

# THE HERALD

Special Editorial

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50<sup>th</sup> Reunion

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## Saga of the Crown ... every girl's dream and every girl's nightmare

Homecoming Queen, Barbara Norrid, stood before her high school peers to receive her crown a mere fifty years late. She was called front and center at the East Ridge Country Club in Shreveport, LA, before a reunion crowd, as a former teacher apologized for forgetting the "Queen's Crown" on what was to be her coronation back on September 27, 1964.

Among the lighthearted group, Committee Chairman, Jan Hopkins, flashed a slide onto the projector and said, "What's wrong with this picture?" The Homecoming Court adorned in their woolen suits, high heels, fancy hats, and over-sized corsages smiled sweetly back at us. "But where is her crown?" he said.

*At the '64 halftime while the Woodlawn Knights ran to the locker room with a comfortable score of 27-0 against Quachita High, we watched a short band performance, as Barbara and escort, Ronnie Mercer, '63 alumni, walked on the fifty yard line to be presented to the fans. She stood before our principal, Dr. Earl Turner, for what seemed like a long time, while he, no doubt, expressed regret and embarrassment. He pinned the queen's corsage onto her lapel, laid a bouquet of roses in her arms, and then kissed her cheek.*

The classmates stared at the projector screen again, only to notice her big smile, her coifed- Aqua-Netted hair, her smart white suit, but sure enough, there was no crown. The emcee took his cue and walked to Barbara's table and forced a microphone to her mouth. "This was horrible, Barbara!" he cried. "How has this psychologically affected you all these years?" After the laughter quieted, she answered in the same dry wit, "Every day of my life." Doesn't that sound like a resilient baby boomer, which happened to be sixty-seven years old? After all, we were seasoned. At this point in our lives, we should have more prospective on life than to give this forgotten crown saga much credence. It was a silly mistake that happened long ago, and that was that. WRONG.

The room suddenly went still and somber as Barbara was led to the front while Jan said, "Don't you think it's time she received her crown?" "YES," the crowd responded. To say this coronation was long overdue was an understatement. Every girl deserves her 'day', even if it is late! The business administration teacher who had forgotten the crown began the apology. "It was all my fault," she said. "I have felt terrible about this for years, and most regretfully, never got an opportunity to explain or apologize to you! That Homecoming night we rushed back to the school via two police escorts; then to make matters worse, my partner could not open the office safe to retrieve the rhinestone crown. It was disastrous; you didn't receive your full moment of glory. That is why I wanted to buy roses for you tonight in an attempt to make amends. The crown is from the school and is yours to keep, for it truly was a special time for you."

Barbara could only mutter, "It was". As she bowed her head and wiped away unexpected tears, we realized it WAS important. The time lapse of fifty years faded and within seconds our hearts felt the same disappointment and heartache she must have felt. As knights we were loyal and true, remember, and our queen had been robbed of a once in a lifetime experience. Barbara admitted she was disappointed back in 1964, but didn't cry at the time. "After all, it was Homecoming and a happy time," she said. "We were winning our game, and I had a date with the quarterback."

*For you football fans, Trey Prather threw a 53-yard touchdown to Tommy Youngblood, Johnny Piazza made two TD's, and Gerald Burnett and Andy Creel shared one apiece. The final score was 33-6. By that time most had dismissed the crown incident for we were off to the dance at the American Legion Club.*

*If you can believe this, the school held no assembly or announcement the following week to right this wrong. Only one picture appears in our yearbook (pg. 96) where Principal Turner places the crown on her head for a brief moment in the school office. More apologies and given, then she was quickly dismissed to class.*

I've known Barbara since second grade and I must say she's evolved into a classic. She was queenly then, accepting what she could not change, and she's queenly now. She's no longer the giddy, sixteen year old, with long ponytail, who had won the highest vote of our student body. No. Fifty years had passed and now we saw her, up close and personal-- an elegant, sophisticated woman, who was gracious and patient ... especially for her well-deserved crown.

Barbara now lives in Conroe, Texas, with husband Rodney, and enjoys gardening, cooking, and spending time with family. She found her career niche in the arts and received a degree in interior design in 2006. "I had always decorated my friend's homes; it's what I should have been doing all along." She has traveled extensively with her husband, who works for Kellogg, Brown, & Root, living in "almost every parish in Louisiana," she said. "And once we had a two-year stint in the Philippines." They have one son, Eddie, and two grandchildren; Lexi, who plays hi-level softball, and Riley, who competes in Rubik's Cube tournaments across the country.