

TOWER NEWS



Withrow Alumni • Box 8186 • Cincinnati, OH 45208 • 513-363-9085

Fall 2022

Greetings from the Principal's Desk

by Jerron T. Gray



I hope this letter finds all Withrow High School alumni and your families doing well. What a year! Our 2021-2022 academic year was very eventful, to say the least. And, our 2022-2023 school year is off to an eventful and great start, as well—with some sense of pre-pandemic normalcy.

As we embark upon another exciting new school year, under the new district leadership of Superintendent Iranetta Wright and her administrative team, we are *Getting Back to the Basics—our ABCs*. We, as one

school and district, will focus on *Academics, Behavior*, and establishing a *Culture of Academic Excellence* to ensure our students have equitable access to a world-class education, unleashing the potential of every student.

I am very excited for this new school year, especially leading such a strong and dedicated group of administrators, educators, counselors and support staff! I truly believe that we have assembled the best administrators, faculty, counselors and support staff in the district! **WE ARE ONE!**

We began last year with relaxed masking as an option for our faculty, staff, and students. With COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters bringing the global COVID-19 pandemic near to a close, we still managed to get hit with the spike in Hamilton County COVID-19 omicron variant case—causing numerous Withrow and districtwide teacher absences and a districtwide return to a two week at-home remote learning plan mid-year—January—that occurred after the winter break.

Unfortunately, with the spike in omicron cases, we also saw a spike in student mental health referrals, which we aggressively addressed with our new mental health care partner. Without really recognizing the impact of two-and-a-half years of isolation and on-again-off-again blended learning, students really had a tough time re-acclimating themselves to the academic standards, rigor, and socialization of pre-pandemic times. It was a true reality check and a process that we had to monitor closely and take seriously as a staff. However, our faculty and staff navigated these obstacles and adapted to change to provide the best instruction possible for our Withrow students, as well as provide the supports that students need to be successful. They are to be truly commended for all the hard work, creativity, patience, and grace they extended to their students throughout the year.

Our students adapted to the academic instructional expectations and challenges that the

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President's Message

by Dave Blocksom '68

I am pleased to announce that Withrow Alumni, Inc. has been selected to manage a \$50,000 donation from a private family foundation which prefers to remain anonymous. The grant is for \$10,000 per year for five years. The funds are being used to pay for music tutors for our five band classes, which include beginning band, intermediate band, and orchestra. There are four tutors (oboe, brass, percussion, and woodwinds) who work with our 70 band students one day per week. The program started last year, and the results have been amazing! Some of the students will give up their study halls to come to the band room to practice with the tutors. Our oboe student is now looking into majoring in music in college. This is quite a turnaround for our band program.

We have included a page in this edition of *Tower News* informing you of the Mathais Fund. This is a scholarship program for a Withrow student who will attend UC, has two working parents, and is not eligible for the standard Pell grant. This scholarship was established by former Alumni Board of Trustees member Ike Misali '50. There are two other scholarships specifically for Withrow grads; both are managed by the Cincinnati Scholarship Foundation. One of the scholarships honors former principal Major McNeil, while the other was established by retired health and physical fitness instructor Mike Finnegan; this scholarship is for

a Withrow grad who intends to major in a health-related field or education.

Withrow is starting a 7th and 8th grade (Jr. High) tennis club after more than 40 years without any tennis programs at the school. The club includes not only Withrow students, but also students from other CPS schools that do not have a tennis program. The club uses the refurbished Withrow tennis courts. Former Withrow tennis player Jerry Howard '75 (state runner-up in doubles) is an adviser and coach to the program. He is partnering with the Cincinnati Tennis Foundation for funding. Jerry has been a teaching tennis pro his entire career, and we are fortunate that he is giving back to our students.

We are announcing our 2023 Withrow Athletic Hall of Fame inductees in this issue of *Tower News*. The induction ceremony will be held Saturday, February 4, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the gym. Last year's induction ceremony was not a part of a boys' basketball game for the first time, and it went over so well that we are going to continue to have the ceremony separate from a basketball game. Honestly, the noise at the games was very distracting to the ceremony. The ceremony is free and open to the public, so please feel free to attend.

