

Oh, to be 30 Again!

Presentation by Charlotte Shepperd, '64, founding member and founding secretary of Muncie Central High School Alumni Association and founding editor of Cat Tracks

Remarks were made at the Association's 30th anniversary celebration at annual dinner, Nov. 7, 2025.

I'd like to acknowledge and give a huge thanks to Teresa Jeter, Bruce Munson and Kay Rankin for their behind the scenes work and preparation for this presentation.

The pearl is the traditional symbol for a 30-year anniversary – and tonight I'm going to share a few pearls with you – facts that I hope will offer insight into the Muncie Central Alumni Association's success.

FROM 1914 TO 2025



Opened 1915 - 1973



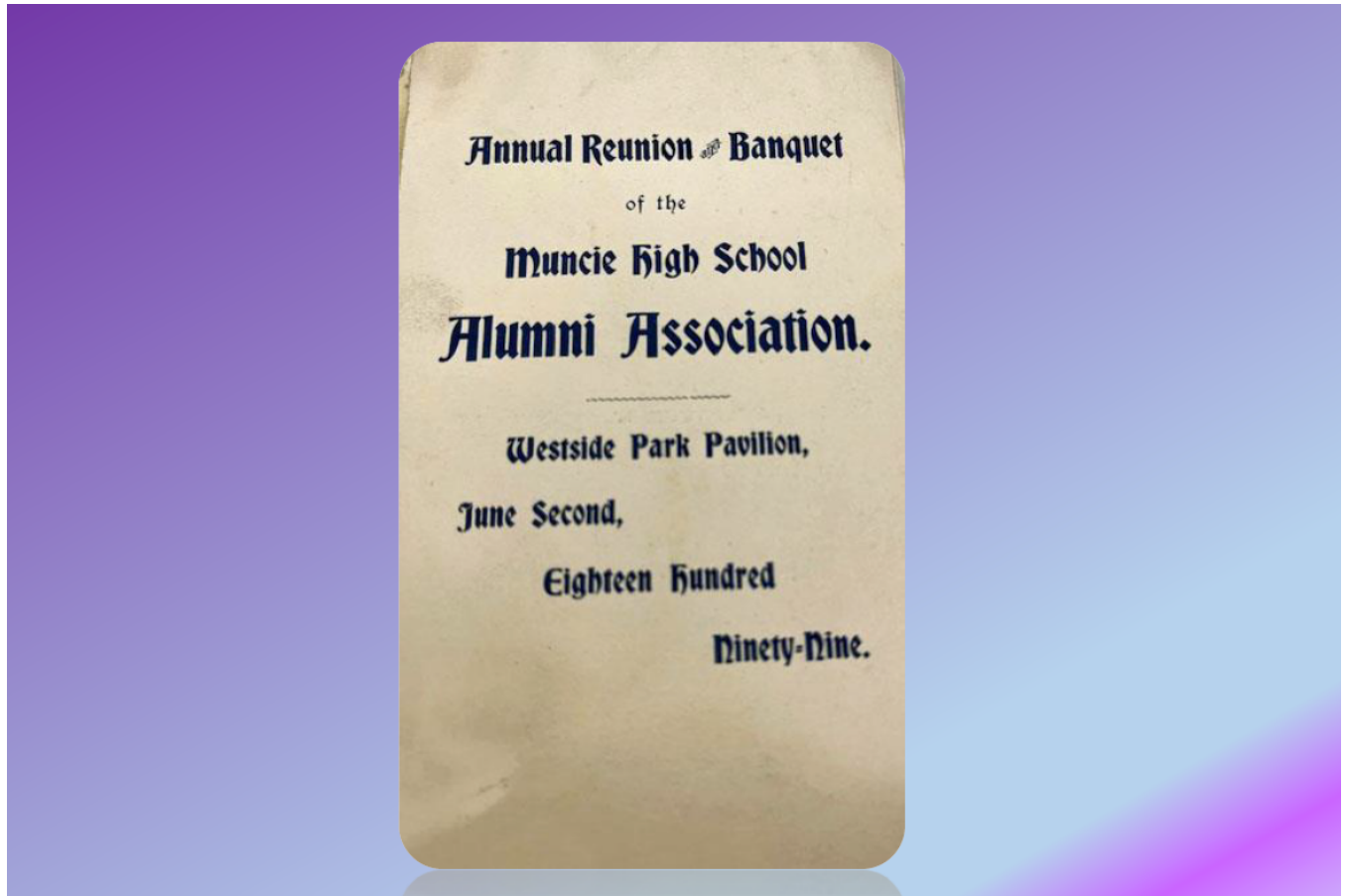
1973 – present

When I was pondering details for this presentation – trying to sift through the Association's 30-year history and pull out important highlights, I thought I should explain briefly why I'm the chosen one to make this presentation. My Muncie Central connections include the "Old" Central —the one that sat on this very land and welcomed students from 1915 through the spring of 1973. The same school that pre-dates the "New" Central – which is now in its 52nd year of existence.

I graduated from Old Central, taught at New Central from its opening through the beginning of the 1981-82 school year. And, yes, I do bleed purple! I quit teaching in November 1981 – Friday the Thirteenth – and began at Ball State the following Monday.

In my first week of working with the university's Alumni Association, fresh after leaving Central, my new boss asked what color I'd like to have my floor to ceiling burlap-covered wall painted. I instantly said, "Purple!" I went into work the next day to find two university painters in my office, painting my wall – RED! But that never thwarted my Bearcat spirit!!

Those connections all intertwine with my three decades of involvement and participation as a founding member of the Muncie Central Alumni Association – the sequel



I say it's a sequel because in archival resources at the Delaware County Historical Society, I unearthed bits of evidence that there actually WAS an organized Association in the early years of the high school. That's right – I discovered a printed program from the Association's annual dinner from June 2, 1899. I don't know how long that Association existed, or what may have caused its demise; however, the second annual alumni reunion two decades earlier received full front-page coverage in the June 21, 1879, edition of the Daily Muncie News.

