



Joan Carol Young
ROBS History Project
June 7, 2001 69

This most interesting lady's full given name is Joan Carol Young. She retired from the Brentwood School District in 1987 after giving of her passion and experience as a master teacher for the greater part of thirty years. She shared her extensive experience and compassionate presence with the children she so selflessly taught here and elsewhere on Long Island for the greatest part of her career.

Home these days is in a Garden Apartment complex for retirees in Bay Shore and has been since she moved there in 1987. She said it was perfect for her being close to the Southern Parkway and everything she needs. Indeed, she's very happy there.

Joan was born in the month of December, and her mother thought that her middle name should be Joan Carol for Christmas. She explained that there are many people her age that can claim the same first name, due to its popularity at that time. She had four friends with the first name Joan. Everybody was Joan, and her mother said that it was generally *the* popular choice of a girl's name. In fact, I asked my mother, 'Why?' Well, she said, "*it was a popular name among the movie stars, but I always wished I had another name*". My last name back then was Kelly, so after a while nobody called me Joan any more. They all called me Kelly. "*That became my nick name and I was glad*".

She and her brother are the only ones left in her family. He's working in California. Her mother passed away as did her father last year. They had another

brother named Edward who has also sadly passed away, making them both surviving members of their family.

Tragedy is no stranger to Joan who was a passenger in the serious auto accident in Minnesota when she was twenty-five years old where her husband was killed. After the accident, *“everyone in the world tried to fix me up”*, she said, but understandably, she wasn’t interested and eventually agreed to be *“fixed up”* with one of her ex-boyfriends who she married, but the marriage didn’t last. She came away with the feeling that she’d been talked into it before recovering from the accident trauma. *“Besides”, she said, “I liked the name Young and figured I’d keep it”*.

Her brother comes to Brentwood to visit Joan about twice a year. She also flies out to see him once or twice a year. The last time he came in was to attend a Brentwood High School Reunion – he graduated from Brentwood High School – He lives in Castroville, California. It’s near San Jose. *“When I go, I fly into San Diego”*.

“Born in Southside Hospital, I attended elementary school in Brentwood. Believe it or not, I went to school in the Fire House for First Grade, then we moved around the corner to the old administration building for Second and Third Grades. For the fourth Grade, we went to this big school up here” and we were all so thrilled to have a school. I stayed there until high school. This period covered the late thirties into the early forties. There was no Kindergarten. They couldn’t have a Kindergarten. In the Firehouse there was nothing there but a square room and the teacher; Mrs. Mitchell. “We had to bring everything we needed with us; books, paper and pencils. When I left there I had Florence Koehler and Dottie Taylor who was Dottie Small - of the Brentwood Lumber Yard - both Retired Brentwood Teachers. When I got to (Village) the ‘big school’ – I had Mrs. Palmer, in Fourth Grade. The other school (Administration Building,) was so small and Leigh Stewart was the Principal of whom I was scared to death. It’s simply amazing the profound affect all these early teachers had on us all.” “As a matter of fact, when I was in high school, Florence Koehler came over and she said, ‘I know that you’re thinking of college’. She suggested that I think of going to State University where she had graduated in Brockport, and she wrote a recommendation for me, and that was why I went to Brockport.” “She was my

Second Grade teacher who quite definitely had a profound impact on my education.”

“Other than the teachers that I loved, and my grandmother – my mother’s mother - who would take me to the city every Saturday and take me to museums and so forth. Her name was Hose, let’s see now, I had an uncle, in fact, who was President of the School Board when there was no School Board because it was so small, and then my uncle also was the President – Mueller, - this would have been back in the thirty’s.” “My grandmother thought that girls should go to the city on the train, so I had her influence. Really, I would rather have stayed home and played outside, but I had to go to a museum. My grandmother always called me her pet grandchild. I think it was because I had so much contact with her, more than the other grandchildren. Not that I was her pet for any other reason but that was why she’d say, ‘Pet we have to go to the city; we would go’. She wanted me to be very interested in the art museum and painting, and I did not wish to paint. I did embroidery and that satisfied her for a while. She knew both sets of her grandparents. Her mother’s father was active in politics and he owned a company in Brentwood called the Whole Gerard Corporation, and he came out from Brooklyn and was able to have a building built for this company. They were jobbers – there are no jobbers today. He headed this company and had several people working for him.

