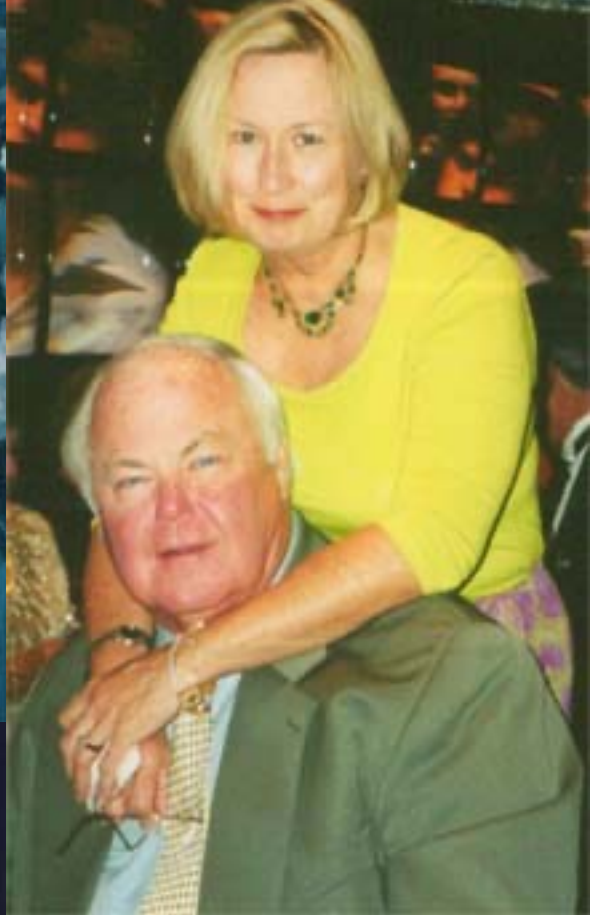


Go, Panthers

July 2025

Linden McKinley HS





Comments and Observations

I was thinking of the Panthers who had some prominence in athletics and came up with this initial list (in no particular order): James “Buster” Douglas (heavy weight boxing champion of the world), Chuck Kessler (Capital University football), Bobby Walston (NFL), Kenny Byers (NFL), Bill Spahr (All-State & OSU football), Jim Clemons (NBA player & coach), the Bowman brothers, Jim and Tommy, Todd Penn (OSU basketball), Jack Strapp (All-American in lacrosse at OSU), Steve Bennett (football & track), Al Plesse (track), Glenn Rowley (wrestling), Bill Angle (state-ranked wrestler), John Schaub (broke LM individual basketball scoring record), Bill Stewart (MVP men’s world championship softball), Judy Stein (AAU basketball), Mike Podolski (golf), Russ Salyers (NFL), Jack Moore (All-State in baseball), Lyn Fitzer (minor league baseball), John Montgomery (football coach), Vince Chickerella (basketball coach), Don Newman (cross-country coach) ... Reggie Rankin and Skip Young probably belong in the mix, but I’m not familiar with their careers ... I’m sure I’ve missed more than a few others ...

LM had no athletic Hall of Fame back in the day but apparently does now ...

LM Trivia Pursuit

What LM classmate owned a horse while in school?

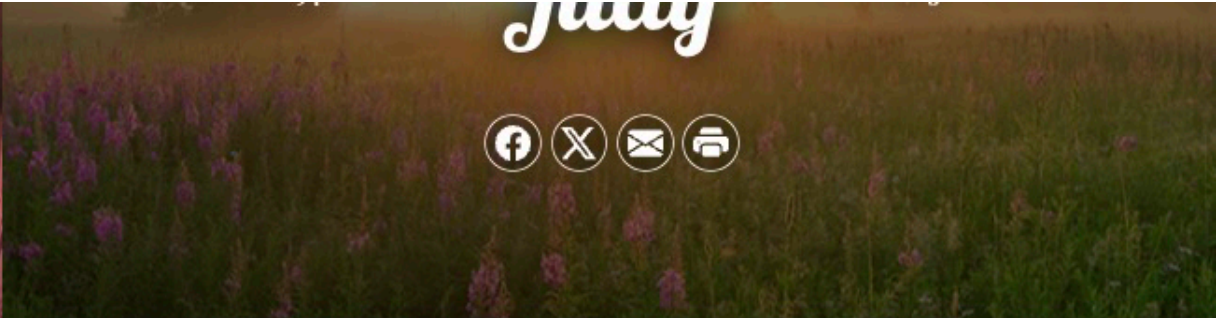
Last Month’s Question: *What two LM ’60 grads went into the executive training programs of two respective major retailers?* Larry France (Lazarus) and Gary Nixon (Rike’s in Dayton) ...

Link Du Jour

Click on link: Who remembers “Crazy Elephant”?



In Memoriam



PLANT A TREE

Judy Ann Smith

March 27, 1942 — May 29, 2025

Judy Ann Smith, of Shawnee Hills, Ohio, passed away peacefully at the age of 83 on May 29, 2025, surrounded by her loving family, after a courageous six-year battle with cancer. Born in Athens, Ohio, to Roger and Meredith Martin, Judy lived a life full of love, resilience, and joy.