We are still looking for annuals for our alumni archives collection. We need years 1973, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1995. If you have any that

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2022 WITHROW SPECIAL TIGERS

You become a Special Tiger when you make a one-time gift of \$1,000 or more. This donation significantly impacts our ability to support academic and extracurricular programs and conserve our campus and facility.

David Bruns '48
Dr. Walter Cash, Jr. '67
Terri Colangelo '68
John Diekman '61
Patty Dilg '71
Noel Hayden '57

Ann Godley Hingst '60
Frederick Howard '61
Carl Jones '71
Clifford Jones '71
Nicholas Payne, Friend
Truman Vanatta '47

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you would like to donate, please contact me at withrowalum@gmail.com. We don't need any annuals prior to 1972. The Cincinnati Public Library has scanned 60 of our 90 annuals. There is a link on our alumni website, withrowalumni.org, to view the library's collection. The rest of our annuals will be on the site by the end of the year.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't mention how important your donations are to help support all our volunteer efforts to maintain our beautiful campus and support our students and staff.

If you are taking taxable IRA deductions, don't forget about using tax-free qualified charitable distributions instead. It also looks like Congress might extend the up-to-\$600 (married filing jointly) tax deduction for charitable contributions again this year (even if you itemize). We sincerely appreciate any financial help that you can give us.

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global COVID-19 pandemic presented, and were poised last year for breakthrough and greatness. Last spring, our class of 2022 saw 209 Withrow Tigers walk across the stage at the University of Cincinnati's Fifth Third Arena to receive their high school diploma—a true vision fulfilled. What a tremendous accomplishment!

As we look toward this 2022-2023 academic year and beyond, we are growing and thriving with well over 1,350 students enrolled that include: four Multiple Disability Units, three Autism Units, two STRIDES Units, one Project Life Work/Study Program Unit, and more than 350 English Second Language (ESL) and SLIFE/Newcomer students in our ESL Department. We will continue to set high expectations and develop our Withrow students into life-long learners who are change-agent global leaders—drawing strength from this pandemic to relentlessly pur-

sue their goals and dreams and putting the world on notice that they are coming. Coming with skill, talent, and the innovative solutions that the world needs and has not seen—representing Withrow University High School with distinction and honor.

It is my hope that each of you and your families will continue to be healthy, safe, and strong and continue to support our Withrow Tigers in any way you can. We thank you so very much in advance.

Always remember: Once a Tiger...
Always a Tiger!
All the Best,

Jerron T. Gray
Principal

Withrow – The first fifty years: Coaches

by Bob Linnenberg '63

John Huheey

Although he is best remembered as the varsity basketball coach for 18 seasons at Withrow, with his hoopsters going to the final four in 1952, Coach John Huheey was equally noted for his varsity nine baseball team which won the state of Ohio Class A championship in 1950.

Joining the Physical Education staff at Withrow in the fall of 1948, the 32-year-old John Ernst Huheey was made head basketball and baseball coach and initially headed up reserve football.

Having lettered in both football and basketball at Terrace Park High School, Huheey continued his education at the University of Cincinnati. At UC he lettered in baseball, playing shortstop for the Bearcats. Playing various positions on the varsity basketball

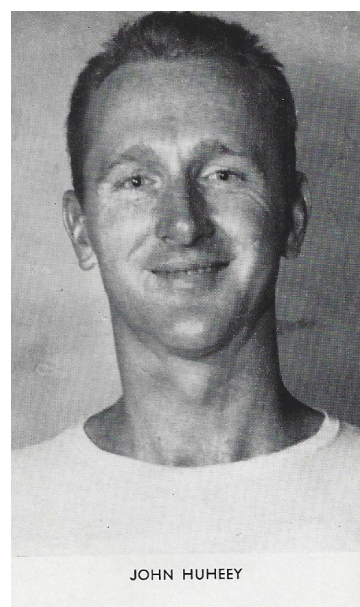
team earned him another letter, and shot putting, plus throwing a discus and javelin on the track team earned him another sports letter. During this time, he also played and coached in metropolitan basketball teams for Terrace Park.

Upon graduation from UC Teachers College in 1942, he served in the Navy during World War II. Attaining the rank of Lieutenant, he was discharged in January 1946 and begin his professional coaching and teaching

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1961 District champs celebrate.



