

SPEECH AT PITTSFIELD, IL HISTORICAL SOCIETY (April 30, 2010)

A wonderful thing happened to our family at Easter time in 1955-55 years ago. We were traveling from Quincy back to our teaching job at Carlyle, Il. Normally, we would have gone through Pleasant Hill, Kampsville, Hardin, and Jerseyville but for some reason we came an alternate route through Pittsfield. Our kids didn't mind when we stopped at Wimpy's Dairy Ripple which was operated by Wayne and Dale (Wimpy) Willard. I had met Wayne at Extension courses from U. of Illinois and I was surprised to see him again. Wayne was a valuable educator as Principal of Pittsfield Elementary Schools. He later distinguished himself in administration at Thornton, Il Jr. College. In our conversation, he mentioned that Coach Glenn Smith would be giving up basketball and suggested I might be interested in the job. Of course, I would be. We called Supt. Voshall to see if I could stop and talk to him about the job. Soon I was in the living room at the Voshall home for an impromptu discussion about the new job opening. I would have dressed differently than my traveling clothes had I known about this meeting. Either Mr. Voshall wanted to fill the position quickly or he was satisfied with my potential, or both, because I received a call the next day and was offered the job as basketball coach and mathematics teacher at the new high school. While I would probably have been principal at Carlyle the following year, there were enough problems looming there and the lure of Pittsfield made it easy to accept the new job. We were never sorry and have been grateful for the twist of fate that brought us through Pittsfield on that important day. Mr. Voshall, always mindful of the finances of the district, apparently judged how much I wanted the job, and a caveat to the job was that he couldn't pay any more than I was making at Carlyle which was \$4,000. By the way, I had started 5 years earlier at West Pike H.S. in Kinderhook for \$2800 teaching math and coaching all sports

So, that is the initial circumstance of our coming to Pittsfield.

Before I recall happy times and somewhat historical school events in Pittsfield, with your indulgence, I would like to highlight a bit of life prior to Pittsfield. I was raised just across the Pike County line near a little spot called Fall Creek. We lived on a small deteriorating farm on the bluff above Fall Creek. In fact, on your way to Quincy, you go through a large rock cut up the bluff where the highway crosses route 57. The cut went through our land. The home still stands, the first on the left as you top the hill.

I remember the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, because we were shucking corn on that Sunday morning (my dad worked in Quincy so much of our farm work occurred on weekend) on land replaced by the cut. I was 14, a freshman. Mother was crying as she relayed the news when we returned with a load of corn.

My Bluff Hall grade school was one room and it still stands as a residence. It was fun growing up near the Fall Creek Gorge. This area with a historical stone arch bridge is a State maintained area. If you haven't visited there, please take time to stop sometime, have a picnic lunch, and wade up the creek to the famous bridge. You will be rewarded with great scenery.

Athletics was always important to my dad and he would sacrifice almost anything so my 2 brothers and I could be in baseball and basketball. While money was scarce, there was always some for a bat or glove. We had a basketball goal in the barn.

My first acquaintance with Pittsfield was in 1941 when my dad took me to a Sectional Tournament game here. While he wanted me to see Art Dufelmeir, of

Beardstown, we came away talking more about Don Ghrist of Pittsfield as Pittsfield won and went on to State to defeat Springfield (Feitshans) before bowing to Urbana in the State Tournament. Dufelmeir surfaced as fullback for U. of Illinois Rose Bowl champs in '47. Don would go to U. of Missouri for football.

I went to high school at Seymour H. S. in Payson. One morning there was a new girl to get on the bus (actually a truck with canvas canopy). She was Fern Heimer and it was my good fortune to be seated next to her alphabetically in all our classes. I told my mother, perhaps facetiously, that I saw the girl I would marry. While we did not date immediately as sophomores, we became steady friends the next year with our marriage coming in 1947 so we will soon be married 63 years. Fern grew up in Calhoun County, Il mostly at Hamburg, Il. before her father, a farm manager, moved first to Clopton Farms (where Clopton H. S. is) at Clarksville, Mo and then to Payson. She was a cheerleader at Payson and then learned secretarial skills at Gem City Business College where she also played basketball. The home Fern lived in near Payson was the former home of Mary Bailey who became Mrs. Tom Bunting. Mary and Fern are the only girls who caught me on Sadie Hawkins Day.

