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LANDON HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI NEWS

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JUNE 2024

AL HOLT: “HOW LANDON CHANGED ME”



“Just because it isn’t true doesn’t mean you can’t believe in it. Sometimes the things that may or may not be true need to be believed the most.”

Uncle Hub McCann in “Second-Hand Lions”, a movie.

As raw material entering Landon in the eighth grade, I believed too strongly in some things that did not measure up when tried in practice. One such was that you could succeed at anything if you wanted to and if you worked hard enough at it.

So, in the ninth grade, I volunteered to learn to play the trombone with three others who were in the chorus music class. This was a lateral arabesque out of chorus and into band. I already knew that I was not cut out to sing. I learned that from persistent requests by my grammar school music teacher to “sing more softly” or words to that effect. This should have been my cue about music in general, but I believed that if I tried hard enough, I could be a musician. In my daydreams, like Walter Mitty, I saw myself becoming a credit to the renowned Landon High School Band.

Alas, it was not to be. I was demoted to the sousaphone, which I could carry, but could barely play. I saw my classmates easily advancing to more difficult music. I did not advance, even though I took the instruments home and practiced. I was not destined to become an accomplished “band bird”.

“Know Thyself” an ancient Greek maxim.

I’m tempted to write “failure”, but it is more accurate to say that I succeeded in learning about myself. The Landon experience was teaching me about myself.

Next, I wanted to be athletic. I went out for football in the spring and summer for two consecutive years. Again, alas. My classmates were stronger, faster, and more agile. It was clear to me that I was not on a path to domination of the gridiron. I was not going to become an accomplished “jock”.

In the course of these experiences, the Landon faculty, staff, and most of my classmates were supportive. The music staff, including E. T. Cook, the bandleader, gave me generous encouragement right up until the last. Then, E.T. finally erupted, “A person like you shouldn’t be in a band.” He was on target. I did not belong there. As to becoming athletic, I also experienced encouragement. One of the coaches, Victor Papa, took me aside and kindly encouraged me to try for just a bit longer. It was not to be. I had learned the lessons.

New encouragement came from an unexpected direction. Miss West and Mrs. Crutchfield in the math department introduced me to the disciplines needed for college math. Mathematics was easy for me and, moreover, I enjoyed the studies. Then I took chemistry. Mr. Reeves helped me discover that science was also easy and interesting. So, I discovered this about myself: It is in my nature and even my DNA, to be an accomplished “nerd”. I found my calling at last!

Over the years I attended Landon, the staff and my classmates had taught me lessons about myself. It was a “know thyself” experience. I am deeply grateful that I attended such a fine school. In this connection and getting ahead of myself, I’ll interject that it was a great pleasure to attend the 25th, 35th, and 50th class reunions of the Landon Class of 1956 in Jacksonville.

The Navy offered to pay most of my college expenses if I would serve for three years on active duty immediately after graduation. Again, encouragement came from an unexpected direction. Dr. Harrell, father of Martin and James who were our classmates at Landon, encouraged me to apply to Georgia Tech and even wrote a letter in support of my application. I was accepted and spent four years extending my understanding of math and science as a physics major. I wonder how many other students benefited from Dr. Harrell’s quiet and kindly help.

My Navy days were spent on the USS DuPont (DD-941) a destroyer launched in 1956, the same year I graduated from Landon. While I was aboard, the DuPont made three deployments to the Mediterranean, a trip to the Canary Islands as an alternate recovery ship for a space flight, an offshore presence at the Bay of Pigs as a reserve asset, active participation in the Cuban Missile Blockade, and participation in the search for the wreckage of the USS Thresher (SSN-593). My initial responsibility was as Damage Control Assistant to the Chief Engineer. Later, I served as Chief Engineer and Senior Watch Officer.

In those times, I courted Miss Edith Sevier Hanna of Spartanburg, South Carolina, who consented to become my wife. We were married in June 1962. We are proud of our three children, all of whom are independent and have children of their own. We have six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Out of the Navy, I applied to the graduate program at the Georgia Tech School of Physics. I was accepted and was offered significant support. I began my studies in June 1963. Of course, the science and math basics and the good work habits I learned at Landon served me well during this intense time of my life. In early 1967, my dissertation was accepted, and I was awarded a PhD in Physics with a minor in mathematics.

