



Kirby High School Reunion Rocked Again

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WOODVILLE – To 1970 tunes, the Kirby High reunion soft-rocked on in the WISD Elementary Cafeteria on Saturday, April 30.

Coordinator Mary Alice Fortenberry-Hall welcomed the largest gathering to date of over 350 celebrating the classes of 1970, '71, and '72. The uniqueness being that they get their first invite at the 50-year mark from graduation. Covid prevented them celebrating in '20 and '21.

“Through the Decades” was this year’s theme.

Master of Ceremonies Fred Sullivan, class of '61, opened the honors, and after a sumptuous lunch introduced the representatives from the three classes.

Again, blind pianist and singer/song writer Walter Plant played hours of '70s music.

Sullivan introduced first Jack Clark, class of '42, celebrating his 80th year and the senior most graduate there. Next month, Clark will be 96!

Seated next to Betty Hairston, class of '46, I was privy to find out that her brother and Jack graduated together in '42. She went on to earn a masters at East Texas State University, which would later be renamed Texas A&M, and finish a career in teaching science. She said, “I taught all the ‘ologies.””

Sullivan introduced WISD Superintendent Lisa Meysembourg who praised their affection for each other and for the spirit of their school. She reported briefly on the latest school bond which was before the voters this week. If passed, a new elementary school would house all together in a more up-to-date facility, as opposed to the current eleven buildings, a few very old. Surprisingly, Meysembourg recalled how she was one of 17, in a family with 11 sisters and 6 brothers, and how they were in route to celebrate her father’s 80th birthday, which certainly highlighted her value of “family.” Family was something all present felt in their school spirit.

For the class of '70, Ron Borel and John Canada recollected their affection. Borel reiterated the honor of “being a part” of such class. With a marvelous smile, Canada recalled a quip to another, that they were celebrating “a half century,” something totally foreign to them when they were teenagers. Canada recalled some of the feelings before and after integration and what a marvelous journey they had taken together.

For the class of '71, Rick Davis, aka “Bubba,” affirmed in turn those in the military, medical, and teaching professions. Their generation was marked by the assassination of Kennedy, the

landing on the moon, and the Vietnam War. He gave several inspiring quotes and noted how they had “much to be thankful for and so much to hope for ... and much to dream.”

For the class of '72, Ky Griffin recalled a host of affections via a few of the endearing songs of the '70s. “Aren't you glad we were laid down here in Woodville, Texas where there were people like the Burtons, the Cortezes, the McClures, the Garners, the Allison, the Nichols, the Swearingens, the Richardsons, the Millers, the Davidsons, the Moyes, the Gardeners, the Fortenberrys ... the Gilcrests, the Parkers, the Williams, the Curries ... many more. They invested themselves into the communities.” As with a few before him, Griffin choked up. Then he listed over dozen more KHS and WISD educators, waxing poetic in adulations.

He told a vignette where he wanted to learn shorthand. But the teacher would not let him, saying, “The only reason you want to take it is because of the girls... that would be like putting the fox in the hen house.”

He queued musician Walter Plant to play “Rain Drops Keep Fallin’ on My Head,” and Griffin sang along, “The blues they send to meet me, Won't defeat me, It won't be long till happiness steps up to greet me.” As the duo sang, several from the audience chimed in.

Nostalgia soft-rocked its way to the close.

Sullivan recognized Linda Johnson and the cafeteria crew who volunteer their time for events like this that raise money for WISD scholarships, over \$100,000 so far!

Mary Alice Hall recognized by name the class agents who have passed over the last decade she has been coordinating these reunions. She noted with sadness that since they last met in 2019, they have lost over 70 classmates, and she asked for a moment of silence.

She recognized Sharon Hall who will pick up the baton and lead the next reunion.

Lastly, they sang the Kirby HS song, which has proven true through the decades, “Ever you'll find us loyal and true, firm and undaunted ever will be, hail to the school we love.”

