

## **MAY DAY AT BAXTER SEMINARY, BAXTER, TN**

**Source:** May Day Celebration and early traditions surrounding it for Baxter Seminary are found on pages 2 - 4 of *All Roads Lead To Baxter* by Anita Cunningham Mitchum - Class of 1951 "A Story of Baxter Seminary, Baxter, Tennessee - pub. 2005:

(pg. 2) The First Saturday Night of May, Every Year Since 1927. The roads leading to Baxter every month of May for the annual Alumni Banquet might emanate in Chicago, in San Diego, in Nashville, and many other points on the map. This night is reserved by Seminary and Upperman High students, graduates, teachers, and friends, because, since 1927, this event has been the function of the year to remember.

Miss Hill began to "preach" to us from the podium every Spring concerning the importance of meeting as a group for a "true and beautiful time." It was her wish that we might recapture the adventures of our Seminary days and try to rekindle memories of past friendships. She insisted that "in years to come, you will look back, and realize that this school was the finest one you ever attended."

(pg. 3) Oddity: The odd fact about this meeting, held not only in Baxter in the beginning, but later in Tennessee Tech convocation hall of the Student Union because there was no building large enough in Baxter which would contain three hundred or more people for dinner, is that:

1. No publicity is communicated re: the date, time, nor place
2. No letters, no phone calls from the Board of Directors. No e-mails, either.

Another odd fact is that we are celebrating an alma mater which no longer exists except in our hearts and minds.

(pgs. 3-4) The Agenda

The attendance number might seem rather scant if one considers that hundreds and hundreds of students have graduated there since 1908. Our crowd consists of approximately three hundred persons who meet to greet and eat!

Social hour begins at 5 p.m. Dinner is served at 6 p.m. in the school dining hall. Upperman students are excellent waiters and waitresses.

At the evening program in the new auditorium, we are entertained by presidents of two former classes: the 50th anniversary class, and the 25th anniversary class. Each speaker introduces his/her classmates individually who in turn make brief remarks. The present principal of Upperman High School makes brief remarks also.

Through the years, we have heard Dr. Harry Lee Upperman, Mr. Arnold Brown, Mr. Frank Medley, Mr. Wayne Shanks, and Mr. Jerry Boyd welcoming us.

The earliest years represented last year were by Jimmie Jacques, 1923, and her sister, Mrs. Hannah Hall, 1924.

The Master of Ceremonies of the night read a "roll call" of each graduating class starting with the estimated earliest year. The class stands, and each person states his name and city. (I can remember when students of the 1915 class attended).

Additionally, I remember the beautiful ladies in long gowns with corsages on their shoulders walking gracefully down the dining hall stairs. Ruth Grace, Nell Campbell, Phyllis Bain, and Joyce Cole were my favorites! Bob Grace, Walter Shanks, and Fowler Stanton were usually there.

(pg. 4) Reservations are made through the Alumni Board's secretary.

(pg. 4) Change of Venue Necessary: Morgan Sadler, BS 1942, told me years ago that he contracted with Tennessee Tech to allow the Seminary alumni to hold their banquet there when the high school dining room was no longer large enough for a party over 100 participants.

The banquet was held there until about 1990 when the group returned to the campus at Upperman High. Now the new Upperman High hosts the banquet. Mr. Jerry Boyd, Principal, and his staff have been very gracious to act as host.

I have (2) books on Baxter Seminary called:

A Light On The Cumberland Plateau by Ruth Robinson Matthews (no index)

All Roads Lead To Baxter by Anita Cunningham Mitchum - Class of 1951 on page 128 she list - May Queens 1945-1955

1945 - Martha Jane Elrod

1946 - Oda Roberts

1947 - Anne Corley\*

1948 - Evelyn Phillips

1949 - Mary Anne Stewart

1950 - Mildred Maynard

1951 - Anita Cunningham\*

1952 - Betty Wheaton

1953 - Peggy Alcorn

1954 - Peggy Love

1955 - Mary Bowman

\*Anne Corley Windle: Baxter Seminary 1947; Tennessee Tech. Retired from Quebecor Printing Company in 1997; attends Donelson Heights Methodist Church; active in the local chapter of AARP; member, planning committee for the BS Dorm Reunions. Lives in Nashville. Three children, eleven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren.

\*Anita Cunningham Mitchum is a graduate of Baxter Seminary, 1951, and of Tennessee tech and George Peabody College in Tennessee. From her perspective as an honor student, member of "Who's Who in American Universities and Colleges," librarian at Vanderbilt University, teacher of music, and daughter of Baxter Seminary's beloved teachers, W. L. and Iva Cunningham, who were house parents to young men from 1941 until 1955, she bases her book on memories and interviews collected from hundreds of Baxter students. Anita is married with five children and seven grandchildren.

MAY DAY QUEENS 1945-1960  
Baxter Seminary



May Queen - Martha Jane Elrod 1945  
crowned by Dr. Harry Upperman.



May Queen - Oda Roberts 1946



May Queen - Anne Corley 1947



May Queen - Evelyn Phillips 1948



May Queen - Mary Anne Stewart 1949



May Queen - Mildred Maynard 1950



May Queen - Anita Cunningham 1951



May Queen - Peggy Alcorn 1953



May Queen - Betty Wheaton 1952



May Queen - Peggy Love 1954



May Queen - Mary Bowman 1955





May Queen 1956: Helen DeLozier. Attendants: Senior, Billie Carolyn Medley; Junior, Judy Keaton; Sophomore, Mary Martha Smith; Freshman, Helen Geer.



May Queen - Charlene Boyd 1957



1957 - Senior Attendant: Sylvia Fields  
 Junior Attendant: Sue Brewington  
 Sophomore Attendant: Betty Dyer  
 Freshman Attendant: Dowlene Maxwell



May Queen - Peggy Davis 1958



May Queen - Ernestine Austin 1959



May Queen - Carol Watts - 1960