Riggs High Class of '63

1989 Reunion

Centennial Celebration Reunion
June 30, July 1 & 2, 1989
Ramkota - Pierre



Back Row (Left to right): Tony Lucas, Richard Miller, Jerry Hunsley, Merle Hawkins, Jack Kitchen, Larry Morris, Dan Neiles, Bob (Dannie) WeddLe, Dennis Naasz, Gary Porter, Ron Olesen, Milt Morris, Dave Baade, Mark Simmons, Sam Ruzick, Jim Carr, Jerry McQuay.

Center Row (Left to right): Dana Dahlgren Bren, Shirley Jensen Brokow, Janet Tobin Turner, Paula Volk Hunsley, Marilyn Jennings, Carol Butler Jones, Marianna McLauchlin Gibbons, Jan Wright, Terry Marie Walsh Deyonge, Nina Colbert Maxfield, Joe Hanson.

Front Row (Left to right): Mary Parlet, Nancy Kindt Lorenzen, Ruth Ann Spicer Stenberg, Mary TyLer Zulk, Jeanne Baumann Cannon, Kay Cruse Mellon, Judy Williams Smith, Vicky Hansen Milbrandt, Barb Stoehr Nelson, Charlotte (Tinker) Samko McKenna, Dick Lamster, Ron Smith

Reunion Synopsis

1989 marked the 100th year of statehood for the state of South Dakota, and summer 1989 marked the Centennial celebration for Pierre, the All School Reunion, and the Class of ‘63's 26 year reunion. Over one-third of the classmates from the Riggs High Class of ‘63, their spouses, families and special friends gathered the weekend of June 30, July 1 and 2 in Pierre for the festivities.

Classmates started arriving as early as Sunday, June 25 and were excited about and anxiously looking forward to the reunion weekend. Many of the classmates phoned Joe when they arrived in town and by Wednesday many of those who had already arrived expressed a desire to congregate, so a pre-reunion gathering was organized to bring everyone together. Joe and his fellow classmates attempted to call all the local classmates still residing in Pierre, as well as those who had already arrived in town, and invited them to an informal pre-reunion “ice breaker” at the Hansons'. Consequently, the reunion started early in the week for many of us. We spent the evening reminiscing about the “good old days” and the crazy things we did while in high school. It was great to be together again with so many of the “kids” that we grew up with and shared so many of our youthful experiences with. We had such a good time on Wednesday night that we decided to do the same thing again on Thursday night. By then, many more classmates had arrived in town so Thursday night's gathering brought many more familiar faces and many more tales of days gone by. One of the highlights of the pre-reunion ice breakers for the women was dragging down Euclid in Dennis Naasz's 1964 Chevy convertible, which Dennis had restored and his wife Byrdi so graciously chauffeured. The convertible was the talk of Pierre for weekend. The local kids couldn't figure out who owned such a neat car and what all those “old ladies” were doing dragging up and down the streets.

It was nice to have the time on Wednesday and Thursday nights to gather, because it gave us an opportunity to visit with one another on a more individual basis. We were impressed with how “down to earth” and comfortable everyone was with one another and we compared notes on how anxious we were to see other members of our class as well as members of other classes who had returned for the All School Reunion. We all agreed that we did not come to the reunion to try to outshine or to impress anyone else. We came to gather with old friends, reaffirm the friendships we had made so many years ago and to further develop those friendships. We were there to share our lives and experiences with one another and we felt comfortable just being ourselves and having everyone accept and respect us for being just that. We realized how proud we were to be a part of the Class of ‘63 and at how much the Class of ‘63 meant to all of us.

Noon on Friday marked the official opening of the Class of ‘63's hospitality room at the Ramkota. We had a keg of beer on ice in the bathtub and soft drinks and snacks available for everyone to enjoy. A cup was placed in the room for a free-will offering to supply the hospitality room with refreshments, and through many generous contributions we had an abundant supply the entire weekend. The hospitality room was a very popular place and was well utilized not only by the Class of ‘63 but also by many classmates from other classes. It provided a place for many of the classmates to gather and visit, as well as giving them a place to go between festivities, especially those who no longer had relatives or friends living in Pierre. We kept a copy of the Gumbo in the room, the Class of ‘63's photo album, and various other memorabilia that provided many hours of entertainment for us.

We extended an invitation to other classes attending the All School Reunion to join us in our hospitality room, and consequently we had the opportunity to visit with many classmates from classes other than our own. The Class of ‘64 particularly took advantage of our invitation. They even brought year books from grade school and junior high to share with us. We had a great time looking at those pictures!

