WABASH COLLEGE
Class Agents Letter
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Class of 1961

Class Agent
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October 2016

Dear Many Miler:

What a grand surprise to walk in the Chapel to see so many of our Many Miler classmates and their wives give me a standing ovation when Rick Cavanaugh, President of the National Association of Wabash Men, presented your class agent with the Frank Misch Alumni Service Award! It is really a big thrill for me to be recognized by the College. Over the years I have received many notes and calls from you to show appreciation for my effort, but this honor from NAWM is also very special!

Jim Amidon told me he had gone thru some of my letters; "My... you wrote a lot of letters!" Well, again I have to tell you that if it weren't for Sam and Susie Hildebrand, it probably would not have happened! They have provided guidance, encouragement, bed and breakfast probably over 200 times (and copious Scotch!) over these many years. That is only one of the avenues they have supported the College all these years and I deeply appreciate what they have made possible for Barbara and me! I appreciate so much all that my pledge brother has done to keep me in this game!

Sam has served as "house manager" for the Beta House since 1959. He has just handed off the furniture inventory and weekly check-up duties to a younger alumnus. His contributions to Crawfordsville over these many years have enhanced the city and he continues to give to his community by serving on the Community Action Committee now that Crawfordsville was named a "Stellar City"! The city has been honored with a large grant from Lilly which will fund several projects including restoring the beautiful Ben Hur Building. Susie has given back to their city in many leadership positions including starting the Humane Society and was a primary mover in the project to build a beautiful new library.

The College is in good condition according to President Hess' comments during his "State of the College" remarks; however, the annual budget is running around $44M of which over $18M comes from the endowment which currently sits at about $320M. At the current

draw down rate this is unsustainable. Recently the draw-down rate has been reduced to below 6% for the first time in quite awhile so that's a good trend. Between now and 2032, the goal is to increase the endowment to $390M. A gigantic goal, but there are some substantial giving opportunities out there![i]

One of the other things being addressed is retention. It costs a bundle to recruit a young man and if he leaves after his first or second year, the recruitment costs are not recouped. There is a very conscious effort to bring in young men whom they are confident can handle the academic rigor of Wabash. Wabash wants to achieve over 90% retention rate from Freshman to Sophomore year. Class of 2019 members were retained at a 91.5% rate. It will require a lot of work, including working with "at risk" students to continue that rate. Comparatively, four year Graduation rate at Purdue is 37%, IU is 48%. Wabash is currently running 83%. This, of course means not everybody will be admitted. However, the College recognizes its mission is to bring in Indiana boys (70%) and challenge them! FYI: the average high school senior is looking at twelve colleges!!!

Prez Hess, Pat White, and Andy Ford

<u>Highlights:</u>

- Cassie Hagen from Career Services said that if a freshman will sign up with their office, he will have a 3 times better chance of getting employed when he graduates! They are doing a superb job and have been recognized nationally.
- Greg Shaheen H88, Interim Athletic Director, is a bright new face that formerly was at NCAA. He has already made some good changes. Greg has served as Game Master for OLAB summer sessions at Wabash.
- We have our first ever female trustee Jennifer Evans whose son graduated from Wabash. She brings successful business skills and enthusiasm to the board.
- The new soccer/lacrosse field is in outstanding condition and will attract good quality players!
- The newly renovated Martindale Hall looks great and will opens in January.
- We have had some alumni contact us asking why Wabash does not appear in the Wall Street Journal rankings of U.S. Colleges which was released September 28. Our Director

of Institutional Research, Preston Bost, researched their methodology and found that their rankings exclude institutions with enrollments of less than 1000.

- Wabash has been ranked #2 in the country for Return on Investment among colleges.
- One BIG change is that in order to comply with the new FASFA requirements, "Scarlet Honors" will be held the weekend after Thanksgiving (12/2 & 3). This is the replacement for Honor Scholarship weekend which was always in March. There are now some 300+ young men who come to campus for this event.
- Sigma Chi won the Chapel Sing on the Thursday before Homecoming!
- One thing I always notice as I walked around the campus is that EVERY student I pass looks me in the eye and asked how I was.
- Homecoming: The Queen contest was toned down a bit and stressed raising money for a worthy cause. The winner was determined by which one raised the most $$.

