



Dave Morton – Class of 1954

The Class of '54 is very active. We have a group that meets for breakfast each Thursday at the First Watch at 83rd and Mission Road.

The Early Years

I attended Mark Twain grade school for kindergarten through 7th grade. I attended 8th grade at Southeast. We lived at 3620 E. 60th and 6015 Indiana. I have four sisters. All attended Southeast; two graduated from Southeast.

- Ruth SE'45
- Priscilla SE'47 or '48
- Elizabeth graduated from Ursuline Academy
- Martha graduated from St. Agnes Academy

High School Memories

Miss Feters taught speech and drama in room 212. She was the one who got me into school politics and turned me into a public speaker. She said, "Let me hear your voice." From then on, I was involved in drama and speech.

I was close to Mr. McMillan. He knew about my family, and that my father had passed away when I was 10 years old. Mr. Powell was a family friend. He was a member of the Baptist church I attended. No matter what happened at school, I knew he would see my mother on Sunday.

I was mostly involved in drama and speech activities. I was Vice-President of the Junior Class, President of the Round Table, and President of the Hi-Y Club. I was the King in Induction.

On the Senior Ballot, I was voted Contributed Most. My junior year, I won the American Legion Oratorical Contest. I spoke on the freedom offered by the Constitution.

Each year, Kansas City had School Day at City Hall. My senior year, I was elected Student Mayor of Kansas City by all the high schools in the district. I ran against two other candidates – one from Paseo and one from Central. I ran on a platform that proposed community centers in all areas of the city. We had a talent show after school to raise money for the campaign. The show raised \$56.30. We campaigned at the other schools for five days. Three cute girls went with me each day. I remember Barbara Fuller and Shirley Fenton were part of the group. I was the first Student Mayor elected from Southeast.

We had Teen Towns every Saturday night at the school. These were social evenings just for Southeast students. There was a dance in the girls' gym, ping pong and other games on the ground floor, and a bar with refreshments. The school officers chaperoned the dance. After my junior year, I was President-elect of the Round Table. I asked if we could have a Teen Town during the summer. That was the only time there was a summer Teen Town. I remember the shield for our class. It recognized me as the Student Mayor of the city, the championship Southeast football team, and the All-City ROTC Colonel, Ronald Belzer.

My time at Southeast was a time of normalcy. President Eisenhower was president while I was at Southeast.

There was no Round Table in the rotunda when I was at Southeast.

Construction began on school additions the year I graduated. The additions included the boys' gym, the balcony in the auditorium, the swimming pool, and a study hall and new classrooms west of the library.

After High School

I attended William Jewell College. I intended to become a lawyer. After my sophomore year, the vice-president of the college approached me about a position with Channel 2 in St. Joseph. He knew the owner of the station and they needed a summer announcer. I took that position and was hooked. I read announcements and did the weather on TV and radio.

Everything was live then. I graduated from William Jewell College with a double major in Political Science and History.

I continued working in TV and radio broadcasting. I worked for most TV and radio stations in the area. Over the years, I was a disk jockey, a sportscaster, a TV weatherman and the host of a kiddy show – Mort the Mailman. I presented the Kansas City Business Journal Reports on TV and radio.

When broadcasting became more automated, I decided I needed to explore another career. I thought I would do some substitute teaching. Since I had not taken any education courses in college, I took courses at UMKC and received my temporary teaching certificate. I subbed at Paseo and Westport in English and history classes. In 1966, I requested a transfer to Southwest High School. I taught for 22 years, mostly current affairs and contemporary issues, and the advanced placement classes. For two years, I was the Coordinator of Student Recruitment (around 1989). My job was to get students to come to the KC magnet schools. I could get them to come, but they would not stay. It was a difficult time.

Throughout my teaching career, I continued to work in broadcasting before and after the school day.

Note: Dave is the coordinator of the weekly meetings and sends out email reminders before the meetings and info summaries (often with photos) after each meeting. Dave was interviewed by KCTV5 News on May 26, 2010, when the last class of Southeast Knights graduated. He talked about the gatherings his class holds each week and encouraged the 2010 graduates to stay connected and celebrate Southeast friendships.