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## GILBERT STUDENTS AND ALUMNI CELEBRATE FOUNDER'S DAY



At an all-school assembly on May 17<sup>th</sup>, the United States flag, flanked by the Connecticut state flag and the new Gilbert School flag, were raised at the East Entrance for the first time. See next page for details on other Founder's Day festivities.

## GRADUATION 2002!



Members of the Class of 2002–105 in all—stand for the *Pledge of Allegiance* as Commencement ceremonies begin on June 20th. Congratulations to this year's graduates.

Pictured below, Gilbert alumna Shelly Sindland '87 delivered the Commencement Speech. Shelly is currently a consumer reporter with Fox 61 News and has several Associated Press and Public Service awards to her credit, including special recognition for her series on the Chernobyl disaster. Her remarks were inspiring and thought-provoking as she encouraged the Class to pursue their dreams and dare to be different.



This year's Commencement marked a special day for World War II Veteran and Gilbert alumnus Gordon Cossitt Wright, pictured above. Mr. Wright received his Class of 1942 diploma from Principal/Superintendent Robert F. Gazda as part of the ceremonies. In accordance with recent changes in State legislation, the School Board was able to recognize Mr. Wright as a graduate of The Gilbert School even though he was unable to finish classes as a result of his call to duty by the armed forces.

## GILBERT SCHOOL CELEBRATES FOUNDER'S DAY...

On Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, the Gilbert School community remembered the school's founder, William L. Gilbert, and his legacy through a flag-raising ceremony in the morning with students, faculty and staff. Later in the day, the flags were lowered with nearly 200 alumni who graduated 50 years ago or more in attendance to kick off the first *Blue & Gold Reunion*.

Long a tradition for Gilbert students, the *Founder's Day* ceremony acknowledges their respect for the school's first benefactor and honors his memory as a true visionary of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following the day's festivities, a wreath was brought to Gilbert's gravesite in Center Cemetery and placed there in remembrance of his contribution to this school and to our community.

These events marked the first time flags were flown on three brand new poles at the front entrance to the school, given as a gift by three groups of alumni and friends. We are grateful for the contributions of the Class of 2000 in honor of their Graduation; the Class of 1951 in honor of their 50th Reunion; and friends, family and members of the Class of 1950 in memory of Freada Patten DeMars '31, all of whom made this gift possible.

Afternoon festivities for the *Blue & Gold Reunion* began with alumni and friends gathering for brief remarks and recognition as flags were lowered for the day. A Gilbert School senior played *Taps* while three alumni representing the three groups of donors actually lowered the flags.

Following the afternoon ceremony, we welcomed our "golden graduates" with a light buffet supper in the school's cafeteria. Those in attendance were given a special pin commemorating their 50+ years as a Gilbert alumnus. ❖



During the morning ceremonies (top), students and faculty gathered as flags were raised by the school's principal, Dr. Robert F. Gazda, officers of the Senior Class, and Dorothy Wetmore Robbins '54. Mrs. Robbins, who retired at the end of the 2002 school

year after 46 years of administrative service to her alma mater was asked to raise a new Gilbert School flag with the Gilbert "G" embroidered upon it. Pictured above are those who lowered the flags in the afternoon, along with Alumni Director Cindy Gould (far left). Second from left is Marjorie Hall Dombrowski '51; then George DeMars '50, Cindy Fixer '78 and Adam Atkins '90.



Close to 200 alumni and friends were on hand for this event. It was an opportunity for these folks to gather and reminisce about their years as students and for us to say thank you for the important part alumni continue to play in the history of our school.



# ...AND THE FIRST BLUE & GOLD REUNION



◀ Gilbert's oldest known living alumnus, Miss Rose Dyson '21, enjoys chatting with school newspaper reporter Mike Dallis.



▶ Eugene Scalise '42, Lorice Nichols Resha '43 and Barbara Palmenberg Reidy '43 catch up on old times.

▶ James Glynn '26 and his sister Mary Glynn Mowle '27 enjoy the buffet supper.



▶ Student volunteers from the Leo Club were a big hit at the supper—our golden grads enjoyed hearing about what's new at Gilbert!



