

TOPEKA HIGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

News from the Paul Fink Room

THS Historical Society/Alumni Association, 800 SW Tenth Ave, Topeka, KS 66612
Website: thshistoricalociety.org Phone: 785-295-3200 Email: thshs2001@yahoo.com Vol.41 No.1 January 2022

150th OF TOPEKA HIGH SCHOOL CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2022



FIDDLER ON THE ROOF – March 4, 7 pm, March 5, 7 pm, March 6, 2 pm matinee in THS Hoehner Auditorium. Graduates will participate in the opening number 'Tradition'. **Admission at the door – Public invited**

Graduates and Friends Sock Hop – April 23, 2022 (the same night as THS Prom) held in the North Gym. DJ Sal Cruz (1989). Sponsored by Michael Stimpert (1962). Chairman - Judy Whitaker Conklin (1964). **Admission by reservation – Public Invited**

Graduate Variety Show and Laser Light Show 150th Finale – May 28, 2022 THS Hoehner Auditorium. **Admission at the door – Public invited**

Graduate Art Show – First Friday Art Walk, June 3, 2022 - THS Art Gallery. Co-Chairmen - Larry and Barbara Waterman Peters and Stan Metzger. Sponsored by Becky Robb Dickinson and Brady Robb. **Public invited.**

The 150th committee is looking for volunteers to help with upcoming 150th events. Join us in providing fun & affordable entertainment that celebrates Topeka High's milestone, past and present students & staff, and provides the opportunity for the community to experience our amazing Topeka landmark.

IMAGES OF HOMECOMING 2021

Homecoming Weekend in September kicked off the 150th year of THS. In spite of Covid-19 we celebrated in style with past and present students and staff. Volunteers from every decade from the 1950s to the present helped make the weekend a success. Current students were showcased throughout the weekend. Thanks to Shayla Babb Kincade (1995) and Nikki Ramirez-Jennings (1995) and their 150th Homecoming Committee for planning the fun weekend.



A Piece of THS History on display at Skinny's Bar and Grill

A piece of Topeka High School history hangs along the east wall of Skinny's Bar and Grill in Topeka at 4016 SW Huntoon. Often unnoticed amidst myriad lighted signs and posters decorating the walls of the popular hangout in central Topeka, Topeka High alumni often get up close to check out Coach Willie Nicklin's signature on the lower left quadrant of the floor.

"It arrived in twelve pieces when the gym floor was refurbished about a decade ago," **Mark "Skinny" Schonlaw (THS 1987)**, says. Schonlaw owns Skinny's Bar and Grill and welcomes alumni from all the area high schools. "I'm often teased by alumni from other schools, but they all respect the Coach Nicklin legend," he says.

"A friend was on the demolition team working to replace the floor," Mark says, "and he casually asked if I'd be interested in displaying a piece of the historic floor. With friends' help, we assembled it, framed it and gave it a place of honor along the east wall." Coach Nicklin came by and signed it, the only signature on the unique floor display.

Garry Cushinberry (THS 1975) and Woodrow "Woody" Carter (THS 1974), have lots of memories playing on the floor. Cushinberry was on the 1973 State Championship team and recalls Coach Nicklin wanting his team members to run 7–8-minute miles. "That was the way he weeded out those that weren't going to make the team," Cushinberry says.

Carter, who only played as a senior in 1974, recalls running the stairs in The Dungeon as the THS gym is known. Woody says, "you had to remember to get your foot up high, those aren't just regular steps!" Experiencing lots of wins, and a few losses under Coach Nicklin, they remember him fondly and have many stories to tell including taking driver's education classes with Coach Nicklin as the driving coach and going by bus to games outside Topeka.

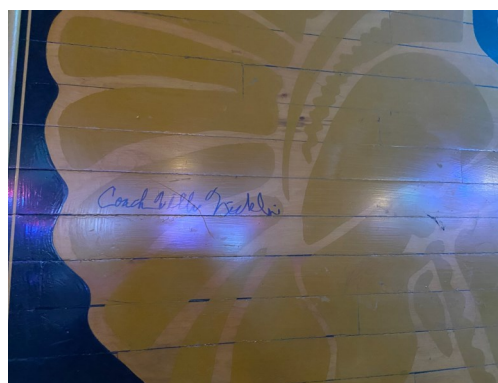
There are laughs and more stories as the two, along with current **THS Basketball Coach Ty Baumgardner**, reminisce about Coach Nicklin who passed away December 10, 2020. Coach Baumgardner says, looking at the center court piece of the floor, "it's all about tradition."