Now, we know our high school traces its founding to 1867. That first school year, 1867-68, records seven graduates – all women. By a decade later, both men and women alumni were gathering together for formal reunions.

The 1879 event was hosted at the Opera House and Kirby House in Muncie and the evening included dinner, entertainment, toasts and speeches!

The speaking agenda included the annual address by Charles E. Bacon, titled "Culture," and the author of the newspaper article gave him high marks, saying, "It was a fine effort, eloquently delivered and heartily applauded."

Oh, to be Charles E. Bacon tonight!

AND, Oh To Be 30 Again!

FROM 1914 TO 2025



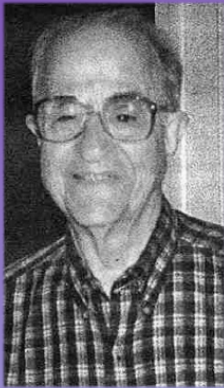
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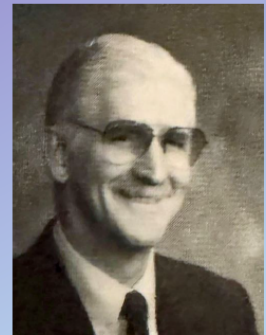
Fast forward through the decades. We'll stop now in the mid-1990s and the formation of the Muncie Central High School Alumni Association we know today.

Bernard Freund, '29



Biography of Bernard W. Freund

- Born in Decatur Illinois to William F. and Pearl Cohen Freund.
- Graduated cum laude from Muncie Central High School as Valedictorian, 1929.
- Graduated cum laude from the University of Michigan, 1933.
- Served as attorney with the National Labor Relations Board in Washington D.C.
- Served as an instructor at Ball State University, and as the BSU student legal counselor.
- Member of Temple Beth El
- Executive Director of the Muncie Human Rights Commission
- Fought in the U.S. Army during WWII
- Owned and Operated several men's clothing stores in and around central Indiana.
- Member and past president of Indiana State Association of B'nai B'rith.
- Local Member of B'nai Brith Lodge 752
- Board Member of Planned Parenthood of East Central Indiana
- Camp Crosley Alumni Association
- Board Member of the American Red Cross
- Co-founder of Muncie Central High School Alumni Association
- Board Member of United Way
- Founder of Benjamin V. Cohen Memorial Fund with Ball State University



Joe Kinnett, '58

This organization owes its existence to several very faithful and dedicated Bearcat boosters.

