

CLASSMATE PROFILES

*Getting to know Classmates all over again!
So what have you been doing for the past 50 years?*



Sue Willers Taft Student



Sue Willers-Bruce - 2007



Sue and Jim Bruce - January 20, 2008



Family Picture November 2006

SUE WILLERS-BRUCE

For me, the almost fifty years since high school have demonstrated that life is the ultimate learning experience--unpredictable, often funny, sometimes sad, and best survived with humor and prayer. Looking back, I can see how one thing led to another. At Taft, my love of reading and writing was reinforced by English teachers like Mr. Postol, so once I was in college at Northwestern, I gravitated to a major in English. Finally, with a B.A. and M.A., I was trusted to teach junior high and high school English, learning quickly that there is an inverse relationship between age and energy level. Now, as a grandmother, I find that principle still holds true. My five-year-old grandson may not need a nap, but some days I certainly do.

Over the years, I have worked not only as a teacher, but also labored in legislative services for the Virginia General Assembly, helping to edit and clarify developing legislation. The attention to detail required by the job reinforced my already overdeveloped radar for typos and grammatical errors. One more principle of life became clear: Being exacting can sometimes be a curse. Miss Strandberg would no doubt have agreed. A corollary of this principle is the wisdom and kindness of occasionally ignoring error.

Four years after high school, in addition to beginning my teaching career, I married my husband, Jim, and five years later, our first daughter was born, followed in almost three years by our second. Family life consumed me until the girls were in high school when I returned to part-time teaching. Being a parent was my most demanding job yet, but incredibly rewarding. When my husband's corporate transfers moved us around the East and even back to Chicago and then Detroit, we all learned flexibility, often maintaining dual households during transitions.

Now, in retirement, we live in Richmond, Virginia, our home off and on for twenty-six of the last thirty-three years. All those idle hours I envisioned for this stage of life have evaporated as more and more volunteer requests clamor for my free time. Old soldiers are not allowed to fade away, and that is probably a good thing. After all, that was how I ended up on the Class of 1959 Reunion Committee, calling dozens of former classmates and re-discovering what truly nice people they are and how much fun it is to share their stories, commiserate, and laugh together over life and all we have learned from it.