Wabash.

**Class Agents Letter**

**Class of 1961**


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Happy Thanksgiving

Dear Many Miler including our many wonderful widows!



Wabash College is alive and well!!! We gained 217 fine young alumni at graduation. President Feller "rang in" 252 new Rhynies in August. With the biggest construction in history, the College is moving toward the 200th Anniversary of those men kneeling in the snow and the founding of one of the top Liberal Arts Colleges in America. Be proud! You have helped get us there. Over the past ten years, Many Milers have contributed at the lofty level above 50%, slipping to a respectable 46% this past fiscal year.

Congratulations to Pete & Janie Pippen who have now gone thru FIVE Commencements! Pete, their two sons, Jay and David, and two grandsons. The latest, Jake, set a new all time Wabash record of 100 goals on the Lacrosse team! A proud Wabash family to be sure! Also of note, Bob Grand '78 is the newly elected President of Beta Theta Pi National Fraternity. The Lambda Chis have enough faculty members that they have a Lamb Chop luncheon every month.








The North Coast Athletic Conference has replaced Hiram & Allegheny with two Power house schools: John Carroll University in Cleveland area, and Washington University in St. Louis. I believe we played Wash U when we were in school. Coach Jake Gilbert has had a good but tough season. We have enjoyed going to every home game in beautiful weather this year. John & JoAnn Birdzell have shared their "W Club" tickets with us. And we had Susie Cumming (John's sister) along also. What a delightful way to watch a game! You might be interested to know that the Wabash Football Roster lists 14 Little Giants in excess of 300#! They are led by Mason Gilbert from Florida who weighs in @ 352#. We enjoyed chatting with several new students. They are enthusiastic about Wabash and seemed comfortable about their classroom experience. The Monon Bell game was played at Ball State in Muncie this month, as DePauw has torn down famed Blackstock Stadium. Though the Little Giants led every stat, they didn't in the one that mattered. The Dannies won the hard-fought battle 10-16. Oh, and the Tekes stole the Beta's front door! In our day, the Sigs stole the Beta Pledge Bell, so we stole their front door. The next morning the Beta cook, Mark Nichols : "No breakfast! All the eggs are gone!"  At least I don't think we set anybody on fire!!!



Dean Scott Brown commented that you don't attend Wabash: You Join! The school is committed to the shortest Code of Conduct with the longest fight song. Again, congrats to Doug Burns who sang all verses of Old Wabash unaccompanied! Big Bash awarded him Honorary #1 class @ Big Bash.

The campus will be enjoying a much upgraded HV/AC system, electrical system and the outstanding Community Center. The new building which will supply both heating and cooling to the entire campus is now under roof just east of the end zone of the football field. A new tunnel runs the length of the mall. All in all, a $100 Million program underway. Concrete is rising out of the hole where Sparks Center was and structural steel is arriving. President Feller told us that even though the endowment is up, the cost of providing student program is also up. He has set his plan to increase the endowment in the coming years. Wabash will continue to

using the Gentlemen's Rule and to work for a Pay Forward alumni base. The College is a philanthropic organization.

President Feller is also spearheading an effort to integrate AI into our liberal arts curriculum, working with DePauw and St. Mary's in an effort to secure a very large Eli Lilly grant in this important area moving forward.

Class musings:

Sam & Susie Hildebrand have moved to an apartment at Wellbrooke, an Assisted Living facility in Crawfordsville. "The Wellbrooke Campus also offers options for full medical care and memory care should we require either service in the future. We will be increasing the St. John's Episcopal Church Wellbrooke membership to 6 as well as joining other community friends currently warehousing there." Address 517 Concord Road Apt 102, Crawfordsville IN 47933. Phone is (765) 366-4040. They will, of course, miss their dear Rottweiler, Gertie, as oldest daughter, Amy, has taken her off to Texas. Daughter Molly (WI) reports that her son, Dawson, wants to wrestle at Wabash.

