



Photos by QUINT SMITH/Missourian

The Hickman High School cheerleaders perform for the Hickman class of 1943 at their 70-year class reunion Friday at D. Rowe's Restaurant & Bar.

## Graduates of Hickman High School's 1943 class meet for their 70-year reunion

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It's been 70 years, and people are still talking about O.V. Wheeler's block that helped the Hickman High School Kewpies football team beat Jefferson City High School, 6-0. That was 1942.

Wheeler's senior year, Jefferson City High School was the Kewpies' biggest rival. It didn't matter if the team lost every game; if they beat Jefferson City, it was considered a good season, he said.

"I told the quarterback, 'I'll drive a hole you can drive a truck through,' and that's what I did," Wheeler said.

Wheeler's block and the big victory against Jefferson City was just one memory tossed around at the Hickman class of 1943's 70-year reunion at D. Rowe's Restaurant & Bar on Friday. This was the first 70-year reunion in the history of Hickman High School.

Twenty-one 1943 Hickman graduates attended the reunion, only seven fewer than the number of classmates at the reunion five years ago. A total of 219 Hickman students graduated with the class of 1943, but there were others who left school before graduation to serve in World War II.

The late Betty Jacobs organized class reunions and sent out newsletters through the years, 1943 graduate Joe Forsee said. Once she fell ill, she passed

the job on to Forsee. Reunion chairman Charley Blackmore also helped out with the event.

A microphone was passed throughout the room for the classmates to talk about their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They told heartfelt jokes about one another while '40s music played in the background.

**'Our class was special. Even when we're separated for a long time, when we see each other it's like we were never apart.'**

**HAZEL WILLETT**  
1943 Hickman graduate

Strong friendships made the most lasting memories of high school, many of the attendees said. Friends Hazel Willett and Betty "Itchy" Elliot, both at the reunion, have been friends since grade school. During high school, Willett and Elliot would go to every new movie and to dinner after-

ward, even on school nights. They had sleepovers at each other's houses and would take walks at night in their pajamas. Both rolled bandages for the Red Cross during the war.

"Things were a lot more innocent than they are now," Willett said.

Willett and Elliot, along with the rest of the class, have kept in contact through the years, mainly through reunions and Christmas cards.

"Our class was special," Willett said. "Even when we're separated for a long time, when we see each other it's like we were never apart."

Supervising editor is Katie Moritz: news@ColumbiaMissourian.com, 882-7884.

Graduates of Hickman's 1943 class viewed yearbooks at their 70-year class reunion Friday. Anna Dean Ballew Teague, 87, displays the page announcing the winners of "Most Popular" from that year.



# 70 years in the making