A distinct change in life came when my family decided to move to Quincy before my Senior year. While there has been a lot of debate about my being the first recruit to be brought into Quincy for athletics, there is absolutely no truth in that claim. With my father and mother both working in Quincy and a small struggling farm decimated by foreclosure during the depression, it was a reasonable decision for our family. Of course, I know it was in my father's mind that I could play athletics at the larger school. I remember being disappointed that I had to move for my Senior year, especially with Fern still at Payson. While Payson wasn't far, gas rationing during WWII precluded too many trips anywhere. As it turned out, Quincy was a good move for me and my brothers. My Quincy H. S. basketball team finished 3rd in the State and I was lucky to make the All Tournament team. While I averaged around 10 points per game during the season, I luckily averaged 15 at State. That would never have happened at Payson. During the year I had my best game of 17 points at Pittsfield. Phil Casteel was your star player. I also remember our half time score with Pittsfield in Quincy was only 3-2. It was unusual but all of our Quincy team lived much of our adult lives in Quincy. I am the only living member.

WWII still loomed over the future of young people in 1945 so members of our team decided to join the U. S. Navy Reserves (being drafted into the Army meant a longer commitment) but we had to sign up before we were 18. We could have been called to active duty before the State Tournament but we were lucky and weren't called until the end of April-still missing the last month of school and the baseball season. Going into the service before graduation prevented my becoming a 4-letter winner at Quincy.

The war ended in Germany soon. In fact, today is the 65th anniversary of Hitler's suicide. Japan's surrender, after the atomic bomb, was to follow in August. So, I was lucky that the war ended soon after I entered the service. My assignment to a ship was delayed because I was sent to Farragut, Idaho Naval Station for a hernia operation. That was delayed as I was on the Farragut basketball and baseball teams.

When I was ready for discharge a year later my commanding officer, who was a previous captain of the '42 football team at Northwestern University, told me he had arranged a basketball scholarship at Northwestern University.

So I mustered out of the Navy in August, 1946 at Great Lakes, Il and stopped on my way home at Northwestern. After a semester there, I decided I was not quite Big 10 caliber and returned to Quincy College where I had success in basketball and baseball. After my junior year at Quincy College, I accepted a minor league baseball contract from the Chicago Cubs and played two years at Sioux Falls, S. D. before my release in time to accept my first teaching job at West Pike.

One of the highlights for smaller schools was to defeat Pittsfield and our basketball team did that with a last second shot in 1954. Of course, it wasn't fun when Pleasant Hill upset my first Pittsfield team in the Regional.

My original superintendent at West Pike then persuaded me to join him at Carlyle. After one year there I bring you back to Pittsfield.

We first rented an apartment from Bill Lowry's parents, Ed & Miriam, near Higbee School. There we enjoyed the Willsey neighbors with Sherry & Ronnie. Both became fine musicians at PHS. Our daughter, Becky, started first grade under Millie Wendorff, a beloved teacher for many. Chuck would later have the venerable Miss. Barkley as 1st grade teacher.

Our second home was rented from George Totsch on Cherry Street. It was a great street because it contained over 50 children. Our rent for a nice home was \$60 per month until we asked Mr. Totsch if he could build another room which he did and only increased the rent to \$70. We are glad Darlene (Totsch) and Keith Smith, our neighbors are here tonight. Across the fence in our back yard was the Ed Lowry pony pasture and he let me mow a little section for a ball diamond. We had a ball game most every evening with all the neighbor kids including Roberts, Smiths, Lymans, Priests, Grays, Robinsons and whoever wanted to join. Our favorite ball field has now given way to a development of homes and Cherry Street has extended far to the south. Another neighbor here tonight is Mike Perrine who has had a long career in radio.

