



TOPEKA HIGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

News from the Paul Fink Room

THS Historical Society, 800 SW Tenth Ave, Topeka, KS 66612
Website: thshistoricalociety.org Phone: 785-295-3200 Email: thshs@thshistoricalociety.org, Vol.45 No.2

2026 Ed Love Scholarship awarded to five seniors

The THS Historical Society (THSHS) scholarship is named in honor of Ed Love, THS 1939 and Co-Founder of the THSHS in 1985. His estate donation, given to the THSHS and invested at the Topeka Community Foundation, has made it possible for the THSHS to sponsor sixty-six scholarships, \$45,000 given since 1994. The THSHS is proud to provide \$1,000 scholarships to these outstanding Class of 2026 students.



Rowan Darby – While a student at Topeka High Rowan was a member of the National Honors Society, a Shawnee County Honors Scholar, a Board of Regents Scholar, and a WU Concurrent Enrollment Program Scholar. He was a 2026 Royalty of Courts Candidate. Rowan has obtained the rank of Eagle Scout and was a

member of Student Government, a Theater Stage Manager, a member of the Band, Wrestling Team, Golf Team, and Madrigals. He completed the National Youth Leadership Training and is a Shift Manager at Glory Days Pizza. He plans to attend KU and pursue a degree in the medical field.



Alfredo Solis Lucio - Alfredo was a member of the National English Honors Society, a Shawnee County Honors Scholar, and a Kansas Honors Scholar. He was a member of Student Government, the Link Crew, the Interact Club, the Morning Report Team, the Robed and State

Choirs, the Madrigals, and was the Secretary of the Theatre Club. He volunteered with the Topeka Civic Theatre. He received top ratings in solo performance at State. He plans to attend KU and major in Theatre and Film & Media Studies.



Natalie Barnes - Natalie served as the Senior Class Vice President, a Men's Soccer Team Manager, and a Training Assistant. She also played on the Women's Soccer Team. She was an honor roll student, a member of Student Government, and the National English Honors Society. She volunteered with Harvesters, TARC, and BCBSKS. She

plans to pursue a degree in nursing at St. Catherine's University, St. Paul, MN.



Anna Goering - Anna was a member of the National Honors and English Societies. She received the THS Tower Award and was recognized as the Senior of the Month. She was a member of the Madrigals, Link Crew, Theatre, and the Varsity Track Team. She was in the Daisy Chain for three years and sang with the All-State

Choir. She was a member of Team Care at Stormont Vail Hospital, a Camp Counselor, and was a busser with the Topeka Civic Theatre. She plans to pursue a dual degree at KU in Political Science and Psychology.

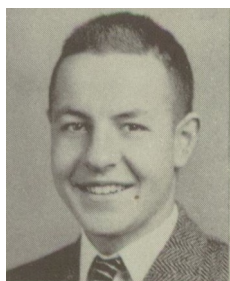


Amber Wirtz - Amber was a member of the Madrigals, Robed Choir, Interact Club, Student Government, the Morning Report Team, the Swim Team, American Field Service, Spirit Club, and the Medical Club. Amber served as the Vice President of the MU Alpha Theta Society. She was a

member of the National English Honors Society, the National Education Equity Lab, and is a Shawnee County Honors Scholar. Amber also served as a Stormont Vail Hospital patient escort. She plans to obtain a degree in nursing from Baker University.

2026 Graduate Hall of Fame and Distinguished Staff

The THS Graduate Hall of Fame Ceremony will be held on Sunday, October 4, at 2 pm in Hoehner Auditorium. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend the ceremony. This marks the 44th year of recognizing outstanding THS graduates and THS staff. Those to be inducted in the Graduate Hall of Fame and recognized as Distinguished Staff are:

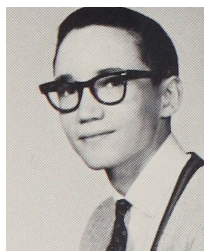


Ken Kerle, THS 1947. As a THS senior, Ken was a proctor, and a member of the 26 voice Boys' Senior Glee that wore black satin warm-up style jackets with a Trojan emblem. He played the part of Reverend Clarence Underhill in the Senior Play "Cuckoos on the Hearth". Ken is being recognized as the editor of the American Jail Association's publication

American Jails (1987-2009) and is an internationally-recognized authority on corrections.



