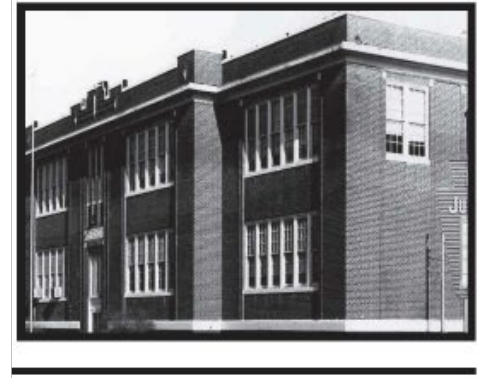
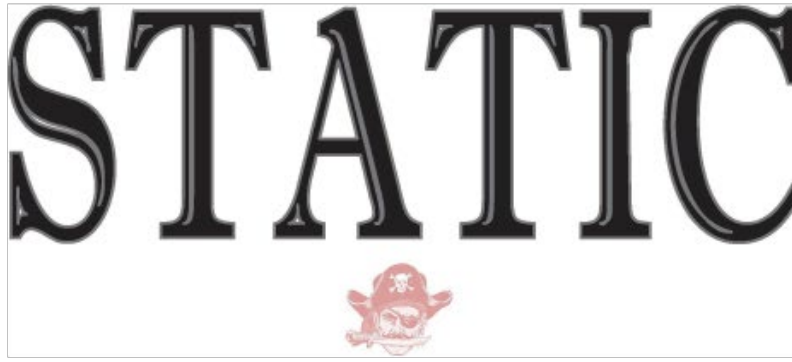




In Memory of Terry Joe “TJ” Wiles

By Bill Scott, Class of 1988

The late Terry Joe Wiles, who lived to serve others, is the reason I joined the effort to grow and maintain interest in our Poteau High School Alumni Association. TJ served as President of the PHS Alumni Association for several years. In that role he was an advocate for the association and made it his personal mission to recruit “the younger generation” to become active members.

Wiles, a Class of 1970 graduate, passed away March 21, 2026, after a battle with long-term illness. The 75-year-old was a local musician, writer and volunteer. His passion for Poteau and the surrounding community extended to recruiting others for causes and serving people in need.

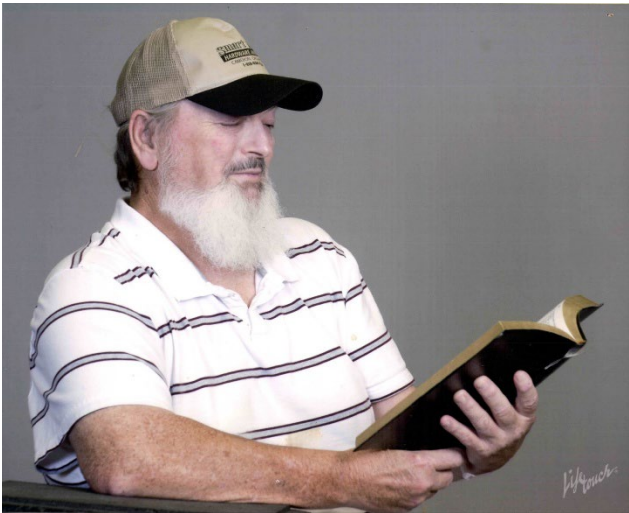
His tireless efforts to improve life for everyone he met were inspirational. He was sharp in identifying skill in people; in my case it is writing and photography as I joined the alumni association as a committee member.

A smile that was hard to resist and incredible enthusiasm were two of his trademarks. They drew me in, leading me to write a Static feature in May 2025 on the evolution of the Bob Lee Kidd Civic Center as a performing arts center for Poteau Public Schools.

His good work included serving as a resource for people who needed medical equipment but lacked financial resources. He put his own hands to work as well, drawing on a long hotel construction career to make much-needed home improvements. These are only two examples of his love for local people. He also promoted the LeFlore County Museum in Poteau, pointing to it as a rich resource for understanding local history and preserving our volunteer spirit.

