Taft Alumni Newsletter

Vol. XLI, No. 4 **Fall 2026**

Taft Off to a Great Start

As reported by Brian Nadig in The Nadig Newspapers, Taft's attendance rate has improved dramatically this school year, reaching nearly 90 percent during the first five weeks of the semester—a significant jump from the 79.5 percent average recorded throughout the previous school year. This represents approximately a 10-percentage point increase year-over-year and puts the school close to its pre-pandemic attendance level of 89.5 percent. According to principal Dr. Ryan Glowacz (2006), who has spent 16 years as a teacher and administrator at Taft, this marks the strongest start he's witnessed during his tenure. He noted that hallways clear out remarkably quickly when classes begin, signaling strong student engagement.

The improvement comes despite broader challenges affecting schools nationwide, where attendance has declined since the pandemic. While digital learning offers benefits by making it easy for genuinely ill students to catch up on assignments online, Glowacz acknowledged it can also make skipping school more tempting for other reasons. To combat this, Taft has implemented incentives such as awarding "late work tokens" to students with good attendance, allowing them to submit assignments up to three days late without penalty.

Enrollment has seen a modest decrease, dropping from a high of around 4,200 students in recent years to 4,100 this year, partially attributed to changes in the JROTC application process. More than 90 percent of students now come from the school's attendance and preference zone areas. To offset this decline, Taft is expanding its Seventh and Eighth Grade Academic Center by adding additional classes. With 20 feeder elementary schools and the largest attendance area in Chicago, Glowacz describes Taft as the "truest community high school in Chicago" while maintaining considerable diversity among its student population.

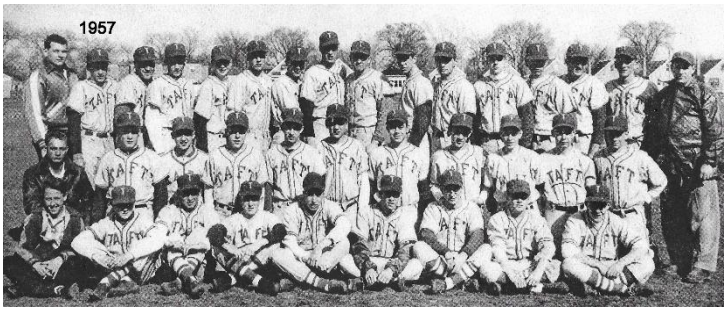
Great Moments in Taft Sports

This new series will spotlight particular teams, players and coaches in all Taft Sports.

By Bobby Friedlander, Jan '67

Back in the late fifties and early sixties we were still in grammar school but we always had a good reason to follow Taft sports teams! We had a neighbor, a cousin, a brother, a friend of a friend who participated in one of the many sports Taft offered.

For me, my passion for Taft sports began in the year 1957 at the age of 8. Our next-door neighbor by the name of Gregg Schumacher was a freshman on the 1957 baseball team that won the Chicago Public League Baseball Championship and again in 1958. For all the home games I got lucky and the legendary Taft Baseball coach, Jim Smilgoff let me pick up all the bats at every game.



Schumacher went on to become one of the stars to play at Thillens Stadium on Devon and Kedzie in the Boys Major League. And playing for a star laden team out of Wildwood Park he hit a towering home run at Forbes Field which was home to the Pittsburgh Pirates.

But two years in row to win the City Championship was won by more than one player! Before the 1957 champions Taft won their first title back in 1949 with Smilgoff coaching the club. Both opponents for the City Championship in 1957 and 1958 were the powerhouse Lane Tech teams. Taft had two ace pitchers in 1957 with Bob Gunderson and Denny Pickett. Amazingly, Pickett started in right field but came to the mound five different times to pitch to Lane's five left-handed batters. Taft won the game by the score of three to two.



And then came the 1958 season and this time it was just Denny Pickett on the mound for the entire game. He gave up zero runs and a sacrifice bunt by Denny in extra innings put a runner in scoring position in the bottom of 8th. Leadoff hitter Jerry Meyer singled to centerfield and Taft had "won another City Championship" making it three titles in 10 years.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Arizona All-Class Picnic
Date: Sunday, November 8, 2026, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
Location: Beardsley Recreation Center Ramada 10, 12755 W Beardsley Rd, Sun City West, AZ 85375
Contact: Judy Jacobsen (gordonsdatter@gmail.com), Fred Wordell (ftjawo@aol.com);
Details: $5 per person (includes a raffle ticket for TAA gear), bring a dish to share, beverages in non-glass containers.

