



Issue 2

AHS Alumni instaNEWS

Arlington High School Alumni Association

www.ahscolts-alumni.org

P.O. Box 152578 • Arlington, Texas 76015



June 2025

Also in this issue: Coach Floyd Named Teacher of the Year, Reunion Information, and more!



Wear your green and make plans to come to downtown Arlington on July 4 and "Kick 'em" with the Alumni Association as they participate in this year's July 4th parade.

Alumni Association to Participate in Annual July 4th Parade

Have you wanted to get involved with the Alumni Association, but just weren't sure where to start? If you enjoy decorating floats, consider this an invitation to join and help on Saturday, June 28 to assemble the parade float.

The group meets at 1301 Windmill Ct. where decorations are provided. Following the float decoration – picnic lunch!

This year, the Alumni Association will be represented by three vehicles as they participate

in Arlington's annual event. Andy Wright will drive his Nash Metropolitan convertible leading the convoy, followed by the Association's float, and ending with President Chris Hightower's Bronco, filled with students from AHS chosen by Principal Stacie Humbles to accompany the Alumni in the procession.

If you'd like to volunteer or participate with the AHS Alumni Association, contact Michele Barlen at mmbarlen@yahoo.com.

Ten Seniors Receive Alumni Scholarships

Ten graduating seniors received an Alumni Association Scholarship during the Senior Awards Program held May 15, in the amount of \$2,000 each to be used for post-graduation education.

Presenting the awards was Scholarship Chairperson Peggy Martin, assisted by Debbie Ericson, NTGD Advisor; David Keal, VP; and Al Preisser, presenting the Joyce Preisser scholarship.

Those receiving awards were Jeremiah Taylor, Alexandra Rodriguez, Alondra Bermejo, Tania Lovo Luna, Mikayla Cathcart, Matthew Nguyen, Kade Story, Deymisela Hernandez and Noah Luck. The final recipient, Fabiola Cueto, was not in attendance.

Each scholarship recipient will be featured in the fall newsletter, along with their bio and how the scholarship funds will be used. Over 30 seniors competed for the scholarships that were given this year.



The Alumni Association presented 10 students with scholarships during the Senior Awards Program held May 15. Presenting the awards were (top photo, left to right, Al Preisser, Debbie Ericson, David Keal and Scholarship Chairperson Peggy Martin. Receiving the awards (bottom photo, left to right) were Jeremiah Taylor, Alexandra Rodriguez, Alondra Bermejo, Tania Lovo Luna, Mikayla Cathcart, Matthew Nguyen, Kade Story, Deymisela Hernandez and Noah Luck. Not pictured is Fabiola Cueto.



Coach Floyd Receives Teacher-of-the-Year Honors

by Rickie Windle
Alumni Association Reporter

In what can be said about a lot of things, it's not like it used to be.

So Arlington High School teacher Will Floyd takes a different path to the school district's Kiwanis Secondary School Teacher of the Year.

Students are an evolving group. Life's twists and societal turns have made them into a different creature than what was known by previous generations. It's possible they're harder to reach and teach. The world screams at them from phones, social media, computers and one another.

"When I was in school, it was just do what the teacher said," Floyd noted. "Now you have to be more intentional in



Coach Will Floyd selected as Kiwanis Secondary School Teacher of the Year

making relationships. There are more distractions."

Why does he teach? "Because I love kids," he said simply. "I

"He's got such good energy, he's just so positive."

— Junior Haanah Gamboa

Fortunately for Floyd, it's in his DNA to work that way.

just like to be around them and see their growth."

He gets that opportunity in world history and as head coach of the girls' basketball team.

It is work, but it works. Escorting someone through the expanded AHS halls to Floyd's classroom for mostly freshmen, junior Haanah Gamboa volunteered she'd taken the class the previous year.

"He's got such good energy, he's just so positive," Gamboa commented.

Watching him teach one recent morning, that was evident in multiple ways. Many alumni have memories of coaches wandering a classroom with a warning paddle in their hands.

