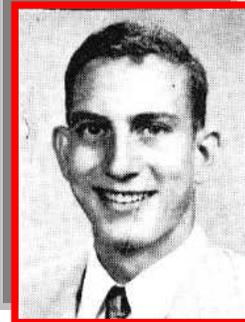


CHS Bio

Ray Cross – Mr. Chemistry

1952

1955



Many of us remember Ray as a great athlete, Captain of the CHS basketball team yet modest, claiming that he was NOT the best player on the team. Many accolades for Ray, yet he was reserved. We are all proud of Ray's military service. Below are his responses to our request for a bio.

1) What were your best and worst moments in school?

Best: Being told by TU basketball Coach Clarence Iba that I had a full four-year basketball scholarship to TU. *Worst:* Being told by Central Coach Clarence Ehlers that I had made All-State in basketball and then not being on the list when it came out.

2) **Did you date anyone particular at CHS?** I had one date with **Anne Getgood**, and **Delores Bukey** came over to my house once to study chemistry. I dreamed about dating one of the **O'Dell twins**—would someone please tell them to come to the next reunion—I would still like to meet them.

3) What did you do after CHS (school, work, travel, etc.)

School: Studied chemistry at TU and OU. Travel: Central classmate Bob Middlebrook and I collected marine invertebrates amidst hard coral and sharks off the atoll of Japtan in the Marshall Islands (1973). I also collected research specimens off the Florida Keys (1969) and Belize (1982). Received all-expense, government-paid trips to Vietnam (1969) and Saudi Arabia (1990)

4) Did you go into military service?

Yes. Entered in 1963 as a Pvt (E-1) left in 1992 as a Col (O-6); left after 29⁺ years.

5) What type of profession or jobs did you have?

Aside from the Army, where I was a Research and Development specialist, I teach organic chemistry. My most significant job in the Army was as Acting Commander, a Brigadier General's position, of the Chemical Research Development and Engineering Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. I am now a full professor at a Junior College in Maryland, where a captive audience must listen to me pontificate, which I do quite well as long as the topic is chemistry.



6) Where did you meet your spouse? I married in Maryland in 1967, had one son, and divorced in 1979. I met my current wife on her 40th birthday, in the Officer's Club at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. Listen to Paul Harvey for the Rest of the Story!

7) How long have you been married and when did you get married?

We were married in 1989.

8) How many kids, grandkids and of course their achievements?

One married son, now 36, and two grandchildren living in Florida.

9) What are your hobbies and activities?

I go swimming but I can't swim; I play with my dogs—a yellow lab and a Chesapeake Bay retriever. I am still an amateur investor; I haven't lost enough to be a professional. Work the crossword every day—I'm addicted to it.

10) Do you still have the same likes and dislikes (hobbies, etc.) that you had at CHS? I still love chemistry, but the basketball is now deflated.

11) Accomplishments and honors. Finished 3rd in the 2-mile walk at the Army-wide track meet at Fort Eustis, VA in 1966 after being declared "useless for Eustis" because I could not participate in my specialty of javelin throwing owing to a broken finger on my throwing hand. (I now reveal for the first time, to clear my conscience, there were only three entrants in the 2-mile walk—I entered because I knew they gave out three awards.)

12) Are you retired? (No) If so, what are you doing now to keep you active? I work the cross-word puzzle in the *Washington Post* every day and twice on Sundays.

13) If you do not live in the Tulsa area, what made you move and how many moves did you make? Being in the Army, I moved more times than I can count. Like classmate John Getgood, I taught chemistry at the United States Military Academy at West Point on one of my tours but not contemporaneous with John.

14) Any truly funny or interesting stories from CHS or life in general?

Well, you might like to know that I speak German almost fluently, and I hear all languages perfectly.

15) TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST KISS AND HOW OLD WERE YOU???

I was about 10 years old, a girl named Shirley charged me and kissed me square on the lips before I knew what happened. I have often wished it had been Gwendolyn Garrett instead.

16) One-word reminders of classmates: Gary Martin: smart; **Paul Peterson:** jovial; **Lee Gideon:** involved; **Judith Kunsman:** friendly. I miss 'em all.

(more – down)

ADDITIONAL ANSWERS FROM RAY TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

I didn't change from languages to chemistry. Like most of us in '56, I was told I should be an engineer, so I enrolled in chemical engineering at TU. That first year I discovered I liked chemistry better than engineering and switched to chemistry. The chemistry degree required 14 hrs of German, and I took an additional 6 hrs of German, including Goethe's Faust, because I enjoyed it.

At Central and at TU, I did not want anything to do with the military. The Air Force Colonel in charge of ROTC at TU called me into his office and really tried to persuade me to join the ROTC unit, but I declined. I wound up as a 25-year-old private because the Tulsa draft board sent me a draft notice at OU. I could have obtained an educational deferment, but decided to enlist for the German language. Among other reasons, I was broke. I found out that the Army granted direct commissions to qualified individuals. Therefore, I applied for a direct commission in the Chemical Corps while I was taking German at the Defense Language Institute. On the application form, my second choice was Military Intelligence, because my original enlistment was in Intelligence (i.e., language skills). The Army made a mistake and had me go before a board of officers for a Military Intelligence commission. That board recommended me for a direct commission as a first lieutenant. Because I checked Chemical Corps, they had to convene a second board of officers, and that board recommended me to be a second lieutenant in the Chemical Corps. If I had had an option at that point, I would have picked MI; however, I did not. I became a 2LT in the Chemical Corps. The MI was so mad; they put a block on me so that I could not be assigned to Germany for 10 years. I was 49 before I made it to Germany.

I started every game on the freshman BB team at TU (freshmen were not eligible to play varsity then). I was a sub my soph and jr years, but started every game my senior year and was co-captain of the team. I did play BB in the Army until I was 40 years old. I quit playing when I told one of my men I had played against Oscar Robertson, and the lad said, "Who's he?" As an aside, I may be the only person to play against two of the top BB coaches of today, Eddie Sutton (OSU) and Mike Kshevsheski (Duke). I started against OSU in my soph year (1957) at Stillwater and guarded Sutton. I captained the Chemistry Dept Team at West Point and we played the Athletic Dept Team, led by Mike K (1975-8).

I made the Army a career, because I liked what I was doing and I kept getting obligations for attending schools. Before long, I was a major with over 10 years of service, so it made sense to stay in. Some of my friends, who went straight into teaching, burned out and retired; whereas, I am just getting started in my academic career.

SEE YA AT THE 50TH RAY!