



Class Agents Letter

Class of 1961

Class Agent
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Dear Many Miler,

Just a reminder that June 30 is fast approaching. Please check to be sure to you are in the game. Wabash needs all possible alumni to reach, once again, the lofty 40% giving. We are 12 years running with 40%. This places us in a very elite group and helps the College in many ways. Foundations and corporations are more likely to give support if alumni show strong support. Even prospective parents are asking about it!



There were 186 Diplomas awarded this year, with many awards to further education. And, Wabash has 288 paid deposits as of June 30. This could be the largest class in some time. President Feller will have his hands full as Dean of the College, McDorman, is going on sabbatical, and Dean of Students Greg Redding is returning to teaching. Plus, Jay Allen is



stepping down after ten years as Chair of the Board of Trustees. These are men who have held positions thru Covid and are now seeking change.

Notes.....

Sparks Center is now coming down! This is a 2-year project which will be magnificent when complete. (They are saving the beautiful cypress ceiling supports for future use somewhere.) I was unaware that there is a tunnel under the campus which supports heating, cooling and electrical. That will be replaced and updated. I have no idea where it is!

Wabash smoked the Dannie's twice in basketball last season, with one of the reasons being that 15 of our 17 players came from Indiana....(although nobody hailed from Alamo!). Coach Brumett is an outstanding coach who has consistently had good teams who play well together."

Wrestling produced two inductions into the Div III Wrestling Hall of Fame: former coach Brian Anderson and Riley Lefever (who was basically undefeated!) Wabash sent 6 guys to the Nationals this year.

Wabash won both the 2025 NCAC Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Championships. Senior Brayden Curnutt (Wabash) earned the Conference Men's Distance/Mid-distance Runner of the Year Award. Also, Will Neubauer of Wabash, earned All American honors by finishing 7th at the 2025, NCAA, Division III, Outdoor Track and Field Championships!" Some Little Giants!

Bawibawi Thang gained All Midwest Volleyball League team honors. He led the League in total kills with 374.

Jake Pippen scored many goals on the Lacrosse team. I need to accompany Pete & Janie to a game next season so they can explain it to me!

Sean Bledsoe finished as runner up in the NCAC Golf Championship played at Otter Creek Course in Columbus, IN. Wabash finished 5th of 8 teams which is an improvement. Senior Lewis Dellinger scored a hole-in-one on the par 3 13th hole, followed by an eagle on 14. (Did you know what an Albatross was before The Open? – I did not!!!)

John Birdzell has amended my earlier baseball report. "Baseball set a school record for victories (27), were runners up to Denison in conference play, but lost to Witt and Wooster in the tournament."

I owe Sally Olexia a big apology for not including Paul's obituary in the last letter. See below.....

Tim Conlon reports: MB & I watched the movie The Holdovers. Paul Giamatti starred as a classics teacher in 1970 at a New England prep school. Giamatti, in the film, is a grumpy and demanding teacher with an all-male classroom of privileged, arrogant 18 year olds. You recall our Dean of Students was Steven Kurtz. Kurtz was my major subject (History) advisor; and he gave me a C+ in American History. Certain movie scenes brought back memories of Kurtz concluding I wasn't a "serious student."

Classmate Dave Bohlin and his wife, Jean, had planned to visit us, but it has been postponed. In the 1957 Delt pledge class there were five of us (out of 18 pledged) who made it through Wabash's four years and comps. Aus Brooks, Dave Bohlin, Bill Kilgore, Lee Andreas and myself. I'm working on being the last man standing in the quintet!

Earl Talbot: "You do a terrific job keeping the Class up to date. The letter is clear, informative and easy to read. I was quite taken by the news of the loss of Aus Brooks. His contributions to our alma mater in some way, I always felt, made up for what I couldn't bring myself to do. I feel even more so about you, John. You do so much to keep the spirit of the college alive for all of us from '61. This spirit is really important to me. The notions of excellence, perseverance, commitment and camaraderie were instilled in me from our first Chapel in 1957. You are central and the main connection to keeping that spirit alive for me so that I can still get goose bumps when I see the alumni magazine or hum the praise of dear ol' Wabash. Please keep the letters coming. Just know that your service won't be forever, only the next 10-15 years or so should do. Earl

Mead Killion has finally retired, with ideas and inventions still not complete, but worth pursuing. He closed his lab and assigned his remaining patents (career total now over 100) to a long-time colleague. Mead is now living full time in Wisconsin where he and Gail have had a second home for 32 years.

Dave Bohlin: Just another note to tell you how much I've appreciated your service as our Class Agent. Your most recent letter was particularly sad for me since it reminded me of the recent death of Austin Brooks. Jeanne and I had been in constant touch with Aus and Lucy ever since our 50th Reunion during our trips back to Indiana to visit her two sisters and other good friends. He was a class act by any definition. Other than breaking her leg and wrist while trying out pickleball

(she lasted ten minutes before falling) things are holding steady for us. I still spend a lot of time in our wood shop here making unusual things from used lumber and vintage artifacts that are sold at our annual craft fair (all proceeds are donated to our non-profit funds here). Jeanne stays busy with Chorale and Readers Theater, among other things..... Dave

Nolan Eller, College Archivist, did some research on sizes of the Class of 1961 from Freshmen to Senior Year which are highlighted below from the College Catalogues.