Floyd carries a stick too, but just a yardstick he uses to pace and gesture among the desks while he quizzes the students on vocabulary about Africa and the Middle East. It's easy to discern the kids who want to learn and those waiting for the hour and a half to finish.

But Floyd doesn't let them wander. He sees a student with a faraway look in his eyes and touches base by name. "You got that?" he asks in a friendly tone. Whether the student does or not, it

AVID Students Participate in Mock Interviews

In its 16th year of operation, the AHS AVID program is an elementary through postsecondary college readiness system that's designed to increase school-wide learning and performance.

Co-Coordinator of the program and Alumni Association member, **Melanie Patterson, Class of 1993**, explained that the "Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)" program was designed to prepare all students for college, particularly those who would be the first generation in their family to pursue further education.



Alumni Board Member Judy Northup questions junior Anahi Jasso during mock interviews held in May to help prepare AVID students on what to expect as they transition from high school to a college environment.

In May, several Alumni volunteers, as well as Kiwanis volunteers, got a chance to be part of the AVID program by participating in mock interviews under Patterson's guidance. The volunteers pretended to interview the students for a job or a scholarship. The students were then critiqued on their appearance, professionalism, reasoning skills and communication, which Patterson said would be used as feedback for the students.

Alumni Board member **Kristina Randerson** also volunteered as did Kiwanis volunteers Diane and Kent Rasmussen, and Larry James.

Research-based methods of teaching are used in the accelerated learning program in which almost 300 students are involved.



Participating in the afternoon mock interviews were (left to right) AVID program co-coordinator, Melanie Patterson*, junior Rhiyanna Knight, Mac Martin*, Kiwanis volunteer Jim Burgess, Judy Northup*, Patti Schimpf*, Bonnie Watkins*, and junior Abigail King.

*denotes AHS alumni

Alumni Association Shows Appreciation for Teachers at Spring Luncheon

Over 250 AHS teachers were recognized and honored by the Alumni Association at the annual spring Teacher Appreciation Luncheon held May 7. Teachers were treated to lunch provided by J. Gilligan's and eight were recipients of gift cards donated by alumni sponsors, selected randomly through a lottery drawing.

We appreciate all the teachers, staff and support workers!



Marching Band Takes Steps to Return to Pasadena with Hopes of Participating in Rose Bowl

by Rickie Windle
Association Alumni Reporter

The march to the Rose Bowl Parade is a long one. But the Arlington High marching band is taking the steps to get there.

AHS has been there before, in

Mill Pharmacy, to raise money.

It wasn't all on the students. **Martha Sue Martin Meek** noted that iconic Arlington Mayor Tom Vandergriff stepped up to help acquire the buses the band took to California.

When questioned if there were

band members.

Before the current band members can ponder any fun, there is a lot of work to be done. The process isn't an annual application, but any acceptance would only be for the 2027 parade. Applicants must submit an array of proof they belong on the route, including a video. With such a long timeline, it means some current band members will never get the opportunity as they will have graduated.

But junior drum majors **Mark Bangs** and **Jamison Adams** said it was a happy duty to prepare the band for admission.

"It would be super cool to say that is our legacy," Bangs said.

"We're just helping to build this band and make opportunities," Adams said.

