



Issue 4

AHS Alumni instaNEWS

Arlington High School Alumni Association

www.ahscolts-alumni.org

P.O. Box 152578 Arlington, Texas 76015



January 2026

Happy Holidays from your Alumni Association Board Members!



GIVING BACK – (Top left): Debbie Ericson leads the group of volunteers in adding stickers to the “Thank You” gift of green and white popcorn given to the teachers. (Top right): Kathy Einhaus and Karen Cox make adjustments before decorating the tables. (Bottom left): Teachers enjoying their meal catered by Babe’s. (Bottom right): Mike and Nicky Austin showing Colt support with Social Studies Department Leader, Alan Austin.

Board Approves Providing Funding for Band Groups Heading for Indianapolis this Spring

Two separate band-related donations were approved by the board at the December Alumni Association meeting.

The first \$2,000 donation will help students in both the Wind Symphony and Percussion Ensemble. Both groups have been invited to perform at the 33rd Annual Music for All National Festival in Indianapolis this March. Over 80 students will be representing AHS at one of the largest gatherings of scholastic musicians in the nation.

The second donation in the amount of \$1,994 will fully fund a Community Impact Grant Request which will reduce barriers to participation in UIL solo competitions for AHS band students.

This grant project will provide band students with instrumental solo music access from the UIL Prescribed Music List. By utilizing the school’s music library’s check-out system, more opportunities for students to prepare for competitions will be allowed.

Alumni Association Thanks Teachers with Annual December Luncheon

In one of the final activities of the calendar year, the Alumni Association held its annual December Teacher Appreciation luncheon, attended by over 100 teachers and support staff.

“This is just a way to say ‘Thank You’ to the teachers,”

event organizer and Alumni Board member Erin Chaney said. “The teachers enjoy the prepared lunch and we’re thankful to them for so many reasons, and this is just one way we can show our appreciation,” she added.

The True History of the AHS Mascot Little Arlie: The Myth, the Legend

By Rickie Windle
Alumni Reporter

If he’d been the lumbering buffalo he could have, it’s unlikely he’d inspire the enthusiasm he still does at 75.

But even at such an advanced age, Lil Arlie is still kicking up the pride and spirit of Arlington High School students and alumni.

It’s a tale told in a letter Robert Fielder of the Arlington founding family fame wrote in 1957. Fielder was the president of the AHS Class of 1925 when the two-year-old school at

Cooper and Abrams was picking a mascot. Fielder said he wanted the buffaloes. But his debating partner, Carl Lee Garvin, won the discussion, establishing the Colts.

It took another 25 years for Lil Arlie to personify the image. It started Nov. 2, 1950 when future renown boy mayor and then Chamber of Commerce President Tom Vandergriff and his father, W.T. “Hooker” Vandergriff, gifted the school with a white colt Shetland pony.

Tom was emceeing a student assembly when he suddenly stated “Here is the Arlington Colt” and opened the curtain to the 27-inch pony.

“Pandemonium broke loose,” said then AISD Superintendent W. Ross Wimbish.

It was just more than a year later AHS claimed a Texas state football championship. Arlington High School was in tall grass.

Students voted on what to call the gift. Among the 10 nominees was Victor, Lucky and Spirit. But Little Arlie won out. It quickly became Lil Arlie to his friends.



THE FIRST OF MANY – From pony to costume, Little Arlie has always been the Colt mascot.

LITTLE ARLIE – Cont. on Pg. 2

Over the decades, it is a tradition that has rankled new high schools that came along with bells or students dressed from a Norse era as their mascots. Those just didn't garner the same affection of a live animal.



STILL STANDING – Donated by the Class of 1960 and restored by the Class of 2008, the Little Arlie Fountain remains a fixture in the courtyard of AHS.

To this day, speaking of Lil Arlie elicits a common response again and again from generations of non-Colts. "Yeah, we tried to steal him once."

It was once successful with catastrophic results. Grand Prairie High School students got their hands on Lil Arlie. They painted him green. Be it from paint poisoning or asphyxiation, that Lil Arlie went to the green pastures in the sky.

It didn't stop AHS. Over the decades, one or another Lil Arlie has kicked up his hooves at a touchdown or in front of a homecoming parade down Main Street.

Will Ross' father, Hugh, was one of the first handlers of Lil Arlie back in the '50s. Will Ross says his memory of his pseudo big brother was one of an entertainer. "He was very cooperative and kind of liked doing it," Ross said.

