

## **Stan Klaff**

The expression "You get old too quick and wise too late!" certainly applies to me! I left Northview and now, fifty years plus later, I have a wife, four children, a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law, four grandchildren and two dogs. So much has happened in the intervening years but here is the abbreviated version.

I was 'handpicked' along with four other Northview matriculants to serve in the defence of our country. Paul Cunningham and I were together for about six of the nine months. Having survived that (the army that is, not being with Paul!) and a brief spell at Wits University, I started work in the construction industry. I was always going to work in building and construction having been interested in that work since my earliest days. My next-door neighbour was a builder and he gave me many part-time jobs in his office and on his sites during my school years.

I have been involved in many projects and businesses allied to the industry including the construction of high rise buildings; work on power stations and in low-cost housing. I ran my own businesses from home renovations to large housing and industrial projects as well as waste removal and recycling. I was given the opportunity during this period to study project management and this has stood me in good stead in all of my activities.

My father, sadly passed away in the early seventies, and I assisted my mother (still going strong at 94) in the family jewellery business until we sold it. I have extensive experience in building and construction in all of its forms and it remains my passion but things changed and I joined my uncle in a real estate business and ran it after he passed away until around 1994 when we closed having sold off most of the operation.

In the mid-nineties I was invited to join a software start-up to raise capital, build the business and to market the product, a software solution for managers in education and training. It has been a challenging experience and the business is still operating although I only sell the product and work with the customers without the day-to-day hassle 'enjoyed' by software developers.

I am proud to say that I have run and finished five 'Comrades' and many marathons. This was a good period in my life and I regret that I stopped but I was too wrapped up in business to continue. I know that a number of others from the class of '62 also ran during this period and I am sure that they will say much the same about the experience. An ex-pupil, David Levick, won the race twice, by the way.

About forty years ago I joined an organisation called the Hebrew Order of David (HOD) which was formed in South Africa in 1904. It is a Jewish fraternity and was active in community and charitable activities throughout South Africa until the eighties when emigration forced the closure of most of the Lodges. Since then the organisation has grown internationally and I have been involved in its growth having served as President of the renamed Hebrew Order of David International for the past 6 years. This has given me the opportunity to travel to the countries where we have Lodges: USA, UK and Israel as well as in South Africa.

I married my wife, Geraldine, over forty years ago, arguably the best thing I ever did, and as I said we are enjoying the grandchildren now. I am far from even thinking of retiring but do

envy those who have or are contemplating this move. I have enjoyed the interaction with all you since we embarked on this project and wish you all well into the future. Hopefully we will be able to continue with this initiative and that someday we will get together and share our lifetime experiences from school to the present. If I had my time over I would begin at Northview High School where I enjoyed being with all of you, it was a time worth remembering.

Stan

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