



Who Am I?

What year did I graduate? [1969](#)

Who did I go to the senior prom with? [Stuart Hill '69](#)

What organizations did I belong to in high school? [Band, Honor Society, French Club, Spanish Club, Future Teachers](#)

What grade was I in when this picture was taken? [8th grade](#)

What state do I live in now? [New Braunfels, Texas](#)

How many kids do I have now? [Two Children](#)

What is or was my occupation? [Social Studies Content Specialist](#)

My closest friend/s in HS? [Stuart Hill '69, Jackie Carnathan '69, Phyllis Stafford '69, Ronnie Baldon '69 and Jane Dunlop '69](#)

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What have I been doing since high school?

After graduation from Channelview High School I attended San Jacinto Junior College for a year majoring in music. Stuart Hill and I car pooled and had so much fun riding the Lynchburg Ferry back and forth. Believe me; we had many adventures on our journeys to the school. I transferred to the University of Texas at Austin the next year and was in the Longhorn Band for only a year. They worked us like we were the football team. It was very difficult to keep up with classes and the band so I dropped the band and changed my major from English to Germanic Languages. During the next two years I studied German, Norwegian and Old Icelandic. I met many Scandinavian people and in my junior year traveled to Lillehammer, Norway to study for a few weeks. These were incredible experiences because I found the wide world outside of my little corner. I loved it.

After graduation from UT, I moved back to Houston (for romantic reasons). After that fell through, I worked at Brown and Root. There a friend introduced me to my future husband. We married in 1974. My cousin, Mark Frederick '68 was a Texas State Trooper who lived in Bellville, Texas. While finishing his shift on April 4, 1976, Mark was shot and killed by a parolee from Georgia. His wife, Jane Dunlop '69, and his daughter Denise mourned his death as did our whole family. He had been like a big brother to me. Jane and I had known each other since kindergarten and have always been close. Happily though, Jane married my brother Kevin James '71 a few years later and they became proud parents of their daughter Erin. They reside in Oklahoma now and are doing well. We lived in Sharpstown until 1978. During those years, I worked at M.D. Anderson Hospital as a secretary in the Pediatrics Department. I was able to take free classes about medical terminology, new cancer treatments and visit any part of the hospital that I desired. I learned so much and began to realize that cancer has no favorites; it can

affect anyone. As much as I loved pediatrics, the 1970s were a difficult time for children with cancer. Many of them didn't survive, in spite of new cancer protocols. When I became pregnant with my son, Ryan, I left my job and spent some time at home. By 1978, my teacher husband wanted to leave Houston so he found a new teaching job in New Braunfels. My daughter Melanie was born there in 1979. Sadly, she was born several months after my Dad died of cancer. He was only fifty-seven. In 1981, I attended LVN school and became an LVN. I worked in the local hospital, nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals and home health care. My favorite was home health care because there it was possible to really know the patients and their families.

1996 was another difficult year. My husband and I divorced after 22 years of marriage. My mother, Sylvia James, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. She had surgery and radiation but survived only until February 1997. My sister, Crispin and my two brothers Kevin and Dusty and I still miss our parents very much. They were unique people who provided us with a good home life and a foundation in Channelview. We carry on though. I changed careers again in the mid 1990s when I began full time work at a company that score students' essays. The world of testing is very controversial and has changed through the years. But I enjoy meeting with teachers and developing training materials in order to train our scorers to objectively score student exams. Almost four years ago, I began school at night at the University of Texas at San Antonio, working on my Masters in History. Finally, on December 20, 2008, I walked across the stage.

To add to my personal pressure, the company I work for now was bought by a competitor, early in 2008. The transition has been tough but at least I still have a job. I'm hopeful that 2009 will be a better year for everyone; financially and personally. I lost four beloved friends in 2008 and still miss them.

I do have a wonderful man in my life named Harold. He has been supportive of me even though he struggles with the effects of Agent Orange from his service in Vietnam. Ryan and Melanie are loving and considerate grown-ups and I'm very proud of them. Ryan is a contractor who writes mainly social studies items for testing companies. Melanie teaches pre-Kindergarten at a private school in Austin. Crispin and her husband Paul live in South Austin in Manchaca. They have a beautiful daughter, Dara, who is a social worker. Dusty or Dustin (as he prefers) lives in Sugarland with his wife Theresa. He works in the Chemistry Department at Rice University. They have three very talented children. I live on almost five acres outside of the city limits of New Braunfels. I have several cats, two dogs and various animals who "visit" my yard. I love leaving crowded San Antonio where I work and turning into my driveway where there are mainly trees, rocks and animals. I'll always be grateful that I grew up in Channelview, Texas. The people from there are special and prove it every day when I read their additions to the website. The Channelview website is outstanding and a great way to keep in touch with our classmates and friends. Who am I, well I am Debbie James.

Those who have been "Who Am I" people: Helen Dworsky, James Mason, Debbie Roberts, Glen Owens, Sandy Kluth, Stuart Hill, Belinda Niemtschk, Renwick Preston, Phyllis Stafford, Homer Laird, Pat Smith, Glen Brown, Jackie Carnathan, Kris Campbell, Charlene Clayton, Mike Garies, Jeannene Bowman, Hans Muller, Carla Peters, Linda Lindow, Jon Swain, Barbara Beavers, Randy Melton, Marilyn Thompson, Kenny McAfee, Marva Lorring, Rocky Fondren, Debbie Campbell, Ronald Buchta, Cathy Seale, David Hart, Debbie James