So-Cal All-Class Get-Together
Date: Saturday, September 18, 2027, Noon – 4:00 pm
Location: "House of Savage," 2372 Recuerdo Cove, Del Mar, CA
Details: $10 (Rosati's pizza and pop), bring a dish to share, BYOB
Please RSVP! Jan (Ostromencki) Savage, (janhellokitty@hotmail.com), 858-353-3559

Florida Regional All-Class Get-Togethers
Tampa/Pinellas Region
Date: Wednesday, January 20, 2027, 11:30am
Location: Paul's Chicago Pizza - Clearwater
1500 N. McMullen Booth, Clearwater, FL
West Central FL Region
Date: Wednesday, February 3, 2027, 11:30am
Location: Gator's Dockside – Brownwood
3698 Meggison Road, The Villages, FL 32163
Southwest FL Region
Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2027, 11:30am
Location: Joey D's Chicago Style Eatery / Pizza
3811 Kenny Drive, Sarasota, FL
Contact: Tom Hoppe (tafths.chicago_hoppe@yahoo.com)
(813) 340-5478

Taft Class of 1967 60-year Reunion
Date: September, 2027 TBD
Location: TBD
Details: Friday Night Lights game and school tour planned
Facebook: Taft High School Class of 1967 Chicago

Taft Class of 1971 55 Year Reunion
Date: Sunday, November 8, 2026, 4:00 - 7:00 pm
Location: Moretti's in Edison Park 6727 N. Olmsted Ave.
Enter on Olmsted Ave. Elevator to 2nd floor private room
Details: $45/person, includes unlimited pizza, chosen appetizers, and soft drinks. Gratuity and service charges included. Cash Bar. Mail checks to Christina Reeves at 777 E. Prairie Ave. Des Plaines, IL 60016 or Zelle to 847-254-3908.
Contact: Chris Reeves (847-254-3908) or Jim Lucchesi (773-631-7661)

Chicago All-Class Picnic



You never know who you'll bump into at the All-Class picnic. Event photos courtesy of Adriane Stennis, 1989



2006 classmates Michelle Alanis and Daisy Dominguez, left, and Principal Ryan Glowacz flank Mayor Brandon Johnson.



Classmates of 1996 celebrate their 30 Year Reunion.



*The high temperatures failed to keep these alumni from the **SoCal Get-together** last month. Seated: Jan (Ostromencki) Savage '74. with Fritzle, Jim Jacobs Jun '60 with Nessa, Gail (Uhlar) Murray '76, Jill Ostromencki '76 with Rufflelina. Standing: Anita (Grabowski) Steinkemper Jun'64, Patrick Raetzman Jun '57, Jerry Knoll Jan '59, Jim Bixler Jun '66, Doug Savage (Maine South '76), Bill Steinkemper (Loyola '64).*



*In July it was once again time for the annual Taft High **Class of 1971 Mini-Reunion** at the Highway House, home of the world's biggest Bloody Mary. Left to right: Barb (Moe) LeMaster, Rich Piper, Rich Lindberg, Pam (Galla) Klein, Denise Donofrio, Arlo Wollin and Judy (Paul) Jackson.*

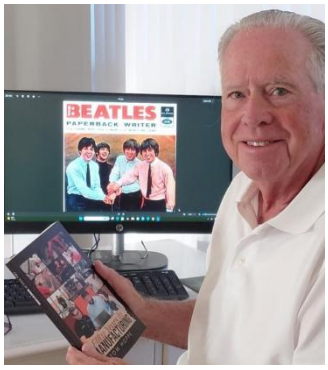


*The lively **Class of 1986** celebrated their **40 Year Reunion** at the colorful Rivers Casino in Des Plaines on September 10.*

Alumni News & Views

We three ladies, Class of June 1949, meet once a year for lunch to celebrate our July birthdays--Jessie (Douglas) Usdowski, Vivian (Kulczak) Ratchek, and I. We went to Farnsworth for 8 years and to Taft. We all turned 95 this July. We're sorry that Jessie passed away on August 1.

