



## **Abilene Eagle High School Reunion of Athletes—1953-1963**

**April 12-13, 2025**

**Gerald Cumby, 1959 AHS Eagle**

**It is always a treat to come back to Abilene, Texas. It is always an honor to be with our high school friends who have meant as much to us as our neighboring friends and church members. Sherry and I find that it has been much more rewarding to listen to our high school friends and hear of their successful lives...and, in some cases, even the disappointing experiences, than our college group (athletes or fraternities, sororities, etc.). Our high school friends, teachers, and coaches have played a major part in any success we have attained...and has had a positive impact on all of us as we head for the finish line of our lives.**

**Many of high school buddies still invite us to their homes in and around Abilene as we come to the marriages and funerals of family members and friends who have been in the Abilene – Tuscola area all of these years. Some have never moved more than 4 or 5 miles from where they grew up.**

**Sherry and I have moved to the areas where we made a living for our family. Since most of our immediate family members live in the Fort Worth-Dallas area, that is where we have put our feet down. Our funeral plots are in the same area.**

**Although we have anchored our lives in the FW-Dallas area, we still remember the “good-old days” in Abilene. I recently read a sweet story about “Growing up in Abilene, Texas.” I felt like it was my story. I love Abilene. The memories are strong and “mostly positive” of our time in Abilene. See if you feel the same way about this central Texas town of Abilene where**

**people went to church, had babies, drove to Impact and Lowake, Texas every once in a while, and loved our “Abilene Eagles.”**

### **Growing up in Abilene, Texas**

I grew up in Abilene TX...a city of character...and some pretty unreasonable characters, too. I would call “our Abilene” a city where kids could enjoy the outdoors without worrying about drive-by shootings. At least it was that way when I was a kid. I never once questioned my dad and mom’s integrity. They never gave me reason to. If there was a story told by either, they would do it with sincerity of purpose. Dad would tell us some things that got us into trouble; but he did it on purpose to teach us to search for answers as to why those stories would get us into trouble. By so doing, we learned the art of discerning good and bad situations and how to deal with them. At least that is his story as to why he led us into some troublesome waters without a life-preserver strapped around us. He taught us to swim by pitching us into the stock tank and saying, “Bout time to learn to swim, son!” He bought us things that he knew would get us into trouble because he knew we would learn from our mistakes with those “thangs” he would buy us. The problem...learning to live long enough to tell others about it was our concern.

Growing up...we ate homemade meals consisting of meat, potatoes, and vegetables. The vegetables usually came from our garden. Desserts and treats, like brownies, chocolate cake, chocolate pie, banana pudding have helped us grow...mostly out, not up. Our Mom made the fixings for the ice cream...and we sat on top of the freezer as someone else turned the crank to make the ingredients cold and good to the last drop.

We spoke when asked...and our questions and our answers were important to our parents. We never touched anything that did not belong to us. We never opened a refrigerator at anyone’s house unless asked to do so. We were taught to respect other people’s property. And we were not rewarded for acting properly...because “acting properly” was expected. We were taught to be polite, be helpful, be attentive to other’s needs,

and to never say, "I am bored." If we ever said that...we would not be bored long! We would immediately be given a chore that would keep us busy digging in the garden, washing the car, or helping clean out the flower beds. If we had a garage, it was for mom and dad's tools, canned peaches and other fruits.

Usually, we had half the car sticking out of the garage because we could not get the lawn mower, toolboxes, mom's mops, brooms, etc. along with the car.

We grew up during a time when we mowed lawns, pulled weeds, babysat, and helped with all chores. We by-no-means were given everything we wanted. We went outside a lot to play, run with friends, play hide and seek, kick-the-can, or go bike riding. We rarely just sat inside. If we did, like on a rainy day...we would play checkers, monopoly, or canasta.

Bottled water was unheard of. If we had a Coke, Pepsi, or RC Cola, it was in a glass bottle, and we didn't break the bottle when finished. We saved the bottle for the return money.

We had to tell our parents where we were going, who we were going with, and be home before dark. If we were home, we played outside after school and Saturdays until mom called us inside for supper.

We had some great theatres to attend on Saturdays...didn't pay more than \$.25 to go to at least a double feature movie, cartoon and sometimes a serial (Green Hornet, Superman, Charlies Chan, etc.)...and by the way, we walked or rode our bicycles to the movies...sometimes coming back home after dark.

