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HOLDREGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Giving Back to Education

HHS Alumni Recognition Feature!

Dear HHS Alumni and HPS Foundation Supporters,

Holdrege High School is fortunate to have many very successful graduates. We are excited to continue sharing the stories of some of those HHS Alums. Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990, has joined our efforts with her journalistic talents to bring you this month's feature.

Many classes will be having reunions in 2013. Class organizers are encouraged to contact us - we can assist with communication by sending messages to classmates through Constant Contact.

We welcome your suggestions and comments and encourage you to join the Duster Alumni Association (*see form below*).

Sincerely,

Matt Allmand, Chairman - HPS Foundation Committee

Ralph Wall - Class of 1973

***From HHS Trouble Maker, to Local Celebrity
Ralph Wall Starred as TV Weatherman, Outdoor Show Personality,
and Now as Singer/Songwriter***

By Kristine Jacobson

Ralph Wall (Class of 1973) described himself as a trouble maker and poor student while attending school in Holdrege. It's not that the teachers or the school were bad, he said. "They were all pretty wonderful. I just made their lives difficult."

So, it might come as a surprise to some that he was able to work as a successful TV weatherman and produce a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission outdoor television show. On the side, he is working on his singing and guitar-playing hobbies with the upcoming release of his second CD.

"I didn't excel academically," Ralph said. "I just didn't have the interest." He's not proud of the way he acted in school. Ralph attended Washington Elementary School and remembers doing anything but trying to learn - making up games, counting floor tiles, etc. But he did have some ambitions for his future.

"When I was in third or fourth grade, I knew what I wanted to do with my life - anything with the spoken or written word," he said.

When he was 15, Ralph took a job as the evening disc jockey at KUVR. It was there that he learned from radio veterans Dave Thorell and Moe Milliken.

After high school, Ralph had no interest in college. "I did not attend a day of college or a university," Ralph said. "It was all the school of hard knocks and apprenticeship."

But, life wasn't easy after graduation from HHS. "I got fired from KUVR right out of high school," Ralph said. He was fortunate to be hired at radio stations in McCook, North Platte, and Sidney before KGFW in Kearney called him in 1974. He worked at the Kearney radio station for five years before learning about an opening for a weather position at NTV, a television station covering south-central Nebraska and northern Kansas.

"I have no idea why they hired me, but they did," Ralph said. He didn't know much about the weather or the television business, but he learned by being thrown in the fire. "Make mistakes, learn from them, and then go on," Ralph said of his motto at the time.

His NTV career lasted for 16 years. After five years of reporting on the weather, Ralph one day answered a phone call about a man in McCook who had built life-sized dinosaurs in his front yard. Ralph asked permission to interview the man and prepare a feature story about him. That was the beginning of an NTV favorite segment called "Ralph Wall's People."

Ralph enjoys visiting with people as if he's sitting next to them on a barstool. "I have a very natural way of communicating information and maybe I try to talk with people, not at them," Ralph said of one reason why he may have succeeded in the television business.

Ralph left NTV in 1996 to work on an outdoor TV show with the Nebraska Game and Parks. He worked on that show until it was cancelled in 2002. Ralph still works for the Game and Parks, producing the agency's audio, visual, and broadcasting material.

"All I would hear when I'd see people while working at NTV was, 'What is the weather going to be like?'" Ralph joked. "Now, after working at Game and Parks, all I get is, 'Where are the fish biting?'"

As he is approaching his 40th high school reunion this summer, Ralph is staying away from the limelight, except for his sideline music hobby. "I remember being real driven by the limelight when I was really young, but today it's the exact opposite," he said.

Ralph taught himself how to play the guitar and produced a CD titled "Marker One," with his friend Greg Mertz. They are currently creating a second CD called "Mosaic," which they hope to complete by summer. But don't expect any live performances. They are sticking to writing lyrics and producing music and videos.

To view one of Ralph's music videos on you tube, click the following link:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNWhL_QuOOY. Copies of his music can be ordered from his web site at www.ralphwall.com.



About Us

The mission of the HPS Foundation is to support and enhance the educational efforts of students and teachers of Holdrege Public Schools by providing funding for innovative and challenging programs, learning experiences, and activities.

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