



## Judy Higgins Donohue's Remarks at the 50<sup>th</sup> BHS Reunion



**Can you believe it?** Our 50<sup>th</sup> High School Reunion. We are pushing 70! How did this happen? I remember what Phyllis Diller said about aging. She compared it to an auto accident: *"I never saw it coming. It hit me from the rear."*

There may be days when you wake up feeling like you've been rear-ended, but the fact that you are here tonight proves that you survived the accident.

As you look around the room, you are probably thinking,

"These people look much older than me." Don't kid yourself. This room looks like a casting call for the movie "Cocoon."



Well, we might look old, but we are still young where it counts. Most of us are still playing with a full deck--- We just shuffle a little slower.

I like the way comedienne Rita Rudner put it: **"I've still got it!** (I just can't remember where I put it.")



**Oh YEAH~ We've still got it!** If you read our class newsletters you know that. We are still achieving great things—writing books, running marathons, playing tennis, managing businesses, caring for others in our community. How about Fran DiGiano—who just celebrated his 68<sup>th</sup> birthday this summer by pedaling a bike from San Francisco to New Hampshire?



And how about Linda Betts who started nursing school at age 60?

**Oh Yeah! We've still got it.**



**How many of you have never attended a Brockton High reunion before tonight?** Welcome! This will certainly be your best reunion ever.

**How many have** attended just one or two, Maybe the 25<sup>th</sup> ? Great that you are here. So we'll see you again at the 75<sup>th</sup>?

**Has anybody attended 5 or more?** Everyone else, take note of these people. They know everyone. Just stand close to them so you can catch the names of people they are greeting.



**Sometimes reunions can be important mile markers** along this journey we call life. I was thinking about the different stages of life I was in when we had these reunions. Maybe a few of these thoughts will resonate with you.

**First the 5<sup>th</sup> reunion:** We were about 23. Just getting started in the work force, maybe graduating from college, or getting out of the army. Some of us were married and beginning our families. It was the middle of the British Invasion. The Beatniks of the 50s were morphing into the hippies of the 60s. Hair was long; skirts were short. We came to the reunion to see who our friends married and who was still single.

**Now the 10<sup>th</sup> Reunion:** We were pushing 30 then. Many of us were married and had babies. We didn't have much money-- what with the rent and the car payments, but we were able to scrape up enough for the reunion dinner and a babysitter. We are still interested in seeing who married whom and who is still single.

**The 15<sup>th</sup>** came along and the men put on Nehru suits and ladies blew out their big hair. We came to see who was successful—and who was still single—or single again.



**25<sup>th</sup> reunion:** This was a biggie. This is the one where we really wanted to impress our classmates. We ladies tried to lose 10 pounds, bought a new dress, colored our hair, got a manicure. Men bought a new suit, and I know of at least one man who rented a fancy car for the weekend. We talked about our careers, our cars and our homes. We bragged about our kids who were-- like the children of Lake Wobegon, above average—and destined for great things. And, since some of us had divorced by then, we came to the reunion to see who was single.

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**By the 30<sup>th</sup>** we were pushing 50. Most of us had added a few pounds and lost a little hair. We were still helping out our kids, financially. They were in college, or out looking for work. The grey hairs started to appear. We got some nice bridgework, but we still had our own knees and hips back then.

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**Now on to the 40<sup>th</sup>** – We were in our late 50s. We've lost a little more hair and maybe added a couple more pounds. The kids are grown and gone, well-- except for those who have moved back home. We are fairly well established in our line of work and most of us have come to grips with the fact that we are not going to be CEOs or millionaires.



We were not ready to retire yet. We still had bills to pay, weddings to fund and grandchildren to spoil. Still eager to look good, we touched up our hair color, went to the tanning salon, got new outfits, and maybe even had our teeth whitened for the reunion.

We **celebrated the 45<sup>th</sup> at Thorny Lea Country Club** and spent the evening lying to each other about how **we had not changed a bit since high school!**

**And now here we are at the 50<sup>th</sup>.** And after 50 years, we finally get it! We know now what really matters—health, family, faith.

Tonight it does not matter what our jobs were or how fancy our homes are or what we drove here tonight. We are just happy to be here -- to reconnect with old friends--to share funny stories—to revive the good old days for a few hours.

Stuff is just not important any more. We have downsized our homes and upsized our wardrobes. And our goal is not to be on the cutting end of fashion—just to be neat and clean and not have food stains on our clothes.

Although most of us are retired, a whole lot of us are working—at least part-time—sometimes because we want to and some



because we have to. And because of the current economic picture, we worry about outliving our money.

Most of us are learning to live on less — We have become more frugal. I know that because the hostess here told me that some of you arrived at 4:30 p.m. looking for the *early bird special*. And I overheard one couple asking the waiter if they could split the dinner tonight, like they do at IHOP and Denny's.

But whether we have a little or a lot, it was enough to get us here tonight. Getting to this point has not been easy for many of us. We have all had pain and loss in our lives. We have learned to adjust our expectations and, hopefully, to focus on the positive.

**We have so much to be thankful for. For example—Isn't it great that we** lived long enough to learn that red wine and dark chocolate are good for you? And aren't you thankful that wrinkles don't hurt?

Tonight we can thank God that long-term memory is WAY better than short term memory. We may not remember what we had for lunch today, but we have total recall of incidents that happened on that bridge between the A building and B Building. But in case you are NOT one of those with total recall about those days, let's start with a **Walk Down Memory Lane** -- courtesy of our talented classmate, Kerry Harkins.