



Patty Johnson and Chelsi Karnes

## **Ms. Patty Johnson, an Incredible Past Educator in Mills County**

**By Chelsi Karnes**

The person I have chosen to interview is Ms. Patty Johnson who has been a resident of Mills County, Texas for sixty years. The main focus that I chose to interview her over was education in Mills County in the past. Ms. Patty has not only been a past educator, but also an amazing addition to our great community. She has been involved in many things over the years and you can be certain to see her at any event in town with her incredible smile and loving heart.

Ms. Patty moved to Goldthwaite in the year of 1953 as a graduate of University of North Texas, formally known as North Texas. She moved here to impact lives of students and the way they thought of learning. Ms. Patty taught at the high school level teaching home economics. She stated that although at the time, she thought she was really teaching a lot, her daughter, Cindy Wesson, now teaches a much broader range in the home economics subject. Ms. Patty taught sewing and foods, which she said she enjoyed immensely.

When asked about the way they disciplined, she stated that most of the disciplining could be taken care of in their own classroom. She smiled and said, "Chelsi, I had a look on my face that

took care of most of the misbehaved kids, and once they saw that look upon my face, they knew it wasn't good." She laughed again, stating that back then it was okay to paddle the misbehaved students, but she herself never came close to having to do such a thing.

Ms. Patty and I talked about some of the new technology that the teachers of Mills County have today such as the Promethean boards and she said teaching sure would have been easier and would have been extremely helpful. During her first year, she shared with me that Goldthwaite had no textbooks so she had to come up with lectures for every day which she stated was no fun for her or the students.

Ms. Patty added that the current students of Mills County schools have many more varied opportunities to take part in. She said that during her first couple years of teaching, the only field trip she was allowed to take her students on was the Texas State Fair. She stated that after those few years, more field trips were made available to them to participate in as she took her Future Homemakers of America to places like the FDA which regulates food and to the condominiums of Marble Falls that were getting built at the time. She also added that programs like Career Preparation have been a great addition to our community as seniors learn how life will be in the real world.

When I asked her about any unusual traditions of the school she stated that wherever the football games may have been all Eagle fans wore their church attire to the games. She said that she remembers wearing gloves, hats, heels and accessories as that was a must. She laughed and said she would never be able to understand why they did such a thing. She said that many of the traditions that we have today were even practiced back then as well. She stated, "Traditions of the Goldthwaite Eagles will never die."

I asked Ms. Patty if she were to give any advice to the teachers today she said "I think the most important thing is to love the kids. Cherish the times you have with them, be patient and try to see their point of view, too." I then proceeded to ask her if she had any advice to the students and she said "Always be respectful of yourself, the teachers, and others. Study hard so you can succeed in life."

Ms. Patty has been a forever family friend of ours. She and her husband, Wallace were one of the first people in Goldthwaite to welcome my grandparents, Joe & Pat Karnes to the community with open arms. As I reflect over my interview with this absolutely phenomenal woman, I will forever cherish and appreciate all she has done for not only my family and I, but for Mills County too. Once God decides that it's time for her to join her husband, Wallace, in Heaven, the entire county will be devastated as we will lost the chance to hug Ms. Patty at football games, but will be able to smile and know she's looking down at us cheering on our Goldthwaite Eagles to a victory. She is perhaps one of the most influential woman in the county as she has been an educator, supporter in the communities events, quilter and Christian woman who is certainly always up to help out anyone in need or just give that sweet little smile that can change someone's life forever.