

# Louis E. Dieruff High School Alumni Association Newsletter



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DHSAlumniNews@ptd.net

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## Huskies Helping the Homeless

John G. Hughes, Jr '61

Converting reusable, sterile surgical fabrics into useful products for Allentown's homeless population is much more than a "lemons into lemonade" story. It is a heart-warming tale of remarkable volunteerism that a dedicated group of Dieruff High School students are employing to elevate community service to a new level.

The voluntary sewing group, known as the "Sew What?" Club, selects projects based on their community service contribution. Currently, the club is partnered with the Lehigh Valley Health Network in order to secure an ongoing supply of recyclable surgical wraps.



Ruth O'Connell '61 models the finished poncho produced by the Sew What? Club



Dieruff students working the sewing machines making various items from teddy bears, to sleeping bags to ponchos

During their weekly after-school gatherings, the students creatively sew those 4'x4' pieces of waterproof material into tarps, sleeping bags, ponchos, and backpacks. A representative of the LVHN then distributes the completed projects directly to the appreciative homeless.

Past projects of the club have included mastectomy pillows, drain holders, heart patient pillows, and Alzheimer patient "fidget blankets". Those items were donated to local hospitals. Children's pillowcases were graciously presented to the Ronald McDonald House and the Sixth Street Shelter in Allentown. Cat beds were delivered to a local animal shelter. Forty-five stuffed teddy bears went to the Allentown Police Department for distribution to police officers, who could use the gifts to comfort children in time of stress. Another significant project of the club was "Stockings for Soldiers", benefiting Pennsylvania soldiers and sailors during the Christmas holidays.

Sponsored by the Dieruff Alumni Association, the "Sew What?" Club was established four years ago by Ruth O'Connell and Jinny Bankhard-Hughes, both members of the Dieruff Class of 1961. Ruth and Jinny have developed strong bonds with the members of the sewing club, and serve as strong mentors and role models. Not only are the young people in the club learning how to sew, a most practical skill, they are also gaining a wonderful appreciation of what it means to give back to the community.



## President's Message

*John G. Hughes, Jr. '61*

### "Pardi Hardi" at the Mardi Gras Party

Our Mardi Gras Party is just around the corner: Friday, February 26, 2016. It couldn't come at a better time. What a great way to "bash away your blizzard blues". Break out of your Winter Doldrums. It is time to "Pardi Hardi" with your fellow Huskies.

This is our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Mardi Gras Party. It has developed into a fabulous social event, with Dieruff alumni and guests enjoying the fun and excitement of New Orleans right here in Allentown. The East Side Youth Center is an ideal venue for this celebration. Beer, soda, and snacks are provided; however, you're welcome to bring your own supply of food and drink. One class annually creates their won version of "Bourbon Street". Our DJ will keep the music rocking, so wear your dancing shoes.

We'll be taking plenty of casual photos, as well as group (krewe) photos. Fred Schuler has thrown down the gauntlet, pledging that the Dieruff Class of 1973 will have the highest attendance. (Who is ready to accept that challenge?)

Someone recently asked me how we determine the date for our Mardi Gras Party. The answer is not as complicated as one might think. We first determine when Mardi Gras, "Fat Tuesday", is scheduled in New Orleans, and then we check with the East Side Youth Center for available dates. We then book "Husky Friday". That's a lot simpler than the formula followed for centuries by the Catholic Church. Christmas was established with a fixed date, December 25<sup>th</sup>. All of the other religious holidays were selected with moveable dates. Easter was set to coincide with the first Sunday after the full moon that follows the Spring equinox. Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is then scheduled 46 days before Easter. The day before Ash Wednesday is Fat Tuesday, or Mardi Gras! (Now, aren't you glad you learned that?)

So, spread the word. Purchase your discount tickets (\$15) at Stahley's, the Dieruff Main Office, or online at [www.dieruff-alumni.org](http://www.dieruff-alumni.org). Dig out your Mardi Gras duds (purple, green, and yellow). Join the celebration.

Warm Husky regards,

John





## Alumni Profile: Karen and Ron Coleman, A Husky Love Story

*Dana and David Ziegenfuss '86*

February 14<sup>th</sup> is Valentine's Day, so our monthly alumni profile is a love story that only Dieruff can produce.....

It wasn't uncommon to see love blossom throughout the halls of Dieruff High School. There have been countless relationships between classmates – some even resulting in marriage. One relationship, though, seemed to capture the attention of the entire school. That relationship was not between two students, but between two members of the faculty. Here is the story of Ron and Karen Coleman:

After graduating from Moravian College in May of 1971, Karen Benckert began her teaching career at DHS in September 1971, where she would teach psychology, sociology and history. It would not be until January 1982 that she would meet her future husband, Ron Coleman. Unlike Karen, Ron was not originally from the Lehigh Valley. Born in 1934 in Woburn, Massachusetts, Ron enlisted in the Air Force upon his graduation from high school and after travelling the world, settled in Tampa, FL and became a Master Sargent and principal for MacDill Air Force Base's tech school. This would lead him to become recruited as an instructor for leadership training and Dawn Patrol for the DHS Junior ROTC program. He later reminisced that although he had many jobs in his career, this would prove to be his favorite.



