



Isaac Litton Alumni Association, Nashville, TN

The End of an Era

Mary Virginia King Gee, July 4, 1905 - February 4, 2007

On October 25, 1930, Isaac Litton High School opened its doors for the first time on Gallatin Road in Inglewood. Principal James Dean Brandon welcomed a faculty of five, and 40+ years of tradition, pride and accomplishments ensued. One of those teachers was a twenty-five-year-old Vanderbilt graduate named Mary Virginia King. She came in to teach English, and she did it well. But the intangibles she contributed to "her school" over the next 76 years and three months are immeasurable. Even after her retirement in 1957 - and the school's closing in 1971 - she continued to attend class reunions and render her rhymes for the enjoyment of all who called Litton home. And though her health had deteriorated in the last several months, there could be little doubt that one of her last thoughts on February 4, 2007 - when she celebrated her final commencement - was of her beloved Litton High.

Born in Rutherford County, Mrs. Gee was an honor graduate of Central High in Murfreesboro, a cum laude graduate of Vanderbilt University in 1927 and later obtained her Master's Degree from Peabody College. She married Harvey Gee Jr. in 1937; he died in November, 1991.

As a member of the Madison Circle of The King's Daughters, she helped found The King's Daughters Day Home, a day care center in Madison. She served as its treasurer for more than 20 years.

Her funeral was held at Alexander Funeral Home in Gallatin on February 7. She was laid to rest, next to her beloved Harvey, in Spring Hill Cemetery on a small hill overlooking Gallatin Road less than four blocks from Litton. It was remarked by many of her former students who attended the services that "she's still keeping an eye on us as we travel Gallatin Road."

MY LIFE IN RHYME *by Mary Virginia Gee*

(Editor's Note: This rhyme was written by Mrs. Gee to be read at her funeral. It was presented by her niece, Julie Ellis Starr at her services on February 7, 2007.)

This day for me is not complete
Without my little rhyme.
Someone must read it for me now
I cannot read this time.

At some lines if you wish to smile,
That's what I wish you'd do.
For I don't want you to feel sad
Because I'm leaving you.

Of course, I'm not a poet great.
I merely like to rhyme,
And that is what I often did
To suit some special time.

(Continued on page 2)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Gene Ward ('51) — President
Raymond Hunter ('52) — President Elect
Jo Ann Boyd Slate ('54) — Secretary
Shirley Coon Ward ('50) — Treasurer
Graham Baker ('63) — Immediate Past President
Fred Clanton ('61) — Website Host

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Class of 2007

Walt Brown ('54)
Joe Carter ('63)
Johnny DuVal ('52)
John Pennington ('60)

Class of 2008

Mary Ann Baker ('54)
Nancy Perry Hoover ('54)
Ted Ridings ('55)
Bryan Roehrig ('71)

Class of 2009

Justine Perry Duke ('44)
Jerry Kemp ('53)
Cliff McRae ('51)
George Stamps ('59)

MY LIFE IN RHYME *(Continued from page 1)*

I'll never be a Tennyson
Or Robert Browning - No!
To scale their heights was much too far
For me to try to go.

The boys and girls I taught at school
Just thought my verses great,
Because I wrote about the things
To which they could relate.

Their sports, their clubs, their love affairs
Were subjects with appeal,
With me they loved to reminisce -
Again those past thrills feel.

For their reunions, some returned,
And I a rhyme would make;
So this event did never lack
Its "icing on the cake."

They laughed at how old back then
To them I seemed to be,
But Father Time had taken toll,
And they'd caught up with me.

And then, somewhere along the way
I married Harvey Gee;
A happy union for us both
This marriage proved to be.

He entered into school affairs
Supportive as could be -
The students called him Harvey;
But I was Mrs. Gee.

My teaching years I did enjoy;
I chose the right career;
The memories of those thirty years
To me were very dear.

A sense of humor you must have
If you should choose to teach;
Also be fair, and you'll be sure
Your students then to reach.

Retirement kept me busy too,
I never ceased to work;
I undertook new projects hard
I did not care to shirk.

A Day Home I did help to found,
Some working moms to aid,
Where they could leave their children small,
While they, their "living" made.

And then, when Harvey did retire,
We were content at home,
Or we could travel when we chose -
About the country roam.

Much money I did never make,
But I was rich with friends -
And friendship adds a golden touch
That beauty to life lends.

Then came the day we had to part
I had to say adieu
And live without my loving mate
Until my life was through.

