

Student Memories of Dale Ponder

TH&VS Graduate 1975

Current position:

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Thank you for inviting me to remember my high school years at TH&VS. I remember that time fondly and, in particular, I remember teachers and good friends who made those years what they were for me personally.

I had the great luck to have some outstanding teachers take interest in me and to encourage me to challenge myself. I can't thank these dedicated teachers enough for doing this for me. It also goes without saying that friendships were a vital part of these years. I learned much from these friendships, including the importance of loyalty, generosity, kindness and shared experiences and laughter. And also, not to take myself too seriously!



Some of my recollections from this time:

- The excitement of our first day of grade 9. Followed quickly by the revelation that we were to dwell at the bottom of the high school social hierarchy for the ensuing year!
- Autumn football games with Coach Toffanello pacing the sidelines.
- Eating French fries loaded with vinegar from the local chip truck.
- The gyms of our old high school campus. The oldest gym featuring the smell of generations of teenage athletes leached into its change rooms.
- And for those of us who were girls, the horrid royal blue one-piece gym uniforms. The design intent not lost on us.
- High school dances in the (less smelly) gym; characterized by huge anticipation and the drama of teen hormones.
- Learning Fortran in computer science class. No Facebook, email, texting, cell phones, portable computers or DVD's. Landlines being the social media of the times!
- From popular culture: jeans; hot-pants; long hair; sideburns; plaid bell-bottoms; platform shoes; suede skirts; the hippy movement; and music our parents didn't like.
- Discovering Van Morrison. Black and white TV with Mary Tyler Moore, All in the Family and the last gasp of Ed Sullivan. Elvis Presley died as did Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison. The Godfather, Jaws, and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.
- From world events: the death of Mao Zedong; the Yom Kippur War; the withdrawal from Vietnam; Nixon and Watergate; the Munich massacre; Pierre Elliot Trudeau; Quebec separatism; the oil crises; the 1970's recession; the feminist revolution; and the cold war with Russia.
- And turning back to the personal, 5 years after beginning high school, my mixed feelings as I said goodbye to friends and family and left for university hundreds of miles away.

Thanks for the opportunity to remember friends, mentors and high school experiences. All the best for the upcoming reunion - I'll hope to be there!