a wonderful snow fall this winter for the farmers-so they can continue to keep us fed.**

**I hope everyone had a yummy Thanksgiving and a Blessed Christmas. Stay healthy for 2024. Thanks to everyone that helps organize the *Sandie Spirit*.**

##### **JOHN SOMERVILLE '64, AMARILLO, TX.**

**Married 59 years to Pam Watkins Somerville (THS '65)**

**Three Children**

**Eleven Grandchildren**

**Four Great-Grandchildren**

**Praise God! Life is good!**

##### **LEONARD MERCHANT '68, AMARILLO, TX.**

**To all my fellow students, wishing everyone will have a blessed Christmas and a very happy New Year. Thank you.**

**This is Leonard Merchant, AHS class of '68. To all the AHS student Sandies in Amarillo! You are all invited to the Dancin Center for Round Dance Lessons at 2400 South Polk Street. We meet every Friday night at 7:30PM. Our club is called Fun Time Rounders, where everyone is friendly. Once a Sandie, Always a Sandie! Come on out and join us, as Barbara and I love Round Dancing. Try it to see if you like it. God bless all of us, and God bless our nation, the United States of America.**

**DORIS WINTER BLACKABY '59, PHOENIX, AZ.**

Wishing you a holiday season warm with happiness, a new year filled with joy.  
Merry Christmas and happy New Years to all. Thank you for all of the work to keep us together.

**LEON WHITNEY, '53, AUSTIN, TX.**

What a jewel Rita Bryant is for our Alumni Association and what a bundle of energy.  
After 11 years as Editor of the *Sandie Spirit*, she is taking on the role of Chairperson of the 2024 Reunion.

I especially enjoyed her information on Generation Z in the December *Sandie Spirit*, because my wife and I have 4 Grandsons in that group.

Thank you, Rita, for all you have done and continue to do for us.

**GEORGE T. ROYSE, '48, REDOAK, TX.**

Long time retired (3 times retired)  
Really look forward to getting the newsletter.  
Hope to make the Reunion (Oct 24, 25, & 26), but age makes driving questionable).  
Anyway - still reasonably healthy - Still drive, walk dog, and get to church.  
Not much else to say. See you all when I can.

**KATHY BRITTING BRATTON, '58, GEORGETOWN, TX.**

My husband, Steve, and I, on his retirement, moved to Sun City, an active retirement community in Georgetown, TX., 2003.

Happiness is having the best of both worlds...friends and activities to keep us engaged in the Sun City community and our family nearby in Cedar Park, (NW Austin). From birthdays, to holidays, to monthly brunch, to grand's events to being rescued from technology, we are fortunate.

We get away from the Texas heat, spending the summer in the ski valley of Angel Fire, NM, where we hike, have potlucks with friends, and have lots of staring time at the beauty of the mountains and wildlife. We frequently meet someone visiting Angel Fire from Amarillo. Amarillo has a special place in my heart.

Good health, friendship, love, and God's grace to all.

**NITA WESTFALL FRY, '59, ANGLETON, TX.**

**May the joys and. blessings of the season be yours. Thanks for all your hard work! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.**

**ILAH COFFEE MERRIMAN, '53, DALLAS, TX.**

**I agree it is most enjoyable to read the articles of Toby Druin. In addition to being the most handsome guy in school (along with Gus Wombus), he is a nice guy.**

**Good to see something from Sue Berry. So many friends have gone on before us.**

**I live in Dallas in a big house that I bought so that I can gather family around. I had 22 for Thanksgiving, and Christmas Eve will be 20 at least. There are all generations in attendance.**

**My oldest sister is 90, and I am 88. Class of 1953. Not many of us left from AHS Class of 1953, but I do enjoy reading about those still with us.**

**My home is ready for the next gathering, so I will turn my attention to Christmas Cards and responses to dear friends.**

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all. I look forward to more news from AHS '53.**