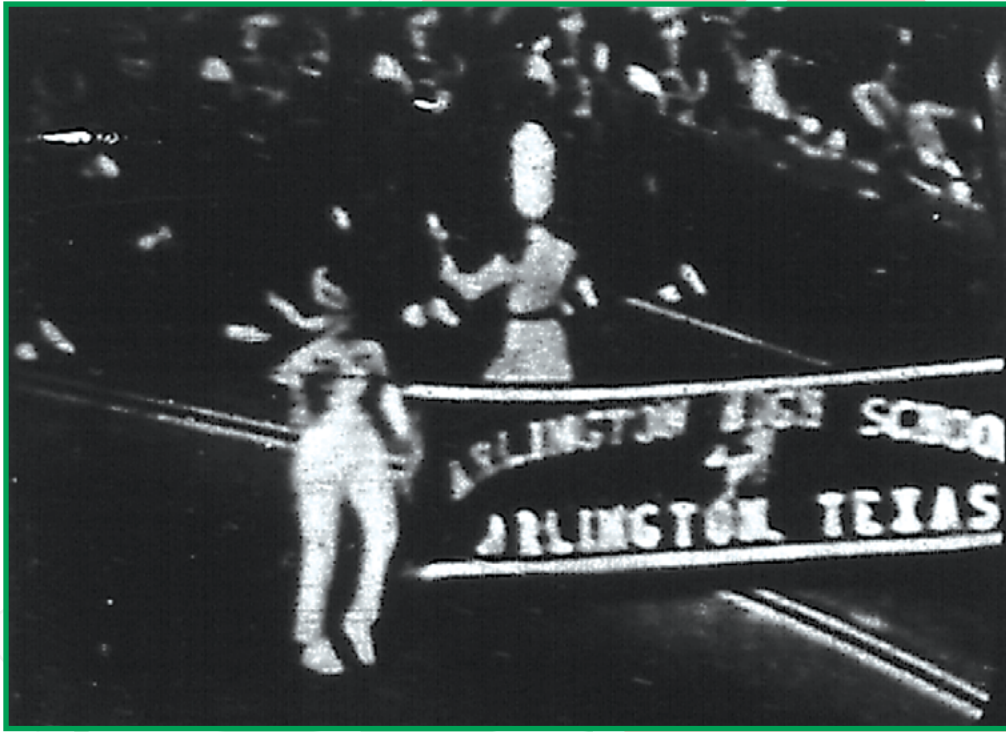
It is an opportunity across the city now that AHS has opened its expansion that includes a fine arts magnet from the speciality program at Gunn Junior High. Students now at Gunn, and some of the freshman currently in the soon-to-be 220-person band, would be the performers.

"It's a lot of work, but I feel it's so worth it," said freshman oboe player **Isabella Morales**. Her cohort **Aubrey Lilley** said she expects to be engaged in a lot of fundraisers in the future.

The running joke among the marching band community is it had to take a 105-degree turn to make the Rose Bowl pitch. Standard marching band pivot is 90-degrees, but the route makes Rose Bowl Parade marchers prove they can execute a 105-degree turn. The current work to accomplish the turn and get it on submission video is complicated, since the end of the football season means the marching has been on hold.

Martin Meek warns of more challenges if the invite is issued. The parade route is five miles, but the twists and turns make it more like a 10-mile high step.

"It was like we were in the Army," she laughed.



COLT BAND ON TV – This photo, snapped from a television screen, shows Arlington High School's Colt Band as the group came down Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena, California, in the world famous Tournament of Roses Parade. The parade was shown on three stations in the local area and was viewed by more than two million in person in Pasadena and 100 million more on television.

– Photo credit to Arlington Citizen-Journal which published this photo on Monday, Jan. 2, 1967.

1967. As it now takes almost two years to wrangle an invite, the band and supporters are working through the rigorous application now in hopes of coinciding with the 60th anniversary of that first visit with a Colt band marching the Pasadena, CA, streets again in 2027.

It is also bringing some of the Colts from the first historic event out to encourage and enthuse the current group of marchers.

Those students-now-alumni were asked to raise \$50 each for the trip. That would be about \$500 in today's dollars. **Becky Graves Hughes** says she got a job at the Dairy Queen in her quest. **Brenda Sprayberry Barnes** gave her spare time to one of the quintessential businesses in the city's history, Randol

any hijinks during the trip, **Martin Meek** laughed "none of your business!" It should be noted her father was long-time Arlington School District Superintendent **James Martin**. And she said she did beg the chaperones who had volunteered for the trip, that her mother not be assigned to the **Martin Meek** bus.

