



1955

CHS Bio

Sharon Northrip French Teacher



The summer after graduation, I took a Botany course at Tulsa University and worked for Susan **Freeman's** mother at the Tulsa Little Theatre. I took the entrance exam for T.U. at 8:00a.m. after having arrived home from the graduation party at 4:00 a.m. I slept through most of the exam and was told by the dean that he didn't think I would do well in college. That summer I made an A in the class and had no trouble at all in college.

I spent four wonderful years at Southern Methodist University. When I crossed the Oklahoma-Texas border, I was a bundle of nerves, but it was a perfect college for me. There are few times in one's life when everything comes together. That was the first of several for me. The night I pledged Tri Delta, when I walked into the Tri Delta house, **Carolyn Newman** was there. She had been a friend at Eliot and had just pledged at the University of Texas. My first week at SMU **Phil Fenn** and **Charlie Eby**, Central alums, came to my dorm and welcomed me to SMU. They took me to the library and told me to plan to spend my next four years there. At SMU I was a member of Alpha Lambda Delta, Kirkos and COGS (service organizations), Rally committee (football service committee), tapped for Mortar Board, and Scholarship chairman and Pledge Trainer of Delta Delta Delta. I am sure the dean at T.U. would have been surprised to hear that I was on the Dean's list every quarter.

After college I taught French and English in Dallas for a year. The next year I was a participant in the French Institute at Emory University. President Kennedy established two institutes at Emory and Penn State to teach French teachers to actually speak the language. We studied under native speakers. It was a marvelous program. The next summer I went to France where I attended Besancon University. That summer I ran into **Cheryl Johnson** in Paris at American Express. She had just crash landed a plane in England. The next year I was a teaching assistant at Emory and finished my Master's degree in French. While at Emory I met my husband, who was in his last year in law school and we married in 1964. The next year he went to Viet Nam, and I moved back with my parents to Oklahoma City where I taught English, French and Latin in two junior high schools.

In 1966 my husband returned from Viet Nam; we returned to Atlanta. We had two children a year apart-our Irish twins. Paul lives in Atlanta and is a Project Manager for Bell South. Alison is a federal agent for EPA and lives two miles away from us with her two sometimes precious children on Saint Simons Island. My husband, Jim Baker, and I raised our family in Atlanta. He was an assistant U.S. Attorney, and I taught French at night at a Community college. During those years Jim also spent twenty-six years in the Army Reserve rising to the rank of Colonel. After our children graduated from college, (Wake Forest and Georgia Southern) we moved to Saint Simons Island off the coast of Georgia where Jim taught in the legal division for several years for the Federal Law Enforcement Center. FLETC trains all the federal agents except the FBI and DEA. We have both been retired for eight years.

During the 90's we spent most of our time taking care of our parents. We had three parents in their eighties. We used to laugh and say "We take care of the one who is the sickest." His mother lived with us for three years. My parents moved to Atlanta in 1984 and moved to Saint Simons Island in 1997. My father always missed Oklahoma, but I was very grateful that they made the move. It was a gift to me that I didn't have to care for them long distance as they had had to do with their parents. The night my father died, my mother moved in with Jim and me and lived a year and a half. I shall always be grateful to my husband for the support he gave me during this time.

In September, 2002 my roommate from SMU and I went to France and England. We had taught together forty years before in Dallas. We had the trip of a lifetime. I loved seeing Paris again. (Editorial note by husband -- I was not invited to make the trip).

On August 29, 2004, our children surprised my husband and me with a 42nd anniversary party. We were completely shocked and still don't know how they pulled it off. Our daughter copied our wedding cake for the cake at the reception and put together a computer program of *"This is your life."* Last year she surprised me with a trip to the Emmy's. We did the whole thing--dressed up, had our hair done and make up. However, we should have sprung for a limousine because it was a long walk from the parking lot to the Shrine theatre.

Now my husband and I spend most of our time helping raise our grandchildren. They get off the bus at our house everyday. Our only problem is fourth grade math and science. Neither one of us is very good at it. The sweetest word in the English language is "Gramma."

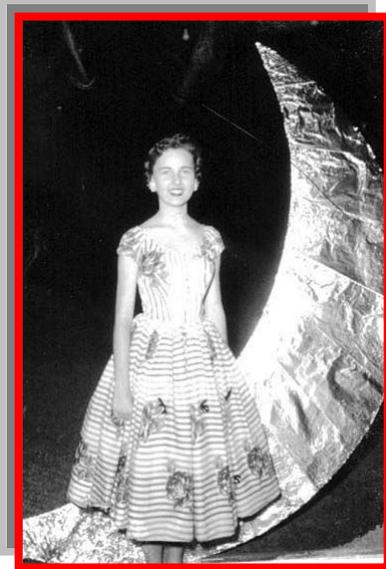
I have spent the last three years as the President of the United Methodist Women at our church. Our church is located on the spot where John Wesley and Charles Wesley preached. I also volunteer at Manna House, a soup kitchen and teach an adult Sunday School class. (I am the youngest member of the class --by at least a generation!)

I have many fond memories of Central High School. I received an excellent education. I remember signing up for sewing my senior year. Miss Lowry, my favorite teacher, saw me in the hall and said, "Drop that sewing class and come take third year Latin. I am so glad I did because it was the beginning of a lifelong love of foreign languages. After Miss Lowry's Latin class, French was a breeze in college.

What fun it was making floats for rush parties with **Susan Freeman** and **Susan Harris**, going sledding at Southern Hills Country Club and ending up at **Sally Howard's** for hot chocolate. I remember members of Pharoah making forty boats out of construction paper--invitations for Pharoah rush-- on my dining room table. My father walked in and said, "Good grief! It's the Spanish Armada." I remember painting jeeps at **Clyde Wyant's** house; Speakers Bureau picnics on **Gay's (Hammond) Hill** (I was too shy to try out for Speaker's Bureau, but somehow thanks to **John Touhey** and **Bo Mapes** I got to go as a date); beautiful formals at the Tulsa Club (I remember at the end of one dance it was snowing. **Bill Tiederman** and **John Evans** carried **Susan Freeman** and me to the car and then into a member of a Pharoah's house for a spaghetti dinner. They had a terrible time getting home that night with all the snow on the ground.) How romantic and innocent we were. I remember going to a dance on top of a parking lot in downtown Tulsa. My favorite memories, however, were the progressive dinners we had at **Gay Hammond's**, **Betsy Martin's**, and my house; and the dances at **Richard Minshall's** and **Clyde Wyants**. Our parents were always happy to open their houses to us. My husband and I did the same thing for our children. My sixteenth birthday was the best. **Susan Freeman** gave



me a luncheon and then surprised me with a cocker spaniel puppy from **Elinor Pottorf's** litter of dogs.



My first date was **Larry Curd** to a Skilly's formal. I was terrified, but **Bobby Houston's** sister drove Bobby, **Betsy Martin**, Larry and me and broke the ice. She was wonderful. She took us out to eat after the dance and kept the conversation going. That Christmas Bobby and Larry took Betsy and me to the Tulsa Club to a dance. Christmas. It was great.

My first kiss was by **Bill Tiederman**. We double dated with **Suzy Baldwin** and **Bo Mapes**.at CHS. What a great time we had. The fifties were wonderful. It has been a wonderful journey.

I can't wait for the reunion and to see everyone. I am very grateful to you, Fred Benford, for all your work in getting us back.

See you soon.

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**See Ya at the
55th Sharon!**