Carmella (Walsh) Patke, Jun '49



Tom Hoppe (1970), who hosts the Florida all-class events, has published "Fifty Years in Manufacturing", recounting his journey over a fifty-year career of leadership in engineering and industrial management. The paperback or Kindle is available on Amazon.

We wish Mary (Steigerwaldt) Abbott, Class of June 1941, a very happy 103rd birthday! Thanks to granddaughter Brandee (Abbott) Hobson, 1993, for letting us share the event.





I drove by the old family newsstand today. So many memories. Check out the street sign.

Irv Kaage, 1969



Jack Katich, 2026, fresh out of boot camp, dropped by to visit Principal Glowacz. Katich enlisted in the United States Marine Corps directly after graduating.



Michelle (Leger) Krajecki, 1976, billed as a "clean comedian", will be performing October 16 at the Geneva Stage in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. She is a graduate of The Second City Training Program in Chicago and Zanies stand-up comedy classes.

You can view one of her performances here: https://www.gigsalad.com/michelle_krajecki_clean_comedian_chicago

Volunteer Opportunity!



TAA is looking for a tech-savvy volunteer to help maintain our website, currently powered by GoDaddy. If you have experience with website management or would like to learn (no coding involved), we'd love to hear from you!

What the role involves:

- Occasional minor updates and content refreshes
- Basic troubleshooting and maintenance (on a reasonably trouble-free platform)
- Board membership optional

Interested or know someone who might be? Send us a message to learn more at eagleemail@taftalumni.org.

Hall of Fame Self-Nominations

It's never too early to submit a nomination for the Taft Alumni Hall of Fame. The next induction will take place in 2028. Don't ask why someone was not inducted; ask whether they were ever nominated. If a nominee was not inducted, they may be considered again.

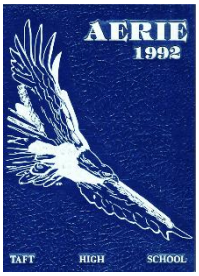
TAA recognizes that not every worthy individual has someone able to put their name forward. To remedy that, TAA will now accept self-nominations. The criteria and submission process remain the same. Nomination forms may be found here: https://taftalumni.org/hall-of-fame

You can view the Hall of Fame online here: https://taftalumni.org/hall-of-fame

Taft Yearbooks

Looking for a yearbook? We may have what you want! Surplus yearbooks are available for the suggested donations as follows:

- $50 for new yearbooks (includes shipping via USPS)
- $35 for used yearbooks (includes shipping via USPS)
- Yearbooks picked up in person will have the $8 shipping charge waived



Please contact TAA Treasurer Ted Groat at TaftJune1969@gmail.com to learn if we have your year, or to donate a yearbook—all years are happily accepted. Yearbook donors will receive a complimentary TAA membership or extension to a current membership.

TAA Fundamentals

TAA members know that it has sponsored countless events, supplied volunteer leadership for Taft's drama program, and donated special gifts including school signage, trophy cases, new computers, and a generous scholarship program. There's more that you may not know…

Our Founders

Frank Zemaitis, after his June '40 graduation, requested permission from Principal L. A. Hoeffer to establish the Taft Alumni Association. The effects of WWII, however, brought the fledgling organization to an end in the late 40s.



Frank Zemaitis, center, and the first TAA Board of Directors in 1940.



In 1983, when Taft asked for volunteers to form a new alumni association, Kay (Carlson) Kuciak, Jan '63, stepped up to establish today's organization. She served for three decades as its president. Her husband Tom Kuciak, Jun '62, was instrumental in developing TAA's sizeable alumni/membership database.

Active TAA Members*

- 40s (15)
- 50s (143)
- 60s (409)
- 70s (212)
- 80s (31)
- 90s (6)
- 00s (21)

Top 5 US Locations: Illinois (480), Florida (62), Arizona (45), California (36), Wisconsin (26)

International Members: Canada (2), New Zealand (1)

**This is a snapshot taken on a single day; the number of active members fluctuates daily.*

Thoughts on Onahan's Centennial

The 2027–2028 school year marks 100 years of learning, growing, and community at Onahan Elementary. For a century, Onahan has been a cornerstone of Chicago's Norwood Park neighborhood shaping young minds, creating lifelong friendships, and building generations of proud Lions. Richard Lindberg, 1971, provides an interesting perspective.