Don Inman says the band didn't just march and play in the parade, but anywhere they could find. He recalled tunes up and down the halls of UCLA dorms showing the Colt spirit.

Inman also said when the band visited Disneyland, they couldn't fathom how all the Six Flags Over Texas stickers wound up on the upper levels of Magic Mountain. But he suspected

brings him back around.

As telling is the clock in the classroom. It is standard issue of the class ticking by. But on the whiteboard all around it are affirmative statements, such as “Believe you can and you are halfway there.” They aren’t education major tricks. Floyd says former students wander by sometimes and put up the statements.

Students are just less social than they were even a few years ago. All the technology makes them less likely to communicate even with each other, much less adults. “It’s too much,” Floyd recognized. “It’s a lot of making them talk.” For the vocabulary exercise, they were teamed into groups of two, and Floyd says even that makes them uncomfortable. It has been exacerbated by the time they would have been interacting and learning social skills that was interrupted by Covid.

“It’s coming back around,” Floyd said.

This is the third consecutive year a teacher from the AHS Social Studies Department has won the district award. Floyd credits the department heads for creating an atmosphere that leads to such accolades.

The committee that chose Floyd for the honor noted his expression of his caring for students, innovation, inspiration to learn and communicating of materials well. Elevating him even more, in the committee’s review, was that he considers teaching a calling instead of a mere job and understands the skills that make a good teacher, including setting clear goals for students and a personal plan for his own improvement.

***Distinguished Colt Alumnus
Tom DeFrank,
AHS Class of 1963, was
inducted into the Texas
Intercollegiate Press
Association Hall of Fame
in April.***

***Tom was editor of the
Texas A&M Battalion
during the protest-filled days
during the war in Vietnam
in the 1960s.***



Alumni Board Welcomes Co-Chairs for 2025 North Texas Giving Day

Mike Austin and Nicky Austin, both *Class of 1990*, have agreed to step into the role of Co-Chairperson for the annual North Texas Giving Day to fill the vacant committee position.

Debbie Ericson, previously the NTGD Chairperson, will remain a viable part of the fundraising committee in an advisory capacity.

The Austins will be working with Debbie on this year’s fall campaign. Board members have praised them for their willingness to participate and are excited to have the Austins on board.

This year, the Communities Foundation of Texas has announced a new initiative – the launch of *North Texas Gives*, an expansion of North Texas Giving Day and their commitment to growing community giving in North Texas.

Since its inception in 2009, North Texas Giving Day has been dedicated to supporting local nonprofits. Building on the success of year-round giving events hosted on NorthTexasGivingDay.org, *North Texas Gives* will provide a one-stop shop for community giving here in North Texas every day of the year.

In fact, a donation to the Alumni Association has already been received this year through their website.

Over \$17,000 was raised last year for the Alumni Association with the funds going towards scholarships and other AHS programs.

This year’s North Texas Giving Day is Thursday, Sept. 18. Make sure to add it to your calendar!

Hervey Receives Outstanding Jazz Director Honors

***A huge shoutout to
Nathan Hervey for winning
Outstanding Director at
the UTA Jazz Festival!***

***Your dedication,
leadership, and passion for
the arts continue to inspire
everyone around you.
Congratulations!***



AHS FFA Teams Compete for State Honors

Fifty years ago, the Future Farmers of America organization at AHS was synonymous with Old MacDonald - with a moo-moo here, and a neigh-neigh there and a baa-baa everywhere. How those times have changed.

Tanner Smith, AHS Ag Science teacher and FFA Advisor, leads today's FFA students in expanded programs which include Vet Science, Floricultural and Wildlife. Through the statewide Wildlife Alliance for Youth program, which helps to raise awareness of the increasing importance of wildlife to farmers and ranchers, FFA and 4-H students compete in regional contests with the top teams going to state. This spring, AHS students brought back both individual and team honors in their respective categories.