▶ Anna O'Brien Harding '28 and Lewella Hart Francis '26 catch up in The Hive—nickname for the school cafeteria.

## SCHOOL HAPPENINGS



The Gilbert School Theatre Department outdid itself once again with their spring production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Directed by Paul Doniger, the play was presented without a musical score—as it was originally written. The actors and actresses did a fantastic job and all who attended were delighted to be transported to the land of Oz for an evening of entertainment.



Congratulations to Gilbert graduates Amanda Whitney and Erica Crandall, both of the Class of 2002. Amanda and Erica were honored for their work in art and music, respectively, at this year's Connecticut Association of Schools awards banquet. The CAS Arts Awards Program recognizes annually two seniors in each of the state's high schools for outstanding ability in the performing or visual arts. Approximately 1,120 parents and educators were in attendance for this year's event. Kudos to Amanda and Erica!

## FORTY-SIX YEARS LATER, DOTTY CALLS IT A DAY!

As the excitement of graduation grew for 105 members of the Class of 2002, so, too, did the bittersweet emotions and grand memories for an alumnus of Gilbert's Class of 1954. After serving her alma mater and five successive principals for 46 years, Dorothy Wetmore "Dotty" Robbins said her goodbyes in June (well, almost) as the more relaxing life of retirement beckoned.

Dotty's connection with The Gilbert School began as a freshman in 1950 attending classes at the original site of the school, now home to Northwestern Connecticut Community College. Her memories from those years are vivid and full of sparkle as she talks. She fondly remembers the enthusiasm and devotion shown by teachers who made such an impression on their charges, both in and out of the classroom. She remembers school dances in the gym; lunches on school grounds (no cafeteria!) and playing outdoor sports at the Rowley Street Field (no fields at the school!). She remembers the many lessons learned from teachers like Helen Sheldrick and Margery Bailey—lessons that have served her exceedingly well through the years. One special memory is that of a school dance that happened to have been on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday—it was at that dance that she met a young man from another school who was to become her husband some four years later! In fact, they married just two weeks after Dotty began her job at Gilbert!

Upon her graduation in 1956 from the University of Hartford, and equipped with an associate's degree in business administration, all it took was a phone call from then Principal Henry Moseley to convince Dotty that Gilbert was to be in her professional future. She had already spent two summers at

the school working with Clara White, who was Mr. Moseley's secretary for twenty-plus years. Miss White was planning to retire and her shoes needed to be filled; Mr. Moseley knew just the person to fill them! Little did Dotty know that she was about to begin an odyssey that would last close to a half-century!

Since joining the staff, Dotty has cheerily and ably served as administrative assistant, expertly managing the individual idiosyncrasies of five principals

the William L. Gilbert Outstanding Service Award in 1994. She has seen a great deal of change and has witnessed the effects of world events, both good and bad, on students and on the educational process. Imagine: when she began her tenure—and for the first several years—the "office" was a one-person show, with the exception of an occasional student aide. And it was a great day indeed when she received her first electric IBM typewriter in 1959—no

party recently, she simply could not picture herself anywhere else.

Listening to Dotty reminisce about things like the special sights and sounds of a walk around campus you know that this school holds a special place in her heart. Know, too, that The Gilbert School will be forever enriched by the impeccable manner in which she performed her duties and the high standards left behind as her legacy.

As was alluded to earlier in this story, Dotty hasn't quite stepped out the door permanently! We are fortunate to be able to call upon her experience and vast amount of knowledge as she helps out with an occasional special project and as a volunteer. She will continue to serve as a member of the Historical Preservation Committee of The W.L. Gilbert Trust Corp. As for life outside of Gilbert, Dotty plans to spend a lot of time with her husband Roger on fun and rewarding things like trips with the Elderhostel program and, of course, perfection of her golf game! She will continue to be active in her church, where she sings and plays in the hand bell choir, is Clerk (a position she has held for 40 years), and is Treasurer of the Community Fellowship. Then there's scrapbooking, ballroom dancing, cross-country skiing...the list goes on—along with Dotty's boundless energy.