My alma mater in its 100th anniversary year. William J. Onahan, prominent Irish-American banker and Democratic politician in Chicago served as City Collector and Comptroller during the post-Civil War era and through the five-term Carter Harrison I and Harrison II mayoralty. Died in 1919. Considered a sharp and astute financial money manager he was never tainted by the swirling political scandals of Chicago all around him during the Gilded Age.



Long forgotten and left behind in the historical narrative from that time, he was one of many now obscure 19th century public figures to have schools named after them. A number of these schools have since been renamed including the former Tuley High School which is now Roberto Clemente. Murray Tuley was an esteemed 19th century judge in his day but swallowed up by history and discarded. Time and fading memory erases all. In another 100 years will Roberto Clemente suffer the same fate?

Lost a Classmate?



Looking for someone? For a $5 donation TAA will print your request here. If the person responds, we'll provide them with your contact information so that they may contact you.

Taft Mission Statement
Educate Global Citizens

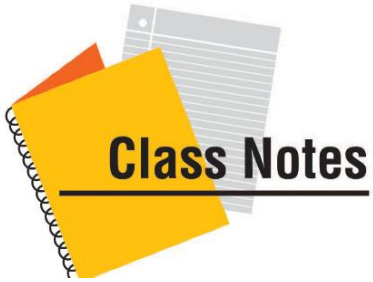
Taft Vision Statement
Create a Better World

Facebook: Taft Alumni Association of Chicago



www.taftalumni.org

www.tafthighschool.org



1940s

Nancy (Mondientz) Tibbitts (Jun 1949) has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, attended Edgebrook, lives in Santa Barbara, CA, NIU BA Elem Edu, is a retired teacher.

1950s

Paul Rebscher (Jan 1953) has 1 child, 2 grandchildren, attended Ebinger, lives in Moriches, NY, Beloit College 1 year; US Navy 1955-57, is a retired Flying Tiger Airline pilot.
Marion (Johnson) Chabot (Jun 1953) has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, attended Onahan, lives in Berkeley, CA, UI BA '57, MD '61, is a retired pediatrician.
Phyllis (Ruttkay) Verbrugghe (Feb 1954) has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, attended Beaubien, lives in Park Ridge, IL, Wright Jr College AA '56, is a retired administrative assistant.
Jeanne (Erickson) Peterson (Jun 1954) has 1 child, attended Edgebrook, lives in Glenview, IL, UI 2 years, is a retired commercial artist.
Robert Soske (Jun 1957) has 2 children, 5 grandchildren, attended Giles, lives in Inverness, IL, US Army 1961-63, is former owner of Presstech which prints this TAA newsletter, his grandson has been drafted as a pitcher for the New York Yankees organization.
Fred Kaiser (Jun 1958) has 3 children, 4 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren, attended Onahan, lives in Orange, CA, is retired.
Margery (Roess) Rollins (Jun 1958) has 4 children, 5 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild, attended Ebinger, lives in Torrington, CT, Wright Jr College, is a retired HR assistant, owned and operated a camp ground for 20 years.
Carolyn (Cella) O'Connor (Jan 1959) married **James O'Connor, deceased (Jun 1953)**, has 4 children, 10 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren, attended Hitch, lives in Evergreen, CO, is retired, her children are all Taft graduates.
Jim Zubert (Jun 1959) married **Lauren Congiusti (1969)**, has 2 children, 5 grandchildren, lives in Wauconda, IL, is retired.