JOHN HUHEEY

Left: Coach Huheey and Coach Ernst. Above: Coach Huheey in 1949.

The sons of Angus King

Two “Kingsmen” became noted coaches, Norman Kusel and Virgil Scardina.

Norman Kusel, known as “Doc” during his entire career, graduated from Withrow in 1935. Number 52 on Coach King’s football squad, he played at right end. Upon graduation, he attended Miami University in Oxford, graduating in 1939. Doc soon began teaching and coaching at Plainville High School. Since it was a small school, he had to coach all the sports offered: football, basketball and track.

Plainville High became Mariemont High School in 1949, the year that Doc’s track team won a state championship. His most famous team was the 1952-53 basketball squad, which, with a 26-2 record, won the Class B state championship, defeating the team from Philo, Ohio, 87-44 at Cincinnati Gardens. Coach Kusel’s basketball career record with the Warriors was 287 wins and 125 losses.

Withrow played basketball against Plainville High in the early 1940s but did not resume play with the school as Mariemont until 1958. In 1962 the Tigers did not play the Warriors during the regular season, but defeated them in tournament play 61-43. The Warriors got revenge for this loss in the District tournament in 1967 when they defeated the second-seeded Tigers 70-61 and ended Withrow’s 10-game winning streak.

Mr. Kusel stopped active coaching in 1967 but remained as Athletic Director and teacher

at Mariemont until his retirement in 1975. Among his many honors, Doc was the first member of the Mariemont Hall of Fame and was inducted into the Buddy LaRosa High School Sports Hall of Fame in 1980. When the Mariemont High School stadium was dedicated in 1975, it was named for him, just as the Withrow stadium is named for his mentor Angus King. Coach Kusel passed away in 1995.

A running back and letterman under coach King, Virgil Scardina graduated with the class of 1945. He continued his education at the University of Cincinnati, graduating in 1949. After serving in the Army during the Korean Conflict, he began his coaching career in 1952 as an assistant coach at Elder High School in Cincinnati’s Price Hill. He soon became the head coach and remained at Elder until 1962. In his second year, he led the Panthers to a 10-0-0 season in 1954, outscoring opponents 319 points to 65. At Elder, his career total was 69 wins, 32 losses and 5 ties. His team won the Greater

Catholic League title in 1954 and 1956, and a co-title in 1959.

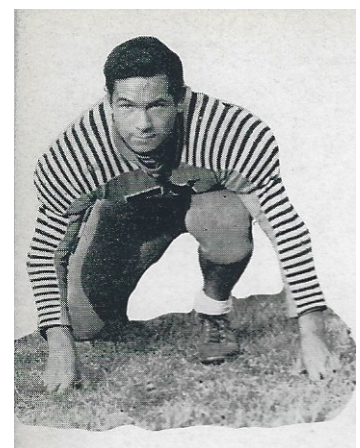
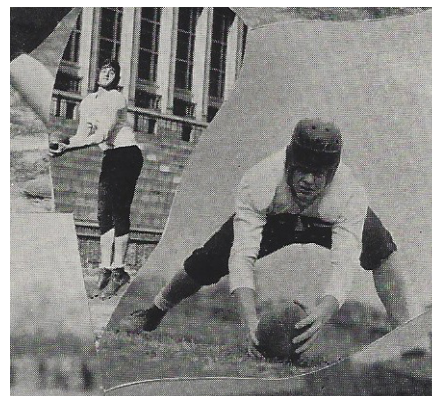
During his time at Elder, Coach Scardina’s Panther squad defeated the Tiger eleven in 1956, ’58, ’59, ’60 and ’61. Withrow tied in 1955, and though the Tigers lost 26-6 in 1957, Withrow got the win as Elder had to forfeit due to an ineligible player on their squad.

Mr. Scardina retired from active football coaching to return to teaching in 1962. He specialized in special education and teaching disadvantaged students in the Cincinnati Public High School system. He still found time to coach track teams and wrestling teams at Courter Tech and Western Hills High Schools.

His 1954 Elder team was inducted into the Buddy LaRosa High School Sports Hall of Fame in 2020.