You LEARNED from your parents instead of disrespecting them and treating them as if they knew absolutely nothing. What they said was LAW and you did not question it. We watched what we said around our elders and neighbors because we knew if we DISRESPECTED any grown-up, we would get a real good talking to...or, in some cases, a whipping (it wasn't called abuse, it was called discipline)!

We held the doors for others and carried the shopping into the house. We gave up our seat for an older person without being asked.

**You didn't hear swear words on the radio in songs or on TV. However, some of the country-western songs were quite revealing as to what was meant by "If you got the money, honey, I've got the time, "...Don't come home a drinking...with loving on your mind," or "Your cheating heart will tell on you."**

**"Please and Thank you", yes ma'am no ma'am", were part of our daily vocabulary because of RESPECT for others! And we would get thumped if we didn't!**

**The world we live in now is just so full of people who hate and disrespect others. Where did this come from...and how did it get started?**

**I will never forget where I came from and only wish children and people nowadays had half the chance at the fun and respect for real life as we did growing up in Abilene, Texas!**

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*I loved to read short stories when I was young. One of the good ones like, "The Ransom of Red Chief" by O'Henry was one that caught my ear when I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade (Mr. Craver, Central Elementary). In those stories we read, there were some great truths spoken by human beings of yesteryear and today...those who have been tested over and over again with life; its hurts, disappointments and its problems:*

- *Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching. I have been bent and broken, but — I hope — into a better shape. **CHARLES DICKENS***
- *Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all. **DALE CARNEGIE***
- *Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. **C.S. LEWIS, Atheist turned Christian.***
- *All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us. **J. R. TOLKIEN***
- *You have to take risks. We will only understand the miracle of life fully when we allow the unexpected to happen. **PAULO COELHO***

- ***Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.*** **MARK TWAIN**
- ***The world is not to be put in order. The world is order. It is for us to put ourselves in unison with this order.*** **HENRY MILLER**
- ***I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.*** **EDWARD EVERETT HALE**
- ***If one by one we counted people out, for the least sin, it wouldn't take us long to get so we had no one left to live with. For to be social is to be forgiving.***  
**ROBERT FROST**

### **The Four Stages of Senior Life:**

Recently Sherry and I were driving by one of the Senior Living areas in our community. I think the name was Atrium Meadows, or something like that. We noticed that the website for the place was Autumnleaf.com. I thought to myself, “Self, this is nearly as bad as “Fallswillkillyou.com”.

With that in mind, I thought of some of the websites these Senior Living places might have:

1. **Springupandlive.com**
  - **If I could spring up, I would tear muscles, tendons, and all those other things in my aching, aging body.**
  - **I want to spring up about as much as I want to help dig up my garden and fertilize the yard.**
2. **Summerthoughts.com. Summerset.com**
  - **“My keys are summers, but I don’t remember where they are.”**
  - **“Summers there are mountains to climb...but don’t ask me where they are.”**
  - **“My summer thoughts are to sit about as much as I can.”**
3. **Autumnleaf.com**
  - **“I ought to do this today or I’ll forget about it tomorrow.”**
  - **“I ought to buy that car, but I want to eat this year.”**

- “I ought to kiss my wife more, but I can’t remember what to do first.”
- I bet you have a lot of ought to’s these days...but your body does not cooperate with your mind.

4. WinterWonderland.com

- “I wonder where I am today?”
- “I wonder where my glasses are...probably the same place I have my teeth.”

**It is true...getting old is sometimes disappointing and disheartening! But, we need to look at the positives of living life to the fullest. We have learned a lot.**

**What I have learned:**

1. **Be kind to your children, because when you get older, they’re the ones who are going to choose your nursing home.**
2. Life is short. Smile while you still have teeth.
3. At my age, the only pole dancing I do is holding onto the safety bar in the bathtub.
4. The older we get, the earlier it gets late.
5. Old people are just young people who have been alive for a very, very long time.
6. Why am I getting older and wider instead of older and wiser?
7. Old age isn’t so bad when you consider the alternative.

