

Julie E. Kistler, J.D. Biography



Julie E. Kistler, J.D., - Class of 1974 - b. August, 1956 - High School Activities: Forensics 2, 3, 4 (State Tournament, '74), IHSA drama and group interpretation competitions; several school plays, "*Carnival*" and "*Look Homeward Angel*" assistant directed "*Barefoot in the Park.*"; Student Council, 2 (on Executive Board -4); Class Council, 2-3-4; Class Treasurer 4; French Club 2; Office Page 2.

In her own words: I did graduate from Elgin High in 1974 after being born in Peoria and moving to the Wayne/West Chicago area in 8th grade (attended Ellis Junior High School) and (last time I looked) my name was on the wall in the library as one of the top ten in my class. I was pretty involved in high school. I think I rode on a Homecoming float every year of high school, too! Not really a major distinction, but I was there! My recollection is that you will find a pretty strange picture of me in the 72 yearbook as Little Bo Peep on the Student Council float. Other than that... I was an Office Page and in French Club.

I worked at Ackemann's Department Store on Highland Avenue when I was a sophomore at EHS, I think. I started as the person inside the Easter Bunny costume to hand out balloons and then worked in the gift wrapping department. Best job ever! We made some beautiful packages to send out to Elgin ladies!

Academically, as I said, I finished in the Top Ten, and I was also one of four National Merit Finalists from the Class of 74, along with Charles Milkovitch, Tom Mohr and Peter Heinicke. I remember an Elgin Courier News article about the four of us (Peter, Tom, Chuck and I) and I was really proud of that at the time because the other three were smart cookies! They were all science and math guys and I was the only one representing the English side of the PSAT equation. At least three of us (I don't recall if Chuck went or not) traveled to Michigan State University for a National Merit Scholarship opportunity, which was the same day as senior picture day, which is why I don't show up on very many pages of the senior yearbook. I think I'm in the pictures of the assembly for Mr. Alexander (I'm the one who looks like a mean

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librarian) and Forensics, but that's it. Oh, wait. I'm in a picture of "Look Homeward Angel," the play we did senior year.

After high school, I attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude in 1978 with a BA in History. I went to law school after that – also at the University of Illinois – and graduated Cum Laude in 1981.

I married Scott Johnson, another member of the EHS Class of 74, in 1980. We both went to U of I, where we were in the same Russian class. Scott has always been interested in the history of Elgin in general and EHS in particular, and he kept records on Elgin High basketball for absolute ever, so someone in your EHS archives may know or have corresponded with Scott. He received a citation from the Elgin Sports Hall of Fame and has been nominated for the Sports Hall of Fame.

After I graduated from law school, we moved to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area where I worked for a law firm for a while and then for West Publishing Company, at that time the nation's largest legal publisher. I was a finalist in Romance Writers of America's Golden Heart contest for unpublished manuscripts twice. I sold my first book to Harlequin Books in 1985, with about 30 more published romance novels in the years that followed.

Obviously, leaving the legal world to write romance novels was a major departure, but it was a lot more creative, which worked for me. I served in various volunteer capacities as well as a term on the Board of Directors of Romance Writers of America and then acted as Vice President and President of Novelists, Inc.

Scott and I moved back to Illinois in 1988 when he took a job as a programmer with his former employer, the University of Illinois, and I continued writing romance novels. I also began to write theater reviews for the Champaign News-Gazette, using my writing skills in a different way.

I was nominated for a Rita Award for one of my Harlequin American Romances in 1994, was nominated for several Romantic Times awards, as well, and won a Madcap Award for Best Romantic Comedy of 2001 for my book "Just a Little Fling," written for Harlequin's Temptation line. I wrote for Harlequin American, Love and Laughter, Duets, Temptation and Blaze lines, with one book for Kismet Romance along the way, a short mystery story for a Barnes and Noble anthology and a chapter of a round-robin mystery done for charity for the benefit of the Peoria Public Library.

Scott became the IT person and unofficial historian at the Illinois High School Association in Bloomington-Normal in 1994. He is now an Assistant Executive Director at the IHSA. His bio is here: <http://ihsa.org/AbouttheIHSA/AdministrativeSupportStaff/ScottJohnson.aspx>

In 2002, he and I collaborated on a book for the IHSA – that book is called "Once There Were Giants" and chronicles the story of Hebron High School's state basketball championship in 1952. It was done for the 50th anniversary of Hebron's historic win. When we started it, we had no idea how many times Elgin High would come up as a topic, but it was certainly there again and again. Elgin was Hebron's opponent at several pivotal moments, plus Hebron's coach, Russ Ahearn, had previously coached at EHS. When we were doing the research, we found a picture of Coach

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Ahearn with an Elgin High football team that Scott's dad, Ben Johnson, was part of. We had no idea Ben went out for football and certainly no idea he'd had Russ Ahearn as his coach! I would be happy to send you a copy of "Once There Were Giants" if you would like it for the archives. The Elgin content really is pretty cool.

