



## WABASH COLLEGE

### *Class Agents Letter*

Office of Alumni Affairs

P.O. Box 352

Crawfordsville, IN 47933

Web site: [www.wabash.edu](http://www.wabash.edu)

Email us: [alumni@wabash.edu](mailto:alumni@wabash.edu)

Phone: (765) 361-6369

---

### Class of 1958

#### Class Agent

Gordon C. Colson

6733 Jons Station

Zionsville, IN 46077

H) 317-769-3219

[gcpjc@tds.net](mailto:gcpjc@tds.net)

February 2007

Gents:

### **Inauguration and Gala Celebration**

2007 marks the 175th anniversary of the founding of our dear old college and is an appropriate time for the inauguration of its 15<sup>th</sup> president. Dr. Patrick White's inaugural celebration took place January 26 and 27. It was a fine affair, another proof of the Phillips Rule\*: "Wabash does things either in a 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> class way. There is no 2<sup>nd</sup> class." \*(David Phillips, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry, who, when my sons were there, was called "The Smiling Assassin." The Class of 1958 was smartly represented by Joe Costanza, a delegate of the Calumet College of St Joseph. Joe has been a trustee at the college for many years.

Again I say that Pat and Chris White are just what the doctor ordered: Midwesterners and liberal arts advocates who know and appreciate single-sex education. Our college is in good hands.

### **Jeremy Wright '96**

Wabash College's two-time All-American cross country star was recently inducted into The Indiana Track and Cross Country Hall of Fame. Sergeant Jeremy Wright was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2005. He was working on a graduate degree in chemistry when 9/11 happened. He left chemistry and enlisted in the US Army.

Jeremy was the 3200 meter Indiana state high school champion in 1992. He and his four Wabash teammates won the Great Lakes Regional with a total score of 15 points in 1996. You can't get better than that! They went on to place 3<sup>rd</sup> in the national championships. Roger Busch, Scott Gall and he were known as the "Three Amigos", a goofy bunch. But, long distance runners tend to be such. Nevertheless, they are Some Little Giants! I knew Jeremy well and he was a fine gentleman and a credit to our Alma Mater.

RIP, Jeremy, RIP.

### **Thinking of the Reunion**

What you aren't thinking about our 50<sup>th</sup>? I'm always thinking about our reunion!\*\* (Colts QB Peyton Manning is all over radio and tv shilling for numerous products. A favorite commercial is one for a Northside Chevrolet dealer: "Peyton, what do you think when I say trucks?" "Touchdowns." "Touchdowns?" "Yes. Bill, I'm always thinking about touchdowns.")

It occurred to me the other day that there are a number of faculty, spouses and staff of our time on campus who are still living in Crawfordsville: Vic and Marion Powell (Speech), Dick and Doris Strawn (French), Bill and Becky Degitz (Business Manager), Elizabeth Johnson (Willis--Zoology), Irmi McKinney (Paul--Chemistry and Dean), Mary Ann Salter (Lewis--Physics and President), Jean Williams (Elliot "Bugsy"--Zoology), Peg Shearer (Warren "Butch"--Economics) and Bob Brock (Basketball). I think a daughter of Butch Shearer has returned to C'ville recently and one of Ben Rogge's daughters lives in town. There may be others; Jack and Max will know.

I did mention our reunion to Vic Powell and he is willing to join us, but said, "No guarantees! I'll be 90." Heck, I'll be 72! There are no guarantees for any of us. According to Vic, most of those I mentioned are in nursing or assisted living homes and are not very mobile. The exceptions are he and Marion, the Degitzes, the Brocks and Jean Williams. I suggest the reunion committee invite these good folks to join us in June '08. (I guess we ought to run this by the alumni office.) Another suggestion of a guest at our reunion dinner is my friend Rob Johnson H'77, track and cross country coach. Rob took over the coaching duties when the legendary J. Owen Huntsman retired in 1972. He has been at Wabash ever since and has become a legend in his own right.

### **Kingery Hall**

I am sorry to inform you that Kingery Hall was razed this past December. Being a reactionary, I hate to see old campus landmarks disappear, but a tornado tore through C'ville last spring structurally damaging it beyond repair. Some of you lived in Kingery and undoubtedly have fond memories of it and your time there.

Do you remember when the tornado that bounced over the College in June of '55 as we were in the midst of final exams? The power was out and I recall taking the Math 2 final in the dim light. It was fitting: I was in the dark in that class most of the time anyway.

