



The Hope Farm / Greer School
Alumni Association
Newsletter



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Photo courtesy Singing River Electric Cooperative, Lucedale, Mississippi

We are...Greer School!

The movie, "We Are Marshall" is a depiction of the 1970 plane crash that killed most of the members of the University of Marshall football team and as you can imagine, devastated the entire Marshall University community. The film addressed the rebuilding of the football program and the healing of the entire college and town.

The first response in the wake of the tragedy was for the Marshall University President to terminate the football program, but he is ultimately persuaded to reconsider after the pleas of the Marshall students and the residents of the town which Marshall is in. It turns out that the team was rebuilt in a relatively short time. The team was composed of 18 returning freshman players—who did not travel with the team for the game after which the tragedy occurred, because of rules about not playing freshmen that existed at that time. There were also some non-scholarship players who later joined the team.

The program rebuilt itself because of the pride of the people and the catchword expression became,

"We are Marshall." That expression symbolized the never quit attitude which developed. As you watch the story unfold, you get a strong sense of pride which developed among the students and the townspeople. They come to realize their uniqueness as members of this special college and community

Although Greer did not go through such a tragedy as Marshall, I have still come to realize that each school has qualities that make it unique from other schools, and a sense of pride and accomplishment develop within its student body which makes one proud to be a member of the school. Greer was certainly no exception to this. What are the positive qualities you felt and saw while you attended Greer which enable all of us to say, "We are...Greer School!"? I invite you to share these qualities with the rest of us that attended Greer.

John Hudnor, Greer Class of '63

Miscellaneous

1. The alumni association was pleased to receive tributes about Greer's staff from quite a few of you. At press time, the following is a list of those who contributed "thanks- to- staff" who made a difference in their lives: **Harry McCandless, Diana Munzer, Penny Klyce, Kristin Beskeen, Armin Ali, Joseph Delisle, John Hudnor, Bob Jenkins, Doug Berry, Pam Stobbe, George Freer, Anne Meyrowitz, Mike Ennis, Georgia King, Pauline Wendt, Jack Miller, Karen Venetian, Rita Playfair, Glenn Fillman, Mike Stolting, Karen Townsend, Angie Oliver, Russell Golden, Peggy Matthewson, Penny Harned, Bill Monza, Hildi Walton, Virginia Moffitt, Bob Ildefonso, Pat Monza, Linda Wilson, Dolan Brammer, Nick Anderson, Robert Tolliver, Al Barsodi, Mark Speakman, Cherilyn Gerringer, George and Laura Fisher, John Nicholas and**

Maureen Meyer. In the coming issues of the quarterly Greer School Alumni Association newsletters we will include these tributes as well as other tributes which have been sent in previously before this recent request was made. We are pleased that so many of you appreciated some of Greer's staff who were a help to you along-the-way. If you have not yet sent in a tribute, feel free to write to us about staff that helped you while you were at Greer. We will continue to publish your tributes to staff in the coming issues of our newsletter.

2. A complete wrap up of the **"Honoring our Staff" reunion** will be forthcoming in the holiday/winter issue of the newsletter.

Catching up on news from Alumni/staff and profiles of Alumni

Penny Harned writes that Greer was very important in her life and at the vulnerable age of 15 1/2 years of age. It was the ideal (neutral) environment that provided a safe haven from mixed up feelings and conflicting "ups- and-downs" of being a teenager.

Al Barsodi wanted me to be sure to mention the farmers at Greer and in addition, the work ethic that was a part of Greer. Al said that the work ethic he learned at Greer has served him well throughout his life. In retirement, Al produces much of his own food on the 20 acres of land he owns. His land has a big garden, chickens for meat and eggs, a Greenhouse, and a 20-cord woodpile. Great work, Al!

Tecla Klyce told an "It's a small world" story. In the mid-1960's, she reports, "I roomed with a group of girls in Boston (too much fun)." Carolyn, one of Tecla's roommates...she is the one who likes to tell people she knew me when I couldn't put a sentence together. But, I did not know she was aware that I'd been in a boarding school in New York State in the late 1950's. Carolyn was in Paris last year in a Viking Cruise, and being a friendly and chatty person, she struck up a conversation with the tour guide. How they got from Paris/Viking Cruise/travel to former roommate Tecla and tour guide's background defies imagination. But the

tour guide told Carolyn that Tecla was his first girlfriend! Turns out the tour guide was former Greer student, Bernie Orlamunder! He has been living in Paris for 30 years. Yes, Tecla, it is a small world.