Friday night we gathered at the Ramkota for the Class of ‘63's mixer. This was the first time we had the opportunity to gather as entire class. A cash bar was available for refreshments and an assortment of hors d'oeuvres was served (if anyone went away hungry, it was their own fault). A class photo was taken by one of the local photographers (Larry Hofmeister) and a short time later the class was formally welcomed by Joe, who officiated as Master of Ceremonies for the short program that followed. Each classmate gave a short presentation on what they had been doing since high school (or since their last reunion), the class voted Joe chairman for the next reunion (Joe very graciously?? accepted), and then we voted when to have the next reunion. The classmates voted to have the next reunion (the 35th) in nine years (1998). HOWEVER, later in the evening several classmates gathered and concluded that nine years was too long to wait, so they suggested that we have the next reunion in 1995 (when most of the classmates turned the BIG 50) and have a big 50th birthday party so all of us could celebrate together. They then decided to have the following reunion in the year 2000 (for some reason everyone seemed to think that the turn of the century would be a great time to have a reunion). After discussing this proposal with the other classmates, it was decided that we would have the next reunion in 1995 and the following one in the year 2000. (Now that you know the years of our next two reunions you can start making you plans to gather in 1995 for the Class of ‘63's 50th birthday party and again in 2000 for the turning of the century party.)

Towards the end of our mixer, we were joined by several classmates from the Class of ‘64 (they were having their 25th class reunion) and also members from other classes who had gathered for their own class reunions. It ended up to be a pretty late night for many of us but also an entertaining one.

Saturday afternoon was photo time again. The All School Reunion Committee made arrangements with Miller's Studio to have individual class photos taken inside the Capital Building so we met there for the photo session. Our class was scheduled to have our picture taken early in the afternoon and, unfortunately, unlike most group photos, the photographers were right on schedule and did not wait but a few minutes for classmates to arrive. Consequently, a few of the classmates did not arrive on time to be included in the photo (ask Joe about his experience). No other reunion activities were scheduled until Saturday night so when the photo session ended, everyone was on their own. Many of us found our way back to the hospitality room and gathered there until the of the All School Reunion festivities.

La Framboise Causeway was the scene for Saturday night's gathering. The causeway underwent major reconstruction earlier that summer, so it provided a really nice setting for the All School Reunion. Food vendors had booths prepared for picnicking and a local band provided music for the dance. The picnic tables and benches placed along the causeway and the two newly constructed gazebos extending over the river provided excellent areas to congregate. There was a small crowd for the picnic but as the evening progressed the causeway was bursting with alumni ranging from students who had just recently graduated to those you had graduated in the early 1920s. It was crowded but comfortable until it grew dark, then it was difficult to see where you were going or who you were visiting with (all of the lights along the causeway were not yet installed). Because of the darkness, we decide to move the party indoors to the Ramkota. Our hospitality room was located on the back side of and adjacent to the courtyard, and since no one was utilizing the courtyard that evening we were allowed to congregate there. We had plenty of food and liquid refreshments in the hospitality room so we were equipped for the evening. Lee and Nina (Colbert) Maxfield provided the entertainment by playing tapes from the 50s and 60s. Once again, we were joined by members of the Class of ‘64 and other classes. We managed to entertain ourselves until about 3:00 am and then decided it was time to close the hospitality room and get some badly needed sleep.

Steamboat Park was the site of the family picnic on Sunday afternoon. The temperature was over 100 degrees but we had a really good turn out in spite of the heat. The food was excellent (and in great abundance) and the picnic was enjoyable and entertaining. We formed a couple of teams and played some volleyball but that didn't last too long. (No, we didn't collapse from old age! After a couple of games, we came to our senses and decided that playing volleyball in 100+ heat was not real healthy for any of us.) Shortly thereafter people started saying their farewells and departing. Our reunion was nearing its conclusion.

It was difficult to say farewell after experiencing such a memorable weekend but it was nice knowing that we would all meet again for our next reunion in six years. The weekend came and went so rapidly, but the memories of it and the people who made it so very special will remain with us always. For those of you who were able to join us, we thank you for coming and sharing yourselves with us and for making this reunion so enjoyable. For those of you who were unable to attend the reunion, we want you to know that you were with us in spirit and we hope that you will be able to join us for our future reunions.

SEE YOU IN 1995!

Classmates Who Attended Reunion

David Baade
Jeanne Baumann Cannon
Jerry Big Eagle
Jim Boyd
Carol Butler Jones
James Carr
Nina Colbert Maxfield
Kay Cruse Mellon
Dana Dahlgren Bren
Tom Douglas
Carol Farries Geis
Bonnie Forney Mattick
Wayne Grubbs
Vicky Hansen Milbrandt
Joe Hanson
Men Hawkins
Jerry Hirsch
Don Hunsley
Jerry Hunsley
Marilyn Jennings
Shirley Jensen Brokaw
Nancy Kindt Lorenzen
Jack Kitchen
Dick Lamster
Tony Lucas
Marianna McLauchlan Gibbons
Jerry McQuay
Richard Miller
Larry Morris
Milton Morris
Dennis Naasz
Dan Neiles
Ron Olesen
Maxine Otto Tessier
Mary Parlet
Gary Porter
Carol Pyncheon Whitney
Sam Ruzick, Jr.
Charlotte (Tinker) Samco McKenna
Diane Schomer Howard
Mark Simmons
Ronald Smith
Diana Sonnenschein Stevens
Ruth Ann Spicer Stenberg
Barbara Stoehr Nelson
Janet Tobin Turner
Mary Tyler Zulk
Paula yolk Hunsley
Marie (Terry) Walsh Deyonge
Bob (Dannie) Weddle
Jim Whitney
Judy Williams Smith
Janice Wright