



The Ruston High School Alumni Association



August 2012



3104 Lakeview Place, Ruston, Louisiana 71270



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www.rustonhighalumni.org

Welcome to this year's edition of the Ruston High School Alumni Association Newsletter. You are encouraged to visit our alumni website at www.rustonhighalumni.org to see all the exciting things going on with the alumni association and to keep up with your classmates and friends from RHS. Send us any suggestions as to what you would like to see in future editions of our newsletter. This association is yours and we want you to help make it even better. Always remember: ONCE A BEARCAT ALWAYS A BEARCAT!

John Sachs '61

Principal Milstead's Message to Alumni

I am very proud of the excellent 2011-12 Ruston Bearcat school year. Our ACT average continued to be above the national average. We completed the 2nd year of the implementation of our New Tech component of Ruston High—New Tech @ Ruston. Our New Tech School is a national demonstration site for the New Tech Network. Our school performance score of 119.7 is one of the highest in the state of Louisiana for non-magnet, public high schools. We anticipate it going higher for the next school year. Our spring testing this year is evidence of continued growth for our school. The RHS graduation rate of 92.6% exceeds the 2014 state goal of 80%. Many extracurricular activities bring renown to RHS as we achieve to the highest levels. Our school is a great place for students to attend. As alumni you are proud of RHS. The present standing of the school should make you even more proud.

I am anticipating the 2012-13 school year as one of excitement and continued growth and improvement. We have just occupied our new Jimmy "Chick" Childress Field House. Our new agriculture facility is under construction and should be completed by March, 2013. Our additional New Tech facility should be completed by June, 2013. Vertical alignment teams will work to make sure that our instructional program continues to prosper and remains one of the finest available. These teams work to help improve the skills of RHS graduates. My personal goal for this year is the continued establishment of professional learning communities which allow us to become even better instructors of our students. Our sports seasons are always anticipated with enthusiasm as we look forward to success on the field and court of play. The 2012-13 school year should be one that we will be talking about and bragging about for a long time.

Come visit RHS when you can and observe the amazing things that are presently happening and will continue to happen. Remember that you are "Firmly Founded" and "Once a Bearcat, Always a Bearcat."

Origin of the Alumni Association

The origin of our Alumni Association came about when RHS graduate John B. Holstead, Class of 1956, was retiring as a partner in the prestigious law firm of Vinson Elkins in 2001. The firm wished to honor Mr. Holstead by making a contribution of \$5,000 to an organization of his choice. Mr. Holstead contacted RHS about this, and RHS graciously accepted this donation with the understanding that an annual \$1,000 award would be made to an outstanding graduating senior as chosen by the faculty.

In order that others be able to make tax deductible contributions to augment the Vinson Elkins donation, the RHS Alumni Association was formed as a 501 (c) (3) Louisiana corporation. Mr. Holstead then followed with a personal donation in excess of \$5,000. Over the 12 years of this program, the annual award has grown to \$1,500 and total awards of \$14,500 have been made. Many have made generous donations to this fund. Among those has been 1961 graduate Sharon Swearingen Tusa who designed and constructed two beautiful and unique quilts that have been raffled. The proceeds of those two raffles totaled \$2,820.

Mr. Holstead issued a challenge to the association in 2009 in which he would contribute another \$5,000 if the association would raise a matching amount. The association accepted and met this challenge, thus another \$10,000 was added to the fund balance.

As a result of Mr. Holstead's generosity, the efforts of many alumni, and the generous giving by so many, the outstanding Achievement Award fund in its present configuration is at a sustainable level for several years. However, in order to continue the award into the foreseeable future, donations are still welcomed.