1960s

Sandy (Bulatek) Ries (Jun 1960) married **Bob Ries, deceased (Jun 1956)**, has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, attended Hitch, lives in Niles, IL, Wright Jr College, AA Bus, is retired from I.T. communications and Avon Products.
Alex Wendorf (Jun 1960) has 3 children, 1 grandchild, attended Hitch, lives in Tucson, AZ, is retired.
Lynn (Anderson) Drost (Jun 1961) married **Rudy Drost (Jun 1961)**, has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild, attended Ebinger, lives in Inverness, IL, Roosevelt Univ. BA Psych, MA Counseling and Human Services, is a psychotherapist.
Rick Wendricks (Jan 1962) has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, lives in Hot Springs Village, AR, Drake Univ., is retired.
Larry Bowers (Jun 1962) married **Bernadette Leszczynski (1970)**, has 3 children, 7 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren, attended Garvy, lives in Chicago, IL, US Army 1965-67, is retired from law enforcement as a Chicago PD detective and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, is an avid boater in the Chicago harbors and is a snowbird seven months a year in Ft. Myers, Florida.
Lois (Knickerbocker) Boyer (Jun 1962) has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren, attended Norwood Park, lives in Anacortes, WA, DePauw Univ BA, is is the retired owner of The Mole Hole of South Bend gift shop, currently in relationship with Lytle Johnson who attended Taft in his freshman year.
Margaret Olsen (Jun 1962) attended Oriole Park, lives in Westminster, CO, BS, is an appraiser, has written four books.
Jeanette (Olsen) Gilbertson (Jan 1963) has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, attended Edison, lives in Tampa, FL, NEIU BA '65, is a retired teacher and artist, enjoys visiting siblings Judy (Olsen) Gammon, Jan '60 in Indiana, and Ron Olsen, Jun '85, in Wisconsin.
Barbara (Bolling) Rimington (Jan 1963) has 2 children, 6 grandchildren, attended Garvy, lives in Elmhurst, IL, Augustana College BA '67, is a retired part-time interior designer, homemaker, and taught for two years.
Pat McKevitt (Jun 1963) attended Oriole Park, lives in St Louis, MO, is retired.
Margaret (Wingert) Hardy (Jan 1964) has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, attended Norwood Park, lives in Aurora, IL,

NIU BS Edu '68, is a retired elementary school teacher of 35 years.

Richard Baran (Jun 1964) has 1 child, attended Hitch, lives in Batavia, IL, NEIU BA '67, MS '69; Loyola MBA '72, is retired.

Betty (Makis) Mooney (Jun 1964) attended Ebinger, lives in Scottsdale, AZ, 2 years college, is retired from commercial interior design.

Donald Janke (Jan 1965) married **Arlene Rolnicki, deceased (Jun 1962)**, has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, attended Oriole Park, lives in Chicago, IL, AA, US Navy Reserve 26 years active duty, Vietnam and Desert Storm, is a retired police officer.

Barbara Kalish (Jun 1965) attended Norwood Park, lives in Denver, CO, NAU BS '70, GA State MEd '75, ASU M SpEd '77, is a retired teacher, recently moved from Phoenix to Denver.

Rich Schutz (Jun 1965) attended Hitch, lives in Glenview, IL, Oakton Comm College AA '85; Roosevelt U BA Hist and paralegal studies '86, is a semi-retired Jewel deli clerk, recovering from a stroke since January, collects records and toy soldiers as hobbies.

Marian (Heinz) Eichlin (Jun 1966) married **Art Eichlin, deceased (Jan 1953)**, has 1 child, attended Norwood Park, lives in Billings, MT, North Park College, is a semi-retired part-time administrative assistant.

Michael Megaris (Jun 1966) has 3 children, 9 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild, attended Oriole Park, lives in Overland Park, KS, MBA Fin, CMA '88; USMC Reserves 1966-72, is a semi-retired accounting professor at Johnson County Community College, and is owner/manager of rental houses.

Alan Nelson (Jun 1966) married **Audrey Johnson (Jun 1966)**, has 3 children, 5 grandchildren, attended Oriole Park, lives in Carmel, IN, SIU BS Econ; DePaul Univ MS Acct; CPA, is a retired health systems treasurer, enjoys watching the grandchildren at their sporting activities.

Audrey (Johnson) Nelson (Jun 1966) married **Alan Nelson (Jun 1966)**, has 3 children, 5 grandchildren, attended Norwood Park, lives in Carmel, IN, Mankato State College BS Social Work, is a retired social worker and activity director.

Lynne Ostfeld (Jun 1966) attended Wildwood, lives in Chicago, IL, UI BA, MAT French, John Marshall Law School JD, is a lawyer and legal advisor to the French Consulate.

Judie (Montgomery) Fezekas (Jan 1967) has 2 children, 5 grandchildren, attended Hitch, lives in Huntley, IL, NIU 2 years, is retired, recently bought a winter home in Ft. Myers, Florida.