Lil Arlie didn't live on campus, but on the ranch or farm of an alumni, quite often under the auspices of the school's Future Farmers of America program.

Ross remembers a tale his father repeated often of an early season game when it was time for Lil Arlie to make the trek to the stadium and the pick up truck broke down. Ross says his grandparents were out of town and had just purchased a new sedan.

"The last thing they said was don't take

that car out," Ross said. "That's the last thing they should have said."

In desperation, Lil Arlie was loaded up in the sedan for transportation to the game. "He was in the back seat, head hanging out the window," Ross said. "We got stopped, and barely made it on time."

Today, Lil Arlie is a student in a costume. To try and maintain some mystique, particularly for children, they try to keep the student anonymous and silent. But still rambunctious, high fiving children and posing for pictures with alumni.

Some think there is no more live animal because of UIL rules. But there are no prohibitions on live mascots on the UIL books. It does state a school must assume all liability for the animal and its actions, which makes insurance costs more of a deciding factor.

The 1963 incarnation of the UIL did implement a rule animals couldn't be on the field, ending the first Lil Arlie's job of leading the team onto the field at the beginning of the game.

Lil Arlie left his prestigious post at the high school to work at hauling children in a cart at Six Flags Over Texas in the late 1960s. Except he refused. So he was sold to a local gentleman for \$75, who drove him around town at what was generously guessed at five miles an hour. Tale is the Arlington Police Department jokingly gave him a speeding ticket one day.

Despite the effort at an air of mystery, the current Lil Arlie did grant an interview at a November event noting the 75th birthday and raising funds for the cheer and dance teams at the school.

Well, sort an interview. As much as you

can get from a mascot horse who tries to stay silent inside a costume head that makes hearing a challenge.

But Arlie said alumni are still more enthralled to see him (an assumption since a colt is considered a male in the horse lingo) than children. Although children still flock during events, Arlie admits it's pretty hot inside there, which leads to frequent disappearances during games. Arlie was unsure, but a handler - who these days is a fellow student who helps Arlie not bump into walls - said he thinks Arlie the mascot is more outgoing than the student inside.

Without the problems of sharp hooves or the natural result of eating oats and hay, there is another benefit for Lil Arlie 2025-26. He is available for rent for anything from birthday parties to business openings. Proceeds are used to keep his mascot look fresh and new.

Thanks to the University of Texas at Arlington's Special Collections for help in researching this article.

Appointees Added to Alumni Board in 2026

Alumni Board President Chris Hightower has appointed two positions to the board beginning in 2026. In addition, a new Secretary will be joining the group.

Retiring Secretary Mary Poston Gunn, will be relenquishing her position to **Meghan Woodard, Class of '15**. Gunn will remain on the board in the position of Parliamentarian In addition, Bonnie Watkins has been appointed Corresponding Secretary, replacing Karen Giorgio Logos, who previously held that position.



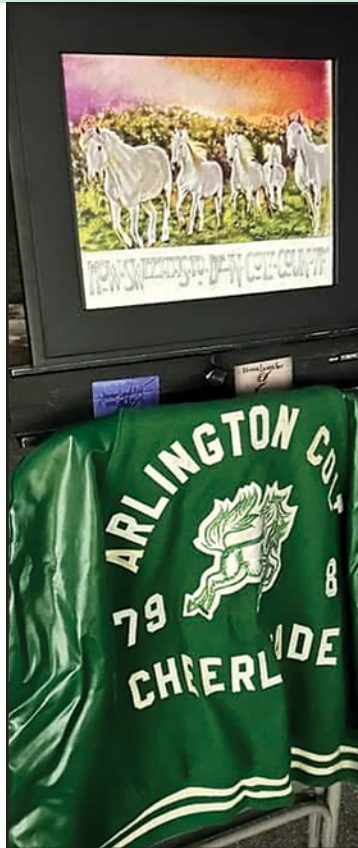
BEHIND THE SCENE – Alumni Association members came together Dec. 17 to serve lunch to the teachers and staff at AHS. Pictured included (left to right) Kim Cathro, Ella Jo McGovern, Kathy Einhaus, Mike Austin, Debbie Ericson, Scott Ericson, Erin Chaney, Jimmy Baas, Peggy Martin and Mac Martin. Also serving, but not pictured, were Judy Northup, Nicky Austin, Rickie Windle and Patti Schimpf.

