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## Carrollton High Class of '59 Celebrates 50th Reunion

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In 1959, Dwight Eisenhower was president of the United States, and Fidel Castro became the leader of Cuba. The Daytona 500 was held for the first time. Barbie made her debut. Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and J.P. Richardson were killed in an Iowa plane crash that would come to be known as "The Day the Music Died."



Photo 1 of 4

### contributor information

s/shaddo  
Carrollton

[more from this contributor](#)

An eventful year, and these are merely a handful of the highlights.

For the 113 seniors of Carrollton High School, graduation joins the list of that year's mile markers.

Now the individuals from the small town that's become a vibrant Dallas suburb are preparing to come together for their 50-year anniversary. A half century has passed, and the teen-age students have become parents, grandparents, scholars and retirees. They have served in the nation's military, and they have seen the world.

Of the members of the Class of 1959, 14 students went on to complete bachelor's degrees, seven received masters, one earned a Ph. D and another finished medical school.

Ahead of the gathering, which will take place in mid-May, a small group of CHS graduates reflected on the past five decades and on their lives, both the personal and professional.

Three of them who plan to attend the reunion, Steve Gratke, Gerald Turk and Joe Pat Vulk, joined Chance Vought Aircraft in Grand Prairie as cooperative engineering students shortly after high school. Eventually, they earned engineering degrees at Arlington State College, now the University of Texas at Arlington, and spent the bulk of their careers in applied sciences.

Of course it wasn't without some adventure. Together, they have quite a travelogue -- California, Hawaii, Washington, Ohio, Japan, China, Germany, Mexico, Switzerland and Australia, just to name a few locales they've visited.

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The One for Children

Richard McCallon wasn't one of the college-goers, opting instead to join the Air Force, where he was one of the first computer programmers in what was still a fairly new branch of the military.

His entire career was in information technology, and his positions took him from the United States to faraway places as varied as Vietnam, Germany and Iran.

Patricia Kerr Laufenberg, meanwhile, received a Ph.D. and became a professional psychotherapist. She spent a few years teaching and counseling in public school system, and before that she worked as a civilian employee of the Defense Department.

Not to be outdone by her male classmates, her travels have taken her through a series of countries in western and eastern Europe, along with the former Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War, and China some 20 years ago.

"My big exciting adventure had to be going to China while it still held a great deal of primitive status in 1986, traveling in the biggest cities and into the backcountry villages and communes, where Maoist thinking prevailed in a regimented lifestyle for most," she recalls.

As for Ed Tuthill, the class valedictorian, he went to college at Rice and then to medical school in Galveston, which led to his career as a psychiatrist.

Before attending CHS, he led a "nomadic kind of existence," with a family who moved regularly. Until Carrollton. At that point, they finally settled down, and he went to school there all four years.

"CHS was the first chance I had to make friends," he says. Now he'll see them again. Some of them, for the first time in decades.

Posted by [slshaddo](#) May 11, 2009 7:38 PM, [Comments \(0\)](#)

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