Jacquie (Luga) Philbin (Jan 1967) has 1 child, 1 grandchild, attended Garvy, lives in Springfield, VA, UIC BA Psych, is a retired United Airlines flight attendant, became a grandmother to an amazing little boy.

James Doubek (Jun 1967) has 3 children, 7 grandchildren, attended Hitch, lives in Waukegan, IL, Tool and Die Inst 4 years; US Army Reserve 1970-76, is a retired tool and die maker and department manager at Ace Hardware, active in his local flying club building and flying model airplanes, and of course, hanging out with the grandkids.

Nikki (Neroy) Peterson (Jun 1967) has 2 children, 3 grandchildren, attended St. Robert Bellarmine, lives in Maple Grove, MN, BA English Secondary Ed, Journalism, is retired from government/corporate communications, recently relocated from Massachusetts to Minnesota.

Tina (Nelson) Porterfield (Jun 1967) has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, attended Ebinger, lives in Oak Brook, IL, UI BS Communications, is a real estate broker.

Judy Eilken (1968) has 1 child, attended St. Paul Luth., lives in St Louis, MO, UI BA, MA German, is a retired high school German teacher, enjoys traveling, hiking, and reading.

Larry Lonson (1968) has 2 children, attended Our Saviour Lutheran, lives in Sarasota, FL, Columbia College BA; Western Int'l MBA Int'l Bus Mgmt, is a real estate broker.

Susan (Heckel) Sieck (1968) has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, lives in Des Plaines, IL, is a retired teacher.

Susan (Zelichowski) Skinner (1968) has 3 children, 3 grandchildren, attended Ebinger, lives in Arlington Hts, IL, is retired.

Chuck Wirtanen (1968) attended Hitch, lives in Scottsdale, AZ.

Marc Erlandson (1969) married **Kathy Showalter (1973)**, has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, attended Ebinger, lives in Park Ridge, IL, NEIU BS, is a retired engineer.

Lauren (Congiusti) Zubert (1969) married **James Zubert (Jun 1959)**, has 2 children, 5 grandchildren, attended Garvy, lives in Wauconda, IL, is a retired administrative assistant.

1970s

Pete Angelakos (1970) attended Hitch, lives in Mt Prospect, IL, Wright College 2 years, is a retired tool and die maker.

Bernadette (Leszczynski) Bowers (1970) married **Larry Bowers (Jun '62)**, has 3 children, 7 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren,

attended St. Monica, lives in Chicago, IL, is a retired wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, married 54 years, is an avid boater in Chicago harbors and snowbirds seven month a year in Ft. Myers, Florida.

Paulette (Zagone) Brody (1970) attended St. Monica, lives in Lutz, FL, AD Nursing, NEIU BA, is a retired RN of 48 years and director or North Shore University Health System-Park Center, retired to Florida, volunteers at a community pool teaching aqua classes and Qi Gong.

Ken Paul (1970) has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, attended Garvy, lives in Klamath Falls, OR, UMT BS Wildlife Mgmt '77, is an incident management team member, retired fire chief at Klamath National Forest, fire science instructor at various community colleges and other organizations, enjoys skiing, fishing, and hiking in the Pacific Northwest.

Jane (Krusinski) Dvorak (1971) married **Dale Dvorak (1971)**, has 3 children, 6 grandchildren, lives in Waco, TX, NEIU BA Early Childhood Ed '75, is a retired teacher.

Dale Dvorak (1971) married **Jane Krusinski (1971)**, has 3 children, 6 grandchildren, attended Antioch, lives in Waco, TX, West Point BS Engr Mgmt '75; Boston U MSBA Fin '79; US Army 6 years, is a semi-retired business owner.

Carl Overhuls (1972) has 2 children, attended Ebinger, lives in Arlington Hts, IL, Wright College AA; RE '76; Cook County Sheriff's Police Academy '77, is a retired real estate broker/investor of 46 years and worked 12 years in the police department, lives in Luther Village, a retirement community.

Robert Renella (1972) has 3 children, 5 grandchildren, attended St. Robert Bellarme, lives in Bloomingdale, IL, AA, BA, MBA, PhD, CCNA, FE, ET, SE, is the semi-retired president of Bella Corp., president of Fountains of Glendale Heights Assoc., has traveled to six of the seven continents.

