

My Wife: An Extraordinary Person

Betty Ruth White was born on March 6, 1938 at the family home in Blythedale, Harrison County, Missouri the third daughter of Truman B. White and Ruth Marie Moore White. The family lived on sixteen acres on the edge of Blythedale. A new home was built for Truman and Ruth Moore White by Otto Wilson in 1940.



Blythedale, Missouri

Original White home- Betty born here in 1938

White home built 1942



This is the only baby photo of Betty. She was about 10-12 months of age.

Betty Ruth White had her first permanent at the Reed beauty shop at the age of seven. The curlers were attached to a machine by electrical wires to create heat. Betty thought the machine was very hot and began to cry. Bedonna Jean White, her sister, tried to console Betty without much success.



Betty



Betty and Jimmy White



Betty on roof of the barn



Joy Ann Betty Bedonna



Front Row: Karen Andrew, Betty Thompson, Betty White, Norma Kelly, Betty Harrold
Second Row: Gary Cook, Ray Wyant, Richard Claycomb, Larry Smith, Karl Lovett
Back Row: James Wilson, Mary Lee Moore, Creta Johnson, teacher, Beverly Claycomb
Blythedale School, 7th and 8th Grades



Truman, Ruth, Bedonna, Joy Ann, Jimmy White

To Betty

To the youngest of My Daughters so Fair,
These few lines so you would know that I care.

I have no Hallmark card to express,
my thoughts of you to wish you success,
And since Valentine day will soon be here,
That day I don't think I will see you dear.

I hope you enjoy this little gift of mine,
Question?, ~~W~~ WILL YOU BE MY VALANTINE?

With these few thoughts I'll close this rhyme,
And I do hope you will be my Valantine.

Love,
Daddy *Truman*



Betty, Jimmy Ruth, Truman, Bedonna and Joy Ann

In 1960 the above photo was taken at the 50th anniversary of the Citizen Bank, Blythedale Missouri. Betty gave her orchid to the president of the Tootle-Lacy Bank of St. Joseph, Missouri who was the speaker of the program. He took it home to his wife who later wrote to Betty.

Betty attended grade school in Blythedale, Missouri and high school in North Harrison

High School, Eagleville, Harrison County, Missouri and graduated in 1956. She graduated from Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, Missouri in 1960 with a Bachelor of Science in Vocational Home Economics.



Blythedale School Blythedale, Missouri



A group with lots of vim, vigor, and vitality have had a very good record for the past three years. Two girls, Karen Slaughter and Betty White, have lettered four years.

Front Row: Betty 3rd from right and Karen 1st from right.

This team did not lose any games their senior year. Betty was the top scorer with several games of more than 30 points. One game she scored 38 points. The team was invited to play in the National AAU tournament in St. Joseph, Missouri after Truman White worked to get the undefeated team invited to the AAU Tournament.

Betty was an outstanding athlete especially in basketball. She lettered all four years in high school and was the leading scorer most of those years. Betty was active in

marching band, stage band, dance band, a cappella choir and music all four years of high school. Their music groups went to the State Music Competitions every year and they often placed first.



Betty with ball from a rebound

Betty with the basketball during the 1956 AAU Tournament in St. Joseph, Missouri. The North Harrison High School, Eagleville, Missouri team played full court for the first time that year against a much team. Eagleville lost to the Kansas City Scotties 38-36.

Eagleville trailed by seven points during the 3rd quarter but rallied to tie the score at 30-30 at the end of the quarter. K.C. stalled during the 4th quarter and won the game.

The two teams took 33 shots and hit 14. Each team grabbed 14 rebounds. The difference was a 10-8 edge for K.C. in free throws. Betty scored 14 points in the game.

A CAPPELLA CHOIR



FIRST ROW: Frances Lynch, Mary Edwards, Becky Gibson, Betty White, Jane McWhinney, Theral Richardson, Karen Slaughter, Elaine Davis, Mary Frost. SECOND ROW: Larry L. Richardson, Larry J. Richardson, Jerry DeLong, Gene Lee, Kay Eastin, David Stevens, Dwight Hale, Larry Cook, J. C. Baker. CHOIR DIRECTOR: Mr. Crawford.

She was respected by her peers in school being elected Student Council President. She was as very good student and was on the Honor Roll. Betty was very pretty, popular and always had boyfriends. Betty was Basketball Queen, Shamrock Queen, Homecoming Queen Candidate, and FFA Sweetheart Attendant during her high school years. In 1956 she was voted the best personality and best athlete by her peers.