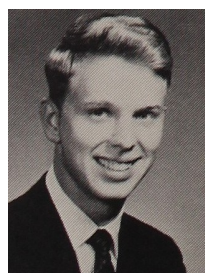
Katherine "Kate" Menendez, THS 1989. Kate served as the Student Council Vice-President her senior year, President of National Honor Society and a member of the Russian Club. Her debate duo qualified for nationals her senior year. In 2021 Kate was appointed a Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota.



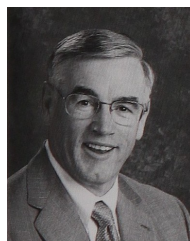
Gerald "Jerry" Potts, THS 1961. Jerry considers himself a late bloomer. He spent his after-school hours doing part-time work at a young age through high school, which taught him he would rather plan than perform hands-on work which required advanced college

degrees and better grades. He proved Marjorie French, Chair of the THS Math Department and National Teacher of the Year in 1962, wrong when earning only a D in her class and receiving her ad-

vice not to pursue an occupation requiring math. Jerry considers one of his notable achievements inventing and development of a flat track tire test machine used by every tire and vehicle maker in the world today.



Lenard "Pete" Stromquist, THS 1962. At Topeka High, Pete was involved in music and theatre. He was in the cast of "South Pacific", played in the orchestra and dance band, sang in madrigals, and participated in district and state music festivals. Pete served in the US Army for 20 years as a helicopter pilot. In his retirement he was a Hospice facilitator for children who had lost loved ones. He passed away in 2020.



Steve Eubank, Distinguished Staff Award. Steve Eubank is a Topeka High choral music legend. His choirs and ensembles consistently won top honors at contests and festivals. During Mr. Eubank's tenure at THS he directed and staged twenty-three musicals, some of those shows were

presented multiple years. He organized and hosted the THS Madrigal 50th and 60th-year reunions. Little known facts about Mr. Eubank include he coached freshman football, and announced home football and men's varsity basketball games.

Qualifications for THS Graduate Hall of Fame: 1. An individual can be considered 20 years following their graduation. 2. Selections based on achievements after their graduation. 3. Complete and current biographical information should be submitted to the THSHS. 4. At least one letter of endorsement. 4. Nominee remains eligible for reconsideration each year.

To be considered for the Distinguished Staff Award one must have been a staff member for at least 10 years and becomes eligible immediately upon retirement, death, resignation, or transfer.

Calling all history geeks! Thanks to friends who have already responded.

Do you enjoy data entry? Do you love a treasure hunt?

The museum database of THSHS artifacts is moving to a web-based system, so more people will be able to access it to add information.

Starting this fall, THSHS needs volunteers to help organize its collections, get data entered into the museum database and sort through new acquisitions.

The big project will be sorting the hundreds of trophies stored in the Tower. Each one will be photographed and logged. Some will be kept, some will be offered to people who earned them, and some will be donated for repurposing.

There will be a lot of "Wow!" and "I had no idea!" and "Look at this!" If that sounds like fun to you, let Joan Barker know by emailing her at thshs@thshistoricalociety.org or calling 785- 295-3200.

CHIMES

high notes low notes
 impressive sounds
 from the **Tower** to **Veranda**
 keeping the hour
 timing our moments
 setting the tone
 for entrances
 and exits
 comforting sounds
 striking for graceful spaces
 that molded our *black and gold* experience
 with architectural support and guidance
 for hearts and minds under construction
 a soundtrack for the memories
 of THS places
 ushered in on day one
 balcony dreams began
 all-school assemblies united
 encouraged tender goodbyes on Class Day
Auditorium drama 1967-1970
 selected our spots in the **Dungeon**
 to claim cheer on enliven our victories
 accept our defeats as lessons in life
 school spirit soaring sincere
 home cooked meals served with pride
 girls eating with girls boys with rolls and mild
 sophomores only dropping trays in the **Cafeteria**
 a **Library** like no other
 ever to be found
 looking for a book a friend a table
 silence amidst the chaos
 with stained glass windows looking on
 high notes low notes
 chiming moments spent in this place
 in the land where the sunflowers bloom
 ever

By Nancy Shuart Vega 1970

THS Patriotic Chimes Concert

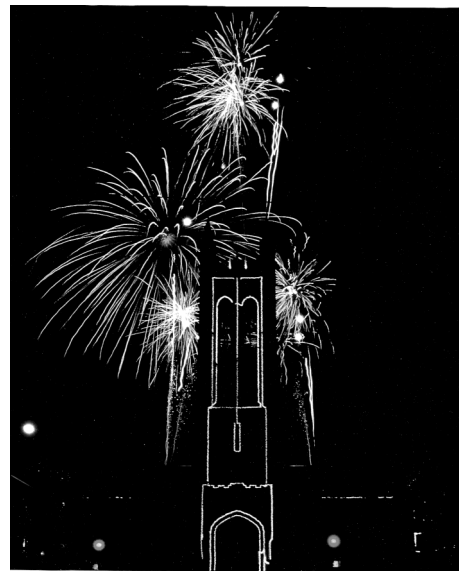
Sunday, July 5, 6 pm

THS lawn

In recognition of America's 250th
 the traditional THS Chimes Concert
 will be
 Sunday, July 5 at 6 pm.