Stephen Rizzo (1972) attended Oriole Park, lives in The Villages, FL, Wright Jr College AA; NEIU BS, is a retired legal administrative assistant for the Social Security Administration, plays a lot of golf, enjoys the weather and retirement.

Christine Burns (1973) lives in Des Plaines, IL, UI BA '77; MLIS, is a records management consultant.

Kathy (Showalter) Erlandson (1973) married **Marc Erlandson (1969)**, has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, lives in Park Ridge, IL, Northwestern U BA, St. Xavier U MA, is a retired teacher.

Joyce (Luga) Selker (1973) has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, attended Garvy, lives in Schaumburg, IL, is a semi-retired high school student supervisor.

Chris (Underwood) Gurney (1974) has 1 step grandchild, attended Hitch, lives in Chicago, IL, Saint Francis College of Nursing '84, is a semi-retired RN, widowed, married 22 years to a Cook County correctional officer.

Bob Uhlar (1974) attended St. Tarcissus, lives in Hemet, CA, Drake U BA '78; Northwestern MS '81; Unity Institute MDiv '02, is a semi-retired Unity Minister serving congregations in Indiana, Florida, and Texas.

Donald Wolff (1975) has 2 children, 2 grandchildren, attended Oriole Park, lives in Elmhurst, IL, NIU BS '79, is a semi-retired business owner.

Geralyn (Conway) Donovan (1978) has 2 children, attended Garvy, lives in Fort Myers, FL, is retired.

Susan (Marquardt) Morrison (1978) attended Oriole Park, lives in Thousand Oaks, CA, SIU BS Math, is a retired analyst, manager, and program manager.

Maureen (Moore) Cross (1979) has 8 children, 3 grandchildren, attended St. Monica, lives in Niles, IL, RN degree, is a semi-retired registered nurse.

Philip Soto (1979) lives in Chicago, IL, DePaul U BA Pol Sci, is a general manager, founded Bishops Hill Winery in Joliet.

1980s

Walt Koscinski (1980) has 2 children, attended Onahan, lives in Manassas, VA, IIT BS Civil Engr '80; VA Tech MS Aerospace/Ocean Engr '91; IU MS Public Affairs '01; National Defense U MS Nat'l Resources Strategy '03, is a program manager.

John Petersen (1981) has 2 children, attended Edison, lives in Chicago, IL, is O'Hare Airport Operations Manager.

Bruno Brunetti (1989) attended Dirkson, lives in Chicago, IL, Loyola, Univ of Chicago, BA.

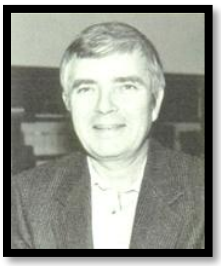
1990s

Juanita Silva (1990) has 2 children, attended St John Berchmans, lives in Chicago, IL, BA Secondary Education (physical education), is a Chicago firefighter, shares that planting the tree in Frank Hood's memory (located by softball diamond at Northcott & Hobart) was truly a beautiful experience and realizes now, as an adult what a positive impact he had in all of our lives.



In Memoriam

Because you genuinely care about Taft High School, please consider a legacy gift to TAA in your estate planning. A planned gift is a lasting investment.



Roy J. Horton of Mt. Prospect, IL, died in August 2026. Starting at the Norwood Branch as a substitute teacher, he taught at Taft from 1961 to 1998, teaching English and Latin, became English Dept. head, and coached track and cross-country for a number of years.

Marian Agnes (Kosel) Anderson of West Dundee, IL, Class of January 1942, died on September 11, 2026. She is survived by her children Joy Rice, Class of 1974, Gail Levin, Class of 1975, Jayne Taylor, Class of 1984, and Brian Anderson, class of 1981.

Norma Mae (Brawner) Cooksey of Meridian MS, Class of January 1945, died on September 17, 2023. She was predeceased by her sister Marilyn Frankenberg, Class of June 1949.

Willard C. Avery of Stuart, FL, Class of February 1946, died on August 14, 2026.

Thomas Martin Tomasic of Cincinnati, OH, Class of June 1946, died on September 16, 2026. He is survived by his children Paul Tomasic, Class of 1980, Donna Leding, Class of 1981, John Tomasic, Class of 1983, Nancy Marino, Class of 1984, and Tracy Ormond, Class of 1986.

