

# History of a high school principal

Leonard Speaker was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

He Attended School in Shawnee, Okla., until the 8th grade moved to Sherman, Texas and graduated from Sherman High School. Following graduation, Leonard attended Paris Jr. College where he was an All American Football Player. The Quarter Back for Paris was Mr. Phil Wood.

Next, Leonard accepted a Scholarship to Sam Houston State College where he was a Team Mate of Bob Woodruff and the quarterback for the Bearkats was Phil Wood. Leonard was a 3-year starting football player for the Bearkats as a center and line backer.

Following graduation, Leonard began a teaching and coaching career at Cleveland High School.

After a few years as an assistant coach, Leonard was promoted to Head Coach and then Athletic Director for the Cleveland Schools.

After 18 years of coaching and working as an Assistant Principal in Dickinson High School, Leonard received a call from his former Quarter Back, Mr. Phil Wood. Phil wanted Leonard to come to Bullard High School as the Principal.

When Leonard arrived in Bullard, he told Phil that he would take the Position if he could find a home for him and his wife, Betty Sue, to live in.

About two hours later, Leonard found a home and 40 acres of land and accepted the offer to become the principal of Bullard High School and Junior High School in the year 1978.

In 1978, a young English teacher by the name of Lynette Hughes also began her teaching career at Bullard High School. The date was June 12, 1978. This date just happened to be the year that Lynette's daughter was born, so lots of good things were happening that summer.

For Mrs. Hughes the experience of working for Mr. Speaker was almost like working for a Sgt. in the Army. With his Crew Cut Hair style, and his demeanor, Speaker came across to you as the tough Army Man.

But once you got to know Leonard you realized that he was a very caring man. When you were in the office with him and a student, Leonard wanted to do what was best for the student.

Many times Leonard would talk to the students regarding his own experiences of growing up in a tough world and he could relate to the students and give them the advice of his own experiences.

Leonard used what he had learned over the years in working with students to better help the students through some of their tough times in growing up.

In 1979, Berryl Johnson became the Principals Secretary to Speaker. Berryl remembers Speakers Panel Grey Station Wagon.

That was his baby at that

## Brag-Brag

Bobby Woodruff

time. Later Leonard went through his green Pick Up and presently his Beautiful Chrysler only has about 275,000 miles on it and is still going strong.

Speaker taught Berryl how to organize the office workload; Berryl appreciated how Leonard taught her how to be a school secretary.

Their children started school together and Speaker treated their children just like all the other students and he would discipline them as others. "I remember one time when his son Perry had just marked on a desk.

Leonard grabbed him up and took him into the office and disciplined him". "I was very upset that he was so tough on Perry. I felt that all we had to do was take a wet cloth and wash the mark off. Leonard said, "It's the principle of the thing that counts."

He knew that he had to be consistent and fair with all students including his own children.

One thing about Mr. Speaker was that he was very proud of his Building and he always wanted things clean and in place.

He would not hesitate to lean down and pick up paper off the floor in the hall. He did not wait for the custodian to take care of business.

It would not bother him to go to the closet and get the vacuum cleaner and do some touch up work to make things look better in the building.

The big thing about Speaker was that he worked with us to accomplish our goals. We didn't just work for him! Leonard always thought of all the staff as a team and we worked together.

Leonard has always had a great attitude with all the school employees. Speaker did have his humorous side and he truly enjoyed his time working with students.

In 1982 we moved into the new high school on Main Street and 20 years later we moved

again to the new school where we are today. With our new bond money we are continuing to build new buildings and facilities.

More and more families are moving into the Bullard district because they recognize the outstanding academic programs and the truly great teachers that we have in our district.

Former students would ask Berryl if Speaker was still the principal and Berryl would say yes, he is still here and they would say "Good, then my kids will be all right because I know that Leonard Speaker will take care of them."

There were times when a student would come in late and tell Speaker that his truck had broken down on the way to School and Leonard would jump in his green truck and he and the student would go out and take care of the problems.

It took a special caring person to give of his time to be sure his students were taken care of.

Now be sure that you understand, that if he needed to use a strong, firm hand in working with his students, Leonard did not hesitate to take care of problems.

This was always out of respect and love for his students that Leonard was willing to take the extra steps.

Former students who now had children in school knew that Leonard would look out for their children and give them the discipline and respect that they deserved.

Jan Berry started teaching at Bullard High School in 1975.

She remembers when Leonard Speaker first arrived at Bullard.

Speaker was always a fair person to work for.

We had a quote in the lounge that spoke about

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## CURB SERVICE



"Big TIME" rolls around for Jamee Eslicker – Jamee's parents, Heidi and Mark Eslicker, purchased the "Limo & Lunch with the Headmaster" package at the recent Brook Hill auction. Jamee invited a few friends and her favorite teacher to join her for a ride in a limo and lunch at Hollytree. From left: Spencer Smith (Brook Hill teacher) and wife Talitha, Kaleigh Emert, Anna Mae Stevens, Jamee Eslicker, Sarah Thigpen, Megan Troxell, Headmaster Rod Fletcher, and limo driver Michael Brosang.

## POST OFFICE HONORS OWN



Bullard Postmaster Jerry Ward, left, presents a plaque to retiring employee James F. Hill. Hill worked a total of 18 years for the postal service -- seven of those full-time. Ward also gave Hill a letter of thanks, signed by Dallas District Manager Carl January. Hill retired at the end of April.

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