Performance by the THS Drum Line
 Commemorative gift flags, while they last
 Food Trucks

Bring a lawn chair and a friend



THS Ultimate Reunion
September 1997

David Kensinger 1989 provided a timely gift to Topeka High recently. He noticed that a couple of rooms he occupied while judging a forensics tournament did not have American flags. He offered to sponsor a flag for the classrooms needing a flag. A canvas of the 81 classrooms discovered 30 classrooms without a flag. That will be reme-

died this summer with new flags. In catching up with David, he proudly stated that he and wife, Beth, have been married for 32 years. Their three children are THS grads. He is still running his lobbying firm and working with Dr. Jeff Colyer on his campaign for Governor. Thank you, David, for your generous gift.



Thank you, **Elizabeth Smith Scheib 1977** for trusting the THSHS with your unique perspective of the Topeka High Tower that you created when you were a THS student. It's a great addition to the THSHS office.

~ 2026 CLASS REUNIONS ~

Homecoming, September 25, 2026 vs Washburn Rural - Hummer Sports Park
Homecoming parade - September 25, following 1 pm assembly.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>For More Information</u>
Class of 1964	October 10	80th birthday party, 785-766-4066
Class of 1966	June 20	Facebook
Class of 1971	May 30	Facebook
Class of 1976	September 25-26	khenao@usd345.com
Class of 1981	September 25-26	Facebook, russ@russ-hutchison.com 785-383-8585
Class of 1986	September 25-27	Facebook
Class of 1991	September 25-26	miguelcolon32@yahoo.com, 785-580-7045
Class of 2006	September 25	golf.dreamcatcher717@gmail.com
Class of 2016	September 25-26	jessbarr1598@gmail.com

The THS Historical Society assists class reunions by: 1. providing classmate contact information
 2. arranging THS tours 3. facilitating the use of the building. Go to thshistoricalsociety.org for words to the school song, THS graphics, information for reunion coordinators, and more.

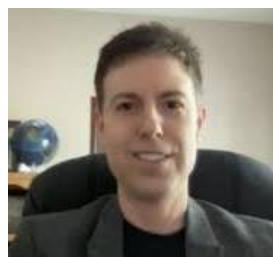
If your graduation year ends in a 1 or 6 let the THSHS know if your class is having a reunion in 2026. We'll help you get the word out in our newsletter and website (thshistoricalsociety.org). Contact us at thshs@thshistoricalsociety.org or 785-295-3200.

Black & Gold Report - Graduates in the Spotlight

Congratulations, Joel and **Emily Bargas Lewis 2002**, owners of Engroff Catering. 2026 recipients of the Greater Topeka Partnership Minority Owned Small Business Award.



Ethan Menke 2008 was invited to speak to current THS students about his journey since high school. At THS Ethan was in ROTC and Band. He received his undergrad and a masters degrees in Agronomy at Kansas State. His PhD was earned at the University of Georgia. Currently Ethan works at Syngenta, a seed and crop protection company. Ethan is a plant breeder, producing hybrid soybeans for farmers.



While we were glued to our televisions in April for reports about the successful Artemis II, the first crewed mission around the moon in 50 years, meteorologist **Mark Burger 1994** was paying special attention to the weather, making sure conditions were right to launch. Weather forecasts for launches are provided by the 45th Weather Squadron where Burger, the Primary Launch Weather Officer for Artemis II, monitored conditions for months. He said that almost half of all rocket launches that end up “scrubbed” have been a result of unsafe weather. The Artemis II rocket contains nearly 750,000 gallons of propellant, so lightning is one of the biggest risks to safety.

News about THS graduates is important to us. We want to know about your careers, honors, and THS memories. Drop us a note at thshs@thshistoricalsociety.org.

