

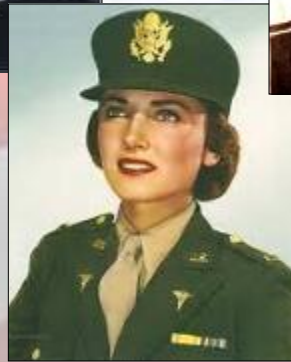
The New  
**Tatler**

NEWSLETTER for alumni of Woodlawn High  
School, Birmingham, Alabama  
Download from [www.WoodlawnHigh.org](http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org)



MEMORIAL ISSUE

May 2013



*They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, nor shall the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the mornings,  
We will remember them.*

*For The Fallen - 1914  
by Laurence Binyon*

The New  
**TATLER**

**MEMORIAL  
ISSUE**  
May 2013

**Editor**  
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**WHS '55**

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**WHS '57**

**THIS ISSUE:**

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## MEMORIAL DAY

May 27, 2013

Memorial Day originated in 1868, when Union General John A. Logan designated a day in which the graves of Civil War soldiers would be decorated.

Known as Decoration Day, the holiday was changed to Memorial Day within twenty years, becoming a holiday dedicated to the memory of all war dead. It became a federal holiday in 1971 and is now observed on the last Monday in May.

An estimated 1.3 million American men and women have died in the service of this nation since its founding. Those deaths occurred in 74 different armed conflicts of all sizes and durations.

About 150 of those casualties were alumni of Woodlawn High School, World War II accounting for at least 110 of them.

This Tatler issue aspires to pay tribute to all of them for their supreme sacrifices. We cannot tell a poignant story about them all. We cannot even name them all. But we seek to reflect on them all, in a collective sense, in appreciation of the contributions each bequeathed to their posterity. Because in every day of our own lives we are their fortunate beneficiaries.

We have chosen to tell here just one story about just one of those young men - as a representative tribute to them all. He was a Woodlawn High School graduate and a refugee from the Great American Depression. He was not just a good athlete, he was the best on the field. He was handsome, courteous, polite, honest, liked by everyone. He carried all the hopes and ambitions this great land of freedom and opportunity could shovel at him. He was going to college. He loved and married his beautiful sweetheart, and they would set this world on fire. They had it all. They were assuredly a great American dream.

Join with us now on our brief journey with him through his brief but remarkable life, and along the painful pathway of those who loved him but were left behind.

His story is intended to remind us why we must take this day to remember them all. We can do nothing else to ever repay them.



## Oscar Lee Cagle, Jr.

1923 - 1944

2nd Lieutenant, US Army Air Corps  
Woodlawn Class of January 1942

Born in the Avondale suburb of Birmingham on 24 January 1923, Oscar was the son of railroad conductor Oscar Lee Cagle Sr. and wife Willie Freeman.



This bronze memorial plaque hung in the front hall of WHS many years after World War II, listing all 110 alumni who lost their lives in the war.

*Oscar L. Cagle, Jr.*  
is on that list.

We are deeply honored to render this brief tribute to the young hero who brought highest honors to that name. And, in so doing, we dedicate this to his family and descendants who, still to this day, feel his loss.

### A WHS Favorite Son

In the Fall of 1938 Oscar Jr. entered Woodlawn High School and quickly became a widely popular classmate and superstar in football, baseball and track. He was a powerful and punishing halfback and led the city high school scoring records and yardage statistics during Woodlawn's three consecutive city and state football championship years 1939-41.

Oscar Cagle's name and game-action photographs dominated the Birmingham newspaper sports sections. Most of Woodlawn's dramatic and often last-minute wins came by way of crushing plunges into pay dirt by Oscar Cagle. Oscar was built stout, and delivered the speed and strength to overwhelm defenders when the going got tough. Some years later, Alabama sports writers argued that Oscar Cagle was the "Harry Gilmer of his time", contending that Harry was Woodlawn's greatest passer, but Oscar Cagle was most likely Woodlawn's greatest runner.



WHS Freshman 1938

Oscar finished his WHS 1941 season, taking all the honors there were to take. He was All-City for



**2ndLt Oscar Cagle Jr., P-47 Fighter Pilot,**  
56th Fighter Group, 8th Air Force,

just before his death in air combat against German fighters over The Netherlands in his 25th air combat mission.



All-State & All-Southern  
Halfback at WHS 1941.

the third time, All-State for the second time, and finally tapped to the All-Southern Team.