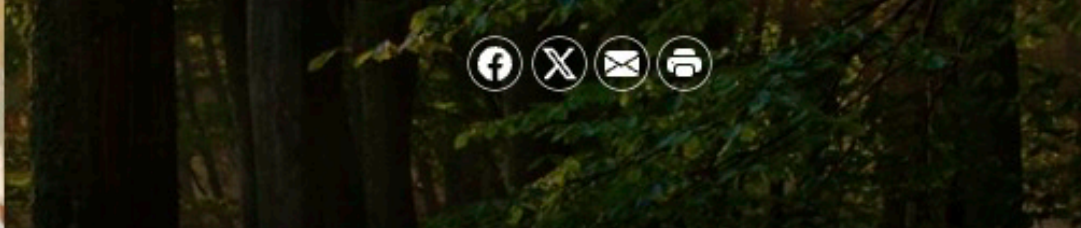
A beloved wife, mother, sister-in-law, aunt, grandmother, great-grandmother (“GG”), and friend, Judy leaves behind a legacy defined by her unwavering devotion to family and her zest for life.

Throughout her career, Judy held several office management positions before becoming the first woman-owned SERVPRO franchisee. She later served as Vice President and Co-founder of MSA Group, where she worked for 12 years. Her entrepreneurial spirit continued as she and Lowell successfully launched and ran a group of Verizon Wireless authorized retail stores.

Despite her professional accomplishments, Judy’s greatest joy came from her family. She was the heart and soul of her home—a devoted wife, a loving and supportive mother, a proud grandmother and great-grandmother. Her warmth and generosity extended to all who knew her. She was a cherished sister-in-law and aunt, always ready with encouragement, compassion, and a kind word.

Judy is survived by her daughters, Robin (Matt) and Kellie (Jeff); grandchildren, Christopher, Heather (Bo), Jeffrey (Krista), Kendall (Zack), Keegan, Evan (Mackenzie), Ethan, and Kori; and great-grandchildren, Chloe, Gavin, Nolan, and Rhett. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Lowell; her parents; and her son, Bradley.

A ceremony to celebrate Judy’s life will be held on Friday, June 6th, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 5475 Brand Road, Dublin, OH. The service will begin at 3:00 PM, with a gathering to follow at the Hoover residence: 8210 Timber Mist Ct., Dublin, OH. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the American Cancer Society or Hospice of Central Ohio.



PLANT A TREE



SEND A GIFT

Wendell E. Taranto

December 28, 1940 — June 15, 2025

With grateful hearts and unwavering faith, we remember and honor the life of our beloved husband, father, grandfather and papa - Wendell Taranto—who was peacefully called home to be with the Lord on Father's Day. Born on December 28, 1940, in Columbus, Ohio, Wendell lived a life rich in love, purpose, and devotion to God.

A proud graduate of Linden McKinley High School, Wendell continued his education at The Ohio State University. He was a lifelong Buckeye fan and enjoyed watching Saturday games and championships with his family.

He shared 63 beautiful years of marriage with his devoted wife, Astrid (Rietenbach) Taranto—a love rooted deeply in faith and commitment. Together they built a family grounded in love, laughter and music. Blessed with two wonderful children Kim (Don Berno, Jeff (Kim) Taranto, five adored grandchildren Christopher (Meg), Brad (Anu), Chelsea (Andy), Amara (Vincent), and Erika (Nick), as well as ten treasured great-grandchildren. Wendell was also predeceased by his father John Taranto, Sr, his mother Wilda Taranto and his brother John Taranto, Jr.

For 33 years, Wendell faithfully served as an employee of Columbia Gas of Ohio, known for his integrity, and steady work ethic. Beyond his professional life, he was a man of many passions. He found peace and purpose in nature—whether hunting, hiking, or simply observing God's creation. His collections told stories of his curiosity and appreciation for the world around him: reptiles, morel mushrooms, arrowheads, and seashells, each lovingly gathered.

Some of the family's most cherished memories were made at his A-frame cabin nestled in the Hocking Hills. There, surrounded by the beauty of God's creation, Wendell found joy in family hikes, bon fires, and the laughter of generations gathered together. These sacred times, along with family vacations to the Outer Banks, crab dances, candy store adventures, and numerous other beach trips created a legacy of memories that will never fade.

A humble servant of Christ, Wendell gave generously of his time and heart. He was active in the hospital prayer ministry, faithfully lifting others in their time of need, and served with compassion through Meals on Wheels. He lived the Gospel in quiet powerful ways, always putting others before himself.

Though we mourn his absence, we rejoice in the assurance that he now walks in the presence of his Savior, free from pain and surrounded by glory. His life was a shining example of what it means to walk humbly with God, to love deeply, and to serve faithfully.

“Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Lord.” — Matthew 25:23

Forever in our hearts, until we meet again. In lieu of flowers, please feel free to donate to the Alzheimer's Association.