2012 RHS Football Schedule

Aug. 31	Neville	Home	Oct. 5	Ouachita	Away
Sept. 7	Bastrop	Home	Oct. 12	N. Desoto	Away
Sept. 14	Arcadia	Home	Oct. 19	W. Monroe	Home
Sept. 20	C.E. Byrd	Away	Oct. 26	Natchitoches Central	Away
Sept. 28	Minden	Away	Nov. 2	Pineville	Home



Homecoming: Friday November 2, 2012



Ruston High Alumni Association Honors Teacher and Graduates

The Ruston High Alumni Association honored distinguished educators and graduates at our annual luncheon in 2011. Each year, the association honors one current teacher, one retired teacher, and one deceased teacher, along with three alumni. The young alumnus award was added to the list in 2011. Distinguished educators honored were current RHS mathematics teacher Elaine Johnson, retired history teacher and coach Norris "Bud" Alexander, and the late history teacher and vice principal Morgan Peoples. Distinguished alumni honored were Zane Skinner, Robert Lewis, and Duddy Burkhalter Garrett. Ryan Dick received the association's first Young Alumnus Significant Achievement Award.

Johnson teaches Algebra I,II,III, geometry, advanced math, and trigonometry. She has been a member of the RHS faculty since 1985 and was the Lincoln Parish Teacher of the Year in 2001. Johnson holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in mathematics education from Louisiana Tech University. She began her teaching career in 1982 at Gibsland-Coleman High School in Bienville Parish. At RHS, Johnson served as faculty sponsor for several student spirit groups and helped prepare students for Quiz Bowl academic competition.

Alexander taught history and coached at RHS for 11 years, and was the school's assistant principal from 1973-78. He helped establish the school's in-school computerization of student absences. Alexander holds a bachelor's degree from Louisiana Tech University with a triple major in social studies, English, and physical education. He has a master's degree in science and physical education.

While at Tech, Alexander was a kicker on the football team, earning the name "Golden Toe" for his prowess. He held the Bulldog's kicking record for years. He turned down the opportunity to play professional football, opting to stay in Ruston, rear his family, and teach.

Peoples, an Alabama native, came to RHS in 1956. He served simultaneously as vice principal and history teacher all of his 10 years at the school. He was a faculty sponsor for a number of student organizations. Peoples graduated from Northwestern State University and Louisiana State University. He left RHS in 1966

and taught at Louisiana Tech for the remainder of his career, specializing in Louisiana History. In 1973, he was named Outstanding Louisiana Historian by Louisiana State University.

Skinner, honored for his work in commerce and industry, graduated from RHS in 1942. He was a member of the school's 1941 championship football team. He attended Notre Dame University on an athletic scholarship. Skinner saw active duty with Army transport in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He began his career as a master mariner with the Lykes Steamship Company, West Indies Division. Skinner spent 34 years as a ship pilot at the Port of Houston. He and his wife, Linda, are co-founders of the Zane and Linda Skinner Charitable Fund. The fund was established to benefit RHS students who have excelled both academically and athletically. Two \$1,000 scholarships have been awarded thus far.

Lewis, honored for his humanitarianism, graduated in 1967. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas, Western Seminary, and holds a doctor of ministry from Talbot Theological University. Lewis is the directional leader of Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock, Ark. Under his leadership, the church has grown from several hundred members to over 5,000. Lewis is the founder of LifeReady, a program designed to build strong marriages and families, and has established a state adoption agency, counseling center and church planting and consulting organization responsible for planting over 40 churches.

Garrett, also honored for her humanitarianism and her volunteerism, graduated from RHS in 1957. She has made her devotion to RHS a life-long passion. She was instrumental in developing many programs that benefit RHS students, preparing them for life after high school.

Dick, a special agent with Homeland Security Investigations, graduated from RHS in 1991. He holds a bachelor's degree from Louisiana Tech and a master's degree from National University of San Diego. Dick served in the U.S. Navy for 11 years and is a Navy SEAL. Dick trained as an intelligence specialist. He is currently deployed with a Navy Reserve Special Warfare Task Unit.

In the wake of the Sep. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Dick was responsible for the deployment, evaluation, and redeployment of 16 SEALs and over \$1.5 million in equipment. He is a former SEAL trainer.

