

Homecoming  
Sept. 30 & Oct. 1  
Honoring  
Class of '72



# HALL OF FAME LUNCHEON

The three Hall of Fame inductees—Cynthia Gates, PhD (Class of '72), Ann Flesor Beck, PhD (Class of '72), and Devon Flesor Story (Class of '80)—will be honored at the Alumni Association's luncheon at 11:30 a.m. at the Methodist Church, 901 N. Prairie, Tuscola. The event will take place during Homecoming weekend on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022. There will be a catered dinner served at \$20/person. You won't want to miss this memorable event. See the next page to make your reservation by the 15th 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 this event. For the Alumni Association, this is one of our fundraisers. The other being the All-School Reunion at the Comm. Bldg. 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 and also give scholarships to deserving seniors.

*Here is our committee: 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), Becky Carroll (Class of '66), Jerie Wills (Class of '73) and Julie Little (Class of '88).*

**Devon Flesor Story**  
Class of 1980



**Ann Flesor Beck, PhD**  
Class of 1972

**Cynthia Gates, PhD**  
Class of 1972



**“Join us on Facebook”**

Tuscola High School

Alumni Association

has over 2,300 friends!

Renew ol’ friendships!

Also check out

Remembering Tuscola

for some great reminiscing. . .



**Homecoming 2023**

**Sept. 22 & 23**

***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!!***

## **For Luncheon Reservations**

Please, contact Marci Shoemaker for your Hall of Fame luncheon reservations at 217-253-9400. Leave a message if she is gone. \$20/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. 15th, 2022) OR if you use Venmo, send to me at: @Marci-Shoemaker-1 (2458, if asks for last four digits of cell phone).

# HOME COMING 2022

## Schedule of Events

### ***-Friday, Sept. 30, 2022-***

- 1:00-1:50**      **Pep Rally in TCHS gym: Hall of Fame Inductees, Homecoming Court, Football, Chorus, Band, Cheer, Poms *Public welcome!***
- 1:50 pm**      **School dismissal & Parade line-up at Ervin Park**
- 2:30**      **Parade down Main to Daggy to TCHS**
- 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 '72 - 50<sup>th</sup> reunion - please report to the football field by 6:25**
- 7:00**      **Kick-off of Tuscola/Clinton football game at Memorial Field**
- 9:00**      **All-School Reunion—at Community Building—21 and over welcome—\$1 entry—featuring Corey Evitts music—drinks served—snacks**

### ***-Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022-***

- 7:00-10:00 am**      **Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast—Community Building**
- 11:30 am**      **Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon - Methodist Church, 901 N. Prairie St., Tuscola. Make reservations by Sept. 15, \$20/person (limited seats). Phone Marci at 217-253-9400/Venmo @Marci-Shoemaker-1 (2458, if asks for cell #)**
- 7:00 pm**      **TCHS Coronation**
- 8:00-11 pm**      **Homecoming Dance for the high school**

**~Subject to change~**

# Scholarships awarded to five deserving 2022 seniors

The TCHS Alumni Association had the pleasure of awarding five seniors each a \$500 scholarship and an alumni shirt in May during the Honors Day event. Sophie Kremitzki, Amelia Bosch, Kathryn Dean, Haven Hatfield and Patrick Pierce 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 \$16,400 in scholarships to deserving seniors: Robert Lopez '12—\$250; Ashley Hunt '13—\$250; Macie Edwards, Jacob Stuart, Hannah Scribner '14—\$500 each; Maria Meyer, Eric Ponder, Zach Bates '15—\$500 each; Nick Bates, Halle McCrory, Alexis Sluder '16—\$500 each; Calleigh Miller and Will Bosch '17—\$700 each; Darynn Burton, Samantha Kidwell, Olivia Chester '18—\$500 each; McKinlee Miller, Natalie Bates, Faith Hardwick '19—\$500 each; Kelsey Slaughter Carli Stone, Lucas Kresin, Mason Day '20—\$500 each; Justine Kauffman, Donovan Chester, Dillan Alcorn, Riya Patel, and Hannah Hornaday '21—\$500 each....not bad for our 14-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 and mail in or drop off when you are back for Homecoming!

