

Readers' letters to *The Times*

Thanks, Hammond

I'd like to thank the citizens of Hammond who awarded me (much to my astonishment) the 1981 Hammond Achievement Award.

Not only that, Mayor Raskosky accorded me the keys to the city. Not only is Mayor Raskosky a classmate of mine of dear old Hammond High ("Go Wildcats!"), but he appears on the same page of the class yearbook, *The Dunes*.

It was a great and most memorable night for me, and I hope as well for those who were present at the dinner and gala which followed at Wicker Park.

I have always felt grateful that I was lucky enough to grow up in Hessville and experience as a boy the beauty and starkness of the Dunes region. We lived on the edge of the Great Marsh which began on Cline Avenue in Hessville and stretched seemingly forever to the horizon. As kids, we spent long sunny afternoons hunting for arrowheads, which were so plentiful in those days that most kids had sacks of them to trade and play with. We went to the Warren G. Harding School, and in those days tumbleweeds would blow down Cleveland Street and cactus grew in the vacant lots, of which there were

many.

Anyway, it was a great place to be, especially for a kid, and I've always been thankful that I was privileged to know that country. For that reason, I have tried to capture as much of the Calumet Region, its folkways, its landscapes, its fears and victories, in my work. My novel *In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash* is laid in The Region, and is truly a work of love by a native son.

Thank you, Hammond; I am grateful for your recognition.

JEAN SHEPHERD

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

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