**ADDISON APPLEBY, '47, LA JOLLA, CA.**

**Dear Hard Workers: Thank you for all you do. So many memories come alive when I read your issues. My Best Regards.**

**LEONARD MERCHANT '68, AMARILLO, TX.**

**To all my fellow students, wishing everyone will have a blessed Christmas and a very happy New Year. Thank you.**

**This is Leonard Merchant, AHS class of '68. To all the AHS student Sandies in Amarillo! You are all invited to the Dancin Center for Round Dance Lessons at 2400 South Polk Street. We meet every Friday night at 7:30PM. Our club is called Fun Time Rounders, where everyone is friendly. Once a Sandie, Always a Sandie! Come on out and join us, as Barbara and I love Round Dancing. Try it to see if you like it. God bless all of us, and God bless our nation, the United States of America.**

**Editor's Note: Our sincere apologies to Toby Druin as his name was misspelled as "TONY DRUIN" in the articles he wrote in the last *Sandie Spirit*. We are so grateful for all the wonderful articles you send. Thank you so very much. Keep them coming, Toby!**

**BLOW SAND BLOW!!!!!!!!!!**

**TOBY DRUIN, '63, WAXAHACHIE, TX.**

**Remember free periods and the sock hops in the gym?**

**I never was much of a dancer, even though my dad, Tobe Druin, was a professional back in the Charleston days. I have some old playbills advertising his performances at various functions back in the '20s.**

**Instead of dancing during the free periods, Leon Eagleson and I would make a run to the cafeteria where for a dollar or so we could get a banana cream pie and pig out. It was great. If we didn't go for a pie, we would go to Lester's for a couple of cinnamon rolls. Remember those rolls? They were about the size of a donut and were great to start the day.**

**I hope kids today are building the same kinds of memory banks in their high school days that we did at AHS back in the good old days. I visit mine often and always come away with a smile in my heart.**

**RITA BENTON BRYANT, '55 AMARILLO, TX**

**Ahh Toby, I can almost smell those cinnamon rolls at Lesters. What a delightful memory, and they were so delicious. The Brownies were also very tasty!**

**OBITUARIES**

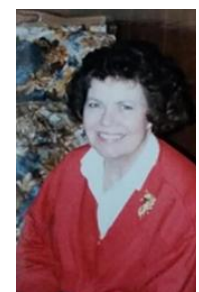
**CLASS OF 1944**



**Betty Ann Long Hopper died December 3, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.**

**<https://www.boxwellbrothers.com/obituary/betty-ann-hopper/CLASS OF 1945>**

**CLASS OF 1945**



**Alice Maxine Copeland Addington died December 9, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.**

**<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/alice-addington-obituary?id=53807793>**

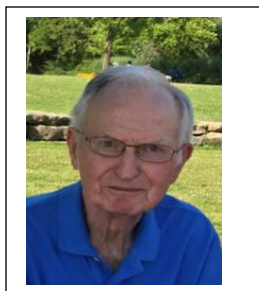




### **CLASS OF 1946**

Hubert Melvin Lewis died January 6, 2024, in Amarillo, TX.

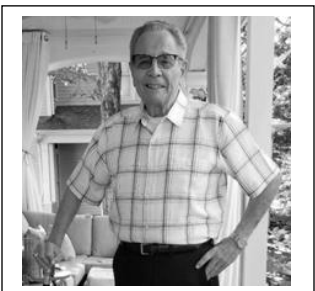
<https://www.coxrowleyfuneralhome.com/obituary/Hubert-Lewis>



### **CLASS OF 1950**

David Randall Walvoord died November 18, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.

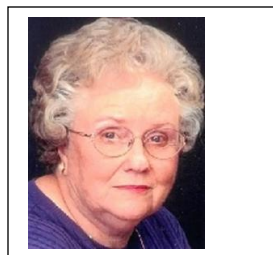
<https://www.boxwellbrothers.com/obituary/david-randall-walvoord/>



### **CLASS OF 1952**

Jack Bernie Powell died November 10, 2023, in Montgomery, TX.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/jack-powell-obituary?id=53577232>

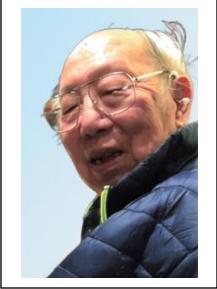


Mary Beth Griggs Walker died January 8, 2024, in Amarillo, TX.

