

They Had Their Dreams

By: Pat Nix



DAVID EDWARD BAILEY
"Beetle"
Band 1-2-3-4; District Ba
3-4; Assistant Director 4;
Glee Club 4; Quartette 4;
BPA 4; Pack Leader 4; Gir

CHARLES EARL BEAVER
"Charlie"
Football 2-3; FFA 1-2-4;

David Edward Bailey
"Beetle"
Band 1-2-3-4, District Band
Assistant Director 4; Boys'
Quartette 4; President Senior
BPA; Pack Leader 4; Girls '1

Pour Yourself a Coke float, kick back in your beach chair and let your thoughts drift back to the fifties – especially 1957 – ahhh. Whatever happened to Peggy Sue, Jackie, and Don? This year, 2007, marks the fiftieth anniversary of the graduating class of Jesup High School (Wayne County High.) For the next few issues, we will spotlight the President of the Senior Class for each decade from 1957 through 2007.

So whatever happened to David, Tommy, Lindsay, Matt and the others? Where did they go after graduation and where are they now? This issue highlights David Edwards Bailey, President of the Class of 1957.

What began as a childhood solution to provide for himself in spite of his blindness became a lifelong obsession with music. When David Bailey, eldest of Ed and Mona Bailey's six children, was five years old, he told his father he wanted to play an instrument.

The idea was influenced by a visit from ray Charles to the "blind war" at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Savannah where David was a patient. His father bought him a harmonica. For the next eleven months, while a patient. David learned to play from the floor cleaner on the 11-7 shift.

David says, "He played the harmonica with one hand, low and soft in the halls, while he polished the floors with the other one. He taught me to play."

Although David was not blind at birth, he had developed internal cataracts by the age of five. After spending 11 months and three weeks at St. Joseph's, and enduring five operations on one eye and six on the other, he returned to Jesup with his sight restored.

His parents never gave up hope.

He heard the piper at a very young age and followed it throughout his life. At ten years old, he picked up the clarinet, and later, the saxophone, thus began his first love affair with music.

"My Dad called P.D. Hester, the high school band director, to ask if he'd give me private lessons. He said he didn't do that, but Dad offered to help sell the uniforms or he'd buy 'em."

David proceeded to become assistant band director and drum major during his senior year. Of course he played in a dance band with the P.D. Hester group, until he left, then Lindwood Paul joined the group and later, Jerry Elmerick.

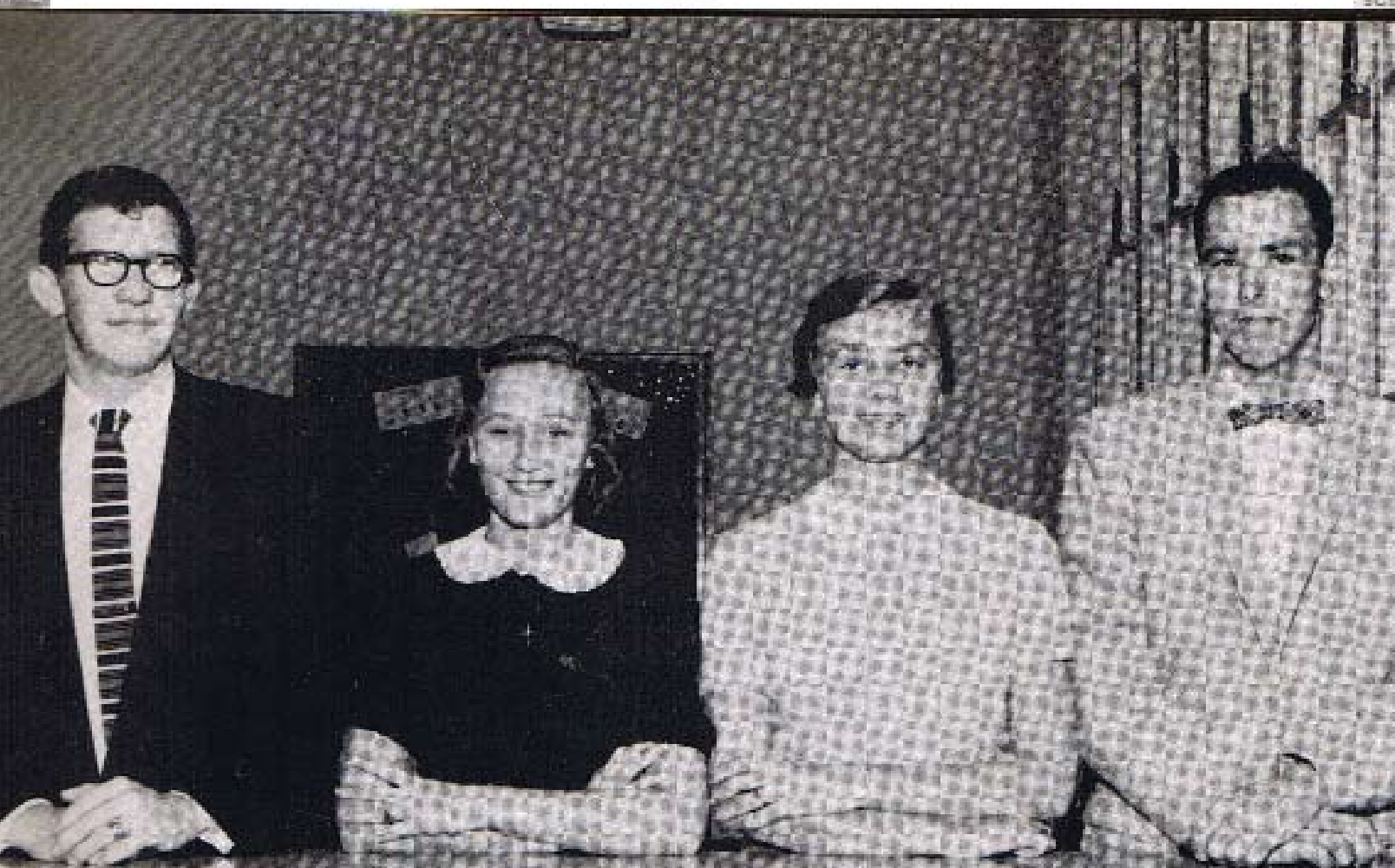
"One of the best pianists was Marge Anderson," proclaims Bailey.