WE REMEMBER OUR GRADUATES & FRIENDS

Roberta Oyler Hagemann 1940	Ronald C. Skillens, Sr. 1954	Nancy Coward Eagan 1965	Connie Blodgett Asselin 1969
Anita Southard Beasley 1945	Carol Snyder Jeter 1955	Sharon Dicks Shobney 1965	Marias M. Borjon 1970
Thomas McCue 1946	Louise Fager Branham 1955	Ronald R. Gragg 1965	Kevin D. Hamm 1970
Dorothy Jolly Wells 1946	Dixie Good Kelley 1955	Edward "Pete G. Ransom 1965	Sandra Green Newman 1973
Allan H. McCue 1948	Jarrett H. Vincent 1957	David G. Carney 1965	Kevin Hobble 1975
Duane W. Wilkinson 1950	Julia Lowe Hall 1957	Lorraine Rosa Twombly 1965	Julie Ann Eaton 1977
Alice Terry Vernon 1951	Sandra Peterson Hohberg 1959	Larry T. Brown Sr. 1966	Susan Brooke Schell 1978
Marjorie Baker Steil 1952	June Hannay Tebbutt 1959	Bessie DeMoss Jefferson 1966	William "Billy" W. Bunten, Jr. 1981
Marvel Johnson Foster 1952	Patricia "Patsy" Myers Blume 1959	Penelope Lawson Plamann 1966	Richard W. Karnowski 1985
Wanda Hug Lawrence 1952	Thomas McClure 1960	David Hass 1966	James M. Tilley 1985
Donald D. Dixon 1953	Leon Hernandez, Jr. 1960	Teresa Renee Waggoner 1967	Michael F. Metz 1991
Sadie Alexander Heflin 1953	Susan Reicherter Gampper 1961	Sharon Kay Harrison 1967	William A. LaClair 1999
Carol King Whelan 1953	Dick Streeter 1962	Charlene Price Vawter 1968	Dick Patterson - Faculty, Coach, Associate Principal
A. Lavonne Leonard Watts Wheeler 1953	Harold G. Schiesser 1963	James E. Gilmore 1968	Mary Ann Morie Starbuck - Faculty
Lou Ann Oberhelman Latter 1954	Robert Webb 1963	Barry M. Hollie 1969	
Peggy Brown 1954	Linda Williams Lawrence 1964	Agnes Tucker Nekwe 1969	
	Jill McKethen Herzog 1964		

Dick Patterson - A friend to be remembered in THS History



Everyone of a certain era in Topeka knew **Richard "Dick" Patterson** or at least claimed to know him. He was an iconic individual. He believed in students, in education, in Topeka High, and always his family and friends. Dick passed away in Topeka April 5, 2026, at the age of 86 after a long battle with Alzheimer's. After a classic childhood on his parent's farm in Tecumseh, Kansas, he attended Highland Park High School and went on to play football and earn his Bachelor of Education from Washburn University and his master's in administration from Kansas University. He

taught in McLouth, Kansas, and at Curtis Junior High in Topeka before teaching at Topeka High School the first time. From there he helped open Shawnee Mission Northwest and then returned to THS as head football coach. He then went on to Washburn Rural High School before returning to Topeka High. He finished his public education career at Lawrence High School. In his "quiet" retirement he was Head of School at Topeka Collegiate. 50 years: a long career with myriad students and athletes, fellow faculty members and administrators, parents, and family. Dick and his wife Martha, who survives at home, would have celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary this year. Their two daughters and four grandchildren also survive to tell "Dick" stories and celebrate his lifelong dedication to education. His email address (dp4kids - Dick Patterson for Kids) tells it all when it comes to his philosophy of life.. He will be missed.

Support the THS Historical Society Now & After Your Lifetime

It's easy to continue your support of the THS Historical Society as you plan for "after your lifetime." The Historical Society offers multiple ways to give back to the school you remember attending in your teens. Your gift will continue to preserve, promote, and enhance the traditions and heritage of Topeka High School.

To add a gift to Topeka High School Historical Society in your will, share this simple sentence with your estate planning attorney:

"I give to the THS Historical Society, a nonprofit corporation currently located at 800 SW Tenth Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or its successor thereto, _____ (write in amount or percentage of the estate) for its unrestricted charitable use and purpose."

To make the THS Historical Society a beneficiary of your retirement account, savings account or CD, or life

insurance, contact the administrator of your account and share our tax ID number, as well as the amount or percentage you'd like THS Historical Society to receive after your lifetime.

You may designate your gift for one or more of THS Historical Society funds:

- Operations (for daily expenses and support)
- Tower Society (for preservation projects)
- Endowment (for long-term benefit)

Tax ID Number: 48-1003353

Thank you for your generosity!