### Auburn-Bound

Graduating from WHS in the January 1942 class, Oscar was selected for football scholarship to Auburn. He accepted and immediately enrolled there in time for the 1942 Spring practice session. At that time, Auburn disallowed freshmen from playing varsity athletics, but that was soon rescinded due to the war's drain on manpower.

So freshman Oscar Cagle moved to the Auburn varsity for the Fall 1942 football season.

Oscar played his best in that 1942 season, but Auburn had a tough go of it with few veteran players on the team. They finished 7th in the Conference with 6 wins and 4 losses.

But college football was by now overshadowed by

Oscar Cagle - continued from page 3

the great national drama of another raging world war in progress.

#### Call to Arms

During Oscar's freshman year at Auburn, America was launching massive industrial build-ups and military campaigns in both the European and Pacific war theaters. On August 7, 1942, it was announced to the world that US Marines had assaulted the Japanese stronghold on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, in the first major American counter-offensive since the war's beginning at Pearl Harbor. Oscar Cagle and a hundred thousand other young Americans knew it was now their clear destiny to join that compelling endeavor. Within five days Oscar volunteered to join the Marine Corps. Being only 19, still a minor, he needed the consent of his parent's, which they both duly and formally gave on August 12th with his enlistment papers.

Expecting immediate call-up to Marine Boot Camp, Oscar abandoned expectations to play that freshman season at Auburn. But a strange thing happened: nothing was heard from the Marine recruitment process for several months, during which time the Fall 1942 football season began, so Oscar went ahead and started the season with the Auburn team.

After writing to the Marine recruitment office asking why he had not been called to active service and receiving no swift reply, Oscar could wait no longer. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in October 1942 and entered active service as his first Auburn football season came to a somewhat lackluster close.

#### Love - the Many Splendored Thing

While anxiously awaiting call-up by the Marine Corps during the long, hot August of 1942, Oscar and his long time sweetheart Norma Cruse were married, both still 19 years old. Norma was the daughter of



Oscar married his beautiful Woodlawn High classmate Norma Cruse in August 1942.

Ellis V. Cruse and Jessie Lee Hodges, of the Woodlawn community. Norma and Oscar had been classmates and sweethearts all four years at Woodlawn.

She was every bit the classic American beauty and he the ruggedly handsome and popular campus hero. They were surely destined for one another and a fairy tale life happily-ever-after. But fate would send them on a different journey.



Norma Cruse  
(WHS '41)

#### Into the Wild Blue Yonder

In late October Oscar and Norma withdrew from Auburn and the 1942 football team. He reported for his first of numerous intensive Army Air Corps training programs to become a combat fighter pilot. The war raged all over the world, and the image of Army Air Corps pilots was now as legendarily heroic as it was so often fatal. Any person who ever knew Oscar Cagle could not have been surprised that he had volunteered to go to war as a gallant and fearless fighter pilot.

Oscar spent the next 16 months in flight training and air combat skills training at Army installations in Alabama, New Jersey and Virginia. Friends and fellow pilots would later remember Cagle as a popular, easy going, enthusiastic fellow with exceptional flying talent.



In Richmond, 8 Feb 1944, when he received his 2d Lt. commission and Wings.

#### Off to War

In July 1944, Norma sadly kissed him goodbye. He departed to join the veteran U. S. 56th Fighter Group, Eighth Air Force, based in Boxted, England. Arriving there he was immediately assigned to fly the warhorse P-47 Thunderbolt fighter in daily, around-the-clock air missions supporting Allied advances through France, Belgium and Holland, and against desperate German ground and counter-air operations.

Oscar flew his first dive-bombing mission on 12 August 1944 during which his squadron destroyed 15 locomotives and 43 rail cars at Mauberg, France plus one ME109 German fighter in the air. The official operational history of the 63rd Squadron provides us exceptional detail of every mission Oscar Cagle flew

Oscar Cagle - continued from page 4

from that first day until his last. He flew every single day, except for the few days his aircraft was undergoing repair or foul weather intervened. He often flew missions twice a day, routinely against German marshalling yards, storage tanks, locomotives, warehouses, air fields, ammunition depots, and troop concentrations throughout northern France, Belgium, Netherlands and into Germany.



P-47 Thunderbolt Fighters of Cagle's 63rd Squadron, 56th Fighter Group, over Germany

There was no let-up, no day off, no relief from German anti-aircraft fire and intercepts by Luftwaffe fighters. Escort missions took Oscar far into the German heartland, providing fighter support to protect the waves of British and American bombers. Never was there a day without Oscar being under fire and seeing fellow pilots go down tragically to German ground flak and fighter fire. Losses were staggering for both Allied and German air forces - every day.