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**For the sermon/devotion today I want to let you guys know about a powerful book of the Bible. The Book of Revelation is a book of chaos, catastrophes, calamities, chastisements, criticisms, complaints, condemnations, and crisis....yet, it tells of challenges, confirmations, commendations, celebrations, and comebacks.**

**NOTE: THERE ARE NO CONSOLATIONS, JUST WINNERS AND LOSERS IN THE END!**

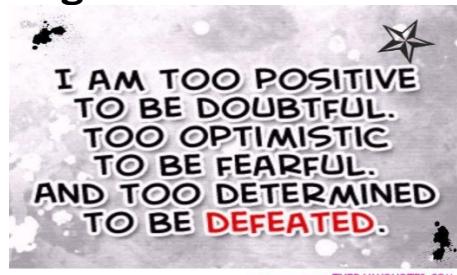
***Mark Twain’s quote on living life was:***

**"Live like heaven is on earth...Love like you have never been hurt...Laugh like no one is listening...Sing as if no one can hear...Dance as if no one is watching... Dream like there are no impossibilities...Play like there are no winners...Give like you have plenty...Smile until your face hurts...Cherish your family and friends every day!"**

**Even if you agree with the quote above and do all of the actions Mr. Twain stated...and by the way, I do agree with him; but,... that ticket, those wise quotes will not get you to heaven.**

**There are no consolation trophies for living a good life.**

**Accept forgiveness and become an instant winner... no scratch-off games!**



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**"The Rest of the Story" was the subject of Paul Harvey's every day comments.**

**Most all of us can relate to the "rest of the story" highlights of one's life.**

**We, as senior citizens, watch television programs like "24", Heartland, Blue Bloods, etc.**

**We can get involved and when we have to go somewhere else and not finish one of the episodes, we can record it...turn it back on and watch the rest of it at a later date. It's not "real time"...and in most cases it is not "real life"...only a façade...It's what the programmers want you to hear.**

**Life is not that way...it is not a façade. You can't stop it in the middle of bad things, good things...LIFE IS REAL TIME.**

**We need to understand that life is not all fun and games...Life is today. You can't stop me in mid-sentence, take me home and finish this story...unless you are taping me. I'm real and so are you.**

**We have to call our own balls, strikes, and outs. It is called "choices." Our life is either in the 1<sup>st</sup> inning or one of the 9 which will end the ball game (at some time the game ends).**

**What we do today for our family, for ourselves, and our Lord should make a difference tomorrow as to where we are in this game called "life."**

In today's world, we are entertained and amused to the point of ridiculousness! Amusement...muse = to think... "A" in front negates it...amusement = "not to think." That is what television, movies...entertainment...do...these technological tools think for us.

**Technology is great so long as it is not misused. And when it is used to keep you from thinking...and paint the picture of life for us, then we are misusing technology.**

**Ecclesiastes 1:9 , "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."**

**Ecclesiastes 8:17, "Then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it."**

**What will "The Rest of the Story" be for you in the future? Will you try to stop life in mid-sentence, try to turn off life, or live life to the fullest and give God glory for it all?**

**I believe in the following principles and practices.**

- **Put God first in all things and, in the end, I will be rewarded for standing for truth and obeying God's rules.**
- **Thanking every American and every foreigner who has stood up for what is right and wholesome, pure and noble by wearing a**

**military uniform that protected homeland and the right to be free.**

- **Thanking doctors that have been educated in the wonderful practice of healing the sick.**
- **Thanking the preachers and pastors for preaching the Word. Giving the opportunity for all people to come to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.**
- **Making sure that honorable widows and orphans are given the means to pay for their room and board (living with honor and dignity).**
- **According to Scripture, “If a man does not work, he does not eat.”**
- **Working to pay my bills on time and making sure that my debtors are respected and given ample time to return what is owed.**
- **Loving my family and willing to give my life for their protection if necessary.**
- **Romancing the wife of my youth and doing everything to honor my marriage to the very end of my life.**
- **Protecting the unborn, the innocent ones in the womb, who are completely dependent on someone else’s decision for their entrance into this world.**
- **Protection of the marriage definition as being “one woman and one man being joined together as one” and the understanding that “what God has put together let no man break, separate or tear apart.”**
- **Heaven is real...and so is hell. The Bible is very clear on this truth.**

**Joshua 1:8 “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”**

**Solomon was the one that said earlier, “No one can comprehend what God has done.”**

**Paul says about heaven, 1 Corinthians 2:9, “However, as it is written: ‘What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived’ – the things God has prepared for those who love him...”**

**The rest of my story will end with my entrance into the eternal state with my Lord Jesus Christ. This program you are hearing from me will turn off one of these days. I know that and you know that.**

**I want the “Rest of My Story” to end in the Lord Jesus welcoming me into the Kingdom of God with this statement, “Well done my good and faithful servant.” God bless you, your family, and the United States of America.**