

CLASSMATE PROFILES

Getting to know Classmates all over again!

So what have you been doing for the past 50 years?



Joe Bartel
Taft Student



Joe & Karen
1963



Joe &
Karen 2007



Joe Still Keeping
the Beat



Joe Bartel Jr.



Jon, Danny, Sally, Mike & Kristin



Paul, Alex, Zach, Kelly & Susan

JOSEPH HARRY BARTEL

Wow! It hardly seems possible that fifty years have gone by since high school graduation. Than again, it's better than the alternative. The years have been good to me and I have been richly blessed.

I was lucky to have attended two different grammar schools, both of which fed into Taft. First it was Hitch and then Ebinger. Although changing schools in 7th grade seemed a bit traumatic, I was welcomed by my new classmates and only a year and a half later I was reunited with the Hitch gang as we all began the four year journey through high school. High school was a great time in my life, particularly my four years in the music department. I enjoyed and admired Wally "Uncle Wally" Freedman to the extent that I was inspired to become a music major for my first two years of college at Wright Junior College. I thought I could become a high school band director. I soon realized, although my talent as a drummer was pretty good, my overall gifts in music were being challenged. This prompted me to change my plans. However, the friends and contacts I made during those two years opened the doors to playing with several groups in the Chicago area. I am still playing drums on a regular basis, and it still brings me great joy. As a bit of trivia, the very first musical jobs I played were with fellow classmate and good friend Ken Neubert. Ken was an outstanding accordion player and we played family weddings.

I continued college through night programs at both Northwestern and North Park colleges taking courses in business. During the day I worked full time in a business which my grandfather was a partner. It was a company that manufactured sponge rubber products, particularly automotive gaskets and weather stripping. I loved this job because I was exposed to every aspect of the manufacturing world. Working in product development, quality control and management offered an outstanding learning and growth experience. Even though I still refer to that job as my favorite, I decided to move on after five years. My grandfather had died and the company was failing.

During the early sixties, I met the woman who would become my wife. Actually in September of 1959 I went on my first date with Karen. Although she was from Arlington Heights, I brought her back to our neighborhood for a movie at the Pickwick in Park Ridge and then a sandwich at Orzi's in Edison Park. If you don't know those places I'd be surprised.

After four years of dating and driving back and forth to Arlington, we were married in February of 1963. We found an apartment in Norwood Park. This was at Milwaukee and Elston, a neighborhood in which Karen lived before moving to Arlington. She actually attended Hitch before moving and we were both students there at the same time. She was a year behind me and I didn't remember her from that time. We lived in our apartment for five and a half years before buying a home in Edison Park which is across the street from Olympia Park.

The sixties continued to bless us. All three of our children were born during that decade. Susan was born in 63, Sally in 66 and Joe Jr. in 69.

In 1967 I changed industries and went into management in the printing industry. The company was A.R. Barnes & Company, a hundred two year old firm. After managing this company's business forms printing plant for three years, I transferred into its sales department. I eventually became president of the company and in 1994 left to start my own company, Print Sales, Inc. I am still selling printing and promotional products after forty years. Although the forms industry has changed as a result of us becoming a paperless society, I still have some great accounts that have been with me for most of my sales career.

As I stated, our three children were all born in the sixties and they've made us very proud and happy. The girls are married and have three children each. Our son is single and is the only one living in the Chicago area. I always said we would have done a good job with our kids if they knew their Lord, could make it on their own and stay friends with each other. That has been accomplished. Again we've been blessed. Susan (Colorado) is a CPA, married to Paul who is Executive Director of three states of Missouri Synod Lutheran Schools. Sally (Iowa) is currently the Facilities Manager for all schools in the Waukee, Iowa school district.

She is married to Mike who is a Pastor within the ELCA Lutheran Synod. She has been a major player in their ministry and Mike's church is one of the fastest growing in the country. Joe Jr. has a degree from Columbia College of Chicago and is in sales in the hotel supply industry. He too is very involved in church, singing with a contemporary group. Joe Jr. is also an outstanding DJ and like his dad is out on weekends doing his musical thing. By the way, all three attended Edison School and Taft.

Our grandchildren range in age from 18 to 10. Jon and Alex, the two oldest boys will be graduating high school this year and have been accepted to colleges of their choice. Zach and Danny are sophomores, ready to move up to juniors. Kristin is graduating 8th grade and has the voice of an angel. Kelly is in 5th grade and already talks about being a teacher. They, like their parents are all very active in their respective churches. Even though they live out of town we are able to attend most of their important events. Grandkids, it doesn't get much better!

As for myself and some of the other things that have kept me busy:

I have been an active 54 year member of Edison Park Lutheran Church having served on most boards and am currently President of the Church Council. Most recently I chaired and oversaw a building program for the church.

I have served on Boards at Lutheran General Hospital for over 35 years, and am currently on its Development Council. Member and Past President of the Hospital's Men's Association.

Life member and twice Past Master of Chicago Lodge No.437 A.F. & A.M. (Masonic organization).

Presented scholarships at Taft graduations on behalf of my lodge for the past 8 years.

Recipient of the Masonic Lifetime Achievement Award. Member Medinah Shriners.

Member and past officer of the Edison Park Chamber of Commerce.

Besides playing music for private parties and dances, the trio I play with also plays for senior centers. This has been a very rewarding experience.

Print Sales, Inc. is still my main focus, but I do some handyman work when it fits the schedule.

My garage is my hangout and when time allows, I enjoy woodworking, my 1928 Chevy and 1957 Ford.

I actually enjoy the fact that life hasn't slowed down. Keeping busy is a gift.

The 48th "mini-reunion" last October was a wonderful event and I enjoyed every minute of the night. I hope we have a great turnout for the 49th and especially the 50th. It will be great to continue the journey and visits. I look forward to seeing you.

Yes, I have been blessed... a God who loves me, a wonderful family, good health, great friends and a wonderful wife who has supported me all the way.