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Sykes High Friends

Thoughts after the Centennial of Sykes High School

You had a marvelous celebration, at least as I saw it from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 6 in Sykeston. I chose to make several other ND stops the same weekend. I had lots of time to think in the 400 miles to, and 500 from Sykeston. Here are some off-the-top thoughts.

Sykeston was very important to me, even though I spent only a single year in the school whose Centennial we celebrated. In all, I went to six schools in four ND towns in the 1940s and 50s, and Sykes High stands out among them all. Of course, Dad was Superintendent in the school for ten years, and Mom taught there for four; three of four siblings went to at least part of their high school in Sykeston. Mary Ann and I graduated at Sykeston. Sykeston was an important place for us.

But the question I ponder is, what's next for that 100-year-old building that's stood so proudly for so long?

Looking at it from 400 miles away, it is hard to see Sykes High being, as a building, anything other than a burden for those who live in the town of Sykeston. It seems to have served its purpose, and it doesn't seem to have a viable alternative use. If left vacant it will just continue to deteriorate. It would be very expensive to retrofit. Sadly, it has served its time.

I am wondering if the mission of Preservation Sykeston might be best to vision the next 100 years for those who are descended from those who attended the school. How about about something like a Sykes Scholarship Fund accessible to families "descended" from the high school, including adopted and step-children, wherever they happen to live? This would give permanence to the memory of Sykes High and what it contributed. The site the lot - could be retained in perpetuity as open space for community or visitor use.

A fund as I describe could be established like any scholarship is, perhaps through some ND Foundation which already exists. Perhaps a pinnacle contribution would be \$1913 (celebrating 1913, of course); maybe \$50 for a brick, or what-have-you.

But first, the visioning needs to happen. To me, that would make the now completed celebration worthwhile.

Special thanks to everyone who put the program for July 4-7 together. All best.

