



## WABASH COLLEGE

### *Class Agents Letter*

Alumni and Parent Relations

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### Class of 1967

#### Class Agents

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Dear Classmates,

Three major topics for this newsletter: **Vietnam**, **Reunion**, and **Classmate** news.

### **Vietnam**

We had this recent exchange of emails with **Tom Brown**:

#### 1. First message:

*Earl,*

*As I spent only 2 years at Wabash I sometimes feel like the proverbial illegitimate child at the family reunion, but since there is a dearth of input and I find that life keeps unfolding I decided to put something in the empty mailbox.*

*In a previous letter I stated that I left Wabash to pursue a music major. It took me an extra year to finish college and in Spring of 68 my choice was enlist or be drafted. I went to see about getting into an Air Force band and the recruiter talked me into taking the pilot aptitude test and life wound up going a whole new direction. Along the way I ran into classmate Larry Underwood at March AFB in Riverside CA. I spent about half of my five USAF years in the Vietnam War. It wasn't a pleasant memory in spite of the fact that the war was one of the best things that ever happened to me. When it's all said and done war is killing and no matter how patriotic one is, for some*

*of us that sinks in sooner or later, but you don't think about it when it's happening because you're just trying to stay alive. Further, I have particularly grieved over the way we abandoned those who befriended and trusted us.*

*Unlike today when the nation as a whole supports its troops, service men during the latter stages of the war came to be viewed by some Americans with contempt and even outright hostility. Happily, after about 20 years, people everywhere started telling Vietnam vets "Thank you for your service" and that hasn't stopped.*

*While I was in the air, on the ground was South Vietnamese Army officer Bang Dao. Once the US pulled out and the north overran the south Bang spent 12 years in a POW camp under a daily routine of hunger and exhaustion that nearly killed him. He was released under the government's watchful eye. By bribing some officials and outsmarting others, he was able to bring his family to the US in 1990. When his daughter grew up she found a career in IT and became active in an organization that fights sex trafficking, and most important, met and married one of my sons. I'm overjoyed to have her in the family and now when I hear the word "Vietnam" I have a very different reaction from earlier. "How unspeakable are his judgements and his ways past finding out." (Rom 11:33)*

*My father went to the Pacific Theater right out of med school. Like many of his contemporaries he married shortly before he shipped out. The day I was born he was on Iwo Jima, and thereafter he treated nuke victims at Nagasaki. As a specimen of diverse ends coming together (part of my USAF time was in the B-52) I have a picture of him, myself, and Paul Tibbets, pilot of the Enola Gay that bombed Hiroshima, standing together at a WW II vet reunion.*

*Though Dad had a fine medical career, those who knew him as a young man saw a change in him after the war. Like a lot of vets he just didn't want to talk about it. The mortar shrapnel that remained embedded in his body set off metal detectors when airports started using them, though they caused him no pain. About age 65 he started going to 5th Division Marine reunions, sometimes meeting men who remembered him treating them and thanking him for saving their lives. (All those last-minute marriages were still holding strong.) After that he became more open about his experiences and wrote a book "Battle Wounds of Iwo Jima", relating the often bizarre cases he had treated.*

*In light of my father's history it is an unexpected parallel to have Vietnam revisiting me at the latter stage of life. Your report on your role befriending Vietnamese and later aiding some them as refugees is just one more blessing to come along. The thing about the war over which I have agonized the most is very thing you entered into.*

*All my offspring came to Dallas from the four winds for Christmas. Had some delightful moments with my Vietnamese daughter-in-law.*

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,*

*Tom Brown*

*[alcuin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alcuin@sbcglobal.net)*

## 2. Response from Earl:

*Tom. Thanks for the input.*

*Funny you should mention Larry Underwood. I've been trying to track him down without success for some time.*