This "gal" was bout 6'5"!!! !

To top it off Wabash won 51 – 0 over Oberlin and the campus is beautiful as ever!

Class Agents Forum:

Don Morel, the new football head coach spoke to class agents Saturday morning. He stated that the very best players he has coached were 3.8 GPA and above so that's who he is going after. They brought in 66 freshmen this year many of whom will not see action until they are sophomores. Wabash has three 300#+ guys, including a Gary Andrean freshman who weighs 370#! Coach did clear the bench against Oberlin in the second half with the score 44-0! My personal thought is that Bill Lynch's DePauw Tigers are not going to let Wabash win eight in a row! They are very good including Matt Hunt (Indpls Heritage Christian) who is an outstanding QB. Our QB Conner Rice is 6'3" 233 performs very well for us. Wabash does not have the highly ranked defense they have enjoyed for the past few years, but they are capable of doing good things.

The Admissions office currently has 200,000 names in the data base. The strongest factor in bringing in freshmen is *alumni involvement!* Keep your eyes and ears open for good young prospects who would benefit from a Wabash education.

Cal Black'66 was awarded the Warren W. Shearer Award after his extremely successful 50th reunion (Class gift of $Eight Million!)

Class Business: In June our class fell below 50% for the first time in about two decades. We are officially now down to 120 living Many Milers. I hope you will recognize that current students benefit greatly from our contributions, just as we did in our day!

Last evening we were served a delicious dinner at the home of Janie and Pete Pippin. Catching up with them and classmates is always a delight and reminds of us our great bond with Wabash!

L-R: Bowerman, Barnette, Olexia, Cumming, Wilson, Killion, Wood, Hughes, Hildebrand, Birdzell, Nikazy, LeDonne, Bachman, Lesniak. *Missing: Brooks & Sanders. Beesley had to leave early.*

Subject: Mike Henderson

Hi J B, Sad news, Nancy Henderson died last night. Alzheimer's had progressed and she was under Hospice care. Mike and Nancy had over 50 years together and I had the pleasure of knowing her since our freshman year. These "sad news" times are becoming too frequent. All the best. Joe 07/17/16

"Speaking of female leaders at Wabash from our past, Gail Pebworth and I are in an active email exchange. She is the "class agent" for Broad Ripple's Class of 1957; and I've proposed to her that our class issue a call for classmates' oral histories--written down. She is warming to the idea.
She is a terrific lady, a winning coach, a Wabash honorary alumnus and in high school, the best looking coed ever! Gail and Rob live in Crawfordsville. They are active in Montgomery County and Gail is a bigwig with the State League of Women Voters". Tim Conlon

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forwarded message:
From: Gregory Hess ‹hessg@wabash.edu›**Date:** September 11, 2016 at 5:54:32 PM EDT
Subject: Sad News Dear Faculty and Staff, I have some sad news to share with you. Bob Allen '57 passed away yesterday, September 10, 2016. We will all remember Bob's warmth, charm and razor sharp humor as well as his exceptional dedication to his family, those he served, and Wabash College.
Note: Bob was THE definition of 'Some Little Giant" One of the biggest pillars of our generation...jb

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Hey JB, Congratulations again on the award this Saturday. It's about time! Sorry Rosie and I can't attend. We will be on our way to Rosie's home turf in northern Italy. Mike Hughes

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I won't be at homecoming, but congratulations on the Frank W. Misch Alumni Service Award. Your patience and service to the Class of '61 have been wonderful.The award seems overdue, and I can't think of a nicer person to get this or any award. Jim Davidson (Jim reports that he has had a good year and is playing golf again.