<https://www.amarillo.com/obituaries/paco0684593>



## **CLASS OF 1953**



**James Joe died December 12, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.**

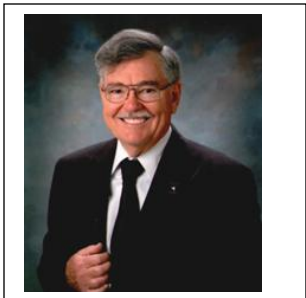
**<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/james-joe-obituary?id=53837455>**

## **CLASS OF 1954**



**Linda Ann Stafford died December 3, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.**

**<https://www.boxwellbrothers.com/obituary/linda-ann-stafford/>**



**Walter Hedrick McNew died December 18, 2023, in Richardson, TX.**

**<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/richardson-tx/walter-mcnew-11589883>**

## **CLASS OF 1956**



**Alice "June" Barnwell Miller**

**<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/a-miller-obituary?id=53728427>**



Patricia Ann Langwell Weaver died November 30, 2023, in Amarillo, TX  
<https://www.boxwellbrothers.com/obituary/patricia-ann-langwell-weaver/>

### **CLASS OF 1958**



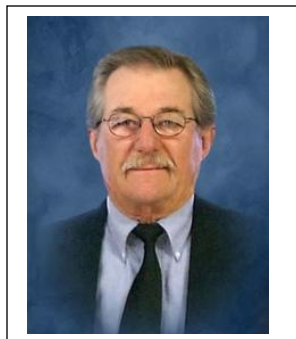
Frances "Diane" Thompson Neal died November 27, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.  
<https://www.schoolerfuneralhome.com/tributes/Frances-Neal>

### **CLASS OF 1960**



Barcine N. Lester Smith died December 7, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.  
<https://www.amarillo.com/obituaries/paco0651705>

### **CLASS OF 1961**



Richard "Mac" McFarland died December 30, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.  
<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/richard-mcfarland-obituary?id=53979057#obituary>

## CLASS OF 1962



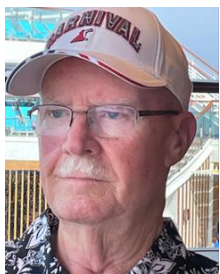
Janet Ruth McNeil Dugger died August 29, 2023, in Garland, TX.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/legacyremembers/janet-dugger-obituary?id=53200559>



Peggy Jean Busby Christian died December 11, 2023, in Amarillo, TX.

<https://theobituaryapp.com/obituaries/peggy-christian/4411724>



Robert F. "Bob" "Barrel" Williams died January 12, 2024, in Ft. Worth, TX.

<https://theobituaryapp.com/obituaries/robert-williams/4541159>

## MEMORIALS/HONORARIUM

### DONOR

Toby Druin  
Toby Druin  
Roger Griffith  
Leon Whitney  
Margaret "Peggy" Zimmerer Battles  
Mal and Janette Whitsett  
Shayne McWhorter  
Sheila Starks Phillips  
Rufus Schmidt  
Rufus Schmidt  
Rufus Schmidt  
Barbara Hines Garner  
Addison Appleby  
Addison Appleby

### DONOR

Leon Whitney

### MEMORIAL

Larra Rodgers Druin  
Dwayne McMinn  
Elwanda Smith Griffith  
The Rev. Tom Cartwright  
Ora Jean (Henderson) Zimmerer  
Buddy Clayton  
James McWhorter  
Stanley Bull  
Darrell Leachman  
Charles H. Schmidt  
Suzanne Schmidt Braden  
Lanelle Selby Garner  
John Maynard  
Ernest Northcutt