Nicklin was the head coach at THS from 1970 to 1994 and guided the Trojans to two State Championships

(1973 and 1986), three State Championship 2nd place finishes, fourteen League Championships (Sunflower and I-70), eleven Sub-State Championships and seven Topeka Invitational Tournament Crowns. In 2006, the basketball court at Topeka High was named 'Willie Nicklin Court' in his honor. He posted 501 overall wins during his coaching career.



Garry Cushinberry (THS 1975), Woodrow Carter (THS 1974) and Coach Ty Baumgardner, left to right, gathered recently to share stories about THS basketball history, honoring Coach Willie Nicklin (THS Basketball Coach 1970-1994).



If you look closely, the Trojan has Coach Nicklin's signature.

Marsha Martin Sheahan, Class of 1967

THS Graduate Hall of Fame 2021

A security officer, band director, and broadcast engineer were inducted into the Topeka High School Graduate Hall of Fame at 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 17, in the THS Hoehner Auditorium. The expansive space allowed for distancing and was a lovely substitute to the Woodward Library space.

One former staff member was honored as Distinguished Staff.

This was part of the 150th of Topeka High School Celebration and the 40th Hall of Fame ceremony, with 122 THS graduates having been inducted and 25 former staff/faculty honored with the Distinguished Staff designation.

A reception, in the main hallway, followed the ceremony. The THS Madrigals, THS String Ensemble and THS Marine Corps Junior ROTC participated in the ceremony.

The three honorees whose portraits have been added to the Hall of Fame Room are:



Marian Knight Douglas (THS 1950). Security Officer. Active in sports at Topeka High, Marian Knight was a cheerleader for the school's black basketball squad, the Ramblers, before integration of teams in 1949. She worked for ten years at the Kansas Neurological Institute prior to being hired by USD 501. Upon acquiring a certificate from the Topeka Police Academy, Mrs. Douglas became a security officer at Topeka High (1979 – 2017).



Steve Holloman (THS 1970). Educator/Music Director. After high school graduation, Steve Holloman majored in music education at Washburn. From there (1975) he taught general music and choir at Boswell Jr. High School. When that school closed in 1980, he became music teacher at Robinson Middle School and assistant band director at

THS. After a year, Holloman was appointed band director at Topeka High, a post he held until 2016. Among numerous achievements, he took the Trojan Marching Band to the Cotton bowl Parade in 1986 and 1989. From 1992 to 2014, the performed 11 times at Disney World.



Gary L. Krohe (THS 1971).

Broadcast Engineer. Gary Krohe received his B.A in Communication Arts at Washburn and then majored in electrical engineering at K-State. He has held many positions in broadcast engineering, having designed and built many television stations. Presently (since 2014) he

is Director of Engineering and Technology for KTWU-TV at Washburn University. However, Mr. Krohe is best known to Trojans as author, designer, and publisher of the coffee table book *Portraits of Troy: The Architecture of Topeka High School*.



Anton Ahrens (Staff). Chemistry Instructor. A Topeka West graduate, Anton Ahrens' college education background includes a bachelor's degree in Chemical Science from K—

State, Research Fellow at the Air Force Geophysics Lab, and Master of Science, Chemistry from KU. Teaching stints were at Highland Park HS (chemistry, physics, general science, and astronomy) and Topeka High (chemistry) from 1984 to 2016. In 2008 Mr. Ahrens was named Kansas Teacher of the Year (team), promoting public education across the state.



From left: Gary Krohe, Anton Ahrens, Rebecca Morrissey (THS Principal), Steve Holloman, Cynthia Douglas 1971, daughter of Marian Douglas

came music teacher at Robinson Middle School and assistant band director at

~ 2022 CLASS REUNIONS ~

Homecoming 2022 - September 23 - THS vs Emporia

Class

Class of 1962

Class of 1972

Class of 2002

Dates

September 16,17

TBA

September 23, 24

For More Information

Website, tgorrell2@att.net

cjrsophia@yahoo.com

jacquemunoz27@gmail.com

The THS Historical Society assists class reunions by: 1. providing classmate contact information 2. arranging THS tours 3. facilitating the use of the building 4. offering discounts for memberships during reunions. Go to **thshistoricalsociety.org** for words to the school song, THS graphics, information for reunion coordinators and more. **Let the THSHS know if your class is having a reunion and we'll help**

THS Class Gift Suggestions

If you or your class are still in the holiday giving spirit and are looking for a way to help your school, here are some suggestions. Contact the THSHS, if you're interested.