Across from the railroad station was Koehler’s General Store. That was certainly nothing like a supermarket, but that was the only store in Brentwood. *“I think eventually they opened a luncheonette in that section of buildings but it didn’t really go because people just went to the store and then they went home. There were no malls. That was THE store, Koehler’s General Market.*

“I used to live on Brentwood Parkway, and the horse farm was right behind me. There used to be food merchants who delivered their goods directly to people’s homes in the neighborhood. Entenmann’s in fact ----no it was before Entenmanns, it was Dugan’s or something, -- would come and deliver cakes and baked goods, and there was the milk man. I remember the blocks of ice being delivered. Even after electrification we had an ice box in the back in addition to the refrigerator that of course, wasn’t that big. My mother always wanted to have an extra supply of ice on hand in case we couldn’t get out, and there were many times when we couldn’t get out because of the weather or other stuff.”

“My father’s father was a policeman in New York City, and he was shot and killed in the line of duty when he was still a young man. He was born here and his mother was born here also. He lived with his mother and they moved around a lot. She ran boarding houses. Her mother and father were both born in New York City.” *“My mother was a tap dancing teacher, and she used to teach in the school’s. She had this show and wanted me to be the biggest star in the world, but I didn’t want to, and she used to say, ‘Alright now Joan’, and I’d tap and I’d grimace and she’d say – ‘You have to smile!’, and I was so unhappy doing this tapping, and when she’d have a show she’d say, ‘The one that never smiles is my daughter and she doesn’t like to tap.’* But she taught in several school buildings when the schools came to Brentwood. She had a tap dancing studio before that. *“My mother ran away from home when she was in high school and went on the stage and became a chorus girl much to my grandparent’s disapproval.”* She was a strong willed person who carved her own path in the world. Her sister is the one who went into education and eventually became a Principal. *“Grandma and Grandpa loved her, because she took a conventional path. Meanwhile my mother was going all over the world dancing and not going to school.”* Joan didn’t really know who she emulated. She didn’t want to be in show business, but she certainly loved children and she guessed that’s where the pull to teach came from was when she decided to focus her passion. Perhaps she had a little of both influences in her life. She eventually did a lot of smiling with the children, and she used to say to them, *“I am the luckiest person in the whole world, because I have twenty-five children of my own more than anybody”.* *“I didn’t have any little ones of my own, but I was lucky to have all these innocent little children in my class to myself.”*

“My brother Wayne did everything he could when he was in school to get into trouble. We lived in the house right next door to Dr. Hoyt, the District Principal. My brother and Stephen Hoyt did everything they could possibly do to get into trouble. Either Stephen was being expelled from class or school or Wayne was. We never thought they would go anywhere. But they did. They were forever playing hooky and not going to school. I was ten years older than Wayne, I guess you might say that I was focused and purposeful and I always knew what I wanted to do. Prior to Stephen my parents had another boy who was born with down syndrome, and my parents were very upset. The doctors told my parents to have

another baby immediately, or as soon as possible. That was how Stephen and Edward were born so close in age almost one year later”.

“My mother all the time used to say to me, ‘Oh, would you please take them out for a walk.’ She needed a break. Then, there was this time I was called down to the Front Office at school where I met with Howard Brodsky, the Director of Special Education in Brentwood. He tried to recruit me to become a Special Ed teacher in the District, because he said, ‘You would be perfect. You’d be a wonderful addition to our teaching staff working with our “retarded children”. You’ve had so much experience working with your brother.’ Since then the terminology has certainly changed. I declined his request for the very reason that I had already spent so much time with Edward, and I had so much patience for him, but I didn’t want to make that kind of commitment working with all the other kids. It would have been too much for me, and I knew it. My brother went all through school in Brentwood and took all the Special Classes and enrolled in a rehab program after High School. He learned as much as he was capable of learning and lived until he was about forty-four years old when he died. In some ways that was why Stephen became the family pet. He was King of the house. It was nice, because my parents would always go away, and they would take everyone with them. No one was ever excluded from family activities not Stephen or Wayne or Edward or me.”