Dotty Robbins will indeed be missed in these halls. But believe it or not, her successor is another Gilbert alumnus—Sandra Height O'Connor '71. Sandy brings to her job the same enthusiasm and sense of loyalty to The Gilbert School that Dotty did. We look forward to a continued tradition!

Thanks, Dotty, for all you've given. You're one in a million. ❖



*"The Gilbert School community is deeply grateful for your unwavering support as you have worked with students, parents, faculty, staff and alumni. Your cheery and always pleasant demeanor, coupled with your professional presence and work ethic, have been the hallmarks of your tenure. We wish you the best as you enjoy the rewards of retirement." —Celebration of Education 2002—*

and their staffs as well as supporting the day-to-day operations of a school. Beginning with Mr. Moseley and continuing with Mr. Nichols, Mr. Fecto, Mr. Steenstra and most recently, Dr. Bob Gazda, she has thoroughly enjoyed working with each. She has been the front line ambassador for alumni, parents, students, faculty and visitors to the school. It is no wonder that she received

more manual Royal! My, how things have changed!

Dotty's love for The Gilbert School and her gratitude for the education she received come through loud and clear during any conversation with her. She is grateful to have had the opportunity to work at her alma mater and to have forged so many meaningful relationships. As she said at a retirement

## ALSO RETIRING: PETER AND DEB DIMARTINO; KENNETH DOS SANTOS

Colleagues, friends and family gathered in late June to wish this year's retirees well as they prepared to embark on a new journey. Collectively, Doty, Peter, Deborah and Ken represent 128 years of dedication to The Gilbert School. In wonderfully prepared and delivered remarks, teacher Craig Schroeder, who served as emcee for the evening's festivities, captured the spirit of each as he recounted stories and gently poked fun at all four! Each was presented with a whimsical beach hat woven of palm fronds, signifying the many hats worn during their tenure at the School—except for Doty—she got a crown! And at the end of the evening, all were surprised to receive handsome Hitchcock chairs engraved with the Gilbert insignia—a nice place to rest and reminisce about their Gilbert years.



Serving Gilbert for 35 years, Ken Dos Santos started out as a French teacher and later taught Spanish when French was no longer offered. He enjoyed his years as yearbook advisor and will miss the students and the faculty he has come to know so well. Ken looks forward to retirement here in Connecticut with his wife Alice and to his service as permanent deacon at his church.

The DiMartinos have already headed to the warm and sunny weather of the southwest to begin their retirement. The couple has enjoyed teaching together at Gilbert—Peter for 31 years and Deborah for the past 16. Peter taught Spanish, was a guidance counselor for many years as well as the director of guidance. He and Deborah were class advisors for the Class of 1999 and were also advisors of the Leo Club. Deborah taught Business Education and was yearbook advisor. Both will miss the students and their colleagues—and Gilbert will miss them.

We wish all the best to Doty, Ken, Peter and Deb—come back and visit us soon! ❖



$$\begin{array}{r} 46 \\ 35 \\ 31 \\ + 16 \\ \hline 128 \end{array}$$

## ALUMNI NEWS



## 1928

"1928 seems like such a long time ago," writes *William E. Flint*. "I am living with my wife Bobbie in my daughter's guest house in Corpus Christi. We have been married 67 years and retired for 30 years."

## 1932

*Florence Vining Thomen* is a writer for *The Voice* and "occasionally" for *The Lakeville Journal*. She writes that she is "doing fine at 89; have 10+ great grandchildren. Still mow the lawn and have a vegetable garden!"

## 1934

*Leighton J. "Sox" Tiffault* passed away suddenly on Monday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Having spent most of his life in the music field, the Sox Tiffault Trio recently released its first CD, *A Labor of Love*, which won a Syracuse Area Music Award in February for best jazz group recording.

## Concerning items in Alumni News

Items included in the Alumni News section of the *Yellow Jacket* are submitted directly to us by alumni or are gathered from public sources such as local newspapers. The purpose of Alumni News is to pass on good wishes, thoughts and news of your classmates and to recognize accomplishments. If you prefer that we do not include you by name in future issues, please notify the Office of Development & Alumni Relations in writing.