1957-1958 (pg. 126, 1958-1959 Catalogue)

Freshmen: 215

Sophomores: 161

Juniors: 139

Seniors: 108

Special: 17

Total enrollment: 640

1959-1960 (hand count enrollment summary not included in 1960-1961 Catalogue)

Freshmen: 194

Sophomores: 157

Juniors: 130

Seniors: 121

Special: not listed

Total enrollment: 602

1958-1959 (pg. 117, 1959-1960 Catalogue)

Freshmen: 199

Sophomores: 169

Juniors: 136

Seniors: 135

Special: 5

Total enrollment: 644

1960-1961 (pg. 127, 1961-1962 Catalogue)

Freshmen: 228

Sophomores: 166

Juniors: 127

Seniors: 121

Special: 13

Total enrollment: 655

113 Degrees conferred for the class of 1961 (pg. 121-122, 1962-1963 Catalogue)

The current roster of our class numbers 85.

OK! One last reminder to send in your support for Wabash. A gift of any amount toward anything that supports Wabash students counts. You can make your gift online at wabash.edu/give, by phone at (877) 743-4545, or by mailing a check to Wabash College | 301 W. Wabash Ave. | Crawfordsville, IN 47933. There are various ways to contribute which you can find at wabash.edu/giving/waystogive.

Many Miles Before the Night.....

JB



W.
ALWAYS
FIGHTS!





Memories...

Paul Olexia PhD '61 04/01/2025

Paul D. Olexia was born July 31, 1939, in McKeesport, Pa, the son of Paul and Gladys Olexia. He is preceded in death by his parents, his brother, Gary Olexia and his daughter, Julie. Surviving are his wife Sally Olexia and their son Michael and his wife Deanna. Also surviving is Deborah (Olexia) Stilley, his daughter from a previous marriage and her family. Paul grew up in western Pennsylvania and graduated from Clairton (Pa) High School. He received his B.A. degree from Wabash College where he majored in zoology and played varsity football. He received his M.A. degree from the St. University of New York at Buffalo and went on to get his Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee in Botany (mycology), working under Dr. Ronald Petersen with whom he maintained a life-long friendship. Upon completion of doctorate, he served a one-year appointment as a sabbatical replacement at Colgate University. Subsequently, he took a teaching position at Kalamazoo College in 1968 where he taught until retirement in 2002. His primary courses were Botany, Evolution and Environmental Science along with occasional courses in Freshwater Ecology, Plant Ecology, Mycology, and Plant and Animal Diversity. He served as Chair of the Biology Dept. and subsequently as Chair of the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. During his time at K College, he collaborated with researchers at Oak Ridge National Laboratories, Argonne National labs, and the University of Rhode Island. His main area of research interest was mycorrhizal fungi which grow mutualistically with the roots of most plant species. While at Kalamazoo College he collaborated with his good friend Ahmed Hussen, initiating an interdisciplinary Concentration in Environmental Studies. He was an initial faculty leader for the Land/Sea Program. Additionally, he enjoyed assisting with announcing football games as well as an official scorer for basketball games at Kalamazoo College for a number of years. Through his long-standing interest in sports, he remained active in pickup basketball, recreational bicycling, and especially playing handball until his early 60's. After his retirement, he was active with both the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy and the Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones. He served as President and board member of both organizations. An area of special interest to Paul was the Wild Ones Community Projects Committee which implemented and managed native plant projects at a number of locations throughout the city. His conservation efforts, resulted in a diverse, notable collection of native plants, mostly spring ephemerals at his home in Kalamazoo. Throughout his life he remained interested in fungi, plants, nature, conservation, and environmental protection..

Arrangements for a celebration of his life are ongoing and will be made public at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in his memory may be made to any of the following organizations: Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones,

Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Kalamazoo Nature Center, Kalamazoo College or Wabash College, in c/o the funeral home. Friend may leave a condolence message for the family at www.joldersma-klein.com.

Charlie Quillin PhD '60 05/04/2025

From Sam Hildebrand: Another good man gone. Charlie and I had a special relationship through Calvary Church. He helped me research some records and photos for me regarding my father's tenure in the youth choir and participation in the first nationwide radio broadcast of a church service from Calvary in 1922. – Dad was 14 or 15 at the time.

May 2025

Dear JB and Barb,

This is obviously not a Christmas letter, but rather an addendum to our 2025 Christmas communication.

Our South America and Antarctica cruise over Christmas turned into a disaster. On the third day out of Buenos Aires, Pat got up during the night to use the rest room in our stateroom, and fell and broke her hip. We were disembarked at Punta del Este, Uruguay; Pat had emergency surgery at the hospital in Punta del Este, and after a week of rest and rehabilitation, we flew back to Denver, assisted by an escort nurse provided by our travel insurer.

After five days in the emergency room at University of Colorado hospital, she was transferred to a rehabilitation center for therapy. After three weeks there, I tried to bring her home, but she was still unable to stand or walk on her own (the hip surgery was apparently successful, but her preexisting condition of polyneuropathy in her legs was greatly aggravated by her injury), so we had to move her to an assisted living facility.

She developed a urinary tract infection, and after emergency hospitalization, we moved her to skilled nursing care, but her condition continued to deteriorate, and we moved her to another assisted living facility where she received hospice care. Unable to stand, walk or use the bathroom facilities on her own, she continued to decline, and finally she passed on May 8.

I thought you would want to know.

I hope you are doing well; I am bearing up as best I can. I have put our house up for sale, and expect to be moving somewhere back east when it sells. Keep in touch.

All the best, Doug Burns

P.S. Looking forward to our 65th next year –