



Homecoming

Sept. 25 & 26

Honoring

Class of '76

Spring 2026

Scholarships awarded to six deserving 2026 seniors

Kathy Frye of the TCHS Alumni Association had the pleasure of awarding six seniors each a \$500 scholarship and an alumni shirt in May during the Honors Day event. Bailey Ritter, Karson Lyons, Trey Waldrop, Claire Leonard, Braxton Moody and Lidia Manzella were chosen for scholarships. There is a scholarship committee and each student must fill out an application. They must be descendants of TCHS grads or have immediate family members who are.

Since 2012 the Alumni Assn. has given out \$25,900 scholarships to 58 deserving seniors....not bad for our 17-yr-old Alumni Assn. The alum's donations to this worthwhile group will take us far in rewarding the appreciative seniors as they move on to their college days—and realize that we assisted them in a small way to achieve their goals. The Alumni Assn. is able to do this with our donations from our alum. If you'd like to make a tax deductible donation, please use the form below; mail in or drop off when you are back for Homecoming!

Donation

Scholarships for TCHS Seniors

Donations may be sent to TCHS Alumni Association, 907 Lakeshore Dr., Tuscola, IL 61953. These are a tax write-off. Name: _____

Email: _____ Class Year: _____

Address: _____

HALL OF FAME LUNCHEON

Jeremy Ross

Class of 1991



Jo Huber

Class of 1975



Thomas E. Ellis Jr.

Class of 1974



The three Hall of Fame inductees—**Jeremy Ross** (Class of '91), nominated by Katrina Chester and Susanna Williams; **Jo Huber** (Class of '75), nominated by Judy Weber-Jones; and **Thomas Ellis** (Class of '74), nominated by Greg Skuta—will be honored at the Alumni Association's luncheon at 11:30 a.m. at the Methodist Church, Tuscola. The event will take place during Homecoming weekend on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026. There will be a catered dinner served at \$15/person. You won't want to miss this memorable event. See the next page to make your reservation by the 11th of Sept. All are welcome to attend our event but there are a limited number of seats available. The Alumni Association hopes that past Hall of Famers will be able to attend also. For the Alumni Association, this is one of our fundraisers. We raise funds with the All-School Reunion at the Comm. Bldg., our Super Squares game, and the Homecoming Sponsorships drive. We have a hard-working crew who meet once-a-month to make decisions about our Homecoming events and scholarships. We decided to refrain from a member-only association who would pay a yearly fee and go with a donation-based organization. We are a 501c3 not-for-profit that appreciates your tax-deductible donations so that we can contribute to a fantastic Homecoming at TCHS, help award those Hall of Fame inductees and also give scholarships to deserving seniors.

Here is our Board of Directors: Bruce Wood (Class of '75), Alan & Marci Shoemaker (Class of '74), Ryan Hornaday (Class of '97), Cheryl Bozarth (Class of '74), Kathy Frye (Class of '77), Sherri Stewart (Class of '85), Lyn Kohlbecker (Class of '74), Tracy Hornaday (Class of '95), Heidi McFarland (Class of '88), Stephanie Kauffman (Class of '87) and Julie Little (Class of '88).

For Luncheon Reservations

Please, contact Marci Shoemaker for your Hall of Fame luncheon reservations at 217-621-2458. \$15/person for a catered meal. Hall of Fame inductees receive 2 free tickets. We are limited on seats, so order soon. Checks may be sent to 907 Lakeshore Dr., Tuscola, IL 61953 (by Sept. 11th, 2026) OR if you use Venmo, send to me at: @Marci-Shoemaker-1 (2458, if asks for last four digits of cell phone).

“Join us on Facebook”

Tuscola High School

Alumni Association

has over 3,100 members!

Renew ol' friendships!

Also check out

Remembering Tuscola

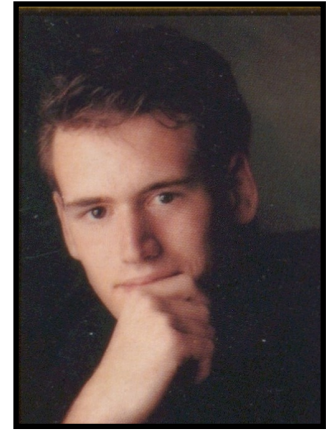
for some great reminiscing. . .