RHS Alumni Association Seeks Nominations

Nominations are being accepted for the 2012 Ruston High School graduates of distinction and distinguished teacher awards. All current and former teachers, and all RHS graduates are eligible for consideration.

The deadline for nominations is Sep. 18, 2012. Nominations should be mailed to RHS Alumni Association, 3104 Lakeview Drive, Ruston, LA 71270 or emailed to johnsachs@suddenlink.net. Persons making a nomination should include their name and telephone number where they may be contacted for additional nominee information.

The RHS Alumni Association's purpose is to seek, find, and recognize those RHS teachers and alumni who by their good works, deeds, and accomplishments inspire current and future RHS students and faculty to believe that they too can achieve distinction in their chosen field of endeavor, and that their affiliation with RHS will facilitate and enhance their chances for success.

Neesha Siriwardane was the recipient of this year's \$1500 Outstanding Achievement Scholarship Award!

9th Annual Distinguished Alumni and Distinguished Educator Awards Luncheon

**Friday, November 2, 2012
Squire Creek Country Club**

**Contact Pat Smith '64 for reservations
CTB Financial Center
1511 North Trenton Street
Ruston, LA 71270
255-4340**

patoms@att.net

Plan on joining other RHS alumni, faculty, and friends for a great time and help us honor some of RHS's outstanding alumni and teachers.

RHS Alumni Ex-Presidents Message

What a privilege it has been to serve all Ruston High School graduates as president of the Ruston High School Alumni Association the past four years. I was very honored and humbled when asked by the nominating committee to follow Willie Green as the association's second president. To work with so many outstanding alumni, that love Ruston High School, has been a very rewarding experience. To honor some of the many distinguished educators and alumni during our homecoming luncheon makes us all proud. Many thanks go to the board of directors and committee members that have worked extremely hard to help make our association one of the best anywhere. Below is a list of some of the projects and accomplishments during the last four years.

- Increased the board of directors from ten to twelve members and implemented a rotating system for the board and other committees. Each year a designated number of members rotate off and new members are elected to replace them.
- The old RHS library has been designated as a memorabilia room. A concerted effort has been made to collect Ruston High School memorabilia of all kinds for display in this room.
- A beautiful framed pin and ink drawing of Ruston High by alumni James White was made available for purchase.
- The first two alumni newsletters were published and mailed to all members during the summer of 2010 and 2011.
- The alumni association contributed money to the Ruston High newspaper, *Chatterbox*, to help with supplies and cost of printing. *Chatterbox* highlighted one of the RHS Distinguished Alumni or Educators in each of their editions during the school year.
- An Outstanding Young Alumni Award was established for alumni age 40 or younger and was presented for the first time during the Distinguished Educator and Distinguished Alumni Awards Luncheon during homecoming 2011.
- With the help of Ruston High Librarian Faith Alexander, two binders with pictures and information of all the distinguished educators and distinguished alumni who have been honored were created. These are located in the Ruston High School library.
- Over \$12,000 was raised for the alumni scholarship fund. Some of this was through a matching contribution from Mr. John Holstead, some was raised through raffling off two quilts made by RHS alumni Sharon Tusa, and other money was contributed by various classes and individuals.
- Money was contributed by the class of 1954, Mrs. Hilda Perritt and others to fund a scholarship that was given to an outstanding math student at graduation in memory of Ms. Ruth Johnson.
- Maintained and expanded the Ruston High Alumni web site.
- A number of class reunions were visited informing them of the Ruston High Alumni Association and its many activities.
- A booth with a display and membership forms was set up at home football games to educate the public about the association and solicit membership.

I have confidence that under the leadership of the next presidents, John Sachs and Candy Daniels, the association will continue to build on the traditions that have been established. They will also add many more activities that will continue to make the Ruston High Alumni Association one that all Bearcats can be proud of.

Thanks again for the privilege and honor of serving as your president. Once a Bearcat always a Bearcat!

