

White Pine Pinenut High School Class of 1976 Gives Back

by Hailey Ernest
Digital Publishing Staff

One of the advantages to living in a small town is that generations help look after each other. Such is the case with the White Pine High School Class of 1976, which recently decided to offer a scholarship to current WPHS students. The Class of 1976, also known as the bicentennial class (thanks to its commemoration of Independence Day), decided to give back to the community. Bessie Chachas, Sadie McVicars, and Shirlene Wever, and others united and came up with the idea to create an opportunity to give financially to the Class of 2017.

Bessie Chachas had very wonderful memories of high school and said that it was one of the main reasons of why she wanted to give back to current students. She chuckled, "To this day I can hear Ed Harris's distinct words of wisdom. 'I don't care if you're interviewing for a job to be a garbage collector...dress like you want to be taken seriously for the position!'" High school taught Bessie how to become the person that she is today and she is very proud to be a Bobcat alum.

Chachas wanted to find a way for their class to give back to White Pine High School. She created an announcement on their class Facebook page wondering how the members felt about each donating \$20 into a fund so that they could create a scholarship for

members of the Class of 2017. According to Chachas, "The goal was \$1000 within two months, and we overshot our goal by \$800!" People were not only donating \$20, but more!

This scholarship is unlike many other local scholarships in that it does not require an application. The money was given to the WPHS Scholarship Committee which is composed of WPHS staff. They have created a set of criteria of which will be used to pick the two most deserving winners. The money will go to one boy and one girl, who will put it to good use.

The Class of 1976 has since challenged classes which came after them. The goal is to make the scholarship an annual event for every class that reaches its 40 year reunion. When the class joins back together in Ely during the 4th of July, to do something to give back to White Pine. "It doesn't have to be a scholarship," said Chachas. "It can be buying supplies for the school, or anything that could be used by the current high school students.

White Pine students are very grateful to have such wonderful alumni that are willing to give money to help out deserving students. It was a very gracious action and we are very pleased to be able to receive this money and pass it along.

Pictured in the photo are Alan Hedges, Assistant Principal, and Class of 1976 members Bessie Chachas, Sadie McVicars, and Shirlene Wever. In the backdrop is the WPHS Bobcat Pride mural, representing the honor through



the generations that classes have towards each other and their school. For information on giving assisting in any

scholarship efforts, interested donors can contact Steffani Thompson at 289-4811.

Editor's Note

As the Pinenut advisor for three years, a White Pine graduate, and a White Pine teacher and administrator, I have frequently had the opportunity to discuss with students the merits and challenges of attending school in a rural community. Sometimes there's a perception that students are "held back" by being in a small environment. But as I reflect on my own experience and have worked with students to navigate high school and plan their futures, I regularly am reminded of the many opportunities students have by growing up in a small town. One of the most obvious is the ability to be involved in every single activity they choose: Band, Choir, Student Council, Drama, athletics, and more. This year at WPHS, students can take STEM classes, Future Teachers classes, AP English, three different types of computers classes, as well as all of the standard ones. So there is a good "quantity" of options for students.

But there's also quality. The composite ACT scores of WPHS's last three valedictorians are 32, 34, and 33! This is comparable (and in many cases surpasses) to valedictorians in other larger school districts in Nevada. Students who want to succeed and be active have every opportunity to do so.

The following three articles highlight White Pine graduates from three different eras. While there are many, many distinguished White Pine graduates, these three are being shared in this issue as a reminder that White Pine has so much to be proud of. Our best and brightest represent us well, and they go on to make the world a better place in many different ways. --Adam Young

Irene Lopez, Class of 1966

by Hailey Ernest
Digital Publishing Staff

Irene Leyba Lopez was born in Vadito, New Mexico. She moved to Ely when she was one year old. Due to her father's employment in mining, by the time that she was five years old the family had lived in Colorado, Wyoming, California, and finally in Nevada. After she turned five, the family stayed here and she has been in Ely ever since. She had a very fond memories of her child-

hood and loved Ely the most.

In high school, Irene was a great student that was never caught in trouble and was always found to be a happy person. She loved to walk down to Economy Drug and get a treat with her and her friends. She was a member of the Pinenut, which was a club that was focused on prep rallies and getting the school ready for upcoming events such as dances, football games, or the holiday season.

Back when Irene was in high school, there were no sports for women. The only sport that was available

was gymnastics. Having girls be able to play sports is a very positive change. Irene relayed, "They learn to depend on each other, develop skills, and learn responsibility and to respect each other."

The style back then was the fluffier the better. From the hair to the clothes, everything was made to be puffy. In 1960s, ladies could not wear pants to school. They only wore dresses and skirts. "I absolutely loved polyester. It didn't shrink or fade, you didn't have to iron it, or anything! I still love it to this day and hope it comes back in style." Irene believes that the clothing in this generation is good because it is geared to better health and they have developed items that are more athletic which push people to work out more than wearing dresses.

