

I've never been able to attend any of the class reunions for one reason or another, but I can assure my former classmates that I think of you more often than not. I love every one of you like brothers and sisters.

LaRee asked if I would mind recalling some of the most meaningful experiences from Kindergarten, St. George Elementary, Woodward Jr. High School, and Dixie High School. I will also add something extraordinary regarding Dixie High School, the Class of 55, and what occurred in March of this year.

Most of what I'll write here, relates to sports, from our earliest years, through high school. The first event that comes to mind, was Dixie's amazing come-from-behind football victory over the Hurricane High School Tigers in the Sun Bowl, by the score of 13-12.

The play called that produced that amazing victory, is otherwise referred to as the 'flea-flicker'. Those directly involved, with less than one minute on the time clock, were: Lonny Hafen at quarterback, Lloyd Booth split out to the left, a few steps back from the line, and Richard Toy as a wide receiver on the right.

At the snap, Lonny stepped back, turned to his left, faked a handoff to one of the backs, and tossed a short lateral to Lloyd, who then saw Toy racing straight down the field, with defenders trying their best to break up the play. Then Lloyd threw a perfect over-the-shoulder pass to Toy, who gathered it in, and scored the winning touchdown.

At this juncture, I ask that each of you select a former classmate that you consider the best athlete in our class of '55; I've already completed my vote, of which Kay Brooks and I have discussed and evaluated through the years.

I will now explain my selection for the 'Best Athlete' from the Dixie High School Class of '55.

In 1953, a few weeks prior to the Dixie Invitational track meet, Coach Blake set up a makeshift broad jump practice area, about 100 feet south of the gymnasium, and off to the right. I wasn't interested in field events, but I usually

stood around and watched others practice. As I recall, the broad jump record was something like a distance of 20 feet, give or take.

One afternoon, as others were practicing, Joyce Jessop walked up and asked if she could join in. This was the afternoon when we stood and watched Joyce Jessop's first attempt at the broad jump.

Joyce Jessop's broad jump that afternoon would've assured her status as a qualified American athlete for the 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne. Joyce Jessop was faster than anyone I've ever known; could jump higher and farther than a Sikorsky helicopter.

So let's replay that victory over the Hurricane Tigers, with Joyce Jessop as a member of that team. First of all, it's important that everyone in the backfield, as well as the wide receivers, take a seat on the bench.

Joyce barks the signals, drops back, shovels the lateral to herself, then throws a beautiful 40 yard pass down the field, then races down the field and makes the catch, then scampers into the end zone for the victory.

In summary, had Joyce Jessop been allowed to participate in men's sporting events, Dixie High School would've won the state championship in football, baseball, tennis, basketball, track and field, as well as the Golden Gloves.

My intentions herein, as they apply to the inherent athletic abilities of Joyce Jessop, are not to criticize, belittle, or offend. Moreover, I consider it relevant, if not timely, to mention that I married a 'Joyce Jessop'; she attended one of the largest high schools in metropolitan-Atlanta, with a student body of 2,000. She is pictured, and noted, in her senior yearbook as the best female athlete for the Class of 1957.

She was as feminine and as beautiful as a wife might ever be. However whenever it came to athletic competition, of any venue, she was a fierce competitor; she took pride in her achievements in her favorite athletic venue, basketball.

She was a winner, and would not accept defeat. Her only defeat in life, was her life.

So my sincere intentions here, are to salute Joyce Jessop for her courage, her competitive nature, and having been blessed with her inherent God-given abilities.

When it comes to my individual, inherent, athletic prowess in the field of sport, Mike Hafen covered it best in May of 1953, when he told me to kneel, tapped me on the noggin with the sword, knighted me, then blessed me with the nickname 'Little Leaguer'.

And now for the stunner, the shocker, that occurred in March. My email addresses usually begin with d-i-x-i-e-h-s-5-5.

I placed a telephone order to Staples; the gal on the other end asked for my email address so she could send the order confirmation. When I gave her my email address, she paused, then asked if the dixiehs55 has anything to do with a Dixie High School, and the Class of '55.

When I replied with the obvious, she told me her mother was also a Dixie High School graduate from the Class of '55.

Yep, it's true alright. There's a Dixie High School somewhere in the state of Kentucky. I'm already aware of the Dixie High School in South Carolina, albeit the Dixie 'Hornets,' rather than the 'Flyers'. So as that old refrain seems to ask, 'Is it true what they say about Dixie'?