



Seasons of Louisiana with Dianne Cage

Saint Patrick's Day.. The Feast of Saint Patrick... "Aye lads and lassies, don't ya forget to wear green this day." The day Irish and Irish Americans commemorate the death of Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who died on March 17, around 492... This is a busy month for us as we have seven March family birthdays, an anniversary, and our first great-grandbaby is due on St. Patrick's... Wheee!

My old friend DANA JEFFERSON, director of the The Neville Alumni & Friends Association (NAFA) called and asked if I would be this year's guest speaker at the annual Excellence Banquet... Of course, I was honored and thrilled and told her I would love to!

Celebrating the 20th annual Educators & Students Excellence Award Banquet: Honoring the Neville High School Top Twenty Tigers, Class of 2021 and the Teachers who inspired them! KATHERINE CASCIO... Teacher KARARI HANKS, CAROLINE CLARY... Teacher KATHERINE DIXON SANDIFER, GRACE EMERY...Teacher KATHERINE SANDIFER, SUSANNAH GRACE GUY... Teacher... ANNA RAMBIN, ANNA GRACE HANSEN...Teacher JAMES ROGERS, VICTORIA HECK...Teacher KATHERINE DIXON SANDIFER, KAITLIN HOUSTON...Teacher KATHRYN WATERS, SADIE KEYS...Teacher KATHY RASCO, JACKSON REED LANDRY... Teacher MARY TUCKER, AUDRY LIVIGNI...Teacher SUSAN STEWART, SIMON HENRY MICHENER...Teacher COACH JEFF GREGORY, PHILIPPA MORSTEAD...Teacher BRITTON LEGGETT, WILLIAN REED...Teacher COACH JEFF GREGORY, WES ROBINSON...Teacher CHRISTINA NGUYEN, SARAH BETH SHIPP...Teacher SUSAN STEWART, SALLIE SNELLINGS...Teacher KARARI HANKS, EMMA STREET...Teacher LEONARD CEASER, ELISE VENABLE...teacher BETH SMITH, JAYLIE WHITE...Teacher MARY NAPOLI, LADAJA WHITE...Teacher KODY CHASE...

The top twenty — more than academic — sports, cheering, music, Quiz Bowl, I could go on and on! They are just well rounded smart students... What an honor to be apart of this world that I never experienced! As my mother use to say, that is why we have chocolate, vanilla and strawberry.

This magnificent event was held at the beautiful ULM Bayou Pointe Event Center, this last Thursday February 25th ... A special thank you to the Banquet Committee...MAGGIE ZENTNER, KATHY HART, LEIGH ANN GOFF, CAROL PAYNE, JENNIFER GRAHAM and DANA JEFFERSON...

An outstanding master of ceremonies, MR. RICHARD PAYLOR, magical perfect music by ROD ALLEN PAYNE. Opening prayer by WILLIAM REED. Introductions of students and their teachers: ASHLEY ELLIS. Video presentation: STEWART SHELBY & WILL ANDERS. ULM Presentation: President RON BERRY...COACH MICKEY McCARTY...Recognition of Benefactors, Educator Excellence Award by JOY CARLSON, the 2020 Ouida McGee Award Winner.... Presentation, this year, 2021 Award to KATHERINE DIXON SANDIFER.

The Neville Alumni & Friends Association — Speech

DANA JEFFERSON, MAGGIE ZENTNER, KATHY HART and Principal / Coach Mickey McCarty...

"I am deeply honored & thrilled to be here....

The Lord gives everyone certain talents, some get a superior brain, superior physique, superior good looks, Artistic touch, a great sense of taste & smell.

The Parables of the Talents. Matthew ...you all have talents given to you by the Lord... Use them to the best of your ability!

There is a little book, "All I ever learned, I learned in Kindergarten," Most of what I learned was at Georgia Tucker, way back when, say around 1948. They did not test for weak eyes and I repeated kindergarten twice... I can remember my mother & grandmother saying what in the world are we going to do with poor little Dianne? A social pro-

motion to the first grade, a social promotion to second grade. Third grade, they started testing eyes... Guess what? I was near sighted and far sighted! Thick glasses and VOILA!!! I still remember that amazing feeling — trees and grass were not like a water color, there were individual leaves and blades of grass, I could see writing on the blackboard! I was so far behind most of my class mates and I was always close to the bottom of the class grade wise... BUT I had something really special!!!!... My Mama, Daddy, grandparents always told me, you do not have to be smart, you are the cutest one!!! Right, thick glasses, a big space between my two front teeth, lots of freckles. Once a friend said, "Mrs. King is the only Mother I know that loves D's. WHEE DIANNE MADE A D!!!"

