



WABASH COLLEGE

Class Agents Letter

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Class of 1964

Class Agents

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Gentlemen of the Class of 1964:

The Big Bash weekend is over. It began for me with the ringing of the bell in Center Hall on Friday morning. I have to admit that I had some concerns about the weekend. I felt that our 45th reunion had gone so well that I thought that it would be difficult to capture the same sense of shared experience and camaraderie that seemed to have been so much a part of that weekend. With more than twice as many of our classmates planning to attend I thought that it would not be possible to achieve the intimacy and expression of feeling that had we had shared five years ago. At our class dinner this year I shared a table with some Kappa Sig brothers, including Todd Hanlin and Steve Cougill. Todd entertained us with one outlandish story after another about some of his adventures with Bob Adams during their junior year abroad. After the dinner a number of our classmates related stories that fit well with the theme of the evening – “Stupid Things I did at Wabash.” But the contribution that struck me the most was that of Steve Cougill who – in a quavering voice – told us how much returning for the first time meant to him. Over the course of the weekend, others echoed Steve’s words. John Caviglia, who led a colloquium on his novel, said he was glad I had twisted his arm to get him to come. Below are some notes from other attendees.



From Dudley Burgess, our fund raiser:

I have many fond thoughts about our 50th reunion. Perhaps the one of most import is the ease with which virtually all of us were able to renew our friendships as if we were back in the 60's. I felt that everyone had a genuine regard for their classmates and did not hesitate to demonstrate the bond we all share. It was an honor to be the gift chair for our class and am extremely proud of the generosity of the class of 1964 to the college. Special thanks to you and the reunion chairs for orchestrating an unforgettable experience.

What class letter would be complete without a note from Skip Lindeman?

Thanks to everyone who showed up, with a special thanks to those who got the ball rolling and kept the ball rolling. Seriously, when Tom Runge in the alumni office said we were behind the class of '63 and even the class of '65, whose reunion isn't until 2015 (!), I was

beginning to sweat! But I am very happy with the way things turned out, and I thank anybody who called somebody, even one person, to encourage him to show. Thanks, guys, for all you did. I am so happy how the reunion turned out. I was SO afraid of letting our class down, and I might have, had it not been for so many of you. So - again - thanks. You are all "Some Little Giants!"

Oh, by the way, I do plan to be there for our 55th, and I hope you do as well. It was gratifying to see how many wanted to have a 55th. I assume those who wanted to come back in five years were not simply "blowing smoke" -as the expression goes. So....if I am able....see you in 2019! P.S.: That reunion book mailed to us was terrific! Thanks to Ron Nichols, I believe, for that piece of work. Really, I feel so proud to be a part of Wabash. What an experience going there 50-plus years ago, and what an experience it is even now to still be a Wabash man!

From Vince Buzard:

Attending our 50th year reunion certainly exceeded my expectations. I hated to leave Rochester because the weekend was predicted to be warm and sunny but I am extremely glad we came. The College physically was in the best shape I've ever seen. We enjoyed talking to the new president and of course to my fraternity brothers and classmates. We also had a terrific visit with Joe O'Rourke who was my debate coach and to whom I owe a great deal. I think I was most struck by the fact that being there reminded me of how much going to Wabash influenced my life. I learned how to think and learn and if I had not gone to Wabash I probably would not have been admitted to the University of Michigan Law school and would not have come to Rochester, New York, where I have spent my entire professional career. My realization of how important Wabash is to me was certainly rekindled. I hope to see you soon.

From Bill Barnett:

My first rather involuntary reaction was astonishment at how many guys I could actually recognize without having seen them for 50 years. Despite the changes in physique and hair color (for those who still had hair!), it was like picking up where we left off. I was also struck by how much our Wabash experience seemed to have shaped our attitude toward life in terms of both high achievement and concern for others. Such values were evident as we chatted about former Wabash faculty, our careers, and family situations.

I especially enjoyed connecting again with good friends and their spouses—Val Harris, Dave Herkner, David Dean, Fred Kraft, Jim Millican, Jim Morris, Dick Shelain, and Doug Fisher—just to name a few.

