



WABASH COLLEGE

Class Agents Letter

Alumni and Parent Relations

P.O. Box 352

Crawfordsville, IN 47933

Web site: www.wabash.edu

Email us: alumni@wabash.edu

Phone: (765) 361-6369

Class of 1966

Class Agents

Cal Black

candmblack@aol.com

Jay Fisher

wjf@fisher-dickinson.com

December 1, 2016

Dear Men of '66,

MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

This has been a wonderful year for our class as we gathered for our 50th reunion in June, became Golden Little Giants and broke every class record at Big Bash. Our class is special, and we demonstrated this to the College administration, alumni, students, faculty, parents and friends of Wabash. We have set the bar high for those who follow! Thank you to each of you for your support of our Alma Mater.

It has also been a great year for Wabash as new Independent men's housing has been completed, the Delts have returned to campus and initiated over 70 young men, the quality of the freshman class is incredible, and the athletic teams have all been very successful. The Greek system is healthy with about 63% of the students in fraternities.

John Lennes sent me a very interesting email regarding the 2016 election, and with John's permission it is printed below.

ELECTION 2016

This year's presidential election result will draw a lot of analysis, most of it coming from people who were genuinely surprised and in many cases disgusted by it. Bless them all, but in the words of the great bard of Corsicana Texas, Billy Joe Shaver, "don't mind me, keep on atalkin', I'm just lookin' for my hat."

I've heard it all. Heck, I've even been there before. Minnesota, of all places, experienced something very much like this not all that long ago.

In 1998 the Governor's chair became vacant. In an outburst of dynasty politics, the Democrats fielded three serious candidates, each and every one of whom was the son of a prior political notable. Hubert Humphrey's son was a candidate, Orville Freeman's son was a candidate, and Walter Mondale's son was a candidate. Their parents had been founders of Minnesota's Democratic Farmer Labor party (the DFL), the result of a

merger of the state's Democrats with the pink, if not downright red, Farmer-Labor party that had been a dominant state force between the WW I and WW II. With new leadership from the three gentlemen mentioned, and from others too, like Eugene McCarthy, much of the ultra-radical element that had played a surprisingly strong role in the state during the Depression was forced out. The new DFL became a powerful political force, counterbalancing and largely submerging the state's "main street"-oriented establishment Republicans, who in any case sought a new identity in the backwash of the Watergate era as the "Independent Republican" (IR) party. The DFL came to resemble a scandinavian-type progressive force in politics, embracing liberal but usually not completely fruitcake "common sense" positions appealing to many. Minnesota has no mountains worthy of the name, but if there were suitable hillsides available, the images of Humphrey, Freeman and Mondale likely would have been chiseled on them sometime during the latter half of the 20th century.

We all remember Hubert; Freeman was Minnesota governor in the 1950's and served as US Commissioner of Agriculture under Kennedy and under Lyndon Johnson; and Walter Mondale, of course, was a Minnesota State Attorney General, US Senator, Vice President to Jimmy Carter, and presidential candidate in 1984. As for their sons, Hubert Humphrey III had been a State Senator and State Attorney General prior to the 1998 campaign; Mike Freeman had served as County Attorney in Minnesota's largest county, containing Minneapolis; and Ted Mondale was a former State Senator. These gentlemen comprised a sort of second generation royalty and collided in a contest for the US Senate nomination that came to be known as the "My Three Sons" race, after a TV sitcom of the time. Humphrey prevailed, and in the general election in November faced Norm Coleman, a former DFL stalwart and capable staff aide to Humphrey himself in the Attorney General's office. Coleman had won a term as mayor of St. Paul as a "DFLer" but switched parties to the IRs due to difficulties created by his strong "prolife" stance and the friction he encountered with government employee unions in the day-to-day running of a large city. Somewhat surprisingly he had won re-election in strongly DFL St. Paul under his new banner. Although Coleman shared the name of legendary charismatic DFL political leader Nick Coleman, also from St. Paul, he was surprisingly (in that 1998 election environment at least) unrelated.

Enter the outsider.

