

December 2015

Richie Rebel says, "If you can read this, thank a teacher."

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Life & Times of the Rebels of '69

Thornton Fractional Township High School South, Class of 1969, Lansing, Illinois

42 Years of Teaching and Still Loving It

by John Jones (California)



My relationship with education has certainly had its ups and downs over the last 65 years. I'd rather forget about the first 9 years of school, which is a real embarrassment for myself. To put it nicely, I'll call it a late-bloomer syndrome. Ironically, my shaky start at TFS ended with my employment as a woodshop teacher at both TFN/TFS for ten years. The photo is me in my 1978 TFN woodshop. I found it odd that teachers I knew as a student were now coming to me for advice about projects they undertook.

In 1983, I was nearing the completion of my doctorate at Indiana State when

District 215 ruffed me. After a short contemplation of being unemployed in Illinois vs. unemployed in Southern California, my wife Carol Stanhope Jones (TFS '68), my three

sons, and I headed for warmer climates.

After a six-month bout of unemployment, I ended up at Diamond Bar High School in Diamond Bar, California. Four years later, I transitioned from teaching cabinetmaking to teaching architecture. Diamond Bar High School has changed greatly since I started in 1984. Back then we had 1100 students of which 85% were Caucasian. We now have over 3,000 students of which 65% are Asian.

This is my 42nd year of teaching. A few years ago, I did a calculation of the number of students I've had over the years. Over 15,000! It is common for me to be recognized as a DBHS teacher. At the wedding of my oldest son, a dozen former students from nearly 20 years ago mentioned having Mr. Jones in high school.

John Jones and his advanced architecture students at Diamond Bar High School.

Fun Fact: The seniors in Mr. Jones's first class at TFN are now 60 years old.



I was named Teacher of the Year in 2002, the first “shop teacher” ever given that honor. I led my students in the Rio Hondo College Architecture Competition from 2003–2009, and my program was named number one for four of those years. I’m also very proud that Diamond Bar High School was named one of Newsweeks’ Best High Schools in America for 2015.

If I sound like I brag, I think it has a lot to do with my failures in my own early education, which later became successes. I was two classes short of my doctorate when I left for California in 1983. I went back to school and got a degree in math at Whittier college. I have a Masters from Indiana State and a Bachelors from Northern Illinois University. Not too shabby for the kid who failed a few 9th-grade classes. I think those early failures added to my success as a teacher, as I can now help the “late bloomers.”

In 2012, I was given an excellent offer to retire from the school district yet teach the same students and classes in the same room. I would no longer be paid by the district, but by Regional Occupational Programs. My hours are now from 7 to 10 AM. More money, fewer

hours? YES, I'll take it!!

On a personal note, my wife Carol and I recently celebrated our 43rd wedding anniversary. Carol retired two years ago as a science teacher. Our three sons are all successful in their careers, and our first grandchild was born in 2015. I credit my wife with ALL the successes in my life. Our family and our travels in our motorhome make for a very content life. I'm frequently asked when I'm really going to retire. I'm shooting for 50 years of teaching!

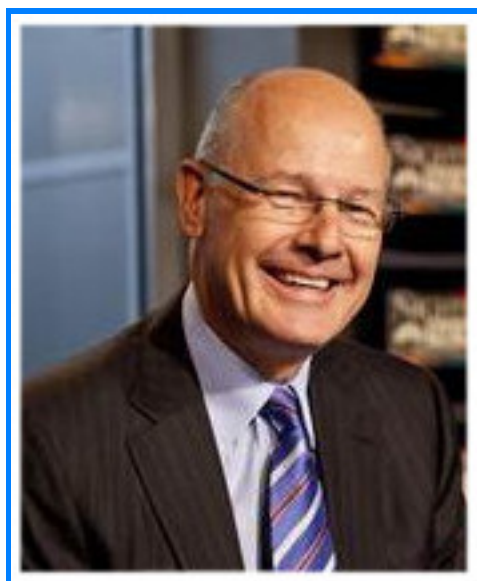


For those who don't remember me, I was the one at Memorial Jr. High who was in a car accident and spent six months in the hospital (special thanks to Pat Walsh for the cards and visit). After that, I was known as the kid with the bad leg. The leg has actually served me well all these years!

