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Section



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The Class Of '68 Takes A Stab At Life

Peabody's Yellow Brick Road

The Peabody High School Class of 1968 — bright, talented and ambitious — maneuvered around the divisiveness of Vietnam and the assassination of Martin Luther King, dodged the trends of skepticism and "dropping out," and emerged a unified, loyal and basically happy group.

This is the story of several members of that class and how their lives, molded in part by Peabody, have developed.

By JEAN BRYANT
They traced a yellow brick road on the floor of Peabody High School leading to the main corridor to the gymnasium.

All around them Peabody seniors were socializing and dancing.

But never mind. It was graduation time, and they would soon face the stage. They were going to "Follow the

Yellow Brick Road" and find the Wizard and the Dorothy in the fantasy.

The Peabody High School Class of 1968 was remembered for the most part about the turbulence of world affairs. The year in Vietnam, the city's first teacher's strike and the assassination of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King didn't leave them too much time to be satisfied by events, yet

But then were adult matters that they were about to complete four of the best years of their lives.

The class of 1968 was exceptionally bright, good looking and exceptionally popular, making it a good addition to the city only to their disappointment.

"Peabody sat in the midst of an unexciting neighborhood. Classes were composed largely of Jews from Boston Heights and Highland Park, Italians from the Lincoln-Larimer District and blacks from East Liberty and Homewood.



"The killing of Martin Luther King affected everyone whether they knew it or not."



Peabody homecoming queen in 1968, Geni Florida now is picking up a belated art career.



"At Peabody, it was socially unacceptable not to be competitive."



Former track star Dennis Schatzman has drive to excel.



Arthur Fedako wants to make a name for his school.



Sam Brewer recalls students who were fight of spirit.



"We had high ideals and expectations, revolutionary social ideals... not violent."



Kenneth White saw school's ethnic diversity as a real plus.

Burger, is slight of build and speaks with a quiet reserve.

"There was no push for dominance from any one group," he says. "It was a good academic class, a good athletic class and the last good mixture Peabody had."

Blacks expressed their identity in 1968 more than in any previous time at Peabody, he remembers.

But he was unimpressed. "I was a white kid and I didn't care. I had a lot of respect for these feelings and we got on our own."

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A year ago she was back in two jobs — as a dance-artist for a film crew in Hollywood and as a manager of an East Liberty supermarket.

Peabody didn't concern Geni during high school and it doesn't seem to concern her now either.

"The killing of Martin Luther King," she recalls, "affected everyone whether they knew it or not."

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Gregory Patrick says class believed in American Dream.