

# Tatler

NEWSLETTER for alumni of Woodlawn High School, Birmingham, Alabama  
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I March 2012

## The New Tatler Continues ....

under its new Editor

George Nelson WHS '55 .



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### NEXT ISSUE:

Miriam Rogers Fowler '57  
Biography

## Mark C. Smith

1940 - 2007

WHS '58

Engineer, entrepreneur, philanthropist, captain of industry, one of this nation's notable achievers.

Mark Smith was born in Birmingham September 10, 1940 and graduated Woodlawn High School in 1958. His parents were educators: his mother a music teacher and his father the director of the Woodlawn High School Band.

Mark received several Science and Math Department awards and was a National Science Fair winner. This interest was ignited in childhood and encouraged by his grandmother, Edna Crocker Masters. Mark's engineering interest accelerated when his science teacher encouraged him to participate in a science fair at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Mark's light beam timer project proved to be a winner. The coveted prize was a visit to Huntsville to meet the famous rocket scientist Dr. Werhner von Braun. While



shaking Dr. von Braun's hand, Mark asked him for a job !

Mark's interest in electronics took him from teenage ham-radio buff, listening to Sputnik's transmissions, to a regular summer internship with the space program, to the founding of two successful companies.

Mark completed college in 1962, earning a Bachelor of Science de-

gree with honors in electrical engineering from Georgia Tech. Diploma in hand, he officially began a career in electronics and accepted a job with SCI in Huntsville, Alabama until 1969, when at the age of 29 he plowed his life savings into starting a modem company, Universal Data Systems, Inc. His new business was Alabama's first data communi-

### Mark C. Smith - continued from page 1

cations company. The success of this endeavor attracted the attention of Motorola. In 1978 Mark sold UDS to Motorola and stayed on as vice-president of the UDS-Motorola Division. Later he left Motorola in hopes of finding a new market created by the breakup of AT&T.

In 1986, Mark and Lonnie McMillian co-founded Adtran. Their first product enabled a telephone company to send data to a business over a private line. The company became publicly traded over the NASDAQ in 1994. Mark led the start-up company of seven employees to a company of over 1700 when he retired in 2005. Today, Adtran is going strong and is well known for its founding father's business ethics and staunch belief in providing great customer support.

Despite all of his achievements in business, Mark was often described as a humble, unassuming man. He was honored for his intellect and integrity, and will be remembered for his generosity, which touched the lives of many. He believed in leading by example.

Lonnie McMillian, Mark's close friend and co-founder of Adtran, said Mark's life was filled with the joy of creating something from nothing, love of engineering and engineers, and an intense focus on building a company marked by character and integrity. " He believed 'If you lose your integrity, you lose your soul.'"



ADTRAN, Inc Headquarters,  
Research Park, Huntsville, Alabama



Mark Smith (right) with his father Gerald Smith, our Woodlawn High Band Director for many years.

McMillian said.

Mark was often recognized for his achievements. In 1987 he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. In 1995, he was inducted into the State of Alabama Engineering Hall of Fame. He also received Georgia Tech's Distinguished Engineering Alumni Award in the same year. He was the Entrepreneur of the Year 1995 in High Technology/ Electronics for the Southeast. The Birmingham News named Mark CEO of the year 2000 and in 2004 he was awarded the first Alabama Information Technology Association Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2005 he was inducted into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame, and in 2006 he was inducted into Georgia Tech's Engineering Hall of Fame.

In addition to his many accomplishments in the business community throughout the state of Alabama, he was also an active philanthropist in his community. Mark served on the University of Alabama

Continued on page 3

**Mark C. Smith** - continued from page 2

Huntsville Foundation Board, the UAH Business School Board, and was president of the Greater Huntsville Foundation. In 1996 he received the Humanitarian Award from the North Alabama Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation. Other organizations he was involved with included the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra Board, the Rotary Club, Randolph School Board, past chairman of the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce, Burritt Museum Board, Alabama Research Institute, AmSouth Bank Board, Expression Genetics, Inc. Board, Open BioSystems and HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology Board.

In 2000, Mark was diagnosed with head and neck cancer and entered Vanderbilt University Cancer Clinic for treatment. He underwent throat reconstruction in 2001.