Mr. Scardina, who passed away in 2008, was also a loyal Withrow alum. His generous donations to Withrow Alumni entitled him to a place on the Special Tiger Donor plaque on display in the main hall. Once a Tiger, always a Tiger!

Below: Doc Kusel. Right: Virgil Scardina



WITHROW 2023 ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

by Dave Blocksom '68

We are proud to introduce the five athletes who comprise the twelfth group to be inducted into the WAHOF. They are:

Joe Dehner, 1966. Joe was an outstanding tennis player at Withrow. During his sophomore year, Withrow's team won the PHSL championship and Joe advanced to the District doubles semi-finals before losing. His junior year the team won the PHSL again and Joe won the district doubles semi-finals with teammate George Mehl. Joe and George advanced to the State doubles finals where they lost a close match 6-4, 6-3. During Joe's senior year, the team won the PHSL championship again, and he teamed with fellow Tiger Ron Lague to win the district doubles competition again and advance to the State matches. He was again State runner-up in the doubles competition, losing 5-7, 6-4, 6-2. Joe was also Ohio Valley singles champion at the 14, 16, and 18 age levels and the Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan singles and double champion at the same levels. After graduation Joe went on to Princeton University where he played his freshman and sophomore years on their Ivy League championship team. After Princeton, Joe graduated from Harvard Law School. Returning to Cincinnati, he was the Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan singles champion in 1977 and 1978 and runner-up in 1982. He won several regional professional tournaments from 1977 to 1981. Joe was the founder and



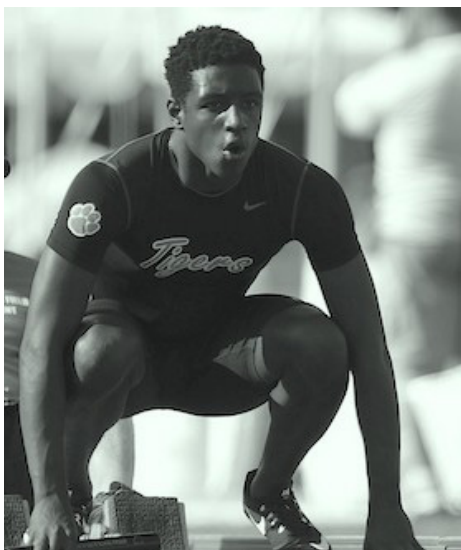
first President of the Greater Cincinnati Tennis Association. Joe has been involved with the Withrow Alumni since the 1980's restoration of the bridge and he has been a member of the Withrow Alumni Board of Trustees since its inception in 1995.

Jeffery Graves, 1981. During Jeff's sophomore year at Withrow, he was a starter on the varsity basketball team, playing alongside LaSalle Thompson. He was an all-league performer that year and was named a pre-season honorable mention All-American. During Jeff's senior year Withrow won the PHSL championship and made it to the Southwestern District AAA tournament. Jeff eclipsed the 1000-point mark while at Withrow. Jeff received a scholarship to attend Lake



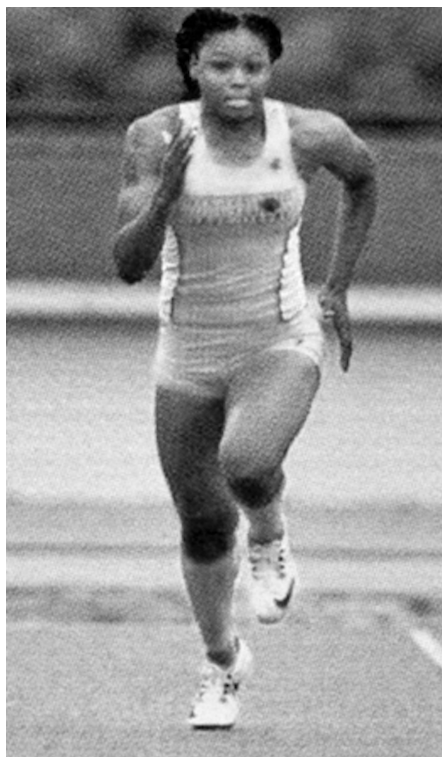
City Community College, and that team finished eighth in the nation. After Lake City, Jeff attended LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis; the team finished 29-2 and were NCAA Division III national runner-up in 1986. After graduation Jeff got a tryout with the Dallas Mavericks and was the last player cut. He then went overseas and played two seasons in Italy before returning home in 1993. Jeff was the Western Hills girls' junior varsity coach and coached Cincinnati Recreation commission teams for seven years. He then moved back to Memphis and became the assistant coach of the Colonial Patriots who won State championships in 2017 and 2018.

