

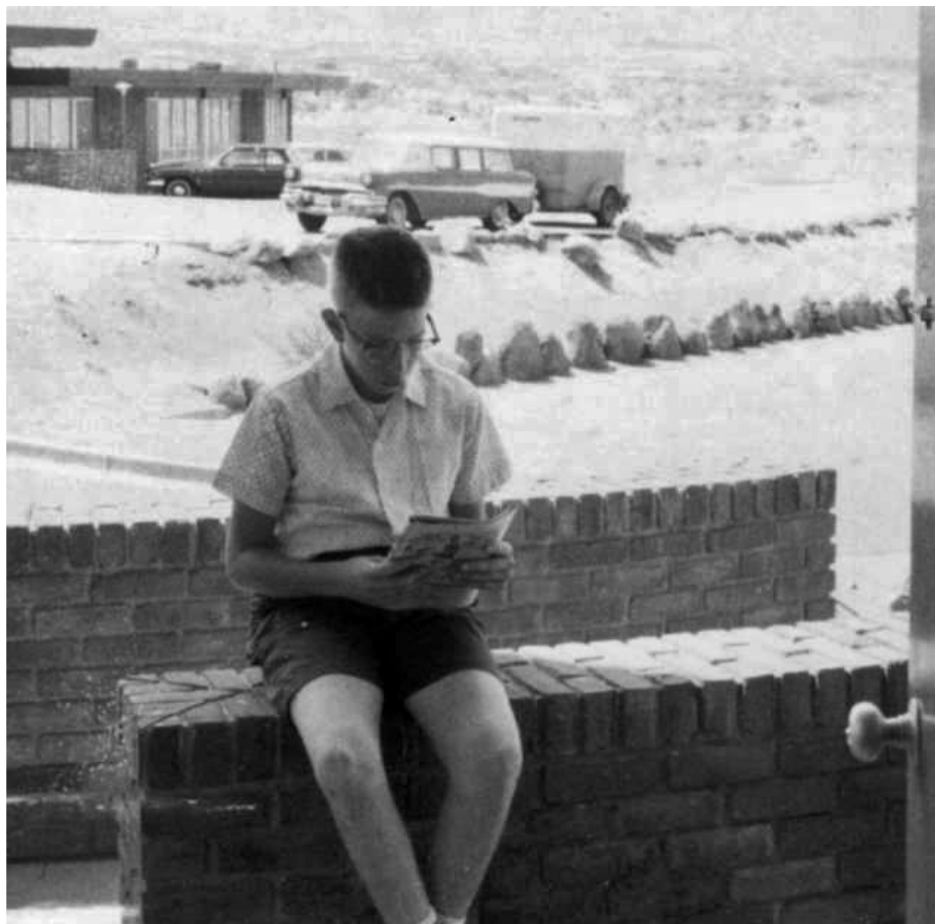
The Magic of Play

I'm sure there were other sports available to kids in my world, but most of my activities revolved around three sports: baseball, gridiron (we called it football) and basketball. After all, living in Kansas, home of Phog Allen and James Naismith (who created the sport and later coached basketball at KU). So many neighbors had basketball hoops up on their driveways, and it's a great sport for solo practice with those hoops. Or for teams, of any size. Baseball is America's pastime, they say, and it was so major in school and in life, that from mid-April to mid-September (the regular season, all 154 games), I was a devotee. I kept daily records of my favorite teams, especially the A's of course. The Kansas City newspaper (Times and then the Star) published the box scores, and I would change the records for each player each day, combining my love of sport and mathematics. Earned run average, batting average, how many strikeouts or walks a pitcher accrued. It was all there, daily.

In 1962 the Dallas Texans moved from Texas under the leadership of their owner, and one of the major architects of the American Football League (later the AFC of the NFL), Lamar Hunt. They renamed themselves the Kansas City Chiefs. So, they were now 'my' club and I used to wear red socks or red shirts or at least thought about wearing red when the team was playing most Sundays. Unlike the A's, Dad had no connections with the Chiefs, but they were my club nonetheless. They

did play football at the same arena, Municipal Stadium on 22nd and Brooklyn, until Arrowhead was built around 1970.

Dad bought the World Book set of encyclopedias when I was in about 3rd grade. It became a fave activity of mine in order like this. I would wonder something, like "How far is Mars?" I would go to the "M" volume of the World Books, and start looking for the answer. My eyes would find another topic like Mammoth or Mary, Queen of Scots. Since I was rarely on a fixed time schedule, and life was less complicated with competing diaries in those days, I would get lost in reading the entries near Mars, and only after a significant amount of time would (try to) remember my original query. That was a 'pastime' for sure. I even used the "Cycloteacher" which came with the purchase of the World Book set, to learn huge amounts of facts which helped me develop the uncanny ability to memorize useless information for winning at trivia. Oh, Cycloteacher taught me how to play chess, like a private tutor. Early analog YouTube, I guess.



Ever reading...but likely little more than the latest comic book.



Reading on my first airplane ride, I was 10. Summer, 1962.



At the state fair in Topeka with Michael observing me. I'm not sure I've held a gun since.

Giggles and Grins

We spent a lot of time watching the television and also listening to records, and I found comedy a comfortable home. The latest Bill Cosby record or Marty Allen would give me jokes to keep laughing long after the turntable stopped. TV shows like F Troop or the Sid Caesar show or anything with Carol Burnett or Mel Brooks- the list is endless and bountiful. My laughter was continual.

Oh, I'm sure we had laughs at home, but nothing compared to the professionals.

Over the decades my family has brought me great joy and fun and laughter. Mostly nowadays it's from my kids as I watch them parent their own children. But my cousins' call since COVID each week has highlighted the love my sister Judy gives me and the laughter we shared as children is deeper in these days as we (both) age.



That's Judy in 2026.