Refinish an original Student Cafeteria Table

3 tables @ \$250 each.

Refinish an original Library table – \$375 each.

Additional picnic tables for the Western Barrett Plaza and benches for the campus.
\$800

Refinish an original USD 501 Drafting Table

2 tables @ \$275 each.

Modifying the Home Gym Entrance Trophy Case

For accessibility - with sliding glass - \$8,500.

Multi-class project

New Trophy Case for Visitor's Gym Entrance -

\$16,000.

Multi-class project

Sponsor the 150th Graduate Variety Show

(May 28, 2022) - \$5,000.

Multi-class, individual or corporate project.

Sponsor the 150th Grand Finale Light Laser Show

(May 28, 2022) - \$10,000.

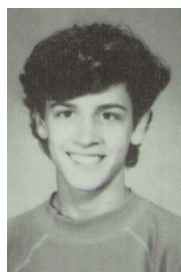
Multi-class, individual or corporate project.

Conversion of vintage THS Video Tapes

(sports, music), VHS to DVD

We are in the process of taking inventory for prices.

THS Grad Makes a Difference for Students



Joe Pennington,
1986 Sunflower

Joe Pennington (THS 1987) is one of those Topeka High volunteers that just “shows up” at the right place and the right time. An entrepreneur and business owner in his own right, having started as Stevenson Company, a Topeka-based metal fabricator, in 1991, Joe has been a guest speaker in Murray Moore’s entrepreneur class. Moore says, “Joe lets students see the real steps involved in starting a business, helping them visualize

their own business ideas.” Joe has also been a mentor to students and always takes the time to visit about ideas whether at a football game or just walking the halls. Joe was quick to volunteer to serve as a shark tank judge for students’ business plans; even asking the students to make their pitch in the space where they dreamed of opening a coffeeshop. When the students

needed counter tops, Joe said, “I do stainless steel.” Moore said, “I had my student negotiate and seal the deal for the countertops.”

Joe participated in debate and National Honor Society while at Topeka High School and is now president of Stevenson Company, a trusted vendor inside food plants across the country, creating sanitary design and fabrication services for the world’s best producers of candy, nuts, and snacks. Their hallmark product is the innovative Spiral Chute installed wherever fragile food product is handled. Professionally Joe serves on the Apprenticeship Training Committee in Kansas City. He is a graduate of Leadership Greater Topeka and was co-founder of Forge, Topeka’s Young Professional Organization. Joe is married to Erin Bess Brunton Pennington (THS 1988); they have two children who have attended THS.

IN MEMORY OF OUR GRADUATES & FRIENDS

Mary Furgason Henderson 1942
Loma Moffet Putnam 1945
Betty Skoog Bomar 1946
David Houser 1946
Neil Firestone 1947
Betty Delfs Bowling 1947
Marilyn Maust Ham 1949
Melvin J. Quinn 1950
Ruth Ashley Logan 1951
Sue Anderson Iverson 1951
Flora Kintz Lohrbach 1951
Emily J. Scott Graham 1951
William L. Reichert 1952
Nancy Dayton Brooks 1953
Henry J. 'Bud' Bromich 1954
Hubert J. Bellman 1955

Judy Ainsworth Gilmore 1956
Dale O. Helmlinger 1957
Thomas W. Shupe 1957
Stephen M. Poort 1957
Delores Hummer Porter 1958
Betty Shields Vines 1958
Tony Comfort 1958
Richard E. Smith 1958
James L. Schwartz 1958
Nancy Fritton Habinger 1959
Dennis Downey 1959
Bill L. Johnson 1959
Robert Schneider 1959
Marcia Kay Jones 1959
Kirby Deeter 1960
Patricia Keefe Eisenbarth 1961

Richard Schroder 1963
Cynthia Gilchrist Vahsholtz 1963
Fred Eberhart 1963
Mary Tavares Tetuan 1963
David G. Monical 1964
Richard 'Rick' McDonald 1965
Randall E. Williams 1967
Cindy George Simmons 1968
Richard Rodriguez 1971
Dane M. Clark 1973
Mark W. Penn 1975
Judy L. Wells 1982
Ricky Steele 1984
Jackie Anderson Fink, THS dear friend

Troy Today - What's happening at THS?