Wiles’ other passions include growing flowers and his dogs. Hours were joyfully spent tending to his plants and sunflowers while loving his pets, who were just as affectionate.

TJ touched the lives of many and his legacy lives on through them. Until we meet again, TJ!



All-School Reunion by Mandy (Rogers) Fellman, Class of 1980

The 2025 All-School Reunion was one for the record books! We had attendance from as early as 1947 all the way to 2006! The festivities started with a Pirate Party at Shop Dog Brewing on Friday night and ended on Saturday night with a banquet and dance. Several ACHE Alumni entertained us with their musical talents, as well as sharing stories from our glory days. From the pictures here, it's clear that we had a grand old time!

And, yet, with all the fun & festivities, we want it to be better. The Alumni committee have been brainstorming ideas and would like your opinions as well. Ideas such as having it in the Fall and attending a Friday night football game. Should we have a reunion every 2 years, or every 3 years? Or, have an afternoon casual lunch and arrange tours of the alumni room at the Lowery Hotel Museum. Live band vs recorded music. Do you prefer a holiday weekend or sometime other than Summer? You get the idea We have lots of ideas. But this reunion is for all of us, so we want to hear from YOU! To give us your thoughts and ideas use the QR code from your phone or click this link.

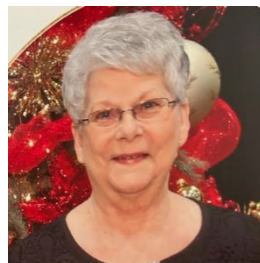
[PHS All-School Reunion – Fill out form](#)



Alumni Association Members & Officers

By Mandy (Rogers) Fellman, Class of 1980

Linda Holton is currently the 1st Vice President of the Association. She has been an active association member since 1984 and has served in almost every officer's role. Linda is a graduate of the Class of 1956 and worked for many years for the Poteau school system. Linda is featured in this issue's Alumni Spotlight.



Howdy Pirates! I'm Mandy (Rogers) Fellman, Class of 1980. In February 2024, TJ Wiles appointed me as the Media Specialist for the Alumni Association. I was later elected to fulfill his term as President and re-elected in 2025. I am the daughter of Betty Jane (Jenson) Summers, Class of 1950, who was a long-time active member of the association. I met and married a Texas boy almost 40 years ago. We have 2 grown children and 1 precious granddaughter. My 20-year career in healthcare led us to Texas, California, Tennessee, and Colorado. We currently live in Van Buren, Arkansas. Poteau and that beautiful hill will always symbolize home for me.



Ahoy the Pirates, my name is Mark McSpadden, I am a 1985 graduate. I am the current Treasurer for the Alumni Association. My wife (Carolyn) and I are the owners of Kim's Flowers/Blooms on Broadway in Poteau. Since being elected to the treasurer's position, one of the things I have created is a Cash App account for the association so payments for the reunion, fund raisers and donations can flow more smoothly to the Association. You will see our latest fund raiser in this edition of The Static. The money from fund raisers are dispersed between caps and gowns for PHS graduates and our scholarship program, etc.



Hey, Pirates! I'm Ruthy De La Rosa, your current Alumni Association Secretary. After graduating in 1984, I received my Certificate in Surgical Technology from Westark Community College; now, UAFS. I made my way to Texas (always a Sooner fan!) to be blessed with a 28-year career in the Operating Room. Taking care of my parents lead me through Texas, Arkansas, Mexico and now, settling in Van Buren, AR. I love this part of God's Green Country! I'm happy to re-connect with Poteau High! ('84 Rules!)

I am Wanda Qualls Dorey. I was born and raised in Poteau where I attended elementary school through high school. My aunt, Dewanda Qualls Marsh, invited me to my first Poteau Alumni Association meeting several years ago. I became a member. It's great seeing classmates and friends when we attend our alumni banquet every two years.



