

## THE AFTER GLOW

BY ROSSANNA HAMILTON HAYS

The Class of 1957 had a wonderful 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion! This did not happen by accident or by some stroke of good fortune. It happened because a lot of people cared enough to put out a tremendous amount of loving effort. It began at the 49<sup>th</sup> Reunion when a small group of classmates met to organize the 2007 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion. I attended because I felt a need to return to Tucumcari what I had received there as a child and young adult growing up. I have always enjoyed writing and working on my computer. So, with little else, I volunteered to write letters and collect biographies from our classmates. Others like Senior Class President, John Lawson, agreed to act as luncheon master of ceremonies and what an outstanding job he did. Dennis Currell volunteered his son, Duane's, artistic talent – cool Rattler! Additionally, he would collect history of our class in the Tucumcari archives. Kay Jernigan Watson was “volunteered” by me since she lived in Albuquerque and I could imagine needing some serious help. At the time I did not realize how clever I was, for Kay is a real computer whiz not to mention artist, poet, organizer extraordinaire and a classmate who has attended just about every reunion since they began! Wendell Leatherwood quickly offered to select, design and order our handsome polo shirts and the lanyards for our name tags. This was no small responsibility. Bill Curry volunteered to provide the Class float and decoration for the Reunion Parade. Joyce Randle Taylor, who has seldom if ever missed a reunion, volunteered to send photographic memorabilia, which turned out to be an amazing collection, plus she aided in classmate information, past year book examples, and genuine enthusiasm for this reunion, bar none. Phyllis Farrow Welch, constant Tucumcari contact, agreed to be responsible for the treasury, no small job. She ultimately made innumerable phone calls to classmates with that personal touch which is invaluable, she arranged our Class Luncheon and she provided many nostalgic photos of the past and present. Becca Thomas Cawthon another loyal Tucumcari resident was an invaluable contact because of her membership on the Tucumcari Reunion Board of Directors. She also helped with personal phone calls and Hospitality. Judy Shipley Hinshaw, Dolores Kemp Bell and her daughter Rhonda Cox, Joyce Randle Taylor, Phyllis Farrow Welch and Becca Thomas Cawthon tackled Hospitality with creative expertise beyond belief. Special thanks to additional help from Mickey Hunt, Wendell Leatherwood and Dennis Currell. No one had a better, tastier or more organized Hospitality Room and what fun those door prizes were at the luncheon! Phyllis, Don Wellborn and Patsy Johnston Vernon provided supplies and helped with decorating Lena's Restaurant for the Saturday Luncheon. Mickey Hunt supplied all of our stamps, return address labels and beginning mailing list from which we began our search for all classmates. John Lawson, Bill Curry and Robert Sandusky donated their awesome artistic talent for our handsome Reunion Book. Frank Turner and John Laritson stood by to assist in any way we might request along with their historic loyal attendance and enthusiasm. It goes without saying, having Mayor Mary Bonds in our midst did not hurt our cause a bit! Our own military chaplain, Gene Shiplet agreed to conduct our special memorial service. Well done, Gene. A constant advisor and contact was our former teacher and President of the Tucumcari Alumni Board of Directors, Norma Redhage Crellin who devotedly works year after year without any compensation on the Annual Tucumcari Reunions. To all the spouses who supported a year's Reunion effort, we thank you! Many of you were outstanding help in multiple ways.

Heart felt gratitude goes to our four teachers for being a part of a grand reunion: Norma Crellin, Barney Miller, Sue Tucek and George Umberson. Their personal effort to join us was exceptional.

After I mailed out the first letter announcing our upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion, I received an excited phone call from Louis Abeyta. Not only was he thrilled about our reunion, but he had a stupendous idea. We needed a Web Site. I agreed positively. Upon further conversation, I realized he was a professional computer technologist. Louis immediately began to search the Web for the ideal format for our class. In no time he had the perfect format and in turn began meeting with Kay and I, instructing us on this work of art. After a period of time he informed us we were Web Masters, but truly the singular Web Master has been Louis, himself. Louis was also instrumental in proofing and copying our master copy of the Reunion Book. Additionally, he donated funds for the initial establishment of the Web Site. He was and is always there with the most sincere and comprehensive personality with whom you could ever hope to work. Now, if that was not enough, he was willing to perform for us at the Class Luncheon in his beautiful classical guitar style. What a touch of Class!

I must again recognize Kay Jernigan Watson. She spent innumerable dedicated hours creating our beautiful name tags, the memorial poster and program, and the artistic design displayed on our Reunion Book cover and interior, designed the luncheon programs, proof read the master copy and produced 92 CD's of our Year Book. She single handedly found the best printer in Albuquerque at the best possible price to produce our Reunion Book. Both of these classmates did far more than is described here. They deserve outstanding recognition for the countless hours of work and the future maintenance of our Web Site.

Another very important recognition is absolutely necessary. You, the participants who came from far and wide to enjoy a landmark moment in your life, are ultimately responsible for the complete success of our 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion. Kudos to you!

The intent here is to express my genuine and heartfelt appreciation for each and every single member of this committee and this class who helped to make our 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion so memorable. Regrettably, in our collection of data, there were omissions. We were not infallible, but we have tried to make up for those shortcomings. Although Phyllis and I thoroughly appreciated the recognition we were given at the Saturday night Banquet (a total surprise), we wish that each one of these individuals had received the same accolade. We, in no way, did this by ourselves. As I have continually stated, it was a **team effort**. We were all a catalyst for an ultimately grand result.

Louis, Kay, Phyllis and I offer our sincere appreciation for the lovely engraved jewel boxes given us at the Class Luncheon. They will be a wonderful reminder of how great our Reunion was and how thoughtful our classmates continue to be.

Life is so short which we all realize more and more as time goes by. It is an ultimate experience each opportunity we take the time to be together and renew our very important, life shaping relationships. As I have said before, old wounds and disappointments must be forgotten and only the good remembered. After all, that is the ultimate point at the end of the line. But, wait a minute! The end of the line is not here yet. Live and love each day as if it were the last and begin your preparation for our 55<sup>th</sup> in the year 2012. Can you imagine that? You bet!