



# JOHN DE LA HOWE SCHOOL

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MCCORMICK—Even a hurricane was not enough to keep just over 50 alumni of John de la Howe School from gathering for their 54<sup>th</sup> homecoming and reunion last weekend.

Tim Smith Rolfe of Lacey, WA, who attended the school from 1959 to 1964, drove 3,000 miles to attend the event, which is held every other October. His reasoning was simple. “This is home to me,” he said.

He was joined by fellow John de la Howe alumni from places like Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina and, yes, right here in South Carolina in a full day of “catching up” with each other and continuing the work of the school’s alumni association, which was founded in 1957.

The alumni association remains active in its support of the school, sponsoring two annual golf tournaments as fundraisers, hosting an annual fishing tournament for the students, providing a Christmas “keepsake party” for female students at John de la Howe and assisting with funding of the school’s equine program.

Saturday’s agenda included tours of the campus, a ride down a recently cleared wooded lane once traveled by Dr. John de la Howe’s wagons, lunch in the school cafeteria, the group’s business meeting, a Saturday evening cookout and party at Hickory Knob, plus lots of visiting.

Alumni received an update from Dan Shonka, chairman of the school’s board of trustees, who said measuring the school’s impact quantitatively is next to impossible. He also spoke of the school’s recent challenges with the South Carolina legislature and pledged that the board would battle on.

“We’re not going to give up,” the retired educator said. “We’re not going to roll over and die. We’re not going to allow it.”

Sandi Boazman of Donalds, a member of the alumni board of directors, encouraged the alumni to record their stories in writing and to share them with the legislature so they can understand how important John de la Howe has been in their lives.

Founded in 1797, John de la Howe School is located on 1,200 acres in the Sumter National Forest eight miles outside of McCormick. The school serves children in grades 6-12 from across the state who are experiencing behavioral issues, proving them a safe place to heal, grow and make changes in their lives.

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