

## Sunset High School's Sanger Trophy bragging rights

This article is 10 of 12 in the [05.2012](#) issue.

### A long-lost trophy exemplifies the high school's athletic prowess



The Sanger Trophy was hidden and forgotten at Sunset High School for decades, but now is on display at the Old Red Museum.

Alumni from Dallas' six original high schools — Adamson, Sunset, Woodrow Wilson, North Dallas, Forest Avenue and Crozier Tech — gathered at the Old Red Museum on March 10 for the unveiling of the refurbished Sanger Trophy. In its new display case, the trophy sparkled and rotated and, well, was lookin' pretty good for an almost 85-year old prize.

Never heard of the award? You aren't alone. Neither had I.

Beginning in 1929, the Sanger Bros. Department Store awarded the trophy each year to the Dallas high school that displayed the highest achievement in athletics. Because the Bison took the title more than anyone else (12 wins), after the store commenced the award in 1954, Sunset was given the cup permanently. But that's not where the story ends.

In 1979, during renovations at Sunset, the ornate silver award was stored in a lofty classroom cabinet, hidden and forgotten for decades. Amazingly, in 2001, a teacher cleaning the space discovered the lost standard and delivered it to then principal Sylvia Lopez. Lopez knew to contact alumna Don Martin (Sunset '52) who two years earlier had shared his desire to locate the missing award. After gathering contributions from other SHS grads to restore the trophy,

Martin was serendipitously contacted by a Sunset '67 grad who had salvaged the trophy's missing "cap" during the 1979 reno, when she was a teacher at the school.

The Old Red Museum accepted the restored cup in 2006. But the prized award found itself again stored away, as the building was being renovated. Then in 2011, when the museum offered Martin a used display case, a committee (formed from all six of the high school alumni groups) raised funds to retrofit and re-design the case and then coordinate the unveiling event.



Jerry Rhome, Lee Smith, Bill Melton and Eddie Southern are four of the Sunset Bison alumni who attended the trophy unveiling.

Hearing all the heartwarming stories and accolades, and learning about the notable alumni from these vintage institutions, was pure magic. Aaron Spelling (yes, that's Tori's dad) graduated from Forest Avenue, as did Stanley Marcus. Sir Colin Brady (North Dallas '61) expressed that the two most meaningful honors of his life were to be knighted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to be a North Dallas alum. Johnny Ruiz, president of the Adamson Alumni Association, read a letter from former Speaker of the House Jim Wright (Adamson '39) who sent an eloquent statement about his alma matter and the event. Then, Sunset alumni president Jerry Boyd spoke of such Bison athletic greats as Eddie Southern, Jerry Mayes, Bettye Mims Danoff, Don January and Jerry Rhome — making it easy to see why the Bison took the tile so often.

Two of the morning's concluding statements came from Woodrow Wilson alumni president Paul Dalton and Sunset alumnus Bill Melton. Dalton shared about Woodrow (what all real Dallasites call the school) being the only public high school in the nation to have produced two Heisman Trophy winners (Davey O'Brien and Tim Brown). Certainly impressive. But Melton (Sunset '58) — not one to let any school north of the Trinity outdo any Oak Cliff school — shared the following:

When I was a Sophomore at Sunset, our principal, Mr. C.C. Miller, made very certain that we all knew that there were two things to strive for: the Sanger Trophy for athletics and the Linz Award for academics. Fortunately, Sunset won both awards during my time there.

We are proud for Woodrow Wilson as the only public high school in the United States to have two Heisman Trophy winners. Congratulations!

However, I am going to throw down to you this morning ...

It just may be that with Jerry Mays, serving as captain of the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl I and winning Super Bowl IV; with Jerry Rhome winning Super Bowl XXII, as a coach with the Washington Redskins; and with me announcing at Super Bowls VI, VIII and IX, Sunset High School is the only high school [in the nation] to have three former students participate in the Super Bowl?

Regardless, it's a great thing for Sunset and for Dallas.

I agree. Let's hear it for Dallas, and ... the Bison!

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- *Benny Kirtley*

This a great article about the Sanger Trophy Gala. I had forgotten about it but it is great to see Jerry Rhome and the other guys from Dallas past. The article took me back when days were some of the best in old Oak Cliff. Thanks for being a heads up kind of person on such remarkable events, thanks.

- *Billmelton37*

Gayla-

Thanks for the outstanding Article about the Sanger Trophy. Appreciation to Don Martin for all of his efforts with the Trophy and Congratulations to the 13 Bison Honored at the Old Red Historical Museum in March, as well as those Honored by Adamson, Woodrow Wilson, North Dallas, Forest Avenue and Crozier Tech.

Go Bison!

- *Lonnie Speck*

Gayla,

Interesting article on the original high schools. Did you know that there was also a Sanger Trophy for the Junior Highs? We won it for several years at Boude Storey and I have a very faded picture of the Captains of each sport around the Trophy we won in 1962. Your articles always bring back alot of good memories.

- *Gayla Brooks Kokel*

Thanks, Benny! I DO try....but have a lot of help, a LOT of help from my generous "sources." Attending the invitation only event was extremely enjoyable. I met some great folks and learned a lot, which we always do when we have the opportunity to be around superior folk like the ones there. Members of the Sanger family were in attendance, as was the granddaughter of Mr. P. C. Cobb. All the alumni from the other schools had so many great stories and, well, it was pure pleasure to visit with all of them. Thanks for posting.

- *Gayla Brooks Kokel*

Yes, Don did a great job all the way around. The Bison alumni stepped up to the plate, as did the other five schools. Now, the trophy will be enshrined for everyone around to enjoy. Certainly a good thing. And, although I'm a Kimball Knight, I can still say (for my Bison friends and for my dad, Glenn Marcus Brooks–Sunset class of '36 (January), all-city QB, glee club member, senior play lead, Cavalier Club member, and featured "bird calling" performer on the 1936 Sunset Talent Show–go, Bison! You guys certainly "rocked" back in the day. Guess you still do. Congrats!

- *Gayla Brooks Kokel*

Thanks for sending the news clip, Lonnie, and for posting. We'll stay in touch about all this. Do email anytime.