Jesse "the Body" Ventura, a recently retired professional wrestler, also filed for election as Governor in 1998. Born in Minnesota as James George Janos, Ventura had enjoyed a colorful career in and around the ring, including cinematic roles with such notables as Arnold Schwarzenegger (do you see a pattern here?). Jesse was not a complete unknown. He had served as mayor of a Twin Cities suburb for four years, and had a radio talk show career. His entry into the race created some interest and promised to liven things up, but few took it very seriously.

In the days before the election, it was becoming obvious that Jesse had attracted support, but most polls still had him running a fairly distant third overall. Then came the dawn of the postelection morning, and behold! Minnesota had sent Jesse to the Governor's office, to the embarrassment of some and the amazement of many. This attracted national attention in a way not previously experienced by conventional "Mary Tyler Moore"-stereotyped Minnesota society. A political columnist from the Sacramento Bee, for instance, marveled at the irony. In California, the land of fruits and nuts (as he termed it) they had a Governor whose name was Gray (Gray Davis), and deservedly so;

but in Minnesota, which he characterized as the nation's second most boring state (after Delaware), we had elected a Governor in tights sporting a pink feather boa.

Which brings us to the question common to the elections of 1998 in Minnesota and nationally last night. How in the heck could this happen?

I will hazard the guess that there will be several explanations offered, and from a variety of sources; it will not go unnoticed. But let me try one, myself. As a friend of mine put it in 1998, "have you ever gone into a voting booth and wished that 'Screw 'Em All' (he put it in an earthier fashion) was on the ballot? Well, 'Screw 'Em All' WAS on the ballot this time, and it damn well won."

As for what happened last night, I think my friend's 1998 explanation still works pretty well. This is not the time or the place to review the ways in which the major political parties (yes, both of them) and their elected representatives over the decades have become tools and indeed embodiments of organized interest groups, to the detriment and exclusion of "regular Americans". On the Democratic side, the party bosses' authority was threatened this year by an uprising of strong support for a non-annointed and non-preordained candidate, not wholly beholden to the funders and the shakers. Clearly the party did everything it could to stifle this disturbing show of disrespect for "betters", and was caught doing so a number of times. People remember things like that. The Republicans were not as detectable in trying to force through the predestined choice of the institutional party chieftains, but that's partly because it is not clear that they had one, and being Republicans, who as a group have an inherent disdain for an activity as tawdry as politics, they probably could not have pulled it off anyway. They are just not very good at these sorts of things.

For a long time now, politics and public policy have become the exclusive domain of pressure groups, "players" who taken collectively are presumed by the policy-setters to comprise the nation. And increasingly, officeholders come from the ranks of career political hangers-on who majored in "Public Policy", instead of being real-world people from a broad range of backgrounds who actually know something about real things. To this new generation of "leaders", there is no "people", just interest groups, boxes to be checked. But the country is still largely made up of the "Common Man", the person for whom Aaron Copland wrote his Fanfare.

These are people who do their jobs, pay their taxes, try to raise their kids right, obey the laws, are civil and courteous to their neighbors, stand up for the national anthem, contribute time and resources to charities as they are able, join the armed forces, the police or the fire department, and in general do their best to be good people. In return they ask little or nothing of their government, not special consideration for their kids, not personal exemption from certain laws, not special funding, not subsidies or exclusionary programs, not institutionally enforced insulation from divergent opinions, and not preference in much of anything.

They play fair and they do not like it when their government does not do the same, or even try.

They do not like it when the government misrepresents the realities of the programs it imposes, then makes program benefits available only to others while telling the rest of us to cough up more to pay for the increased costs. They do not like it when they are told

that the benefits of programs they have long dutifully contributed to but not yet accessed will be cut back or denied to them before they can participate because the politicians have already given the money away to someone else. They do not like it when politicians and other favored people are clearly treated differently from us, and are above the laws that regular people must respect, or at least obey (these days “respect” may be too much to ask). And they do not like it when politicians go to Washington not so much to serve as to become multimillionaires (hint: there is more than one).

They are told that there is no problem, the nation is in great shape, the stock market is high and unemployment is low. But they know that these measurements are laughably imprecise or completely irrelevant. They know, and are a part of the reality, that more people, especially men in prime high-earning years, are out of work than ever before. In addition to the officially “unemployed” (which is a Department of Labor estimate anyway based on a national survey of just 60,000 households), seven million prime-age men have dropped out of the workforce and have no paid work at all, and many many more have had their careers replaced with dead-end jobs paying wages that do not pay the bills. Some analysts believe that overall real-world workforce participation rates are at or below Great Depression levels.

