



Members of Dixie High Class of 1955 gather for 80th birthday bash

Written by [Joseph Witham](#) June 6, 2017



ST. GEORGE — Growing old isn't so bad when done in the company of good friends, at least that's what members of the Dixie High School Class of 1955 will tell you.

Friendships established over six decades ago were renewed Monday during a celebration of the class members' 80th birthdays. It was a day of fun-filled activities and cake accompanied by a "Happy birthday to us" chorus.

See video in the media player top of this report.

"We have a unique Dixie High School Class of 1955, and we meet once a year with our classmates and all of those that can come for – we call it – our yearly barbecue," party organizer LaRee Jones said.



Members of the Dixie High School Class of 1955 pose for a photo at the Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House, St. George, Utah, June 5, 2017 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News

This year's barbecue took a unique twist when, upon realizing everyone in the class would be turning 80, Jones said, few classmates were particularly excited to celebrate the milestone of old age.

“We thought ‘Ok, if you were to have a (sic) 80th birthday party who would you want to have it with?’” Jones said, “and we decided we’d want to have it with everyone else turning 80.”

The day-long party was packed with activities commemorating the classmates’ lives together.

The alumni met at the Thunder Junction All Abilities Park in St. George for a group photo and train ride. They then headed to Leeds for a tour of the Silver Reef Museum, whose curator also happens to be a class of 1955 alumnus who actually lived in the old mining town before it went to ruin.

From there, they returned to the Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House in St. George to mingle and share old photos and other mementos. The evening’s entertainment included dance pieces by two couples from the alumni featuring ballroom dance and western swing styles and a duet performance of the classic tune, “Just for Now.”



An album displays a photo of the Dixie High School Class of 1955's 10-year reunion. St. George, Utah, circa 1965 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News

The partygoers also took the opportunity to acknowledge those who have died.

“Every time we meet, we do an in memoriam for our classmates who have passed, and in the last two years we have lost nine classmates.”

“There were 105 of us, and from that time we’ve lost 39 classmates, and there are about seven that kind of poofed away,” Jones said. “We could never find them.”

Of the original 105, 28 are homebound with varying conditions prohibiting their attendance at the party, but the classmates did their best to include them by visiting with them in days prior to the party to report to the rest of the group how they are doing.

Even with more than half of the original 105 not in attendance, dozens of alumni and their spouses were present for the party.

“I think our class has survived probably better than some,” alumnus Don Miles said. “There’s quite a few of us for our age group. Our class has been really close.”



Members of the Dixie High School Class of 1955 celebrate the members' 80th birthdays at the Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House, St. George, Utah, June 5, 2017 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News

Jones said the attitudes and egos of classmates have improved significantly with old age, explaining how cliques that originated as far back as high school have since disintegrated.

"All that matters at this age is good friendship and taking care of each other," she said.

Other attendees mused about how suddenly life has caught up with them in old age.

"It hits me every once in a while, and it seems like life is awful short. It seems like you still got a lot more to do when you're at this point," alumnus Ivor Jones said.

One thing the class can count on, if LaRee Jones has her way, is continued reunions and opportunities for friendship renewal.

"I don't know how you put it in words. It's just great when you've been with them all these years," Ivor Jones said. "Just kind of like family."

Click on photo to enlarge it, then use your left-right arrow keys to cycle through the gallery.



The Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House, St. George, Utah, June 5, 2017 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News



An album displays a photo of the Dixie High School Class of 1955's 10-year reunion. St. George, Utah, circa 1965 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News



An album displays a photo of the women of the Dixie High School Class of 1955's 60-year reunion. St. George, Utah, circa 2015 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News



Members of the Dixie High School Class of 1955 celebrate the members' 80th birthdays at the Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House, St. George, Utah, June 5, 2017 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News



A cake commemorating the Dixie High School Class of 1955 members' 80th birthdays is displayed at the Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House, St. George, Utah, June 5, 2017 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News



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Members of the Dixie High School Class of 1955 pose for a photo at the Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House, St. George, Utah, June 5, 2017 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News



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Members of the Dixie High School Class of 1955 celebrate the members' 80th birthdays at the Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House, St. George, Utah, June 5, 2017 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News



Members of the Dixie High School Class of 1955's basketball team pose for a photo at the group's reunion turned 80th birthday party for its members. Stephen and Marcia Wade Alumni House, St. George, Utah, June 5, 2017 | Photo by Joseph Witham, St. George News

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About the Author

Joseph Witham is a Utah Valley University graduate with a bachelor's degree in communication. He loves the Utah outdoors scene and is likely to be found camping or hiking in any one of the state's epic landscapes on a given weekend. He is equally passionate about writing and was published in various news media, including The Daily Herald in Utah County, before joining St. George News.



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