Class of '80 Celebrates 45 Years of Friendships and Memories

The Class of '80 held their 45th Reunion in November at Division Brewing in Arlington where 50 classmates gathered renewing friendships and memories. "It was so much fun and everyone liked it was low key," Lori Richman, one of the event organizers, commented.

Holland K Smith, Class of '78, performed, Keisha Smith drew and donated a picture of being in "Colt Country" and a raffle was held.

"All funds raised are going to the AHS Alumni Association in honor of our passed classmates," Richman added.



Class of 1980 - In Memory of:	
Carla Andrews	Kerin Simpson
Sandra Baird	Diane Lighlton
David Brannon	Allen Livingston
Jan Capella	Jeff Litherland
Ryan Collier	Robert (Dreg) McFarlin
Jeff Dalton	Dennis McGrath
Marilyn Davis	James McKeown
Jeff Fells	Kelly McNulty
Todd Foster	Eric Nale
Fred Garcia	Grace Priddy
Karen Grote	Jennifer Reager
Arnold Hubert	Patricia Sanders
Pete Howell	Mike Sender
Billy Hunt	Jeff Smalley
Christie Jacob	Anna St. Clair
Cindy Kover	Jeff Ward
Adam Keller	



Stay in touch with your Classmates and your Alumni Association!
Send your reunion dates for 2026 to:
AHSColtsforever@gmail.com

Kight Remembered for Service to Community; Received AHS's Distinguished Colt Alumni Award

Barbara Nash Kight, Class of '57 and AHS Alumni Association Life Member, passed away Oct. 19, 2025, surrounded by the love of her family.

She was also among the first to have received the Distinguished Colt Award, selected in the second year along with Tom Cravens. Tommy and Annawaynette Vandergriff were the first inducted in 1997.

Cathy Brown, founder of the Alumni Association said that Barbara was

instrumental in building a membership base in the birth year of the AHS Alumni Association.

Barbara served her community, working with Citizens on Patrol, the Arlington Historical Society and the Johnson Creek Project, while rearing three children and supporting her husband, Colby, who preceded her in death.

Her sister, Geraldine Mills, Class of '59, still serves with the Arlington Historical Society.



Barbara Jean Nash Kight
Jan. 16, 1939 - Oct. 19, 2025



MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH OUR SPONSORS – Member Randy Ford, Class of '67, and owner of J. Gilligan's restaurant in downtown Arlington, has supported the Alumni Association through generous donations and services for many years. We will be recognizing all of our sponsors who contributed on the Association's behalf in the newsletter this spring and throughout the year on our social media page. We appreciate all those who are Making a Difference!

2025 Alumni Association Board of Directors

OFFICERS:

President: Chris Hightower, '90

Vice-President: David Keal, '78

Secretary: Mary Poston Gunn, '67

Treasurer: Chris Wade, '79

CHAIRPERSONS:

Membership: Judy Whitenight Northup, '69

Assistant: Kim Counts Cathro, '78

Corresponding Secretary: Karen Giorgio Logos, '68

Webmaster: Mac Martin, '61

Reunions: Jo Colliflower McGovern, '66

Co-Chair: Beth Anne McGovern Woodard, '88

Product Sales: Kristina De La Rosa Randerson, '99

NTGD: Mike & Nicky Austin, '90

Advisor: Debbie Koehl Ericson, '68

Distinguished Colts: Jerrell Womble, '71

Assistant: Karen Cherry Cox, '76

Special Events: Erin Hawkes Chaney, '64

Publications: Patti Schimpf, '74

Reporter: Rickie Windle, '75

Scholarship: Peggy Wood Martin, '66

July 4th Parade: Kathy Einhaus, '68

Alumni Band: Tanya Terrell-Weidemann, '81

Colt Volunteer Corral: Michelle Barlen, CBC

Members-at-Large: Mike Enger, '74;

Campus Liaison: Natasha Newsome, CBC

Ring In the New Year WITH A MEMBERSHIP IN THE AHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Start the New Year Off Right by becoming a member of the AHS Alumni Association. For only \$25/year (or \$125/lifetime) you can stay connected to your classmates and stay up-to-date with happenings around your Alma Mater. Join us and be part of an organization that awards Senior scholarships, honors teachers and serves others by giving back to AHS.

Scan the QR code below to see how you can join this group and start Making a Difference!



Making a Difference
Together!
ahscolts-alumni.org