They know that too many public officials clearly curry favor with elitists who have “insider influence” and with celebrities of inexplicable notoriety, who are rarely people of real substance or worthwhile respectable achievement (furnish your own definitions here). They ask for fairness, and they do not believe that they are getting it. They do not believe that they are getting recognition, much less respect. And they are right. Last night, unexpectedly, they spoke.

That’s not necessarily to say that their voice spoke all that coherently. It is far from clear that the political beneficiaries of this outburst will end up getting much done in the way of rectifying our society’s disdain for its own fundamental substance. But notice was served that at least it is time to start thinking about it once again.

John Lennes Jr. is a retired lawyer, lobbyist, adjunct law professor and statewide public Office holder who resides in Marine-on-St. Croix, MN

And while this has been a special year for our class, we have recently lost two classmates, Richard Mendes and Warren Sunday. It is always difficult to provide this information, and we need to be grateful for the friendship and memories of these two wonderful Little Giants. Information about Richard and Warren follows:

Dear Cal and Jay,

I've uncovered Richard's Wabash, Class of 1966, 50th Reunion College Memory Booklet.

With much disappointment, I did not see the request for information to send in order for Richard to be included in this booklet. If I had, I would have interviewed Richard in order to submit a page about him which would have been included in the wonderful Reunion Memory Book.

With much sadness and heartache, I want to let you know Richard passed away from a-typical Parkinsons, Progressive Supra-nuclear Palsy, on July 10th, 2016.

Richard was diagnosed with a-typical Parkinsons just before his 65th birthday and passed away at the age of 72.

We were married for 38 years and there was not a year that went by that Richard did not talk about his wonderful years at Wabash. He later graduated from Michigan State University with a Doctorate in Political Science. He went on to be a College Professor at Stanislaus State College in Turlock, California. Then after receiving his tenure, Richard decided he loved writing public policy. In 1977 he started working in Washington, D.C. on a Fellowship at HEW and from there held a variety wonderful positions in city government actively involved in public policy.

I would very much like to continue receiving the Wabash Alumni Newsletter. I will keep you updated with my current address.

I am also sending a donation for the Wabash Alumni, in the Memory of my husband, Richard Gerald Mendes, to honor his love for Wabash.

Most Sincerely,

Gale Mendes
galemendes8@gmail.com
917 Belle Point Drive
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Richard Gerald Mendes, Ph.D., 72, of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, husband of Gale Margaret Gara Mendes passed away Sunday, July 10, 2016. His Graveside Service will be held on Wednesday, July 13, 2016 in Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Cemetery at 10:00 a.m. Arrangements by J. HENRY STUHR, INC. MOUNT PLEASANT CHAPEL.

Richard was born May 18, 1944 in Chicago, Illinois, son of the late Irving Mendes and the late Isabelle Brenner Mendes. He spent his career in public service, making many communities better places; from spearheading efforts to improve water usage in New York City to leading initiatives to revitalize downtown Cincinnati. Richard worked

tirelessly to improve the lives of all people through good public policy. He was an avid baseball fan – especially of the White Sox. He enjoyed The New York Times crossword puzzle and playing poker. Richard loved his wife, children and grandchildren – spending time with them was what he lived for.

He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Gale M. Mendes of Mt. Pleasant, SC; son, Elliott Mendes of Atlanta, GA; daughter, Elizabeth Mendes (Bruce Kirsch) of Atlanta, GA; grandchildren, Max, Zoey and Dagny; and brother, Joel Mendes of Chicago, IL.

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Warren G. Sunday II

November 10, 1944 ~ October 14, 2016 (age 71)

Warren G. Sunday II, age 71 of Auburn, passed away on Friday, October 14, 2016 at his son's home in Fort Wayne. There are no services scheduled at this time. Arrangements are being handled by Feller and Clark Funeral Home in Auburn.

As we look forward to 2017, Jay and I would like to encourage each of you to continue your terrific support of Wabash by attending events at the College, supporting the College financially, recommending prospective students, continuing to connect with classmates and providing us with updates about you, your family, your interests, travels, etc. You are all SOME LITTLE GIANTS!

“These fleeting years...”

Cal