One of the first things I recall at Pittsfield High School was the outstanding football team and my getting to get to know Coach Glenn Smith better. If things would have worked out a little differently, he would have been my coach at Quincy. We could spend the evening discussing why Quincy let Coach Smith go. Let's just say Quincy's loss was Pittsfield tremendous gain. The 1955 team was undefeated for the 2nd year in a row though they had 3 ties in the span. The '55 tie came in a game with Jerseyville that should not have been played. It was a torrential rainfall during the whole game and I bet it was the worst conditions ever for a PHS team. The lines were non-existent and Coach Smith had us punt on 3rd down in case of a fumble with the wet conditions. Of course, Jerseyville and wily Coach Jurkanian knew that the conditions gave them their only chance to win. The game ended 0-0 marring our perfect season. (Dave Ellis interjected that they had to shower at halftime to get rid of the mud). The Pittsfield all-senior team featured Tom Petty and Tom Dickey at ends with Dickey an outstanding punter, Roger Frazier, Bill Ferguson and Reg Dunham, tackles; Bill Vannatta and Don Smith, guards; and Harley Whitlock, center. The backfield was Tom Plattner, QB; halfbacks Khoy Sanderson and Dave Ruble with fullback Paul Smith. Of course, incredibly, Pittsfield was to reel off six successive 9-0 seasons under Zeke Pollard from 1966-1971-followed by another under Coach Erickson the following year. A time when legends were born, I looked forward to the basketball season because even though they had a losing season the year before (Coach Smith's first ever), I inherited veteran starters Tom Petty, Bill

Ferguson, Khoy Sanderson, Tom Plattner and Paul Smith. Overall, I was slightly disappointed at my coaching effort producing a 17-7 season. Especially, disappointing was a 60-52 loss to Pleasant Hill in the Regional tournament when an Edwards boy was unconscious hitting unorthodox bombs against us. Of course we had only defeated Pleasant Hill by 3 during the regular season.

Tom Petty was probably the best all around athlete in the class though he wouldn't feel comfortable having me say that because he didn't want to stand out above the crowd. I must have complimented him too much after he had scored 27 one game because the next game, while he played an outstanding game, he did not take a single shot. Tom was also a fine left handed pitcher.

Through the years, I have had most contact with Bill Ferguson and Khoy Sanderson, both being very congenial every time we met. Here is a weird happening I'd like to mention. About a year ago Khoy appeared in a dream I had. He had never been in a previous dream. Ironically, as I checked the online in the Herald Whig the next morning, glaring at me was Khoy Sanderson's obituary. I don't put much stock in superstitions and the like but there was only a 1-20,000 chance of the coincidence. It gives me something to wonder about. I hope I don't dream about any of you tonight.

My first year at Pittsfield was also the first year after Nebo high school closed and students came to Pittsfield. I always felt sorry for Nebo athletes Looper, Lansdon, Guthrie, Franklin and Scranton who would have had a good team at Nebo but could not crack the lineup the larger school. Yes, Scranton is Delbert who was later to become a Pittsfield fixture as an effective Superintendent.

It was wonderful to start teaching in a brand new building-the result of the addition of Nebo, Baylis, Milton and Pearl in to Unit 10. Milton and Pearl would form East Pike at the time. I am glad the Kraybill family is here tonight because there dad and mother played key roles in getting the bond issue passed following a 2-1 defeat in the first attempt. The elder Dr. Kraybill (Bill is the second) was also a school board member. I have enjoyed visiting with Ann, a social worker, on occasion through the years.

In the classroom, I was blessed with outstanding, congenial and appreciative students. Among my memories were the very pretty and personable young ladies which brightened the halls of PHS. For example, look at those who are here tonight. The boys of Pittsfield were very lucky but I'm sure it has been tough on judges who had to select beauty queens at various times. A string of homecoming, prom and sweetheart ball queens while I was at Pittsfield included Connie Shue (Allen), Dorothy Ellis (Newman), Sue Frazier (Yonikus), Sue Smith (Plattner), Doris McConnell, Vera Dean, Jill Heavener, Esteline McKee, Mary Jane Sparks, Mary Beth Priest, Marsha Sloan, Sue Strother, Judy Hammitt, Gloria Damon, Norma Allen, Jeannette Garner, Marcia Hammitt, Carol Fesler (Barber), Jean Shipley, Beverly Capps, Sandra Spellman, Mary Batz and Jane Kraybill (Ransom). I'm missing an annual so I am missing a couple from 1957-58.