Construction will begin soon on the site for a building to house The Wabash Center For the Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, a respected and nationally known think tank. It is primarily funded by the Lilly Foundation. Uncle Eli continues to pour his largess on Wabash!

### **Sports**

The swim team is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in Division III and should "spread the fame of her honored name" at the national championships next month. The track team won the league's indoor relays in January and the wrestlers are as strong as usual. It's been a tough year for basketball-a rebuilding year, I guess.

### **The Drill:**

You know it: Recruit, Contribute and Remember June 6, 7 & 8, 2008.

Gordon

Attached is the eulogy given by Ben's (Bernard F. Fellerhoff) sister, Liz Kahl, at the funeral in Columbus on November 14.

**Eulogy for Bernard F. (Ben) Fellerhoff**  
**St. Bartholomew's Church, Columbus, Indiana**  
**November 14, 2006**

“This eulogy was very difficult to prepare. But Father stated earlier in the Mass that ‘for Christians there are no time considerations’ and 70 years is a considerable time, so sit back and relax - this is going to be a long one! (Pause) Was that a good enough opening, Ben?”

In my earliest memories, there were two brothers, Theo and Benny, born 15 months apart and practically inseparable. If Theo's bike went down the street, you could be sure that Benny's was right behind, with Benny pedaling furiously to catch up, and even to challenge his older brother. Or on a sunny day you would find them playing a game of baseball with the other neighborhood boys in the big field across the street. And about 5:30 you would hear the call go out over East Washington Street, “Theo! Benny! Suppertime!”

Until one Sunday afternoon when we were celebrating Theo's graduation from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, a river swept Theo away, and suddenly and finally there was just Benny. Theo was 13 ½ and Benny just over 12 years old. That wound was so deep that in all his life Ben never spoke of his time growing up with Theo. He never reminisced about their exploits—he just couldn't do it.

But time forces us all onward. Benny entered St. Lawrence Jr. High and made the junior high basketball team. Two and ½ years later, we had a baby sister, number 6. Babies were a big thing in our house. But just before Margaret turned 1 month old, she choked on her bottle and stopped breathing. At 14 ½ Benny was asked to help try to revive his baby sister. We buried her on the day she would have been 1 month old. This, too, Ben buried deep.

That year he graduated from 9<sup>th</sup> grade and entered high school. He was good enough at basketball to earn a spot on the mighty Muncie Central Bearcat varsity squad, so that, in his senior year, he could be part of the Milan – Muncie Central championship game, and thereby be listed among the most famous and remembered losers in the State of Indiana—and beyond!

Nonetheless, his basketball skill earned him a scholarship to Wabash College in Crawfordsville. Another major blow to end his teenage years was the death of our mother from lung cancer after Ben's freshman year in college. He had been so close to her.

At Wabash Ben came into his own as a basketball player. He played all 4 years and was named MVP in his sophomore and junior years. In his senior year, he broke the school's all-time scoring record. For his achievements, he was to have been inducted into the Wabash College Hall of Fame on the day of his death.

After his graduation from Wabash came 2 years in the Army and then the years of deciding on, studying for and establishing a career as a CPA. We girls were growing up too. We tried our wings, established our own careers, and spread ourselves across the eastern United States.

These were the busy years -- of having and raising children, of quick trips home and quick visits, checking each other out to see that we were all doing OK, trying to catch up on each others'

lives, half distracted, keeping a weather eye on the children. But that was OK, the children would eventually grow up and then there'd be time for us – wouldn't there?

Ben had 3 wonderful, talented children, Kristin, Kara, and Kyle. And we knew you were wonderful, because he told us so – every chance he got. Being a German male, he probably didn't tell you, but he knew every award and achievement for each of you in great detail. And when we visited, we could see how right he was. You have grown up into wonderful and talented young people.

Well, our children grew, and this year our time seemed finally to have come. First of all, I was sent to a conference at Purdue University. My colleagues kidded me – we usually try to get a conference in a big city like San Francisco or Boston. But I just smiled— they didn't understand—I was going home. And it turned out that Ben's 70th birthday, April 5, was one day before the conference started. I got permission to travel one day early, the 4<sup>th</sup>, so that I could share his birthday. We went out to his favorite restaurant at Smith Row. We had a delicious, leisurely, relaxed dinner, and I spent the next day filling his refrigerator with home-cooked meals before driving on to Purdue.

