

Sylvia Ann Grider Pampa High School Class of 1959



Sylvia Ann Grider is a native Pampan, born in the Worley Hospital on October 21, 1940. Both of her parents, R. C. and Mildred Holt Grider, graduated from Pampa High School as members of the Class of 1933. Her brother, Robert, graduated from Pampa High School in 1957.

Growing up in Pampa in the 1950s was an idyllic time for wearing poodle skirts and bobby socks. The faculty, staff, and administration of Pampa High School guided the good-natured and rambunctious student body by precept and example, preparing graduates to succeed at some of the finest colleges and universities in the country. Faculty to whom Sylvia is indebted include Howard Graham, Bill Haynes, Elizabeth Hurley, Elaine Ledbetter, Lula Owen, and Aubra Nooncaster--all of whom demanded excellence in the classroom. Others in Pampa who provided love, good times, and life-long friendships are the members of Girl Scout Troop 22, including troop leader Marian "Tuffy" Osborne, and my classmates: "We're the class that will always shine! We're the class of '59!"

After graduation, a Cabot Scholarship enabled Sylvia to attend the University of Texas at Austin, where--influenced by her high school classes with Lula Owen--she majored in Latin, graduating with a B. A. in 1963. After teaching Latin, English, and world history at Caprock High School in Amarillo, Texas, for a couple of years, she returned to the University of Texas for an M. A. ('67) in history, with a minor in classical civilization. To further her classical training, she participated in the University of Texas archaeological excavation at Ancient Corinth, Greece. It was on this excavation that she unexpectedly discovered the field to which she would devote the rest of her professional career--folklore, or the study of tradition in culture. The folktales and legends that the Greek workmen told were much more exciting to her than the excavation and analysis of ancient artifacts! After returning to the United States, Sylvia taught English and world history at N. R. Crozier Technical High School in Dallas before enrolling at Indiana University, where she received her Ph. D. from the Folklore Institute in 1976.

Upon completion of her doctorate, Dr. Grider was hired as an Assistant Professor of English at Texas A&M University, where she continues to teach and conduct research. She is currently Associate Professor of Anthropology and teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in general folklore, material culture, and folk narrative, as well as Texas cultural history. Her graduate students have won university-level awards in both teaching and research. The results of her research have been published

in scores of scholarly journal articles, book chapters, and essays, some of which are included in textbook anthologies. She also has presented research papers at state, national, and international meetings of various scholarly societies. Her most recent book was co-edited with Lou Rodenberger, *Texas Women Writers: A Tradition of Their Own* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), which was a featured book at the 1997 Texas Book Festival. She has been President of both the Texas Folklore Society and the American Folklore Society. She also served two terms as the American Folklore Society delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies. Some of her work can be seen at the online folklore journal, *Newfolk*.

After the fatal collapse of the Aggie Bonfire in 1999, Dr. Grider directed the Bonfire Memorabilia Collection Project as Principal Investigator.

The love of learning instilled at P. H. S. is the main reason she chose to become a career scholar/teacher.