

Jeanie [Ellerd] and Harvey Pennell

Jeanie and Harvey Pennell have contributed much to Plainview and Hale County through their dedication to generations of local youth and private acts of charity. Jeanie has taught baton twirling, gymnastics, and dance in Plainview and other towns for 40 years. Harvey's career in public education spanned 32 years in positions from coach to principal and dean.

La Vonda Jeanie Ellerd was born in Seagraves in 1940 and grew up in Plainview, where her family has roots going back to 1905. She played cornet in the summer band program under O.T. Ryan and became a baton twirler in her junior high band in 1954. She twirled for the Plainview High band under "Chief" Davidson from 1955 to 1958 and at Texas Tech from 1958 through her graduation year, 1960.

Jeanie began teaching twirling in the local YMCA summer program in 1956. After college, she taught twirling at Dumas High School and gave private lessons to area students from 1966 to 1972. She taught twirling and flags for the Plainview High School band from 1979 to 2005 and taught and gave clinics at other Panhandle towns beginning in 1973. She also instructed in the summers at the Lake Brownwood Christian Retreat for 17 years and at the University of Texas, Arlington, for five years. From 1973 to 1983, she hosted ten baton competitions for the National Baton Twirling Association in Plainview. Some 200 competitors from Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Kansas attended these meets. Jeanie received the Texas Twirling Teacher of the Year award in 2000.

In 1976 Jeanie opened the Barnyard Academy at 918 Broadway and began three decades of teaching dance, gymnastics, and twirling there. The school moved to 607 Yonkers, its present location, in 1984. She still gives private baton lessons.

Harvey Pennell was born in Slaton in 1943 and grew up in the little Panhandle town of Southland, where he acquired the nickname "Ziggy" as a high-school football player. He graduated from Texas Tech in 1965. Harvey was a weekend ski instructor in Red River, New Mexico, when he met Jeanie Ellerd. The couple married in 1983. They have three children and six grandchildren.

In 1965 Harvey was hired as a junior high football coach and history teacher in Plainview. He also coached track and basketball, taught history and vocational training, and was a dean at Plainview High School. Later, he was principal of Hale Center High School from 1988 to 1994, then served as the director of federal programs in Hale Center from 1994 to 2001. Harvey was president of the Hale Center Lion's Club also served the community by volunteering for Meals on Wheels.

Jeanie and Harvey are members of the First Presbyterian Church. Both are Meals on Wheels volunteers. Jeanie is a participant in the Leadership Plainview program and an alumna of Kappa Alpha Theta.

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