It would be the students and a few other faculty members that really put this relationship together. "The kids liked him and they were telling me that he was eligible and knew that I was an 'old maid'. He would walk by my room & I would go out to the water fountain to get water for my plants and that was my excuse to see him." Their first date was arranged by the DHS Future Business Leaders of America club. They hosted a "Dating Game" for the students and one round for the faculty. Ron would be the faculty bachelor and Karen was one of three faculty contestants vying to win a date with the bachelor. Karen recalls, "The question that really sealed it for me was: If you would be reincarnated, who would you come back as? I said the Dieruff Husky and everyone cheered!" Ron would choose Karen, and their prize was a date consisting of dinner at Walp's and movie tickets.

After dating for a few months, Ron and Karen would break up in May 1982 (a time which Karen remembers as "the worst 3 to 4 weeks of my life"). Ron would honor his previous commitment; however, and took Karen to the prom in June as he had promised her. It was to be a special night, as it was also Karen's birthday. It was that night that Ron had decided that they were going to get married. "Ron was a romantic – I was making hamburger barbeque in the kitchen and this was the proposal: you look really good at the stove – would you mind cooking for me for the rest of my life?"

Karen and Ron were married at the Moravian College chapel on September 11, 1982. "I wanted the gown and the flowers, he wanted to be married on the football field" Karen remembers with a smile.

In bringing a new dynamic to her life, Karen's view was "love me, love my dog". Kiska was a very important part of Karen's life and very important to Dieruff. After their first date, she was not so sure that there would be a second date with Ron. Kiska III (only a puppy at the time) bit Ron and Karen feared that he would never come back. Fortunately, the adjustment and fondness between Ron and Kiska was quick to develop. Kiska loved Ron and Ron enjoyed running Kiska out after the football team. Friday night football was one of Ron's favorite activities.

For many couples, working with a spouse can be a trying experience, but not for Ron and Karen. Their romance remained strong, as he would walk her to class and carry her books. They were not only best friends and husband and wife, but also colleagues who could relate to each other's day experiences since they both knew the daily activities at the school. This also provided a great support system for each of them. There was a time, however, where there was the threat of separating the Colemans at Dieruff. In the early 1990's, there was concern regarding the status of faculty spouses teaching at the same school. It was suggested that one spouse could stay at Dieruff, the other would be sent to William Allen. Due to Ron's involvement in the ROTC, it would allow him to stay and Karen would have had to transfer. Thankfully, in the end, no changes were made. "They were always afraid people (married couples) would bring their marital problems to school, but we always thought – let's show the kids that there is such a thing as a good, happy marriage".

The only two things that the Colemans seemed to disagree on was NFL football (Ron was an Eagles fan and Karen is a Cowboys fan) and the number of pets in the house. Karen remembers, "I would always say to Ron – you had 7 kids, what do you mean I can't have 4 cats?!"

Sadly, Master Sargent Ronald Coleman passed away in 2006 after 24 years of happy marriage to Karen; however, his legacy is not forgotten with those who knew him. The generosity of the Colemans, whether it be memories of ROTC ice cream parties, Christmas parties at the Coleman home or Friday night football games with Kiska on the sidelines, continues today with a scholarship in Ron Coleman's name. How honored and fortunate are we at Dieruff High School to call these two special individuals a part of the Husky family.

## Help Us Recognize Those Vets

John G. Hughes, Jr. '61

The Dieruff High School Alumni Association is seeking military veterans who attended Dieruff High School during the Vietnam War, but did not graduate due to entry into the military service.

"**Operation Recognition**", established by the Pennsylvania State Legislature, authorizes school districts to grant a high school diploma to any eligible veteran who served during World War II, the Korean Conflict, or the Vietnam War. We are pleased to announce that Dieruff High School is proud to participate in this program and we are anxious to locate, recognize, and honor those veterans who meet the following requirements:

- Was honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States.
- Served in the U.S. military between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975.
- Attended Dieruff High School between 1958 and 1975 during the Vietnam War.

Would have been a member of the graduating Class of 1961 through 1975, but did not graduate due to entry into military service.

Also, please note that upon proper application, a diploma shall be awarded posthumously to a veteran who meets the stated requirements. A family member must complete the application on their behalf.

