

Worcester Central School Alumni Minutes 2018

The 122nd Worcester Central School Alumni Banquet was held on June 23, 2018 in the WCS Cafenadium with 160 alumni and guests present. Decorations of floating rosebud vases were placed on the tables by the alumni association. Kelly McLaughlin Reed, class of 1981, served punch during the social hour. Carnation corsages were given to several anniversary classes as they arrived: 50 years, 60 years, 65 years, 67 years, 68 years, 69 years and 71 year graduates.

President Anita DuBois Cleveland, class of 1986, welcomed guests and the class of 2018 to the banquet. There were alumni from New York State and 7 other states attending the banquet.

The pledge of allegiance was recited by all attending, and President Anita DuBois Cleveland gave the invocation. Dinner was catered and served by Chef Joe Calleja and the WCS staff.

Interim Superintendent, Ed Shultis and his wife Beth were present. He stated he was very pleased to be back at Worcester Central, and recalled that back in 1966 his wife was first hired by Mr. Cerra, and that she had come back in the 1980's as a substitute teacher. He also reported that Timothy Gonzales had just been appointed by the school board as Executive Principal until he gets certified. He is coming from Arizona and will be here in July of 2018. Mr. Shultis then introduced Secondary Principal, Kimberlee Curran. She welcomed all alumni to the banquet and thanked the alumni committee for such a great event. She also noted that this was a special group of seniors, displaying pride and loyalty in the community. She said the Class of 2018 made a very lasting impression, and that just recently the tour guides on the Senior Class Trip remarked how impressed they were by the seniors.

Guest Speaker Vera Bozanic Peters, class of 1945, was introduced by her daughter, Suzanne Peters. There were 12 kids in the family and all graduated from WCS. She suggested to the alumni committee that her mom be this year's speaker because she is a good and kind person who grew up poor, lost her parents, made a life and at 90, living longer than either her parents or husband, continues to be happy for what she has.

Her mom said they didn't think about being happy but whether they would have something to eat. She told me her life on the farm seemed like another world and is something I could never understand. I can't imagine having the same principal, Arthur B. Doig, all 12 years nor the same president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Even when a new president took office, Harry S. Truman, he would have the same birthday as my mom!

She wanted her children to have access to knowledge. She taught us not to spend money you don't have, to pay your bills at the end of the month and to buy good shoes because you only have one set of feet.

My oldest brother Craig said to mention that kids in the neighborhood liked to eat at our house because mom was a good cook including her fabulous blackberry pies and that she maintains our extended family relationships via cards and monthly emails.

My other brother James said she was a great friend growing up and always supportive.

Excerpts from Vera's speech:

Good evening graduates, alumni and guests. I am Vera Bozanic Peters. It is my honor and privilege to be your speaker.

There were twelve of us; Nick, Anne, Helen, Zita, John, Donald, George, Emily, Janet, Mary, Larry and me, Vera. We all graduated from Worcester Central school, this very school that provided the groundwork for us to successfully engage the world around us.

My mother Marta Durkota and my father John Bozanic immigrated from Europe. My mother came from what was then the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and my father came from Croatia. They both entered the United States through Ellis Island and then to Illinois where they met, married and started a family.

My siblings Nick, Anne, Helen and Zita were born in Illinois. They decided to move to Worcester, New York and settled on a farm on Decatur Road where I was born. About five years later we moved to a new farm on South Hill and the family kept growing.

Music was one of our biggest entertainments on the farm especially in the winter. It was a respite from work. Remember we didn't have electricity so no television and of course no computers. Pa bought our first piano with many bushels of potatoes. I remember that day vividly even though I was only 4yrs old. Anne, Zita, Emily and I would all learn to play it.

Music was also one of the things we looked forward to at WCS. From the 2nd grade up the music teacher, Mrs. Whitcomb, would come to our class and teach us vocal training and how to read the musical staff and notes.

Mrs. Whitcomb would recognize my sister Emily's musical talent, encourage her and assist her in getting a scholarship to Hartwick college.

If you wanted to play an instrument the school would provide them and almost all of us took advantage of this. Donald, Nick and Janet played saxophone plus Donald played harmonica. Emily and John played trombone. Emily also played guitar. George played

trumpet. Zita played trombone, violin and viola. Anne played flute and played in the WCS flute quartet at nationals. Mary played violin and I played clarinet.

In summer time when school was out the band played every Saturday night outside the Worcester Inn. It was two miles from the farm on South Hill and I would walk the first mile and then run the second mile because I was so eager to play.