## THANK YOU, ALUMNI!!!!

*Donation*

Scholarships for TCHS Seniors

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Devon Flesor Story TCHS Class of 1980**

On November 16, 1962, I was born in Hanover, Pennsylvania to Margaret Elizabeth (Betty) and Paul G. Flesor. I was two weeks late and have been running late ever since.

Our little family moved to Tuscola a few years later to join our Greek immigrant grandfather Gus in the family confectionery business. He was REALLY old by then and needed our help. My sister Ann (husband Roger), brother Scott (wife Tracy), and I were “raised” in the store. It was at the center of our lives, and we couldn’t wait to grow up and do anything besides scoop ice cream, make candy, package candy, sell candy.

Both fortunately and unfortunately, I got my chance to escape the candy store life when my parents went out of business during my early high school years. Those were tough times, but I emerged stronger and made a beeline for Eastern Illinois University, the best “cheap” yet good college close by. In fact, Eastern became what I call my personal one-room schoolhouse. I earned a couple of degrees in the English Department and then somehow ended up teaching there for sixteen years. I loved it.

In 2003, Ann talked me into quitting my perfectly good job (summers and holidays off, “government check,” good benefits) to go into debt and return to hard labor. We reclaimed our family’s now trashed-out building and in 2004, after 18 months of renovation, Ann and I reopened what we now call Flesor’s Candy Kitchen on the corner of Main and Sale in Tuscola. We’re proud of what we accomplished.

A few months ago Ann retired and my husband Robert (Bob) Story and I took over ownership and operation of the business. We’re not young, but we’re determined to carry on the family tradition. Thank God we have a great staff and supportive customers!

Like my parents, I raised three children in the store: Nicholas Moore (Ruriko), Sendai, Japan; Alexis Nau, Chicago; and Paul Nau, Tuscola. I am happy to report that Tuscola public schools along with their independent studies, prepared my children well for university coursework.

Looking back, I chuckle about the crazy jobs I had in my early days: waitress, waitress, waitress, dishwasher, house cleaner, shoe salesperson, high school teacher, substitute and GED teacher, life insurance salesperson, jewelry salesperson, telemarketer, union organizer. I’m sure I’ve repressed quite a few more.

When I’m not at our store, I’m reading a book, weeding the garden, or browsing in some junk shop. I sing a lot. And I love a cocktail or three on the patio after work. Life is good.

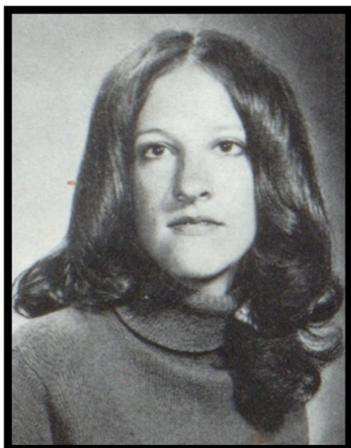
Thank you for choosing my sister and me for the TCHS Hall of Fame. I was a completely out-of-control high school kid, so the honor makes me giggle a bit. I tell people that I’m making up for the sins of my youth every day I work at the Candy Kitchen. So true. So true.

**Ann Flesor Beck, PhD**  
**TCHS Class of 1972**



Ann Flesor Beck spent her later childhood and teen years in Tuscola, enjoying small town life. “I learned about being a good neighbor, how to be in business, and what makes a thriving community.” After spending a few decades in Iowa and Connecticut, Ann returned to central Illinois where she completed her graduate work at the University of Illinois, earning a Ph.D. in education. Her book, Sweet Greeks: First-Generation Immigrant Confectioners in the Heartland is an honorific to her grandfather, Gus Flesor, and a tribute to the first-generation Greek immigrants in Central Illinois. Ann joined her sister, Devon, in reestablishing Flesor’s Candy Kitchen in 2004. “We appreciate the initial and continued support of the City of Tuscola and the many customers, old and new, who welcomed us back on the corner of Main and Sale Streets. It has been a true labor of love!”

