



1955

CHS Bio

Ken Kastl Owner Ugly Plymouth



It has been great to read about the many achievements of my classmates. While I always thought I had a successful career it really pales when compared to many of you.

I don't have the same history with my classmates as many of you seem to enjoy as I went to Immaculate Conception for my seventh and eighth grade and then to Holy Family for the ninth grade. I moved back to Tulsa from Perkins, OK when I was twelve and first lived on North Cincinnati across from the Weber's Root beer stand and the Pine Theater. I remember many great Saturdays at the show and won a bike in a yo yo contest there. Also, starting in my sophomore year I went to work for the Tulsa World in the advertising department working before and after school. This too kept me from activities and sports at school. In fact, my senior year I only went to school from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. At the time I thought that was great. Looking back, I wish I had been more involved in my studies during my time at CHS.

I suppose my only claim to fame in high school (according to Fred Benford) is that I had a green Jeepster convertible during my sophomore and junior years. As I recall there was also a yellow Jeepster that one of the girls owned (Betsy Beach – FB). The other part of the story is that I had a lot of trouble with the transmission in the Jeepster so I got rid of it before my senior year and bought *the ugliest black 1951 Plymouth* (again, according to Fred). Fred wanted to buy my Jeepster but I convinced him it was not a good deal. Wish I had both of those cars now.

Before I graduated from high school, my parents moved to El Reno, Oklahoma so I spent the last two months of my senior year living with my good friend **Kent Kallenberger** and his family. Kent was a 1955 graduate and I still keep in touch with him.

One of the things I remember that makes me smile is about the senior prom. I wanted to impress my date and I knew that Plymouth wouldn't do the trick so I rented a car. To me that was a big deal. Further wanting to impress my date I decided on a unique place for dinner - the restaurant on the Turner Turnpike midway between Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Remember that? I must have seemed like a real dork for selecting such a place. Everyone else was eating at the fine establishments in town while I was out on the road. Needless to say, we got to the dance fairly late. I don't believe we ever dated after that so I won't reveal the name of my date as I don't want to embarrass her anymore.

After graduation I went to Oklahoma A&M College. The next year they changed the name to Oklahoma State University. I am glad to see that there were some in our class that also thought that going to college meant party, party, party. I pledged a fraternity, Theta Chi, and moved into the house my freshman year. Immediately, I knew that the social life was for me. I started out in Architectural Engineering and just barely made

good enough grades to get into the fraternity. I realized after the first semester that I didn't have the background needed to be an engineer so I switched to Architectural Design. While I loved the design part there were still too many courses that required me to study so I switched to the school of Business. Before I was finished at OSU I had five majors. The last major was Radio & TV Advertising. I did become president of my fraternity and was assistant editor of the Yearbook among some of my accomplishments. But, don't get the idea that I graduated from OSU. My senior year I ran out of money and quit school during the spring semester.

One story from OSU that relates to a classmate. One night a week pledges at fraternity and sororities were expected to socialize with each other. Many times that meant we would go to the student center for dancing. One of my favorite dancing partners was **Marcia Anderson** (world's greatest dancer – FB). In fact, Marcia and I often relied on one another for these activities and on occasion went dancing even when we didn't have to. Then one night I guess I thought that we ought to do more than dance so when I took her back to the dorm I tried to kiss her good night. I will never forget her words. "Let's just be friends!" What a blow. I can't remember if we went dancing after that but I do remember that she fixed me up with one of her pledge sisters from Oklahoma City.

Leaving OSU I headed to Tulsa but could not find the right job. Next, to Kansas City and went to work for a printing company selling advertising. Shortly after moving to Kansas City I met and married my first wife. And, shortly after that I was off to the Army. As you men may remember, during that time, 1960, there was still a draft but if you were going to school you were exempt. Having quit school my name came up on the draft board real fast. But, this was not a good time to be drafted because all the draftees were being sent to Viet Nam. So, I volunteered, became a Military Policeman, got selected for the Honor Guard Company at Fort Monroe, Virginia and stayed there to fight the "Battle of Phoebus". (Phoebus was the name of the town just outside the fort).