The Wildlife and Recreation Management Career Development Event (CDE) was started by the Wildlife Alliance for Youth almost 30 years ago in an effort to educate youth on wildlife careers and enterprises in Texas.

"Arlington High Ag Teacher Trey Polster (1985-2018) was one of the first to train a team and compete in the contest and helped to get it started," Smith said, explaining the history of the events. He added that since the start of the competition, a team from AHS has advanced to the state contest every year, except for three.

The FFA Wildlife team competed at the Region 5 Wildlife contest in Eastland in April. Out of the 60 teams competing, they placed first in Area 5 and eighth in the Region, which secured them a spot to compete at the state level. Area Wildlife team members

include Zach Bastas, Spencer Doughty, Morgan Jones, and Catherine Knowles.

"To say I am proud is an understatement," Smith said. "This contest is one I hold dear to my heart competing while an AHS student and now training as an AHS teacher! These students are leaving a legacy for the future Wildlife teams!"

Earlier in the year, the FFA Wildlife team hosted its first local wildlife contest, partnering with River Legacy Nature Center, in which 12 teams from across the state were represented. The contest featured eight sections including plant identification, biological facts, habitat evaluation, fish and game laws, safety and techniques.

In the biological facts section, students took a multiple-choice test covering native Texas wildlife species, including white-tailed and mule deer, bobwhite and scaled quail, wild

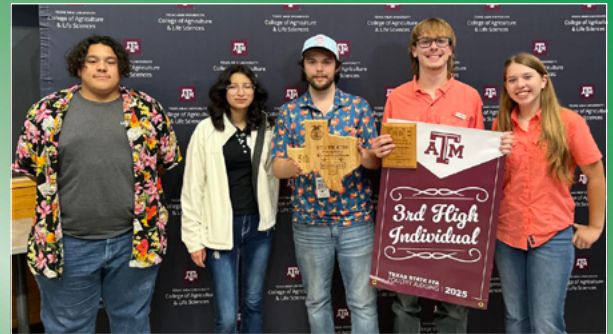
turkey, pronghorn antelope, fox and gray squirrel, mourning and white-winged doves and waterfowl. The fish and game laws portion required competitors to study the Texas Outdoor Annual and complete a multiple-choice test on the state's hunting and fishing regulations.

AHS students competed in the FFA state CDE contests this year and four teams advanced to the finals with Evan Strayhorn placing third in Individual Poultry Evaluation. Teams making it to the state competition and receiving recognition were: Poultry Evaluation, 5th place; Wildlife, 30th place; Floriculture, 54th place; and Vet Science, 72nd place. "This has been an amazing CDE season for Arlington FFA and we are so proud of all our teams that competed this year!"

– Ag Science Teacher and FFA Advisor Tanner Smith



Evan Strayhorn



Poultry Team



Wildlife Team



Floriculture Team



Vet Science Team

For the Safety section, students demonstrated knowledge of hunter and boater education through a written test. The habitat evaluation portion required participants to analyze a scenario, study a map and physically assess a plot of land to determine if it provided the necessary food, water and shelter for wildlife. The techniques portion involved identifying 20 different objects related to wildlife management, such as skulls, traps, tracks, water samples, scat and GPS tracking devices.

In the plant identification section, students identified up to 15 flagged plants from a pool of 125 native Texas species and determined which wildlife consumed each plant.

"I am so proud of the turnout of the contest," Smith said. "My team was incredible. They were group leaders and helped set up every bit of the contest and take it all down to make sure River Legacy was left in the same shape as we got it."



CLASS OF 1965

The Class of 1965 held its 60th reunion in March at J. Gilligan's in Arlington. Attending classmates included Tommy Waldrop and Clete McAlister (*top photo*) and David Skidmore, Scott Chandler and John Ball (*bottom photo*).



Correction

In the last instaNEWS, we featured an article on the National Museum of Honor opening and the only AHS graduate, Neel Kearby, who has received the Medal of Honor.