One of the students in geometry who sat in back left corner was Warren Winston, your Historical Society member, who has impressed with his willingness to act on convictions, whether popular or not. He has become a treasured friend. I also looked forward, through the years, to seeing Becky Watson Acuff, an English teacher, at teacher institutes.

If you ask me who our best math student was, I would remember Norma Jones.

Following my first year, the park district asked me to be the manager for the King Park Swimming Pool for the summer. Teachers always needed a summer job so I was glad for the offer. We operated with the first don't ask, don't tell policy because they didn't ask how well I swam and I didn't tell them that my swimming was limited to a few side strokes. So, when they asked me if I had a Red Cross Life Saving Certificate, I answered that no I had never pursued that-hoping I wouldn't have my job rescinded because of the deficiency. It didn't help much when they said that's ok because we offer the class and you can take it then. When I say I was not a swimmer even that was an understatement. Passing the navy swim test was disastrous so the lessons they gave me were not pleasant. So I practiced as much as I could because one of the prerequisites for the class was that you must swim 440 yards. I felt very inferior on the morning the class was to start when all these young high school students-both boys and girls-dove into the pool and I jumped into the shallow end and wondered how far back I would finish in the 440- if I could make it at all. Then I was uplifted when I saw a lady older than I come to take Red Cross course. I said to myself, at least I won't finish last. Wrong! After a couple laps I decided I better not try to keep up with Violet Shulman or I wouldn't qualify at all. Violet, an expert swimmer, was updating her Red Cross certificate.

Sue Mueller, a cheerleader and Khoy Sanderson's girl friend, was teaching the class so I thought she would be easy on me. Wrong again! She was a thorough, no nonsense instructor. One of my anxious moments in the class was when we had to retrieve a sack of weights from the bottom of the deep end of the pool and carry it to the opposite end. I couldn't lift the weights. All the younger kids said its easy coach, so I tried but failed a second time. When one of them investigated, they found that the sack was caught on the grates at the bottom of the pool. If someone deliberately tricked me, it was never revealed. The end result: I did finally gain the certificate and had an enjoyable summer at the pool. With the help of Fern and some special assistance from Dorothy Ellis we had a successful summer. I don't know who Dorothy has worked for since but I do know they had a competent employee. The park commissioners had told me that I could give lessons to make extra money. Me, giving swimming lessons? But before the summer was over, people were coming from all over the county for the lessons and I never remember having my feet off the bottom of the pool.

While we were checking the receipts to deposit one day, there were 20 Indian Head pennies- obviously some body hadn't intended for a youngster to take coins from a collection to pay pool admission. We bought the pennies and kept them hoping someone would ask about them but no one inquired so we still have 20 Indian Head pennies to remind us of a wonderful summer in which our kids learned to swim. Doodlebug Hayden may not have thought it the best summer as we had a sudden storm at the pool one night and the lights went out. In the ensuing commotion of getting everyone out of the pool he stepped on a broken pop bottle and wound up in the emergency room.

My second year at Pittsfield was not my best coaching effort. In the end it turned out to be the first losing basketball season of my career. There were plenty of basketball players with all having similar abilities and they didn't have varsity experience because of the all-senior team the previous year. I remember on the final practice before the first game that my so-called second team trounced the first team. It was obvious that I hadn't picked out the best team so I remember juniors John Bauer and Sam Boyd being elevated

to a starting role. With hardworking seniors Jerry Brandt, Les Allen, Dave Ellis and Ron Walgren, supported by underclassmen John Bower, Kirk Franklin, Sam Boyd, tall Ellis Sanderson, Jim Harry, Dave Baughman, Mike Callihan, Don Fidler and Mike Lippincott, they were a very enjoyable group to coach and from this group have come some life-long relationships that I treasure. Of the group I have had the most contact with Kirk Franklin – a talented player who I always wonder if I should have helped him realize his potential earlier as he was a high scoring free lance player as an adult. Of the group, Mike Callihan was one of best pure shooters I coached (he once had 33 straight free throws in frosh-soph games. Did you know Sam Boyd also walked on at U of Ill and made the final cut? Dr .Dave Ellis and wife, Carole Atwood, have been good to keep it touch. Dave was to become a paratrooper and a school administrator in California. Jerry Brandt is a Podiatrist and Jim Harry was the voice of the Illinois Legislature.