Rashaun O'Neal, 2016. Rashaun was three-time All-Ohio in track and field. His team broke the school, city, district, and regional records in the 800-meter relay. He broke the school record in the 4 x 400 relay and had the second fastest time in Cincinnati history. As a senior, he was first team All-ECC in both football and track and field. As a junior he was second team All-ECC in football. As a senior, he made the All-City and All-District team in football. He received a full scholarship to play football at Bowling Green State University.



Doneasha Brewer, 2017. During Doneasha's sophomore year, she was named to the Cincinnati *Enquirer's* track and field Division I first team. She placed second in the state in the 200 meters and first in the state in the 4 x 100 relay. She was named to the *Enquirer's* track and field Division I second team in the 100 meters and honorable mention in the long jump. She was the ECC conference champion in the 100 and 200 meters. She was the

Enquirer track and field Division I Athlete of the Year her junior year. That year she placed second in the state in the 200 meters, first in the state in the 4 x 100 relay and second in the state in the 4 x 200 relay. Doneasha was the ECC champion in the 100 meters, 200 meters, 4 x 100 relay and long jump. Her senior year she placed fourth in the state in the 200 meters and second in the 4 x 100 relay. She was the *Enquirer* track and field Division I second team in the 100 meters and honorable mention in the long jump. She was the ECC track Athlete of the Year and top points athlete. She was the ECC champion in the 100 meters, 200 meters, 4 x 400 relay, and the long jump. Doneasha also played basketball at Withrow all three years; her senior year she averaged 12.3 points, 12 rebounds, and 2.4 steals a game. After graduation, Doneasha



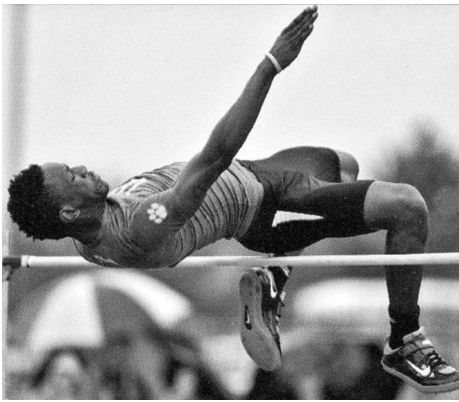
attended Indiana Tech and participated in 60m, 100m, and 200m races, and the long jump

Albert Kalala, 2017. During his sophomore year, he was the ECC champion, the OSHAA Division I champion and the Division I Region 4 champion in the high jump. He was fifth in the state meet in the high jump. He placed third in the American Nationals Outdoor in the high jump. His junior year he repeated as the ECC champion, Division I District champion and Division I Region 4 champion in the high jump. He also won the State championship in the high jump. He placed first in the Nationals Outdoor high jump. His senior year he was again the ECC conference champion, Division 1 District champion and Division 1 Region 4 champion in the high jump. He was runner-up in the high jump at the state meet. He placed seventh at the Nationals Outdoor. He was a three-time first team all-conference, first team all-district, first team all-region, first team all-state and first team All-American. He was conference player of the year and *Enquirer* track and field athlete of the year. Albert also played basketball at Withrow his junior and senior years. He was second team all-conference his junior year and first team all-conference his senior year. After graduation, Albert received a full scholarship to the University of Cincinnati where he competed

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for four years and received his degree in four years. While at UC he was a first team all-conference selection three times and a second team all-conference once. Albert was born and raised in the Republic of the Congo and became a U.S. citizen in 2014.



The induction ceremony will take place on Saturday evening, February 4, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the Withrow gym. The public is invited to attend. These outstanding athletes will join an exclusive group of 60 previous inductees. Names and bios of all inductees are available on the Withrow Alumni website, withrowalumi.org.

Maintaining a meaningful Hall of Fame requires the efforts of many people starting with your submission of nominations for consideration for induction. The criteria for consideration and the nomination form are available on our alumni website. We need your support of this important recognition effort.