If you have questions, call the THSHS office -

785-295-3200

Other Opportunities To Help Your School

Are you feeling charitable and over the age of 70 1/2? Then, GOOD NEWS for the THSHS. Pretax money saved in an IRA can be an ideal charitable donation. You can give a donation by taking a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). A QCD will count toward satisfying your required minimum distribution (RMD), and neither you nor the THS Historical Society will have to pay income taxes. You can take a QCD whether you itemize deductions on your tax return or not. If you use the standard deduction, you will generally receive no tax benefit from a regular charitable contribution.



A note about the THS Chimes

If your heart jumps a beat when you hear the THS Chimes play the school song you might want to take the lead from the Class of 1975 and contribute to the new Chimes Maintenance Fund. The THS Historical Society has accepted the general maintenance responsibility for the only working Deagan Chimes system in a public high school in the world. Interested in donating to the Chimes Fund? Go to thshistoricalociety.org 'Giving Opportunities' or give us a call at 785-295-3200.

Wondering what to do with your used car, truck or motorcycle that has been taking up space in your garage? Donating your old vehicle to the Topeka High School Historical Society is convenient, easy, and

may qualify you for a tax deduction. And best of all, your donation of that used vehicle will make a big difference in supporting Topeka High projects. All you need to do is to complete the Vehicles for Charity simple form on



the THSHS website or call 866-628-2277. Vehicles for Charity will take care of the rest. They will pick up your vehicle, arrange to have your donation towed, and provide you with a tax-deductible receipt, all at no charge to you. Call 866-628-2277 or online at www.thshistoricalociety.org/support-2/vehicles-for-charity.



Support your favorite non-profit, the THS Historical Society, every time you shop at Dillons. The Kroger Stores sponsor the Community Rewards Program of Dillons. Go to www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards to sign up to shop for the THS Historical Society. **Thanks to Trojan Shoppers!**

THS Historical Society Supporters (On a Mission for THS)

Graduation Year _____

First Name _____ Last Name (as student) _____ Current Last Name _____

Spouse First Name (THS grads) _____ Last Name (as student) _____ Spouse Graduation Year _____

Street _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Country _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

ANNUAL SUPPORT – (for operational expenses & THSHS special events)

	Amount
Yearly Donation (\$25)	\$ _____
Extra annual donation of \$1 for each year since my graduation (i.e. Class of 1976, 50 years since graduation=\$50)	\$ _____
Bonus gift honoring 40th Anniversary of the THS Historical Society (\$40)	\$ _____

I want to sponsor an annual contribution for a friend (\$25):

Name _____ Graduation year _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Check enclosed: (payable to THS Historical Society or THSHS) TOTAL \$ _____

Charge account: Visa Master Card American Express Discover (**\$50 minimum requested**)

Name on Card: _____

Number: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ CV # (required) _____

Expiration Date: Month _____ Year _____

Mail to: THSHS, 800 SW Tenth Ave., Topeka, KS 66612, or pay online at: thshistoricalociety.org/

Troy Today What's going on at THS?

- **Amanda Burr, 2007 and THS Technical Theatre Director**, was one of three finalists, ultimately earning an honorable mention for the Reba R. Robertson Award, a national award presented biennially by the Children's Theatre Foundation of America and the Educational Theatre Foundation (the parent organization of the International Thespian Society). The award honors outstanding work in public high school theater education, recognizing public high school theater teachers who demonstrate artistic excellence, mentorship, and a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Congratulations, Ms. Burr!

- **Joey Noriega 2026**, with TCALC classmates from Highland Park, earned an 11th place finish in May at the American Rocketry Challenge Nationals near Washington, D.C. The student-led team qualified for nationals after successfully designing and launching rockets that met the flight requirements. Congratulations!

- **Hara Del Castillo 2026** placed 24th in the 100-

freestyle and 17th in the 100-backstroke at State in May.

- In their first appearance in more than a decade at the 6A Scholar's Bowl state tournament, the Topeka High team placed 4th. The team members are Ben Harris, Max Luttrell, Laura "Ruby" Ortiz, Sophia Byers, Micah Ansell, Estella Forstein. They are coached by Boone Smith and Smitha Elangikal, and managed by Ryan Anderson.



Congratulations to the THS Lady Trojans softball team who repeated a trip to the State Tournament in Wichita, KS. Weather delayed games that were scheduled for May 25-26. Watch

the Topeka High Facebook page for results of the tournament. Go Lady Trojans!