This trying time in his life contributed to his interest in biotechnology. He signed up and took for credit an organic chemistry class from MIT so that he would have an educational background for his

involvement with the HudsonAlpha Institute. He was one of the founding board members of the Institute and was on the building committee. He convinced the architect that had designed the Adtran campus to come out of retirement to design the HudsonAlpha Institute. The institute is a premier facility, one of the best in the world because of Mark's vision and understanding of what it takes to have a cutting edge institute.

Mark always gave credit to his Science teacher at Woodlawn High School, Mrs. Pauline Long, for always encouraging his interest in science.

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Mark died of complications from pneumonia on March 27, 2007. He is survived by his wife Linda; his daughter Cynthia Smith Hughes, his son Mark Clay Smith and eight grandchildren.

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After Mark's death, a Ground Breaking ceremony was held on September 23, 2009 to name a new road in Research Park after Mark. One year later, on September 21, 2010 Mark was inducted into the Alabama Men's Hall of Fame which recognizes men native to or identified most closely with the State of Alabama who have made significant contributions on a state, national or international scale within their professional fields of activity and concern.

A bronze commemorative plaque of Mark Smith can be found at the main library of Samford University in Birmingham.

*We thank Linda, Mark's wife, for this biography which celebrates our classmate and friend who did very good things with his life.*



Mark and Linda Smith



## Willow Wood Park

### Do You Know its History ?

On Georgia Road one block west of Woodlawn High is Willow Wood Park, which has many years provided recreation facilities, community center, volleyball courts, and even a spring-fed swimming pool that some of us remember back in our distant childhood years.

But what most folks don't know is that Willow Wood Park occupies

the site of the once beautiful antebellum plantation home "Woodlawn Manor", built by Obadiah Wood (1753-1849) pioneer settler from South Carolina and founder of Woodlawn. He and his wife Mary Wood (1776-1839) are buried in the Wood Family Cemetery just one block east of Wood-



lawn High School.

Offspring of Obadiah and Mary Wood continued to live and marry

in this area, and many WHS alumni are Wood family descendants including those of familiar Woodlawn family names Tarrant, Talley, Hood, Hawkins, Hudson and many others.

In 1910 the Wood family donated the old plantation manor house and grounds to the city when Woodlawn was annexed into Birmingham. The city then built the swimming (wading) pool and turned the house into a community center. Additional sport and recreational facilities were added in 1934, including the Willow Wood Park building standing today, recently renovated (photo upper left).

Since 2010 the City has been struggling to maintain the park against a severe budget crisis. Its future is uncertain.

~ Roland Monette



### Who is this beloved WHS Faculty member for 30 years ?

( photo from 1938 Woodlog )

Answer on last page

## A WHS Classmates Love Story

Ed and Linda both graduated from Woodlawn but hardly knew each other until they re-connected years later at the WHS Grand Reunion at Panama City. Ed fell head over heels for her.

After the reunion he started asking her out, and within a couple weeks, they had gone to BOP clubs, restaurants, concerts, movies, and museums. Ed was convinced that Linda was his soul mate and true love.

One month after the reunion, Ed took Linda to a fine restaurant. While having cocktails, Ed said, "You must know I'm very much in love with you. I'd like a little serious talk before our relationship continues to the next stage. So, before I get a box out of my jacket and ask you a life changing question, it's only fair to warn you that ..... I'm a total golf nut. I play golf, I read about golf, I watch golf on TV. I eat, sleep, and breathe golf. So if that's going to be a problem , you'd better say so now !"

Linda took a deep breath and responded, "Ed, that won't be a problem. I love you as you are, and I love golf too; but, since we're being totally honest with each other, you need to know that for the last five years I've been a hooker."

Ed replied, "That's OK. I bet it's because you're not keeping your wrists straight when you hit the ball."