Don Engler reports he has had two back surgeries but is feeling better!

Denny Sheridan attended a swim meet @ Albion where his grandson swam for Wabash. We are privileged to have three Many Milers who have THREE generations of Wabash men: Norm Beesley, Pete Pippen and Denny Sheridan (all Phi Delts, by the way!)

Thank you to all who made Wabash Homecoming a glorious day for my family and me. It's a day I will hold dear for the rest of my life!

Many Miles Before the Night.....

J B

Wabash educates men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively and live humanely

WABASH COLLEGE

John Bryant "JB" Bachman '61
Frank W. Misch Alumni Service Award

Presented October 8, 2016

During the wettest 50th Reunion Dinner in Wabash College history, you brought together the Class of 1961 under a large white tent on Joe and Charlene Barnette's lawn despite an early summer downpour. Fortunately, the rain pelting the canvas was drowned out by the flow of conversation and laughter—proof, once and for all, that you and your Many Milers will find a way to have a good time together, come hell or high water.

That gathering is also a pretty good metaphor for your more than half-century of work as Class Agent—a celebration of connection, an affirmation of friendship, and a shelter from life's storms in an increasingly impersonal world.

Your frequent collaborator Sam Hildebrand recalls that you, a philosophy major, were one of three seniors who volunteered for the job before your Commencement in 1961.

"Not too many years down the road, though, JB picked up all the responsibility and continued to write the letters, perhaps fearing that the ghost of Myron Phillips would haunt him if he slacked off," Sam says. "JB shared news from men in all fraternities, not just his own, and worked hard to keep our independent classmates involved. He has been the main interface between classmates, wives, and the College for now on to 56 years."

"The bonds forged during our years at Wabash were certainly strong," your classmate Jim Cumming says, "but the reinforcement and prodding JB's letters provided—along with his urging attendance at reunions and other events and bringing back errant classmates who strayed from the fold—has meant so much to each of us."

Your Beta pledge brother John Birdzell says trying to put your tenure as Class Agent in proper perspective is akin to imagining a local postman starting out as a Pony Express rider:

"JB began the work armed with a portable typewriter, a mimeograph machine, a rotary dial phone, a Polaroid camera, and a good bottle of scotch," John says. "Only the quality of the scotch has endured over the years—cell phones, the Internet with its e-mail,

Twitter, Facebook and other social media—have taken over. Yet JB has stayed the course, adapted to new technologies, and continues to serve our class as 'the straw that stirs the drink.'"

By getting to know College administrators you helped keep the Class of 61 up-to-date on the latest developments at Wabash, creating the best and largest body of class letters ever written by an agent representing any class here.

Your correspondence includes letters of gratitude from a host of Wabash legends: Dick Ristine, Bill Stout, Thad Seymour, Lew Salter, and, of course, Glee Club Director and your friend, Bob Mitchum. There's even a letter from a 1970s annual giving director begging you to stay on as Class Agent, adding, "Bob Mitchum needs you like his own right arm."

The College prides itself as a place of lifelong friendships, but they do not happen by accident. For 56 years you have kept your classmates in touch. You announce their achievements, revel in their misadventures, and celebrate their marriages and the births and accomplishments of their children and grandchildren. You grieve their losses, and you remember them to their classmates when they're gone. And you've done so even as you've faced your own challenges and sorrow in life.

Your good humor, compassion, empathy, and perhaps above all, faithfulness, are an example we hold up to others and proclaim, "This is what it takes to keep a community together."

In 100 years when Wabash Archivists happen upon that file drawer packed with your hundreds of class letters and correspondence, they'll have to wonder: What was it about the Class of 1961 that made it worthy of such attention, such admiration, such celebration, such love? They'll find part of the answer at the top of the opening page of each letter under that familiar heading: "JB Bachmann, Class Agent." Therefore, the National Association of Wabash Men is proud to present you with the Frank W. Misch Alumni Service Award. "JB" Bachman, you are Some Little Giant!