Rob Hays, THS Assistant Principal, was a record holder two times in October 2021. With a final time of 14 hours and 35 minutes, Hays broke two road 100-mile records at the Ottawa Rails-to-Trails Extravaganza. Nationally, Hays set the age group record for 55 to 59-year-olds by one hour and 14 minutes. Statewide, regardless of age group, Hays now has the record by five minutes.

Congratulations, Mr. Hays!



For the last 3 years, THS JAGK (Jobs for America's Graduates Kansas) has partnered with BC/BS of Kansas in assembling and creating community gift baskets for elders in the community. LULAC, the Topeka Housing Authority, and Jackson Towers

residents are just a few places who receive these baskets. After the students have assembled them, they personally deliver them to the various sites.



Clubs at THS today are different from 'back in the day'. Now they meet during Trojan Time once a month for those not able to meet after school. They still have AFS and Thespians as popular options. However, many of the club choices are different. Above is a picture of the **Backpacking Club's** first trip as a club. They backpacked on the beautiful trail skirting the bluffs along Elk City Reservoir outside Neodesha, Kansas. Thanks to THS sponsors Jason Morrison and Stephanie Crawford and to **Dan Wadley THS 1995**, Maurine's father who provided his expertise. They're going Mushroom Hunting in the Spring with the Hunt & Fish Club.

Thanks to **Daniel Edwards, THS 1969** for the 2 aerial pictures of Topeka High and the neighborhood taken in 1970, on display in the main office.

Black & Gold Report - Graduates in the News



Curt Skoog THS 1981, was elected mayor of Overland Park, Kansas, in November 2021. Prior to that, Skoog was elected to the City Council in 2005 and reelected in three times, serving as City Council president in January 2021. Skoog's focus has been strengthening neighborhoods, passage of Vision Metcalf, the 96th and Antioch redevelopment and the resurgence of downtown Overland Park. Professionally, Skoog is the Branch Manager for the Institute of Building Technology and Safety. He and his wife Amy have three children who graduated from schools in the Shawnee Mission School District.



Thelma Chapman Allendorf 1944 and family have been honored by Washburn University as Family of the Year. Thelma is a retired elementary teacher and President of the North Topeka Historical Society. She is a 1944 graduate of Topeka High. Congratulations to the Allendorf Family!



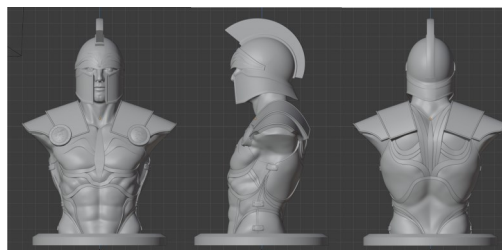
Duane Pomeroy, THS 1970, attended an event at the WU Mulvane Art Museum in November 2021. **Jon Sebelius, THS 2002**, was one of the featured artists. Sebelius partnered with award-winning photojournalist Brian Lanker in a series called "Powerful Women". Pomeroy was Sebelius' tennis coach at THS.



The THS Class of 1980 held an art raffle at their reunion during 2021 Homecoming Weekend. The proceeds were gifted to the 150th celebration. The THSHS thanks the Class of 1980. Pictured are **Terry Parker THS 1980** on the left and classmate **David Penn THS 1980**.

It warms our hearts to know that individuals and THS classes share our belief that preservation of Topeka High history and tradition is important. During the 2021-2022 school year it has been the desire of the 150th committee to remind our graduates and supporters of 150 years of THS's rich history and provide fun and affordable opportunities for them to

walk the Halls of Troy. 150th Sponsors have generously helped offset celebration expenses. Their names are displayed on bricks on a THS Tower replica in the main hall. It's not too late to add your name to the 'Tower'. **How would you like to sponsor the THS Variety Show or the 150th Finale** being held on Saturday, May 28th at Topeka High. get in touch with Joan Barker at jbarker@tps501.org or 785-295-3200.