#### *A Bridge Too Far*

On 17 September 1944, Oscar Cagle's fifth week in combat, the greatest allied airborne troop-carrier operation in history was launched. Oscar and his squadron flew support cover for the airborne delivery of 15,000 British, Canadian and Polish troops into Arnhem, Netherlands to seize the Rhine River bridge. This was *Operation Market Garden*, later to be infamously known in history books and movies as "A Bridge Too Far". On the first day of the Arnhem landings, Oscar flew "Red 4" position (far left aircraft in an 8 plane finger formation) and attacked anti-aircraft positions in the Netherlands ahead of the allied troop planes' approach. Oscar's squadron destroyed 16 German gun batteries opposing the airborne flights, a very significant contribution. The following day, intense rains and foul weather prevented getting back into the Arnhem fray, but Allied forces were now in a desperate defensive situation there.

Next day, 19 September, the Allied situation had deteriorated drastically. Additional British airborne forces were dropped near Arnhem to reinforce beleaguered units locked in combat at the Rhine Bridge against heavy German infantry and tank attacks. The greatest Allied air support operation of the war oc-

curred that day to try and save *Operation Market Garden* from disastrous defeat. A total of 296 British and U.S. aircraft flew in paratroopers and supplies, under escort cover by 232 British and U.S. fighters, including Cagle's 63rd Fighter Squadron. Before this terrible day ended, 33 aircraft went down, including troop carriers, to German flak fire and unexpected attacks by 80 to 100 German fighters.

Cagle's squadron first guarded the troop carriers and engaged attacking enemy aircraft. Twenty German fighters were shot down, after which the 63rd Squadron's official reports give a detailed narration of the air-to-air engagement that ensued 15 miles north-east of Arnhem. The 63rd Squadron began a search for targets of opportunity, patrolling from Arnhem over to Nijmegen, then north over Deventer, then in a turn-around back south over the small Dutch village of Lochem, where they spotted a flight of about 15 German FW-190 fighters flying west, close to the ground. From 3,500 feet the four P-47s of Cagle's flight dived straight down into the surprised FW-190s. The enemy attempted to get away but nonetheless put up a fight for their survival. When the engagement was finally broken off, six German fighters had been shot down, but two P-47 pilots of the 63rd Squadron were lost and never seen again:

2nd Lt Harold Spicer, age 23, from Cleveland, Tennessee; and

2nd Lt Oscar L. Cagle Jr., age 21, from Birmingham, Alabama.

*Operation Market Garden* eventually became a huge Allied offensive failure, and the Rhine Bridge was lost with terrible Allied casualties incurred and prisoners taken. It was indeed *A Bridge Too Far*.... but not for any lack of extraordinary heroes..... who never came back.

continued on page 6



2ndLt Oscar Cagle Jr. in P-47 "Spirit of Crawford County Missouri" taxiing for take-off from Boxted, England 21 Sep 1944. The last photo ever taken of pilot and aircraft. Both were lost over Netherlands same afternoon. Photo from 56th Fighter Group Museum, Halesworth, England.

Oscar Cagle - continued from page 5

**"Missing in Action"** read the Western Union telegram presented on 24 September to Norma Cagle at her parent's Woodlawn home. In the weeks and months to follow, letters arrived from the War Department, Eighth Air Force and from some of Oscar's fellow pilots, all offering Norma encouragement and hope for his eventual safe return. The below words from Oscar's Commanding Officer help us imagine the anguish of uncertainty gripping the Cagle family.

Oct 30, 1944

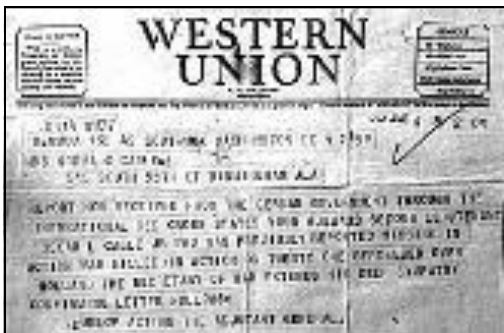
Dear Mrs. Cagle:

... I am hesitant to say anything to you in the form of condolence, because the implication derived might be that Oscar is gone, when actually, that is not necessary, nor must such a conclusion follow. That Oscar is alive and well is more than possible, and that is the thing for which we are hoping. Unfortunately the determining element is time, and though it is not easy to carry on under such circumstances, it is the only deciding factor and one with which we must contend. Until future notification reaches you, I would have hope, and I do know that all officers and men of this squadron are in deep understanding with your feelings and anxieties during these days.

