Greetings my fellow classmates,

It gives me great honor to be selected as president of the graduating class of Gary Roosevelt High School year 1980 Reunion Committee. I want to first give kudos to Rosa Askew and Amelia McGuire (Copeland) for holding down the class responsibilities for the last 44 years. They have shown inspiration and dedication to keeping our class traditions, values, and us together. I applaud them for their time and labors in achieving those efforts. I also want to thank all the people that have worked tirelessly on the committees in the planning struggles for any/all events that have occurred over the 44-year period since graduating; picnics, outings, etc. A job well done!

2024 brings us to our 44 years of being out of high school. Wow, 44 years, and we are still standing! Maybe not upright, but I pray that your health is good, you’re in your right mind and your family is doing well, at this ripe age of 60+! God is truly good.

I’m sure that you’ve had an awesome journey along this 44-year path. There have been ups, downs, lows and highs. As one musician put it, “I play low notes and I play high notes, but in the end, every/all notes played helped to make this beautiful melody.”

We have lost parents, family, friends, and a lot of our mates of the class of 80, but again, we are still standing, and standing Panther Proud!

Panther Pride, that’s one of the mottos that we share as a community of Roosevelt. The building has been labeled as an historical site, which means, *an official location where pieces of political, military, cultural, or social history have been preserved due to their*[*cultural heritage*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_heritage)*value. Historic sites are usually protected by law, and many have been recognized with official historic status.* We give thanks to the Alumni Association for that. Thank You!

Now, lets discuss our future, yes, we still have a future and I believe it’s a bright one. We are all older, children are grown, grandchildren, some retired, some still making the donuts, etc., but hopefully wiser and in decent health! Technological advances have progressed further than we could have ever imagined back in 1980. I come today to share with you some of the ideas about 2025 and beyond.

Realizing that 2025 will be our 45th year out of school, it gives us a great opportunity to celebrate the next 5 years in counting down to Gary Roosevelts 100th year of existence, 2030! That’s correct, in 2030 Roosevelt will be 100 years old, and we, the class of 1980, will be the class of the 100th year of Roosevelt! Just as we were in 1980, the 50th anniversary of Gary Roosevelt. That’s a milestone worth celebrating.

We have an obligation to the ones that came before us and more importantly, I believe, the ones that will continue after us, to keep this push forward.

We must demonstrate the panther excellence in education, athletics, music, etc., and all around being “The Best” at what we do, as we were taught. Those values that were instilled in us will never be obsolete! They will stand the test of time, because they shaped who we have become and will do the same for generations to come.

What I’m promoting, is that we start a kickoff celebration of;

1. Our 50th year of being out of school: **50 years of Excellence**;
2. Kick-off the celebration for the entire Gary Roosevelt population for 100 years of Gary Roosevelt! **2030! Excellence then; Excellence now!**

So, in 2025, we will celebrate 45 years out of high school, but will start a five-year countdown to 2030! Our 50th year and Roosevelt’s 100th year. Below, I have listed the events that I’m thinking of for our five-year plan. We will take any suggestions and/or comments on what your thoughts are and how we can improve the plan.

So, maintain your health and mental capacities, get ready for another journey! Thanks for being part of one of the greatest events that ever happened in the history of Gary and the nation. The school created for African Americans in 1930 and became an institution of excellence for so many students! We are part of that history! Celebrate yourselves and your accomplishments! May God continue to bless your families, stay encouraged and prayed up, God is in control! Always has been.

With all respect and admiration,

**The Class of 1980, 2024/25 Reunion Committee**

Michael Bullock, Clara McKinney-Alexander, Jeff Hughes, Shelia Taylor-Lewis, Shellie Tinner-Walker, Beverly Dudley-Johnson, Marcus Steele, Amelia Copeland-McGuire, Kim Milan-Banks, Tammy Smith-Stone, George Brooks

**Velt 80 class plan for the next five years: (TBD)**

2024 – (44) This Year 44 years out of High School!

Picnic Schedule for the third week of July – Saturday July 20, 2024 @ Hidden Lake

Fundraisers for Next Year Activities

* Bid Whist Tournament
* Casino Night
* Silent Auction – Velt Memorabilia

2025 – (45) Kick off Countdown to 50 years of Excellence! 2025 to 2030!

Fundraisers for Next Year Activities

Train Trip to New Orleans with a stop in Memphis

* Souvenir – Countdown Anniversary Book – Digital/Hardcopy – Fundraiser?

2026 (46) – Go to Our Classmates – Florida/Arizona/California

2027 (47) – Go to Our Classmates – Atlanta/North Carolina

2028 (48) – Go to Our Classmates – Vegas/Alabama

2029 (49) – Near home - Indianapolis/Chicago

2030 (50) – New Year Eves Party to Celebrate the Year!

Gary/Chicago – All Year Celebration