A. O. Mathias Made Learning a Matter of Principle

In the spring of 1950, Principal A. O. Mathias stopped the son of Greek immigrants in the halls of Withrow High School and asked what he planned to do after graduation. "I don't know" was the reply.

Akila J. "Ike" Misali's parents ran a small dry-cleaning store downtown. He wanted to attend college but didn't have the money.

In early August that year, with his future still in limbo, Misali unexpectedly received a letter from Raymond Walters, then president of The University of Cincinnati.

Walters invited Misali to attend UC on a full-tuition scholarship because of his record and Mathias' recommendation.

Kent Holwadel, a stockbroker and president of Withrow's 1950 senior class, said Mathias helped make it possible for dozens of students like Misali to attend college.

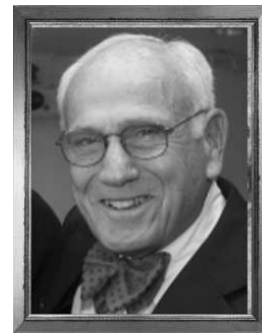
During the next 10 years, more than 50 percent of Withrow's graduates went on to college. He always made a policy of asking students what they planned to do and if they needed any help.

Never forgetting his personal life lesson about the value of a scholarship, Misali established The A.O. Mathias Scholarship Fund that covers freshman tuition to UC for a Withrow graduate (named for the principal who started Misali on his UC journey).

The scholarship is to be given to a student with two working parents who is not eligible for the standard Pell Grant.



A.O. Mathias



Ike Misali

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career. It was reported that he had been hired to teach science and coach at Williamsburg, Ohio, high school in the fall of 1946.

At Withrow, his basketball career got off to a slow start. The '48-'49 season was a disappointment with 5 wins and 14 losses, but by the '51-'52 season Coach Huheey's team, with 21 wins and 4 losses, won the league, the district, and the regional championships. At the Final Four tournament in Columbus, the state champion Middletown High School team ended the season for the Tigers in the semi-finals, 67 to 48. The captain of the team, Will Ernst, later returned to Withrow in 1961 to teach and assist his former coach. Dave

Plunkett, who later played for UC, was the lead scorer for the season with 476 points.

Another league championship wasn't attained until the '61-'62 season, followed by three more for Coach Huheey in '63-'64, '64-'65 and '66-'67. There was also a championship season in '65-'66 under another former UC star, John Bryant, who took over while Huheey was ill and then succeeded him as coach in 1967. In total, Coach Huheey's basketball teams racked up 239 wins and 139 losses, the best record in the first half of Withrow's existence. John Huheey passed away at age 50 in May 1967 after a long illness.

As baseball coach from 1949 to 1956 and again in 1960-61, he had only one league cham-

ampionship. However, the 1950 team, with 12 returning lettermen and a 19-win, 4-loss record, took the top prize in the state of Ohio by winning the Class A title, defeating Galion High School 6-4. In all, Coach Huheey's teams won 121 and lost 68 games.

A friend and a mentor to many a Withrow athlete, Mr. Huheey was noted for his patient demeanor and kindness to all. A disciplinarian who stressed sportsmanship and fair play above all, John Huheey was posthumously inducted into the Cincinnati Public High School Hall of Fame in 2016.



The 1962 District champion team

Row 1: Coach Ernst, A. Fischer, B. Ferone, N. Christman, R. Orr, Coach Huheey

Row 2: G. Hess, J. Nichols, M. Duermit, S. Coaston, Ro. West, B. Johnson, C. Orr.

Not pictured: Ri. West



The 1950 State baseball championship team

Row 1: S. Hughes, I. Misali, R. Wilson, B. Beck, C. Duquette, D. Ernst, D. Miller, R. Virgil

Row 2: D. Lambley, A. McMillen, J. Kumpf, H. Boston, C. Brandenburg, H. Broerman

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EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! Withrow High School Class of 1963 60th Reunion

Date: Saturday, September 23, 2023

Location: The Grove Shelter at **Grove Park Grille**
6735 Kellogg Road (US 52)
Cincinnati, Ohio 45230

Event: Informal Catered Picnic (Rain or shine)

Time: 11:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Price: TBD