It was especially gratifying to see that Skip Lindeman's wife, Harlene, knows how to keep him in check (sort of!). Learning that the choir in Skip's church sometimes hissed at his jokes from the pulpit somewhat restored my hope in Christianity!

Attached is a photo of my reunion medal draped across the Wabash plaque left to me by my father, Max Barnett (Wabash, '32). Both hang in my office.



From Fred Kraft:

Thanks go to you for the tremendous effort you put into organizing the reunion. I was a little disappointed that only 3 other guys from the Teke house showed up, but at least I did get to have some nice telephone conversations with some. It was actually a bit depressing that some were not healthy enough to travel. _But overall the event was a great success and a lots of fun to see all of those faces from the past. It was also great to sit at the table with Greg Hess and get to know him a little. It turned out that he knows a colleague of mine in the economics department at Grand Valley State University, and my wife (she's our Provost) actually got to talk shop...maybe a little too much!



John Caviglia, Bob Adams, John Kline, and I find the fraternity photo from 1964 on a visit to the Kappa Sig house.

From Stewart Ellis:

Sig Fraternity brothers I had not seen in literally half a century since our Wabash days, like Steve Cougill, who actually left Wabash after three years for dental school, Keith McNeill, who raced on to get his PhD, and John Caviglia, whose presentation about his new novel *Arauco* set in his native Chile was a highpoint of our reunion for me.. I was glad to be able to tell him something he did not know about Chile, namely that some of the blueberries we buy during our hemisphere's winter that come from Chile are actually from sister plants to the ones on our little farm in North Carolina. When we bought 300 blueberry plants over 30 years ago from Dan Finch's nursery in Bailey, NC, to plant an acre for our boys to earn some college money, Dan was shipping 30,000 to Chile.



And it was good to visit with others many of whom were at the 45th, like John Kline, Bob Adams who actually is a plant lover who has been through my native Pewee Valley, KY to visit a nearby arboretum, Todd Hanlin, Kent Merrill, Chad Williams, and Wabash Trustee John Fox, who sent me a thoughtful, hand-written note when I got home, and the very Rev. Skip Lindeman, whose Sunday morning sermon (and still lame jokes) was another highlight of the weekend. And it was good to catch up with frosh roommate Mike Langenfeld whom I had not seen since he came to Grace and my wedding in 1967 in Louisville, KY. Dick Calvin pledged Kappa Sig after our group, and he played baseball for the Little Giants and

like several in our class, went on to medical school and became a physician.

Another highlight for me was a visit to the Kappa Sig house, in the same location with the same card table but a new house with amenities we could not have imagined 50 years ago. And it will never be the same without our wonderful cook Jonsie. At our 45th reunion, some of us visited the new frat house which was still under construction. Meeting an African American brother at that time was a healing moment for me since we had tried to pledge Jesse Lipscomb 50 years ago and our national fraternity prevented us. But since Grace and I got back home, I have thought a lot about our classmates and friends who were NOT at the 50th, like Jim Bond and Jerry Dennerline who were our Class of 1964 senior commencement speakers. Bond is struggling with dementia, so sad for one with such a brilliant mind who finished Wabash in three years, debated, and edited the *Bachelor*, among many other things. He went on to Harvard Law School and taught at the Wake Forest Law School here for a while and was a dear colleague of a church friend here. And some like Bill Dittrich, who are no longer among the living. Bill Bishop, like Cougill, left after three years at Wabash for medical school. Brothers Byron Grubb and Amos Garrett both wanted to come, but had other commitments. I don't know about Mike Warren, who did not graduate with us. Kappa Sigs Jim Staulcup and Dave Dossett graduated with us after five years at Wabash. Dossett and his wife Jane visited us in NC, although she has been battling cancer in recent years.

The 50th Big Bash was worth my attending, and now I look forward to the 55th.

Very nice testimony to the efforts put forth by so many beginning with the professional staff in the Alumni Office: Tom Runge, Michele Ward, Heather Bazzani, and Mike Warren.