During his time with us, Oscar was quiet by nature, very easy going, and very set in his ways. He was popular with all pilots and was well liked for his natural personality as well as admired for his fine flying ability. He had been awarded the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster in recognition of his flying ability.

Sincerely,  
Harold E. Comstock,  
Major, Air Corps, Commanding, 63rd Fighter Squadron

Christmas 1944 sadly came and sadly went for Norma Cagle in Birmingham. Then on January 4th, 1945 the worst of all her fears was realized.



" REPORT FROM GERMAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS STATES YOUR HUSBAND 2NDLT OSCAR L. CAGLE JR WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION WAS KILLED IN ACTION ON 21 SEPT OVER HOLLAND. THE SECRETARY OF WAR EXTENDS HIS DEEP SYMPATHY. "

### Norma and Lee Anne

Just over five months after Oscar's death, Norma gave birth on February 28, 1945 to her and Oscar's first and only child, Miss Lee Anne Cagle.



Norma and daughter Lee Anne - the beautiful legacy Oscar Cagle never got to see.

### Bringing a Hero Home

On September 21, 1944 residents of the little Dutch village of Saasveld watched the raging dogfight overhead, 15 miles northeast of Arnhem. At 4:15 pm they saw Oscar Cagle's P-47 fighter plunge to earth just off the village lane. Next day they buried 2ndLt Cagle honorably in their local cemetery.



After the war's end Oscar's body was re-interred in July 1945 in the Netherlands American Military Cemetery at Margraten, Netherlands

Oscar Cagle - continued from page 6

Four years later, Oscar was finally brought home to Woodlawn and re-buried at Forest Hills Cemetery on April 10, 1949 with full military honors and news media coverage befitting a national hero. The funeral was attended by family, friends, former teammates and coaches, Woodlawn teachers, fellow Air Corps pilots, city and state officials and a military honor guard delivering a 21 gun salute and the casket flag to Norma.



Lee Anne and Norma Cagle at Forest Hills, his final resting place.

As the casket was lowered, the plaintive call to Taps was sounded, and a flight of four Air Corps fighter planes flew a low pass over the gravesite to pay 2nd Lt Oscar Cagle Jr. a final tribute from a forever grateful nation. Four year old Lee Anne Cagle would never forget that moment. The father she had known only as a name and legend was finally home.

#### Moving Onward

Norma Cruse Cagle eventually remarried to John Paul Scott Sr. of Birmingham, but she may never have completely gotten over the profound grief of losing Oscar Cagle - truly the storybook love of her life. She died in Birmingham on April 2, 2011, age 87, her life celebrated by her four children, 11 grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren.

Oscar L Cagle Sr. and wife Willie Cagle endured the entire terrible saga of their son's loss with all the grief and anguish that any loving parents could ever be compelled to bear. Oscar Sr. died in 1987, age 97, and Willie passed away in 1981, age 90.

Oscar's daughter Lee Anne grew into a beautiful young lady and graduated from Woodlawn High in 1962 as Lee Anne Cagle Scott, having taken the Scott surname of her step-father who loved her as his own daughter. She was wonderfully popular in school.

Everyday at Woodlawn Lee Anne was reminded



#### Lee Anne Cagle Scott

WHS Class of 1962

Secretary of the Student Body, Head Cheerleader,  
W-DAY Queen

that her father was one of those honored names of fallen alumni on the war memorial plaque hanging in the school's hallway. Over the years Lee Anne has been in quest of knowledge about her father, seeking to understand everything about him, his achievements, personality, character, his short but illustrious life. She has collected and provided for this article hundreds of photos, news articles, War Department letters, museum items, and personal stories from all conceivable sources. Her descendants will treasure this for many generations to come.

Lee Anne remains to this day a forever gorgeous woman and lives in Notasulga, Alabama with her current husband Jerry Pinkard. She and first husband Charles Lynn (WHS '62) have 4 children and 20 grandchildren, each of them embodying the spirit and image of their beautiful and memorable forebears, Oscar and Norma Cagle. .