TCHS Alumni Association (501c3 organization) does not solicit membership dues. We are wholly funded by your donations and contributions to our fundraising events.

THANK YOU!!

Jeremy Ross

TCHS Class of 1991



Thank you to my sisters, Katrina Chester and Susanna Williams, for nominating me and thank you to the TCHS Hall of Fame Board for this honor. I graduated from TCHS as part of the Class of 1991 and hold many fond memories of my childhood in Tuscola. I was blessed with a loving family. My dad, Fred, and my mom, Gaila, were very involved in the community and church and were known for being warm and hospitable, often hosting large groups of our friends at our home in Parkview. Our loving family extended to my grandparents, Virgil and Mary Ross, and Mildred Grubb. Virgil and Mary provided “the best of both worlds,” as I lived in town but spent every available moment with them on our family farm just southeast of Chicken Bristle. I still escape to the farm whenever I can. My Grandma Grubb, affectionately known as “Grandma Middy,” was a long-serving secretary at TCHS. I’m now blessed with my own loving family. I met my wife, Sarah, at the University of Illinois, and we’ve been married for 28 years. We’ve lived in Monticello for 20 of those years, raising three children who are now young adults: Mary Grace (24), William (21) and Rachel (18). Beyond being involved in sports and other activities at TCHS, I was a four-year art student. Art taught me how to sketch things from my mind’s eye and craft them into existence. I want to thank my art teacher, Les Sluder, for that. At 53, I am still seeing and crafting things into existence. I earned a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Mechanization from the University of Illinois in 1995. Upon graduation, I worked for a large Caterpillar and John Deere dealership. This was followed by a year helping a local farmer, John Baird. I credit John with first showing me what servant leadership looks like. After helping John, I held positions with American Cyanamid and Dupont/Pioneer Hi-Bred. While at Pioneer, I met an executive at a large government contractor, SAIC, who asked me to lead a team developing advanced technologies to defend against food and agricultural bioterrorism. SAIC was my first foray into working with the U.S. government. In the fall of 2002, I had an idea for a flashlight that could be attached to your hand instead of being held in it. I thought of it while deer hunting on our farm. Initial sketches led to wooden carvings and then to functional prototypes with the help of Elmer Lash, a 1958 TCHS graduate and my dad’s best childhood friend. At the time, Elmer owned Harland and Lash Machining in Champaign. I filed for my first patent and then founded First-Light USA in 2004. Fast forward 22 years, and First-Light USA has delivered hundreds of thousands of lights to U.S. and allied military forces, as well as government agencies around the world. Our lights are standard-issue equipment for U.S. Army combat medics, combat lifesavers, air ambulance helicopter crews, Abrams tank crews, and are used by many types of conventional and special operations forces. They have also been standard-issue equipment for the U.S. Border Patrol since 2021. In 2018, while developing a new survival flashlight for the U.S. Air Force, we were asked to integrate cockpit lighting into a new flight helmet. This led me to invent a new way for pilots to control lighting completely hands-free during flight. That capability caught the attention of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), and we were awarded a multi-year contract to develop a hands-free heads-up display that virtually connects medics to specialists when casualties cannot be evacuated. That effort has been expanded under a NATO contract to address critical needs identified in Ukraine. Upon working with USSOCOM, I founded a second company, Hourglass Medical, that focuses on advanced head-worn technology. Beyond our military work, we have collaborated on smart-glasses projects with Google and EssilorLuxottica, the parent company of Ray-Ban and Oakley. We are also developing smart-glasses solutions for industrial applications through projects with ThyssenKrupp and Nucor. Locally, we work with CHI Overhead Doors in Arthur, which is owned by Nucor. I have been awarded more than 40 patents with the majority representing new ways of controlling smart glasses and other head-worn systems in demanding environments. I continue to own and lead innovation at both companies as we focus on listening to our customers and delivering superior solutions. I appreciate being recognized for my accomplishments, but the real credit goes to Sarah. It isn’t easy being a founder, or a founder’s wife, especially while raising three kids. I’m required to travel frequently and am often distracted at home. Entrepreneurship is an unrelenting roller coaster of wins and losses, sacrifice and emotions. Without our combined faith and her love and support, I would never have been able to withstand the challenges. She is a pillar of strength for me and our family. I also want to thank Mary Grace, William, and Rachel, they deserve a lot of credit too. Credit also goes to countless others who have helped me along the way, including my current and former employees, partners and mentors. No one builds anything worthwhile alone. Thank you again to my sisters and to the Board for selecting me. And thank you to the Tuscola community for helping shape me into the person I am today.