The initial cast of players were Joe Kinnett, Central's principal at the time and 1958 Central graduate; Bernard Freund, Class of 1929; Linda Hollis, Class of 1964, teacher and math department chairman at Central; and yours truly, who, as mentioned, had taught at Central but was by that time with the Ball State Alumni Association.

The impetus behind the group was provided by Bernie. He had collected – for years – all the information of reunion classes – their reunion calendar dates and their contacts.

Remember when those announcements were faithfully published in our Muncie newspapers?!

Bernie was driven by a desire to see Muncie Central form an organization that could serve alumni as well as current students.

And he had seen, firsthand, an Alumni Association in action in Fort Wayne, as his wife, a graduate of Fort Wayne North Side, was a member of their Association. Bernie knew some of the benefits that such an organization could provide. He envisioned a group that could assist students and the school, connect alumni with each other and their alma mater and, eventually, host reunions that would honor specific class years (5-, 10-, 25-, 50-, etc.).

And Bernie apparently was a persistent soul. He regularly spoke with Joe Kinnett, as I understand it, and Joe eventually asked Linda and me if we would work with Bernie to try to figure something out.

It was a good and logical fit. Linda and I had graduated together in – well, too many years ago – 1964 – were good friends, and to put it mildly, could relieve Joe of Bernie's persistent contacts!

So, now we land in 1995 – which was our foundational year.

The four of us met in Mr. Kinnett's office at first to discuss the viability of such a group and how we might interact with the school on a regular basis.

Then, we began to put things into action.

We took Bernie's roster of contacts, added a few of our own, and enlisted as many class representatives as we could to join in meetings about the feasibility of such an organization.

MOST individuals were very interested, and we found ourselves obtaining cooperative participants – class reps who were willing to share their class rosters or who would put us on their reunion agendas – and we were off to the races.

We set up a regular calendar of phone banks, strategically matching our volunteer callers with class years around similar times.

We formed a board, initially of 26 alumni, named officers, and wrote a constitution and set of bylaws. Then, we began to meet monthly in the school cafeteria.

It didn't hurt at all to have the likes of Hurley Goodall among our charter folks. Hurley's standing in the community and Indiana opened numerous doors, and with Hurley's helpful hand, we obtained a \$2,500 grant from the Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County. It became much needed seed money to increase our visibility and to attract memberships.

We also can't overlook the work of Linda Clark Dague, Class of 1965, who worked through all the details to secure our 501(c)(3) status.

ANNUAL DINNERS



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The groundwork was in place, and In the fall of 1997, the Association conducted its inaugural annual membership meeting and dinner program.

The annual meeting has been hosted each fall since.

Bernie was honored that year – in 1997 – as the Association’s brainchild, and he was presented an award acknowledging his integral role in establishing the group.

Cat Tracks—Newsletter

**First newsletter—Fall 1998
Notes 'n News**

**And then became—
CAT TRACKS**



We began production of a newsletter in 1998 – called Notes 'n News at first. It became Cat Tracks the following year. In addition to Cat Tracks, the Association also developed both an active website and Facebook page.

DOROTHY WEBB, '33



Charter Board Member

**Our First
Distinguished Alumni Award
Recipient
1998**



The Association's first Distinguished Alumni Award was presented in 1998 to Dorothy Webb, Class of 1933. Dorothy, who passed away in 2017 at the age of 102, was an extremely proud Bearcat. She had attended, for example – in person – every single Muncie Central state championship – 1928 forward. She served in the United States Navy WAVES during WW II, was an accountant in Muncie for many years, and she truly embodied the spirit of volunteerism. She had been her class's contact—thank you, Bernie!, was integral in helping to form the Association, was on the charter board, and continued serving into her 90s.

That's what it's all about!