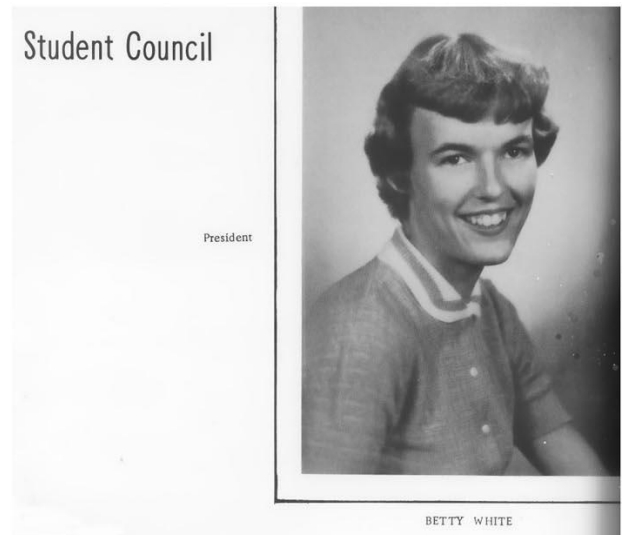


Betty White - Sid Jones



Betty White Jerry DeLong

**Betty Ruth White
1956
North Harrison High School
Eagleville, Harrison County, Missouri**





Betty lost this FFA vote by one vote.



A group with talent and initiative organized their own dance band and soon gained much popularity. The Dixieland Eight were called upon several times to entertain at various events. LEFT TO RIGHT: Jane McWhinney, Becky Gibson, Theral Richardson, Maureen Weable, Elaine Davis, Jerry DeLong, Betty White, Sue Hutton. MUSIC DIRECTOR: Mr. Crawford.

Betty won the Harrison County Dress Review five times, won the District three times and went to the Missouri State competition where she won blue ribbons. Betty won the District Make-It-With-Wool contest in 1958 and placed second in the Missouri state

competition in 1958. Betty received a Singer portable sewing machine for her Missouri State award. Betty had a lifelong interest in needlework during which she made several quilts, Christmas tree ornaments, Christmas stockings, needlepoint items, knitted items, clothing, draperies, rag quilts, cross-stitch items, silk ribbon embroidery and red work.



Betty showed Angus cattle from age nine to age twenty-one at the Harrison County Fair, Bethany, Missouri and Interstate Fair at St. Joseph, Missouri for many years. She won the Grand Champion Beef cattle competition and the Outstanding Cattle Showmanship Award at the Harrison County Fair, Bethany, Missouri and placed fourth in the Interstate Livestock Show in St. Joseph, Missouri. The cattle that she showed were from the outstanding purebred Angus herd of Truman Ben White.



There were many trips to the family farm to view and count the cattle. The farm was located about four miles from Blythedale and Betty remembers riding in the back of the pickup standing on the stock rack as her father sped over the many hills toward the farm. She especially enjoyed wading in the creek with her sister, Joy Ann White Lynch, to catch tadpoles while their father inspected and counted the cattle.

Betty's mother Ruth Moore White and Truman White had a very large garden. Large amounts of produce from this garden were canned and frozen for use by the family. Phillip Baker, Betty's husband, would tease Betty that when he visited the family for the first time in 1960 he thought that the Second World War must still be on because this garden was large enough to qualify as a *Victory Garden*! This garden was about two acres in size and very well kept by the family. The family also raised chickens and killed, picked, cleaned and froze them for their family eating.

Betty worked at the Citizens Bank, Blythedale, Missouri during the summers when the regular employees were on vacation where she would operate the posing machines or sort and file checks.

Betty White Baker and Phillip Baker met on a blind coffee date when Betty was teaching Home Economics at Ar-We-Va High School in Westside, Crawford County, Iowa. Phillip called Betty one morning before she left for school to ask her to go to nearby Carroll, Iowa for an afternoon coffee date when school was finished. Phil gave much personal information and stressed the fact that he was in medical school at the University of Nebraska, Omaha, Nebraska. The call was about over when Betty said she would go for coffee but asked "*What did you say your name was?*" Betty wanted to know his name as later she asked the school principal about Phil. During the summer months Phil and the principal had worked on the same construction crew. Fortunately, he gave Phil a good recommendation. She remembers that at that time Phil liked very hot coffee but later in their life this reversed and Betty liked hot coffee and Phil would let his cool before drinking.

Betty Ruth White and Phillip Leonard Baker were married August 5, 1961 in the Christian Church of Blythedale, Missouri and the reception was held on the lawn of the family home. The temperature was 97 degrees and there was no air conditioning at that time. They spent their honeymoon in Colorado.

Their first home was in Omaha, Nebraska where Betty taught Home Economics in District 66 on the west edge of Omaha, Nebraska and Phil was a Junior at the University of Nebraska Medical School. This was a time for Betty to develop skills to occupy her time as Medical School demanded so much of Phil's time and Betty and Phil had little money for extra things. Betty developed her skills such as needle work, cooking and reading in addition to her school teaching work. Betty was an avid reader and always had several books available to read.