All my life, I've wanted Ben to visit my home in New York, if for nothing else than to show him that not all of New York State is New York City, the Eastern Liberal Establishment he was always teasing me about. We girls had always known that Ben felt safer in his own environment and didn't like traveling a lot unless it was for business -- or golf -- so we had done the traveling. But a very close friend of his had told me at Kara's wedding the November before that Ben wanted to visit his sisters. Well, we could arrange that! And we did.

This past June he finally made it. Mary picked him up and drove him to New York. And his entrance was typical Ben. He filled the doorway, arms braced against the door frame, looked around and exclaimed, "What!? It takes me 40 years to get here and this is all the reception I get? Where's the parade? Where's the band? And where are my two nieces, the 2 most beautiful girls in New York State?" If that was an obscure apology for his not having come sooner (and it was the only apology I'd likely get from him), he quickly learned it wasn't necessary. He was, and would always be, welcome and at home in my house.

And it was a great visit. He saw his nieces and nephew in their own environment, at ease and confident young people. As daughter Amy reminded him, "After all, Uncle Ben, you're our only blood Uncle!" He straightened up visibly at that and said, "That's right – I am!" Of course, Amy didn't know you never gave Ben an edge—he'd use it sooner or later to tease you outrageously. One of Ben's former Wabash College teammates works just down the road from Syracuse University and I had met him several years ago, so we were pleased to invite him to our house for a reunion dinner. Ben insisted we make a specialty of his for the occasion, for which he had to call his daughter to check the recipe. And it was delicious!

From our house, we took Ben to our youngest sister's and brother-in-law's miniature horse farm in Ridgeville, Indiana, the place we now go back to when we say we're going home. It is surely one of the most peaceful places on God's green earth. Ben loved it. Of course, all that green expanse gave him slightly different ideas – he figured it'd make a great place to practice his golf swing...

Once more we got together for my son Jon's wedding on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Ben didn't think he'd be able to make it because he wasn't feeling very well, and he didn't think he could handle flying

home. But we managed to figure a way to drive him both ways, and he came. It was the first time in 10 years that he and his 5 sisters were all together, and that made it an even happier occasion. Ben even got up and danced with the bride!

Mary and I drove him back the Monday after the wedding. It was the 1<sup>st</sup> time we 3 older ones had been together since we were teenagers. We were driving through no particular space and it seemed in no particular time, and we fell easily into our old roles. We commented and joked and cheerfully insulted each other across the better part of 3 states – in other words, doing exactly what a brother and sisters are supposed to do.

At the end of that day, we had to put him in the hospital. He insisted we take him home first to his apartment so that he could take some medication. Then he proceeded to listen to, and answer, phone calls for about 30 minutes. At one point Mary and I both found ourselves grinning at each other. Ben was acting just like our Dad, who, if he had to do something he didn't want, would nonetheless do it on his own terms.

Two days later, on our way back to New York, Mary and I both agreed what a grace that trip had been for us. We hoped we'd have more of them – Ben had expressed a desire to come back to NY next summer and I was already plotting how to get him there. But this trip was the 1<sup>st</sup> one, and we knew we'd always remember it as a special blessing.

I was to have seen him an unprecedented 4<sup>th</sup> time this year, at his induction into Wabash's Hall of Fame for Basketball on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. The day before, Thursday, his former teammates had put together a celebration in his honor at a hotel in Indianapolis. On Friday evening, one of them expressed a worry that the celebration had been too much for him. I've thought about that – I think that party was just what he needed.

If Ben had to die, and we all must die sometime, what better way than on the last full day of his life, to sit among his college teammates, classmates, and even high school teammates and competitors (3 came from that victorious Milan team), and, in the company of his children, to be toasted – and roasted – to see, and hear, and feel the warm regard of these men with whom he had grown to manhood, and to know he had made his mark, he was and would be remembered. Then, to go across the way and end the day with dinner at a nearby restaurant with his children.

And, on his dying day, still looking forward to the public acknowledgement of his achievements, to take a step down the hallway and suddenly be transported from here to there without time to register fear, or pain, or surprise. Can you think of a better way to die? I can't.

I was honored to be at the ceremony at Wabash College to receive Ben's award for him. It was the last thing I could do for this brother whom I love. God is kind; it was good to sit with his coach among his teammates, his friends, to listen to their stories and feel the bond they had among themselves. I could picture Ben among them, these men who in their ready companionship had given him back something of the brotherly comradeship he had lost.

No, I never wanted to see this day. But – once again – at last – and now, for always – there are two brothers – Theo and Ben."