Most importantly, I truly have a love for teaching architecture to high school students. I cannot imagine anything more rewarding. I am one lucky guy.

My Favorite Teacher

by **Harry Smith** (New York)



In 2004, Harry Smith tracked down his favorite teacher—Mrs. Joyce Freund, who was the third-grade teacher of 36 Indiana Avenue School classmates in Lansing, IL. Here is part of that delightful interview. We invite you to click this link for the full CBS video story.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/harrys-favorite-teacher/>

My favorite year at Indiana Avenue School in Lansing was when I was in third grade. No contest. And the reason was—my teacher, Mrs. Freund. That was 1960. In 2004, The Early Show and I tracked her down. When we called her up, she was completely flabbergasted. After so many years and thousands of students, frankly, I was a little surprised she even remembered me.

During our interview, Mrs. Freund told me that she would see me on television and tell her

husband, "You know, I had a little boy with big brown eyes named Harry Smith." She kind of had this inkling that it was me, but was never quite sure.

Over the years, Mrs. Freund moved from Lansing and the old Indiana Avenue School was torn down. Mrs. Freund continued to teach at Westmoor School in Northbrook, Illinois, before retiring. But even after retirement, she returned to school as a substitute teacher.

Through decades of teaching, my third-grade teacher saw many changes. "We had to teach every single subject—math, reading, writing, music, art, gym. I took you out for gym," she told me. I asked her what she thought the biggest changes are since 1960. Mrs. Freund didn't miss a beat. "Computers. The Internet. Fantastic."



Mrs. Joyce Freund and her third-grade class at Indiana Avenue School, Lansing, IL, 1960.

Fun Fact: One-third of the kids in this class are *Life & Times* subscribers.

And the kids today? "I think they have so much more pressure," she said. "There's just so much more demanded of the kids and of the teachers, with the tests and so forth, that everyone has to achieve. It's difficult."

It was nice to have the opportunity to say "Thank You" to my favorite teacher who helped mold me from an eager-eyed kid to an appreciative adult. I remember that we'd come into the classroom every day with our eyes wide open. What's going to happen today?

What could be better than that, I asked her.

"Working with children," Mrs. Freund answered. "It's a great reward."

Harry and Mrs. Freund stroll down memory lane, reminiscing about Harry's third-grade school year.

Fun Fact: Indiana Avenue



School was built in 1893 and served as Lansing's high school from 1920-1924.

Harry is a contributing correspondent for NBC News and CNBC.

Time travel with Harry as he reveals facts about himself and his classmates in his 2004 CBS interview with Mrs. Joyce Freund. To watch, click the following link or cut and paste it into your Internet browser window.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/harrys-favorite-teacher/>

Many of our TFS '69 classmates spent some or all of their careers in education making an impact on students' lives from pre-school through college. Thank you Class of 1969, and thank you to the teachers who made a difference in our own lives.—TEAM69



Ask Richie Rebel!

Hey Richie—Do you ever share our email addresses when we subscribe to the *Life & Times*?

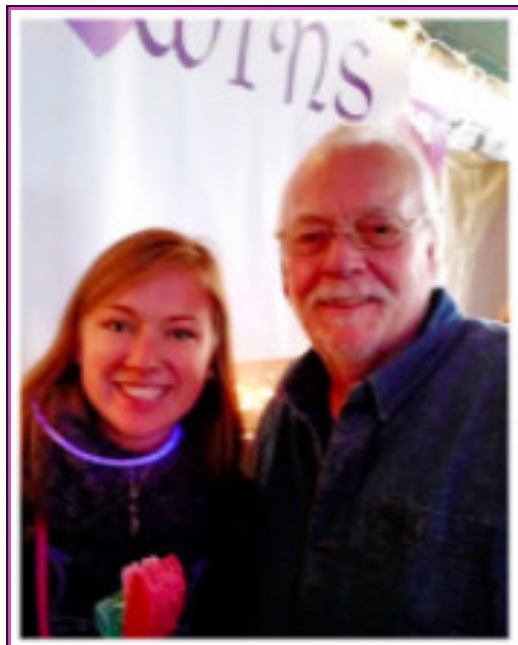
Richie says—No, we don't. When you signup for our class e-newsletter, *The Life & Times of the Rebels of '69*, you are trusting us to do our best to protect your email address from being spammed. We are vigilant and we do what we can. Neither our email service, MailChimp, nor **TEAM69** share your email address.