If you know of any veteran who should be honored, please contact us at 610 868-4490 or at [dieruffalumni@gmail.com](mailto:dieruffalumni@gmail.com) Ann Blacker, Class of 1984 is the chairperson for the very important project. If you are a Dieruff graduate, please make sure to register on our Website at [www.dieruff-alumni.org](http://www.dieruff-alumni.org) and update your past military service. Thank you for your service.

**They left school without a diploma  
in order to serve their country.**

**They served with honor.  
Dieruff High School would  
like to honor them.**



## Kiska's Korner

*By Kiska V w/Karen Coleman*

Lot to celebrate in February. We have Groundhog Day, Faschnacht Day, Valentine's Day and President's Day weekend. This year, I am hoping for a valentine, other than from my cat housemates.

Dozer is my doggie friend and neighbor. He and his mom moved next door in August. We met at my fence and hit it off right away. Dozer is a cattle dog. He is my age and just a little bit shorter. Very muscular (sounds like match.com), but more importantly, he is a rescue dog, too. We were both lucky to get homes as young pups.

I have a fenced-in yard, a necessity for huskies – thus, there really is a Kiska's Korner. I sit there, watching the neighborhood. Dozer comes to visit, and like me, he is always on a leash. We talk. I tell him about Husky High, the kids, football and all the Alumni events. He talks about wanting to herd cattle or maybe tackle the mailman.

Know in almost every article, I keep talking about being a rescue. Even though it was a

short time, it was very traumatic. Hard not to have a home or be loved or to have some humans (little did I know I'd get a whole school to love and call home). Dozer feels the same way. Often we talk about the stray critters. Life on the streets and shelters is hard for anyone, critter or human.

So if you or friends have a dog or cat, please spay or neuter them. There are too many critters who suffer horribly before their short lives are over. Also, neutering helps prevent cancer in your beloved pet. These organizations provide low cost neutering:

No Nonsense Neutering  
1044 Quebec Street  
Allentown, PA

Center for Animal Health and Welfare  
1165 Island Park Road  
Easton, PA

Lehigh County SPCA  
640 Dixon Street  
Allentown, PA

A valentine donation to any of these groups would be greatly appreciated. All of them work on bare-bone (pun) budgets.

Husky Hugs & Kisses,

Kiska Diva Dog



## Husky Mascots...From the First to the Present (A Continuing Series)

Joanne Ogrydziak '76

Last month's newsletter included a shout-out to all LED alumni who have been the Husky Mascot. Wanting to share their stories and memories of wearing the Husky Head, how fortunate we were when we heard from the alumna who was Dieruff's very first Husky Mascot! In the Fall of 1964, Anita "Nikki" Kotoris '65 was invited to play the role, and, at that season's Dieruff vs Allen Football Game, another East Side tradition was born. I recently had the opportunity to speak to Nikki who interestingly explained that photos had been taken, prior to that city rivalry game, of both schools' mascots standing over each other in the end zone. With her confident Husky Pride, she proclaimed to the photographer that the only picture which would be later featured would be the one of the Husky victoriously posed over the Canary. Nikki's prophetic assurance came true as Dieruff shut out Allen that year 13-0.

A retired educator and school administrator, Nikki is still active with her Class of 1965 which celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion in October 2015. She was also among the '65 alumni who participated in Dieruff's 2015 Commencement program with the first class to celebrate its graduation in Allentown's new PPL center. Upon exchanging our own "Mascot Memories," we realized that the Husky suit that her mother had made (including a tail and paws, of course) was the very same outfit that I had worn ten years later in the mid-seventies. Likewise, the Husky Head, which was designed by LED Art teacher Ronald Glass and his students for Nikki's new costume, was the same one still "cheering" on our Huskies at Dieruff football and basketball games a decade later. We both fondly recalled the painted papier mache head that had been crafted over chicken wire to form the guise of the Husky Mascot.



Nikki standing proudly over the Canary after DHS' 13-0 victory. This would be the very first mascot outfit

A few days later, in a beautiful classroom overlooking the scenic interior of the Dieruff campus, I met with two students who currently share the duties of the Husky Mascot. With the permission of Social Studies teacher and Student Council Advisor Dan Jurasits, I spoke with seniors Rami Hazouri and Jack Yacoub about their experiences representing their school in this most visible role. Their smiles never left their faces as they excitedly shared their favorite stories – from climbing atop the cheerleaders' pyramid to having a friendly "Dance Battle" with the William Allen Canary. I told them both that I often observe the Husky at the football games interacting with not only the cheerleaders, but also with the Dieruff students, parents, fans, and alumni. I watch the young children clamor over the bleachers to give high-fives to the Husky who always responds good-naturedly, well aware of his public image symbolizing Dieruff High School.