*I was in Vietnam as a civilian attached to the Defense Attache Office from 73 to 74, just after the US military withdrawal. I worked with a lot of Vietnamese army folks. I recently had a visit from the daughter of an officer I worked with on a daily basis for a year in Vietnam. She was researching her father's military career. A coworker of mine who was there when Saigon fell was able to get this family, and several other families of Vietnamese we worked with, out of the country at the end. The families contacted me from Refugee camps in Guam, Wake island, California, and Florida over the following months and we were able to find sponsors for them and help get them resettled in the states. I've kept in touch with several of them over the years.*

## 3. From Tom:

*Merry Christmas to you too, Duane. **I plan to attend the 50th.***

As Tom points out, the Vietnam era was often not viewed in a positive light. However, many Wallies and Men of '67 served our country with HONOR. It is proper that we acknowledge their service and say THANK YOU! I do not have a list of men who served in the military, but would like to hear from any and all who did serve. Also, please send any stories of Vietnam or the military you would like to share with classmates. Perhaps we can prepare a book for distribution to our class.

We always enjoy hearing from classmates about any subject, so please continue to send any and all comments.

## *Reunion (Teaser)*

In a few weeks Clark Dickerson will be sending information on our 50<sup>th</sup>, June 2-4, 2017. In the meantime, a few thoughts:

1. Show up!!!! Tom Brown, as he notes, was at Wabash for only two years, yet he plans to attend. How about the rest of you, especially if you spent all four years? Please plan to attend and make sure you persuade at least one classmate to be at the Big Bash. And, if you are like Tom and did not spend the entire four years at Wabash, please plan to join us anyway. You are and have always been a Little Giant and we would like to see you!

2. Attend as many days and events as you'd like. I know some will be arriving on Thursday night and some may even stay until Monday of that weekend. Others will only attend one day. It makes no difference how long you plan to be on campus, please join us!! Details – schedule, rooms, cost, etc. – will be sent from the College in January of 2017. But, make a personal commitment NOW to join us.

3. Help us set more reunion records. The Class of '67 has set attendance records at our most recent four reunions. Every one of them has been broken, so it is time to set yet another record. (IMPORTANT – be sure to sign the Attendance Book when you get to campus – we will keep reminding you!!) We had a nice string of Chapel Sing wins, which we lost at our 45<sup>th</sup>; time to win again, so please practice *Old Wabash*, both verses! And, giving records – there are two challenges here; one for highest dollar total and one for highest percentage of givers. Your annual gifts are very much appreciated; please continue and please plan to make an “extra” effort. We will have more details on \$ and % over the next 18 months. And, THANK YOU to everyone who has already contributed this fiscal year (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016); there is still time to join the Honor Roll of Donors.

4. Personal thoughts. I have attended all of our reunions – each one has provided a different perspective, but each one has been enjoyable – seeing the

campus and physical changes, reconnecting with classmates, attending interesting colloquium sessions, talking with our profs who are still around, and meeting some of the “new” folks in campus administration and athletics. I hope you will share this experience with me at our 50<sup>th</sup>.

5. If you have already decided to attend and/or are willing to contact others to attend, please send an email to Clark Dickerson at [clark@dickerson-bakker.com](mailto:clark@dickerson-bakker.com).

### ***Classmate News***

It is with sadness that we report the passing of **Greg Ball**.



**Gregory D. Ball**

**November 18, 1945 - January 4, 2016**

Gregory D. Ball, 70, of St. Joseph, Michigan, passed away peacefully, January 4, 2016 at Lakeland Regional Medical Center in St. Joseph.

He was born on November 18, 1945 in Muncie, IN to the late Esther (Ebrite) and Dr. Philip Ball, who survives. Greg, a fifth-generation Hoosier, graduated from Wabash College in 1967 and the Indiana University School of Law in 1972. After practicing law in Indianapolis for one year, Greg married Elizabeth (Liszewski) in 1973 in South Bend, IN. In search of adventure, they moved the night of their wedding to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. After five years in the Caribbean, Greg and Liz returned to Indiana where he served as the chief public defender in Richmond.

