Pat Smith Brendle, outstanding basketball standout for R.B.S. High during the late sixties, passed away last Friday from cancer. She led her team to the State Tournament in 1969, when girl's basketball rules called for six players per team- three on offense and three on defense- playing only one-half of the court at a time. Pat played offense, and was a dead shot. One commentator at Jackson, Tennessee, where the State Tournament was played, commented on her shooting ability by saying, "I believe this girl could kick the ball through the goal, she's this good." It was one of the highlights of my life to attend the tournament with many of the R.B.S. fans. In those days there was no division of the schools into small, medium, and large as exists today. R.B.S. High had to play the "big girls" to reach the state, and they did it successfully. But Pat had five other players that were great, and without them she could not have led her team to the state. Their picture appears elsewhere in this issue.

In my opinion, Pat was the best all around player ever to play for years at R.B.S. High. Coupled with her shooting ability, was the outstanding coaching of Charles Biles, who distinguished himself as a girl's coach.

Regina Cassilty, Linda Smith, Janie Biles, Patty Ray and Carolyn Hix Blankenship, were the talented girls who composed the Bulldog Team.

That year, the high school students and fans gathered in front of the City Market in Red Boiling Springs to give the convoy of cars a send off to Jackson, though they were champions, they couldn't afford a chartered bus for the trip.

It was a great joy on my part to have had Pat in some of my classes. She was one of 12 children who grew up in the Willette Community of East Macon. All twelve of them graduated from R.B.S. High. Pat, along with her two sisters and ten brothers were taught to work, and they all pitched in and helped the family. I was also Pat's counselor for four years. She was funny and a joy to have in class. Sometimes she would go to sleep in class, and in that day a teacher could get away with throwing a piece of chalk or an eraser and wake up a sleeping student, and I would. But today that could get a teacher a prison sentence or perhaps executed. Pat would always raise up and say and I can still hear her, "Ah, Mr. Cook, I'm sleepy." Sometimes it was after a ballgame or she had worked hard at home the afternoon before that she was so sleepy. Pat liked the students and they liked her. She was honest and loving. Sometimes she acted a little weird, but that made one love her more. She never had the big head because of her basketball ability.

Pat played the game of life just as hard as she did basketball. She suffered and died of cancer. She wanted to go home where she died.

The last time I talked to Pat was at the funeral of a family member. She hugged me and told me she loved me and I echoed similar words.

"Pat, you can't hear me now, but as long as I live I'll remember your antics on the ballcourt and your repeat in the classroom and the honor you brought to R.B.S. High. May we all cherish the memories you created for us."

Incidentally, Pat's jersey, number 14, is the only girl's jersey to be retired in the Sports Showcase at R.B.S. High. Her awards in sports were too many to list here. Besides she was to modest and she wouldn't want me to list them.