Jackson "Jack" Thigpen '63

President's Privilege

Our Vice President, Candy Daniels, will be spearheading a three year membership campaign. She will work closely with our Membership Committee to develop ideas and then oversee their implementation. A vibrant organization requires membership increases in both numbers and involvement. Numbers of members must, of course, precede involvement. Thus, for at least the next three years, we will be asking that all existing members help us to contact and encourage eligible non-members to join us. The more members we have, the greater services we can provide. The more services we can provide to members, the more enjoyment everyone will share from belonging. Please start now encouraging all of your non-member friends, family, and former classmates to join. Our current membership roll can be viewed on our website and it's arranged alphabetically by year of graduation to make research easy.

You are encouraged to nominate RHS alumni and former faculty for recognition as having achieved distinction in their life's work. What constitutes distinction for our purposes is discussed on page 2 of this newsletter. It is amazing the good lives led by so many RHS alumni. The world is surely a better place for having RHS graduates in it. We can all be proud of our association with RHS.

Please write me at 3104 Lakeview, email me at johnsachs@suddenlink.net, or call me at 318-254-5303 with any suggestions, questions, or comments regarding the association. I welcome your input.

Association Board of Directors

The Association Directors are elected to serve a four year term. Without exception, all who have served in the past have said that at the end of their term that the time flew by and that they thoroughly enjoyed serving the Association. Having excellent Committee Chairpersons doing the "heavy lifting" makes serving on the board a pleasure. Committees of the association are the following: Distinguished Alumni and Faculty Awards, Graduating Senior Outstanding Achievement Award, Membership, and History. Our thanks and gratitude go to all that have formerly and presently serve on these committees.

In April 2012, three board members completed their 4 year terms. Those were Patricia Kavanaugh Tippit and Antionette Riser Anderson, both Class of '59, and Jackson Thigpen, President and Class of '63. Both Patricia and Antionette served far more than 4 years (more like 8 years) and for that we are most grateful. Jackson came on the board as President (baptism of fire) and did much to move the organization forward with regard to areas of involvement in addition to membership growth.

Check out the Ruston High School *Chatterbox* and stay in touch with your Alma Mater.

Visit the RHS Homepage at <http://rustonhigh.lincolnschools.org/> and click on the *Chatterbox* link!

Membership and Keeping Current on the Ruston High School Alumni Association Web Site

Approximately 830 people have joined the Ruston High School Alumni Association since its inception in 2004. If you know of any alumni that have not joined, please encourage them to do so. A one time payment of \$25 buys a lifetime membership. Membership forms can be printed from the alumni web page rustonhighalumni.org. Click on the "Join Us" tab to access the form. Send the completed form and \$25 to:



RHS Alumni Association
Attn: Bobby Williams
CTB Financial Center
1511 North Trenton Street
Ruston, Louisiana 71270



You can also join by simply sending in your payment of \$25 along with your name, year of graduation, address, email address, and phone number to the above address.

Current members: Please log on to the alumni website, go to the members only page, and check your information. Email the webmaster with any corrections that need to be made. We need you to keep your information current so alumni information can be sent and other alumni and friends can contact you. To access the members only page, use RHS (all caps) as the user name and 1921 as the password.



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3104 Lakeview Place
Ruston, La. 71270

**Ruston Alumni Association
Board of Directors**

John Sachs '61 – President Candy Williams Daniels '65 – Vice- President Janice Gray Evans '86 – Secretary
Bobby Williams '91 - Treasurer Paula Pardue '69 Jim Hilton '72 Pat Oxford Smith '64
Lance Hall '91 Trot Hunt '72 Shonna Jordan '83 Rickey Burton '74 Tommy Rogers '70

Awards Committee: Chairman – Betty Jo Johnson-Fagan '65
History Committee: Chairman – New Chairman Pending
Membership Committee: Chairman – New Chairman Pending
Publicity Chairman – Nancy Bergeron '72
Scholarship Committee: Chairman – Allen Tuten '63