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI RECIPIENTS



Ruth Chin



Rick Rowray



Charlie Richmond

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI RECIPIENTS



Bev Reese accepting for late husband Jim Reese, an original board member



Ida Husted Harper,
Member of first graduating
Class of MCHS 1868

Greg Williams, '62
Represented by Ken Schuck &
Sally King Wetzel



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI RECIPIENTS



Marilyn Weaver with
Forrest Bowers



Francis Lafferty



Mark Ervin, former
board member and
current school board
member

Since 1998, the Association has presented a total of 46 Distinguished Alumni awards to outstanding graduates. They represent business and academic leaders, as well as sports figures, journalists and community advocates. Tonight's recipients will be added to our ranks of those who are examples of the best Muncie Central has to offer. They are honored for outstanding contributions to their community, state, nation and/or Muncie Central.

We added the Honorary Alumni Award in 2007.

HONORARY ALUMNI RECIPIENTS



Mark Burkhart, former CFO of
Muncie Community Schools



Morry Mannies, former MCHS
teacher and voice of the
Bearcats



Tom Jarvis, former Athletic
Director and Principal of MCHS

HONORARY ALUMNI RECIPIENTS



Ball Brothers Foundation



Display case for Distinguished and Honorary Alumni



Shelia West & Jan Marsh
Delta Theta Tau

Morry Mannies was the initial recipient of the award, which acknowledges non-graduates and organizations that make outstanding contributions to their communities and/or Muncie Central. Since inception, we have presented eight Honorary Alumni Awards.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Delaney Strange
Harris-Jones Scholarship



Addie Davis
Alumni Association
Scholarship



Gabe Reynolds
Alumni Association
Scholarship

In addition to proudly honoring our alumni, the Association has had a positive impact on the lives of Muncie Central students. Scholarships are presented annually in the spring. Students are selected through an application process that requires recommendations from a teacher or administrator. To be eligible, a graduating senior must be entering an institution of higher learning. The scholarship money is provided to the financial aid department of the chosen college or university.

Scholarships:

The first student scholarship, for \$750, was presented in 1998. The scholarship grew over a few years to its current \$2,000 stipend. A total of \$41,750 has been awarded to 27 students since the scholarship program began.

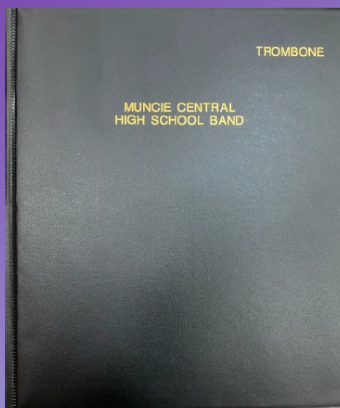


Sherry Harris-Jones was a 1962 Muncie Central graduate. Sherry proclaimed that receiving the Oliver W. Storer Scholarship made all the difference to her life. Very active as a student at Central, Sherry never forgot her high school roots. Giving back in a big way, Sherry and her husband Ralph Jones—upon learning that the Association is a 501(c)(3) organization – set up an endowed scholarship fund. From the fund an annual renewable scholarship has been awarded since 2019. The Harris-Jones Endowed Scholarship, since beginning, has generated \$5,000 each year, and a total of \$35,000 has been presented. Sherry passed away last November, but her legacy will continue to live on through this generous gift!

To provide needed resources to teachers for supplies and programs not typically funded through the school system, the Alumni Association set up a Teacher Grant program that began during the 1998-99 school year. A total of \$2,000 per year provides all or partial funding through an application and approval process. The money has generally been split among more than one recipient.

The list is long, but awards have ranged from enabling the purchase of small classroom and athletic equipment, like calculators for math and items to complete football uniforms, to assisting with the cost of educational field trips. We've also provided drama and music teachers funding for a variety of needs, sewing machines for costuming and sound equipment for stage performances as well as leather binders to hold music and funds to provide private lessons to music students are examples. And so much more. Grants totaling \$38,749.69 have been provided to 89 teachers since the program began.

TEACHER GRANT RECIPIENTS



Music folders for our Bearcat Band

Sewing machines for the Drama Department



Marnell Bishop representing the Science Department

Beyond the grants and scholarships, the Alumni Association addresses other needs as they are identified. Those needs can range from assisting a single student with proper gym clothes and other school necessities to answering requests for other causes brought to our attention. To that end, there is a special account within the Association that gives aid to individual students. The Student Assistance Fund was initially established through a substantial contribution from the class of 1963. It often receives additional contributions that help to generate ongoing support for students.