Brentwood was still quite rural as Joan was growing up there. She had chores to do; taking care of the house and cleaning her room for example. *“As I grew up I had to go to High School in Bay Shore. It was so hard, because then all the kids didn’t have cars, and we’d have to take the bus home. They’d give us passes for the bus, and the drivers didn’t particularly like kids taking the commercial bus from Bay Shore, although we did have passes. It was always difficult getting back and forth when I was in High School. We didn’t like it, because kids would be kids. It was a private bus company providing public transportation. We would go to the office to be issued a slip of paper which was a pass to allow us to go home”.*

“My uncle lived next door. He had been a judge and even the Comptroller once before. His name was Fred Hose, and he had a daughter my age, and he used to spend a lot of time with us. He used to encourage us to do things in addition to reading stories from the Bobbsey Twins who were the principal characters of what

for 75 years had been, the Stratemeyer Syndicate's longest-running series of American children's novels. I think my uncle had a lot of influence locally. I think I read every one of the Bobbsey Twins editions that were published, because I was a reader. I loved to read. I think kids have gotten away from that today. Yet, it can be said they're still reading, but their interests are different today. Harry Potter has been big over the last few years." When television was introduced after the war she remembered neighbors and family all coming over to her parent's house to watch television. Everyone would be sitting in the middle of the living room floor. They weren't millionaires but they had a television set before most other people in their community. The screen may have been very small and measured in inches but everyone loved shows like Your Show of Shows, Milton Berle, Howdy Doody, Luck-Pup, I love Lucy and the Lone Ranger.

Just last year many people returned to Bay Shore from far and wide for their 50th High School Reunion. *"We all went up to the front of the Auditorium to receive our diplomas. Bay Shore has had this tradition of 50th Reunions every year, and because we graduated from Bay Shore when we did, they'll forever be the location of our Commencement. It was a few years before BHS was open in 1957"*.

"We lived on Brentwood Parkway at that time. My grandfather had five children and he gave each child a piece of property and each child had a house on the Parkway so that all five children could live right near him. The houses are all still located there but they've all been sold to new owners except for our house since we're the only ones still there. We do have some people living in our house now who might buy it, but we're not sure when we might want to sell.

"My first job was working in Freistat's, a Drug Store in Bay Shore. Everybody would come from all over to buy ice cream there. They had a tremendous number of customers. They also had a very big lunch counter business, and I was very, very happy to be there, because the tips were very good. In fact Sidney Sieben, the lawyer from Bay Shore would come in and say, 'Kelly, you know what I want. I want it to be ready.' I'd have it ready, and I'd run over to give it to him and he'd give me a dollar. What a tip that was for a lunch. But I always had his lunch ready, so that I enjoyed. There was a Drug Store in Bay Shore that I enjoyed that had ice cream and food; the only one other than Attics, the Ice Cream Parlor so everyone would come down there for lunch or drugs and so forth,

but it is not there any longer. The teenagers would go to Attic's, the ice cream parlor. The teenagers didn't congregate too much at Freistats".

"The family holiday that most of us really enjoyed the most, I think, was Thanksgiving. I think Thanksgiving was my favorite because, everyone would come to Grandma and Grandpa's house, and all five of my mother's brothers and sisters and all of their children. So, I'd see all my cousins, and that was a big treat. I have one other cousin who lives in Oakdale. There are only two of us who are on Long Island. Everyone else has moved away."

"I'm laughing because I'm embarrassed if anyone else ever sees this, and I'm afraid they will, because they used to call me "Boney Joanie with the aunts in her pants jumping around, because I was always jumping around or climbing trees, and I wanted to move, because if I wasn't climbing trees or I wanted to play some " --thing or move, I never wanted to sit. That was my name." Oh well, so you were a hyperactive little kid who was always on the move. Kids can be cruel sometimes but you've seen examples of that. As a matter of fact, you've experienced it, and it prepared you to be a compassionate influence yourself since you've been on the receiving end. "I think, but I don't know if it would be an appropriate time to talk about teaching. I really can't go into detail other than to say I was teaching Kindergarten Pine Park, and I had a little Black Boy, and both parents worked, nobody was ever home. He used to come to school without a bath and so forth, and he was not interested in school work at all, and one day I said, you know one day you could make me very happy you would make me so very happy if you would just try to put that name...this was when we taught printing----He said, 'I don't want to', and I said, Why? And he said, 'Because!' 'You are a f---n teacher.' and all the kid's never heard this terrible word before so, I've got all these kids in the room. So I rang the bell in the front office, and I said send the psychologist, so he came down, and I said all I wanted was to do him a favor, and I had to call you because all the kids were going to go home and tell what he said. And so he said I'll talk to him and we're having music or something and I hear.... I'm glad to go back to that room because you are a f---n man. To make a long story short, what happened was that he was expelled, and I felt terrible because I knew about the family life, and when he came back to school after three days he had bruises on his arm and I naturally had to take him to the nurse but the psychologist told me he didn't know what he was saying he just heard this word so much at home; yelling by the mother and father that he just thought that was