Tragedy struck in 1942. It was winter, I was 14 and my mother went into childbirth. There was a terrible blizzard preventing a doctor to come to the farm. Larry, my last sibling was born that night, but my mother died, leaving my sisters and I in charge as my father grieved. As each girl left the farm after graduation, the next in line became 'the mother'. I was the 'mother' for about four years.

Years later a second tragedy happened. A tractor tipped over and killed my father. There were six children still living at home. My brother Donald, 19 at the time, remained on the farm to help, and 27-year-old Helen and her husband, Winfield, became the legal guardians.

. Despite losing both our parents nobody quit school. We knew education was important. School provided us with some amazing teachers who gave us tremendous support. It is no surprise why several of the younger ones became teachers.

We didn't have any money, but we stayed together as a family, helping each of us to graduate, to leave the farm and become successful.

I joined the Air Force as I discovered you got free room and board and a paycheck as well. I met my husband, who was also in the Air Force in a Russian class at the University of Maryland. My sister Janet went into the Air Force using her musical skills, traveling the world with the Air Force Band.

After WWII the draft came causing my brothers John, George and Larry to enter the Air Force. My brother Donald deferred because of the responsibility of running our farm and taking care of the kids after Pa died but as soon as the farm was sold he was drafted. We would all use the GI Bill to enable us to obtain an education, go to college and get good jobs.

Where did our paths take us? Well my brother Nick, the oldest child, would leave the farm first. He would get a chance to play for the NY Giants baseball team, work at various jobs, marry, have three children and become known for raising prize chickens.

My sister Anne was very musical and in addition to piano and flute she learned how to play accordion and the organ. She played organ at The National Shrine in Auriesville, New York. After Anne married she moved to Indiana, had six children and played the church organ for fifteen years there.

My sister Helen was the overall guardian of our family after pa died. She married, had three sons and was the one who remained in Worcester. Helen was a Justice of the Peace for the Town of Worcester, long time library aide at WCS and active in both the Historical Society & Women's Club. Her son Jeff Teller married and still resides here in Worcester.

My sister Zita was the valedictorian of her class at WCS in 1944. She went to NYC, became the first female radio operator at LaGuardia airport, married an airline pilot, had three children and lived the good life on Long Island. She later moved to Tavares, Florida and became a Children's Librarian at the local public library.

My brother John, after serving four years in the Air Force, graduated from the University of Miami with a degree in electrical engineering. He married, had four children and moved to California to work for North American Aviation working on Apollo 13.

My brother Donald went to work for Westinghouse, married, had two children, obtained a degree in electrical engineering and holds many patents in electron spin echo frequency. He retired thirty years later moving to West Virginia and becoming a master gardener. He also learned to play banjo and ukulele, skills he uses to entertain seniors confined to their retirement homes.

My sister Janet earned a PhD from UCLA, married, had two children, became the Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as well as the Chair of the Faculty and Director of Parr Center for Ethics. For 25 years, she was the announcer for UNC women's basketball and field hockey, and was the first and only woman to announce both men's and women's basketball at the 1996 Olympic Games.

My brother George married a graduate of Schenevus. They both went to Cortland State Teachers College for their bachelors, and Stonybrook for their masters' degrees in physical education. After teaching they moved south with their four children where among other things he became involved in the Outdoor Amusement Business. George was well known for developing new ideas to improve the industry.

My sister Emily received a scholarship and graduated from Hartwick college with a music degree. She taught music 27 years in upstate NY, married & moved to Florida. There she taught 10 more years. She is currently President of the Deerfield Beach Historical Society.

My sister Mary Ervina, named for the school nurse Irva Rock, moved to California, and created her own computer supply company. She followed her dreams to play guitar writing her own songs and appearing in local clubs. Mary wrote and recorded the song "Dreams of Gold and Fame" played in the 1996 Olympic Village in Atlanta.

My brother Larry graduated from Eastern Michigan University, married, had five children, and worked for Ford Motor Company in Detroit. He holds a patent for an automation process. Larry was integral in the global plant startup operations within Ford and was sent to China for their start up plant, where he finished a Chinese language program at a University in Shanghai. He later retired to travel the world.

And as for me, I have worn the hats of daughter, student, staff sergeant, wife, mother, aunt and grandmother. I went from living on the farm to living in Europe and then living in a suburb of our Nation's capital. I worked in real estate and traveled the world but have always returned to my own garden to spend the day planting and weeding.