In that article, two items need to be corrected. First, Colonel Kearby was the commanding officer of the 348th Fighter Group, (not the 248th) and his full-size statue is located outside Arlington's City Hall, facing the George W. Hawkes downtown public library.

Our thanks to AHS Alumni Lifetime member Richard Aghamalian for bringing this to our attention.

CLASS OF 1975

Starting Friday, June 13 from 6 to 9 p.m. the Class of 1975 will hold the first of several celebrations for its 50th Reunion at J. Gilligan's Bar and Grill located at 407 E. South St. in Arlington. There is no charge but attendees will be responsible for their own food and drinks.

On Saturday, June 14, two dinners will be held – one in Fort Worth at Esperanza Restaurant, where a \$40 ticket will buy your dinner. There will be a cash bar. The second dinner will be at Candlelight Inn in Arlington. Attendees will be responsible for their food and drink, but reservations are requested.

For more information or reservations, visit the **AHS 75 THE BIG 5-0** site on Facebook.

2025 Alumni Association Board of Directors

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Reporter: Rickie Windle, '75

Scholarship: Peggy Wood Martin, '66

July 4th Parade: Kathy Einhaus, '68

Alumni Band: Tanya Terrell-Weidemann, '81

Colt Volunteer Corral: Michelle Barlen, CBC

Members-at-Large: Mike Enger, '74;

Campus Liaison: Natasha Newsome, CBC

Workman Receives Sports Honors at Annual Hall of Fame Banquet

Football captain and starting fullback of the 1962 Colts, Rusty Workman, was inducted into the Arlington Athletics Hall of Fame at the annual Tom Vandergriff Night of Champions Awards banquet on May 28.

The Lifetime Alumni Association member and four-sport athlete competed in football, baseball, track and basketball during his

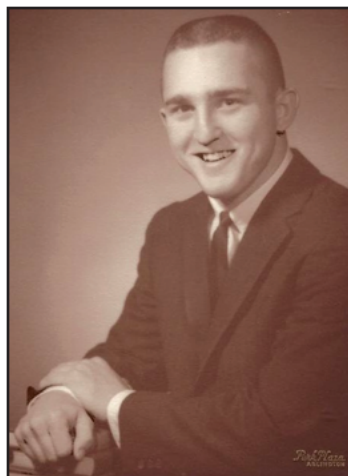
high school years.

He was awarded District 4-4A and Team MVP and selected All-District, All-Region and Honorable Mention All-State in football. Rusty was also selected All-District in baseball, where he was the catcher for the team.

He earned a football scholarship to the University of Texas, graduating in 1967. Afterwards, he received his Master of Business degree at

NTSU and then graduated from SMU's Southwestern

Graduate School of Banking. Congratulations, Rusty!



AHS alumnus Rusty Workman, captain of the 1962 AHS Colts football team, was inducted into the 2025 Arlington Athletics Hall of Fame in May.

COMING in the August Newsletter...

- The **2025 Distinguished Colt Award** winners will be recognized. These alumni were selected for their post-high school achievements and will be publicly presented at this year's Homecoming Pep Rally and Open House festivities in September.
- The **Alumni Annual Open House activities (Sept. 12-13)** will be detailed. Contact a classmate and make plans now to attend!
- **North Texas Giving Day** will be Sept. 18 this year. Your contribution to the AHS Alumni Association makes a difference in the lives of students through scholarships and other programs throughout the year.
- **Class reunions** are happening around Homecoming and Open House. Check back to see if your class will be getting together and make plans to join them!

For more information on any Alumni event, check out our webpage at www.ahscolts-alumni.org, or find us on Facebook or Instagram at



Arlington High School Alumni Association

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

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For only \$25/year (or \$125 for a lifetime membership), you can stay connected to your classmates, keep informed of opportunities to participate in upcoming events through our digital newsletters, and give back to your Alma Mater! Have siblings or friends who are AHS alumni? Get them to join with you, or give them the gift of a membership, too.

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Making a Difference Together!
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