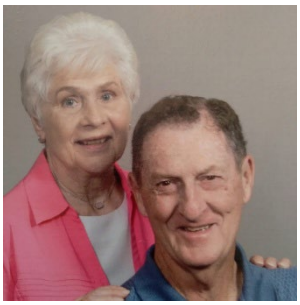
Tim Conlon (Bend, OR): "This morning I met with Susan and Jim Dyer (Jim Cumming's nephew); and as far as Wabash College, a realistic and contemporary conclusion about its excellence as a school of higher learning." From Ben Rogge's speech quoting George Kendall: "a robust environment and intellectual opportunities fitted to help able boys to live four strenuous and agreeable lives while becoming informed and self reliant young men". Susan and Jim confirmed "Wabash is still that place."

Rusty Cleland: "I was sorry I couldn't make it out for the reunion. I am sitting in my garden enjoying all the plants and animals. Just saw a flycatcher, the first one I have seen in several years. Insect populations have dropped so much that flycatchers are now very rare." (Take heart! There was a seminar at Wabash recently regarding "Cooking with Insects!")

Charlie West: (12/25) "Dave McAfee's Obit inspired me to write as his farm experience pretty much parallels my life experience. The last 25 years 'farming' and enjoying life… (West Farm Nursery, 116 Burnt Mill Road, Somerville, NJ 08876)" Charlie raises Paw Paw trees.

Terrance Anderson (Miami FL) Re: Austin Brooks: "Austin was my pledge father and a good friend. Thanks for the memories. Sincerely, Algernon" (this tag was from his lead role in The Importance of Being Ernest our senior year.)

Don & Janet Engler recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. Congratulations!



There are 56 living alumni, 25 nongrads, and 56 widows on the Class of 1961 roles.




## *In Memorial……*

**Robert Michael Henderson**, 87, passed away on October 2, 2026, at his home in Sarasota, FL. He was born to Louis F. and Thelma Albea Henderson on September 20, 1939. A native Hoosier, he was educated in Indiana, attended Covington High School and Wabash College, where he became a member of Phi Gamma Delta social fraternity. He graduated from the College of Business Administration at Butler University in 1963. He married his high school sweetheart, Nancy Bilsland, in 1961.

A barber's son, he was the first in his family to graduate from college and the first to get a passport. While working full time at the IU Medical Center in the 1960s, he and a business partner opened their first nursing care facility. He went on to own and operate a number of skilled nursing health care facilities with several business partners, and eventually a variety of diverse businesses spanning multiple industries in the US and abroad. Opportunities found him due to his strong work ethic, sound reasoning, financial acumen and management skills. His generosity, kindness and honesty were admired by all who met him.

His life was changed when he and his wife Nancy fell in love with the Caribbean. Though they traveled extensively all over the world, they most treasured their time in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, where they built a home, invested in businesses, including Tortola Yacht Services, and made many friends for over 40 years. They were active members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Sea Cow's Bay.

An avid reader and lifelong learner, friends knew that they could always ask what he was reading, and he delighted in sharing. He was an unapologetic Anglophile who loved classic cars, the Scottish Highlands, the sight of cows grazing in fields, watching Book TV and delegating tasks to anyone who was standing within earshot, at any time. He was possibly the only person to subscribe to the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Economist, The New Yorker and Country Life magazines. He had an almost encyclopedic knowledge of American History.

His dry sense of humor and clever wit were cherished by his friends and family. His kindness and humility will outlive him in the many charitable organizations he and Nancy quietly created and supported throughout the world.

Generosity and stewardship were his guiding tenets, which he expressed continually in thought, word and action. He created a legacy of charitable giving and was delighted to see this spirit of generosity and responsibility in his children and grandchildren.

He was profoundly grateful to have had a full life that was centered in and surrounded by a close family. Surviving are his three children: son Brian (Louise), daughter Lisa Acker (Rob) and daughter Kay Gerhardinger (Joe), as well as nine grandchildren: Glennis Henderson (Michael Lewis), Allison Henderson, Kristen Henderson (Piotr Bajda), Ian Acker, Calvin Acker, Wils Acker (Cristina Nevelits), Anna Gerhardinger, Mary Gerhardinger and William Gerhardinger. Also surviving are his sister-in-law, Susan Orr Henderson, brother-in-law Hank (Marsha) Bilsland, several nephews, nieces and other relatives.

