

Alumni Association

Keeping Ties with Our Alumni



TAYLOR
School District



November 2020 Newsletter

IN THE NEWS

KEEPING UP WITH GRADS!

Dr. Tom Gonda | JFK 1972



In 1985 a committee composed of students, alumni,

city leaders, church representatives, and school administrators established rules and procedures for selecting distinguished alumni from the graduates of the Taylor public schools. The very first selection was Dr. Tom Gonda, a 1972 graduate of

Kennedy High School. He was active in high school, having been a member of the debate-forensics team, placing first in all of their league meets.

He also was a member of the state championship gymnastics team and claimed a personal state championship of the side horse competition. Part one of the Tom Gonda story was in the October Newsletter. This is part two.

LIFE AFTER JFK

Tom writes—I chose to attend Harvard University and enrolled in pre-med. I buried myself in my classes, biology, biochemistry, advanced math

and organic chemistry. It was brutal. I was lucky enough to be in a "final club", it is like a fraternity, but you do not live there. I met 8 guys from all over the country. We had a great time and were supportive of each other. This was a considerable help and I eventually graduated from Harvard with honors.

ON TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

I chose to go to Stanford University, renowned for the

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school of medicine. My focus was taking me in the direction of cardiothoracic surgery. This was very challenging for me, perhaps another test of resilience and distress tolerance.

Now I had to get board certified in general surgery. My training was at Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan. A brutally competitive program that required about 100 hours per week. When that was completed, I added residency training in thoracic surgery for two years.

Finally, I was able to set up shop as a self-employed surgeon in the bay area of California. I Was busy from day one and, over a 25 year span, participated in approximately 20,000 surgeries. I self-evaluated and decided it was time to retire from a career that knew no hours, being on call 24 hours per day. I felt I could no longer maintain the work pace of a thoracic surgeon. I still had the urge to help people in

some capacity. Albert Einstein once said, "Only a life lived in the service of others is worth living". So, off to school again for psychotherapy for marriage and family therapy. I now live in San Diego and have a very busy private practice in psychiatry. I have office locations in San Francisco, Oakland, San Diego, Reno, and Las Vegas, which I service every month.

Looking back at my experiences at JFK, I learned that being coached and inspired by the best instills a hope for the future and promise of a better life. Obstacles are mere stepping-stones. I will meet those challenges as my JFK teachers told me to do. I do believe, at the age now of 66, that anything is possible even for a guy with average abilities. I say to JFK teachers, staff, coaches and fellow classmates, "Thank you".

The Taylor Alumni Association thanks you, Tom Gonda, for sharing your remarkable

career with us. There is much more to the "Story of Tom", such as his heritage, love of music, interest in Segways and more in the 34 pages that you may read by clicking on the link below.

<http://www.tayloralumni.org/sites/default/files/Thomas%20Gonda%20Story.pdf>.



ALUMNI NEWS!



The Taylor Alumni Association and all of its members would like to wish John Pantalone a happy 92nd Birthday.

DOWN MEMORY LANE:

BACK TO THE 1980'S

Some of the headlines in our Country and State

1976-1986. 200th Birthday of our Country.



1980 — The Republican National Convention held at the Ren Cen & Joe Louis Arena. Ronald Reagan nominated to run for President-former President Gerald Ford gave the opening address to over 4,000 delegates.



President Reagan shot by John Hinckley in an attempted assassination.



Winter Olympics Lake Placid New York, Miracle on Ice Gold Medal winner US Men's Hockey Team.



1981 — Heavy Weight Champion, Joe Louis dies. Iran Releases 52 American Hostages After Holding them for 14½ months.



Inauguration of President Ronald Reagan and Vice President George H W Bush

1984— Detroit Tigers World Champions, Bless you Boys Summer Olympics, in Los Angeles, USA wins 83 Gold and a total medal count 174. Carl Lewis wins 4 Gold Medals—100 & 200 Meter Dashes and the Relay Long

Jump. Earl Jones of Inkster, MI won Bronze in the 880 Meter Race.



1986 — "Challenger Explodes after liftoff killing 7 Astronauts.

1987 — 153 die when Northwest Flight 255 crashes near Metro Airport. Four year old Cecelia Cichan was the Lone Survivor.



Cecelia Cichan in 1987 pictured above and in 2013 below.



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Pope John Paul visits Detroit he was the first successor of the Apostle Peter to visit the Metro Area.

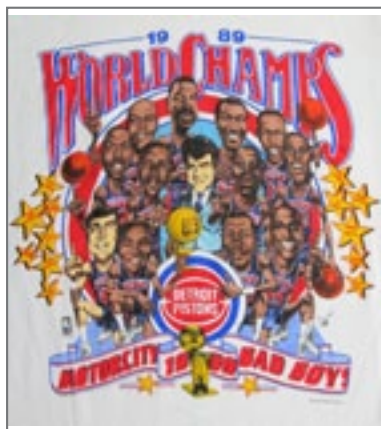


1988 — Michgian State Football Team wins at the Rose Bowl for the first time in 32 years defeating Sourthern California 20-17.

Winter Olympics in Calgary, Canada.



1989 — Detroit Pistons sweep Los Angles Lakers 4-0 to become national champs. The "bad boys" had a season record of 64-18.