During my 2-year coaching stint at Pittsfield, I was ably assisted by Mel Kuethe, who was a player for Coach Smith at Edwardsville. He was avid about baseball and coached several of our outstanding teams. He returned to teach in Edwardsville and I was glad to have the help of Moody Murry, a fine player in his on right (and best tennis player in Pittsfield). Our helpful basketball managers were Floyd (Punky) Robertson, Mike Perrine (our Cherry St. neighbor) and Phillip Jones.

At the end of our 2nd year, Fern and I, along with Helen Harman, were honored to be selected to chaperone the Senior trip to New York. What a wonderful experience to see these young Pike county grads take New York by storm exerting some new-found independence while, at the same time, leaning heavily on the help of their chaperones. One memory occurred when we were ready to leave for home and Nancy Willis was not to be found. Other students said they tried to include her in activities but she preferred to wander alone. It was crisis time for chaperones which was resolved by Helen Harman saying she would have to stay behind until the missing student showed up. Nancy's caption in the Annual says STOP, LOOK, LISTEN. She must have heeded the message as she showed up safely at the last moment.

During the 2nd summer at Pittsfield, I accepted a summer institute from the National Science Foundation to learn modern math teaching techniques at the U. of Wyoming. For once I wouldn't have to seek a summer job as the stipend for this institute was adequate. It was while enjoying school and the scenic beauty surrounding Laramie, Wyoming, that we received a surprise call from Supt. Harold Voshall saying that the current principal, Allen Metternich had resigned, and they wanted me to be principal at Pittsfield H. S. Needless to say I was overwhelmed. He asked if I could return right away but I persuaded that I would like to finish my commitment to the National Science Foundation and when I said I would finish by August 5, he thought we could make that work. While we had planned to vacation a little longer at Yellowstone and other places in the west, Mr. Voshall's next letter changed that. After his patent opening, Dear friend Dick, it said, I have placed in the paper that you will be in your office on August 9, am I correct? Of course I said, "You are correct."

When I walked into the office for the first time I was greeted by Secretary Grace Irick who said, "Mr. Heitholt, I have been on this job longer than you are old." She did her job her way but was a big help as future secretaries, Patty Smith (Capps), Helen Hollembeak, Fern Heitholt and Linda Smith would be too.

I will never forget the tumultuous ovation with which the students greeted their new principal on the first day of school in 1957. Now, how could I meet their expectations. I was very lucky to be surrounded by wonderful experienced teachers like Elden Fesler, who made physics and chemistry a joy and was valuable as Senior Sponsor and taking charge of the projectionists; Lorena Bueker, who had the National Honor Society named for her; Helen Harpole, who was a noted Student Council sponsor; Helen Harman, who demanded that students know U. S. History; Archie Collins, ex-Nebo superintendent who was also assistant principal(he introduced many to their first term paper), Charles Fisher, venerable ag teacher who would become principal, Carolyn Grubbs, Margaret Meyer, the Annual Sponsor, Mary Margaret McGuire, who gave advice for decorating for the prom, and Coach Smith.

A new teacher literally burst on the scene. When I was introducing the new teachers to the students a person came running down the aisle yelling "I'm here, Mr. Heitholt" I had inadvertently omitted Paul Rosene, who was an outstanding band leader. He later became a professor at Illinois State University and is still active in music during his retirement in Florida. He is one of the foremost authorities in bell choirs. We hope to see him this summer as he and Doris visit their daughter near Champaign.

Another fine teacher to join us was Jim Sanderson who brought history alive for students. I was privileged to see his antique tractor and machinery collection in Milton a few years ago. Also, we recently lost Jack Coil who was one of our football coaches and I just heard tonight of the passing of Walter Pippin, industrial arts teacher. Other valuable teachers during my tenure not mentioned elsewhere were Jim Hirsch, Judd Worley, Clay Irick, Virginia Mays, Joan Sealock, Wilma Chamberlain, Tom Johnson, Mary Prentice, Patricia Beckenholdt, Don Mellon and others who will come to mind. Don Mellon would become another Pittsfield treasure as Principal and Assistant Superintendent.. I was tremendously impressed with Don's contributions to Pittsfield education and to the IHSA where he was a long time Secretary.