With different life challenges, Irene was unable to attend college. She married her high school sweetheart and they started their lives together.

Back then times were very different to what they are now. College was not as frequent or required as it is now. Only about 25% of students in her class

went on to college and very few women were a part of that. Women have become much more independent and that means having to supply for themselves. Having a college degree makes it much easier to find a job. She stayed at home and raised three children and after the third one turned two, Irene went to work for multiple companies until she found her calling in banking. She worked for multiple banks and continued that for 15 years until the branch closed. After that she started working at William Bee Ririe Hospital and has been there ever since.

Irene is most proud of her family. She has raised three wonderful children who have had beautiful grandchildren and a great grandchild. Irene has been married for 50 years to a great man. She has stayed in Ely for all these years because it is a place that felt like home when she was a child and she loves the people here. Two of her three children live here in Ely as well as one of her sisters and one brother. Irene is surrounded by family that loves her and there is nothing more important than that.



Irene Leyba Lopez in 1966.



Michael Sandoval, Class of 2006

by Britney Kingston
Digital Publishing Staff

Michael Sandoval graduated from White Pine High School with the class of 2006. Michael then went on to Southern Utah University (SUU) where he earned his degree in Political Science, then from there he entered into William S. Boyd School of Law at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). He is now working at Richard Harris Law Firm as an attorney in Las Vegas.

Michael enjoyed school and he had good interactions with his teachers. Michael's most enjoyable subjects in school were math and chemistry. Math and Chemistry were his favorite subjects because both of the subjects dealt with recognizing patterns and rules which allowed him to come to an answer. Once he understood the process it was easy for him to apply it to any question that was asked. "Even though these classes have nothing to do with the career I eventually chose, I found them to be my favorite." But not only did Michael enjoy what he did in school, he also enjoyed his extra-curricular activities.

He noted, "I kept myself busy with extracurricular activities such as wrestling and rodeo. Most of my time spent outside of school was spent roping with

my family and traveling to the rodeos every weekend." Michael really loved the time spent with his family and friends, and all the memories that were made over the weekends while competing. During the winter season he went to wrestling practice and traveled to many tournaments with the team. Michael was involved in various clubs and because of wrestling and rodeo he learned to be disciplined and to give maximum effort to all that he aspires to be. Sandoval echoed the advice given by adults to many high school students, "Even when I didn't love what I was doing, I learned to try my hardest all the time. This helped throughout college, law school, and my career."

After graduating from WPHS in 2006, Michael went on to attend college at SUU, which he reported was a great school to attend as it provided connections for entering law school. While attending SUU, he majored in political science and minored in criminal justice, believing that these fields would be most important in his future career. Sandoval's political science professor mentored him and inspired him to go into the legal profession.

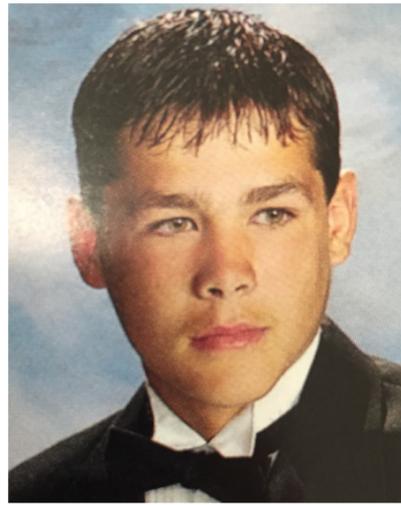
Regarding college, Michael reported, "The best thing I ever did was stay in student housing for my first year. Stay in student housing for your first year. This is what I tell any High School student that asks for my advice

before entering college. It gets you out of your comfort zone and provides for a much more enjoyable college experience." He graduated from SUU in 2010.

Law school at UNLV was next. Michael used the same thought processes in law school as he did in math and chemistry back in high school. But instead of recognizing patterns in numbers and formulas he learned to recognize them in factor tests. Factor tests are legal formulas that allow attorneys to answer questions. Factor tests do not give precise answers like in math and chemistry. Rather, solutions are revealed by applying different sets of patterns and rules.

Michael has worked in many areas of the law--criminal defense, im-

migration, administrative, insurance, and civil law. He has worked at both the state and federal level. He is now employed at the largest personal injury firm in Nevada. He gets to meet new people every single day and help them to the best of his abilities. "Being a lawyer is really stressful but so rewarding," he noted, "as I advocate for my clients." As parting advice, Sandoval suggested to students, "College is four short years of your life (on average) and makes a world of difference once you have graduated. A high school diploma isn't as valuable as it once was and good jobs are becoming more difficult to get. Invest the time and it gets more enjoyable once you can narrow your studies to subjects that interest you the most."