Ann recently retired from Flesor’s, leaving Devon and her husband to carry on the tradition. She continues her global travels and volunteer work with international and local programs for women. “Thank you for the honor in representing Tuscola.”



## **Cynthia Gates, PhD TCHS Class of 1972**

As a kid growing up on the family farm, I was immersed in a setting that nurtured my curiosity in the natural world. My parents, Gaylord and Rowena Gates, and my older sister and brother, Julia and Mark, encouraged my keen interest in things scientific. I loved our set of encyclopedias and pored over the chapters on human anatomy. I was always on hand to watch my mother pluck and gut a chicken for Sunday dinner because the innards fascinated me. Mom recalls when I was 6 years old, she found me sitting on the living room floor trying to read about human evolution in Julia's college level biology textbook. I also drove Helen Whalen (my first grade teacher) nuts with my dinosaur obsession to the point where she asked, "Cindy, do you want to teach this class or should I?"

So, I knew from a very early age that I wanted to be a scientist. The support from my family and my education in the Tuscola public schools laid the foundation for what would become a career as a scientist. It was a given that I would take biology, physics, and chemistry classes at TCHS. Anita Brown (biology) and Kay Kleiss (physics, chemistry) were marvelous teachers who gave me a leg-up when I enrolled at the University of Illinois-Urbana after graduation from TCHS.

However, as a freshman, I had no clear idea of what kind of scientist I wanted to be, so I defaulted to a pre-med biology major. That was an impersonal, often cutthroat, major with large classes, and I did not thrive in it. I changed majors to architecture for a while, but the life sciences called me back, and I chose a major in botany. However, I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a botanist out collecting and classifying plants or something else.

A class in plant natural products chemistry awoke my interests in biochemistry and advanced organic chemistry big-time. After spending the summer of 1977 at the Marine Biology Laboratory in Woods Hole, MA, I returned to Illinois to work as a research associate in the plant pathology department at the U of I while strengthening my chemistry credentials. The interactions of small molecules with enzymes and receptors in the human body fascinated me. I knew that I was on the path to becoming a drug hunter.

In 1979, I married my husband, John van Melle, who grew up in Homewood, IL. A year later, I was accepted into the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Pharmacy in the pharmaceutical biochemistry doctoral program, so we moved north to Madison, a beautiful city. There I experienced intensely competitive classes along with the frustrations of failed experiments and the rewards of those that were successful. I worked hard, often spending weekends and late nights in the lab, but it was an incredible education. I made lifelong friends while in grad school, and I was exposed to an amazing diversity of people.

I defended my doctoral thesis in February of 1986 and almost immediately started my post-doctoral work in the UW-Madison Biochemistry department. In addition to my academic accomplishments, John and I welcomed our son, Marc, who was born in 1987. I also made the decision to pursue a career in the pharmaceutical industry.

My career in pharma research started with my first "real job" in 1988 at Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals in Cincinnati, OH where I became a senior scientist in the chemistry department at Merrell Dow, which became Marion Merrell Dow (MMD) after a merger. After 9 years at MMD, I joined Vertex Pharmaceuticals as a senior staff investigator. My family, which now included our daughter Laura, moved to Cambridge, MA in 1998. I had the most rewarding experiences in pharma research at Vertex and truly fell in love with the Boston area. A friend described me as "a Douglas County Yankee in Ted Kennedy's court."

In 2004, Bristol-Myers Squibb (a "Big Pharma") lured me away from Vertex to become the department head of a group of 12 biochemists. We then moved from Cambridge, MA to Princeton, NJ. My job at BMS became less scientific and more about counting "metrics" and all that comes with "people management." I was unhappy in that role, so during a period of lay-offs, I raised my hand for voluntary severance. I then had the luxury of 6 months to think about next steps. I decided to pursue a longtime interest in drug development (the "D" of research and development/R&D).