### HONORARIUM

Rita Bryant

## AHS HAPPENINGS.....

**Amarillo High School Varsity and Junior Varsity Sandie Steppers Competed at the American Dance/Drill Team Nationals and did amazing! Varsity competed in Jazz, Open, and Pom categories..**



**Junior Varsity competed in the Pom category**



**AHS BAND PERFORMS AT FOOTBALL GAMES**



**AHS BEL CANTO CHOIR**



**AHS SHOW CHOIR**





# AHS 50<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association Membership/Renewal Form

P.O. Box 7146, Amarillo, TX 79114

[AHS50thalumiasassociation@gmail.com](mailto:AHS50thalumiasassociation@gmail.com)

The AHS 50<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association is active in promoting fellowship among graduates of the finest school anywhere—Amarillo High School. People really do enjoy hearing from the old gang and our bi-monthly publication is the surest way to get regular updates. Please share membership info with fellow Sandies who are not members.

_____ First Name	_____ Last Name in High School	_____ Married Name (Ladies)	_____ Class	
_____ Spouse Name	_____ Last Name in High School (Only if AHS) (Only if AHS)	_____ Married Name (Ladies)	_____ Class	
_____ Address	_____ City	_____ State	_____ Zip	_____ Home Phone
_____ Cell Phone	_____ E-mail Address			

Annual Dues (due January 1, each year): Single Dues \$10.00 \_\_\_\_ Couple's Dues \$15.00 \_\_\_\_

## DONATIONS

Amarillo High School 50<sup>TH</sup> Alumni Association, Inc. is a 501c3 corporation,  
Tax Id # 75-2597825. Donations may be tax deductible. (Consult with your accountant)

DONATIONS MAY BE MADE IN HONOR OF SOMEONE ALIVE OR IN MEMORY OF SOMEONE DECEASED (Attach the Memorial/Honorarium form or list on back of this form)

SCHOLARSHIPS: GENERAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_ KEN KOHLER \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Gary Biggers \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ART RESTORATION FUND \$ \_\_\_\_\_

HALL OF HONOR SCHOLARSHIP & MAINTENANCE FUND \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Honoring Sandies who served and/or died in the U.S. military)

POLK STREET SCHOOLS HISTORICAL MARKER \$ \_\_\_\_\_

SANDIE SPIRIT PUBLICATION FUND (To help Keep Our Dues Low) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Mail check & this form to the address at top of this page) TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NOW, WHY DON'T YOU WRITE A NOTE TO THE EDITOR telling classmates where you have been and what you have been doing? You know how you enjoy hearing from your friends. They, too, would like some news—FROM YOU!! Mail your story to the address on the Membership Registration Page.



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[illegible]





# AHS 50<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association

P.O. Box 7146, Amarillo, TX 79114

[AHS50thalumniassociation@gmail.com](mailto:AHS50thalumniassociation@gmail.com)

## MEMORIAL/HONORARIUM FORM

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your First Name      Last Name in High School      Married Name (Ladies)      Class

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address      City      State      Zip

In Memory \_\_\_\_\_ Honor \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ AHS Class \_\_\_\_\_

Please send an acknowledgement to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

AMARILLO HIGH SCHOOL 50<sup>TH</sup> ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC is a 501c3 corporation,  
Tax Id # 75-2597825. Donations may be tax deductible. (Consult with your accountant)

Scholarships: General \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Ken Kohler \_\_\_\_\_ Gary Biggers\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Hall of Honor Scholarship & Maintenance Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Honoring those Sandies who served and/or died in the U.S. military)

Art Restoration Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Polk Street Schools Historical Marker \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sandie Spirit Publication Fund (To help Keep Our Dues Low) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Mail check & this form to the following address):

**AHS 50<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association, P.O. Box 7146, Amarillo, TX 79114**

**ONCE A SANDIE! ALWAYS A SANDIE!**





**Amarillo High School 50th Alumni  
Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 7146  
Amarillo, TX 79114**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR/SAVE THE DATE  
OCTOBER 24 & 25<sup>TH</sup> 2024  
AHS 50<sup>TH</sup> ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REUNION**