



Richard DeHart – Class of 1967

“If you have fond memories of Southeast, join the Alumni Association to help us preserve the traditions of “The Castle.”

The Early Years

I grew up on the east side of Kansas City and attended East High School for 8th and 9th grade. My parents both graduated from East - Mom in '40, and Dad in '36 - and an aunt and uncle were also East graduates.

Despite our family's history at East, my transition to Southeast was smooth. We moved to 3839 East 61st Street before my sophomore year. We were 1/2 block east of Swope Parkway, and there were lots of Southeast students in the neighborhood. Barney Brockman (SE'66) was my next-door-neighbor to the east. I remember the Payne family and the Kobersteins. Jim was in the class of '65, and Ann was in the class of '67. Cathy Campbell (SE'67) and Karen Flathers (SE'69) were also neighbors. My siblings who attended Southeast were: Bill DeHart SE'68, Becky DeHart SE'72. My older sister Joyce DeHart graduated from East in 1965 after we moved to the Southeast area.

High School Memories

- Graduation in the Music Hall of the Municipal Auditorium stands out. We had an after party at King Louie, and then some of us went to Sidney's on the Plaza after that.
- I remember parties at Porter's farm (Steve Porter's family).
- A group gathered at a house around 65th and Troost to work on a float for the American Royal parade.

- Ken Jacobs was a basketball star our senior year. He played center, and I especially remember the Pem-Day and Rosedale games. He scored at least 30 points in both of those games.
- One of my memories is having lunch with a group of friends in the cafeteria - Larry Schanzer, Steve Porter, Tim Wolf, David Franco, David Burnham and John Stephens.
- I remember most of my Southeast teachers, but my English teachers were most memorable. I had Mrs. Roberts my sophomore year, Mrs. Buckle my junior year, and Miss Johnson my senior year.
- I had Miss Ballinger twice - for geometry my sophomore year and for trig my senior year. She was no nonsense. We were seated in order of our most recent quarterly grades. The student with the highest grade sat in the front row next to the window. I think I earned that right at least once.
- I had Mr. Lockard for Drafting II my sophomore year. I had taken drafting my freshman year at East, but Mr. Lockard's class was much more demanding. I remember getting a D and having to work to pull it up. In drafting class, we developed our blue prints by dipping them in a special ammonia bottle. One day, for some reason I shook up that ammonia bottle. Mr. Lockard immediately warned me to not open the bottle after shaking it, but he was not quick enough to stop me. I got the ammonia vapors in my eyes. That provided a lesson I never had to repeat!
- Overall, Southeast seemed more academically rigorous than East.

Involved in Sports

I ran cross country at East and received a junior varsity letter. I was not eligible to run cross country the fall of my sophomore year at Southeast because of Interscholastic League rules regarding transferring students. I ran track the following spring. I ran the high and low hurdles and the 2 mile. I was better suited for long distance. In all, I earned two varsity letters in cross country and a junior varsity and varsity letter in track. East had a good track team. It was better than the East football or basketball teams. Southeast was just the opposite. The football and basketball teams at Southeast were better than the track team. Sometimes I wonder how I would have done in track if I had stayed at East.

I tried out for the basketball team my junior year. I did not make the team, but Coach Roitman picked Bob Langlands and me to be the varsity team managers. Our senior year, Ron Wissel, Bill Lunsford, George Swaney and I were the varsity basketball team managers.

Beyond the Classroom

I was on the Crusader photography staff my senior year and took many of the sports photos. I especially enjoyed covering the Southeast - East basketball games. I had played with several of the players from East before I transferred to Southeast, and a photo I took at one of the East games was used as a full-page intro to the basketball section of the '67 Crusader. Mr. Fritchman was the photography staff adviser. Others on the photography staff were Mark Propst, Paul Tivis, Gary Humbard and Joy Bailey. We developed our own photographs, and that could be challenging. I remember one with the senior class officers standing beside a marble stairway at the Nelson Art Gallery. The marble was very light, but there was a very dark metal urn standing atop the marble base. I worked quite a while to get the lighting just right on that one.

I was in Beta, and I remember going to the convention in St. Louis on the train. We had a Beta group that performed in Knightlites.

I was on the Round Table and Secretary-Treasurer of the Knights Lettermen's Club. I remember that the Knights Club organized a picnic in Swope Park, and I was responsible for the picnic supplies.

Current Events

- Beatlemania was at its peak while I was at Southeast, and I have all the Beatle albums. Their popularity went beyond music. They also had an impact on hairstyles and fashion. Remember Beatle boots?
- The Civil Rights movement affected Southeast. My senior year, about 25% of the students were black. The percentage was much higher on the sports teams. When the vote for cheerleaders resulted in entirely white squads, controversy bubbled over. There were walkouts and disputes. A representative from the district office was sent to resolve the issue. Ten representatives from each of the four classes, both black and white, worked with the district rep, and the result was an unprecedented second junior varsity cheerleader squad. The second squad included Southeast's first black cheerleader, Stephanie Bryant. I was one of the representatives from the senior class.
- The Six-Day Arab/Israeli War was at the end of my senior year, just before graduation in 1967. The issues behind that war continue today.
- 1967 was the last year the Athletics played ball in Kansas City. The A's moved to Oakland, and KC was without a baseball team until the Royals arrived in 1969.

- The Chiefs won the American League Championship in the fall of '66 and played in the first Super Bowl in January '67 against the Packers.

Early Work Experience

In the spring of '65, my father suggested that Bill and I might want to think about earning some money for college. We started working in concessions at the zoo. We worked some after the school day and on weekends, but full time in the summer. We worked six days a week, eleven hours a day, and earned \$7 an hour. I continued working at the zoo most summers through high school and college.

In '66 I was the bear pit concession stand manager. During busy weekends and holidays, a group of Southeast students worked as cashiers and concession clerks including Pat Gallaway, Ottie DePriest, Leslie Willhite, Mark Bryant and Rosanne Shields. In '67 I became the stock manager and was responsible for ordering supplies for the boat house, golf course, swimming pool and all park concessions. I also enjoyed collecting baseball cards.

After High School

I attended the University of Missouri at Columbia. I started out in engineering, moved to education, and finally graduated with a BA in sociology in '71.

During the summers, I continued working at the zoo. I was the assistant manager of concessions in '68 and became a zookeeper in '69. I worked with Casey A and Lady A, the elephants who were brought to town in the '50s as part of a promotion for the KC Athletics. We exercised and trained the elephants in order to guide them as we provided their care. I also spent time working in the Great Ape House and learned how smart those animals are. You can actually see humanity in them. I continued to work at the zoo off and on until I graduated from college.

My career has been with the city of Kansas City, Missouri. I have held five separate positions.

- My first City Hall job was as a probation officer. During that time, I began work on my MBA from UMKC.
- Next, I served as a member of the City Council staff where I met the future Mayor Kay Barnes. Each staff assistant served two council members. I worked with Kay and Ed Quick.

- I left the City Council office in the spring of '84 and took a city development position. I held that position for 15 years and worked in economic development, oversaw the budget and handled personnel issues.
- In 1999, Kay Barnes was elected Mayor, and I became her administrative assistant. I will say it was the most difficult and stimulating of my positions, but it was fun. I was the mayor's assistant for eight years.
- In my final position with the city, I returned to Parks and Rec., working on a master plan for trails, both on and off road. I retired in 2009.

I maintain contact with classmates:

- Steve Porter SE'67
- Larry Schanzer SE'67 (d. 2008)
- John Stephens SE'67 (d. 2008)
- Dave Patterson SE'67
- Jesse Munkirs SE'67