I am Joanna Robertson Hoffman. I got involved with the PHS Alumni Association in 1997 when my mother, Dorris Boyd Robertson class of '44 asked me to help with a reunion. She loved the reunions and I continued helping, got my lifetime membership around 2000, and remain active. I graduated in 1965 and have held the office of 3rd vice president, focusing on membership, and the office of secretary. I have 3 younger brothers that graduated from Poteau High School too. The busiest time for us is during the All-Class Reunions every other year. We pay close attention to growing the membership, recruiting volunteers, soliciting civic interest, and preserving the history of PHS. We also provide 2 scholarships to graduating seniors which is an honor for us. I also enjoy being a part of this group of graduates who strive to host a fun, memorable, and nostalgic reunion; we try our best to change with the ever-changing times.



I am William "Bill" Scott, Class of 1988. I've enjoyed a 27-year career in newspaper publishing as a writer, graphic designer & photographer. I'm a graduate of Eastern Oklahoma State College. I became active in the Association a couple years ago, at the urging of TJ. I currently serve as the Media Specialist.



Joyce Pappas Woodruff was born in Pontiac, Michigan and moved to Poteau in 1950. She was a member of the Poteau High School Class of 1960 and was the Class Salutatorian at their graduation ceremonies. She continued her education at Carl Albert State College, receiving her AA Degree there while employed as Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Joyce was married to James Woodruff and they have one daughter, Laurie Elaine. Music has always been a big part of her life, and she is an avid reader. Joyce writes poetry and is an active member of Poteau First Baptist Church.

Alumni Spotlight – The French Connection

By Joe Harwell, Class of 1972

What do Vincennes, IN, and Poteau have in common? Both are on rivers, and both were established as trading posts by French explorers in the 1700s. The most significant connection is PHS Alumni Association Treasurer extraordinaire Linda Holton.

Her father was an equipment operator in Vincennes who came to Poteau for a job opportunity when Linda was in seventh grade. She returned to Indiana for eighth grade, then back to Poteau for good the next year when her dad was employed in the development of land owned by Senator Kerr. Then, she met “JC” (James Clark) Holton.

JC and Linda graduated from PHS in 1956 and married in 1957. JC attended college at Northeastern in Tahlequah. After graduation, he took a teaching job in Nowata, where their sons, Jay and Jerry, were born. They returned to Poteau in 1966, where JC taught math at PHS for six years before becoming head of the math department at CASC for 22 years. After his retirement in 1994, their son Jerry followed in his footsteps at CASC. Between the two, there was a Holton in the math department at CASC for fifty years. JC passed away in 2014, followed by Jerry in 2025.



Linda spent twenty-five years as secretary to two principals at Pansy Kidd (Junior High) Middle School. She became involved with the PHS Alumni Association in 1984, serving as a member and Treasurer. She is also a member of the hospital auxiliary. Keeping the Holton tradition of service alive at CASC, she has served on its Board of Trustees for many years. These days, Linda enjoys spending time with friends and family, especially grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In my conversation with Linda, we discussed how Poteau has changed. For instance, Braum’s is located where JC’s father operated Earl’s car lot for years. The New York Store and Holton’s carried selections of good-quality clothing, and the employees knew your name. In the 1960s, a teacher’s salary allowed couples to purchase a home at 5 ¼% interest, with a payment under \$80 a month for thirty years.



Linda is a Poteau treasure who has seen the Alumni Association grow and shrink over the past 40 years. Today, she is more committed than ever to strengthening and growing the association for future generations.

Alumni Financial News by Mark McSpadden, Class of 1985

Treasurer’s Report, April 2026

April 30, 2026 bank statement

Association Account:	\$1,944.89
Static Account:	\$5,724.09
Scholarship Account:	\$1,380.78
Total:	\$9,049.76

As of the 4/30/2026 bank statement, the association has total funds in the amount of \$9,049.76. The funds are subcategorized into the following accounts: The Static (or Pete’s Dream), the Scholarship fund, and the general Association fund. The general association fund covers items such as the All-School Reunion and caps & gowns for PHS graduates.