Most of us left Worcester but the seeds of what we learned here is something we have passed on to our children. My son Craig served 21 years in the US Navy, retiring as a Navy Diver, received his BS degree, then spent the next 26 years in the IT industry before retiring again this past May. My son James attended college in California, served 4 years honorably in the U.S. Marine Corps, and has spent 38 years in the bicycle industry as courier, shop manager, product manager, and Director of Product Development. My daughter Suzanne attended college for theater & civil engineering, lived in France, managed a bike store and is now in Jewish education.

Among my nieces and nephews are ballerinas, historians, PhDs, valedictorians, (Donald is here with us tonight. Both of his children, Christie and Andy, are here with us.) teachers, musicians, scientists, explorers, scuba divers, mountain climbers, poets, Eagle scout leaders, international business developers, writers, accountants, attorneys, public speakers, inventors and university librarians and professors.

About now you might be asking yourself why am I up here? What lessons do I at 90 years old have to pass on? Just this. Focus on what you have and not on what you don't have. Money didn't make my family successful. Our school years at Worcester Central was the foundation of our success. Lacking other resources many of us would take advantage of the different opportunities offered. Determination, perseverance and a sense of adventure got each of us to where we are. These are traits worth more than money because unlike money they NEVER lose their value.

After Vera's speech she enjoyed a standing ovation from the audience.

President Cleveland called the business meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence for members of the alumni that have passed away, and military who have fought for our country.

Class President Gabrielle Clements introduced her classmates and class advisors, Dawn Schrull Handy, class of 1986, and Shelby Casola. A motion was made and seconded to accept the class of 2018 into the alumni association. Gifts of WCS note paper and lanyards were given to each senior in attendance from the alumni association.

The secretary's and treasurer's reports were read and accepted as presented.

Vice President Linda Karker, class of 1968, read 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year generation of graduates from WCS:

2nd Generation:

Sebastian Fredette and his mother Jo Ann Golja Fredette, class of 1984

Zachary Kever and his mother Tammy Prentice Kever, class of 1991

Rebekah McCoy and her mother Mary McCoy, class of 1986

Not Present: Logan Fancher and his parents, Marie Ridgeway Fancher, class of 1986, and Randall Fancher, class of 1980. Jordin Manchester and his father Brian Manchester, class of 1990.

3rd Generation:

Cassandra Rock and her father Brian Rock, class of 1988, and her grandfather Arnold Rock, class of 1953.

Liv Spina and her parents, Joanne Millias Spina, class of 1989, her dad Joel Spina class of 1988, her grandmother Teresa Cicchine Millias, class of 1964, and her grandfather David Millias, class of 1960.

4th Generation:

Parker Sheldon and his mother, Beckey Bentley Sheldon, class of 1985, his grandparents Winnie Bailey Bentley, class of 1948, Granville Bentley, class of 1949, and his great grandmother Emma Roseboom Bentley, class of 1914.

Corresponding secretary Norma Alexander Ralph, class of 1956, gave the roll call of classes. The anniversary classes were as follows:

50 years, class of 1968, Florence Murdaugh DeWitt, Linda Ten Eyck Karker, Joe (Buzz) Smaila, Jr., Gail Davi Tallman, Artie Verity and Chris Preston Althiser.

60 years, class of 1958, Judy O'Connor Amitrano, Sid Chase, Patricia Milavec Golding, Jean Ten Eyck Patton, and Hazel Conklin Jenkins.

67 years, Class of 1951, Catherine Milavec Rooney and Mary Ann Wilcox Ehrmann.

68 years, class of 1950, Donald Bozanic.

69 years, class of 1949, Marilyn Wright Dufresne.

71 years, class of 1947, Joe Smaila

The oldest graduating class was 73 years, class of 1945, Ellen Moak Leverett, Vera Bozanic Peters, and Jean Platts Stillwell.

President Cleveland recognized past and present teachers and support staff in attendance at the banquet. She asked for any new business, and there was none.

The 48th A.B. and Gladys Doig Memorial Award was presented by Shirley Holloway Wright, class of 1955, and given to Parker Sheldon. The WCS Alumni Award was presented by Richard Wright, class of 1954, and given to Liv Spina.

Maryann Verity Holmes, class of 1961, reported that the current officers will stay on another year. A motion was made and seconded to accept the slated officers.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the business meeting of the banquet.

President Cleveland addressed the seniors with closing remarks. She thanked the maintenance staff for setting up the banquet, the tour guides, officers of the alumni committee, and the cafeteria staff for preparing a delicious buffet.

The program concluded with the benediction by President Cleveland, and the singing of the WCS Alma Mater.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly McLaughlin Reed, Class of 1981