My first job out of graduate school was in the Physics Department at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California. There, I had the joy of collaborating with eminent scientists and mathematicians both in the department at Livermore and at the University of California at Berkeley. I broadened my knowledge of the discipline and (surprise), continued to learn about myself. In 1973, after six years of research at Livermore that followed on the heels my dissertation research, nearly ten years in all, I realized I had become interested in turning to applied research and product development. At the same time, Edith and I decided to move our family out of the urban environment. We moved to a small town on the north coast, Trinidad, California. There, we acquired a small builder's supply company to run as a family business. The laboratory at Livermore agreed to keep me on part time. I acquired a private airplane and used it to travel back and forth to Livermore about every second week for a few days at a stretch. In our idyllic setting, we had horses, goats, and other barnyard animals. At Livermore, I worked on problems mainly related to armor and the defeat of armor, including advanced materials and projectiles. The projects were supported by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and involved collaboration with the Army's Ballistics Research Laboratory in Aberdeen, Maryland.

By 1989, the children were largely out of the nest. Our retail business had served us well, but we felt it was time to move on again. I resumed full-time work at the lab in Livermore and we moved back to the "burbs". My work turned to hypervelocity impact studies and then to project management. In the 1990s, I accepted three two-year assignments as an advisor in the Pentagon, the first two in the Office of Munitions and the third in the Air Staff Strategic Studies group. By 1999, I felt it was time to retire from the Livermore lab. Here I am with my son-in-law and our Cobia.



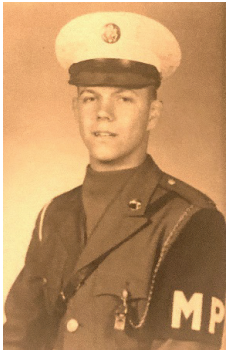
My son and I went into partnership in a marine electrical repair business. The work went well, but the partnership did not. By 2005, I was on the street looking for a job. I was hired by Science Applications Incorporated to work in the technology team for the Army's Future Combat Systems Program and eventually transitioned to work as a defense contractor in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD).

Edith was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2014. We realized that we needed to change our lifestyle. I could not be away from our home to work full time. We elected to move to Florida to be near family and OSD kindly agreed to keep me working on a part time basis. In 2015, we moved to a home next door to my brother's weekend place in Homosassa. In 2017, I retired from defense-related work at age 79. We were skidding toward home plate. Edith passed away in 2021. I remember the Landon years fondly.

I am thankful for the influence of my teachers and classmates.

With Thanks to Jim Webb, Landon Class of '56 Editor for sharing this story

DAN RUSSELL '64, SERVED VALIANTLY IN VIETNAM



In Dan's own words: "My time was with the Army's 1st Air CAV in Vietnam. Helicopters replaced horses. My unit was portrayed in the Mel Gibson movie "We Were Soldiers." Our '64 classmate, Ted Ginsberg was also in the CAV. I was in-country from December 65 to July 67.

"Had two R&R's, one to Taiwan and one to Tokyo. Same places my father visited while he was in the Navy. He wanted me to join the Navy like him, my brother and many of my uncles, but I didn't like the uniforms so I told him I'd join the Marines. He then informed me the Navy kept the Marines in the bottom of the ship to do details and keep the ship clean. So I joined the Army. Yup. Went overseas in the bottom of a Navy ship cleaning the ship. My first experience with karma.

"I had it pretty easy in the military police where I spent most of my time in different LZ's (landing zones) and FB's (fire bases) doing convoys, check points, perimeter guard, gate duty, handling POW's, doing preliminary interrogations (even though my Spanish teacher, Mrs. Bryant almost had a nervous breakdown trying to get me to roll my r's, I picked up the Vietnamese language good enough to get info for Military Intelligence to use). Sometimes being *Uber* drivers delivering drunk troops back to their units and putting them to bed and lastly trying to extract cobras from the rafters of hooch's (buildings) by shooting the place up and creating a bit of roof ventilation.