My cats Delilah and Gray Man
Did both my love return;
Also my loving Gypsy dog
To guard me well did learn.

Soon I will lie by Harvey's side
Just where I want to be,
I've been so lonesome these last years
Without him here with me.

Goodbye to all until we meet
Again - I know not where.
"I only know I cannot drift
Beyond God's love and care."

'57 GRADS HOLD GOLDEN REUNION MAY 5 WITH DAY-LONG ACTIVITIES

The Class of 1957 celebrated its Golden Reunion on May 5 with a schedule of activities befitting the occasion. Starting at 10:00 a.m., the grads met at Rockland Recreation area in Hendersonville for a brunch. The day was capped off with guests arriving at Bluegrass Country Club at 5:15 p.m. for dinner, entertainment and the 50-year program.

During the day, Roger Wills spearheaded a visit to the old gymnasium on Gallatin Pike. For some, this was the first visit to the campus in 50 years.

A highlight of the evening affair was the entertainment provided by Buzz Cason and the Originators. Buzz is a '57 Litton grad and has excelled on Music Row since graduation. Though Buzz and his group graciously donated their services for this auspicious occasion, the reunion committee suggested a donation to a tax-exempt organization Buzz has spearheaded called G.I.F.T. (Giving In Faith Together). This ministry helps musicians in need of financial help for whatever reason. Another example of a Litton alum giving back to the community.

Andrea Jo Lehning Moore chaired a strong reunion committee consisting of Carolyn Graves Capley, Dottie McQuiddy Cathey, Edna Coffier Salyer, Joan Stewart Hewgley, Martha Hurt Peden, Joy Craig Wills, Roger Wills, Charles Kimbrough, Anita Kay Fergus Donnell, June Weaver Curtis, Marolyn Marklin Blankman, Buzz Cason, Anita VonDohlen Cline, Edwin Hutcherson, Sandra McElhiney Kyne, Ray Clark, Murray Brown, Mack Thweatt, Martha Leigh Binkley, Preston Hunley, Paul McClellan, Linda Gill, John Riadon, Hank Thompson, Bruce Graves and Gayle Graves.



Mrs. Harvey Gee, in her most familiar role, delivering her final rhyme at the 2006 All-Alumni Banquet April 2006.

'67 GRADS PLAN 40TH REUNION AT MARRIOTT AUGUST 18TH

The Isaac Litton Class of 1967 has planned its 40th reunion for August 18th, 2007, at the Nashville Marriott, according to Phil Taylor. Things kick off at 6:00 p.m. with heavy hors d'ouvres and a cash bar. The Howard Fine Band

(Class of '69) will play oldies starting at 8:00 p.m.

The Class has instituted a unique innovation - starting at 8:00 p.m., the reunion is open to anyone who wishes to attend. This includes, according to Phil, grads from other classes, other schools, siblings of '67 grads, or former Litton students who did not graduate at Litton. They may not have seen each other in 40 years, but this is a great time to renew old acquaintances. Of course, there's no food after 8 p.m., but the cash bar and music is all available at no charge. No need to RSVP, just show up.

Contact Phil at his email address: philliptaylor@nashville.gov for more information. See photo showing a recent '67 Reunion Committee meeting.



From left, seated: Suellen Clark Richardson, Kathy Vaden Cundall, Georgia Norman, Diane Adkisson Wakefield, Jerry Wakefield (spouse and East High grad), Herbert Patterson.

Standing: Clyde (Sonny) Richardson (classmate and Suellen's spouse), Gerry Green, Ron Merville holding Madelyn Grace, Jimmy Fuller, LaDonna Merville (Spouse), Janet Patterson (Harold's spouse), Harold Patterson and Phil Taylor.

TRADITION LIVES ON: COACH CUMMINGS AND HIS TEAMS SHARE LUNCHEONS AND MEMORIES

Many former Litton players gathered periodically to have lunch with former Coach Bob Cummings, rehash old times and generally reminisce of days gone by. Tommy Patton ('49) and Henry Bledsoe ('52) have spearheaded the get-togethers, usually held in the Leiper's Fork or Franklin areas.

Recently, Vicki Stout penned an article in the Leiper's Fork Life that masterfully chronicled the whys and wherefores of these luncheons. In it, she writes, "Coach Bob Cummings, long retired, is still calling the plays, currently from tables pushed together at Puckett's Grocery. Huddled around him are his players, vintage 1946-54. They come from all over the city to have lunch with him once a month."