He is preceded in death by his beloved wife and partner of 55 years, Nancy Bilsland Henderson and his brother Joseph D. Henderson.

He was a member of the Church of the Redeemer Episcopal in Sarasota, Florida, and St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Port Clinton, Ohio.

He served many organizations as a board or trustee member: Butler University, the Salvation Army, Seabury Western Theological Seminary, St. Paul's Episcopal Church Indianapolis and Old National Bank. He was a member of Rotary Clubs in Indianapolis Northeast and Tortola, BVI.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, October 10th, 2026, at 10:30 am at St. Francis-In-The-Fields Episcopal Church, 1525 Mulberry St., Zionsville, Indiana, where he was a member when he lived in Indiana. A reception will be held at the church at 11:30 am, following the service. He will be laid to rest in a private graveside service with his wife, mother and father at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Covington, Indiana. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Circle Trail Fund of Western Indiana Community Foundation or a charity of your choice.

**Raymond Lee Zimmerman**, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend, passed away peacefully on August 29, 2026, at the age of 87, holding the hands of his children. Born July 19, 1939, in Milford, Indiana, Ray was the cherished son of Michael and Magdalene (Madalyn) Stieglitz Zimmerman. He was a hard-working farm boy, but didn't want to follow in the footsteps of his father and 3 older brothers. He was the first of his siblings to graduate from high school and the only one to attend college, later graduating with a degree in chemistry from Wabash College. He was recruited on campus for a job in West Virginia with Marbon Chemicals, later Borg Warner, and then General Electric as a liaison with Underwriters Laboratory. He married Diane Hill on June 16, 1962, in Parkersburg, West Virginia, and their marriage was later solemnized in the Mesa Arizona LDS Temple on July 1, 1964.

Ray loved traveling and seeing new places, working in the yard, playing with his grandchildren, and performing in plays and skits. He loved to sing to his family, and also sang in many choirs. He loved country and gospel music. He loved playing the clown, telling Dad jokes, and teasing. He enjoyed wearing silly t-shirts and "themed" Hawaiian shirts. Even while joking, he was a strong, steady, calming and supporting influence for his family.

An active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Ray served in many capacities, including as the first Bishop of the Parkersburg Ward, where he played a key role in the construction of the ward building itself. He also served on the High Council and in the Stake Presidency. He and

Diane enjoyed family history research, and they served together as service missionaries in the Church and Family History Headquarters Mission in Salt Lake City, Utah. They also served in the Columbus Ohio Temple, and Ray served in the Mt. Timpanogos Utah Temple.

Ray leaves behind his wife, Diane, and their children, Molly (Brian) Larson and Joel (Amy) Zimmerman. He took pride in his seven grandchildren (Andrew, Eric, Michael, Becca, Spencer, Katie, and Asher) and four great-grandchildren (Sam, Gwen, Nora, and Lilian.) He is also survived by his siblings Mary Gerber and Michael Zimmerman, Jr. He was preceded in death by his parents, his son Daniel, and three brothers, George, Melvin, and Virgil.

In celebration of Ray's life, a viewing will be held on Thursday, September 3, 2026, from 6 to 8 PM at the Anderson & Sons Lone Peak Chapel, located at 6141 West 11000 North, Highland. A funeral service on Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 6:00 will honor Ray's legacy in Parkersburg, West Virginia. It will be held at the Parkersburg Ward building of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at 2515 Capitol Drive. There will be a viewing prior to the funeral service in the church starting at 5:00 PM. Interment will be in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Parkersburg.

I was saddened by the passing of fellow Class Agents Alan Stanford ’63 and Bob Johnson ’54 . They were both good Wabash men and I will miss them at the Forums.

Many Miles Before the Night.....

J B