Currently, Tecla is very much enjoying life as the publisher of a bimonthly regional magazine, "Outlook by the Bay". Now in its 11th year, the focus is to provide information that will enhance the lives of adults over 55 who reside in the Chesapeake Bay Area of Maryland. Creating and maintaining the magazine has been a challenge which has been more enjoyable than taxing—it involves problem solving, stamina, self-motivation, a sense of humor and guts. It is 90% hard work and 10% creativity. As one who did not play well with others (ask my Greer housemother!) it is a niche that fits perfectly.

At this age our motives for taking on new challenges is hugely different from our earlier years. With our kids now out of college and married, income is no longer the prime focus of our lives, which relieves us of a huge responsibility. We are now free to go in whatever direction we find most satisfying. A further sense of endless enjoyment is our extended family as three daughters and eight grandkids have all chosen to settle nearby and be a part of our lives.

For a gazillion years it seems, I have been writing historical novels about young adults under the pen name, "Tecla Emerson." Four novels have been self-published, and the goal is to have about 10 more published. Also, I would like to eventually complete an anthology of the 200 best articles pulled from the magazine I publish. Having goals at this age seems to keep one focused and makes each day worthwhile. I continually want to get out there and do more.

Tributes to Staff of Greer School

Serita Weaver Eisenbies

Serita was a caseworker at Greer from 1962-1965. She said she loved working and living at Greer cottage where the **Shay's** were the house parents. She became good friends with **Howie and Ginny Sanders**. She married after leaving Greer and has

three children. In their retirement, her husband worked with a mission group that provided donated cars for working families. At present, Serita has also been involved with various church activities.

Maurice Neville

Maurice worked in the Vocational Department at Greer during the 1950's and 1960's. Maurice was the person who maintained all of Greer's vehicles and taught quite a few students about keeping vehicles in shape. After leaving Greer, he worked for the telephone company for 30 years and in his retirement, enjoys model railroading. He married the former Greer homemaking teacher, **Virginia Swanson** and they raised their children in his current home right across the road from Greer's "res", our old summer swimming hole.

Tom Percy

Tom Percy was one of those people who fits the title of a "jack-of-all-trades." He oversaw Greer's vocational training programs, driver's education teacher, forestry expert, advisor to the student council, and with his wife, **Cynthia** served as house parents for many years. Tom was also an administrator at Greer in the mid 1960's.

From the class of 1960: They pointed out in their yearbook that Mr. Percy had always been a close friend to the students and was someone who they enjoyed being with and talking to.

From Pam (Rogers) Tooke: Mr. Percy set the standard for me on how a man is supposed to lead on the dance floor. Tom and his wife were great house parents and examples for me.

From Mark Speakman: Mr. Percy was the person who got me interested in forestry and in building things.

From John Nicholas: Mr. Percy helped me to learn a love for the outdoors through his example of forestry projects.

From John Hudnor: Teaching me how to drive Greer's huge all-purpose dump truck took a lot of patience on Mr. Percy's part, and I am very appreciative of this. He also taught many other Greer's students how to drive. What a thrill it was

to learn the art of driving from him. At the high school I taught at, they had two teachers who teaching the students how to drive was what they did full time. Mr. Percy's teaching us how to drive was just one of the many roles he played. Kudos to Mr. Percy for doing so many things for the students at Greer.

From Tony Vaz: Although Mr. Percy didn't personally teach me to drive, I learned to drive a "stick shift" on his watch in the Forestry Department's Ford Ferguson tractor. He was a great guy to work for.

Gayle (Houser) Fox

Gayle reports that her years as a teacher at Greer in the 1950's were a great time for her in her life.

Later, after leaving Greer, she began a church school in 1972 with 16 students. As of a few years ago, the school had its own building with 275 students. She goes in two mornings a week to help grade papers and be a grandma to the 2nd and 3rd graders as she answers their questions and befriends them.

