

Willard and Olive Whitaker inducted into LHS Hall of Fame

The largest crowd ever to attend the Livingston School Reunion gathered October 25th at the Rockcastle County Middle School. More than 250 former students, fellow teachers, friends and family reminisced about their years at Livingston and celebrated the careers of Willard and Olive Mink Whitaker.

Pauline Baker Vanzant (1953) and Lois Thomas Sparks (1963) introduced the graduates of their respective classes. Former Livingston coach, Preston Parrett, read three of his poems about Livingston School. The poems included *LHS Reunion*, *Tribute to Lennie Mink, Jerry Mink, Kay Hammond and Paul Sturgill*, and "Closed."

Dr. Barbara M. Castleberry made a slide presentation covering the personal and professional lives of Mr. and Mrs. Willard Whitaker. Willard was the first born of four children to James and Pearl Arnold Whitaker. He graduated from Livingston High School in 1943.

On June 6, 1944, when he was 18 years old, Willard left home for the Army. In the Army, he spent much of his time in the South Pacific and rose to the rank of Sergeant. He fought in the Battle of Luzon and earned several medals and honors for his military service. These include the Pacific Theater Ribbon, Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, Army of Occupation Medal-Japan and a Bronze Battle Star. Mr. Whitaker was recommended for further military training but, after 2 1/2 years in the service, decided to return home to enter college.

He entered Union College in January, 1947. After one semester at Union, he was issued an emergency teaching certificate and began teaching at Whitaker School in the Sand Hill area.

Mr. Whitaker taught in several rural schools for the next few years while taking night classes and attending summer school to obtain additional college credits. He earned a BA degree from Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) in 1954, with a major in social studies. In 1958, he was awarded a Masters degree in secondary education. In addition, he completed graduate coursework in the area of social work in the schools.

Olive Mink was born, the last of nine surviving children of George D. and Susan Mink. She attended Livingston School for all her elementary and high school years and graduated as Salutatorian of the class of 1949.

About two weeks after graduating from high school, Miss Mink enrolled at Union College. During that first summer of college, she earned enough credits to obtain an emergency teaching certificate.

She took her first job teaching grades one through four at Victory School near Sand Hill. Victory School was a one-room school and the teacher for the upper grades was none other than Willard Whitaker. The couple had met previously at a pig supper when she was a junior in high school.

In order to get to the Victory School, Miss Mink walked from her home in Calloway. She traveled on a path that her father cut through the woods from Calloway to the top of Sand Hill ridge. She remembers this four-mile walk as terrifying in the



Willard and Olive Mink Whitaker

warm months because of her fear of snakes and treefrogs in the winter due to ice and snow. Meanwhile, Mr. Whitaker had a shorter trip because he lived at the foot of Sand Hill and merely had to manage to get to the top of that long curvy hill each day.

After one year at Victory School, Miss Mink transferred to Livingston to teach the fourth grade. She remained at Livingston until 1955. That year, the couple was married in Richmond, Indiana and their son, Dale, was born in 1957.

The couple spent two years teaching outside of Rockcastle County. In 1956, they taught in Carroll County and the next year they taught in Lincoln County. In 1958, they returned to Livingston School.

Mr. Whitaker taught social studies at Livingston for twelve years. He then transferred to the administrative offices of the Rockcastle County Board of Education where he served as supervisor of transportation and attendance for the next 15 years. He was away above that required for master's degree. She is certified in elementary and secondary education.

Over the years, Mrs. Whitaker taught the third, fourth, seventh and eighth grades as well as a high school English in high school. In 1972, she left Livingston School to become a teacher in the homebound student program. Mrs. Whitaker retired as a full-time teacher in 1985. After a couple of years in retirement, she returned to teaching part time as a homebound instructor. Mrs. Whitaker continues to serve in this position, teaching students from kindergarten through grade 12.

The Whitakers enjoy spending time with their son, Dale, and his family. Dale and his wife, Sandra have given their parents two terrific grandchildren, Jordan and Hannah. Dale continues the family tradition, by serving as a counselor at Rockcastle County High School.

