



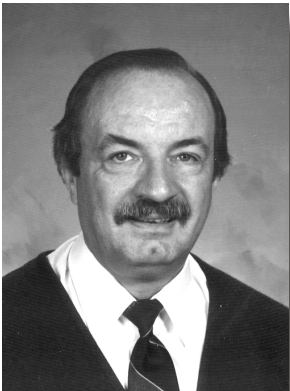
NEWSLETTER of the Joliet Township High Schools

RETIRED TEACHERS

Vol. 45 - January 30, 2017

Our Featured Retiree

Matt Kochevar



Editors note: The following article is by Dave Jaeger, a good friend, colleague and neighbor of Matt. Dave had been after Matt for several years to do an article.

1933-2016

From time to time we feature a story about one of our retirees. An article on Matt Kochevar had been planned for a coming edition. Unfortunately, Matt died unexpectedly on December 24, 2016 at age 83 before the interview could be fully completed. Therefore, we are doing an expanded obituary.

Matt, a lifelong Joliet resident, JTHS Class of 1951 graduate, and US Army veteran, began his teaching career in North Chicago before joining the JTHS faculty in 1960 as a social studies teacher. Matt received both his bachelors and masters degrees from Illinois State University and was forever a proud "Redbird." He had a starring role in the school play, "The Crucible".

When Joliet West opened in 1964 Matt was appointed chairman of the Social Studies Department and when the department expanded to the Humanities Division, he became chairman, a position he held until his retirement in 1992. In addition, he agreed when needed to serve the campus and district as dean of students, assistant principal, and district personnel officer. During Matt's years at West Campus, every seven years he was the building chairman for the important North Central Evaluation.

Matt was known for his attention to details,

organizational ability, and willingness to mentor new teachers. At least four of his hires later became principals in District 204 while others went on to administrative positions in other districts. Joliet West graduate Craig Spiers was hired by Matt in 1973 to teach social studies at West Campus and retired from the district as principal of Central Campus. Craig commented, "Matt taught me the skills needed to be an effective teacher and administrator. He was a good man."

Students also recognized Matt's ability as a classroom teacher. While in college a former student who is now a medical doctor returned to West Campus and told her counselor that she learned more in Mr. Kochevar's psychology class than she did in her University of Illinois psychology class and found his class more interesting. Matt also attended many student athletic events, concerts, plays, etc. in support of the students and his fellow teachers.

Retirement years found him attending spring training of his favorite baseball team, the Boston Red Sox. He also enjoyed tours of professional baseball stadiums throughout the country and an occasional trip to Las Vegas or a local casino with friends. For years Wednesday morning breakfast with other JTHS-JJC retirees was a must.

Matt was a member and volunteer for his church, St. Joseph in Joliet. He was a member of KSKJ, and his church's Holy Name Society and the Senior Citizens Club and served the latter as treasurer. His keen interest in local history dictated his membership and work with the Joliet and Will County Historical Societies and the JTHS Archives Committee. He was also elected to his condo association board after he retired from teaching.

News Notes

CAMPUS NEWS

JTHS FOUNDATION

The JTHS Foundation has launched its second annual appeal. Suggested donation include the district number - 204 – for example, \$2.04 daily or \$204 annually. Alumni are asked to please consider donating. Contact Mark Turk (mlturk05@comcast.net) or see their web presence at www.JTHS.org or on Facebook.

Dates are set for the foundation's annual fund raisers, the trivia event will be held on Sunday, March 12, 2017 at 176 West, 1100 NE Frontage Road in Joliet. The trivia event has turned into a very popular event with lots of fun tables decorations and audience participation. This year's event theme is "Classic TV". Prizes will be awarded for first and second high scores as well as "best themed table décor" and "costume". The table cost is \$150 with all of the proceeds going to the JTHS Foundation. There surely are JT Retirees out there who excel at trivia. We encourage them to form a team and participate in this worthwhile event.

The Annual Golf Outing has also become a very popular event. This year's outing will be held at Wedgewood Golf Course on June 14, 2017. The contact for details for this event is Nancy Waesco (nwaesco@gmail.com).