something to say. But I never forgot that child and then about ten years later I feel this kid wrapping his arms around me and I got this big hug and I said - How are you? And I said, "I've thought about you so much and he said if you only knew how much I've thought about you and I wanted to come but we moved away. His father was transferred, but he finally wanted to come back, and he said, 'I wanted to tell you that that was one of the happiest school years of my life that I had in your room because you really liked me.' And here I felt like...the poor kid. He was expelled and everything else. I just never forgot that." I told Joan, This is when you know you've achieved what you were trying to do. It's what I'd call, a "Pay Day"!

I looked at her face as I asked my questions and saw her hesitate and saw her mind race through experiences and special memories. I thanked her in particular for sharing that one with us, because it expressed so much about what the purpose of teaching is; to express your own caring and human compassion for young people. When in your own childhood you have experienced feelings of putdown and rejection that your students have lived through it communicates that as their teacher you've also been there. We've seen many sad examples of kids from homes where they have not received the kind of validation and support that we might have hoped they'd receive. This is due to no fault of their parents who are doing everything they know how to provide the love and nourishment that is theirs to provide. It is particularly sad for the children as you say, because the parents had to work so the family could survive. They're not bringing home two salaries to live "on easy street." They're working as long and as hard as time allows simply to put enough food on the table. The sad part is it's not their fault that parents are trying to do something. That's the right thing for families to do. Joan said, *"I've been retired for a while, and I don't know if it's still as difficult today, but it was very hard for me to get a class mother. They would love to help, but they were all working or they were babysitting, and they couldn't come up. It was very, very hard for them too"*.

You've described yourself as a morning person. Tell us about how it was for you coming to school every day for all those years before you were retired. *"I love to be social, but I also loved to get to school in the morning before anybody got there so I could get ready for my day. So, I used to get there sometimes before the doors were open, so eventually Herb had to give me a key to the school, because I couldn't get in to do my work. Everybody in school used to kid me about having an affair with the custodian. If they'd just come down to my room they would have*

seen that I was working like crazy down there trying to get everything set up, because when people come to school they like to have coffee, and you can't always say, oh, I've got to do my work now.

We know that one of the toughest teaching jobs in the entire school is to be responsible for thirty-five Kindergarteners for an entire day. Every single moment of time has to be pre-planned and pre-arranged so that your kids are aware of what they're going to be doing next, and after that and then after that. You can't take your eyes off them for a minute – not one minute, or all hell could break loose. It's not that they're bad kids, it's just that kids will be kids and they'll either innocently get into trouble or they'll get into mischief because their creative young minds will explore possibilities that you may not yet even have conceived.

Joan said, "I think when Kindergarten had two sessions, we did get a break in between sessions so you could catch your breath and eat lunch, but when it was a full day – well they eventually did have music and art ---but when it was a full day in the beginning it was hard. Now everyone goes to daycare. But then not everyone went to daycare".

Right now the way the curriculum is set up they're reading before first grade. They wouldn't be permitted in first grade unless they could teach themselves to read. The curriculum has caught up with Kindergarten. It's no longer simply playtime and socialization. Oh no! They do need some time to play, but it's next to impossible to find the time.

"I enjoy all the seasons, but I like the summer. I enjoy the beach. I also enjoy Florida. I go there a couple of times a year, but I wouldn't want to live there. It's a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there". A lot of people from Long Island and a lot of people from Brentwood now live there, and they're very happy.

As a girl I loved to roller skate. Once Brentwood began constructing sidewalks I loved to skate on the sidewalks.

When we asked about Joan's early memories of starting school in The Fire House in Brentwood, we learned that she had been so prepared by her grandmother, that after a few weeks of attendance her teacher asked her mother

to allow Joan to bring her crocheting yarn and needles to school to give her something to do, because she was bored. She was so far ahead of the rest of the class that they had to think of a way to keep her engaged.