## 1937

*Catherine Dew Geer* writes, "Retired; spend winters in Harlingen, Texas. Enjoying the good life!"

## 1942

60<sup>th</sup> Reunion: October 5, 2002

## 1947

55<sup>th</sup> Reunion: October 18-19, 2002

## 1952

50<sup>th</sup> Reunion: September 21, 2002

## 1953

Kudos to *Rich Hughes*, whose historical novel *Firefly* has been recently published. *Firefly* is set during the American Revolution and depicts the adventures of men and women during the early days of our country's founding. If you're interested in ordering the book, it can be found at amazon.com; barnesandnoble.com; winepresspub.com or by calling 1-877-421-7323.

## 1956

*Gail Jewiss* writes that she has retired from nursing home administration and has opened a new consulting business as a certified legal R.N. consultant.

## 1957

45<sup>th</sup> Reunion: October 12, 2002

## 1961 &amp; 1962

40<sup>th</sup> Reunion: October 12, 2002

## 1963

*Roberta Honaker Simonton* would like to hear from some of her classmates—any plans for a 40<sup>th</sup> reunion next year?

## 1965

Joel A. Fragale, son of *Grace Fracasso* and *Tony Fragale '64* is a U.S. Navy helicopter pilot stationed in San Diego. In late 2001, he participated in *Enduring Freedom*, flying missions from the Arabian Sea into Pakistan.

## 1971

Congratulations and best of luck to *Sandra Height O'Connor*, who has replaced *Dotty Robbins '54* as administrative assistant to the principal/superintendent of The Gilbert School! Sandy joined us at the beginning of last school year, transitioning into the position for the last year as Dotty prepared to retire. We look forward to having another Gilbert alumnus at the helm!

## 1977

25<sup>th</sup> Reunion: October 12, 2002

## 1979

Alumni Class Officer:  
*Carolyn Irwin Rogers*

*John Smyth* writes, "Still in Caracas; no immediate plans to leave. Should be back in the U.S. by

2006—most likely California. Hope all is well."

## 1982

20<sup>th</sup> Reunion: November 30, 2002

Hats off to *Jeffrey '82* and *Gina (Mariano) Bunch '81*, who welcomed their son David Anthony into the world on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8 lbs, 10 oz!

## 1983

Alumni Class Officer:  
*Elizabeth Irwin Cary*

## 1989

Alumni Class Officers:  
*Raymond and Astrid (Haskins) Robitaille*

Best wishes to *Darrick G. Sampson* who recently joined Ernst & Young LLP's Global Employment Solutions Practice as a senior consultant specializing in health and welfare employee benefits consulting. As a continuation of his work at Arthur Andersen, Darrick will help employers successfully manage their employee benefit plans and mitigate cost increases.

## 1992

10<sup>th</sup> Reunion: August 31, 2002

## 1994

*Bobbi-Jo Preston Koutroumanis* lives in Colebrook, CT, with her husband of two years, Bill, originally from Greece. The two own *Elaine's Pizza Restaurant* in Torrington and invite you to stop by and say hello!

## 1995

Congratulations to **Sara Stumpf Krhla** who was married last August and is now teaching at Hartland (CT) Elementary School.

## 1997

**Alumni Class Officer:**  
**Jessica Leighton**

**5<sup>th</sup> Reunion: Winter 2002**

**A message from Jessica about your 5th Reunion—**

"First, I would like to toast all of my fellow classmates that have recently graduated from college. Congrats on achieving your academic goals. I wish you all the best success and hope that you all continue to reach for the stars. I would also like to praise all of you that have chosen to continue your education to the next level—good luck! I envy your ambition and strength.

"Wow! Five years have passed already since our high school graduation. Can you believe it? I would like you to know that the class officers of 1997 (Andi Nagel, Amanda Gamari, Brian Angel, and I) are currently coordinating a class reunion planned for sometime during late 2002—possibly November or December. We will be in touch soon with all the details!

"If you would like more information about how you could assist us in planning for this reunion, please contact Andi or myself via email: [absolutegirl22@hotmail.com](mailto:absolutegirl22@hotmail.com) (Jessica) or [andinagel@hotmail.com](mailto:andinagel@hotmail.com) (Andi)."