Greg's love of experiencing new places and occupations would distinguish his entire life. His family shared in the adventure of living on several islands of Hawaii and in various towns in Indiana. In his 43 year career, Greg was an esteemed trial lawyer in his practice areas of personal injury, civil litigation, and criminal law matters. Along the journey, he had many remarkable exploits, including: managing his own law practice while weekend-farming 200 acres of organic crops and livestock

(a decade before organic food was even popular); competing in outrigger canoe paddling regattas across the Hawaiian Island chain; and dabbling as a mule-skinner on Molokai's Kalaupapa Trail. Greg loved to bike, swim, sing, read, play with his grandkids and investigate new entrepreneurial adventures. He had a love of words which resulted in his authorship of many poems and stories.

Greg is survived by his wife Elizabeth; his children- Summer (David) Galvis of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, Rory (Heather) Ball of Sagamore Hills, OH; his grandchildren- Kelsey & Nathaniel Hoyle, Emmeline Galvis, Wesley Ball; his father Dr. Philip Ball of Muncie, IN; his sister Susan Ball of Muncie; his brother Thomas (Runchana) Ball of Queens, NY; and his niece Katie Ball of California.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 9:30 A.M. Friday at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 211 Church St., St. Joseph. Burial will follow at Riverview Cemetery, St. Joseph. Friends may visit with the family from 5:00 until 8:00 P.M. Thursday at Starks & Menchinger Chapel, 2650 Niles Rd., St. Joseph with the Rosary recited at 7:30 P.M. Memorials may be made to St. Joseph Catholic Church. Those wishing to sign Greg's Memory Book online may do so at [www.starks-menchinger.com](http://www.starks-menchinger.com).

We received this note from **Jay Fisher '66**:

*Man ... don't know what to say ... Several months ago, Earl Houck emailed me that Greg had suffered an aneurism and was in a hospital in St. Joe (about an hour south of grand Rapids). I had not heard or spent any time with Greg since I graduated. Somehow, I just felt I needed to visit him. There was a reason (I did not understand at the time) why I felt compelled to travel from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo to visit with Greg in the hospital there where his aneurism was being treated.*

*I am so glad I did. He was up beat, happy, contented, waiting for summer at St. Joe and good wine AND was very pleased that a Wabash guy would come visit. I remember leaving the hospital ... glad I had made the trip and determined to run him down in St. Joe this summer. This last part I will, regrettable, not be able to fulfill. But ... we did have a great conversation in which most of you guys were the subject. His wit and memory were on display that afternoon. Remember him that way.*

*... And all I can say .... as a 71 year old is .... make that extra effort to stay in Wabash contact and visit. It means a lot and ... in today ... is an enjoyable interlude and updating experience. Also ... as a Class Agent for our class of 1966 which makes its 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion this year ... I really encourage you ... join 1967 Class Agent Houck and Hile next year for your 50<sup>th</sup>. **You are old farts**, and it will be something I believe you will find rekindles the spirit of Wabash and of Wabash Sigma Chi.*

*In Hoc*

*Jay Wabash Sigma Chi, Class of 1966.*

And, this note from **John Sturman '67**:

*Greg's life threaded through mine for the past 45 yrs. Best man at my wedding. Visits in Washington, Hawaii over the years. Saw him in Indianapolis 2008-2012 and in St. Joe last summer. He provided me with important support and vital information in my recent situation. There is an acute sense of loss, especially as vital and witty as he was (even after aneurysm #1). He was granted a rapid and painless exit--no lingering death, especially memory fading away. It has been my pleasure and gain to have him as a friend over these many years. I will miss him.*

And, to return to more a pleasant thought, here is news from **Earl**:

*An update to my horse article. ... we just got the 2016 calendar from the draft horse rescue where we got the Clydesdale and he is Mr. June in the calendar! He is a handsome brute.*

(Note from Duane: I have not seen the calendar, so I'm not sure if the picture is PG or X rated! You know how risqué some of the calendars are!)

In light of the recent record Powerball payout, I share this thought:

***All I ask is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy!***

Keep those cards and letters and emails comin'!!

***Duane***

**WAF**