



Diana Horine Bay – Class of 1968

My most vivid memory involves Miss Johnson. She was a petite little thing, but one day she shoved a file cabinet in front of her classroom door to protect us from the turmoil in the halls. It was the day that the black students met by themselves in the auditorium. That was part of the civil unrest that engulfed Southeast and Kansas City.

I was never afraid; I never felt in danger; we were all classmates. I was angry at the outsiders - the news people who invaded our school with all their cameras and microphones and actually put some of their equipment on the Round Table, and the instigators from the inner city schools who came to Southeast to stir things up. In retrospect, I must have been naive and insensitive. I was not aware of the frustration and anger my black classmates must have been feeling.

I had heard they voted as a block to crown Dianne Dillon the first black football queen, and I knew a second B-team cheerleading squad was selected to allow Stephanie Bryant to be included as the first black cheerleader. However, I thought the big problems were “out there,” and what happened at Southeast was a result of manipulation and influence by radical outsiders. It is still painful to recognize that within the next few years white flight and changes to school staff would transform Southeast dramatically.

The Early Years

I lived at 7220 Wayne, between Paseo and Troost, south of Gregory. That was just about as far west as you could live and still go to Southeast. Only seven members of my sixth-grade class from Marlborough went to Southeast Junior. The others went to Bingham Junior and Southwest. My first memories of Southeast include going in the back pool entrance to take

swimming lessons and checking out books from the Southeast branch library when I was in grade school.

High School Memories

I was fortunate to be a Varsity and B-team cheerleader, and I was on the Tower and Crusader staffs. Although I had no theatrical or musical talent, my friends were good enough to include me in the Knightlites dance lines. I loved school and made good grades. The result was membership in Beta, Quill and Scroll and AAUW One Hundred Girls Club. My senior summary says I was in French Club, Y-Teens, Round Table, AFS, Induction and the Junior and Senior Class Business Committees, but I do not have clear memories of those activities. What do I remember? Here is a sampling:

- President John F Kennedy assassinated - November 22, 1963 - I was in the downstairs hall outside the locker room at Southeast Junior when I heard that President Kennedy had been shot. Girls were crying. It was very odd. It is true: you remember exactly where you were when momentous events occur.
- Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated - April 4, 1968 - I was a senior. The Civil Rights Movement defined the '60s, but the racial ramifications triggered by this tragedy changed our neighborhood and school forever.
- Vietnam War - The war was not popular, and protests were in the news. Boys were concerned about the draft. There was talk about student deferments, and some considered joining the reserves or National Guard.
- My mother never drove, and we lived far enough from Southeast that I rode the school bus. I hated waiting for the bus every morning. If I missed it, I would run over to Paseo by the time the bus was picking up Kathy Whan and catch it there.
- I have a lot of cheerleader memories. Jeanne Hughes had a car - it was green, and we called it the grasshopper - and she would pick us up for cheerleading practice. We chipped in quarters to pay for gas. There was a bottle of ketchup on the floor in the back seat; you always needed extra ketchup for those Griff's french fries. Sometimes we practiced on the front lawn of the school. Vickie Ellis was our head cheerleader and chief comedienne. She did this thing - she acted like an ostrich strutting around flapping her arms like wings. We would collapse in laughter on the grass. We went to cheerleader camp in the summer. The Spirit Stick was a big deal. I remember learning to cheer in a new way - different from the sing-song "Two Bits, Four Bits" and "We're from Southeast" traditional cheers. We were supposed to use deep voices, short phrases, and strong

motions. Each evening we would massage Ben Gay into all our aching muscles.

- I always kept a supply of red and blue hair ribbons to replace the ones Michael Bay snatched from my ponytail after B-team football games.
- Our junior prom was very special. I made my navy blue dress, had the shoes from Baker's on the Landing dyed to match, and dyed my long gloves with Rit dye. I had my hair done at the beauty school at 75th and Troost. Michael wore a navy tux and rented a car. He chose red roses for my corsage, and I got him a red boutonniere. The dance was in the Little Theatre at the Municipal Auditorium. It was a beautiful, elegant, traditional setting. (No decorated gymnasium for us!) We went to dinner with a group at Hereford House. It was perfect.
- I remember making Round Table campaign signs in Donna Newton's basement.
- We sat around in groups in the downstairs hallway waiting for our turn to go through the tunnel to get to the stage for Knightlites performances.
- I bought Fritos from the snack counter lady in the cafeteria and saved the rest of my lunch money to buy other things.
- Carol Anderson and I both had Chemistry the same semester but different hours. We used the same book in class, handing it off when we met in the hall to avoid returning to the locker. We wrote notes, drew pictures, and gave commentaries about class for each other in the margins.
- When I was on the Tower staff, I remember Mrs. Hunter corrected me when I wrote "he could care less." She explained it should be "he could not care less," as in "there is no way he could care any less" or "he does not care at all." Whenever I hear the incorrect phrase used, I think about writing for the Tower. I also remember trying to sell Tower advertisements to businesses on Troost. That experience told me that I would never be happy or successful in sales.
- Mr. Patterson said that you never really understand a topic until you can explain it to someone else. He put that in practice by pairing us with other students to review classwork.
- Miss Anderson would dictate recipes to us in Foods class, and we wrote them on index cards. White cream sauce, anyone?
- Miss Turnbow smelled like the hard candy she usually sucked on during shorthand class.
- Miss Johnson must have had a blood sugar problem. I remember she interrupted class one day when she was not well to have some orange juice.