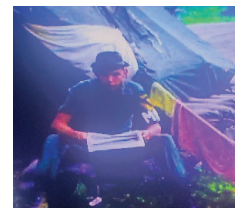


"This is me after unloading the M60 machine gun, later known as **The Pig** from our fragile jeep after a convoy. Notice the thin steel for protection from bullets. We also used sandbags on the floor of the jeeps for protection from mines in the road. Very ineffective but gave us a sense of safety. Our 1965 classmate, Walter Strahan was KIA with a land mine. Slow salute, Walter.

"Notice I had hair then. Lots of hair. Also lost lots of weight. When I arrived, I weighed 178 pounds. Nine months later I was at 123 before my first R&R. I'm now back up to 180 and going to stay there.

"We went out on patrol looking for enemies to capture for intel. Seems the infantry didn't like to take POW's so sometimes we had to save some. Very rare.

"Relaxing and reading a newspaper after a fun filled day in a tropical paradise. Notice the sandbags around the tent to keep out undesirable things such as snakes, rats, water, or mortar fragments. A rare occurrence thank goodness. More rats than anything. Big rats. Really big rats.



"I ended my service at Ft. McPherson in Atlanta. Worse duty ever...had to shave, have haircuts, wear clean uniforms, and spit shine boots and had to salute officers. Even thought about volunteering to go back to Vietnam where you never shined your boots, wore dirty uniforms, never saluted, rarely shaved, or cut your hair and called some officers by their first name but always respected them and whenever possible protected them if needed.

"I'm grateful to have served and would do it again, even though I've lost friends from Agent Orange cancers, the gift that keeps on giving. I've been given excellent care by the VA for my AO cancer (Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma) and I am beating it. After all, I've got to beat Larry Cahill (class of '64) in golf before I croak.

"Upon discharge, I joined the Jacksonville PD, attending the first consolidated police and sheriff academy in the Spring of 1968 before consolidation with Duval County. I then joined the Orlando PD as Disney was opening, but after six months returned home to Jax as not much police work at that time, so I went into constructing aluminum screen enclosures, even doing some for the Prevatt brothers who were building homes in Clay County, also fellow 1950's Landon grads. After an unsuccessful run for Clay County Commissioner, I moved to Atlanta and did construction and eventually home building. After the recession in the mid '80's I semiretired to the mountains of North Carolina, eventually finding my way back to Atlanta and started a VELUX Skylight company and then sold it in 2020.

"I now live full time in The Villages in central Florida near my sister, Clara, a 1958 Landon grad. I spend most of my time playing softball, golf, and basketball. Last September, completed my second RV trip to Alaska, though I was recovering from a bout of cancer from Agent Orange the past couple of years. And yes, the VA took excellent care of me during my two-year successful battle, not so much for several friends though. Life is great and I live every day like it is my last."

THE LONDON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION URGENTLY NEEDS SOME YOUNGER CLASSMATES TO SERVE ON THE BOARD AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER. PLEASE CALL JOE RIPLEY AT 904-476-7664 OR CHARLIE ROOKS AT 770-289-7704.

LANDON HIGH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION: IS THE END NIGH?

Dear Faithful Subscribers,

I regret the necessity of sharing the reality that Your Valiant Landon Alumni Association has reached ‘old age.’ Some might say, “It’s in its “dotage.”

The last Landon High School class of some 220 students graduated in 1965 – nearly 60 years ago – and are now nearly 80 years old. What’s worse is that only three of those youngest graduates cares enough to even subscribe to the Landon News, and only four from the class of 1964 subscribe.

As a bit of history, the Landon Alumni Association was founded in 1988 with Mark Blankfield as the first chairman. Carolyn Knopf Graham, class of ’44, was the first editor of the Alumni News. They opened an office on Atlantic Blvd. with a full set of Landonians and other memorabilia. Reed Tillis, ’53, succeeded Mark and served until 2021 when Joe Ripley, ’54, succeeded both Reed as chair and Carolyn as editor. Bobbie Ward Gould and Charlie Rooks, both ’54, volunteered to help, especially with the News, and helped Joe improve the quality with professional printing and full color.

The average age of the current Board and News is now 90 – not counting Carolyn’s niece, Amy Knopf, who did not graduate from Landon and is the only one who has not outlived his or her statistical “Use By Date” of about 70 years.

