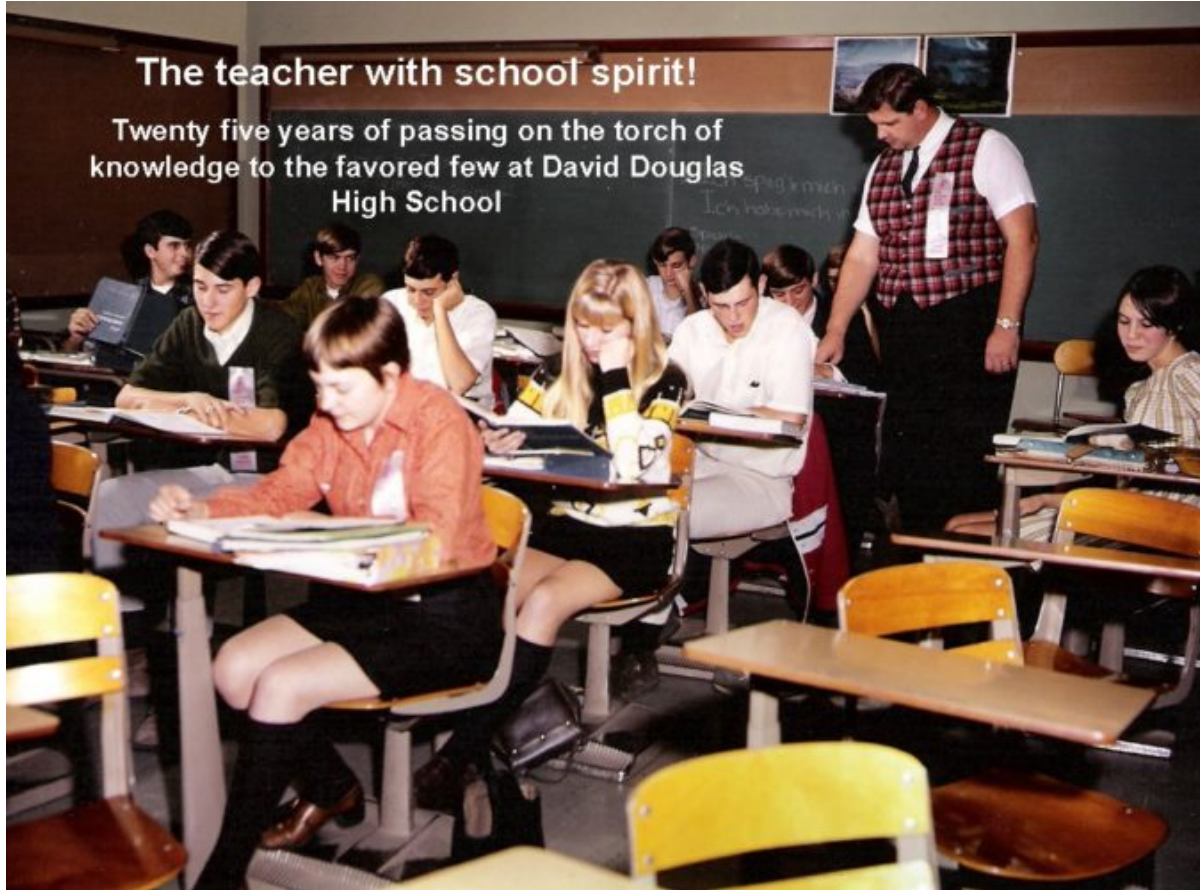


By Dan Friesen

In 1964, after Dad parlayed his German language skills into a fast-track college teaching degree, he was hired to teach German at David Douglas High School. Those were exciting times for the family; moving across town, attending new schools, and being swept along with Dad's new life at one of the largest high schools in the state.



Dad in the classroom on game day - hence the tartan vest of the David Douglas Scotsmen!

Teachers' salaries were low in those days and Dad was always looking for summertime jobs. One idea he discovered early in his teaching career was leading trips to Europe in the summer for his high school German students.



Returning home across the tarmac at PDX from their first epic summer journey in 1966

The first big trip was in 1966 and it must have lasted about 40 days. My siblings and I were billeted out with friends from our church on Sauvie's Island for half the time, then spent a few weeks in Canada with relatives. It was a memorable summer!



The tearful reunion

After a couple years of student tours, Dad figured out that summer was the primary season for all kinds of European tourism and found a job as a tour guide for a local travel company. Turned out he had a knack for it. And he decided that adult tours were easier to lead than student tours.

Soon he had his own one-man travel company - Friesen Tour Service - and began building a reputation as someone who provided a fun, quality experience in Europe. He led a wide variety of groups: classical music tours, woodcarving tours, Reformation history tours, and many general interest sightseeing tours.

Dad was a people person. He was energized by being in a group - he loved a challenge and was almost bored when things went too smoothly. "We're gonna win!" was one of his favorite rallying cries. And, of course, he sang to the group. If you traveled with Dad, you heard "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin' from the hit musical Oklahoma, at least once each tour. People loved him.



Dad often had a song to share on the bus.

Dad experimented with a lot of ways to earn a living over the years, and he was a home run hitter - always swinging for the fence. Like Babe Ruth, he often struck out, but life with Dad was never dull and he was definitely not a quitter!



The Real Estate photo - some years travel didn't work out...terrorism reared its ugly head back then too. So dad got his real estate agent license.

In the end, however, teaching and travel were the reliable ways he supported his family. In 1988, he was planning his retirement from teaching and planned to let his one-man travel business die a natural death. But that was not to be.

In my next post, I'll share the story of how Dad was persuaded to start Walking Tours, Inc, the predecessor of Walking Adventures International.