



The Bear Facts

Welcome to the official newsletter of the Ballard High School Alumni Association. Our mission is to keep graduates and friends up-to-date on both school and alumni news.

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June 2021 Stadium Update New Artificial Turf Field Installation Begins as Entry Plaza Nears Completion

Lots of changes are popping up at Pat Crawford Stadium. The new entry plaza is nearing completion, with commemorative donor tile and brick installation nearly complete. **There are many spaces remaining for new donor wall tiles (\$1,000 each) and commemorative bricks (\$250 each). If you want to have your donor wall tile added to the collection prior to the stadium dedication, call Steve Gowers ('72) by June 25 at 502-291-3916. He'll make it happen!**

By mid-June, the existing field will be plowed under and work on installing the new artificial turf field will begin. This work is being funded by a family of major donors -- we will showcase them in our August issue.

We also need to take a minute to thank several people for their tireless work to get our stadium to this stage of completion. They include:



Tony Waits ('73), whose donated legal services have helped to negotiate construction contracts and the complex approval process within JCPS.

Charlie McDuffie ('89), whose company has worked with great care on all of the masonry work to make the stadium entrance look special.

Doug White, our General Contractor (father of Helaina '19 and Peyton '22), who has worked tirelessly to modify plans while keeping suppliers and contractors on schedule.

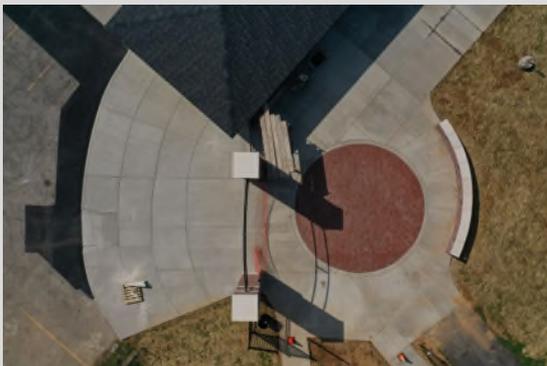
David Boone of Miranda Construction for the first-rate aerial photos of the stadium in progress.

None of the could have been made possible without their continuing dedication. ALL of us in Bruin Nation thank you sincerely for your hard work!

The official dedication for the renovated Stadium is scheduled for September 24th. More news and details will follow later this summer.

To purchase a brick, go to <http://www.thatsmybrick.com/ballardalumni>.

To make a donation, go to <https://chip-in.us/ballard>.



Teacher Feature: Sherleen Sisney
AP U.S. History, Political Science, Economics -- 1971 to 1992
Effective Learning Program Leader -- 1988 to 2000
Volunteer Tutor and Mentor -- 2015 to 2019



Sherleen Sisney has been one of Ballard's best-known teachers over the years. Her innovative approach to learning earned her recognition from the Kentucky Department of Education as Kentucky Teacher of the Year and U.S. Department of Education as the National Teacher of the Year in 1984. She led a team to develop the Effective Learning Program, helping many students for whom traditional education was not effective to achieve academic success. And in recent years, she has worked as a mentor and tutor to numerous students from less-advantaged personal backgrounds while developing new teaching and assessment tools. Here's what she had to say about her years at Ballard.

Were there any staff members or students who were particularly influential during your tenure?

Without question, Pat Crawford was the most influential person on me at Ballard. He had a genius for identifying and hiring the best people, giving them the tools they needed to succeed and then getting out of their way. He often challenged me to try new things and was very supportive of me even when what I wanted to do did not fit existing rules. For example, I wanted to make AP U.S. History classes available to any student who wanted to take them, not just those on the AP track as was the rule with JCPS. He just said "do it" and backed me up when the inevitable

questions followed.

What were your most memorable moments from teaching at Ballard?

Being nominated and selected as Teacher of the Year and being able to attend the award ceremony with 35 Ballard students in the White House Rose Garden with recognition from President Reagan is the most visible moment. But the moments that meant the most to me were when my students understood what I was trying to teach them. I wanted them to become their own best teacher. My goal was to teach them how to think and believe in their conclusions, not just to memorize names and dates. When I could see that light come on within their eyes—a belief in their abilities, we had succeeded.