In school all she wanted to do was read. That was her passion. She loved her English classes. She took Spanish as her language elective. She had graduated as we remember, from Bay Shore High School. Then after that she attended Brockport after which she knew she wanted to come back to Long Island and teach. Dr. Hoyt had offered her a teaching position in Brentwood, but she first wanted to get some experience in the classroom in another district and not have to work with teachers who had known her as a student. She taught initially in Half Hollow Hills for three years in the Fourth Grade and was tenured. She decided to go to Europe where her husband was in the Army, and she taught in military dependent school for a year while he was on TDY (temporary duty as a coach). When she came back from Germany she returned to Half Hollow Hills for a year. About that time her husband suffered his fatal automobile accident, and Joan was offered an opportunity to teach at the College she had graduated from, so she went up there and taught at the State University at Brockport for a year or two. While there she did graduate work at the University of Rochester, took the summer off and went to the University of Hawaii where she took advantage of courses offered through Columbia University faculty at a greatly reduced rate of \$10 per hr. and took surfing at the same time. What a deal! Graduate Students were put up at Waikiki. She couldn't have imagined what a great summer she would have there. She came back to Dr. Hoyt in Brentwood and said, *"Gene I'm ready, but please don't put me in my aunts school. Her aunt was Dotty Grimm. He said okay! Then she came back, and as it turned out she worked under Herb Fishman. She taught with him, but it was a whole different situation."*

"I began in Brentwood by taking the place of a pregnant girl in Ralph Saikin's school in North Elementary." Then she came back and the next year went to Southwest where she taught for Frank Hall for three or four years. After that she spoke with Herb Fishman to find out what he had going. *"He had a Kindergarten and I decided to try that. I tried Kindergarten, I'd worked with Herb before, I enjoyed it and stayed in his school until I retired from Pine Park. I made the changes from Building to Building and Principal to Principal at a time when the population of Brentwood was growing exponentially every year and it was possible to do that then. Every year another school was opening. I was in the right*

place at the perfect time to do that. Eventually that would change, but by then I was settled in my comfort zone and had honed my skills to a point where I had become the best I could be at what I'd been learning to do."

When you told Dr. Hoyt you were ready, he responded with *"Brentwood is very happy to have you"* and that was your follow-up interview that had begun years before. Jerry Smith was at Central Administration, Dr. Art Breiger was here then and now the Brentwood Family included Joan Young.

"I was always trying to come up with memory tricks to help students remember how to learn to print or write their letters. I was always trying to think of a story to go with a letter or a number so the children would remember. Starting with the numbers I might say 'A straight line one is fun!' - as I drew it, doing it in the air, I'd have them do it, they'd copy it, -a straight line I is fun, and then I'd have them put a tree in the middle of the paper and go - tracing her index finger in the air -she'd say "around and around a tree that's three, and they'd remember oh, interrupting herself she said, they used to like four, 'cause (in the air showing them) I'd say, down and over and down some more, that's how you make a four - They loved that! They also liked, "Fat old five, because fat old five had to have a big hat on to cover his big old stomach", then drawing in mid-air she'd continue saying - the fat man was a straight man with a big fat stomach, and to cover that stomach he had to have a hat on. They loved that!" So long as it was politically correct I bet you could have written for Sesame Street, or the Children's Television Playhouse, because much of that kind of technique was very prevalent on early television at that time. You were very much at the cutting edge with a lot of your thinking. "But they didn't teach writing after a while. Now they don't teach printing. They start off with cursive writing in Kindergarten because I've spoken with people who are still there and I think it was hard enough with the fine coordination to get them to make big numbers but now they say it's very difficult. They go right into teaching cursive writing." "I told Joan, for the last several years of my teaching at the High School I ceased to see students at the High School who could write in script. They could only print." You've explained that it was no longer in the curriculum, that's why they didn't know how to do it. They weren't being taught any longer. There were too many things that were expected to be done and not enough time in the day in which to pass everything along. It couldn't be fit in. The demands on teachers became too great. Something had to go. And then

they wanted children in Kindergarten to be able to read so teaching that now took precedence.

Her first year of teaching in Half Hollow Hills Elementary school, Joan remembers clearing \$3,000 before taxes, and she thought that was more money than she could imagine. Teachers upstate had been making \$2,200 and when in 1962 she first came to Brentwood it was \$6,400.