Needless to say, the Landon Alumni Association is living on borrowed time. All of us have appealed to those in the latest classes from 60 to 65 for help. We appreciate they are busy, but unless some step forward soon, ***The End is Nigh.***

What can you do? Call everyone you know from those later classes and encourage them to contact us and get involved. Even better, get involved yourself.



Ye Ed

Joe Ripley

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JACQUELINE WURN, CLASS OF '56,

With a last name beginning with a letter near the end of the alphabet, you *could* become accustomed to sitting at the back of the class and always being *last* to be called upon. But not if your last name was Wurn. *YOU* were expected to *excel in everything* as both your parents did.

And like her father, Lonnie, born in Poland, brought to America in 1921 by his father, Adolph, at age 10, who *excelled with high honors* in law school at the University of Florida, Jacqueline also *excelled* at Landon and as a classical pianist at a young age at a time when her Father and Grandfather were developing homes with subdivisions like Sans Souci.

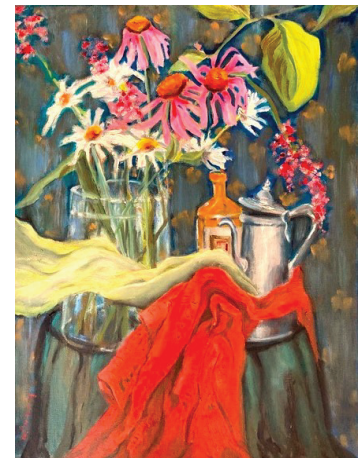
Jacqueline, known as Jackie at Landon, *excelled* at such a rate she skipped her senior year and went straight to the University of Florida at 17 to study medicine. After a year, she needed more of a challenge and transferred to Duke University. Then, somehow, instead of becoming a doctor, she married Joel Stein who became a child psychiatrist at the U of F, and after raising three children, Jacqueline graduated with honors with a degree in English Literature.

Fast forward, Jacqueline remarried a professor of Russian, moved to Boulder, Colorado, and some 15 years ago, remembering the inspiration of Memphis Wood at Landon, picked up a brush and became an *excellent* painter. Here is some of her work featured at a recent gallery showing in Boulder:



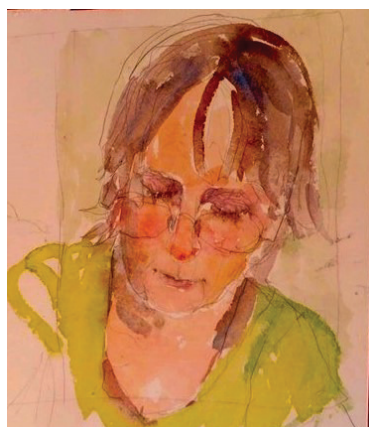
BURST OF SUMMER

Oil Paintings Featuring Jacqueline Wurn



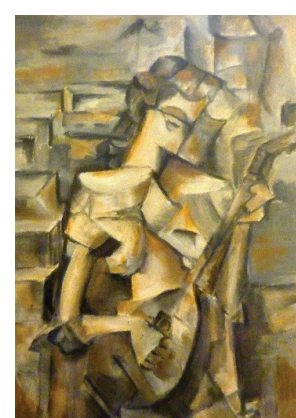
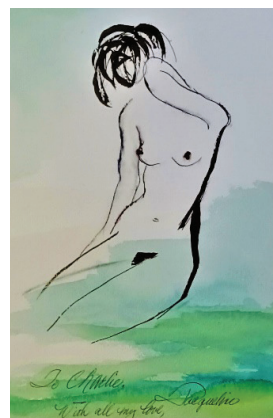
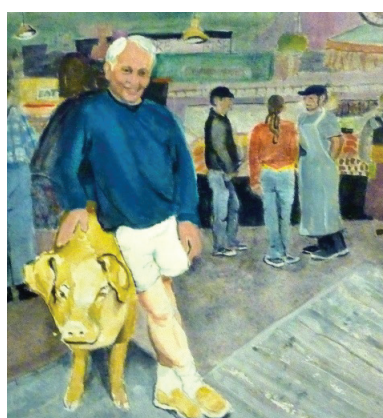
Jacqueline said she has achieved self-discovery through her art. She said it gives her a feeling of engagement in a greater bandwidth. "I can get lost in my paintings excluding the outside world focusing all my attention on my work. It's like meditating. You are not sure where it's going to lead you, but you have the confidence of good expectations. My Mother taught me to be beautiful to impress the influential people around me. My Father taught me to make beauty to enrich the lives of people around me. I think my Father would be proud of my art works."