Bledsoe, who was President of the Class of 1952, recently e-mailed, "Coach said to me lately, while we were talking after the last luncheon at Leiper's Fork, that the camaraderie and love we all show him, after all these years, means more to him than his induction into the Hall of Fame."

Coach Cummings, incidentally, was married on May 5 at the United Methodist Church in Portland.

If you are interested in participating in the luncheons with Coach Cummings, you can e-mail Henry Bledsoe and he will put you on his list to inform you of the time and locations of the luncheons. He's at hbledsoearchitect@comcast.net.

A recent photo provided by Vicki is presented with this article.



At the recent luncheon with Coach Cummings at Puckett's Grocery: From left, Ernest Sherrill, Jim Burroughs, Coach Cummings, Bobby Reasons, Tommy Patton, Henry Bledsoe, Erskine Ausbrooks, Gene Ward and Jim Presley.

GYM RENOVATION TAKES POSITIVE TURN; ESTIMATE AT \$1,750,000

One of the prime efforts of your Alumni Association has been the potential renovation of the gymnasium on Gallatin Road. Several proposals have been sidetracked for various reasons, but due to the determined and tireless efforts of Jimmy Howell ('47), a plan seems to be falling into place.

An architectural plan has been submitted and the initial proposal has been approved by the Metropolitan Public Schools System. It entails a three-way occupation of the building that combines community, civic and alumni activities in one locale. Hardaway Construction Company has put an estimated price tag at \$1,750,000.

(1) Youth, Inc., a 50-year-plus non-profit organization with long-standing Litton and East High ties, will occupy office space and provide scheduling and janitorial services for all building activities. Youth, Inc. provides sports activities in basketball, roller hockey, 8-man football and soccer. In addition, they operate a camp on Percy Priest Lake and provide summer football facilities for several Middle Tennessee high schools.

(2) A community meeting center will be provided for the Inglewood Neighborhood Association to accommodate bridge clubs, stage plays and other community meetings.

(3) The basement area will be renovated and can be used for class reunions and alumni meetings of all types, in addition to housing Litton memorabilia.

The plan calls for a three-phase renovation. The first will be the Youth, Inc. offices, basketball and restroom needs. Second and third phases will develop the basement meeting rooms and kitchen needs. Offices will be air conditioned. A new boiler has been installed and the roof was replaced approximately five years ago. There is no time table announced at this time.

THE LITTON BLAST

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EDITOR

Johnny DuVal ('52)

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Mary Louise Perry
Grissom ('42)

Justine Perry Duke ('44)
Jean Greene Barksdale
('47)

Jimmy Howell ('47)

Jane Hagedwood
Steinhauer ('49)

Shirley Coon Ward ('50)
Genevieve Dorris Lish
('50)

Jack Benz ('51)

Gene Ward ('51), Paul
Rawls ('51)

Henry Bledsoe ('52)

Andrea Jo Lehning Moore
('57)

Tom Pennington ('63)

Phil Taylor ('67)

FACULTY ADVISER, EMERITUS

Mrs. Harvey Gee
(1905-2007)



ANNUAL ALUMNI PICNIC TO KICK OFF AUGUST 25

If you've not attended one, you don't know what you've missed. It's the annual Litton alumni picnic, now in it's 20th year. It's scheduled this year for August 25, and once again Litton grads Judy Joyner Maddux ('53) and Drew Maddux ('52) are graciously providing the location. It's their Winingham Farm in Gallatin.

What do you need? It's simple. Just bring yourself, spouse or significant other, a covered dish and folding chair for comfort. And, oh yeah, bring all the tall stories you ever told at Litton and the new ones you've made up since. Surely, someone will be there that will believe you.

A map to Winingham is shown below. Questions? You can e-mail Jack Benz ('51) at jandnbenz@comcast.net.



**Map to
Alumni
Picnic
August
25,
2007**

THE LITTON WEB SITE <http://www.isaaclittonhigh.com> The brainchild of Fred Clanton ('61).

Send your news and notes for the web site to: info@isaacittonhigh.com
or Tom Pennington ('63) — tompngn@worldnet.att.net and Paul Rawis ('51) — prawls33@bellsouth.net

ILAA DUES AND MEMORABILIA

In 2002, the Isaac Litton Alumni Association Board of Directors established a \$5 annual dues amount — on a voluntary basis — to help defray costs of publications, mailings and other non-profit expenses. If you

haven't sent your dues in lately, now is a good time. Also, items relating to Litton are available for purchase. The proceeds over and above actual cost go into the fund for the gymnasium / alumni room development. Here's an

opportunity to pay your dues and order items for your own collection or for gifts for Christmas or other special occasions.