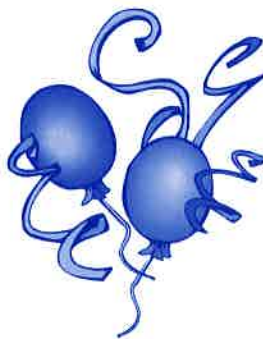
## 2001

**Alumni Class Officers:**  
**Kristin Kittelsen**  
**Jessica Leifert**

## 2002

Congratulations to the Class of 2002! We look forward to your future visits to Gilbert as alumni!

Also, congratulations to **Alesia Vaccari '02**, who was named this year's Laurel Queen!



## IN MEMORIAM

Clarence E. Anstett '43  
June 3, 2002  
Kenneth E. Church '28  
April 28, 2002  
Sarah A. Morgan Durant '23  
June 26, 2002  
Ruth Wright Euglow '41  
April 26, 2002  
Bernard L. Fields '68  
May 26, 2002  
Camilla Radocchio Fracasso '26  
April 1, 2002  
Irene Rebillard Geddes '49  
July 8, 2002  
Reno J. Groppo '44  
July 3, 2002  
Roy A. Howe '70  
May 5, 2002  
Bernadette Victor Kennedy '27  
May 12, 2002  
Gertrude Weaving Kuchta '40  
May 3, 2002  
Ronald R. Nalette '66  
July 22, 2002  
Clarence R. Osborn '35  
June 24, 2002  
Charles J. Pease '70  
July 13, 2002  
Leighton J. Tiffault '34  
June 3, 2002

Memorials are included up until press time and reflect information received since publication of the prior issue of the Yellow Jacket. Information to be included here may be forwarded to the Alumni Office.

## Upcoming Reunions

To date, members of the following classes have contacted the Alumni Office with information about an upcoming reunion.

1997	1957
5th Reunion: Winter 2002	45th Reunion: October 12 <sup>th</sup>
1982	1952
20th Reunion: November 30 <sup>th</sup>	50th Reunion: September 21 <sup>st</sup>
1977	1947
25th Reunion: October 12 <sup>th</sup>	55th Reunion: October 18-19 <sup>th</sup>
1961 & 1962	1942
40th Reunion: October 12 <sup>th</sup>	60th Reunion: October 5 <sup>th</sup>

For more information—or for help in planning your reunion,  
email [gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org](mailto:gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org) or call  
860-738-9439



Veronica Staszowski Rusckowski '39 stopped by Gilbert with this special addition for our archives collection. Veronica earned the "G" and the three bars by attaining an average of 85 or above for each of her four years at Gilbert. Students would purchase their own sweater and the Home Economics/Sewing classes would make the letters and the bars. Veronica also shared with us some vintage photographs and memorabilia from her years at the school.

We'd like to expand the Alumni News section of the Yellow Jacket. Whether you've recently married, celebrated a landmark anniversary or an addition to your family, received a promotion, changed occupations, started a business, written a book, won an award—or just want to send greetings to your classmates—let us know!

Simply fill out this form and mail it to the Alumni Office or send us an email! We'd enjoy hearing from you!



Calling all alumni! Send us your news for the next issue of The Gilbert School *Yellow Jacket*! Keep in touch with classmates and let them know what you've been up to!

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Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Office of Development and Alumni Relations, The Gilbert School, 200 Williams Avenue, Winsted, CT 06098

## TRUST ACCEPTS PAINTING FROM THE WINCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Members of the Historical Preservation Committee of The W.L. Gilbert Trust Corp. accept a painting of William L. Gilbert from Milly Hudak, representing the Winchester Historical Society. Pictured l to r are Tom Botticelli, Dotty Robbins, JoAnn Briggs, Milly Hudak, Elaine Fortuna and Par Rasmuson. The painting will be restored and hung at The Gilbert School, along with portraits of Dr. John Eastman Clarke, the School's first headmaster, and all subsequent headmaster/principals.



## Homecoming 2002: October 12th! Watch your mail for details!

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