AN EXPECTATION OF EXCELLENCE



Portraits of the Artist: From *Meditative* by Melissa Stuart to *Exhubriant* by Herself

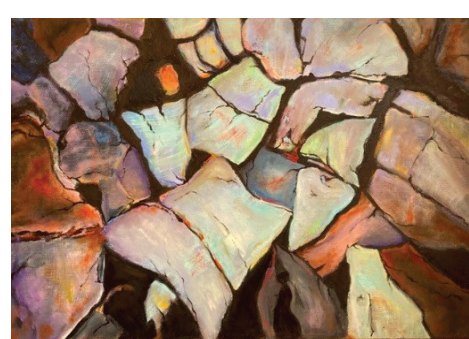
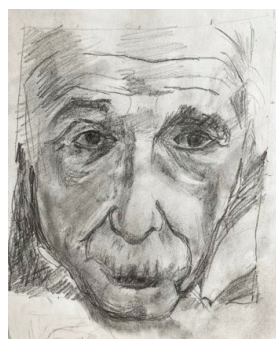
Shopping in Mexico from a pPhotograph



Pinting of an old Landon Friend*

Husband, Steve Grad

Two Nudes, One With a Guitar



Sketch Drawing of Einstein

A Still Life

Abstraction

Ice in a Puddle



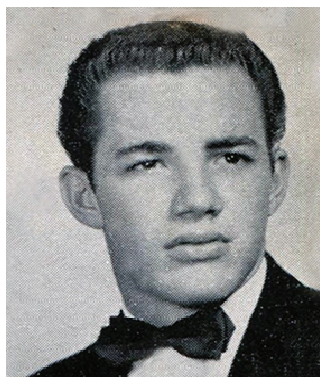
A Silver Chalice

Onions

Jacqueline & Steve

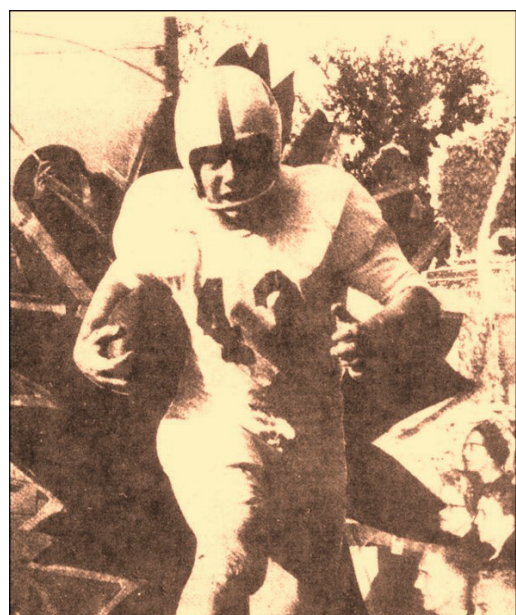
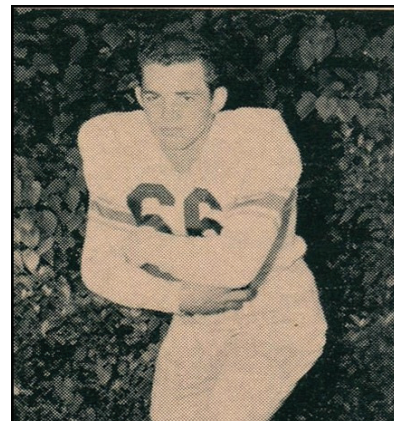
*This article prepared from Jacqueline's art works and photos by her "Old Landon Friend," Charlie Rooks, whom she tried to teach to paint.

FREIGHT TRAIN SONNY GILES, CLASS '56



An accomplished athlete, Sonny held many honors from his football career at Landon. He was voted “Most Valuable Senior” on the 1955 Landon football team which was co-Big 10 Champs with Coral Gables, Florida. From various sources, he was awarded the titles of All-City, All-State, All-Southern and Honorable-Mention All-American.