Fortunately for me George Washington University had a campus facility at Fort Monroe and I was able to complete my degree from there by going to night school for two years. It took that long because they wouldn't accept all those bad grades from OSU. However, I was now a changed person and I had a 3.75 grade point average there which essentially pulled up my over all average to the point that when I got out of the service I was marketable.

After the service, back to Kansas City and Allstate Insurance as a management trainee. After six months I decided that the insurance business was not for me. Arthur Anderson (the accounting firm) was hiring in Kansas City for the Boeing Company in Wichita, Ks. At that time all I could remember about Wichita was that the main street running through town was made of brick. I really thought I was going to Hicksville but it put me back closer to my family still living in Oklahoma so I took the job. The job was doing time studies on indirect employees. This was a new concept. For years, Industrial Engineers had been setting standards for direct or hands on employees but this was the first attempt to do the same for support employees.

In two years I was a third level manager with about 50 employees. I was going places. Then, Boeing had one of their downturns and they eliminated my group. I was still a manager but the scope of my job had changed. I was working for the Director of Finance trying to figure out ways to cut costs.

So, I decided that it was time to leave Boeing and test my entrepreneurial spirit. I returned to Tulsa and opened a “7 Knights” restaurant at 51st and Yale. Unfortunately, not enough of my classmates came there so I went bankrupt with that venture. Next, I worked for the local Arby’s franchisee and opened his second store at 51st and Memorial but Boeing came calling again and I returned there in 1972.

This time at Boeing I was in charge of Overhead Forecasting for all of the Wichita Division. I was in this job for about five years and then became the estimating manager over B-52 programs. When my boss retired I became “Chief Estimator”. Basically, what that meant was that it was my organization's responsibility to estimate the costs of the military programs and negotiate the costs with the government.

Shortly after assuming that position, Wichita became the headquarters for all Military Airplane Programs, so my role as chief estimator expanded from Seattle to Huntsville, Alabama. In 1989 the headquarters for Military Airplanes moved to Seattle and it was in my best interest to move there so in 1990 we moved there.

At first my job was the same as in Wichita but then reorganization occurred and I was “elevated” to a staff position for all military programs and at that time had as many as 450 people in my organization. That job was not as satisfying as I was no longer on the firing line. Lucky for me, in the fall of 1993 Boeing had landed a contract with NASA to manage the International Space Station and they needed an estimating manager.

Being estimating manager on the International Space Station was my most rewarding career opportunity and the most enjoyable job I held at Boeing. Maybe because it was at the sunset of my career but I could see the results of my efforts once again. This contract resulted in my being responsible for negotiating a contract with NASA for \$5.7 billion which at the time was the largest contract ever negotiated by Boeing.

In 1995 Boeing offered an early retirement package but because of my job on the Space Station program they extended my time for another year and in April, 1996 I retired from



Boeing with 30 years of service. My career took me all over the United States and to foreign countries and I negotiated contracts with some of the largest companies and at military installations all over the U.S. It was always exciting, ever changing and never a dull moment.

So much for my college days, military and career.

As I stated earlier, I met and married my first wife in Kansas City. After we moved to Wichita we adopted a son, Kevin. Kevin is married and the father of two sons and lives in Mulvane, Kansas - a suburb of Wichita. After I went back to Boeing in 1972 we adopted a daughter Amy. Amy is married and has a son and a daughter and lives in Wichita.

In 1982 I got a divorce and in 1983 I married Beth who will be with me at the reunion. Beth had two sons, Stan and Brian and they both live near us in Bella Vista, Arkansas. I am sure that many of you have been to Bella Vista. It is a wonderful place to retire. Both Beth and I play golf but we basically do a lot of volunteer work. I served on a board that was trying to build a performing arts center in the village; I was president of a group supporting our "Yacht Club" and served a term as an advisor to Arvest Bank, Bentonville. Currently, I am the treasurer at Bella Vista Community Church and next year will take the position of Business Manager.

If you are ever in Bella Vista - look us up!

**See Ya at the
50th Ken!**