Jo Huber

TCHS Class of 1975

I grew up on a farm east of Tuscola part of the "Filson Road Gang!" I am the fourth of six children of Bill and Suzanne Huber. Mom and Dad were our biggest cheerleaders. They were always right there for encouragement, support, guidance and love! They were a wonderful example of how to treat people. I had lots of jobs out on the farm. Pressed into service at very young age when I could back the tractor and manure spreader into the horse barn so my older sisters and I could clean the stalls. My siblings were my best friends growing up and they still are! Johnne Huber Dobbs was the ringleader and mentor for us all. Johnne took great care and kept a very watchful eye out for us. She was always right there when you needed anything. She lives in Gastonia, North Carolina down the street from our mother. Jami Huber Owen is next in our lineup. She lives in Dallas, Texas and has the most kind and generous heart. Don't mention you like a certain item because it will be delivered to your front door the next day, we call her Jame-a-zon! Now, my brother, Rudy Stephen Huber resides in Sullivan, IL. Some of you that have brothers can possibly realize that they can or could be brats growing up! Mine was no different, although we did get along very well. He was a good example for me to follow into my sports career. Hard working, determined and very competitive. Then it was me #4 followed by Andrea Huber Burda from Graz, Austria, my very first roommate! There is not enough time to tell you all the inside jokes we had growing up and still do today. I was a bit of a caretaker for Andi, so she says, and learned from her that a little bit of dramatics was good for your soul! Heidi Huber-Kalin is our caboose living in Hollywood, CA and what would we ever do without her! Ten years younger than I and she was my "Best Friend!" She was our very own living little doll to play with. She keeps us on track with her spread sheets, assignments, great suggestions and song re-creations! I love them all! My sports career started with my siblings playing softball, football, hot-box, pitch & catch, high jump (with mom's lawn chair cushions), tether ball and basketball in the yard and up in the hayloft. My sisters, brother, neighbors and friends got to join in the sports activities. Anyone that was in town or visiting. Through jr. high and into high school I was awarded the Presidential Physical Fitness Award each year. That was so exciting for us girls to have that opportunity, and I was fortunate to be named the Tuscola Warrior, the school mascot, for three years. Then the United States implemented Title IX in 1973. In 1974 TCHS had Volleyball, Badminton and Track for girl athletes. I participated in all three of them my junior year. Volleyball: learning the game with improvement each game. Badminton: I was first in singles and doubles (with Jean Meyer) at Regionals. Track: I was the first girl from TCHS to qualify for the IHSA State Meet, the very first State meet for girls in Illinois and I placed 6th in the Shot Put. In 1974 Tuscola was Regional Champs in Volleyball with a great team. Badminton: I placed first in both singles and doubles (with Jean Meyer) at Regionals. In the 1975 track season I qualified for state again this time in Discus and placed ninth at state. After TCHS I worked at my sister Johnne's horse farm for the next year and travelled the Midwest and beyond showing quarter horses. In the fall of 1976, I enrolled at Eastern Illinois University, majoring in Physical Education with a Health and Driver Education minors with a teaching degree. I played varsity basketball all four years and was a starter each year. I am in the record books for scoring and rebounds (probably fouls as well). I was also on the Varsity Track Team all four years qualifying for the National Track meet in both shot put and discus in my senior year. I was contacted by the Iowa Cornets after graduation, which was a team in the Women's Basketball League (WBL), a precursor to the WNBA professional league. I was traded to the WBL St. Louis Streak team before the season started and played the full season there before the entire league folded at the end of that season. (cont. to next pg.)