Todd Wilkin, Class 1988

by Collin Young
Digital Publishing Staff

Every career begins with education. To be good at something, one must know how to do it and have an understanding of the art. Education can come through many ways, but in the case of Todd Wilkin, it started at White Pine High School. Wilkin graduated in 1988, and then went to the University of Reno, Nevada, and majored in pre-dental and pre-medical. He graduated from UNR with his Bachelor's of Science. He then went to the University of Colorado, and continued his education in dentistry. From there, he came back to where it all began--Ely, Nevada--to embark upon his career as a dentist.

In high school, Wilkin interacted with many and was well known by all. He kept good grades, played sports, and rode motorcycles. His favorite subjects were Algebra and Woodshop; Algebra because the assignments were easy and non-stressful, and Woodshop because "I enjoyed making things with my hands. It is kind of an art form. I also had very good teachers for both classes," Wilkin says. With classes, Wilkin also kept very good grades throughout school. He graduated with a cumulative grade point average of 3.78, and still found time for extracurricular ac-

tivities. Wilkin advises that all students put time and effort into whatever they are working on. The more time and effort put into an activity, the better one will become at it.

When Wilkin graduated in 1988, he went on to continue his academic career at the University of Reno Nevada (UNR) for his undergraduate degree. During those four years of college, Wilkin took courses such as biology, chemistry, biochemistry, organic chemistry, human anatomy, psychology, and a few english and maths for courses that the university required. Wilkin also notes "I also took health science courses, physics, and a sculpting class. The sculpting was to show dental schools that I could work with my hands." In preparing for college, Wilkin advises all students to study hard, and to really think about what they like. He adds, "Set some goals for yourself. Do you want to graduate in four years? Five? Be prepared to work a little harder than high school. Nobody is there holding your hand and like teachers and advisors in high school. You are considered to be an adult so act like it.

After earning his bachelor's degree, Wilkin went on to be accepted into the University of Colorado. In dental school Wilkin focused all on the courses that the college set up in order to graduate an official dentist. Wilkin revealed that dental school is comprised

of extensive chemistry and science classes as well as learning how to drill, create fillings, apply anesthesia, and run a business. He says that there are similarities to high school in the sense that students take a four year curriculum with mostly the same classmates and then graduate at the same time. Wilkin also shared some advice for students looking to get into postgraduate schools. "You really need to work hard in college because graduate schools (medical school, law school, MBA programs etc.) are very competitive and you probably won't even be considered without good grades."

After becoming a dentist, Wilkin came back to Ely to open his practice. "I found out some nice advantages

about working in a small town. You don't have the competition you do in the cities, and you don't really need to spend on advertising. Word of mouth is the best advertising here." Wilkin also had the thoughts of family in mind: "Tiffani and I decided to come back to Ely because both our parents lived here, and it is a good place to raise kids."

Wilkin has been continuing his great career in Ely for 19 years coming this June, and he has been a great addition to the community of Ely with his business. As a last bit of advice, Wilkin suggests that students work very hard and put in a lot of time and effort into whatever activities they are doing.



Stewart, Ivins, and Willes Recognized

Digital Publishing Staff

It is with great pleasure that we nominate Lelsy Stewart as WPHS Teacher of the Month. Mrs. Stewart is a long time member of the WPHS faculty. She has taught a variety of classes from Earth, Physical, and Life sciences.

Mrs. Stewart is an example of our vision of working together interdependently to support high levels of learning. She collaborates beyond her science team to improve strategies used in classrooms. She helps fellow teachers determine the best ways to gather data and help their students understand expectations of the class. For herself, she

participates in multiple professional development opportunities that enable her to collaborate and make decisions for her own students.

Being an example of our vision, Mrs. Stewart demonstrates an adherence to our values. Mrs. Stewart will challenge what she believes needs challenging, but she seeks to understand others' points of view. She may still be developing her understanding of a practice, but she is willing to do what is asked for the sake of her students and school initiatives.

What we are most proud to share is her change from a teacher-led and directed classroom to an inquiry-based format. She has focused on the skill

of questioning both by her and by her students to engage students in their learning. Discussions are deeper and richer. Students are excited about what they learning. Mrs. Stewart deserves much praise for what is happening in her classroom.

It is an honor to nominate our custodial team of Bertha Ivins and Amanda Willes as co-recipients of WPHS Support Staff of the Month. These ladies have worked tirelessly to ensure a safe and healthy environment for students, staff, and visitors.

They have been a two person crew where normally three would be. It has been difficult and often overtaxing to maintain such a large facility with

just them, but they have risen to the challenge and deserve to be publicly praised.

It is important to recognize the impact of their service on the learning of students. People often take for granted that the building is ready for their use. This team can often be overlooked, but their contribution to our mission to open our students to "limitless possibilities" is critical. Without their support, the work of the teaching and coaching staffs would be far more challenging.

Thank you Mrs. Ivins and Mrs. Willes for your dedicated service to the students and staff of WPHS!