

## LETTER FROM A ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL GRAD

*The following is an excerpt from a letter to her daughters written by Peggy Bullock Bardarson, a 1947 Roosevelt High School graduate, following the dedication concert of the newly rebuilt Froula Memorial Pipe Organ on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>.*

I have to report on a wonderful concert yesterday at my alma mater, Roosevelt High School. As you may remember, my dad was a fine amateur organist and for many years of my Methodist childhood accompanied the choirs my Mom directed first at Green Lake Methodist and then at Sand Point. In 1937 he was appointed vice-principal at Roosevelt by its first principal, V.K. Froula when the VP took a sabbatical.

Mr. Froula died suddenly in November, 1938 and Daddy was again vice-principal. The community was stricken by the sudden death of the much admired V.K. Froula and a memorial project was proposed. I think my dad had a great deal to do with the selection of a pipe organ as a fitting memorial. The community raised \$2500 and the School Board donated the \$560 necessary to install a new Möller Pipe Organ. This is quite amazing since the Depression still had the country in its grip. The dedication concert was on October 3, 1940 and it was a big event in Seattle. It was performed by the young virtuoso, Richard Elsasser, now deceased. I attended the concert. Over the years of my dad's career at Roosevelt, the organ was used a lot and there was a weekly 20 minute recital before class, played by members of the faculty and probably most often by my dad.



Now fast forward to 2003, when Roosevelt was set for a multi-million renovation. No plans were made to include the organ, now in ruins in a storeroom. At the 11th hour a handful of parents of kids in music decided that it should not be given away and the Friends of the RHS Organ was founded. I was

contacted at that time and we gave some money, but I was sure it would never "fly". I did make an impassioned speech at a homecoming on behalf of the project before the remodeling was begun. The organ had not been in playing condition for several years and there seemed to be no faculty or student interest in it. I was sure the project was doomed.

So what a miracle to attend the fine concert at RHS rededicating the Froula Memorial Pipe Organ, now completely restored by volunteers from Seattle organ aficionados. The players were all students with only one pro participating (the daughter of an alum who has an international career). The RHS string orchestra accompanied one of the soloists in a Handel concerto — very well played by all. Three students performed and two had original compositions to play. It was a lovely program.



RHS has been completely rebuilt, the facade is the same, but that is all - it is very beautiful again and my dad would be so proud. I was filled with tears of joy — "Build it and they will come" I guess is the message here. And to know that the legacy of music which was so strong in my day was thriving again!

The new auditorium (with a true sloping floor) was almost full. We had a great after-concert chat in the "commons" over cookies and punch. So we must never give up hope — music and the arts do bring us together.

Your proud Mom,  
Peggy Bullock Bardarson  
RHS Class of 1947