



Trena Catherman takes a look back to her high school days with the help of a 25-year-old clipping from the Farmington Enterprise. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)



MRS WINFRED OTIS



MARGARET KREAGER SMITH



WILBERT RYE

Class of '20s takes a fond look at old times, good companions

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Fifty years ago, Farmington was a quiet farming village where some children graduated from a one-room school house to attend high school with few more than 20 others in their class. Those were the years when Nancy Walton taught English at Farmington High School. Only slightly older than her students, she relied on a strict demeanor to keep her pupils in line.

It was also about that time in the early '20s that Wilbert Rye became acquainted with all of the streets in town when he came up from Monroe to court Doris Frank, a teacher at Farmington High.

Although the student population was small, they managed to capture first place in baseball, basketball and football for two years running. Now the teachers, students and athletes are half a century years older and memories of those days are fading. But they gathered together to remember the those times, last week at a 50-year reunion.

"WE ALWAYS ENJOYED every-

body," said Margaret Kreager Smith, class of 1924, who now resides in Arizona. "We always had a good time. Football was more than interesting. We would stand on the sidelines."

One of the young men she cheered on the playing field eventually asked her to marry him. "Things turned out the way I thought they would," Mrs. Smith said with a smile.

One of her teachers, Nancy Walton Tangers, now of Plymouth, was at the reunion to share a few hours with the students that once were not that much older than their young English teacher.

"I had to be strict. The boys were almost as old as I was. It was my first year teaching," she said of the class of '24.

Farmington has changed she taught there. "It was a small friendly village where everyone knew everyone," she said.

As Farmington changed and broadened its horizons, so did Mrs. Tangers. The Plymouth School District named a school after her, Madonna College.

where she was a faculty member, also, named a scholarship in her honor. She and her husband became world travelers who gave lectures on faraway places to homebound tourists.

ANOTHER TEACHER, Doris Frank, added Rye to her name in 1925, when Wilbert Rye persuaded her to leave teaching and marry him.

"She lived at Mrs. Pierce's. I took her away from here," grinned Rye. "I met her on a blind date."

A couple he knew from Sault Saint Marie landed him the blind date, telling him that the girl was tall and lanky.

"Instead she was small and good looking. A queen," said Rye.

For Dallas Harger, president of the class of 1922, the fondest school memories are those which recall the valiant winning teams of his last two years at Farmington High.

"That was a long time ago. It was right after the war. We had a group of fellows who had quit school and worked during the war. We won all the games for two years in all of the sports," he said.

One of those winning team members

was Russel Catherman, of the class of 1922. He went on to be inducted into the Coaches' Hall of Fame, to receive recognition from his alma mater, Alma College and have Dearborn's Fordson High School's athletic complex named after him.

"I'VE BEEN LUCKY," he said. Catherman's trek through high school was interrupted for a year when his father was crippled by a horse while working at the Farmington Lumber Yard. He went to work to support the family while his father recuperated.

At 19, he was older than some of the students in his graduating class. That helped on the playing field, he was a quarterback in football, a guard in basketball and a pitcher in baseball.

His age gave him an advantage when after appearing in a school musical, he took a fancy to the young music teacher Edythe Collier.

Miss Collier quit teaching in 1923 when they were married. Her stay at Farmington High was quite the sensation. She introduced musicals to the school and produced the Mikado, Miss Cherryblossom and the Gypsy Rover.



MR and MRS RUSSEL CATHERMAN



DALLAS HARGER



LUCY BANKS PRATT



MR and MRS ROSWELL TANGAR



Dining with old classmates was part of the evening's festivities as Farmington High School grads talked over their school days.

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