In the summer of 1963, they moved to Kansas City, Missouri in 1963-1964 living just off 47th and Paseo, near the Menorah Medical Center, where Phillip was an Intern. Betty

taught Home Economics at Meadow brook Junior High School in Shawnee Mission, Kansas.

Betty Ruth White Baker and Phillip Baker were sent to Kitzingen, Germany from July 1964 to June 1966 where Phil was a Captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. Betty taught Home Economics in the U.S. Army Dependent School System in Wurzburg High School, Wurzburg, Germany during those two years. Betty and Phil traveled extensively throughout Europe and the Middle East at this time. In the summer of 1964 Betty's mother, Ruth Marie Moore White, died just before they went to Germany. Betty continued her skills of reading, sewing and writing as Phil was in the field training with the 1st Battalion, 15th. Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division. This field training extended over several weeks each month from October until April.

In the summer of 1966, they returned from Germany and moved into the Adams House Apartments at 41st and Adams located behind the Safeway stores across the street from the University of Kansas Medical Center. Betty taught Home Economics at Shawnee Mission West High School and after three years they bought a home in Shawnee, Kansas and lived there for one year before moving to Topeka, Kansas. Nancy Ruth, their daughter, was born on September 29, 1968.

They moved to Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas in 1970 and lived at 1520 Ward Parkway for two years. Susan Marie, their daughter, was born November 9, 1970. The family then moved to 3133 West 15th Street where they were still residing at present.

Betty Ruth White Baker was known as the outstanding entertainer and hostess in the Westboro area of Topeka, Kansas. She held elegant dinner parties and had many formal social events. There was a desire by her friends to be invited to a "*Dinner Party by Betty Baker*". During many Christmas Holiday Seasons she held an invitation-only dinner party that was the highlight of the Holiday Season. She was *Cook of the Week* in the Topeka Capital Journal in 1975 and 2005. Her specialties were desserts such as pies, cakes, homemade ice cream, cookies, candies along with breads, cinnamon rolls, and buns.

Betty was an avid reader and always searched for new authors to read. Her life-long interest in reading made her a very skilled conversationalist and resource person. She had a charming, keen sense of humor and could remember names and people for years after conversing with them for a short time. Her library was extensive and she passed a reading interest and passion on to her daughters, Nancy and Susan. She encouraged Phil to read books that he would later tell his friend's, in some detail, the contents of the book. Betty would just smile at his stories.

Betty will be best remembered as a person who always put her family first. After beginning her Master's program she gave up her aspiration for advanced education as her family was the most important concern in her life. Her constant attention to their needs made life easier for the family. She was focused on family health needs, school volunteering, 4-H leadership, Girl Scout campouts, entertaining other physicians and

their wives with dinner parties, sewing clothes, baking cookies for Nancy and Susan and neighbor children to decorate, taking food to friends, always writing thank you notes, starting two different family letters that lasted for decades, picking cherries from her backyard trees for pies, canning green beans and tomatoes, freezing corn, making strawberry and peach frozen jam, baking cookies by the dozens, worrying about her daughters, serving on church committees, making Christmas ornaments and seeking new authors to read. However, she was always placed the needs of her family first.

Betty completed many items of needlepoint, pieced and completed many quilts (over 25), did countless Christmas tree ornaments for family and friends, silk embroidered many shirts, and made many children clothing items. She was highly skilled in these fields but never stopped completing new projects.

Betty learned the game of bridge and became skilled. She belonged to a bridge group for many years and substituted in other groups.

Betty began writing stories of her family remembrances as her ability to recall events, people, places and times was outstanding. Some of these will appear in another book. She can recall events of decades past with a clear recollection.

Betty spent a lifetime attempting to teach Phil to “*follow the beat*” while dancing. Betty was a good singer and dancer with great rhythm. They belonged to Helianthus, a dance club at the Topeka Country Club that met four times a year for a formal dinner and dance. She would “*dance*” with her grandchildren to music that was always on her kitchen stereo. Andrew Phillip Anderson especially liked to “*dance*” and watch the graphic equalizer while they swayed to the music.

Betty continually was focused on her children and grandchildren. She always prepared Valentine cookies, made Easter cookie and candy bags, prepared Halloween treats and Christmas candy for her family. She taught them to bake bread and rolls, pies, cakes, cookies and make macaroni and cheese.

Betty was a role model for a wife, companion, mother, entertainer, listener, neighbor, reader, worker, planner, decorator, needle-pointer, quilter, writer and my lifelong friend.

Source:

My Wife, An Extraordinary Person, personal notes, Phillip Leonard Baker, M.D.

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