I would say my tenure as principal was a great experience for me. There were a minimum of tough problems and it was a joy to see the development of the students through the years. One of the first things Supt. Voshall asked for my opinion was who we should get to be basketball coach. My friend Toby Smith has never forgiven me for skipping over him-he was Higbee Grade School coach at the time. I had recommended Rich Maack, a Collinsville and Kirksville University standout who had impressed me with his first job at West Pike. He had limited success here and then moved to Jr. College Coaching near Chicago. So Toby got his chance and made his mark on Pittsfield basketball with 174 wins in 10 years at the helm. Two of his teams reached the Sectional Finals. One beat Quincy by 20 points but fell to Monmouth in the finals. That team included Bruce Saxbury, David Giger, Ernie Patton, Gary Curtis, Bob Cantwell, Mike McGinnis, Jerry Harmison and Bill Kraybill. Mike McGinnis would go to Southern Ill to battle Jim Hart for the QB job. The second, in 1963, included Vincent Pease, who went to Western Kentucky; Dan Boyd, Mark Bauer, Terry Reel, Jim Miles, Bill Henderson, Ron Luster and John Steuart and Dave Jenkins. They were finally defeated by Springfield Lanphier. Of course, Toby's crowning accomplishment would come later with his State Championship Golf team.

In basketball, of course, Dave Bennett would amass 527 wins in 23 years including a Class A State Championship-an incredible record. In between, Wayne Puckett would

take the 1970 team to the State Tournament with our son, Chuck's, old friends, Fred Grote, Steve Jenkins, Tom McCartney, Bruce Callender and the Anderson twins. They ran into a good E. Moline team that Chuck had conference battles with. Previous Pittsfield teams to go to the one-class State Tournaments were 1911, 1941, 1949. At the new high school, we were daily reminded of the 49 team with pictures above the cafeteria line including Rich Zimmerman, Bob Voshall, Bob Niebur, Dan Beard, Tip Collver. Is it still there?

Among my favorite memories are the school musicals which began in 1963 under the direction of Jon Robb, Athene Schimmel and Paul Rosene. They were truly professional performances which made me proud. Jon Robb was like the best of athletic coaches-demanding perfection. By the way, Jon Robb was the first teacher I personally hired. Mr. Voshall was on vacation and he said we needed an English teacher and if I could find one, OK. Out of the blue, Jon stopped by to ask about a job. He impressed, I offered him the job, then crossed my fingers that he would turn out OK. You know the rest. While he could keep you on your toes with his ideas, he was a master at his art. For example, I remember a play in which he wanted a character to smoke for added effect. I didn't agree it to be proper so we compromised on a cigarette but no smoking. Anyway, I will never forget the performance of Gloria Grigsby as Babe, Stan Ballinger as Hines and others including Mike Boren, Cherryll Gaffney, Kristy Berry, Steve Harry in Pajama Game. I will never know how they pulled off a knife throwing illusion where Stan threw knives which neatly stuck in the wall around Gloria. (Mike is here and says it was magic).

It would be hard to top the first musical, but then came Bye, Bye Birdie. I hope you all saw the performances of Nancy Watson as Rosie, with Joe Miller as Albert; Miki Irving was great as Mrs. Peterson while Vic Hubbard played the Conrad Birdie role and Hugo and Kim were Maurice Neece and Linda Taylor. I especially liked the scene where Birdie said there were not enough women in this little town and he was getting tense. When Miki extended her leg and asked "did you ever think in terms of a more mature lady", the answer was, "Ma'am I'm not that tense". This was probably our favorite musical because one of the chorus members was freshman Becky Heitholt.

A cloud of national disaster hung over the Bye Bye Birdie musical because on Friday, November 22, 1963, the first day of the performance, I interrupted classes with the intercom announcement that President Kennedy had been shot and we immediately aired Walter Kronkite's news bulletins to the entire school. I vividly remember the haunting, but appropriate classical music the network played between news bulletins.

