



WABASH COLLEGE

Class Agents Letter

Alumni and Parent Relations

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Class of 1964

Class Agents

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Gentlemen of the class of 1964:

I had the opportunity to be on campus for the weekend of September 5th, 6th, and 7th. Officially I was there to attend class agent meetings, but I really wanted to see the Gentlemen's Classic, the meeting between the Hampden-Sydney Tigers and our own Little Giants.

On Friday afternoon both teams gathered in the chapel, Little Giants on the west side of the aisle, all in red. Both presidents spoke giving a little background of the two institutions, shared goals, and interests. Both spoke well.



Photo courtesy of Judy Burgess

They managed to exchange a few barbs as they were clearly enjoying the situation. President Christopher Howard is African-American, relatively young, about 45, tall, good-looking, a former athlete at the Air Force Academy, a Rhodes Scholar with a masters and doctorate from Oxford University. I couldn't help but reflect on the unlikelihood of even so talented a man being president of a college in Virginia during our college years.

The afternoon was perfect for football, cool, bright sunshine, no breeze. The game began with the Tigers in control. They were well-coached and talented. Wabash came to life by the end of the first quarter and slowly took over the game. The defense began to stop Tiger drives, and the offense managed some long drives. At the half the score was 17-14 in Wabash's favor, and the game ended at 34-21.

I was sitting in the bleachers waiting for the game to start when a gentleman asked if he could sit next to me. I believe he was a member of the class of 1952. He had grown up in Crawfordsville, and both his father and grandfather had graduated from Wabash. He had his grandson in tow. After three generations of Wabash connections, he was full of lore about many of the characters that for most of us would have been only names in the history of Wabash, if that. He was amiable, and we spent a pleasant afternoon together in the stands. In some ways he reminded me of a character from P.G. Wodehouse, the oldest member.

I had stayed Friday night with my third cousin, a senior, and his housemates in Golf House, just north of the Phi Gam house. It was Friday night, and they were partying: lots of beer and a surprising number of girls. They kept checking in with me to make sure they weren't making too much noise. I don't remember being that polite when I was a senior. We swapped tales of what Wabash was like in the 60's and what it is like now. They decided they wanted to re-institute the greased pole fight. For their part they are convinced that there is a system of tunnels under the mall connecting various buildings on campus. I have the feeling that after Senior Comps they will be found trying to dig up the mall. Have any of you heard similar legends about Wabash?

Most of us are convinced that not only are we perhaps a little smarter, but also that we are better people thanks to our experiences at Wabash. I have also wondered about the faculty – the ones who came to Wabash with freshly minted Ph.D.'s and filled with ambition to succeed in their fields. They came with the idea of staying for two or three years and then moving on. But some of them fell under the spell of what Dr. Trippet called the Wabash mystique and spent the rest of their careers at Wabash. Trippet puzzled about the phenomena in *Wabash on my Mind*: "The majority stayed because they immediately liked Wabash, and their liking deepened into love. Whatever they were looking for in life, consciously or unconsciously, they found it in the Wabash community."

In 1940 Dr. John Charles was one of group of promising young scholars that President Hopkins had brought to Wabash to add more rigor to the academic life of the college. He came to teach Greek and the classics, but when World War II broke out; the college faced the very real prospect of having to shut its doors. Many of the faculty joined one or another of the services, and of course prospective students joined or waited to be drafted. Dr. Sparks somehow managed to get a contract with the Navy to teach prospective officers, part of their Naval College Training Program (V-12). As a result the young classics professor found himself teaching Naval History and Strategy.