What can alumni do to support teachers at Ballard?

Thank them for what they do. Most teachers work hard every day to help their students learn and grow and having encouraging feedback from parents and former students lets them know that their efforts are truly appreciated.

Alumni Association Welcomes Graduates from the Classes of 2020 and 2021

Graduation was held on the morning of May 28th for the Class of 2021, with a commemorative ceremony held for the Class of 2020 that afternoon. The photos here show how the event was staged in Pat Crawford Stadium.

Rudy Moeller represented the Alumni Association, having the privilege of addressing the 2020 graduates along with faculty and administration members. He encouraged these graduates to join the group and use it as a networking tool as they continue their journeys through higher education and careers.

It is not widely known, but the Class of 2020 donated money that had been raised for their prom and other senior activities to the Stadium project. **This amounted to a gift of over \$20,000!** We deeply appreciate this unselfish act of school spirit and look forward to having the members of this class join our Association.

If you know a member of the Classes of 2020 and 2021, please encourage them to join the Alumni Association. They can enroll **absolutely free** at <http://www.ballardalumni.com>. They can also keep track of school developments at

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Ronnie Baker to Compete in Olympic Trials June 19-20

Ballard grad Ronnie Baker (Class of 2012) is scheduled to compete in the Olympic Trials for Track in Eugene, OR on June 19-20.

Let's all cheer for Ronnie. Go, Ronnie, go!



Planning a Class Reunion this Summer? The Alumni Association Can Help.

It sounds like there are some reunion plans “bruin” for the classes of 1981 and 1982. We have reached out to the organizers and will be happy to share details once information/dates are confirmed. We've also heard rumors about the classes of 1974 and 1976 planning get-togethers. We can help you reach your classmates if you'd like our assistance.

Do you help with your class reunions? Please send an email to ballardalumni@gmail.com – we would love to connect with you. We are looking for class leaders/reunion organizers to help us build our association. We can help each other by sharing information to assist with your reunion and our association membership.

As always, please share this newsletter with any classmates! Please help us reach out!

Meet our Ballard Alumni of the Month



Tom Burkhart

Tom graduated from Ballard in 1975 and is one of the numerous skilled artisans in our ranks. After Ballard, he attended Jefferson Community College, the University of Louisville and Penland School of Crafts.

It was at Penland that Tom honed his skills as a woodworker, leading the creation of his own custom woodworking and millwork business that he ran from 1977 to 2020. His fine custom cabinetry and custom furniture grace homes throughout the region. Using his skills on a personal level, Tom converted an old school bus into a camper that he and his family have enjoyed for years. He has also served as the Managing Partner of the John Hartford Memorial Music Festival and Campout since 2012, featuring over 40 bands and performers at the last event in 2019; he has confidence that 2021 will mark a strong return

Tom lives on a farm in southern Indiana with his wife Clare and four donkeys. He has two grown children and enjoys working around his farm, cooking and attending bluegrass music festivals.

It's really encouraging to see Ballard grads channel their creative energy into so many positive ways. Continued good fortune to you!

Michael Saag

Mike Saag is a Ballard alum with an international reputation. After graduating in 1973, he received his BS at Tulane University followed by his medical degree at the University of Louisville. From there, he completed his residency in infectious disease and virology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. While at UAB, he conceived the creation of an interdisciplinary HIV outpatient treatment clinic making UAB a leading treatment and research center for AIDS.

Over his career, Mike has been published with over 500 peer-reviewed journal articles and edited a leading textbook on



AIDS therapy. He also serves on the Boards of numerous domestic and international AIDS research groups and is past president of the HIV Medical Association.

During March 2020, Mike contracted and recovered from Covid-19. Based on this experience and his deep knowledge of virology, he became a regular interviewee on major national media as a commentator on the affects of Covid-19. He also started an infusion clinic to minimize Covid-19 among high-risk patients

Mike, we are honored to have another rock star physician among our ranks of graduates. Thank you for all you have contributed to the world!

Do you have personal news you'd like to share with Bruin Nation? A new job, a published article, a professional recognition? Here's your chance to let everyone know "What's Bruin" in your life. Send your submissions for inclusion in our next issue to rmoeller@change-managed.com.