Charles Edward Ekstrom of Phoenix, AZ, Class of June 1948, died on December 17, 2016. He was survived by his wife Kay (Kramer) Ekstrom, Class of June 1952.

Jessie Nancy (Douglas) Usdrowski of Hoffman Estates, Class of June 1949, died on August 1, 2026.

Barbara Jean (Ellerbrock) Vogt of Mt. Morris, IL, Class of June 1950, died on September 15, 2026.

Raymond Charles Black of Guttenberg, IA, Class of January 1951, died on August 2, 2026. He is survived by his wife Beverly LeBuy, Ebinger 1948, and his sister Ellen Sandkam, Class of June 1958.

Norine Renee (Anderson) Kmett of Spring Hill, FL, Class of June 1954, died on November 10, 2025.

Patricia Jane (Dunn) Hall of Huntley, IL, Class of June 1955, died date unknown.

Carole Tobiasz-Rodi of Highland, IN, Class of June 1957, died on March 1, 2026. She is survived by her brother Howard Tobiasz, Class of June 1963.

Robert Leroy Zaun of Mundelein, IL, Class of January 1958, died on June 6, 2026.

James Ashley Hudson Jr. of Port Orange, FL, Class of January 1965, died on February 25, 2026.

Janet Marian (Turcan) Evert of Northbrook, IL, Class of January 1965, died on February 13, 2026.

Robert Wesley Bergstrom of Park Ridge, IL, Class of June 1966, died on May 5, 2026. He is survived by his wife Linda (Mondschein) Bergstrom, Class of June 1966.

Dean M. Weickert of Bensenville, IL, Class of 1979, died on July 20, 2026. He is survived by his siblings Judi Johnson, Class of 1969, Sheri Sears, Class of 1970, Greg Weickart, Class of 1975, and Sue Ottow, Class of 1974. He is predeceased by his father Richard Weickart, Class of June 1942, and his brother Jeff Weickart, Class of 1973.

Teresa Marie (Petrella) Smith of Madison, WI, Class of 1981, died in July 2026.

Desiree Deneen "Dee Dee" (Brown) Lloyd of Chicago, IL, Class of 1984, died in October 2026.

Roderick James Varner of Chicago, IL, Class of 1984, died on August 25, 2026.

Fawzi Ali Ottman of Hillside, IL, Class of 1990, died on September 11, 2026.

Jonathan Hector Perez of Chicago, IL, Class of 2000, died on September 8, 2026.

Erick Llamar Smith of Chicago, IL, Class of 2000, died on August 11, 2026.

Are you proud of your background at Taft?

Would you like to help future Taft graduates as they start into the world? Individuals, groups of friends or reunion classes are encouraged to donate to TAA's scholarship fund. Memorials to classmates are also welcome. Please contact TAA at eagleemail@taftalumni.org or write to Taft Alumni Association, 6530 W Bryn Mawr Ave, Chicago IL 60631-3185.

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Taft Alumni Association

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Please tell us as much about yourself as you like so that we can share your news in the *Class Notes*.

Only fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required for membership. We will not publish your address or phone number.

About You ☐ **My information has not changed** ☐ **Do not publish my information in Class Notes**

*First Name (PRINT CLEARLY)	* Last Name at Graduation	* Current Last Name (if different)	
*Home Street Address	*City	*State	*ZIP
Primary Phone	Email Address	**List in Email Directory?** ☐ Yes ☐ No	
*Month/Year You Graduated	Number of Children Children _____ Grandchildren _____ Great Grandchildren _____ Great Greats? _____		
Additional Education, Degrees, Military Service, Years			
Occupation	Retired? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Semi	Elementary School Graduated From	
Other news you'd like to share?			

About Your Taft Graduate Spouse

*First Name	* Last Name at Graduation	* Current Last Name (if different)	
Primary Phone	Email Address	**List in Email Directory?** ☐ Yes ☐ No	
*Month/Year Spouse Graduated	Higher Education, Degrees, Military Service, Years		
Additional Education, Degrees, Military Service, Years			
Occupation	Retired ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Semi	Elementary School Graduated From	
Other news you'd like to share?			

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