Once we were in Bloomington-Normal, I began writing theater reviews for the Bloomington Pantagraph as well as the News-Gazette and also started a theater blog called A Follow Spot (afollowspot.com). I am a member of the American Theater Critics Association and continue to write about theater and movies for my blog.

I also became involved with B-N theater, including more than ten years on the Board of Directors at Heartland Theatre. I created a playwriting contest there, running that contest for quite a long time, and I've also acted and directed there, plus I worked behind the scenes as a properties designer, dramaturg and literary manager. When Heartland's longtime Artistic Director passed away in 2013, I stepped in as interim Artistic Director and served in that capacity for two seasons.

Julie Kistler is the author of 30 romance novels and five shorter works, including one Cat Crime, two chapters for charity projects, an online serial and a novella. Julie won the Madcap Award for the best romantic comedy of 2001 for *JUST A LITTLE FLING*, a Harlequin Temptation, and she was nominated for Romance Writers of America's Rita Award for *BLACK JACK BROGAN*, a Harlequin American Romance. Several of her books have hit the Waldenbooks Best-Seller Lists.

She and her husband, Scott Johnson (also Class of 1974), co-authored *ONCE THERE WERE GIANTS*, the story of how tiny Hebron High School won the Illinois High School basketball tournament in 1952. That book came out in 2002 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Hebron's amazing run to the state championship.

Julie was born and raised in Peoria, Illinois (yes, she "played in Peoria") but moved to the Chicago area for high school, where she met her husband Scott in 10th grade. (He sat in front of her in math class and she was attracted to his tall, dark, handsome and very smart ways.) Scott and Julie both attended the University of Illinois, and Julie graduated with a BA in history (Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude) in 1978. She married Scott in 1980, and then 1) got a law degree (cum laude) from the University of Illinois, 2) passed the Minnesota bar exam, 3) ran off with Scott for a two-month trip to Europe, and 4) moved to Minnesota to be a lawyer (in that order).

But law didn't suit her very well, and Julie left the legal world to be a full-time writer in 1985. She also sold her first book in 1985 (nine days after quitting her job.) That book was *THE VAN RENN LEGACY*, a madcap treasure hunt with a quote-acrostic for readers to solve, and it also earned Julie her second Golden Heart nomination.

Julie and Scott moved back home to Illinois in 1989, and have lived in Central Illinois ever since. A lifetime movie and theater lover, Julie began a side career as a theater critic for the Champaign News-Gazette in 1990. She has now joined the Board of Directors of Heartland Theatre, in Bloomington, Illinois, and she initiated an annual ten-minute play contest there which has proved to be very popular. Julie's play, "Hopeless Romantics," was performed in the first year of Heartland's Ten-Minute Playfest.

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In her life, Julie has been a student, front desk clerk, room service waiter, switchboard operator, pizza chef, criminal prosecutor, singing and dancing law book, prose reader, legal research expert, member of the Board of Directors of Romance Writers of America, president of Novelists Inc, marketing manager, romance writer, sportswriter, reporter, critic, Fred Astaire fanatic, cat lover, White Sox fan, daughter, sister, wife and friend. She lives in Bloomington, Illinois, with her husband, where she reviews theater for two newspapers. If Julie is not out watching local theater or basketball games, she occupies herself watching Arrested Development, House, The Daily Show, and various other shows all over the cable dial, adding to her large collection of books and DVDs, and answering her email.

As of this writing her books are:

2006 Scandal
2004 Always A Bridesmaid (Anthology)
Cut To The Chase
Hot Prospect
It's In His Kiss
Packing Heat
2002 More Naughty Than Nice
Once There Were Giants
Stand-In Bride
The Sister Switch
2000 Calling Mr. Right
In Bed with the Wild One
Just a Little Fling
1999 50 Ways to Lure Your Lover
Crafty Cat Crimes
Deader than a Doornail
Lizzie's Last-Chance Fiancé
Naked Came the Farmer
1998 Tuesday's Knight
1997 Touch Me Not
1995 Fantasy Wife
Ryan's Bride
1994 Dream Lover
Once Upon A Honeymoon
1993 Black Jack Brogan
Cinderella at the Firecracker Ball
Finn's Angel
Paris When It Sizzles!
1992 Flannery's Rainbow
1991 Christmas in Toyland
1990 Best Wishes
1988 Always a Bridesmaid

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Wildflower

1987 Christmas In July

1986 The Van Renn Legacy

Awards

Nominated for Romantic Times' Best Temptation of the Year for "Packing Heat" (2004)

Nominated for Romantic Times' Career Achievement Award for Series Romantic Fantasy (2003).

Winner of the 2001 Madcap Award for Romantic Comedy for "Just a Little Fling"

Waldenbooks Bestseller for "Just a Little Fling" (2000)

Nominated for Romantic Times' Best Duets of the Year for "Calling Mr. Right" (2000)

Nominated as one of Affaire de Coeur's Top Ten Favorite Authors (1995)

Waldenbooks Bestseller for "Fantasy Wife." (1995)

Finalist for Romance Writers of America's Rita Award for "Black Jack Brogan" (1994)