Donald Ralph Benjamin “Sonny” Giles, 85, on January 22, 2024 died peacefully at his home in Fort Pierce surrounded by family and friends



Sonny, On the cover of the 1958 Homecoming issue of the Florida Alligator

Sonny liked being referred to as “Freight Train” Giles, a nickname he earned with his bruising style of playing football. Upon his graduation in Landon’s Class of 1956, Sonny chose the Florida Gators for his college and was awarded a full-tuition scholarship. In 1958, Sonny earned “Letterman” status as a “Gator” with his accumulation of on-field playing time. Sonny wore No. 42 and played fullback for two head coaches at Florida, Bob Woodruff and Ray Graves.



Sonny was born in Atlanta, Georgia on May 22, 1938 to Ralph Lee Giles and Mary Ruth Connitte. He attended Landon High School in Jacksonville, FL where he was a legendary fullback on the football team. He attended the University of Florida on a football scholarship and was proud to be a “Gator”. He was a traveling salesman, or “detail man” as he would say it, selling medical supplies all around the state of Florida. He got into the retail business and owned many stores in Underground Atlanta and all-around town.

Survivors include his son, Malcom (Shameem) Giles; daughter, Marcy Montejo; sister, Vicky Giles, sister-in-law, Kathy Giles; grandchildren, Gemila Giles, Jessica Montejo, Olivia Short, Juliette Montejo, Margaux Montejo; great-grandchildren, Emmitt Adkins, Orson Gardner, and Weston Short.

Sonny was preceded in death by his daughter, Doreen, brother, Joseph Giles, sister Dedra Giles and ex-wife, Maureen Brown.

A writer once penned the phrase, “Legends are made, not born.” This best described Sonny. When Sonny donned the orange and black, he was the best football player he could be.

Jim Webb, Landon Class of '56, Editor

REMEMBRANCE OF CLASSMATES

Raymond Perry Harris, Class '58



Raymond Perry Harris, age 83, of Jacksonville, Florida, passed away on April 1, 2024.

Born on October 23, 1940, in Jacksonville, Florida to Edward Perry Harris and Mary Jo Prevatt, Raymond lived most of his life in Jacksonville where he attended Landon High School and served in the US Air Force.

Raymond had a long and illustrious career in real estate, beginning in 1965, and founding his own brokerage, Harris Real Estate, in 1967. He was the last President of the Clay County Association of Realtors and one of the original Century 21 charter brokers of Northeast Florida.

He was most at home when boating. For him, life was a yacht. An avid boater, he took many trips with his family all over Florida, the Keys, the Bahamas, and up the east coast as far north as Chesapeake Bay. He was a true Florida native, loving the outdoors and all waterways. He also enjoyed the mountains of North Carolina.

He valued family life, good health, a grand sense of humor and a positive mindset. He had a spirit full of adventure and traveled the world.

Nancy Moore Eubank, Class '51



Nancy Moore Eubank passed away peacefully after a brief illness on Friday, February 16, 2024. Nancy was born on December 16, 1933 in Memphis, Tennessee. When she was three years old, her parents moved to Jacksonville, Florida.

Nancy was a star at Landon where she was a National Honor Society member and held numerous student government positions, including vice president of her senior class, officer roles in school clubs and the yearbook. Nancy was also a cheerleader and a member of the homecoming court.

Nancy enrolled at Rice University where she held numerous officer roles in student government and clubs and was the Queen of the annual Archi-Arts dance. Nancy graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1955 with a BA in Romance Languages and received the Rice Undergraduate Service Award. Nancy served as a board member and twice as vice president for the Rice University Alumni Association and received the Rice Alumni Service Award.

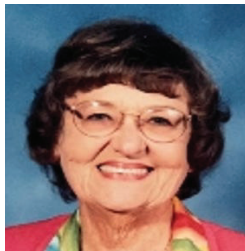
During her senior year at Rice, Nancy went on a blind date with a newly licensed attorney and Rice graduate named Tom Eubank. Nancy and Tom were married on February 10, 1956. The two spent their honeymoon driving to San Francisco where Tom completed his military service at the Army's Presidio. Before starting a family, Nancy worked in the Psychiatry Department of Baylor College of Medicine and later served as the Dean of Women at Rice University. Tom returned to Baker & Botts where he became a senior partner and attained national distinction as a probate and estate tax attorney.