At least 270 dead and 1,400 injured as 2nd worst earth quake hits San Francisco.

Top TV shows of the 80's included Mash, Dallas, 60 Minutes. Top movies included "Raiders of the Lost Ark"



Tickets to see Blood, Sweat & Tears at Meadow Brook were \$10,\$9, \$8. Chorus Line at the Fisher Theater, all seats were \$10.

Brunch at the Sveden House Smorgasbord cost \$3.09. Newspapers as low at 10 cent for daily.

Cabbage Patch Dolls



Local Headlines Included:

Taylor Schools attempt to navigate a literal minefield in 1983

Heading back to school in the fall of 1983, students and their parents in the Taylor School District faced the possibility of a radical shakeup, the threats of which had not been heard of here before. The school district had major problems for over a decade and had fallen into receivership in the late 1970s. Strikes, picket lines and parent sit-ins were not uncommon. For a brief period, there had even been three superintendents simultaneously on the district's payroll. The newest Superintendent - Jerry Montecillo - was charged with cleaning up the district under orders by State Superintendent Phillip Runkel.

Major cuts would take effect if a ballot referendum was not passed the following February. The ballot requested a 5.4 million increase as well as approval of a \$5.7 million deficit elimination bond. These proposed cuts were perhaps the most radical ever announced in the face of possible failure.

In the proposal - named the

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"Pack And Save Plan," - half of the elementary schools (9 of 18) would close and students from the three high schools (Taylor Center, Kennedy and Truman) would all be brought together in two groups using one 5-hour shift at one high school. Bus service would also be eliminated. If the proposal was to fail, students would be directed to bring paper bags to their school the next day to pack up their books "for their new education." In other words, failure of the bond would result in immediate consequences.

Fortunately, both the millage and bond passed easily in February 1984. A total of 17,690 residents

came to vote, a number $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the amount of any prior failed millage.

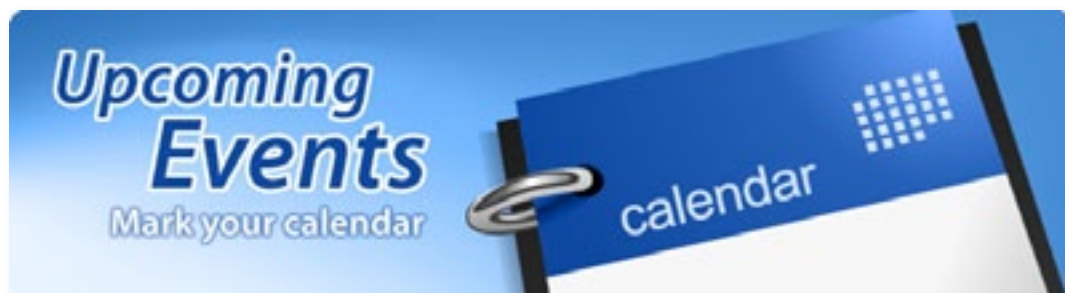
In school year 1983-84, part of my duties as Assistant Principal was to schedule teachers in JFK. When the "Pack and Save" concept was being developed I was asked to create a schedule for the students and faculty of all three high school and have it ready intimate for the consolidation of the three schools into the one building in the event the millage failed. It was not an idle threat. If the millage had failed the "Pack and Save" would have taken place 2nd semester. -Written by John Pantalone

The bankruptcy of Gilead Baptist Church makes headlines



Bankruptcies appeared to continue around Downriver, but perhaps no outsider would have thought a church would have been among them, Indeed, in November 1988, Gilead Baptist Church in Taylor filed for Chapter 11 protection.

Future edition of Down Memory Lane will in JFK 1980-89, TCH and History 1980-89. 📖



May 21, 2021

JFK Florida reunion. More news to follow.

May 22nd

Taylor Center High School Reunion of all Football Players. Coach Tom Mall wants to know the number of players that would attend. Contact him at Thomas.mall@lpps.info

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.

Please Note: If we receive deaths from the past that are not listed in our newsletter, they will be posted on the "In Memoriam" section on our website. If you 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.

John F Kennedy High

Gayle Bartlett LaFleur Grant, Class of 1968 (passed July 10, 2020)

Diane Morri Conley, Class of 1967 (passed September 21, 2020)

David Eger, Class of 1969 (passed October 6, 2020)

Ronald Galley, Class of 1971 (passed February 24, 2020)

Taylor Center High

Joan Golden, (passed September 12, 2020)

Sharon Golden (passed in 2014)

Robert Brancheau, Class of 1972 (passed November 2, 2016)

Alan Kennedy, Class of 1988 (passed July 27, 2020)

Sharon McCarthy Wallace, Class of 1961 (passed November 18, 2015)

Pam Bakhaus DoGarmo, Class of 1960 (passed October 7, 2020)

James Mills, Class of 1963 (passed September 7, 2020)

Truman High School

Richard Pacurai, Class of 1979 (passed August 25, 2008)

Staff

Al Sebastian, Teacher and Administrator, (passed October 15, 2020)

Marlene Munroe, Long time Cook at Harry S Truman High School, (passed October 19, 2020)

Elaine Worley, Taylor Public Schools Elementary Educator, (passed October 18, 2020)

For more information about the deceased and their families, please visit the alumni website tayloralumni.org and click on "In Memoriam".