FUNDING ADDITIONAL PROJECTS



Greeted every day by Abe Lincoln



The Alumni Association has provided funding for laundry facilities for our Bearcat students



The Alumni Association contributed to the purchase of state championship banners which proudly hang in the Fieldhouse

The Association also proudly provides partial funding for a range of projects, including but not limited to support for the school's laundromat equipment and supplies, repair of the Abraham Lincoln statue when it was defaced two decades ago, and new state championship banners in the Fieldhouse.

Additionally, we have acknowledged Central students from all grades through a newly established Inspiration Award.



But, among the more visible aspects of the Alumni Association is the Memorabilia Room located in the Fieldhouse. What began with the discovery of discarded trophies in a storage closet at Muncie Central has grown beyond our wildest imagination! Under the presidency of Marilyn Moore, Class of 1950, the room was established in a relatively small space at the Fieldhouse and after outgrowing that, we were able to secure a larger room where the Memorabilia Room currently resides.

We have a short video to give you a glimpse of the Room and its history.

[Not available]

The Memorabilia Room opens its doors during basketball season and to reunion classes. And more recently it has hosted freshmen during their orientation to Central in the fall.

Mission Statement of the Muncie Central High School Alumni Association

We, the alumni of Muncie Central High School, recognize the need to build lasting relationships between the graduates and Muncie Central High School. We, therefore, set forth these ideals: to stimulate the loyalty of all alumni of the school; to encourage their support by uniting them in close bonds of fellowship and mutual assistance; and to acquaint them fully with the progress and needs of their alma mater.

You see our mission statement on the screen. And, it has been our guiding principle since our beginning!

Summary: We are so proud of what we've accomplished in 30 years! We have many pearls to show for those accomplishments. But it's the people behind the projects that sustain us!

Since its inception the Association has involved 123 alumni as members of the board of directors. I think 19 current and past members of the board are here. Will you please stand to be recognized.

The lifeblood of the Association is through memberships and other individual monetary donations.

Life memberships are available, and more than 100 alumni and friends have answered the call. Annual memberships also help us maintain the programs and services that we proudly provide. Nearly 500 members annually sustain our work.

FROM DOROTHY WEBB— TOP 10 REASONS TO JOIN THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

10. So your grandchildren can say with pride—"My grandmother/grandfather belonged..."
9. So your children can say with pride—"My mom/dad belonged..."
8. So you can vote when you attend the Annual meeting.
7. So your dues can help finance the goals of the Alumni Association.
6. So you can show you are still a Bearcat Booster.
5. So you can serve on the Alumni Board sometime.
4. So you can meet with other Alumni members.
3. So you can carry an alumni membership card in your wallet.
2. So you can have a say in how and what the Association does.

Dorothy Webb penned the Top 10 reasons for joining the Association back when David Letterman's Top 10 was the rage!

Among Dorothy's Top 10 list are:

—So your grandchildren and children can say, My grandparents and parents were proud Bearcats!

—So your financial support can help sustain Association programs

—So you can vote at the Annual meetings

But the Number 1 Reason is:

and the NUMBER ONE reason--

1. So you can be an official member of a group dedicated to helping your Alma Mater and its students in producing A+ citizens!

So you can be an official member of a group dedicated to helping your Alma Mater and its students in producing A+ citizens!

What will our next 30 years hold? There are many Dreams, yet to be imagined! And maybe I'll be invited back for the 60th anniversary, the Diamond one, with more updates!

We've never quite succeeded with Bernie's full expectations, as he wished for an organization that would bring more alumni, especially the older ones, back once a year for a reunion of sorts. But I think Bernie would be very proud of what we HAVE accomplished – and all of us here tonight have been a part of this success.

Thank you – for your continued support of the Association and its positive and cooperative presence with Muncie Central High School!

And, in true Bearcat spirit – **Together WE BEARCATS ALWAYS SUCCEED!**