Following the slide presentation, former Livingston students Buzz Carlisle, George Poynter, Billy Wayne Bryant and Darrell Nee shared some of their memories of the Whitakers. Clyde "Butch" Phillips provided a highlight of the evening by playing a song he had written as a tribute to Mr. Whitaker. A well-known Nashville musician, Mr. Phillips graduated from Livingston in 1962. A copy of the words to the song accompanies this article.

At the conclusion of the program, Willard and Olive Mink Whitaker were presented with a plaque symbolizing their induction into the Livingston School Hall of Fame for 2003. They were honored for more than 90 years of service to their students and the community. It is hard to imagine a couple who has done more for education in Rockcastle County.

On behalf of his parents, Dale Whitaker thanked the planning committee members -- Aletha Parker Bryant, Barbara Marshall Castleberry, Barbara Ponder Fain, Janet Kelly Owens, Carolyn French Ponder and Paul Ponder for their efforts.

The Livingston School Reunion is held annually on the last Saturday in October. During the evening, Mrs. Pauline Mink Waddles was given a certificate of appreciation and floral wreath in recognition of her tireless efforts as coordinator of the reunion from 1991-2002.

"Mr. Whitaker"

By Clyde W. Phillips

Verse
A teacher like you, a student like me
One shining the light, one trying to see.
I could've studied harder but I've got no regrets
I've only got God to thank for you and I ask Him to bless.

Chorus
Thank God for Mr. Whitaker for letting him be around
At a time when we needed a gentle soul, look what we found.
Thank God for Mr. Whitaker and the kindness he's shown
God grant us the wisdom down the road to pass it on.

Bridge
Teachers stay, students go what road they'll take nobody knows
But we'll all look back someday in a reflective way, I say
Repeat Chorus

CLOSED

By Preston Parrett

Stroke lights are flashing
Buses are on the road
They're traveling highways and byways
Picking up their precious load.

When they get to Livingston
They don't even slow down
And they keep on rolling
Right on through the town.

Passing up a closed school
That was the community's pride and joy
For almost a century of service
Was provided for each girl and boy.

They came from the hollers and hills
Fighting the odds of nature and life's wrath,
Joining together in a common cause
That lifted the darkness from their path.

They were a very special breed,
Who had a culture of their own,
And through life's eternal wars and struggles
Courage and resourcefulness they have shown.

They came from all over
From Horse Creek to Cave Ridge,
And Ping Hill, Calloway and Climax
To Orlando, Gauley and the Brush Creek Bridge.

From Lamer to Three Links
Chestnut Ridge, Salt Pet Cave, Red Hill and Bummer,
Sand Hill, Luner, Burr and Poplar
They enrolled every summer.

There in the hallowed halls and rooms
They learned to read, write and spell,
And where there was once laughter
Now only the spiders dwell.

The rooms and hallways are now silent
With only ghostly footprints of distant memory,
Where students once walked the hallways of life
Now is only folklore and history.



Class of 1953 - Front row: Harold Ballinger. Second row: Lorene Mink Ponder, Laura Ruth Bingham Kirby, Pauline Vanzant Baker and Lorena Phillips Mullins. Back row: Donnie Mink, Lois Kirby Elliott, Josephine Hammond Meadows, Faye Thomas Wehrle and Wil Kincaid.



Class of 1963 - Front row: Betty Clark Caudle, Doris Vanzant Durham, Lois Thomas Sparks, Edna Drew-Lakes, Janice Haskins Gentry and Charles Crawford Cole. Back row: Dean Carpenter, Clive Mullins, Randy Durham, James Kirby, Eddie Mahaffey and Sam Mullins.

Mrs. Phillips honored on her birthday

Mrs. Christine Phillips of Dayton, Ohio was happily greeted with a surprise birthday party in September, following her return from Chicago, IL.

Attending were her children through to the fifth generation, her relatives from Hamilton and Dayton, OH and her friends.

Shirley started the day off with prayer, as is our custom to begin and end our days. Afterwards, everyone sat down to enjoy a well thought out menu of great foods and long conversations. A happiness of being together and seeing each other again on this, our Mother's Special Day.

