

— A Stroll Down Memory Lane —

Recently, I took a stroll down memory lane by doing something we're all guilty of from time to time. I thumbed through some of my old high school year books. I attended Bradley Central High School from the 1992/1993 school year to the 1994/1995 school year. In retrospect it wasn't that long ago, but it seems like a lifetime.

1992 was the year when the BCHS band waited for over three hours in the hot sun to perform for President Bush (Sr.) on his campaign stop at the Chattanooga airport. I only remember that because I was a member of the drumline in the band. (Band life is a whole other article!) It was also the year Clinton became president and when Florida and Louisiana were crushed by Hurricane Andrew.

1993 was the year Leno took over for Carson on the Late Show and when Michael Jackson was accused of sexual molestation of a 13 year old boy, but the case was settled out of court. It was the year when my parents could watch both my older brother Patrick and I on Friday nights, Patrick playing for the Bradley Bears football team and me playing the drums at halftime. It was also the year when Patrick graduated. And who can ever forget waking up on Saturday morning, March 13th to 21 inches of snow. Yes, I too survived the bliz-

zard of '93 in Cleveland, TN.

1994 was the year O.J. Simpson was arrested and tried for the murders of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman. Mud people emerged from Woodstock '94 and Michael Jackson was back in the news when he married Lisa Marie Presley. It was also the year Jackie O. and Richard Nixon died and when I discovered how difficult it was to march in step and in formation while carrying and playing a bass drum.

1995 was my senior year, sure many worldwide events took place, but all I could think about was that 1995 was the year I was finally going to graduate! After having perfect attendance from Pre-K through 12th grade, I couldn't wait to walk across that stage.

While flipping through the pages of my year books, I enjoyed remembering those who signed them. Unfortunately, I received my senior yearbook late and no one signed it. For the ones that were signed, not only did my fellow classmates leave their memories, but I was one of those students who asked teachers to sign their year books too.

Just to name a few of those teachers: Algebra I - "Short and Sweet." Your Pal, Ted Gee." Ecology - "Help Save The Earth. Kevin Kerr." Band -

"Danny Coggin." American Studies, A.P. History - "Tonya, It has been a pleasure having you in class this year. Best wishes to you in your senior year. Sincerely, Lyman Woods." Chemistry I - "Tonya, You're in my favorite class. You've worked hard! Always strive for the best. God's Love, Beverly Brown."

And then, there was my favorite teacher: Accounting - "Tonya, What a great student! I'm glad I'll see you again next year for Accounting II. Mrs. Minor" I really shouldn't play favorites because it isn't fair to all of the wonderful and memorable teachers I had, but Mrs. Pat Minor was different. I took Accounting I, Accounting II and Automated Accounting all from Mrs. Minor.

My senior year, I had the option of taking band for my last class of the day or a new class that was offered, Automated Accounting. I still believe I made the right choice, although I must admit, I was a bit jealous listening to the drumline in the distance warm up for band practice that year.

Mrs. Minor was an amazing teacher! With her sweet, non-evasive demeanor and kind voice, she not only taught her students that what they were learning would be useful for the rest of their lives, but she never hesitated to explain her lessons all over again if it was needed until all of her

students understood the material.

She was also the advisor for the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) at Bradley High of which I was a member my senior year. That year the FBLA visited the pediatric ward at Bradley Memorial Hospital on Halloween to give toys and candy to the children unable to go trick-or-treating. On Thanksgiving, and during the Christmas season we visited nursing homes to take the residents fruit, gifts, cards and companionship. The FBLA also attended the state convention held that year in Gatlinburg, TN. FBLA gave its members a taste of the "real world" and allowed them to decide if they were making the right career choices through the many activities and events experienced. Plus, I learned that by volunteering a few hours of your time to brighten someone's day is worth every second in the long run. Mrs. Minor was most influential to me by her desire to instill these lessons in each of her students.

I admired Mrs. Minor not only for her teaching style, but for her style in general. If teachers were nominated for superlative awards, she would have won best dressed hands down! As a business teacher, she always dressed the part and she always matched her accessories to her business



By Tonya Brantley

attire. One of her most unique accessories was her charm bracelet. She had a different charm from each of the places she and her husband had visited from all over the world and a story behind each one.

Mrs. Minor retired in 1996. After graduation, I lost touch with her, but I often wondered how she was doing, if her and her husband were visiting a foreign country, how many more charms she'd acquired in her travels, but most of all if I'd ever hear from her again.

Just last month, I was sitting at my desk when I received a phone call. It was Mrs. Minor! She had stopped at Walter's Car Wash in Cleveland to wash her car and while waiting, picked up a copy of *The People News*. She said that when she saw my name and that I was the managing editor, she just had to call me. It was another one of my "lifemarkers" I'll never forget.

Our conversation was a brief one in which the two of us "played catch-up." She mentioned that despite a health scare her husband had a few years back, the two of them still love to travel and have been to many places including a re-

cent trip out west to visit the national parks. She also mentioned that they just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. I had to ask her if she added any more charms to her bracelet, to which she said, "Of all the things you remember, I can't believe you remember that." I was so pleased to hear that she was doing well, as I know she was equally pleased to hear I was doing well too.

She surprised me when she mentioned that she still had the present I had given her my senior year. It was a stained glass ornament with the following words: *A teacher takes a hand, opens a mind, touches a heart.* I would never have guessed just how much that gift meant to her and how I touched her life as much as she did mine. I will definitely keep in touch. Thank you Mrs. Minor.

A kind word is never lost. It keeps going on and on, from one person to another, until at last it comes back to you again. - Anonymous

Do you have Questions or Comments about Tonya's Tales? If so, e-mail Tonya at: people4news@aol.com

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