Bricks and plaques for former teachers and students continue to be available at both Central and West Campuses. John Randich (johnrandich1@gmail.com) is taking care of brick orders and Don Barnes (debrmb59@aol.com) the plaque orders.

A new campaign for scholarships, United in Excellence, has been started by Warren Dorris and has already received a number of donations. Contact Mark Turk at the above e-mail address for information.

As a result of all these endeavors, grants and scholarships for JTHS teachers and students have greatly increased, and, hopefully, will continue to do so. The Foundation is grateful for all those who have helped to make this happen.

The JTHS Foundation mailing address is c/o Joliet Township High Schools, 300 Caterpillar Drive, Joliet, Illinois 60436.

JTHS OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Kristine Schlismann, Director of the Office of Community Relations for JTHS has a new title and job responsibility. The position has been combined with Alumni Relations to cover both areas. She is assisted by Jordan Smuksta, the Media and Communication Specialist. Back copies of the JTHS Retired Teachers Newsletter are posted on their page at www.JTHS.org.

DEATHS

• **Diane Hartman**, was a recent JT Retiree in 2015. Diane attended school in Joliet graduating from JT Central. She attended JJC, St. Francis University and Lewis University. Diane worked at Central Campus for 15 years before retirement. She lost her battle with Lupus and passed away at age 62 on January 14, 2017.

• **Paul Morzorati**, died at age 79 on November 16, 2016. Paul attended Joliet Township High School graduating in 1955. He attended Illinois State University and Roosevelt University. He spent most of his career at JTHS as a teacher, coach and Athletic Director. He was at Joliet West as a math teacher and golf coach. He served as AD at West from 1966 until 1982 and Joliet Central as AD for the district which had combined the two campus athletics. Paul held that position until he retired in 1995. Paul also worked for 15 years at Oakwood Swim Club and numerous years at Inwood Golf Course. He was inducted in the JTHS Athletic Hall of Fame in 2008. He was an avid lover of golf, the Chicago Cubs, travel and sports. His greatest joys were on the golf course, rooting for the Cubs and spending time on the beach in Florida with his loving wife of 53 years, Sharon.

• **Don Tolen**, was born in Kansas – Illinois not the state – and he made this point to many of his students in his Earth Science classes at both JT West and Central campuses. Don passed away at age 73 on November 23, 2016. He graduated from Eastern Illinois University in 1960 and 1965 with degrees in Geography. After college he spent time in the Alaska bush working for the Federal Aviation Agency. After marrying his college girlfriend, Phyllis, they both enrolled in the Peace Corps where they taught Science and English at the Leyte Normal School in the Philippines. He taught Earth Science and Geography at JT West from 1968 until 1983 and at JT Central from 1983 until his retirement in 1994. Don was known for the large garden at his home in New Lenox and often invited friends to come and pick all sorts of vegetables for their own use. Among his many other interests were his pilots license, which he obtained in 1982, his love of building radio controlled model airplanes, woodworking, clock making, cross-country skiing, orienteering, mushroom hunting and hiking in the woods. Don was diagnosed with stomach cancer in April 2013 and tolerated chemotherapy and multiple surgeries over the next few years. He is well remembered by his many students as well as JT staff as an outstanding teacher.

and finally. . .

- An invisible man marries an invisible woman. The kids were nothing to look at either.
- Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says, "Dam!"
- A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why," they asked, as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess-nuts boasting on an open foyer."
- A dyslexic man walks into a bra.
- There was the person who sent twenty different puns to his friends, with the hope that at least ten of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did!

NEWS, NEWS, NEWS - SEND US YOUR NEWS

The next issue of this newsletter will be published at the end of April 2017 It will only be available in a PDF version or on-line. If you are not on the e-mail list, send us your address. The newsletter will also available on the JTHS home page (http://www.jths.org/community_alumni/jths_retired_faculty.aspx). If you do not have an internet connection please send \$4.00 to Alice Henderson to cover mailing costs for two years. Keep the news and feedback coming as we all like to hear from and about former colleagues. Please send information to:

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