

**Reed City Area Public Schools
Graduate Highlight September 2007**

Robert Tift

RCHS Class of 1959

written by Steven Westhoff, Superintendent

NO PICTURE AVAILABLE

Robert Tift was a high school chemistry and science teacher for 20 years; however, this Reed City High School graduate's passion is mission work.

After his "working" years, as Mr. Tift puts it; he dedicated his life to mission work in Japan, Haiti, Hawaii, and Alaska. Robert served as the lead chef at Youth with a Mission and supervised a staff of ten at Kailuna Kona, Hawaii. He also traveled to Alaska to serve as a baker and cook at Victory Bible Camp. Robert describes his mission work as a "faith- building" experience.

Robert is the identical twin of Dick Tift, which at the time was believed to be the only set of identical twins at Reed City Area Public Schools. Being an identical twin resulted in some interesting situations in school. In second grade, the boys had a teacher named Lucille Savage who Robert felt was a real friend. When Robert referred to her as "Lucille," both ended up staying after school as she did not know which twin was the guilty party. Since classmates couldn't tell them apart, both were called "Dicky-Bob" throughout their school days.

Robert always had a fondness for teaching and he followed in the steps of his high school chemistry teacher, Loren Kilmer, though Robert claims that he never quite attained the genius status that Mr. Kilmer had. Robert's Latin teacher, Beth Fisher, had a significant effect on him and always said that he would be able to recite his conjugations as long as he lived; she was right. And, to this day Robert, Dick and friends all remember the fear they had of sitting face to face across from principal, Earl Messner's desk.

When Robert Tift started school there were only four busses; on one of which his dog Stooply would ride to school with him and then walk back home. Robert states "the worst thing to happen was the passing of notes and chewing gum." Drugs were not an issue then and most of the movies were "G" rated; I consider myself lucky to have been part of the Class of 1959." Reed City Area Public Schools also feels lucky and is proud of Robert Tift, RCHS Graduate of 1959!