

# KATY TIGERS REUNITE

## *The Class of 1980 Celebrates 30 Years*

Written by Ashley Withers

A lot has changed since Katy High School's class of 1980 stepped off the graduation stage and into a bright future. The Tigers recently gathered for their 30-year class reunion and found that the one thing that hasn't changed is the fond memories they all share of their early years in Katy.

### Remembering the Good Old Days

For many Tigers, their high school memories remain vivid as they laugh at their high jinks as teens. "I remember sneaking out of school for lunch at Dairy Queen," says Tiger alum, Doug Hanson. "We were the first senior class to have a closed campus, which meant we had to stay on campus for lunch, so some of us rebelled on the new ruling. When we got caught, Mr. Haskett would give us 'pops' with a wooden board. Wow, we actually got 'licks' at age 18 back then."

As the classmates wandered around town, many reminisced about their old hang-outs, noting how Katy has grown over the years. The old Dairy Queen location, Brookshire Brothers, VFW Hall, Westside Grocery, and Johnson's Rice Well used to be popular places for meeting up with friends. "Coming home to Katy was like walking into the twilight zone," says KHS alum, Terri Lambert. "It is not the same small town it used to be. It was sad to learn that the rice farming is a thing of the past."

### Reconnecting with Classmates

While the community itself has developed and grown a lot, most reunion attendees agree that it was always the people who made Katy special. "I hadn't talked to my best friend in high school, Jamie, since our junior year," says Lambert. "Seeing her at the reunion, you would have never known that we stopped being friends in the 11th grade! It was great that we seemed to pick up right where we left off, only wiser now."

Even though some had moved away and lost touch over the years, the reunion was the perfect chance for all of the Tigers to reconnect and catch up. "It was really odd, because some you recognized and others seemed like complete strangers until we made our introductions again," says Jamie Koehn Grimes, Lambert's long-lost friend and classmate. "Some people never changed. The best part was when we started telling old memories of each other [and of what] we had done that was long forgotten."

The reunion planning committee wrote on the class website a list of rebuttals to the predictable excuses people would use to get out of

coming. Classmates were assured that not losing that last 10 pounds or not being in the "popular crowd" in high school would not make a difference today. Everyone who attended agreed that it was well worth it and that they shouldn't have worried about things like looks or old rivalries and cliques.

"For the most part, the social 'barriers' among all of us had come down," says Tiger alum, Julie Dail. "We realized we had those high school memories at KHS in common, had overcome some insecurities, and could just talk about who we were and what we had become." Fellow KHS alum, Sandra White also enjoyed reconnecting with former classmates. "We have all evolved into more balanced adults," she says. "We now appreciate each other for the 'true' person on the inside." Hanson adds, "We're at the age now where the pressure to impress each other is no longer a factor. Everyone seemed more interested in connecting with each other and learning about each other's families than in impressing anyone with their material things or accomplishments."

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- Doug Hanson

### Bring on the Katy Fun

The reunion activities included a small mixer, a picnic with the family, a road rally scavenger hunt, and a formal event at Agave Road. In addition to seeing old friends and reconnecting with classmates, reunion attendees could also win fun awards in categories like having the oldest child, having the most children or grandchildren and traveling the furthest.

"The best moment for me, as a planner, was standing in the middle of the room and listening to the sounds of the reunion," says Julie Fonteno. "Our music playing low in the background, the buzz of animated conversation, and the smiles on the faces of old friends and classmates, I think that's the moment I knew that we had achieved our goal."

For Tiger alumn, Mike Hopfe, the event brought back all his good memories of Katy. "The reunion reminded me why I like saying I'm from Katy," he says. "The people are genuine. We picked right up again where we left off." While the Farrah Fawcett hairdos for girls and tight jeans for guys might be a thing of the past, the friendships and memories made have lasted through the years. Katy will always be a true home for the class of 1980. **KM**

*ASHLEY WITHERS is a junior at Southern Methodist University studying journalism and sociology. She has a while until her own high school reunion, but hopes it is as great of an experience as the KHS class of 1980 event.*

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