In 1961, Nancy gave birth to her first child, John. Marshall followed in 1964, Stephen in 1968, and Laura in 1972. With the arrival of Laura, a larger house was needed, and the family moved to Bunker Hill Village.

After Nancy's children left home, Nancy continued to volunteer and support numerous organizations, including the Houston Bar Auxiliary Association, Houston Museum of Art, Houston Symphony League, and Houston Grand Opera Guild. Nancy held positions on the boards of Rice's Fondren Library and Shepherd School of Music. Together, Tom and Nancy established the annual Eubank Conference on Real World Markets put on by Rice's Center for Computational Finance and Economic Systems. Nancy was very proud of her 16-year service as a citizen member of the Judicial Advisory Council of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice which oversaw the Texas adult probation system responsible for hundreds of thousands of probationers. Nancy's work included regular visits to prisons and jails, treatment facilities, and local criminal justice programs. Nancy's contributions were recognized by her receipt of the Texas Probation and Parole Association Service Award.

REMEMBRANCE OF CLASSMATES

Josie Clair Cannon Doty, Class '50



Josie Claire Cannon Doty of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida born in 1933 at St. Lukes Hospital in Jacksonville, peacefully passed away on Monday March 25, 2024.

Jo grew up in Jacksonville on a mission to education from the start. She graduated from Landon High when she was 16 years old. Then she went right to college at FSU where she graduated in 3-1/2 years with her bachelor's degree in Elementary & Secondary Education. She then completed her master's degree in Elementary Education and Administration.

Jo started teaching in the 50s and served as principal at Loretto Elementary School for 9 years and later at the New Mandarin Oaks Elementary. Jo always knew the best thing for the kids was to have the most dedicated, caring staff. THAT is exactly what she did there for 14 years until she retired in 2003.

While attending college at FSU, Jo met William "Bill" Doty. After she graduated from FSU, they were married Feb. 9, 1954. However, Bill left FSU to attend Randolph Macon Military Academy graduating with honors with the intent of a career in the US Army. They traveled all over Europe during Bill's first three years of deployment.. On their second tour of duty in Germany, their first child was born, Susan Lee Doty. They were then stationed at Ft. Lee, Virginia and four years later their son, Steven Taylor Doty, was born. Their next six years were spent in Ft. Rucker, Alabama. After Bill Retired with 25 years of service in the US ARMY, they came back to Jacksonville permanently.



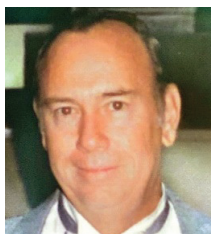
Emily Jopling Herrick, Class '56

Emily Jopling Herrick, 84, passed away on April 22, 2023, in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida following an extended illness. She is survived by her son, Greg Herrick (Susan) of Phoenix, AZ. and daughter, Amy Herrick, of Palm Beach Gardens.

Emily was a 1956 graduate of Landon High where she was President of the National Honor Society and a Majorette. She graduated from Florida State University in 1960.

Emily was a member of Alpha Gamma Delta, a women's organization committed to providing opportunities for personal development and service to others – all through a spirit of sisterhood which challenges members to lead lives of significance that positively impact their communities.

Emily worked as an administrative assistant at a CPA firm until her retirement.



Jerry Arthur Lake, Class '55

Jerry Arthur Lake, 90, of Windermere, FL, died March 6, 2024. Jerry was born in Jacksonville, FL in 1933 to William Perry Lake, Jr. and Violet Larnar Lake. He attended Landon HS and Jacksonville University before graduating from the University of Florida in 1955 with a bachelor's degree and later a master's in mechanical engineering.

At the Bendix Corporation he worked on a top-secret project on the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Nautilus.

He met Patricia Ann Davis in Jacksonville on a blind date and they married a year later in 1956. At Lockheed Martin, he worked on the guidance system of the Army's Pershing ballistic missile. His lifetime hobbies included boating, salt-water fishing, real estate investing, genealogy, troubleshooting any problem, and his favorite – working on engines of any kind.