There was immediate concern about whether to cancel the performance. After huddling with Mr. Voshall, and he, no doubt, with board members, we decided to go ahead as scheduled. Mr. Robb and Mr. Rosene had lobbied hard for that positive decision. While there was, understandingly, some public criticism (I remember John Blake, hospital administrator, being vocal in questioning our reverence and patriotism), the packed house audiences confirmed that the public could use some diversion from the dismal news that would dominated the week which lie ahead.

The Student Council was very important at PHS and we were honored to host two separate conventions of the Pekin District of Illinois Councils. Connie McGinnis and Keenan Barber were the district presidents for the conventions. Other of our local council included Annie Dimmitt, Charles Bradburn, Ruth Ann McKenna and Mike Boren and I know I am missing a couple more.

I would like to pay special tribute to two people who meant a lot to education in Pittsfield. They come from opposite ends of the leadership structure and definitely at extremes of the pay scale. First, the afore mentioned Supt. Harold Voshall was appropriately honored by having the gym named for him. He was truly an excellent leader for Pittsfield. Can you imagine anyone being able to be Superintendent in one place for over 30 years? He started in 1936 and to put that in perspective, I was 9 years old and some of the graduates of PHS at the time were Vic Calendar, Eldon Atwood, Tom Troutner and the Willard baseball playing brothers from Time. I mention Eldon Atwood, Glenn, Eddie, Zeke and Sooner Willard because I enjoyed playing baseball with them with the Griggsville Nighthawks and Macomb Moose. Eldon and Glenn played professional baseball and they were Western Ill standouts. Tom Troutner was a school board member and valuable President of the Board at John Wood Community College. Not that Mr. Voshall couldn't have gone elsewhere (you almost lost him to Decatur) because he was one of the leaders in the State of Illinois educational circles. He was President of the important Illinois Association of School Administrators. Mr. Voshall once told me he never ever felt secure in his job and that any morning the School Board might say we need a change. Perhaps, that was one of the factors that contributed to his greatness. "Vosh" worked hard to avoid controversy and was great at defusing problems and bringing people together. I learned first hand of this.

At the beginning of my first year, he said, "Dick, I forgot to tell you that I told the Nebo folks we could play several basketball games in Nebo." Apparently, in the discussions with Nebo about their coming to Pittsfield, they had raised the complaint of losing part of their identity with no more basketball in the community. It shocked me to think we had a brand new gym that we wanted to show off to visitors and why would we want to lose our home court advantage by moving a home game. My main problem was how I was going to get 3 teams to agree to transfer sites for the games. But I realized I needed to help Mr. Voshall honor the commitment. He talked to some Nebo people again and they reduced it two one game. I was able to negotiate with my old school, West Pike, to move our game to Nebo. The Nebo gym was a very good gym and it gave me the opportunity to start all of the Nebo players on the team back at their home gym. We won the game and Mr. Voshall's promise was honored.

One of Mr. Voshall's big problems to deal with occurred over a Regional basketball game. It happened over such a minor rule as which direction a team would go on the court. The accepted practice that the first team on the floor would practice at the basket they wanted for the first half. Milton had an outstanding team and knew Pittsfield Coach Greg Sloan always wanted to start at the west basket. They new they could get into Coach Sloan's head by claiming the west basket to start the game. So Milton sent some people to the Higbee gym at noon and camped under Sloan's preferred goal. Of course, it "hit the fan" and Sloan said that he wouldn't play. I don't know how Voshall resolved that one and I don't know who won the game or whether Milton got their way. Coach Sloan was not a kook because he left Pittsfield in '43 to a large Chicago suburb school Lyons Lagrange where he won the State Championship in 1953- the year following tiny Hebron's win over Quincy. The IHSA made the rule after this incident which gave the visiting team the choice of goals to start the game.

During my second basketball season at Pittsfield, we had an incident which was unpleasant for me but I felt I had no choice but to suspend a player for the rest of the

season. This player was a promising athlete but didn't seem happy with his status on the team. After practice, when one of the coaches went through the locker room, the athlete was smoking. While I tried not to have many absolute rules which would tie my hands this was a violation which I felt deserved a maximum penalty. The audacity of the student was so bizarre that I often thought the player did it because he wanted to be dismissed from the team. Of course, parents went to Mr. Voshall and he came to me with the suggestion that I think it over. I told him something to the effect that I thought I was to run the basketball team and it wouldn't be good for our program to rescind the action. Later, when I was appointed principal, he reminded me what I had said, and that there might be times as principal that I would be well to seek his advice. I knew he had my best interest at heart and it was his style to have his stamp on everything that happened in the district. While he did offer salient advice from time to time, he never disapproved of my actions as principal and was a great mentor for my initial principalship.