Following dinner, Mom was presented with beautiful tiered cakes of buttercream frosting which were topped high with the palest of colors of pink roses and small green leaves. The cakes were roped and draped with our Mother's favorite, pearls.

All stood and joined in to celebrate her while singing "Happy Birthday" as pictures were taken and the celebration finished. There was lots of fun and visiting the entire day and in the late night to help kick off our Mom's new year.

As her children, we watch and talked about how very graceful and gentle our Mother was while conversing with one or all, how earthy and without pretense she is; her many accomplishments in her life and the way she lives it; how she plans her goals in life and with prayer and work, succeeds; the many charities she funds and all the places she has flown to with more marked on her calendar. Her friends are countless and from everywhere and they stay in touch. For, if you know our Mother, you will know her as well as her children. That is to say, her warmth and her smile are as quick as her footsteps. Just as quick as her words and if she thinks we are slack in some part of our life - she will point it out to us - our age does not count. Her favorite words to us are, "It's all in the giving and never about one's self."



Christine Phillips

when you go to the Pentecostal and Baptist churches with your children. By your faith and wisdom, you have taught us the true meaning of worship. "There is but one belief. If you know the Father, you know the Son and they are as one, not one church, temple or parish is going to take you anywhere." Enough said.

Mom, you are young in the way you think, young in heart and you still outwork all of us. It doesn't matter to you if we've been on a jet for endless hours or if you have - the day or night is still young. We agree with your grandchildren when it comes to how you look and how proud they are when they are out with you. Grandma, you are one beautiful, well-behaved awesome lady." Well said in slang.

In keeping with all things that you and Dad taught us, we hope never to disappoint you Mom, for you have never disappointed us. We believe as Ann does, when she says, "Wie Die



Ashley Rader and John Lunsford Jr. are the proud and loving parents of a new baby boy named Corey Austin, who was born at Lake Cumberland Regional Medical Center on September 24th at 7:54am. He weighed 7 lbs. 7ozs. and was 20 inches long. The paternal grandparents are John and Mindy Lunsford and the maternal grandparents are Sue Rader and the late Bronnie Rader.

Arbet, so der Lohn." After all Mom, you taught this to us as being the right way. In English, Brad's words - they remind us of what our Benny and Lois would say - Mom, in a world that has forgotten what true and real things are made-of - you are there with your feelings. In a world that has grown cold - you are there with your warmth. In a world filled with me-me - you are there with your unselfish heart. In a world that has forgotten what to believe in and how and why - you are there with your faith in all things good - you are a gift. So don't ever change. The world needs you just the way you are.

Happy Birthday, Mom. We give you our deepest respect, our deepest love.

Submitted by both: Ann Phillips, Daytona Beach Shores, FL and Brad Phillips, Centerville, OH. Brad's wife, Pam, Fritz and Linda Phillips, Dayton, OH, Gary and Gail Phillips, Dayton, OH/Lake Cumberland, KY; Juanita Rose, Centerville, IN; Shirley Miller, New Castle, IN.

Mrs. Phillips' children attended Livingston High and the



Lake Spencer Powell was born October 16th at Hardin Memorial Hospital in Elizabethtown. He weighed 8 lbs. 11 ozs. and was 21 inches long. Proud parents are Marty and April Powell of Elizabethtown. Maternal grandparents are Arlie and Patty Renner. Great grandparents are Joyce Holtzclaw and the late Carl Kirby and Arlie and Dorothy Renner. Paternal grandparents are Buford and Wanda Stafford of Leitchfield. Proud aunt and uncle are Autumn and Dustin Renner.

**News
Deadline is
Noon
Tuesday**

Happy belated birthday, Gene. I didn't forget you, I can't forget a young good looking man like you. Gene and I have been together around five years this December. He is a sweet man who is always by my side when I need him. He has always treated me like a baby. One thing I can say about Gene, he treats my kids like babies and will do anything we need to help them. That means the whole world to me. I love him with all my heart and want to spend my life loving him. He shows me the love I need. Gene, when I love you and we are really looking good. Gene's birthday was October 28 and mine was October 29.

I love you, Gene
Your woman with love of love
Sue Cameron