In January of 1981 I did substitute teaching around the Tuscola area until I got a long-term teaching position at Unity High school in Drivers Education until the end of the school year. I moved to Peoria and taught at Woodruff High School in District 150. During my time at Woodruff, I coached volleyball, basketball and softball. Enjoying the twelve years at Woodruff making lifelong friends with both the staff and students, I purchased Balda Driving School which is a commercial Driver Education school that is the second oldest driving school in the state of Illinois. I owned Balda for 20 years with Jane Bertolino. Jane and I then purchased 10 acres in Normal and built a storage facility that we named Anchors Away Storage so it would be listed first in the phonebook. Jane's sister Jenelle moved to Peoria after we established Jolino's Kwality Baking Company a local bakery in Germantown Hills, so she could work for us while she took classes at Illinois Central College. After moving to Peoria area, I became a member of the Jr. League of Peoria, which is a women's organization committed to advancing women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration and training. I worked countless hours on the different projects through the Junior League years. I am still a sustaining member today. I was chosen along with Jane to be the co-chair of the Race for the Cure in 2001. That Race was the largest Race for the Cure in the country that year with over 37,000 participants raising over \$680,000 just that year. They volunteered for over 30 years holding several different chairmanships throughout the years and thousands of volunteer hours. I have volunteered and done fundraising for St. Jude Midwest Affiliate to help the Memphis to Peoria Run for the past 25 years. The money goes to St. Jude Children's Hospital. During those years I organized a committee to host golf outings that have raised over \$100,000. I currently serve on the Greater Peoria Sports Hall of Fame Board to research Tri-County area athletes, coaches and outstanding volunteers from Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties. I was this year's recipient of the Neve Harms Meritorious service award for the Tri-County area. I have lived for the last 13 and a half years battling Ovarian Cancer. As I reflect on those years, yes, it was difficult but not nearly as difficult without the loving support of my family, relatives, friends and all of Tuscola! What a wonderful town to grow up in. So much support and love shown by so many here! How fortunate I am to be from such a great town! I must thank all my fellow student athletes throughout my sports career, all my coaches, Judy Weber-Jones who nominated me for this award, the numerous people that wrote referral letters, all the fans that came to the games and my grandmother Mamu, Kate Huber who would listen to my EIU games on AM Radio WEIU (if she couldn't make it to the games). In our family we say, "Nothing would get done, if it wasn't for the last minute" and in my world I say, "Nothing would get done, if it wasn't for Jane Bertolino!" She has been my rock, head cheerleader, financial guru and life partner for 47 years! She has made my volunteerism and community service possible over all these years. Thank you Jane and to everyone! It truly is my Honor to be a part of The Tuscola High School Hall of Fame 2026.



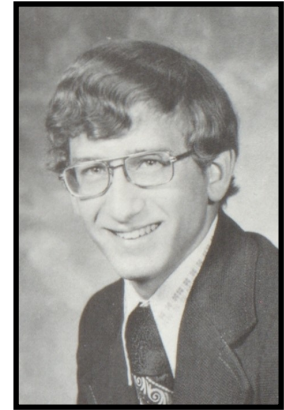
JO AS OUR WARRIOR

1973-1975



Thomas E. Ellis, Jr.