Dan Simonds

He was a houseparent, teacher, and guidance counselor during his year at Greer from 1960-1961. He and former Greer houseparent and coach, **Ken Lynn** both graduated from Springfield College in May of 1960 before starting their work at Greer in September of 1960.

Mr. Simons reports that his single year at Greer might have been among the most impactful of his early adult years. He said that today (2019) he is amazed at the clarity of his memories of that year at Greer—specific people and events. He and his wife left Greer only because his hometown high school contacted him with the opportunity to completely develop a high school counseling program, and he felt he could not pass up this challenging opportunity. He worked there for 37 years before retiring in 1998.

Mrs. Kenneth Taylor

She taught English, History, and was the girls' coach during the 1960-61 school year. She coached the

field hockey team to a record of 4 wins, 2 losses, and 1 tie.

Miss Herta Taussig

She was a special person who left Austria to escape the NAZI regime, and it took her six years to finally arrive in America. She found a teaching position at Greer and loved her students and the whole atmosphere at Greer. The Greer students had empathy for her as she had been displaced from her home and country just as Greer's students had been displaced from their homes.

The students in the 1949 yearbook said her enthusiasm for Mathematics was very inspiring to them and whose warm personality made us all her friends.

After leaving Greer, she married former Greer teacher and coach, **Arthur Frietag** and went on to becoming a famous math professor at a Virginia college, and had one of the buildings named after her because of her skills and positive influence on her students.

Miss Josephine Thomas

She served Greer's students from 1919 to 1952. During that time, she taught grades 1,2, and 3. Later, she became assistant principal. Because of her, each student was inspired to become a better person. The students felt the warmth of her friendship. The senior class of 1950 said they were the recipients of her unselfishness and understanding. She was known for the generous giving of herself to others.

Miss Bette Thomas

She was the girls AD and aided in the building of the concept of sportsmanship by adding her youthful punch and vitality. She started a 6-girl athletic counsel and through the counsel helped the girls experience leadership roles. Miss Thomas believed the GAA has helped decidedly in morale and efficiency. The GAA assisted in conducting gym classes, refereeing games, and acting as hostesses for visiting sports teams.

She married Greer's PE teacher **Gordon Goudey** in 1952. They had both been at Greer from 1949-1952.

Herby Van Anden

Worked at and later ran Greer's farm. He was a soft-spoken man who was a very hard worker, a great boss, and patient with those who were learning the ropes of farming. He, in short, was a first-class person.

From Don Farkas: Working on the farm was special because it gave me the opportunity to learn to drive, milk cows, and plow the land.

From Mike Ennis: **Herby and Vern Ladeau** were some of the best people I ever met.

From Glenn Fillman: If you had kitchen duty at any of the cottages and prepared the aluminum cans and bottles of fresh cold milk, who you gonna thank? Vern and Herby.

Philip Van Hook

He was Greer's commissary Manager and purchasing agent. He helped students manage the "Wigwam" and taught them how to run it efficiently.

Susan Van Tassell

She taught for many years in Greer's elementary grades. At the end of each school year, she took her class to her farm in Verbank and had a picnic with them after they got to see all her animals and the chance to play games at her farm. A wonderful tradition of Mrs. Van Tassell's!

Carmen Vitello

He came to Greer in 1917 as Greer's custodian. In 1920 he worked in Greer's food store as a butcher where he put up orders for cottages and baked bread 3 times per week. From 1948 to 1953 he was a maintenance man at Main House.

The 1953 seniors said in their yearbook that he was well liked by all the students at Greer.

Marinus and Wilhelmina Wesdorp

They were house parents at Greer in the late 1950's. He was born in Holland and a master of many things: tentmaker, expert sound effects man for Dutch National Radio and he sheltered a prominent Jewish Radio Personality in his attic in WWII Holland. He was enslaved in a NAZI work camp but escaped. After leaving Greer, he was a drafting expert for IBM. In retirement, he painted

and built ship models and clocks. He also kept excellent aquaria and pressed wine.

Mrs. Wesdorp also came from Holland and assisted her husband at Rapallo while raising their two sons and working as a nurse at Greer's infirmary.

Warren West

He was the head of Greer's farm in the early 1950's. In addition to providing Greer's milk, he raised pork and beef for school consumption.

