

**Taft, California**  
**Greetings from Pete Gianopulos, Class of 1942**  
**The Taft Newsletter**

**Reader's Comments**

**From Vicki (Kennedy) Wilson, Class of 1964, of Hermosa Beach, CA**

Thank you so much. I am from the Class of '64 and Joyce Snyder Hopkins (our class mom) keeps us all in touch thru an email chain. I am including below some comments made about Dr. Johnson from some classmates if she hasn't already.

Keep up the great work. It is enjoyed and appreciated far and wide.

**From Richard Waldner**

Joyce, thanks a million for Mr. Gianopulos article on Dr. Johnson. My mother, Maxine, worked for both Dr. Johnson and Dr. Bitzer for over 30 years. They don't make heroes like these men every year. I can distinctly remember returning from Vietnam and sitting in his office waiting for treatment for the flu. He took the time to hear about my experiences and make no mistake I had the same confidence in him as I did in my own father. If there is a First Class seat in Heaven, both of these Dr's should have Head-Of-The-Line privileges. Rich Waldner

**From Ricky Dykes Kauh**

Thank you for sending this. I had seen it in the Driller (my mom saves them for me and even delivers them...only a week or so late :) This way I've forwarded to my siblings. Don't you dare put me on the ISO list...I love the tid bits from everyone!

Dykes Johnson was our dad's first cousin. He came here to practice medicine because of his family here, including my grandfather, Dr H R (Hillie) Dykes.

As a small child, I had my tonsils out in the back of the Dykes-Johnson Building...performed by my Uncle Bob Dykes. I don't remember if Dykes came when my grandfather moved to the Los Angeles area or before that, but because of the name of the building, I suspect that grandfather Dykes and Dykes Johnson built it.

Dykes Johnson was wonderful gruff old bear with a heart of gold. He was a treasure that we were lucky to have as a family doctor.

Side note: He delivered and named Jon & Joe Adams (Cheryl's husband and his twin) Their legal names were different, but Dykes named them Jon & Joe at birth and the nicknames stuck with them through life. My Uncle Bill Dykes, first a pharmacist, then an educator (much to his mothers delight), named his first son John and his second son Joe (daughter Cindy came later).

After I heard the story about the Adams twins, I always wondered if Dykes Johnson had anything to do with that!

Thanks again, Ricky

**From Suzane**

..Bye the way, the stories about Dr. Dykes Johnson bring about memories. During one of our physicals in the high school girls gym he asked me if he had delivered me. It told he that he had delivered my two brothers but that Dr Patrick delivered me. He then told me that 'that explains what is wrong with you!' He was joking with me and we both laughed. I figured he gave me an excuse!

...Suzanne

**From Pam Jones of Taft**

Mr. Gianopulos:

>> My mother sent me your piece on Dr. Johnson. My husband and I read it with excitement and pleasure. The reason we were so happy to see this is because we now own Dr. Johnson's home at 723 D St. We purchased this lovely home three years ago and I have a funny story for you...

After raising our children on a 15 acre horse ranch outside of Valley Acres, we decided it was time to sell the ranch after our daughter moved (she was a very talented equestrian -- but that's another story). I told my husband, however, after living on 15 acres, I didn't think I would be comfortable in the tight quarters of a neighborhood.

He came home one day and asked who was Dr. Johnson. I told him he was a former physician in Taft, but passed away several years ago. He told me his house was for sale. Well, I

couldn't believe my ears. I told my husband we HAVE to see this home. I remembered as a little girl, my friend and I would walk up to the end of D Street just to peer through the iron gates. We could only imagine what parties they must have had in that "mansion".

I immediately called Mr. Causey, who was the real estate broker, and made an appointment to see the home that very day. When I finally got to see the inside of this home, it was very dated -- everything seemed to be from the 1970s with the shag carpet and bright colors. The feeling overwhelmed me that this was a very, very special home. I told my husband that we MUST buy this home.

Three months later we got the keys and I went back in to the house. It was November, so it started getting dark relatively early. I tried to turn some lights on, but lights were not coming on. I had to get a flashlight to investigate the problem, and realized that the light fixtures had been removed!

I called Mr. Causey and told him about the lights. My fear was that Mrs. Johnson had a grounds keeper and a house keeper who had keys. I was afraid that someone had come in and stole the lights. As you can imagine, Dr. Johnson spared no expense in this home. Everything was top of the line for its time.

Mr. Causey told me that he would call Mrs. Johnson and find out the story on the lights. When he returned my call, he was chuckling. He said that when he asked Mrs. Johnson if she removed the light fixtures when she moved she said, "Of course I did. They were mine!" Of course the lights were hers. This was her home for her entire life. I wish I would have known her.

I was told that Mrs. Johnson continued living here, after Doctor's death, until she was 96, when her sons insisted that she move to the ranch in Reedley, CA. She resisted for a long time, but finally agreed to move. In less than an year, she passed away.

We have lived here for three years. That seems like plenty of time to feel "at home", however I have come to accept the fact that this will never be Rick and Pam Jones' house. It will always be referred to as Dr. Johnson's house.

I am extremely interested in learning anything and everything about his home. I have heard many "stories", but I am not sure what is fact and what is fiction. Is there more information you can share with us?

By the way. When we moved in, I found a daily journal of Dr. Johnson's house calls from the 1940s. You might be interested in seeing it. Feel free to give me a call 765-7318. I would love to visit with you. Also, if you have any old photos of the house, I would love to see them.

Please add me to your address list. I love the old stories.

Take care,  
Pam Jones

**From Elsa (Lyle) Villa**

I also somehow missed the article on Dr Johnson, could you please send it to me. I was a child of about 9 years old and fell from a tree onto a picket fence. Dr Johnson came to our home to examine me and said would be sore but no internal injuries. He was gruff but a wonderful doctor.

Thank you,  
Elsa (Lyle) Villa

**From Hugh Silcox, class of 1949.**

Pete: I do not believe that I got the newsletter with the article about Dr. Dykes Johnson. I'd appreciate it if you would send it to me. I print your letters and send them to my brother Bill and my sister Keith Lee. Keep up the good work. Does the student body know the lyrics to "Taft High, We love you Taft High?" It's a shame if they don't.

Hugh Silcox Class of '49

**From Emilie Maples, Class of 1959**

Mr. Gianopulos,

I am a graduate of the class of 1959 and also a patient and fan of Dykes Johnson who cared for our family the many years we lived in the Taft area. In the spring of 1956 when I was 14 he removed my appendix, a traumatic experience at best for a young girl. However, he made it better and I got well under his "gruff but compassionate care." He and Dr. Bitzer who came to work in the clinic later will always have a fond place in my memories of growing up in Taft. Thank

you for your news and all you have done and do for the school. We were certainly lucky to have grown up and gone to school in Taft.

Emilie Maples  
Class of 1959