Because of my experience in writing publications, patents, and even putting together PowerPoint slides, I chose to pursue regulatory medical writing. A regulatory medical writer creates the documentation that regulatory agencies require in the approval process for drugs, devices and biologics.

I landed a job at Biogen in the medical writing department, so we moved back to Boston in 2010. At Biogen, I have focused on neurology/neurosciences and late-stage drug development. Neurology is an especially challenging and risky therapeutic area in which there have been many more failed drugs than successes.

Drug hunting is hard work. The research and development process includes creating and identifying a drug, performing preclinical and clinical studies, and receiving marketing approval after its regulatory review. This process is associated with an extremely low success rate, about 1 compound in 20,000 to 30,000 drug candidates. Additionally, the clinical development of a candidate compound, from the start of a clinical trial to marketing approval, has a low success rate (10% to 20%) and requires a huge investment that continues increasing year by year.

Because of these long odds, many scientists in pharma R&D may never see a drug they have worked on become a marketed product for patients. I have been fortunate to have been a team member for 3 programs for which a clinical candidate went on to be approved for market: the compound I worked on at Vertex (a hepatitis C drug), and as a medical writer at Biogen, Tecfidera and Zinbryta, which were approved and marketed as drugs for multiple sclerosis. More recently, I have been the medical writing submission lead for tofersen, a potential new drug for a genetic form of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. This submission is currently under review by the FDA.

In addition to my career in pharma R&D, I am an advocate for scientific literacy and equality in the sciences. When I was in grad school, there were very few women and minorities in my particular discipline. I was the only woman with a PhD in MMD's chemistry department. As a result, I volunteered to speak to high school students in the Cincinnati area to raise awareness among young women and minorities that STEM fields could be a challenging, but rewarding, career path. While in Cambridge, I was actively involved in Marc and Laura's school in the Cambridge Public School system, which included helping out in their science classes and chaperoning field trips to science-oriented activities at Harvard and MIT. Now, I advocate for alternative career paths in the sciences. It's not all about bench work in an academic laboratory.

The pharmaceutical industry has changed in the years since I started my career in 1988. Without a doubt, many new drugs have made dramatic differences in patients' lives, but cost and equitable access to these drugs are a challenge. The pharma industry, which was admired when I started my career, is now often vilified, and not without reason. However, please know that the scientists like myself in pharma R&D are committed to the discovery and development of life-changing drugs for patients. It's not about the money or glossy advertisements for us. I'm proud of my accomplishments in pharma and grateful to my family, friends, and the TCHS system that provided the foundation for my career.



## MEMORIALS/DONATIONS

*John Huber Dobbs donations-Class of 1971*

*Ray Wait memorial-Class of 1950*

*Jean Venhoffmann donation*

*Edward Cearley donation-Class of 1967*

*Justin Bozarth donation-Class of 2004*

*Susie Byers Harbaugh donation-Class of 1975*

*Phil Benner memorial-Class of 1967*

*Margaret Patterson Loewenstein donation-Class of 1969*

*Gunner Taylor memorial-Class of 1959*



These shirts and huggies are for sale to benefit the Alumni Assn.—scholarships and Homecoming events. Sizes run from S—3XL; long sleeve t’s—\$20; short sleeve t’s—\$15; huggies—\$2. Have some gold shirts, too.