He was described as having youth and know-how and taught many agricultural skills to students.

Ruthann Wichelman

She worked as a teacher at Greer from 1949-1951 as a 6th grade teacher. Before coming to Greer, she received a college degree from NYU and later, a master's degree from Rutgers in Library Science. At Greer, she helped with Greer's sports teams and the Brownie troop at Greer.

She remembers that most staff in her time at Greer had 3 assignments each weekend. Hers were teaching Sunday School, Brownies, and library duty.

Bertie and Wistar Wood

They worked at Crest cottage for the two years they were at Greer—1953-1955. They look back at Greer as a fun and satisfactory experience.

From Hildi Walton Plunkett: They had a great influence on her life. Everything she learned about family life was from the Wood's. You were kind and loving to me and you always had time to talk to me. Wistar taught me to dance and how I loved it.

From Diana Munzer: In their two years at Greer, they crammed so much love into those years that for me it seemed like they were at Greer forever. They were intelligent and funny and talked to us like we were regular human beings.

More from Hildi Walton: The house parents who most influenced me were Bertie and Wistar Wood. They were just a young couple who with no experience dealing with teenage girls, but I felt valued in their care. They both strengthened my

moral and ethical outlook on life by their examples of being calm, understanding, and loving.

Mr. and Mrs. Yates

They were teachers at Greer. She was the home economics teacher and Mr. Yates taught 7th grade. They both loved to travel.

Miss Ellinor Zischkau

She taught 7/8th grade English, American history, and Problems of Democracy. She also coached girls' field hockey and supervised the cheerleaders. She had attended Roanoke College in Virginia and as a hobby enjoyed analyzing handwriting.

Mrs. Ruth Freitag

From Hildi Walton: Mrs. Freitag was the teacher I most respected and whom I most often think of, even today. She was very knowledgeable, fair and consistent. When a student was trying bluff his/her way through a scientific explanation, she would say, "Well, you're leaving a loop hole big enough for a Mac Truck" meaning that he/she didn't really understand what they were saying, but at the same time she sort of appreciated the effort and never humiliated the student. She was wise and she cared about teaching and her students.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Shay

From Linda Wilson Cavanaugh: Mr. and Mrs. Shay, the house parents at Greer cottage had a positive influence on my life. I worked at Greer cottage as one of my vocational jobs and was very impressed by the way the Shays treated their daughter, **Thomasina**. In fact, I was so impressed that it was one of the reasons that I became a nurse specializing in the care of special needs patients. Thomasina's room was always the "it" place for activity. The school children were always in there visiting or reading to her. Thomasina was the center of the Shay's world and she was very much loved by them and the girls who were at Greer cottage. This was quite a contrast as in that era in America as then, most handicapped children were hidden away with little interaction with the general public, but the Shay's were a wonderful exception to that general rule.

I have worked in a crippled children's hospital and later, I worked with intellectually impaired children.

Sad News

We have learned that **Ida Fairley Bove** passed away February 5 of this year. **Edward Nathaniel Martin** (Class of 1962) passed away on April 21.

Hopefully, that is all the sad news for now.

Greerschool.Org Web Site Update

Nothing new to report at this time.

Tony Vaz – Webmaster Greerschool.Org
Greer Class of '61 (Honorary)
JOAT/MON SOHK 1961-2019

In addition to reporting any change of address to Peggy Sparks, you can contact me at tonyvaz@greerschool.org

Send newsworthy articles to:

John Hudnor - } Contact tonyvaz
Sandy Hudnor – } tonyvaz@greerschool.org
Peggy Sparks – } for contact info
or “snail mail” them to the return address on your hard copy envelope.

Due to a lack of communication from the reunion organizers, we were unable to report the actual attendees to the recent event. There were reported 58 attendees registered, but the number of former staff who attended are unknown presently. We do know from photographs provided by **Anne Meyrowitz Foster** (Class of '61) that **Isabel Rarick Morton** and **Charmi Neely-Mulvihill** were there. Thanks! Anne.

We will try to provide a complete list of attendees in the Winter Holiday newsletter.



Isabel seated with Nick Anderson and Dolan Brammer



Charmi and Pam Pequeno together again