*They could have never known what a magnificent America their lives would help build, preserve and pass on to us.*

*They truly were "The Greatest Generation".*

Oscar Cagle - continued from page 7

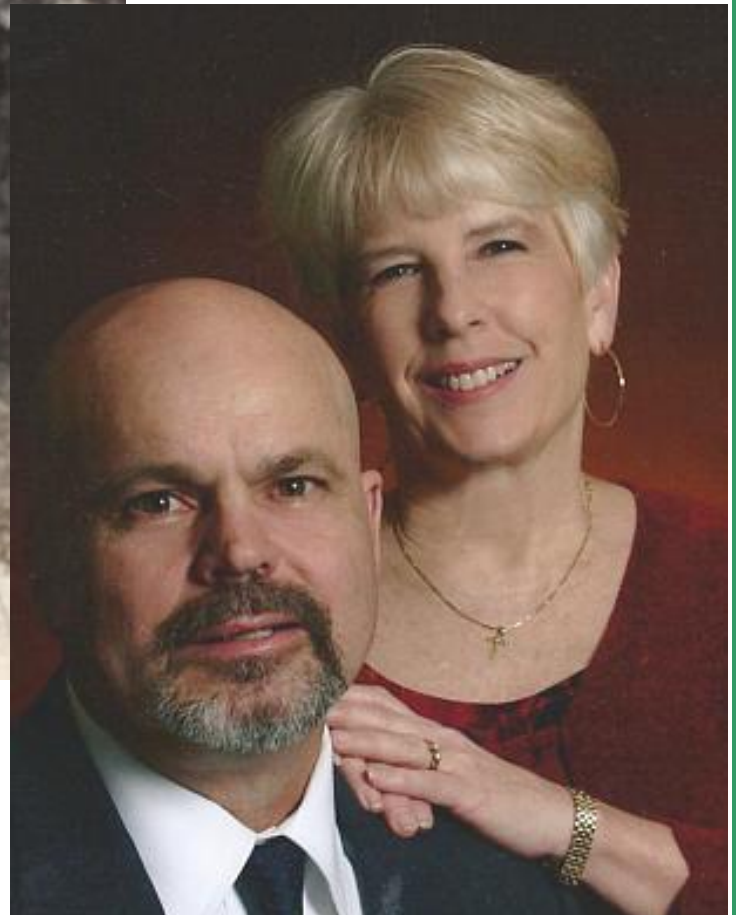
*“ Our life is made up of time. Our days are measured in hours, our knowledge in years. Yet time eventually runs out, and you hope in your heart of hearts that those minutes, days, months, years and decades were spent the best way they possibly could .”*

~ Cecilia Ahern



**1942**

**Oscar Lee Cagle, Jr.  
and  
Norma Cruse Cagle**



**2012 - 70 years later**  
**Lee Anne Cagle Scott**  
and husband  
**Jerry Pinkard**

*Alumni of Woodlawn High celebrate your lives.*



## In Special Appreciation

Apart from the extensive personal information collection of Lee Anne Cagle Scott Pinkard, a great amount of information was obtained from a variety of international sources that contributed great detail to Oscar Cagle's military service and his loss in action. Worthy of mention are the following:

- Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama
- United States Military Cemetery, Margraten, The Netherlands
- Gemeentearchief Lochem (Municipal Archives, City of Lochem, Netherlands)
- Eighth Air Force Museum, Halesworth UK
- Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, Pooler, Georgia
- Achterhoeks Museum 1940-45, Hengelo, Netherlands.

Mister Karl Lusink, Dutch citizen, masterfully compiled a detailed account of the 21 September 1944 air engagement over Lochem from many eye-witness and archival sources - which account was invaluable to this story of Oscar Cagle. Through him we had the incredible opportunity, after all these years, to communicate with a man in a far distant land and language who actually witnessed the dogfight and shoot-downs, including the loss of Oscar Cagle and his P-47 Thunderbolt. The gentleman at far left in this photo is Mr. Frank from Lochem, Netherlands who was the young Dutch boy who saw that air battle. He is shown standing here (with Mister Lusink at far right) on the precise spot of ground where Oscar Cagle crashed in the village of Saasveld. After the war, residents of Saasveld provided Oscar's identification and grave site location to US Army teams who then removed Oscar to the new U.S. military cemetery at Margraten. We are grateful for their helpful services.