Please consider donating or becoming an active alumni member. Dues are \$40 (one-time only) for lifetime membership. Or donate any amount that you prefer.

Donations can be made via CashApp at the QR code below. Or checks can be mailed to PHS Alumni Association, P.O. Box 803, Poteau, OK 74953.

Timothy Mcspadden
 \$AlumniPoteau



More Financial News by Mark McSpadden, Class of 1985

As a fund raiser for caps & gowns, and scholarships, we are selling 4X4 round window stickers. They are \$10 each.

Locally, you can pick them up at Kim's Flowers at 2510 N. Broadway, Ste. B. We are open Monday – Friday from 9am -5pm. Or I can deliver them to you in town. If you would like them to be mailed, you can pay by Cash App, or mail a check or money order to PHS Alumni Association, P.O. Box 803, Poteau OK 74953. We will offer bundles on stickers, alumni shirts and koozies later.



Timothy Mcspadden
\$AlumniPoteau



Have you Moved?

Each time we mail the Static, several issues are returned with a corrected address or are undeliverable. Due to the cost of postage, we will not re-mail the issues that are returned. Address corrections will be made for the next issue. If you prefer, we can email the Static, which will be an additional savings for the Association. In a few years, we will probably convert to an all email or e-version of the Static, due to rising printing and postage costs. But, if you'd like to continue receiving hard copies, we must have your correct address. If you move, please send us the corrected address. When you update your address at the post office, or your phone or email, consider sending that information to us as well.

PHS Alumni Association, P.O. Box 803, Poteau, OK 74953

PHS Scholarship Winners

By Mandy Fellman, Class of 1980

The purpose of the PHS Alumni Association scholarship program is to provide financial assistance to students who wish to further their study in community college, technical school, colleges, or universities. Each year, we award scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 to 2 graduating seniors who demonstrate excellence in academics, community service and extracurricular activities.

The 2026 scholarship recipients were Shelby Reece and Lexi Henson. Shelby graduated with a cumulative GPA of 4.45 and plans to attend Southeastern Oklahoma State University. During high school she held various leadership roles with the Choctaw Nation, National Honor Society, FCCLA and Varsity Cheer. Lexi graduated with a cumulative GPA of 4.0 and plans to attend Carl Albert State College. Lexi held leadership roles in FCCLA, TRIO, Upward Bound, Blessing Boxes, and the Angel Tree. Congratulations to both of these outstanding PHS Graduates!!



Poteau Education Foundation turns 40!

By Steve Holton, Class of

In 1986 the Poteau Foundation for Excellence, dba Poteau Schools Education Foundation, was founded by Poteau businessman Steve Holton. Holton was a founding trustee of U.S. Senator David Boren's Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. The statewide Foundation's goal was to encourage excellence in Oklahoma's public schools by recognizing and rewarding academic excellence at all levels. Following the founding meeting, Holton determined that Poteau Schools could benefit from such a Foundation and founded the Poteau Foundation for Excellence. At the time, there were fewer than ten public school foundations in Oklahoma. Today, there are over 200.

Over the years, the Poteau Foundation has sponsored Academic Banquets, with guest speakers that included the U.S. Senator, the Lt. Governor, the Chief Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, University Presidents and former governor George Nigh. There was a Grants to Teachers Program and Outstanding Teachers were recognized and rewarded annually. The Foundation also sponsored the Academic Quest Program, which was recognized as one of the three outstanding Foundation programs in the State.

One of the most outstanding programs of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence is the Academic All State Award. This annual award honors the top 100 academic students in the State. Poteau School District has produced 18 Academic All Staters.

Sustaining momentum over the years is a challenge for any organization, and most recently the Foundation's program centered on recognizing and rewarding the Poteau School District's outstanding teachers for that year.