Nikki speaking at her 50th Year Reunion in 2015

I was very impressed with Rami and Jack, who are both National Honor Society members, and could have spent more time with them sharing stories about Dieruff. These two boys exemplify the best of the many great students who walk the halls of Husky High. Before we had to say good-bye so they would not be late

for their next class, I reminded them that, no matter how many years may go by after graduation, Husky Pride will always be in their hearts. I have a feeling Rami and Jack already know this. Nikki Kotoris, our first mascot, knows, too.

Once a Husky, Always a Husky!

**I WANT YOU TO STOP INTO STAHLEY'S AND GET YOUR MARDI GRAS TICKET**

**Ask Bartender About Tickets**

**Dieruff Huskies**  
Join in the fun 5th Annual  
**Mardi Gras Party**  
Friday, February 26, 2016  
7:00 - 11:00 PM  
East Side Youth Center  
1140 East Clair Street  
Allentown, PA  
Sponsored by:  
**Dieruff Alumni Association**  
Ticket Price: \$15 in advance \$20 at the door  
Includes beer, soda, mixers, and snacks  
Dancing to live DJ  
**PURCHASE TICKETS HERE**

**Proceeds go to**  
**Dieruff Alumni Association**  
**"School Spirit Scholarship Fund"**

**HUSKY PRIDE...UNLEASHED!**  
LOUIS C. DIERUFF HIGH SCHOOL  
FOUNDED 1923

**\$5 Husky Magnet**

Below the magnet are three small images: a Husky head, a blue car, and another Husky head.

PROCEEDS GO TO THE  
ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
VISIT [WWW.DIERUFF-ALUMNI.ORG](http://WWW.DIERUFF-ALUMNI.ORG)  
TO PURCHASE



# UPCOMING EVENTS

To get your event listed, please email event before the  
24th of each month to: [dhsalumninews@ptd.net](mailto:dhsalumninews@ptd.net)

<b>February 26:</b>	5th Annual Mardi Gras Dance 7PM-11PM East Side Youth Center
<b>March 2:</b>	Alumni Association Monthly Meeting 6:30PM Meilinger Center
<b>March 5:</b>	Dieruff Band @ Carnegie Hall \$110PP
<b>April 2:</b>	Class of 1986 Cherry Blossom Trip To Washington, DC \$79.00PP
<b>April 6:</b>	Alumni Association Monthly Meeting 6:30PM Meilinger Center
<b>April 28, 29, 30</b>	"The Producers" Dieruff Theater Company Details to follow soon!
<b>May 6:</b>	HUSKY FEST - east parking lot 3PM-7PM
<b>July 30:</b>	Fandangle IV 2PM - 6PM East Side Youth Center - Details to follow soon!
<b>August 19 &amp; 20:</b>	Class of 1966 50th Year Class Reunion Weekend CLICK ON LINK FOR DETAILS: <a href="http://000/2/6/8/20862/Userfiles/file/DHS-66_50th_Reunion.pdf">/000/2/6/8/20862/Userfiles/file/DHS-66_50th_Reunion.pdf</a>

All events can be found on the DHS Alumni Website: [www.Dieruff-Alumni.org](http://www.Dieruff-Alumni.org)



Louis E. Dieruff High School

**Alumni Association Newsletter**

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We publish an online digital .pdf copy of the newsletter 11 times annually, with two special printed editions for the Fandangle and Dieruff-Allen Game tailgate. All digital copies will be emailed by or on the 5th of each month. Deadline for inclusion for the next month's edition is by the 24th of each month, unless arrangements are made. Please email articles, advertising and events to:  
**DHSAlumniNews@ptd.net**

All articles and photos are property of the DHS Alumni Association Newsletter. Visit the Alumni Association website [www.Dieruff-Alumni.org](http://www.Dieruff-Alumni.org) for more information or advertising opportunities.



## Fundraising BUS TRIP! Washington DC Cherry Blossom Festival

*Benefits: Louis E. Dieruff  
Alumni Class of 1986*

**Saturday - April 2, 2016**

The tour package **includes:**

- **Luxury Motor Coach** transportation.
- The **Cherry Blossom Festival in April**. Spend the day on your own in Washington, D.C.
- A **wonderful fundraiser** for Louis E Dieruff Alumni Class of 1986.

**The Cost is: \$79**

*\$20 of your registration is a  
donation to the Louis E Dieruff  
Alumni Class 1986*

**Register NOW!**

With PAM WARMKESSEL  
(610) 333-6617

Or send check or money order to DHS—please make check/  
money order payable to the "DHS Alumni Association"

**Payment due by March 1, 2016**

**\$79 RESERVES your NON-Refundable Seat**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_


Number of Seats: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_



PLEASE INCLUDE your Drivers License  
Number and Expiration Date on the Check

We will depart PROMPTLY @ 8:30am  
In the parking lot of Calvary Temple, 3436  
Winchester Road, Allentown  
and returning before 10pm



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