On to Neville High School for the 7th gradel. It was so exciting, new friends from Lexington, Sherrouse and Lida Benton. I was so excited! The one thing that resonates with most people when you say NEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL is TRADITION & TIGER PRIDE. It has been that way from the very beginning. My father Tom King was in the first graduating classes of 1934. I grew up on 415 Park Avenue, directly across the golf course/swimming pool from the state-ly, magnificent old structure...NEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL! It reeks with TRADITION & PRIDE!!!

I certainly was not where you are, at the top... I was close to the bottom in grades, but not in SPIRIT! I truly believe there is a wonderful place for all at Neville ... regardless of race, brains, beauty or athletic ability. I always felt very confident and happy and popular. All my teachers made me feel as smart as the next one...Dr. Ed Cascio, my favorite. Coach Van Leigh, Coach George Davis, Mrs. Nibbie Thompson. My favorite class, Home Economics, with Mrs. Daisy Daniels, Mrs. Dorthey Johnson, and of course ART & P.E...

Always be kind to all. You never know.. WAY back when we had a group known as hoods... so to speak. They hung out on the corner of 6th Street across from Neville. They smoked, wore shiny looking motorcycle jackets and sort of long hair in Duck Tails... the style reminded me of the Fonzy. I liked them all... Melvin Rambin who became the president of a major bank and later the Mayor of Monroe. Like I said never burn any of your bridges or be unkind to anyone, you never know what they may be going through... and one day you may be working for them.

Never be afraid to say you are sorry.

If you chase your dream lone enough, you will catch it!... Hank Aaron

I never learned anything by talking while I was talking... Larry King

Be bold, be courageous, be your best!

Failure is the CONDIMENT that gives SUCCESS its flavor!

You will have failure, without failure you cannot have success. Never, ever, never give up... Stay close to your higher power; you are going to need it!

There is nothing you can't accomplish if you try. If you don't try you can't accomplish anything!

Eat the proper foods, get enough sleep, exercise, DANCE, LAUGH, listen to your favorite music. Take care of yourself and above all have FUN....

"The Little Engine That Could." I Think I Can, I Think I Can, I Think I Can... I Thought I Could, I Thought I Could, I Thought I Could.... I KNEW I COULD, I KNEW I COULD.... I have a personalized copy for each one of you... this little book has lots of wisdom!

I have loved being here with you celebrating this magical evening!

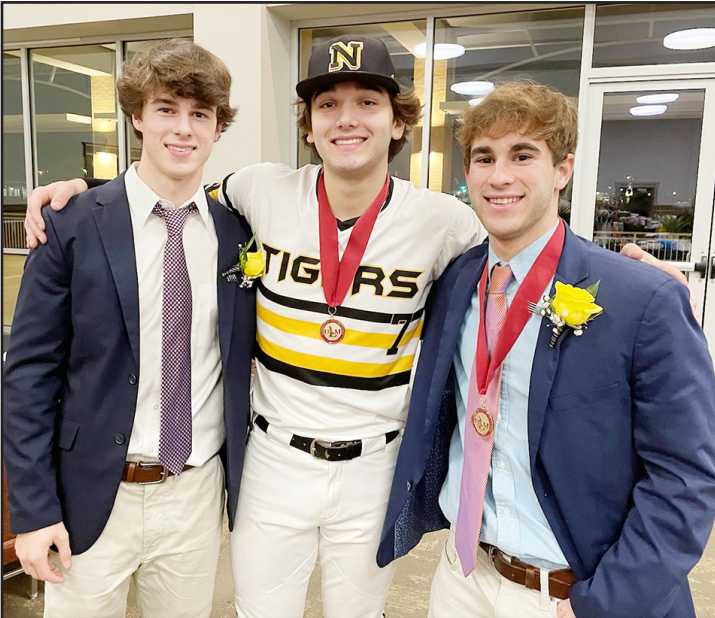
If one dream should fall and break into a thousand pieces NEVER be afraid to pick up one of those pieces and begin again....

P.S. I dreamed MR. JAMES ROGERS, Master of Arts in Mathematics at Neville and also one of my favorite dancers was explaining -r2 "Pie are Square" to me. He was being very patient. I looked at him really confused and said "Oh no, Mr. Rogers, Pies are Round, Cornbread are Square."

Dianne



ABOVE: The top 120 Neville Tigers.



ABOVE: Jackson Landry, Wes Robinson and William Reed.



RIGHT: Sarah Elizabeth Shipp and her mother.



ABOVE: Katherine Marie Cascio and Sallie Snellings.
LEFT: Stephanie Heck and daughter Victoria.

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