Ron Nichols shares his perspective as one who worked on the reunion and as an attendee:

Our 50th Class Reunion was so full of memorable events for me that I will try to recall the highlights: A *Memory Book* meeting in November with Beth Swift, who helped me dig through the college archives Our committee class chairs conference call in December A Memory Book meeting in January with Kim Johnson and Tom Runge, Kim for her valuable advice and professional experience and Tom to make sure I mentioned him in my preface to the book (kidding) A Beta cookout on Thursday of Reunion Weekend (aka "Big Bash at Wabash") at the home of Sam (Class of '61) and Susie Hildebrand, which brought together five pledge brothers and their wives: Dudley Burgess, Stan Sibell, Dexter Snyder, Mark Braford, and me. Missing were Alan Hiratsuka and Eric Norman, who had passed away. Our pledge class was so small because the old Beta House was scheduled to be razed to make room for a new one, the first to be erected under a new agreement with the College regarding maintenance, etc.. 1961 was a transition year for us and most of the brothers lived off campus. Our campus headquarters was in Kane House. The new house was dedicated October 20, 1962, and signaled the beginning of new fraternity house construction that was to last for several decades. The weekend itself was so packed with memorable events and experiences that once again I will only hit some highlights: First and most significant was the meeting with classmates I had not seen in some time, as well as those I did not know very well in college. The weekend schedule was so well planned that we had time to share both Wabash and life experiences with classmates and their wives between sessions, at meals, at hospitality venues, or the "refreshment tent". The Class Sing, where I felt that the Class of '64 did not receive proper recognition or accolades for what I deemed a stellar performance. I lobbied among the crowd beforehand and caught my wife Connie cheering on the

Class of '59 as well as "Killer" Kilbane's group.

Many of you shared pictures with me, and I want to thank you. I have enclosed a few of them below.

More pictures are available in galleries on the Wabash College website:

http://wabash.edu/photo_album/home.cfm?startrow=21&maxrows=20



Two old acquaintances meet again

Skip leads
us in Chapel
Sing



Campus
tour



Beautiful weekend for a reunion



After the awards luncheon on Sunday of Big Bash, Skip Lindeman, John Kline, John Tweedle, and I climbed the stairs in Center Hall and rang the bell to bring the festivities to a close. All in all, a nice conclusion to a good weekend.

Football vs. Hampden-Sydney. For the first time in over 40 years two all-male colleges will meet on the football field in game one of two scheduled meetings between the Wabash College Little Giants and the Hampden-Sydney Tigers in what is already dubbed the Gentlemen's Classic. I am not sure how two games can qualify as a classic, but my major concern is whether the Little Giants can overcome two Tiger teams in one season. The game is set for Saturday, September 6th. Tickets for The Gentlemen's Classic will be sold at the entry gates to Hollett Little Giant Stadium on game day. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children and for students with a college ID. Wabash students may enter at no charge by showing their student ID. The game will also be streamed on Wabash's website at www.wabash.edu/live.

One last thing: On Friday of Big Bash I visited the Admissions Office. On the wall I noted this quotation from Byron Trippet:

“The poetry in the life of a college like Wabash is to be found in its history. It is to be found in the fact that once on this familiar campus and once in these well-known halls students and teachers as real as ourselves worked and studied, argued and laughed, and worshipped together but are now gone, one generation vanishing after another, as surely as we shall shortly be gone. But if you listen you can hear their songs and their cheers. As you look you can see the torch which they have handed down to us.

But a college cannot live by poetry alone – at any rate not for very long. No matter how glorious, no matter how heroic, the past is the past and has meaning only in terms of the present. It is the present that counts. It is the present which always especially matters because it is at the present where the past and future meet; therefore, in the last analysis when we try to appraise the character of Wabash what we really must appraise is the present.”

So often his words seem like a poem for Wabash. I have yet to discover when he spoke these words. I do know that I can almost hear pens scratching out donations to the college. Now, while the warmth of your feeling for Wabash is at its peak, is the time to take out your checkbook and write a donation a little larger than your usual.

Set your calendars and reserve the first weekend of June 2019 for our 55th reunion.

If you have misplaced your *Memory Book*, I do have a few extra copies available.

All the best,
James R. Durham