

This used to be our kitchen.

Don Stahl, my father, told
Judy Schroder-Kelly
in the Main Office in 1971.

Rohwedder, Waage, Stahl and Sindt—
these West Locust Street landowners lived on the outskirts
of Davenport, east of Waverly Road, the city limits.
Rohwedder rented pasture, Sindt planted corn
and Waage-Stahl processed milk. Waage's Dairy hosted
the middle ten acre property.

At West, my dad worked as a custodian,
maintained the swimming pool and locked rooms
for the night. He knew directions
like he was in his
own home.

He smelled his morning pancakes and sausage
when he entered the school's Main Office. Here his compass
pointed north to his favorite horse chestnut tree,
the one he wanted saved
on his and this school's front lawn.

He loved education, the world of books. After the milk route,
he came home in the afternoon to a den crowded
with academia. His degree in journalism
from the University of Missouri
kept his right hand moving across the page
with writing. Reading was a room
of sacred ground.

My sister Donna read and learned in many classrooms
since she was part of the first class
to go through three years at West, graduating in 1963.

My second-story bedroom in the old brick house floated above
the school's gym. Most appropriate since
I was a Turner in gymnastics. I even let
my homemade sidehorses, Victor and George, roam
West's south parking lot. My grandfather's milk wagon team

of horses knew the milk route better
than he did.

Our rooms are now your rooms.
This year 2010, West High School celebrates 50 years of education.
Maybe some rooms of our old brick house
live in the classrooms at West. Whenever I drive by the school,
I still hear our voices
and check my internal compass
for the right room.

Happy Golden Anniversary, West High School!

Dick Stahl