"The Spirit Lives"

RALPH McDONALD PRINTS:

10" x 15" @ \$50 _____ \$ _____

18" x 25" @ \$265 _____ \$ _____

PHIL PONDER PRINTS:

28" x 10" @ \$30 _____ \$ _____

(\$25 + \$5 s&h)



LITTON CAPS:

Red & Blue structured cap @ \$12 _____ \$ _____

(\$10 + \$2 s&h)



Khaki, Red & Blue unstructured cap @ \$12 _____ \$ _____

(\$10 + \$2 s&h)



"L" LAPEL PINS: @ \$5 _____ \$ _____

DUES: _____ \$ _____

DONATION TO GYM PROJECT: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Name _____ Class of 19 _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Make checks payable to and mail to: **Litton Alumni Association, Inc.**, P.O. Box 752, Madison, TN 37116 - 0752

ALUMNI GATHER FOR MONTHLY LUNCHEONS

Want to know what's happening with Litton alums every month. No better way to do it than attend one of the monthly luncheons for all grads. It's held the first Thursday of each month at the Piccadilly Cafeteria in Madison. It gets underway at 11:30 and no reservations are required.

Jane Hagewood Steinhauer ('49) is the prime mover for this event. Alumni from all decades have attended and enjoyed the information and fellowship shared as only Litton Lions can.

You can e-mail Jane at mawjhs@cs.com and she'll add you to her reminder list.

LITTON ACTIVE IN 'SHARE' GROUP OF FORMER HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

An informal organization, or 'SHARE' group, consisting of former high school alumni associations is meeting periodically in an exchange of ideas and initiatives. Joining Litton in the group are associations from DuPont, Cameron, East, Madison, Meigs and Pearl.

In their recent meetings, the group has shared information regarding alumni activities in areas such as re-unions, mailings, dues, scholarship and gathering of memorabilia. Jane Hagewood Steinhauer ('49) is representing the Litton association in this group.

At a recent meeting held at the Metropolitan Nashville Public School Maintenance Department hosted by Maintenance Director Tom Hatfield, the members examined Hatfield's "museum" of items accumulated during renovations and/or demolition of old high school properties.

Wilson Stewart of the DuPont Alumni Association is chairing the group. Jane brings her reports to the Litton Association Board of Directors, but if you wish to communicate with her by e-mail she's at mawjhs@cs.com.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HAS TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

Though most alumni are probably aware of this information, the Isaac Litton Alumni Association has received its tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. Contributions are now officially deductible under Section 170 of the code. The Association is now classified exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the code.

A gigantic vote of thanks goes to Graham Baker ('63), Immediate Past President of the Association. Graham, an attorney, doggedly pursued the determination, along with able assistance from Randall Matlock ('63), a CPA.

THROUGH THE PORTALS ...

Every year that passes brings the news of the passing of other Litton alumni. These are honored and recognized at our annual All-Alumni Banquet each year. Just recently, however, we have received special notice of the following who have celebrated the final commencement:

*** Ed McNabb, who served as President of the Class of 1944, passed away in February.

Mary Lou Ward Dews ('54) died earlier this year. She was the widow of the late Rev. Vernon Dews ('50).

*** Mary Ruth Matlock Weir ('59) died in December, 2006. Mary Ruth helped founded "Jubilee Partners" in Coiner, Ga., an ongoing ministry to refugees from all over the world.

*** James William (Jimmy) Jackson ('38) died recently in Murfreesboro. Following graduation Jimmy began a life-long association with Middle Tennessee State University. Upon graduation from Middle Tennessee, he spent four years as a Navy pilot in WWII.

FORMER LION COACH BILL HARRIS DIES

William T. (Bill) Harris, who coached Litton football from 1954 to 1961, died April 1. He was 90. Coach Harris began his teaching and coaching career after returning from military service in 1946. He left Litton in 1961 to go into school administration and in 1971 was named Athletics and Physical Education Director for Metro Nashville Public Schools. He held that post until his retirement.

Funeral services were held Thursday, April 5, at Spring Hill Funeral Home, with burial in Spring Hill Cemetery. A host of his former Litton players were in attendance.

Coach Harris is survived by two daughters and a son.

DID YOU KNOW ...

... the Class of '51 held a 55th reunion last year at Bluegrass Country Club. It was an informal affair with no preset program, but with a great buffet meal and typical Litton togetherness.