~ from life experiences of George Nelson '55

## Potpourri

- Mrs. Edith Connor Howell Farmer, mother of former Woodlawn High football coach Johnny Howell, turns a healthy 102 years old on March 17th this year.
- The old Woodlawn High School football stadium is reportedly being demolished this month.
- FACEBOOK has a very active site titled "I Swam At Cascade Plunge", where many WHS folks are participants. It is an open public Facebook page, so anyone can go there and reminisce with friends about good times, the curvy mirrors, and 10 cent hotdogs. Just go to Facebook.com then enter in search box "I swam at cascade plunge".
- We are sad to be reminded that so many young Woodlawn men and women have lost their lives in the military service of this nation:
  - ~ 110 in World War II
  - ~ 11 in Korea
  - ~ 12 in Vietnam
  - ~ Unknown others in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world

## Obituaries

**Ray D. Carmack '66** died Dec 2011.

**Harold D. Deason '65** died Dec 2011.

**Fred A. Montebaro '47** died Jan 2012.

**Vince Gibson '51** died 10 Jan 2012, age 78. He graduated a football star at WHS in 1951 and Florida State in 1955. He went on to a 23 year career coaching college football at South Georgia College, Florida State, Univ. of Tennessee, Kansas State, Univ. of Louisville and Tulane. He won numerous Coach of the Year honors and is enshrined in the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. He died of ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) at his home in Kenner, Louisiana, survived by his wife



Marie Cecile Gibson, two sons, four daughters, eight grandchildren.

**Marian Hap McGilberry '51** died Feb 2012

**Dale Daniels Vann '64** died 4 Mar 2012



## Birmingham's Streetcars of Yesteryear

At one time Birmingham had the second most extensive streetcar network in the entire nation, nicknamed the "Lightning Route". It operated the famous "Peter Witt" style trams (left) from well back into the 1890s. This same style tram is still operating today in Budapest and several other European cities.

Many of us recall the old metal and hard paperboard "tokens" that were routinely used as car fare. The last of these old streetcars were not taken out of service in Birmingham until the early 1950s. They made lots of noise but were fun to ride.

## Roebuck Drive-In Theater

1953

25 cents per car.

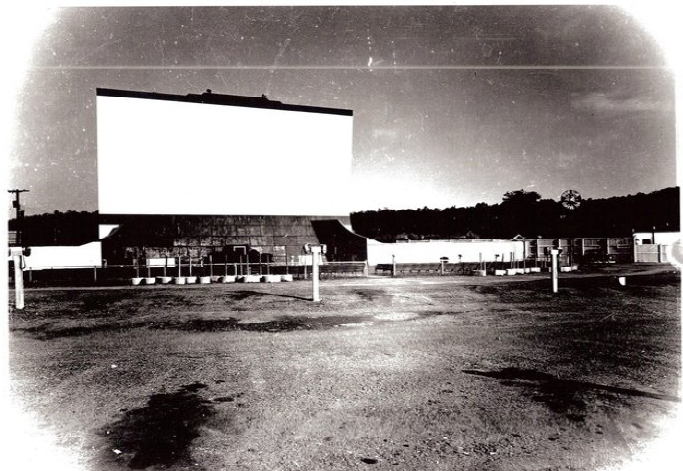
10 cents each passenger.

10 cents each walk-in.

Heads must stay above car seat back.

Note: Viewable also from outside the rear theater fence where cars could park in the Huffman baseball field. No charge, but no speaker sound, and no head checks.

Memories, anyone ?





## REUNIONS and Other Happenings in 2012

Also see information on these and other  
events at

[www.WoodlawnHigh.org](http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org)

What	When	Where
<p>▶ <b>CLASS OF '72 - 40th REUNION</b> Email <a href="mailto:WHS72Reunion@yahoo.com">WHS72Reunion@yahoo.com</a> to get a registration form, or call Lynn Stalnaker Cleveland at 201-910-3044</p> <p>Check <a href="http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org">www.WoodlawnHigh.org</a> for updated details.</p>	Saturday, 21 July 2012	MARRIOTT on Grandview Parkway on US 280
<p>▶ <b>CLASS OF '62 - 50th REUNION</b> Planning underway, For more info or if you wish to help, Contact Harold Morgan at <a href="mailto:HMorgan5225@gmail.com">HMorgan5225@gmail.com</a> Or Butch Fadely at <a href="mailto:Butch@MailAtlanta.net">Butch@MailAtlanta.net</a></p> <p>Check <a href="http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org">www.WoodlawnHigh.org</a> for updated details.</p>	Summer 2012	TBD
<p>▶ <b>GRAND REUNION 2012</b> Details will be published very soon in next Tatler issue and on website <a href="http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org">www.WoodlawnHigh.org</a> . Stay tuned, and please come join us. Everyone welcomed.</p>	Thursday, 30 Aug 2012 to Sunday, 2 Sep 2012	Boardwalk Beach Re- sort Hotel Panama City Beach, Florida
<p>▶ <b>CLASS OF '57 - 55th REUNION PICNIC</b> Maybe pot luck. Dunno nothing right now except lots of folks want to get together . Stay tuned to next Tatler edition and check website <a href="http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org">www.WoodlawnHigh.org</a> for more info when we get organized. For now, send queries or comments to <a href="mailto:Webmaster@WoodlawnHigh.org">Webmaster@WoodlawnHigh.org</a> (Roland)</p> <p>Check <a href="http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org">www.WoodlawnHigh.org</a> for updated details.</p>	Saturday, sometime Summer or Fall 2012	maybe at Oak Mountain State Park, maybe not

