

## **50 Years Later, Class of 1964 Not Through Giving to MCHS Museum**

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(Midwest City, OK - April 11, 2014) — The Midwest City High School Class of 1964 made a special gift to the school when it graduated 50 years ago.

That gift, a Bomber floor inlay, forms the centerpiece for what is now the Midwest City High School Museum.

The museum occupies the school's former main entrance at 213 Elm St.

Midwest City High School Museum, Inc., opened in 2001. Since then, alumni have been adding memorabilia and exhibits from classes dating back to 1944.

This spring, the Class of 1964 is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with another gift for the museum, and extending special recognition for the museum's first and only curator, Shirley Shipley Nicholson (Class of 1953).

No one knows Midwest City High School like Nicholson. She's lived more of its history than almost any other graduate, having had a continuous work or volunteer association for 60 of the school's 70 years.

This includes years in office administration for J.E. Sutton, the first principal (later district superintendent) and Oscar Rose, Mid-Del's first superintendent.

Nicholson, 78, is seeking a successor for her volunteer job at the museum, which is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesdays or for class reunions by calling 405-732-7161.

"I would like to identify someone really interested in MCHS and be able to train that person in our holdings and cataloguing before I feel I have to retire," she said.

The Class of 1964 is putting out the word to other classes and paying tribute during its reunion to Nicholson's devotion to the school.

The class memory book, a collection of 50-year profiles submitted by the graduates, will be dedicated to her, and she and her husband, Paul, also a mainstay for MCHSM, Inc., will be guests at the reunion buffet the evening of May 3 at the Reed Conference Center.

At 10 a.m. on May 3, the 1964 alumni will tour the MCHS museum and adjoining graduates' Wall of Fame, then hold a wreath laying and veterans-recognition ceremony at the Vietnam Casualty Memorial outside.

At the suggestion of Nicholson and current MCHS principal Chris Reynolds (Class of 1991), another school history buff, the Bombers of 1964 have purchased a new exhibit stand for the museum's football programs and wrapped them in acid-free covers to protect the paper from deterioration.

Planning and executing this 50-year class gift to the museum on behalf of the Reunion Committee have been alumni Tony Callaway, a career architect, and Marty Thompson, a career librarian. Dr. Alexandria Rose Miller is committee chair.

Class members have been invited to help with the museum preservation project and other reunion expenses with contributions to Class of MWC 1964, c/o Jane Vickers Bogan (Class of 1964 Registrar), 401 E. Boyd St., Unit 401, Norman, OK 73069.

School museums are rare. Oklahoma has only a handful.

Nicholson and the other alumni who helped start Midwest City High's museum toured the oldest, at Enid, Chandler, and Oklahoma City (Classen High and Central High) looking for ideas.

MCHSM, Inc. in turn motivated alumni in Shawnee and a city in New Jersey to start high school museums, according to Nicholson.

It's easy to get excited about school history once you've been in one.

Their tour and meeting with Nicholson and Reynolds inspired Callaway and Thompson to put together, pro bono, exhibit and preservation ideas for MCHSM, Inc. to consider.

Callaway's drawings will illustrate ways to make the center interactive and educational, beyond simply housing artifacts.

"I want to encourage visitors to relive their education experience within an historical context," Callaway said. "When people leave the exhibits, hopefully they will feel a sense of connection and pride to be a Bomber or how it would feel if they were a Bomber."

Callaway, president/CEO of Callaway Architecture in Richardson, Texas, was the architect on the John F. Kennedy Sixth Floor Visitors Center in Dallas.

He also coordinated the exhibit design and architectural preservation of the Sixth Floor in the School Book Depository.

Currently, he is serving on the design committee for the Holocaust Museum in Dallas.

"I am as excited about doing something special for Midwest City High School. For me, my adult history began there, and I have always been proud to be a Bomber," he said.

Thompson retired last year after more than 30 years as director of the OU Health Sciences Library, and chair and professor of library and information management in the Graduate College.

He is contributing knowledge for how to digitize the written and pictorial holdings of the museum and then set up computer stations to access the information and store it for future generations.

“We can define projects that future classes can take on, and work with other interested parties and alumni on fundraising to accomplish it,” Callaway said.

Their conceptual ideas will be on display when the class tours the museum the morning of May 3.

As to the inlaid Bomber – the pride of ’64 – a few decades of students remember respectfully stepping around the logo in the school’s main entrance.

Some express concern when they learn a museum has taken over the space.

“‘Is the Bomber still in the floor?’ That’s the question I get asked most often,” Nicholson said.



Shirley Shipley Nicholson, curator, Midwest City High School Museum, in November 2013 with the Bomber floor inlay given to the school by the Class of 1964 and embedded in the front lobby that summer. The museum now occupies the site, but the pride of ’64 is still front and center! (Photo by Barbara W. Sessions)



Tony Callaway, Chaniece Kennedy Harkey, Barbara Winn Sessions, and Marty Thompson form the projects subcommittee for the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion of the Class of 1964. Here they visit in January 2014 with Shirley Shipley Nicholson, curator, at the Midwest City High School Museum. (Photo by Dianne Callaway)