

EAST HIGH SCHOOL

Know Your Purgolder: Northside resident John Walrath reflects on East



**Name:** John Walrath

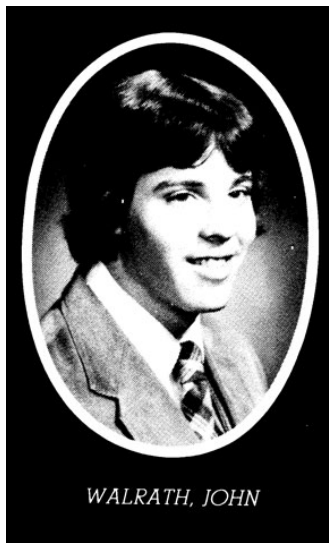
**Occupation:** President of America's Lending Authority.com, a Wisconsin mortgage banking company and President of ALA Business Consulting Services.

**Personal Profile:** Married to Maureen Walrath (Quinn) and reside on the Northside with our three children: Nicole (age 9), Shane (7), Ian (5) and new puppy Jesse. All three attend Mendota Elementary School. We are involved with the Mendota Elementary PTO, Mendota's Steering Committee and Endowment Fund Workgroup, North Lake Mendota Neighborhood Association, the Northside Planning Council, and the Madison Area Builders Association. My greatest joy is spending time with my family. They always keep me engaged and entertained, whether it's a family trip to the Kalahari or Chicago, playing a game of chess or snuggling in for a movie and fire. For me, there is no higher honor than being "dad."

**When did you graduate from East?** 1982

**What activities did you participate in at East?** I participated in many non-sponsored events, mostly being with friends. I did however support and enjoy all the football, basketball and hockey games.

**What is your best memory of your East days?** Going to McDonald's and watching Ron Peterson put a whole pancake breakfast, including sausage, butter and orange juice, in his mouth



WALRATH, JOHN

John in 1982, the year he graduated from East



John in 2004, as a Northside resident, businessman, and father of three

(all at the same time) and shaking it vigorously in his mouth.

**How did East prepare you for life?**

At East, you were given boundaries, but treated as an adult. I had to be dis-

ciplined in everything that I did—be it juggling a part-time job and coursework, or having a social life (and waking up for chemistry class!). East provided an excellent learning environment. Students who were actively engaged in their studies excelled.

**What have you been doing since graduating from East?** Attended UW-Madison and graduated from UW-Whitewater in 1988 receiving a BBA in finance with an emphasis in real estate and financial planning.

Subsequently, I worked for a mortgage banking company, consumer finance company and stockbroker prior to joining the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions where I worked for eleven years as a financial examiner, eventually serving as the Bureau Director for the Mortgage Banking Section. In October of 2004, I resigned my position and formed a company, America's Lending Authority.com LLC (website: ALAloans.com). I also am the president of ALA Business Consulting Services, a company specializing in providing fee based consultative services to licensed financial services companies.

I enjoy traveling (after I get off the plane!) and have traveled extensively throughout the United States.

**Will you be sending your children to East and why?** Yes, I plan on sending my children to East. My children and family have already benefited by attending Mendota Elementary, a school that has achieved diversity. Everyone in the classroom has something of value to offer, and we need to take advantage of their broad viewpoints in and out of the classroom. Mendota has prospered because of its leadership. Principal Sandy Gunderson is an outstanding leader, mentor and human being.

East provides a similar, unique, opportunity for students and families to learn and benefit in a diverse culture

with what looks to be great leadership in Principals Harris and Watkins. Furthermore, it is my understanding that East High United has been organized to support and advocate for East and its students, faculty, and staff. This type of community involvement coupled with strong leadership is exactly what we need to make East an outstanding school.

**If you could time travel back to your time at East, what would you do differently?** Good Question. I would probably not work outside of school as much as I did. It was rewarding to have a job (to purchase a car and motorcycle and have the money to do the things I wanted) but I would have liked to play sports and be involved in more extra curricular activities.

**Is there anyone you remember from East that you'd like to cross paths with again—and why?** Ron Peterson. Ron was a great friend and we shared many great experiences at East. Ron died unexpectedly in an automobile accident and I was never able to tell him good-bye or express to him how much I loved him. Ron and I shared a great deal of time together at East and he will never be forgotten!

**Favorite class?** Geometry

**Favorite teacher?** Elmer Homburg

**Knowing what you know now, what advice do you have for East students?** Work with your parents, teachers and guidance counselors, conduct as many informational interviews as possible while you are in high school. This will help tremendously to guide you with your future vocational/higher education choices. Focus on communication and recognize that there is a process for everything. Take advantage of the many, many people who are willing to mentor and help you along the way.

*Know an interesting East H.S. alumni member? Send ideas to Teri Gehin at tgehin@tds.net*

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