... Dot Wood Harrison-Sloan ('53) was honored last year for having been instrumental in the birth of the Murfreesboro/Rutherford County Center for the Arts. Appropriately titled the "Dot Harrison Cabaret," it brought together dozens of Rutherford County notables, along with Dot's long-time elementary and Litton classmates, the Jolly Dollies - Wilma Deuel DuVal, Charlotte Miller Hagewood, Laurale Burrus Williams, Martha Win Norman and Nila Garmon Sherrill.

..."Girls" of the Class of 1950 continue to hold their monthly luncheons at the Hermitage House Smorgasbord on Lebanon Road. They meet at 11:30 the first Tuesday of each month.

... John Hollingsworth ('48) was honored last year as Freed-Hardeman University bestowed upon him the Honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

... A group of ex-Litton guys get together every Monday for a day of golf.

... Roland Downing ('49) served as President General of the Sons of the American Revolution for the years 2005-2006. The honor was bestowed at the organization's 115th annual congress in Louisville, attended by Downing and his wife, Norma Wright Downing ('51).

... The Class of '62 will hold its 45th reunion on October 20th at the old gym. Want more details? E-mail carolebhulan@aol.com.

RUSSELL GERALD GREENE

Isaac Litton Class of 1941 - American Hero - Class of 1944 LITTON'S HEROES SACRIFICED ON MANY FIELDS OF HONOR

An often overlooked aspect of Isaac Litton's heritage is the service and sacrifice of its graduates in our country's military from World War II forward. In archives found among Mrs. Harvey Gee's possessions after her passing was a Litton history. Though not dated, it appears to have been written perhaps in the late 1940's. In it, she writes that "during World War Hits (Litton's) boys, over 500 in number, fought in both the European and Pacific theaters. Thirty-one gold stars shine on its service flag to remind all that Litton too made the supreme sacrifice."

Jean Greene Barksdale ('47) reports on one such Gold Star. It belongs to her brother, Russell Gerald Greene, class of 1941. Gerald volunteered for service in the Navy in June of 1942. After completing flight training in Pensacola, Florida, Ensign

Greene received his wings and was assigned to the Pacific Theater as the pilot of a torpedo bomber.

On June 14, 1944, the day before the U.S. Marines landed on Saipan, Ensign Greene broke formation on a torpedo run, and with no warning or distress call was never heard from again. He was reported missing, and his parents Mr. & Mrs. C.H. Greene were notified. He was 21 years old. Nineteen months later he was officially declared killed in action.

On May 23, 2006, a Memorial Service honoring Gerald was held in Arlington National Cemetery. In attendance were sister Jean, her husband Phil ('44), their son Gerald, and the two daughters of Gerald's older brother, Hutton. Hutton served two years in the European theater. He has since died.

Their mother wrote a poem

honoring her two sons while they served their country. Entitled "Because of You, My Son," it is reproduced on these pages. Though written in another time and for another generation, Mrs. Greene dedicated it to all mothers and their sons.



BECAUSE OF YOU, MY SON

Why am I through all these days,
Happy to sing and render praise?

When can I, when friends I meet,
The thoughts, I think, to them I speak?

Why can we meet here with God
And not be face to face with gun or rod?

The answer I give to every one,
Is because of you my Son, my Son.

You bravely sail the stormy sea.
You soar the sky for Victory.

You guard the coast for dangerous ones,
You man the tanks and fire the guns.

Your courage, loyalty and unselfish love
Brings us nearer to our Father above.

God has promised to love and care.
Because of you my Son, I continually
breathe a prayer.

Your Mom's at home and doing her best,
To keep from worrying like all the rest.

I'll be so happy when the last battle is won
Because you'll becoming home to me, my
Son, my Son.

But if it happens that you meet your fate,
You'll do bravely, it's a chance you take.

Your mother is proud of you, my dear,
So proud, that beneath my pride, I hide
my fear.

Yes, and mother understands better than
any one,
That in the end, when Victory is won,
It will be because of you, My Son, My Son.

—Your Mom

View our 2006 BANQUET PHOTOS

on our web site at: <http://www.isaacclittonhigh.com/06banquet/06banquet.html>

2007 BANQUET PHOTOS coming to our web site soon.



ISAAC LITTON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. BOX 752

MADISON, TENNESSEE 37116-0752

<http://www.isaacclittonhigh.com>

email: info@isaacclittonhigh.com