I never had a class with Dr. Charles, but many of my brothers did and I never heard one word of complaint. Ron did have a class with him and will relate an amusing anecdote in his part of the letter. I do have one story about Dr. Charles. In the fall of our sophomore year, I was walking across campus headed for lunch at the Kappa Sigma house. One of my upper class brothers came jogging up to me, looking rather smug. He had just finished a test. He then

told me how he had pulled a fast one on Dr. Charles. There was a section for which he had no response. So he had handed in a series of blue books labeled Book I of IV, Book II of IV, and Book IV of IV. I don't know the outcome of his little scheme, but I do know that years later this same brother was the Chairman of the Ethics Committee of the state bar association of the state in which he practiced. I saw the notice, scoffed, and said, "Lawyers."

Now for something a little bit different. Every once in a while in reading or the world at large we come across something that just seems strange.

Example #1: "It is comparatively easy for a man to disguise Himself as a bull or a swan."
Fitzroy Richard Somerset, Lord Raglan.

I have tried this several times but have had no success. If you pull it off, let me know.

Example #2: At the intersection of Wabash Ave and Rte. 231 is a Valero gas station. Behind the pumps is a building. On the right side is the Mini Market. On the left is a Laundromat. Across the top of the building in two-foot high lettering is the name of this business: 24 Hour Laundromat. On the window is a neon sign stating the hours of operation:

Monday 5 - 12

Tuesday 5 - 12

Wednesday 5 - 12

Thursday 5 - 12

Friday 5 - 12

Saturday 5 - 12

Sunday 6 - 12

No am, and no pm. I don't know if the place is open 7 hours a day or 19. Below the neon sign is a hand-written one stating "Open till Midnight." Which still does not clarify the 7 hours or 19 hours problem.

Example #3: In Waterbury is an intersection at North Main and North Main. You can't make this up.

Take care, and enjoy the passing parade,

James R. Durham

November 2014 Class Letter

Dear Classmates,

What an eventful year for Wabash College and the Class of 1964! From our fiftieth reunion in June to the Hampden Sydney game / Class Agents weekend, and Homecoming in September, to Wabash Day in October, and looking forward to the Bell game on the 15th, Jim and I have plenty of grist for the class letter mill.

A week or so before Wabash Day(s) on October 11th and 12th I noticed that the nearest project site to "The Region" was in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I knew that Jay Fisher '66 and

his crew have done a bang up job there for the past ten years, but I knew there had to be an opportunity closer to home. After all, last year a gang of us had worked on the Old Lake County Jail (where John Dillinger spent time before his escape) in Crown Point, Indiana. Sure enough, after a few phone calls I made contact with the Valparaiso City Park Department. They were sponsoring a volunteer work week end on Wabash Day week end to help build a new city playground. The \$1.2 million project was dedicated two weeks ago, and I felt that once again Wabash Day pays off. If a group hasn't been formed in your area next year please consider organizing one.

Another opportunity for Big Red camaraderie presents itself on November 15th with the annual Bell game against the "Dannies". The game is in C'ville this year, but if you can't make it, there are many local telecast parties across the country. I'll be hosting one at "Cheers" in Munster, which provides us a great venue every year. Please see the web site - <http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/mononbell/> - for a complete list of this year's locations.

Jim has asked me to comment about Professor Jack Charles. In my junior year I was in Dr. Charles' Medieval European class, and we were assigned to write term papers. Not having taken typing in high school, all my term papers to that date had been done in longhand. Desiring to make an impression, I dropped off my paper with the wife of a Beta brother who made some extra cash by typing term papers, etc.

Upon returning from break I discovered that I had received an A- on my paper. When I questioned Dr. Charles about the minus he explained that it was due to "all the typos" in my submission. Soon after I purchased a used Remington.

It wouldn't be a class letter without mention of our financial commitment to Wabash College. By now our giving habits have been pretty much established. Our reputation as a generous and committed class has been clearly established, as evidenced by the \$2 million plus check we presented to the College at our 50th reunion. I implore each of us in 2015 not to just give a little more in our annual gifts, but to contact fellow friends in our class who have not contributed in recent years and encourage them to jump on board. Where would each of us be without the Wabash experience?

OOH WAA WAA!

Regards,
Ron Nichols