



HE TURNED HIS LIFE AROUND

A great story of a life gone wrong and a rebirth. As told by Justin Ford, Harry S Truman High School, Class of 2001.



When I think of some of my life's greatest accomplishments, this is in the top 3 for sure! Many of you know that I dropped out of school as an honor roll student and while my class was graduating in 2001, I was sitting in a jail cell. Between the ages of 17-19 I acquired 8 misdemeanors and a felony-- all drug and alcohol related. My life quickly spiraled out of control and my dreams and aspirations of going to college and becoming a lawyer vanished. May 5th, 2002 is when my life changed. After a drunk driving accident that could have taken my life, I checked myself into the Grace Centers of Hope and that is where I found Jesus. He changed me and transformed me and set me on a new path!

Although my life had changed, not finishing high school haunted me for many years. On a regular basis I would have dreams that I was back in high school finishing the 12th grade. I remember how excited I was in my dreams only to wake up disappointed and realize it was in fact only a dream. Mind you, the summer after I dropped out of high school, I got my GED so it wasn't me needing to accomplish that, but that I needed some type of closure.

Then, in 2014, one of my favorite teachers and at that point (and still now) the principal of my former high school, Mrs. Melissa Sheridan Skopczynski, reached out and told me how proud she was of me changing my life and the success I had created and asked me if I would be the Keynote Speaker for the Class of 2014 at Taylor Truman High School. Honestly, I think I cried for a moment and obviously I said yes!

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Walking in the doors that evening was surreal because I never got to experience graduation. I was handed a commencement program and opened it and saw my name as the Keynote Speaker and I heard God say, "Justin, your name finally made it into the program but not as a graduate rather the honor of Keynote Speaker!!"

I was SO elated and honestly cried again. Not only did I have this opportunity to speak, but three of my former principals Teresa Denise Urso Winnie, Mr. Edward Buchynski, and Mrs. Skope were there and my favorite teacher, Mrs. Char Dudek. Having them all there and being able to speak not only brought closure but was one of the greatest moments of my life! I felt this void in my life go away. Everything I had been through; all those dreams I dreamt waking up disappointed for not graduating.... Looking out over that graduating class and being able to share my story with them WAS ALL WORTH IT and I wouldn't change a thing!!

You never know what God's plans are and how He will turn your mess into a message and your test into a testimony. I hope you enjoy one of the greatest moments of my life!

GOOD THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN THE CITY OF TAYLOR

Like the popular old television show, "Cheers," Keith Lehman wants to create a place where everyone knows your name. It's called the Taylor Business Alliance, and it held its first meeting last month in the Lakes of Taylor Golf Course's banquet room, attended by about 75 people. For questions or to get involved with the new Taylor Business Alliance, email Lehman at keithlehman23@gmail.com or call (734) 407-2415.

Larry Wright, president of the Rotary Club of Taylor and a major supporter of the Taylor Business Alliance, announced the group's major community projects for 2022 during the initial meeting of the TBA. Those projects are:



Maternal Care Walk – The Metro Detroit Share organization sponsors its "Maternal Care Walk" each year, serving families who endure the loss of a child.

Wounded America Ride – This motorcycle ride/fundraiser serves veterans and first responders and is held each summer.

Charity Softball Tournament – This tournament is relatively new to the schedule, but this year will feature a competition between area police departments.

Goodfellows Christmas Drive – The Rotary is focusing on aiding the Taylor Goodfellows annual holiday season campaign to leave "no children without a Christmas."

For more information on the Rotary, click on taylorrotary.org

GOOD THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN TAYLOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Taylor Public School District Superintendent Griff Mills announced that TSD will be partnering with the Special Olympics to hold the "Taylor Unified Special Olympics Day" on May 20 at the site of the Board Annex/Old Taylor Kennedy High School. The goal of a unified day is to join people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.