“I had enjoyable first impressions when I came to Brentwood, especially because I had gone to school here, and I still knew a lot of people. I knew what they were talking about, and I knew the area. Your very first day you were introduced by Dr. Hoyt to the faculty when he said, ‘I’m so happy to say to everyone that we have someone coming into our system this year who was a resident of Brentwood, born in Southside Hospital’, and I’m sitting there thinking, OMG he must be talking about me and then he introduced me and after the meeting was over and people came over to me and looked at me with this expression like, I had some kind of a disease or something that I would be born in Southside Hospital and go to school in Brentwood, because they were all from New England and had come down and couldn’t imagine anyone that would still be here and want to teach here. Boy! They must have thought something must be wrong with me. It certainly did single me out as being unique. To have been born, grown up, gone through twelve years of school gone to college and more, then come back and have remained to work and teach, I guess maybe it does say something really special about me.”

“I met a friend from High School who graduated with me. We met again at our 50th Reunion in Bay Shore, and when he saw me he asked, ‘Who’s left?’ And I told him, ‘No one.’ I said, ‘Everyone is gone.’ There’s no one that I know that lives there and went to school with. I’m still friendly with a girl that I went to school with, but she has moved to Florida but we’re still friends from my Grade School. But she doesn’t live here. John Chris said to me, Who’s there? And I said, ‘No one.’ I think presently, there are more people who have gone to school in Brentwood and have come back to teach here and have remained here.

“I taught for Ralph Saiken, Frank Hall, Herb Fishman and Harvey Brickman. Those are the four people I taught for in Brentwood. Ralph Saiken was very

popular as a teacher. I loved talking to him. Frank Hall he was also someone I liked talking to.” You loved teaching though, didn’t you? “Oh, I did. I really did.”

“Talk to me about the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. How did you cope that day? “I didn’t know how to handle it. I didn’t know how to talk to the children. They were frantic. They wanted to know. What’s happening to our world? I couldn’t find words to explain how it could be that a person could be so cruel that they would kill the President of the United States. It was very difficult for me as well as for the children. It was a very scary time.”

“Once I was working with a Kindergarten group at Pine Park. I was working with one of the other teachers, and we put on a show, and we had two sessions at that time so we put on two shows. I will never forget that that was the most exciting things for the children. They came in with television cameras, and they televised it with both groups. That was the highlight of my experience at Pine Park, and that would probably have been back in the seventies.”

“My last year was great because before that many times we were on austerity, and we didn’t have any paper, we didn’t have any pencils and I always saved things in the closet, because I would save something if I couldn’t get any materials and I was always worried that we could only make ‘one of something’, because I wanted to make sure I had enough for the next year. The last year I was so relaxed, because I didn’t have to save anything or any of the materials, and they could make as many of something as they wanted. If they wanted to make four mother’s day presents they could. It was so relaxing. I think if people only knew, and I didn’t spend that much money the last year. I don’t know what it is today, but if you were just allowed to have the supplies you needed to be comfortable it would make it so much easier.”

Joan raised an important issue that I’d like to take a minute to shine a light on. Every year, she and many other teachers in her school as well as other schools have gotten used to spending a lot of money out of their own pockets for materials they desperately need in the classroom and are not being provided by their underfunded budgets. *“Every year before Halloween I used to go and buy things that I knew I wouldn’t have. But I’m not the only one. I used to go with my friends, and we were very good customers because in the long run we knew it was going to make our job easier. Plus it makes your room more attractive”. I*

remember reading somewhere that the average Grade school teacher spends as much as four or five hundred dollars a year on materials for which they are not reimbursed.

I asked Joan about her mission or purpose for doing what she did every day. Here's what she told me: *"I think that if I felt I could instill in the children the feeling that they wanted to come to school every day then I was fulfilling my job. Granted they might during some years have teachers that they didn't particularly get along with, but if they had that feeling it wasn't going to die. It would continue making them remember that they wanted to go; they wanted to come. I felt that if I gave them a good start, particularly in the Kindergarten, that was my goal.- to teach them to love school, to love to come to school, they didn't have to love to work they only had to love to come; just to be there. I've had contact with several of my former students. I've gone to several weddings and I've gotten Christmas cards from a lot of them. But the weddings I think were the most fun, because Oh, I went to two weddings last year in Bay Shore, and they're so excited to be getting married.*

This is a funny story but yes, I remember Bay Shore High School had a Principal, and I was friendly with his daughter, and I called him when I was in college and asked him if we could have a bridge game and he said, "Certainly!" So I went to his home and played bridge and saw his daughter too.