The City of Cuba, Missouri answered our question why Oscar's P-47 was named "Spirit of Crawford County Missouri". The citizens of that county had raised \$105,000 dollars in their War Bond Drive during the war. This entitled them to "buy a warplane" for the nation, meaning that they were entitled to go to the factory and have their name painted on the plane before it was shipped to the Army Air Corps. The Crawford County citizens did so, and 2nd Lt Oscar Cagle Jr. later became the pilot of the "Spirit of Crawford County Missouri" on that day of no return.

by Roland Monette (WHS '57)  
with Lee Anne Cagle Scott Pinkard (WHS '62)  
May 23, 2013



## REUNIONS and Other Happenings in 2013

Also see information on these and other events at  
[www.WoodlawnHigh.org](http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org)

What	When	Where
<p>▶ <b>CLASS OF 1967 and 1968 - REUNION.</b> \$70 per person. Cash bar and Karaoke. Make checks payable to Sharon Waldrop Aderhold at 7013 Rowan Road, Leeds, AL 35094 ALL CLASS YEARS WELCOME</p>	8 June 2013 6:00 pm	Zamora Temple, Irontdale, AL. Off Interstate-459

### 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 '58 at MLandman0703@charter.net or Jackie Vandergrift at Jackie200@aol.com . Everyone welcome.
▶ <b>Brookwood Mall Monthly Lunch 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 12 years. We go to the latest and most interesting places for lunch. To get on call list contact Ernestine Shannon at 205-836-6909 or EShannon37@yahoo.com .
▶ <b>Village Tavern Group</b>	Monthly (various days), 6:00pm until about 9 pm-ish	The Village Tavern - on lower level of the Summit Mall at US280 & I-459	Everyone welcome. Contact Pattie Neil at PattieNeil@hotmail.com to get on her email list to be notified of the date for each meet-up.
▶ <b>Trussville Cracker Barrel Breakfast Group</b>	First Monday of every month at 8:30 am	Cracker Barrel, Trussville. At Trussville Exit off I-59	Everyone welcome. Just show up.
▶ <b>BEACH SHAGGERS OF BIRMINGHAM</b>	Every Tuesday night at 7:00 pm	VFW Club, 18th St. and 11th Ave North, Birmingham	Dance Club. 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</b>	1st, 2d, 4th & 5th Wednesdays and 3rd Friday ea. month 7:00 PM	VFW Club, 18th St. and 11th Ave North, Birmingham	Dance Club. Everyone welcome. Free dance lessons at 6:30 pm. Contact Larry Vance 205-969-0732

## Obituaries



**Jerry Ann Edwards Peace** WHS '57, age 73, died Mar 3, 2013 in Fairhope, AL.. She was married to Henry E. Peace (WHS '56) and was 24 years in the education profession. She was loved by the entire world. [Her obituary](#)



**Delmas Lacey Lawler** WHS '52, age 79, died 1 May 2013 in Birmingham.

[His obituary](#)



**Annie Claire Morrison Dixon** WHS '38, age 92, died April 13, 2013 in Alexandria, VA.

[Her obituary](#)

**Dr. Harold Lester Flatt**, WHS '41, age 89, died Feb 27, 2013 in Birmingham. [His obituary](#)

**Jerry D. Trimm** (WHS '54), age 76, died March 2013 [his obituary](#)

**Rae P. Willis** (WHS '44) died 22 Feb 2013 [his obituary](#)

**Janet Virginia Jordan Tate** (WHS '50), age 81, died 6 March 2013 in Claremont, CA. Renowned vocalist, concert musician, symphony violinist, international music teacher, world traveler, [Her obituary](#)

**Ione (Mamma King) Killian** (WHS '34), age 97, died 25 March 2013, Hoover, AL. [her obituary](#)

**Dr. John Byron Pennington**, WHS '51, age 80, died 27 Apr 2013 in Nashville. [His obituary](#)

**Robert William Ezekiel**, WHS '55, died 4 May 2013 in Birmingham.

**William Earl "Billy" Humphrey**, WHS '55, died 7 April 2013, Pinson, AL.. [His obituary](#)



### TATLER CONTENT CONTRIBUTIONS ARE SOLICITED FROM EVERYONE

**SEND US** proposed articles, images, songs, videos, poems, jokes, quizzes, obituaries, factoids, whatever.

Email to: George Nelson at [LonEagle@knology.net](mailto:LonEagle@knology.net) and  
Roland Monette at [Webmaster@WoodlawnHigh.org](mailto:Webmaster@WoodlawnHigh.org)

**IMPORTANT:** All TATLER issues are downloadable from [www.WoodlawnHigh.org](http://www.WoodlawnHigh.org) .

**PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO EVERY WHS CLASSMATE YOU KNOW.**

Issues are no longer distributed by mass-emails when published.

*With compliments from  
the TATLER Editor, writers and contributors*