THOUGHTS FROM ALUMNI

TCHS Class of 1960 Monthly Luncheons - Why We Do It by Bill Riggs

At the 50th Class Reunion for Taylor Center High, I found out there was a small group from the class that met every month for lunch. Barbara (Garner) Belcher had accumulated an email list of around 40 graduates who were still in Michigan. She would email them the details (restaurant name & address, date and time - usually the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 12:30pm). At my first luncheon (in Birmingham), I recognized most of the names & some of the faces (by their eyes, as all wore masks), but there was no one there that I was in regular contact with. Now, a dozen years later, I've come to know most of the regulars quite well and it's a blessing! Unless you belong to a church group or civic organizations, it's hard to have this kind of circle of friends as you grow older (and older). We all went through the same period of history: fads, fashion, movies, music, tv shows, wars, political changes, births & deaths, etc. I recommend that every class give this a try. Hopefully, you will be pleasantly surprised. You may renew an old friendship or start some new ones. All it takes is one or two people to assume the reins and begin calling/texting/emailing to start a group.

Two grads from the class of 1970 regularly get together and during a visit, questions came up regarding one of the favorite locations back in those days, LITTLE SKIPPERS. John Bowyer and Ken Renner thought a lot of grads would be interested to poll this readership to see if they can learn how many Alumni have worked at LITTLE SKIPPERS? Just send us an email if you worked there.

A LITTLE MORE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF TAYLOR



Taylor Township Hall, a small white clapboard building located at Goddard west of Telegraph, was built at a cost of \$300 and was open from 1856 to 1959. The building served as a school for a period of time. The building was established when the farm families at the western end of Ecorse Township did not want to make the long oxcart journey over muddy trails to Ecorse Village to pay their taxes. In later years, Township officials studied a plan to move the old hall to another site to preserve it as an historic monument. Unfortunately, the study did not work out and the building was razed a couple years later. A new library was built at the location of the original

Township Hall. (Alexander Papp Library)



OBITUARIES

The Alumni Association members would like to extend their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the former classmates mentioned below. You will forever be in our thoughts and prayers. [Click here to let us know of a deceased graduate that is not listed in the Memoriam section of our website.](#) Please let us know the name, school, graduating class and date of passing.

TAYLOR CENTER HIGH SCHOOL

- Michelle Le Blanc, Class of 1987 (passed January 22, 2013)
- Jerry Don Givens, Class of 1965 (passed October 5, 2021)
- David A. James, Class of 1968 (passed June 9, 2021)
- Beverly Nichay Zambeck, Class of 1965 (passed January 27, 2022)
- David Flodquist, Class of 1960 (passed February 4, 2022)
- James Ashby, Class of 1987 (passed July 7, 2013)
- Michael Steven Husak, Class of 1980 (passed February 8, 2022)
- Pat Chortos McPherson 1964 (passed February 12, 2022)
- Brenda Busch Sparks 1971 (passed November 25, 2021)
- Arlene Grey Brunet 1957 (passed February 2022)
- Elizabeth Manns Driskell 1965 (passed October 18, 2021)
- Gary Villet, Class of 1960 (passed February 23, 2022)

JOHN F KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL

- Larry Summitt, Class of 1973 (passed January 30, 2022)
- Mark Roland, Class of 1975 (passed January 2, 2022)
- William Reeber, Class of 1975 (passed March 19, 2021)
- David Adamisin, Class of 1967 (passed February 6, 2022)
- Blane Hicks, Class of 1968 (passed February 12, 2022)
- Paul Marshall 1977 (passed December 20, 2021)
- William “Bill” Johnson 1968 (passed November 28, 2021)

HARRY S TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL

- Mary Ellen Woolsey Jones, Class of 1980 (passed January 18, 2022)
- Shirlee Sollars Emond 1984 (passed February 1, 2022)

TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL

- Noah Ford, Class of 2025 (passed January 25, 2020)

STAFF

- William Robert “Bob” Schnieders (passed January 25, 2022)