Embarrassing Moments

- Trying out for cheerleader in a gym suit on the stage in the auditorium
- Being the least coordinated cheerleader; never being quite sure where I would land after a flip or one-handed roundoff, or if I would even make it all the way over
- Yelling during a B-team basketball game in the girls' gym with such pitch and volume that play stopped - the players thought it was the referee's whistle
- Having to wear one-piece cotton swimsuits that were color coded by size
- Attempting to recover after swimming in gym class by rolling my hair on brush rollers in French class while trying to stay out of sight in a language cubical

Proud Moments

- Knowing my Uncle Joe scored the first touchdown for Southeast
- Being in the first class to attend 7th grade at Southeast Junior and then graduate from Southeast
- Writing the Crusader tribute to Mr. McMillan with Carol Anderson
- Cheering on the Varsity and B-team cheerleading squads
- Hearing Mr. Powell announce my name for the Ladyship Award

Memorable Classes and Teachers

Harry McMillan - Principal

George Powell - Vice Principal

Vern Sinclair - Counselor

Mary Margaret Johnson - Senior English

Mary Roll - English

Bette Hunter - Tower Sponsor

Carol Spady - Crusader Sponsor

Theresa Bauman - Chemistry

John Reid - Geometry

Nate Roitman - Algebra

Mary Ballinger - Trigonometry

Elizabeth Coulter - French

Cecil Patterson - Civics

Emmett Smith - History

Paul Hester - Art

Eileen Anderson - Foods

Hazel Turnbow - Shorthand

Sara Gaggens - Cheerleader Sponsor

My family has many ties to Southeast including those who graduated and those who married into the family!

- Brother - Michael Joseph Horine SE'71
- Husband - Michael Rodney Bay SE'68
- Cousin - Mary Kay Comer Sims SE'64 (my Uncle Bill's daughter)

My mother, Dorothy Mae Comer, was the oldest of nine siblings. She and two of my uncles, Bill and Jim, attended Paseo since Southeast was yet to be built. The six younger siblings all graduated from Southeast, and three married Southeast classmates.

- Uncle - Joseph Comer SE'40
- Joe married Jeanne Nortman SE'41
- Uncle - David Comer SE'42
- Aunt - Alice Comer SE'44
- Alice married Donald Meyer SE'43
- Aunt - Frances Comer SE'46
- Uncle - Robert Comer SE'48
- Uncle - Ronald Comer SE'52
- Ron married Barbara Fuller SE'54

Beyond the school day, I was busy with school activities and homework, football and basketball games, cheerleader practice, sewing, reading, listening to WHB and the Top 40 (and burning through 9 V batteries in my transistor radio), trying to get a tan in the summer, and talking on the phone. (That would be the wall phone in the kitchen. I dreamed of having a princess phone in my bedroom, but that never happened.) Since I usually got home from school before my mother got home from work, I often fixed dinner for our family. I never had a part-time job - not even babysitting. I'm not sure why, but I don't remember wanting or asking to work.

After High School

Michael and I were married the summer after we graduated. I took a few classes at Metropolitan Junior College on Westport Road and worked in an office on the Plaza for a short time.

I was able to be a stay-at-home mom after our son Christopher was born. Once Christopher was in grade school, I became a teacher's aide for developmentally delayed students at Shawnee Mission North. After nine years with the school district, I decided it was finally time to get my college degree. I received my AA from Johnson County Community College and

then transferred to UMKC, graduating with a BS in Accounting. After graduation, I joined the controllers department at JCPenney in Lenexa. I worked in several management positions over 22 years, and I retired from JCP in 2010.

Now I feel I have come full circle to what I enjoy most. I am back in a classroom volunteering with the Johnson County GED program. As I work with the GED students, I often flash back to Southeast math classes. In addition, Michael and I read, travel, volunteer at church, and try to stay involved with current issues. We have also helped plan reunions for our Class of '68.

Michael and I are active with the Southeast Alumni Association, and I love interviewing alumni and researching Southeast history. I am so grateful to the first class of Southeast graduates. They laid the foundation for all of our traditions. Their decision to be Knights and Ladies of The Castle was inspired.

To those who are reading this interview, please forgive any errors or misstatements I may have made. It has been several decades since high school, and I may have unintentionally embellished some memories over the years. I wish I could remember more about four of the most significant years of my life.