## WHS Meet-up Groups and Dance Clubs

Meet-up Group	Meet when ?	Meet where ?	Comment
▶ <b>Moody Lunch Group</b>	Weekly, every Wednesday, 11:00 am	Bobbie's Lounge in Moody, AL	Everyone welcome. Lots of attendees from classes '50 to '80. Just show up.
▶ <b>Pell City Monthly Lunch Group</b>	Second Thursday of every month plus holiday parties and other gatherings.	Different locations each month. Please get on email list for monthly notifications.	Contact Mary Sue Stevens Landman '78 at MLandman003@charter.net or Jackie Vandergrift at Jackie200@aol.com . Everyone welcome.
▶ <b>Brookwood Mall Monthly Luncheon Group</b>	First Tuesday of every month at 12:00 noon	Brookwood Mall, Food Court	Been meeting 8 years. Also have annual Christmas parties, special outings, and short trips. Everyone welcome.
▶ <b>W.O.W. !! Women of Woodlawn Lunch Group</b>	Third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am	Different surprise places. You will be contacted by phone.	Been meeting 11 years. We are adventurous and go to the latest and most interesting places for lunch. To get on call list contact Ernestine Shannon at 205-936-6909 or EShannon@yahoo.com . Everyone welcome.
▶ <b>Village Tavern Group</b>	Third Thursday of every month, 6:00pm until about 9 pm-ish	The Village Tavern - on lower level of the Summit Mall (next to Flemmings Steakhouse)	Everyone welcome. Lots of '50s, '60s, '70s folks always there. Contact Pattie Neil at PattieNeil@hotmail.com for more info.
▶ <b>Trussville Cracker Barrel Breakfast Group</b>	Third Wednesday of every month at 8:00 am	Cracker Barrel, Trussville. At Trussville Exit off I-59	Everyone welcome.
▶ <b>BEACH SHAGGERS OF BIRMINGHAM Dance Club</b>	Every Tuesday night at 7:00 pm	VFW Club, 18th St. and 11th Ave North, Birmingham	Everyone welcome. Free dance lessons at 6:30 pm. Come learn how to SHAG. Contact Jackie Vandegrift at 205-884-7581
▶ <b>MAGIC CITY BOPPERS Dance Club</b>	1st, 2d, 4th & 5th Wednesdays and 3rd Friday of every month at 7:00 PM	VFW Club, 18th St. and 11th Ave North, Birmingham	Everyone welcome. Free dance lessons at 6:30 pm. Contact Larry Vance 205-969-0732

## New Tatler Staff Members

**George Nelson '55** - Editor

**Pat Harris Renta '55**

**Mary Kate Scruggs Gach '55**

**Stanley Lawler '55**

**Nita Nix Yarbrough '64**

**Jackie Harbuck '61**

**Roland Monette '57**

## Content Contributions to the TATLER

should be emailed to  
**George Nelson** at  
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[www.WoodlawnHigh.org](http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org)

Closing thoughts from Polly Prosch '55



*Growing old is compulsory;  
growing up is optional.*

**ANSWER** to WHS Faculty member pictured on p. 4: WHS Girl's Advisor—Miss Beatrice Hannon.



Precious rescued dog for free adoption

### **CoCo**

Loving little female, spayed, fully vetted, healthy and happy. 15 pounds, about one year old, house trained. Loves everybody, great car riding companion and bed -buddy.

Call Roland at 931-592-3908 anytime  
or [RMonette@blomand.net](mailto:RMonette@blomand.net)