The final image of a Trojan by Sean O'Callaghan (THS Art Faculty) that will become a 4 foot statue. It will be mounted on a two foot concrete pedestal. We have sponsors for two statues that will be installed on the THS grounds. The 150th committee is looking for another sponsor for a statue that might be placed in a yet-to-be-determined spot in Topeka. Contact 785-295-3200 for details.

USS Constitution gets first woman commander

Cmdr. Billie J. Farrell will become the first woman to lead the crew of the 224-year-old warship on January 21. Farrell is a native of Paducah, Kentucky, a 2004 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, and most recently served as the executive officer aboard U.S.S. Vicksburg. THS and Old Ironsides have a significant connection. Three spars from the warship have been THS flagpoles since 1931. Congratulation Cmdr. Farrell!

THS Historical Society Supporters (On a mission for THS)

Graduation Year _____

First Name _____ Last Name (at graduation) _____ Current Last Name _____

THS Spouse's First Name _____ Last Name _____ Spouse Graduation Year _____

Street _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Country _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES – (for operational expenses & THSHS special events)

	Amount
Yearly (\$25)	\$ _____
Extra annual payment of \$1 for each year since my graduation (i.e. Class of 1966, 50 years since graduation=\$50)	\$ _____

I want to give a membership to:

Name _____ Graduation year _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Membership levels: ____ Yearly (\$25) ____ 5 Year (\$100)

Total \$ _____

Check enclosed: ☐ (payable to THS Historical Society or THSHS) TOTAL \$ _____

Charge account: ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ American Express ☐ Discover (**\$50 minimum requested**)

Name on Card: _____

Number: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ CV # (required) _____

Expiration Date: Month _____ Year _____

Mail to: THSHS, 800 SW 10th, Topeka, KS 66612, or pay dues online at: thshistoricalociety.org/

Keep track of your THSHS membership easily by creating a recurring payment online at thshistoricalociety.org. Find the option at the checkout.

Trojans in the Spotlight

- ◆ The **2022 Topeka High Yearbook** was selected as a national sample book for the Balfour company. It's the second year in a row that they had that honor. Only the top 3 percent of all Balfour's yearbooks are chosen as national samples. Our book will be sent to schools across the country as an example of an excellent yearbook.
- ◆ Congratulations to THS students who were recognized for their literary excellence in the 2022 MLK Living the Dream Awards. **9th - 10th Grade:** Jayden Norman, 1st in Poetry; Rylee Jade Salts, 2nd in Poetry. **11th - 12th Grade:** Lilian Thorton, 1st in Poetry; Kristoffer Comahig, 2nd in Poetry; Skylar Sutton, 3rd in Poetry; Day-Shauna Wiley, 1st in Art; NiJaree Canady, 2nd in Essay.



The 150th Black and Gold Gala on December 4, 2021 was an evening of fine dining, fellowship and music. Thank you Manuel & Sara Martinez for the elegant dinner; Sheila Krohe and committee for the special touches; and Tommy Jones, Richetta Manager and musicians for the rocking concert.



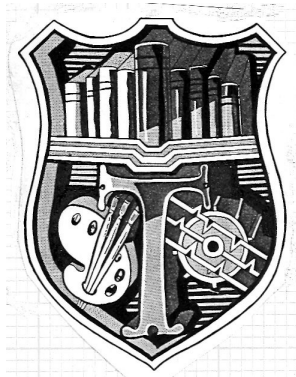
THS Historical Society
800 W Tenth Ave
Topeka, KS 66612

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non. Prof. Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Topeka, KS
Permit No. 702

**The THS Historical Society
appreciates our members!**

Help us get the word out about our mission to support Topeka High. Encourage a classmate or friend to join the THSHS. Consider giving a THSHS membership to a sibling or classmate as a gift. You don't have to be a THS graduate to be a THSHS member. All who are interested in historic preservation of a Topeka landmark are welcome. You can remit your dues by completing the form on page 7 of this newsletter or by going on-line at thshistoricalociety.org and joining the effort for THS by credit card.



**THS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ACCOUNTS**

THSHS ENDOWMENT - Established in 2019 to sustain the operations of the THSHS and encourage building preservation - administered by the Topeka Community Foundation.

THSHS 150TH - These funds are used for the celebration activities & events.

THSHS TOWER SOCIETY— established in 2009 to be used for building projects - list of donors is included once a year in the THSHS newsletter and on the THSHS website.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES AND YEAR
END APPEAL**— These funds are used for operating expenses of the THSHS.