



LINGEN HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

Name and Address: Betty Smith	Spouse Name: <u>Divorced</u> # of Children: <u>3</u> # of Grandchildren: <u>3</u>	Graduation Year: <u>1967</u>
Occupation: GED <u>Teacher and</u> <u>Ecclesial Lay Minister</u>	E-Mail: <u>bsmith5076@aol.com</u> Phone: 615 269-7372 Cell Phone: 864 517-4557	

What's Happened since HHS: "The Good, The Bad, The Ugly"

I don't mean to sound flippant, but I feel that I've lived two lifetimes---*before* and *after* my surprise divorce in 1995. From 1971 (the year I married) to '95, my life was filled with helping my husband through medical school, rearing three daughters, teaching for short stints (2-3 years at a time) and traveling to many wonderful places. I was privileged to work when I chose (and held volunteer jobs when I wasn't "gainfully employed"). Mostly, however, I was able to spend a lot of quality time with the family in their formative years. I lived mostly here in Nashville, TN (where I currently reside), but also one year in Dallas, six years in Winston, Salem, NC and 6 months in Toronto, Ontario CANADA. I lived a very charmed life, but apparently, one full of others' projects instead of figuring out who I was.

Since '95, I have spent a LOT of time doing just that. I have taken a number of college courses (both to renew my teaching certificate---in TN it's not for life, as it was in TX) and to work on my Master's in Pastoral Studies (by extension), which I received from Loyola in New Orleans in 2001. That process has given me direction, focus and helped me discern who I am for the first time in my life. One of the first changes was switching from teaching elementary level to adult. For the past eight years I have taught in a couple of different settings, but basically preparing adults from the lower socio-economic strata who dropped out of high school for a variety of reasons, to take their GED exam. The success rate is extremely low, but we celebrate small accomplishments. This is part-time.

In addition, I have worked on staff at my parish church, St. Ann's, as part of the pastoral team. Just this past year, I "retired" from my role as Youth Minister to take on more responsibility planning and preparing for Adult Education/Formation. I am also the Stewardship Director, but probably NOT in the usual sense (I told them when they hired me that "I don't DO money".) This role has more to do with educating Catholics to the more inclusive role of stewardship as well as coordinating various ministries. Some years ago I returned to singing in a choir, which has always brought me tremendous joy, but which I took a LONG hiatus for many years.

My trips these days are to the Carolinas (both North and South) to visit my three married daughters and their families, including three granddaughters (ages 4, almost 4 and 6 months). It is with great joy and sense of pride that I watch these new generations carry on the cycle of life so beautifully and with such care and devotion. Relationships have always been important to me, but now I'm much more inclusive. My church "family" and friends also bring tremendous fulfillment, as each day offers new surprises and challenges.

I thank all of you who have had a role in organizing this fantastic reunion (my 1st). It has taken a TREMENDOUS amount of effort to plan and coordinate, but I know the fruits of your labor will be abundant indeed. Looking forward to reconnecting with all of you.