TCHS Class of 1974

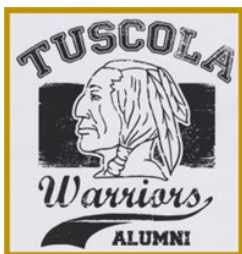


My family moved to Tuscola in the summer of 1964 from Robinson, IL when my father was transferred with his employer, the Central Illinois Public Service Company (CIPS). My parents, Tom and Joyce Ellis and my sister, Nancy (TCHS Class of '72), settled into a great community that provided many opportunities for us as we grew up. Tuscola provided a great supportive community environment as well as an excellent education system. It was the community and educational leaders in Tuscola that prepared me well for my future profession in architecture and construction management. After I graduated from TCHS in 1974 I attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and majored in Architectural Studies. Upon graduation in 1978 I moved to the Chicago area and worked for two architectural firms prior to returning to UIUC for graduate school. Prior to returning to graduate school I took and passed my architectural registration exam, becoming a registered architect while I was continuing my post-graduate education. During the next three and a half years I completed course work on two master's degrees, a Master of Architecture and a Master of Science in Civil Engineering, focusing on construction management. In 1986 I moved to Boston, Massachusetts and over the next nine years worked separately for two world-renowned architects, Benjamin Thompson and Hugh Stubbins. Each firm provided me with opportunities to work on signature architecture projects, which included two very well known projects, the renovation and restoration of historic Union Station in Washington, DC, and the new Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, CA. During this time I was able to work with outstanding architects in developing my skills and expertise in preparing drawings and specifications from which these buildings were constructed but I also spent a significant amount of time in the field during construction as the projects were built. That's where I felt most comfortable, being an integral part of the actual construction process. During that time frame I met my wife, Jean, and were married in October of 1991. Our son Thomas was born in January of 1995 with our twins, David and Elizabeth, arriving nearly three years later in November of 1997. In March of 1995, I secured a position with the Boston office of Heery International, a well know architecture, construction and program management firm based in Atlanta, Georgia. Over the next 27 years I managed design and construction projects for corporate clients such as NIKE and Georgia-Pacific Corporation, but also many public sector clients at the local, state and federal level. Over that time, I transitioned from managing individual projects to leading the business operations of Heery in the six state New England region. Over that course of time Heery oversaw some significant federal projects such as the Warren Rudman US Courthouse in Concord, NH as well as the new US Courthouse in Springfield, MA. During my career at Heery I was able to lead two design/build projects in New England, the renovation of historic McCoy Stadium, home of the Pawtucket Red Sox, the triple-A franchise of the Boston Red Sox, and the new Federal Correctional Institution in Berlin, NH. The achievement I am most proud of is the public educational sector work which included the management of the design, construction and/or renovation of over 30 public schools which impacted the teaching and learning of nearly 20,000 K-12 students in Massachusetts. Over the past five years I have led a public-sector project management team within the Project and Development Services group of Jones Lang Lasalle Americas (JLL) in Boston focusing on repair and energy retrofit projects for schools within Massachusetts. I will be retiring at the end of this year and handing off this responsibility to the next generation of construction project managers at JLL. (cont. next pg.)

During the course of my professional career I have been actively involved with a number of professional organizations such as the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) and the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA). Since 1995 I have been on the Board of Directors and am a past President of the CMAA New England Chapter as well as an appointed member of a number of national CMAA committees. Over the course of my career I have achieved additional professional certifications as a CMAA Certified Construction Manager (CCM) and a LEED Accredited Professional (LEED AP) with the US Green Building Council (USGBC). As a resident member of the Westford Permanent School Building Committee and Permanent Building, I participated over a period of nearly 20 years in the construction of three new schools and the renovation of three other schools, as well as the renovation/expansion of Westford Town Hall, J.V. Fletcher Library and the Westford Senior Center. I am extremely proud to have spent my youth in Tuscola, which allowed me to grow up in a caring community, provided me with a solid educational foundation as well as nurture within me a strong work ethic. It is the dedication of all the teachers, educators and coaches who have guided me through my life that I would like to personally thank. But it is also my family, the community leaders, as well as all my classmates and friends who supported me in numerous ways throughout my life that I credit for any success which I may have achieved throughout my life. I would finally like to thank my classmate Greg Skuta for nominating me for this award and for the HOF Committee for my selection. It is truly an honor.

-HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025 HOMECOMING-





TCHS HOMECOMING 2026

Schedule of Events



-Friday, Sept. 25, 2026-

1:00-2:00	Pep Rally in TCHS gym: Hall of Fame Inductees, Homecoming Court, Football, Chorus, Band, Cheer, Poms <i>Public welcome!</i>
2:00 pm	School dismissal & Parade line-up at Ervin Park
2:45 pm	Parade down Main to Daggy to TCHS
3:00-4:30	Reception in Library -Snacks & drinks
5:45-6:45	Tailgate with pork chops, ribeyes, burgers, hot dogs, chips & drinks (fee benefits Pow-Wows)
6:30-6:37	Recognition of the Class of '76 – 50th reunion – please report to the football field by 6:25
7:00 pm	Kick-off of Tuscola game at Memorial Field
8:00 pm	All-School Reunion —at Community Building—21 and over welcome—music by “AllNighter”—drinks served—snacks

-Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026-

7:30-10:00 am	Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast —Community Building
11:30 am	Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon – Methodist Church, Tuscola. Make reservations by Sept. 11, \$15/person (limited seats). Phone Marci at 217-621-2458. Venmo @Marci-Shoemaker-1 (2458, if asks for cell #)
5:00-11:00 pm	Cast Iron Block Party , Kleiss Plaza, downtown Tuscola
7:00 pm	TCHS Coronation
8:00 pm	Homecoming Dance for the high school

~Subject to change~

Class of 1976

To Celebrate 50th Reunion

Kristi Kleiss Townsend announces that their 50th year class reunion will be celebrated ALL weekend during Homecoming. They will be on a float in the parade and introduced as a class before the football game. Their class will gather at Hometown Grounds at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26. Please send your reservations to Kristi for Saturday evening. More info will be sent as the date gets closer.



Dan Cain & Kathy Jacobs



Ken Hausman & Meri Izquierdo



Dave McCarty & Maureen

Tuscolian Staff



King & Queen



Doug Corley & Karen Kaimar



Senior Lettermen



Jeff Oakley & Jarie Shook



HC Super Squares

Tuscola Warriors \$20 Super Square										
	1	9	6	4	7	8	5	0	2	3
8	Bill Riley	Peggy Helm	Deb Hott	Jessie Hanner	Bill Riley	Mark Volbed	Ken Hausman	Cheryl Borth	Larry Boe	Sandy Botes
9	Todd Wingstrom	Peggy Helm	Angie Wingstrom	Katie Wierke	Doreen Lyn Woodard	Nick Volbed	Nick Hausman	Peggy Borth	Ken Botes	Nick Minner
4	Blonde McC.	Heather Brown	Alie Hanner	Heidi Hanner	Sherry Hanner	Don Hanner	John Brooks	Nick Hanner	Nathy Clapper	Dale Botes
5	Peggy Helm	Nathy Freye	John Hanner	John Hanner	Cam Hanner	Bob Doolin	Bill Riley	Bill Riley	Bill Riley	Bill Riley
3	Stephanie Hanner	Bill Hanner	John Hanner	Bill Hanner	Julie Little	Ken Hanner	Bill Hanner	Ken Hanner	Wade Hanner	Hoey Hanner
6	Bill Riley	Christie Fields	Merri Shae	Alie Shae	Bill Riley	Tina Rosso	Dave McCarty	Sandy Hoke	Larry Boe	Larry Boe
0	Mary's	Nicki Hanner	Ken Hanner	Ken Hanner	Robert Hanner	Wade Hanner	Stephanie Hanner	Nathy Freye	Mary Hanner	Larry Boe
2	Bill Riley	Josh Hanner	Alan Hanner	W Hanner	Terry Hanner	Don Hanner	Bill Riley	Ann Hanner	Brace Hanner	Wade Hanner
1	Nathy Freye	Ken Hanner	Kristin Hanner	Bill Hanner	Sherry Hanner	Cheryl Hanner	Carol Hanner	Julie Little	Nathy Freye	Mary Hanner
7	Febe Cross	Nathy Freye	Andrea Hanner	Andrea Hanner	Josh Hanner	Frank Hanner	Nathy Freye	Stephanie Hanner	Nick Hanner	Bill Riley
Q-1 Q-2 Q-3 FINAL										
\$100 \$200 \$100 \$700										
PAYOUT - HOME COMING -										

Be sure and watch for us at the home football games in August & September where we will be selling the squares for your chance to WIN with the scores from the Homecoming football game on Sept. 25. We've played \$10 & \$20 square boards. Watch for us also on the Facebook page of the Tuscola High School Alumni Association which is a public forum.

W-A-R-R-I-O-R-S