Poteau Superintendent Scott Kempenrich had worked with public school foundations in Newkirk and Coweta and fully appreciated the added value of a local school foundation. Working with Holton, they reorganized the Poteau Schools Education Foundation and kicked off a new Grants to Teachers

Program, nine grants of \$500 each awarded in the Fall of 2025, and for the first time the Foundation will award five \$1,000 student scholarships this spring.

The Grants to Teachers Program was so well received that 15 grants of \$500 each will be awarded in the Fall of 2026. Holton stated that,

"We are looking for sponsors for these grants and welcome businesses and individuals to contribute. In 2025 the grants were sponsored by the Foundation, Central National Bank, First National Bank of Heavener and Pam and Steve Holton.

Holton stressed, "Our public schools need and deserve our support. Any program that encourages teachers and students to strive for excellence is a win for our community."

Foundation trustees include Steve Holton, president, Lisa Mixon, vice-president, Janita Hendricks, treasurer and Kim Hardaway, secretary. Other members are Chad Yandell, Craig Price, Lorraine Caldwell, Scott Kempenrich and the District Teacher of the Year.

Please direct any questions, suggestions, encouragements, contributions, etc. to stevebolton48@gmail.com

Poteau High School Alumni Obituaries

The alumni Association received word of the following deaths, but no other information was given.

Linda “Jones” Floyd passed away March 4, 2026. She taught at the elementary school for 31 years and was married to Sherman Floyd..

Jerry Ray passed away July 2, 2013. Class of 1953.

Bill Rice, Class of 1957.

Coy Barnes, Class of 1951.

Johnny Mansara, Class of 1968.

Larry Poe, Class of 1960.

James Lowell McDowell passed away April 15, 2025. Class of 1953

Sandra “Estes” Lum passed away June 16, 2025. Class of 1981.

Winfred Smith passed away July 1, 2025. Class of 1960.

Joe Soriano III passed away July 16, 2025. Class of 1988.

Robin Leanne “Poole” Wolsey passed away July 29, 2025. Class of 1976

Rhonda Marie Grant passed away August 3, 2025. Class of 1970

Harold Ray Branstetter passed away September 17, 2025. Class of 1960

Garry Joe Davison passed away September 15, 2025. Class of 1963.

Thorai Juanita “Neta” Fields passed away October 21, 2025. Class of 1943.

Jimmy Ford passed away October 2025. Class of 1978.

Charles Schrodtt passed away November 13, 2025. Class of 1970.

Edwin Burden passed away December 8, 2025. Class of 1956.

Tracy Eileen “Sears” White, passed away December 4, 2025. Class of 1980.

Betty Huddleston Broome passed away February 6, 2025. Class of 1951.

Terry Joe “TJ” Wiles passed away March 21, 2026. Class of 1970.

Daniel Curtis Henderson passed away May 8, 2026.

Florentino “Cho Cho” Ramirez passed away May 9, 2026. Class of 2023.

Euphia Gay “King” Johnson passed away June 3, 2026. Class of 1951.



Once a Pirate, Always a Pirate

Georgetta “Moore” Newby, passed away September 7., 2025. Class of 1966.

Kathleen Hale passed away September 11, 2025. Class of 1944

Dean Mills passed away October 2025. Class of 1984.

Jackie Louise “Bernard” Shuport. Class of 1965

Robert Thompson passed away November 21, 2025. Class of 1960.

Matthew Brandon Spradley passed away December 3, 2025. Class of 1997.

Robert Lindstron passed away January 4, 2026. Class of 1950.

Gabrielle Hoffman-Wilson passed away March 21, 2026.

Sammy “Henson” Crawford, passed away in March 2026. Class of 1954.

Jace Dean Goff passed away May 9, 2026.

James E. “Jim” Dunn passed away May 22, 2026. Class of 1970.

All-School Reunion Photos, continued from page 2



Poteau High School Alumni Association
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