On the other hand, if you are looking for that long-lost love, that BFF from the 60's, or a classmate you wished you'd gotten to know better, contact **TEAM69** at our email address or through our website. We'll do what we can to put you in touch.



A Celebration of Life for **Sue Myers Bredemann** will be held by her son and daughter on December 6, 2015, in Indianapolis, IN. If we get more details, we'll post the information on our Facebook page: Tfsouth Classofsixty-nine.

LOVE WON!



Kind people with big hearts turned up at the rockin' **Love Wins!** benefit for Diane Szumski Pranski (TFS '80) at Bottoms Up in Lansing Nov. 21 in spite of an incredible dumping of snow that day. The benefit raised over \$25,000 to help Diane on her long road to recovery. Local bands Scamp, Lake Effect, Jermey & the Rolling Jones & Lindsey, Latin Satin Soul, and 5 N Time Band got everyone up and dancing for Diane.

Diane's daughter, April Michelle, shown here with **Ken Hanes** (Indiana), thanks everyone for their support. Ken said, "It was a great turnout for a very good cause."

TEAM69 Heard from...

Sherelle "Nikki" Rompca: Thank you for including us in the newsletter [Nov. 2015].
—*Our apologies to SSGT Sherelle Rompca. We misidentified her U.S. Air Force rank in the Nov. 2015 Life & Times. Nikki left the Air Force a year ago as a Staff Sergeant.*

John Giles (Georgia) HEY, TFS Team 69, great newsletter.

Marilyn Rea Beyer (Massachusetts): Beautiful. Thanks for this stirring edition [Nov. 2015], especially for the view of the impressive military lineage of our classmates.

Rich Krilich (Illinois): Another couple of excellent editions in October and November! Great job, interesting articles, and beautiful photos! I hope we continue connecting with old friends from the past and are able to locate more! Thanks for all that you friends do to keep us informed and connected.

Sue Taylor Hasse (Kentucky): Wow!!! What a magnificent issue of TFS *Life & Times* [Nov. 2015]. Thank you for honoring our Military Veterans and also those who are serving to protect us at home. A wonderful tribute to our Vets and our Fallen Soldiers.

Lynda Schneider Gleim (Indiana): Great issue! Thanks for all the hard work.

Dave Dickinson (California): Outstanding job. You all busted your butts.

Grace Demanuele Talbot (California): Great Newsletter. Once again you all outdid yourselves!

Denny Walton (Utah): Great *Life & Times* for November. Love to hear about my friends and family in the military. Thank you all.

Renay Vanderby (California): It's really fun to see pictures of our classmates and find out what everyone is up to. Thanks.

Happy December Birthday!

Janet Claussen Venecz, Sherry Nondorf Bingham, Pam DeYoung Bertalan, John Giles, Rich Kuske, Grace Demanuele Talbot, David Meilleur

Celebrating a November Wedding Anniversary

Maria and Rich Krilich (Illinois)—20 years

Help Us Contact Our Classmates

Here's another batch of classmates who are not subscribed to our *Life & Times* e-newsletter. If you are in contact with them, please invite them to subscribe at our website tfsclassof69.weebly.com. You can use the **Forward** button below to share the newsletter with classmates, family, and friends.

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Cliff Purnell
John Pranger
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For the Dec. *Life & Times*

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Rene Sterbenc (TFS'68) @ReneSterbenc

Our Mission: To promote and grow our network of TFS Class of 1969 friendships by sharing information and planning reunion events to keep the spirit of the 40th Reunion alive and vibrant.

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