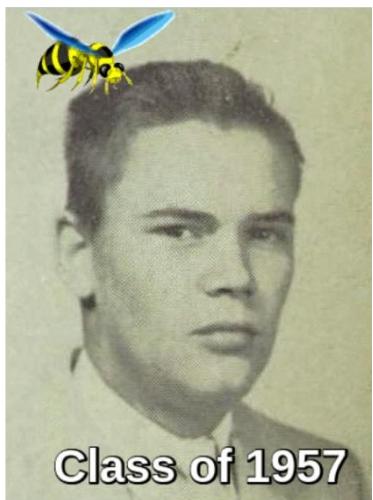


Class of 1957 – Delbert Bryant West, Jr. “Sonny”



Class of 1957

American Folk Figure, Actor and Author. West was introduced to Elvis Presley by his cousin, Red West in 1958, just before Presley was to be stationed in Germany during his time in the U.S. Army. After Presley's military discharge in March 1960, West began visiting Presley at his Graceland home in Memphis and it was during this time, the two men became fast friends. Shortly thereafter, Presley asked West to come to work for him full time as a bodyguard and to maintain his fleet of cars. The friendship between them grew over the years with West moving into Graceland for a period of time. Along with other members of Presley's security team, Charlie Hodge, Red West and Joe Esposito, West would be given roles in some of Presley's movies such as 'Kid Galahad' (1962) and 'Stay Away, Joe' (1968), which led to appearances in other films, among them 'The Navy vs. the Night Monsters' (1966), 'A Matter of Blood' (1967), 'The Hellcats' (1968), 'Bigfoot' (1970), 'The Disc Jockey' (1978) and 'E.S.P.' (1983). He can also be seen in two concert movies 'Elvis: That's The Way It Is' (1970) and 'Elvis On Tour' (1972). He also worked as a stuntman on several films. On television, he appeared on 'Daniel Boone' and had a guest role on the 'Beverly Hillbillies' as Dr. Robert Graham, a veterinarian and the boyfriend of Donna Douglas' character, Elly Mae. West,

who was fired by Presley in 1976 after a falling-out, was one of several co-writers of the controversial 1977 book 'Elvis, What Happened?'. West died after a lengthy battle with lung cancer.