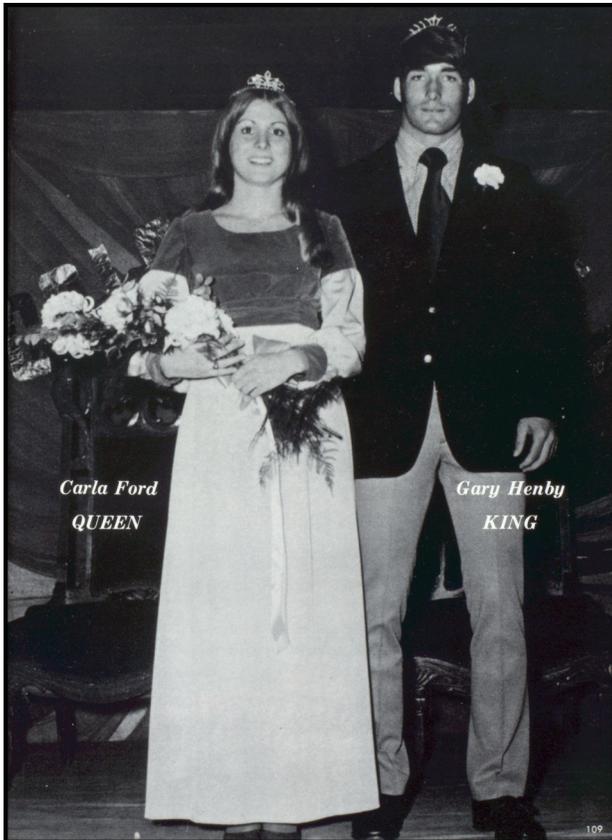
Contact Marci or Alan at 217-253-9400!

## **“Homecoming Super Squares” —Our newest fundraiser—**

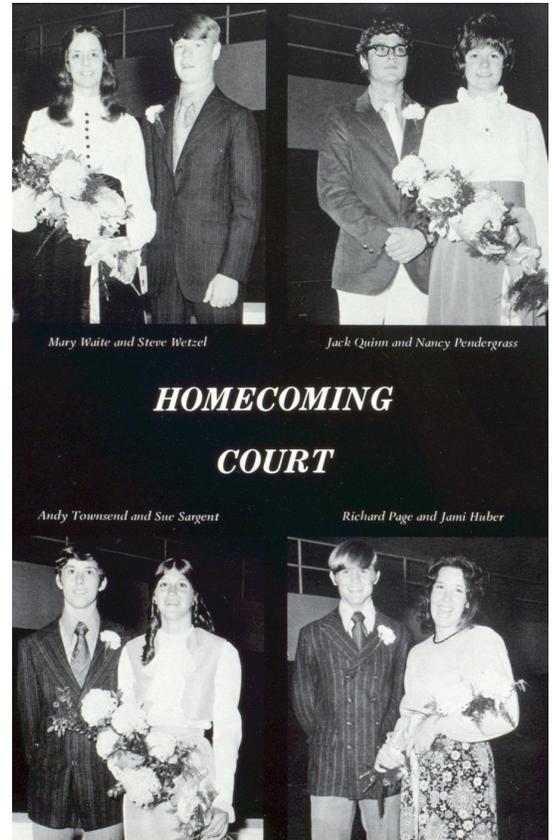
We know you can’t wait to play!!! You know those Super Bowl squares/board game? The TCHS Alumni Assn. will have some boards for you to play for the Homecoming game Sept. 30th. We are setting up the boards now!! We will be on our Facebook page—TCHS Alumni Association—selling these squares for \$10 (selling at games) and \$20 each (selling on Facebook). We will launch this fundraiser August 25th—the day before the Warriors’ Cola Wars game in Tuscola. Watch for more info on Facebook and look for us at the home football games before/during our Homecoming game. The cash prizes will be given after the Homecoming game Sept. 30th at the Community Building. (Or we can mail to you if you are a winner and are out of town).

**GO WARRIORS!!!!**

# 1972 Class Celebrates 50th Reunion



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This class will be celebrating their **50th** reunion on Saturday, Oct. 1 at the Community Building from 5-10:30 p.m. Class members will be participating in the Homecoming parade on Friday, Sept. 30. These alum will be introduced before the football game around 6:30 p.m. Cynthia Gates and Ann Flesor Beck will be inducted at the Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon at 11:30 on that Sat. at the Methodist Church. Any questions, reach out to Jan Hastings: [jmhrn1976@gmail.com](mailto:jmhrn1976@gmail.com).

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