This is the final example I will use to exemplify Mr. Voshall's community stature. It was a meeting of members of the Old Orchard Country Club. I don't remember the issue but there were opposing sides to bring together. There was potential for some anger. Mr. Voshall was selected to break the ice for the meeting. He started with this joke: A young man who stuttered was staying at the famous Broadmoor Hotel with the famous golf course in Denver. He told them he wanted to play golf but his stuttering was an embarrassment. Did they know anyone who played who also stuttered? A little later, a call came to his room, informing that there was a golfer who also stuttered who he could join at 9 the next morning. When he arrived at the first tee, he saw this sporty vivacious young lady. He introduced himself, 'H h hello m m y n name is P P P Peter but I'm n not a s s saint. The young lady replied, "well m m y n name is M M Mary and I'm n not a v v v very good golfer.

He then reiterated that he wasn't a good golfer-which was true. He usually played with Charley Barber on Thursday afternoon and when Harold was having trouble hitting the ball off the fairway, Charley saw him teeing the ball up on every shot and said hey you can't do that. Voshall replied, "well ___ ___ I'm going too.

Mr. Voshall was a giant in education in Pike County and the State of Illinois.

The second person I want to salute tonight shows that it is important to hire quality people to be around young people – no matter what the position. One day while I was teaching math, some boys knocked on the door and said they were collecting from students to buy Mr. Franklin a ring for Christmas. Mr. Everett Franklin was one of our custodians. My reaction was what are you giving Mr. Hubbard? Lawrence was our second custodian. They answered, "we ain't gonna get him nothing". I said I didn't think that would be appropriate and asked them to return later. It was later decided to give both a present. But the ovation for Mr. Franklin at our annual Christmas Assembly always caused some uneasiness. It wasn't that Lawrence was antagonistic are anything but it was hard for anyone to match Mr. Franklin's popularity. He was so nice to everyone he met and became an unmatched legend and a great influence on students. I'm glad so many students could add a part of Mr. Franklin to their personality traits as they went through PHS.. I salute him as a true Saukee and will never forget him.

In 1964, it was decision time again for the Heitholts. I applied for an Education Grant called the Mott Fellowship in Flint, Michigan. An enticing feature was that it paid

\$8,000 tax free to pursue an advanced degree. I was getting \$7500 at Pittsfield. After my first airplane ride ever and a comprehensive interview in Flint, I was selected as one of the 40 recipients of the scholarship. I was assigned to the U of Michigan but our year was spent in Flint studying their Community School Programs. Fern had an exciting year as an assistant for the Director of Students at Mott Junior College. Becky had profitable year at Flint Central H. S. and Chuck blossomed as a student and athlete at Washington School. The Charles Mott that was the benefactor for this program was a former president of General Motors.

While it was a memorable year in Flint, it meant we had to say goodbye to the happy nine years in Pittsfield. The decision to leave was complicated because Mr. Voshall had offered me the job of Assistant Superintendent as Mr. Prentice was taking a job with Western Illinois University. In the end, he agreed with us that we should not turn down the opportunity to further my education under such profitable conditions.

In the 1956 Saukee, the school annual, the editors Betty Jones and Connie Shue offered this foreword: "With the passing of time, the echoes of our school life will grow fainter and fainter and then die away. Gone forever will be the routine of school life, the fun we had, and the friends we made. It is the hope of the 1956 Saukee Annual Staff that, as you glance through this book in the years to come you will recapture those moments- and the echoes will begin again."

We hope some of those echoes have reverberated tonight. We want everyone in Pittsfield to know that you, as a community and as students at PHS, did more for our family, than we did for you. We are forever grateful for spending about one-eighth of our lives with you.

As our final years approach, we will cherish this night and the opportunity to be with friends like you. We will never forget it.