

## 1959 Lamar High School Graduating Class

Good evening everyone— They say the older you get the more you forget---but isn't it impressive that so many of us remembered our 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion—and even more impressive, we remembered where to show up tonight—Now I just hope all of us can remember where we're staying when we leave tonight.

Quite a few historical things occurred in the Year 1959—Believe it or not, 50 years ago—Among them, Alaska became the 49<sup>th</sup> State, and Hawaii followed shortly thereafter to become our 50<sup>th</sup> State—The space program began to heat up when two monkeys were sent into space and returned unharmed—shortly after that Nasa picked its first 7 Astronauts—Castro took over the Cuban Government in 1959—Blacks entered an all-white Little Rock School for the first time under armed guards—And Ford's Edsel was officially declared a flop—We were the ones living “Bye Bye Miss American Pie” the day the music died with the death of Buddy Holly in a plane crash—and finally, Mike Blackledge has reminded me that this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “In Cold Blood murders, which Truman Capote made famous in his book of the same name.

And how things have changed----In 1959 the average income was \$5,016/year, a new car cost \$2,250, a new home was \$12,400, and gas was 25 cents a gallon, about ¼ the cost of a gallon of milk—

And hasn't the terminology changed! In our day Coke was a soft drink you sipped thru a straw—Now it's a powder they sniff thru a straw

A Pot was something you cooked in—Now it's something to smoke

Gay referred to being happy or jovial

Thongs were rubber soled sandals that had a strap that fit between your toes—Now the strap fits between something entirely different—

At our 40<sup>th</sup> reunion I said that society had changed so much since we were in school that where they used to go in and ask for cigarettes and whisper for condoms, they had started asking for condoms, and whispering for cigarettes—Now, ten years later the

condoms fill up one aisle of the store, and the cigarettes are under lock and key behind the counter

Lewis Cutrer was mayor of Houston, Price Daniel was Governor of Texas, Dwight Eisenhower was President and Richard Nixon was Vice President—

And of course one of the best things about Houston in 1959 was the Lamar High School Senior Class---714 of us graduated that year and I know the exact number because I was number 714 and the last one to cross that stage and get my diploma—

And he thought everyone was clapping for him, but they were clapping because it was FINALLY over!

We have great memories of high school and there are lots of things that remind us about growing up in Houston and being a senior at Lamar—Here are just a few of them--

Girl-G The girls wore bobby socks, penny loafers, and long straight skirts with matching sweaters

Boy-B- Blue jeans with white socks and black loafers were standard for us—

G-Some of the girl's favorite singers were Johnny Mathis, the Everly Brothers, the Platters and of course Elvis!

B-We liked Bo Diddley, Johnny Cash, the Big Bopper and Buddy Holly

G-We called the girl's P.E. Director "the Beak"

B-Football was King in Texas High Schools and our Head Coach was Fred Pepper, a name which cost me a lot of extra laps a season, because every time my mom saw him she'd call him "Dr. Pepper"!

G-The girl's favorite car was probably a 1958 Chevy Impala Convertible

B-Our favorite car was anything with wheels and a motor that worked

G-We shopped at Craigs's and Palais Royal in the Village, and Foley's downtown was one of our favorites-and we remember the Sakowitz Tea Room with our mothers

B-We didn't shop!!

G-According to Sukey, the favorite place to park and make out was the trails in the Briar Patch between Westheimer and Richmond

B-Our favorite place to park was anywhere!

G-Our favorite restaurants included Prince's for burgers, Felix's Mexican food, and Alfred's and Neilson's Deli's—Pizza was brand new and it was great at Vallian's on S. Main

B—Our favorite was anywhere cheap, and Coney Island was hard to beat! Do you remember the Taco Hut about half a block from the school on Westheimer? But to celebrate a special occasion or a big date, we remember The Red Lion, Bill Williams, 2 K's and, if we wanted to travel WAY out Westheimer, Bud Bigelow's

G-Our favorite date was a movie downtown at the Majestic, Kirby, Lowes or Metropolitan, with dinner before or after—Best Picture in 1959 was Ben Hur, best actor was Charlton Heston, but who can forget "Psycho"!!

B- Our favorite date was the South Main, Post Oak or any other out- door theater, no matter what was showing

G—our favorite hangouts were at each other's houses, slumber parties, the Shamrock Swimming pool, the bowling alley, and wherever the boys were

B- Remember Kay's Lounge, cruising thru the Buccaneer Drive-in, Playland Park and of course, where ever the girls were?

G- Whether you ever took drama or not, we will never forget the many wonderful plays and musicals that came out of the drama department under Ruth Denny's leadership— She is truly a legend—and in the Chorolettes we could sing, we could dance, and we knew all of the parts to the Halleluiah Chorus—and we will never forget our trip to Washington D.C.

B. We got really good at imitating Mr. Keding as he swished through the halls, until he fetched the coaches on us with their paddles--

And in between it all we went to class, ate lunch on the front lawn, wrote love notes to our boyfriends or girlfriends—(we didn't have texting in those days)—We took a rigorous curriculum taught by 104 teachers, 80 of whom held Master's degrees—When we graduated we attended Colleges and Universities throughout Texas and the entire country from the east coast to the west coast—Many of us remained in Houston, and many of us have lived, and made our mark in other cities and countries around the world—

In closing, I'm reminded of one of my favorite emails, where a young college student and a much older man are talking, and the college student was bragging and chastising the old man about all the things that he had access to in his life that the old man had never had like cell phones, cable and satellite TV, Blackberries, texting, personal computers, ipods, the internet, HD TV, video games, and on and on—The old man listened calmly, and when the student had finished, he said you're right—we didn't have any of those things--- so WE INVENTED THEM—Now you little jerk!—what are you going to do for the generations that follow you??

You were and are a truly amazing class—and in the words of our alma mater, Hail to Lamar, and Hail to the Class of 1959!!