One of his classmates and fellow officers, secretary Jackie Parks Dekle says, "David was a sport in high school. He was a party person—loved to have a good time. He was a

logical choice for President. You know we claim to be the best class ever to graduate from Jesup High School"

"Beetle," he was known to classmates, was named "wittiest," participating all four years in the yellow jacket band, in district band all four years, in state band his last two years, in Boys' Glee Club and Quartette his senior year. He also started an organization called BPA, Bachelors Protective Association, and he was Pack Leader. Its emblem was a red wolf head with its tongue hanging out. The final activity listed in his yearbook is "Girls 1-2-3-4," that should speak for itself.

The summer before college, Bailey went down to Miami to play with the famed Wayne King Orchestra. Wayne's brother, Dana King, played trombone with in and offered for Dave to come to school in Statesboro where he was going to be the head of the music department.



"I didn't have my SAT scores in Statesboro. I had 'em in Douglas where my grandfather taught. He was glad to get 'em sent up there to keep me from coming to South Georgia," says Dave, with a chuckle.

When he came home on breaks from college, he taught ballroom dancing with Hester at night in Jesup and the surrounding towns. He learned the beat by tapping the back of a chair before he ever turned on the music. Dave stopped college after a year to help Hester teach band in the schools in Alma and Reidsville during the day, ballroom dancing at night and play dance jobs on the weekend.

"It kept me pretty busy, but I wasn't making any money," he says, "then, Pat Daniels got a job in Alaska. We drew a line from Jesup to Seattle and me, Jerry Rentz, and Pat headed out. It took us five and a half months to get there, driving just as hard as we could drive, while sightseeing along the way. Pat decided he didn't want to go to work in Alaska, so I took a job in a bakery, making cheesecakes at three o'clock in the morning, just to make some money."

After touring in Panama, Mexico, and the Grand Canyon, David did go to Alaska to work for about six months, returned home and started selling encyclopedias. He moved on from there to radio disc jockey. Later, he go into the pick-up truck bumper business but still played gigs on Friday and Saturday nights. He was running the machine shop making templates for the bumpers. The owner gave him an interest in the business. Even though he is no longer there, his original designs are protected legally. Today, he divides his time between Panacea, Florida, a new venture in Silver, North Carolina, and Jesup, Georgia where he visits his Mother and works, as needed, with his brother, Joe, in the fabrication business. Bailey's Dad recently passed away at age 93.

"There are three things I never leave home without: my saxophone, my pistol, and my credit

card. Some ask, 'what's the pistol for?' and I tell 'em, 'it's for when they don't take my credit card,'" David says, living up to his name as Wittiest in his graduating class.

In response to the question, "How do you want to be remembered?" David answered, "as enjoying life. I love to dance every chance I get. I love it. And, I've tried to treat everybody as I'd like to be treated."

As to where he will be in ten years, "I don't really know, maybe Costa Rica, there's no taxes there, but I'll never be without my horn."