I told you I was going to be asking you questions about your affiliation with the Brentwood Teachers Association. You were a member of the teachers association before there was a union in Brentwood. *"Yes, I was a member right from the beginning. I was a Building Representative for a couple of years when I first got involved. I felt that everybody had their job to do that they were particularly good at performing and that was not my job. That was a man's job in school. I always kind of voted for a man to do the political jobs. I think the role of unions and professional organizations has changed over the years as the times have changed. It couldn't stay the same as it was it had to change with the times. I always used to feel sorry for the children when budgets would be defeated and residents would have to do without; buses for example. Buses were always a casualty of defeated budget votes by voters and kids and their parents paid the price. The parents would bring them in and then they couldn't bring them in. Then they had to walk sometimes. They didn't want to, but they had to because there*

was no other way of coming to school. As far as supplies were concerned I would show them that I bought my own and could show them receipts. But you did what you had to do to get through those hard times”.

But here did come a time when you decided that it was time for you to try to do something else and that came around 1987 is that right? *“But first I talked with a representative of the state of NY, and I was offered the incentive to go. I knew I didn’t have the degree of energy I once had, I was tired, but I still loved what I did.” “Part of me felt differently about it. I no longer wanted to come in early like I had for so many years. Now it felt like a chore, and I didn’t want it to be like that. Unless I took the incentive I thought maybe they would withdraw the chance for me to go out early next time. I was only fifty-two, and they were offering me a three-year incentive and it was a very attractive offer. Financially, I was advised that there wouldn’t be that much of a difference if I took advantage of N.Y. States offer now and didn’t wait, so I made up my mind and put in my papers. My health was still good. I admitted to myself that I didn’t realize I was ready but it was in fact, my time to go, so I did.”*

“As an undergraduate I had been very fortunate, because my parents did not have the money then to put me through school, so I was able on my own to do that – my grandmother helped me a little bit –but I put myself through school by working in a canning factory, and then I left the factory and went to work in a restaurant, and then I moved up and worked in a book store, and then I worked in the registrar’s office, so I think that was the biggest thing in my life that I was able to put myself through school on my own. Well, it couldn’t be done today but then I was able to accomplish it.”

“I left without anything being undone. I think I did what I started out to do as well as I could, with no regrets. I put five years in Half Hollow Hills, twenty-five in Brentwood and a year in Germany and a year at State University supervising teachers almost thirty-two years in total”. Since retiring she admits to being a Bridge addict. She works at a Bridge Club two day a week. She helps the owner with the collections and so forth. She went through a period when she was going all over the place to play Bridge. Her goal was to be a life Master of Bridge through competitive playing and she has achieved that goal. Skip Romboli the Brentwood Principal, was the first partner she had ever played bridge with. Skip introduced Joan to the sport, she had always played at home or in college. She

heard about Bill and Polly Lane playing Bridge and knew about Ken Moss and Wes Trutt's skill at the game. Educationally speaking Joan believed that all teachers should have the experience of teaching children of all ages and grades with a max of three years per grade. To acquire the vision that it would provide it might even be assigned as a requirement for all teachers to teach many different levels. Life happens to people at all different times, ages and stages.

"When students came back to see me after finishing college they were so proud of themselves for what they had accomplished. It was a feeling of having made an important contribution to their lives. The feeling was incredibly satisfying. They still thought of you. Today, she loves getting up in the morning and reading the morning paper. I could never read the paper at night. I was too tired"...and what didn't she miss? Bus duty!

She hopes that Brentwood will keep growing in all curriculum areas. She advised all new teachers to get to know their students parents. *She said, "That's the key to your success. The child at home is very often a different person from the individual you've come to know in your class".*

"I loved my job in Brentwood. I loved every day of it. I enjoyed every day. If I had it to do all over again I would come right back to Brentwood. You see, Half Hollow Hills was like a Fairy Land. Everything was bright and clean. It was a make believe land. Brentwood isn't. Brentwood is not a make believe land. Brentwood is the real deal, it's the real world, and that experience alone I think was very, very, important".