



**Pactoracles
Class Agent's Letter
For The Wabash College Class of 1971**



May 11, 2026

**We Lived Our College Days In Unique Times:
Let's Celebrate Our 55th On June 5-7**

Fifteen classmates have registered for our 55th reunion so far for June 5-7. This number is respectable considering our demographics. But, let it grow. Sign up.

We will swap stories and enjoy the comfort of just being on campus. We lived in different living units then, but we all lived Wabash College. This will be our Homecoming for old friends, new friends, and Little Giant nostalgia.



I have studied Wabash history, though I am more a fragment of history than a historian. We, the Men of the Class of 1971, lived in historic times. There was no other period in Wabash history like it. Let's celebrate.

Most of us started in 1967 and graduated in 1971, but many did not. Some started at Wabash prior to 1967 and graduated in 1971. Some started in 1967 and graduated after 1971. Some did not graduate. Still others started in 1967 and transferred to Wabash and graduated in 1971. At least one of us started in 1967 and graduated in 1970.

All of us lived in unique historic times. Why unique? We alone of generations of Wabash Men faced the extensive controversy and disruption on campus and in the world as we did. We faced the challenges of the draft and the

Viet Nam War. Wabash Men faced challenges from other wars and other drafts—Civil War, World War I, and World War II. But those were popular wars. We had controversy, conflict, and consternation over the Viet Nam war and the draft. Each of us remembers his draft number—especially if it was low.

Race relations were boiling nationally in 1967-1971. They were heating up at Wabash, too. In 1967-1971, the Malcolm X Center was started by members of our class. The first African-American professor, Finley Campbell, joined the faculty. A few more fraternities accepted blacks, and there was a push for others to do so. The curriculum expanded to cover courses with African-American themes. There were hardly any blacks, Asians, Jews, or Hispanics who enrolled at Wabash before 1967. The



The Bank Cigar Store sold a lot more than cigars.

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demographic shift of more men coming from diversified backgrounds was also unique in Wabash history.

During 1967-1971, men's liberal arts colleges had or were considering becoming co-ed. Wabash was one of them, the first time at Wabash since the 1890s. The college established a committee in 1970 to study the issue. Two classmates were members of the committee.

Other schools dealt with turmoil and violence on their campuses. Violence did not happen at Wabash. Wabash students voted to go on strike after the Kent State shooting in May 1970. Nothing in Wabash history resembles that four-day strike.

1968 was an election year. Anti-war Democrats turned against the incumbent president, a Democrat. In 1968, two candidates for U.S. President campaigned in Crawfordsville. That was unique. They were Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy.

Many Wabash traditions departed in 1967-1971, and some departed with disagreement. With a hiatus during the 1940s, Chapel had been required since the start of the college, and it ceased to be required. Classes were held on Saturday. That stopped. The pole fight ended. The W-haircut as a mark for not knowing *Old Wabash* was discarded. Even our yearbook abandoned tradition, and behind the editorship of Jim Czarnecki '71, our yearbook had a yellow cover and avant garde themes.

A lot stayed the same. We had classes. We had sports. We had fun with or without alcohol and with or without girls.

Now, 55 years later, we can reflect, celebrate, and rejoice about our

personal histories and our class's history in a historically unique era.

A contrast of our era with today makes the good old days look really good. Let's celebrate.

In 2024 about 14 men of the Class of 1959 celebrated their 65th reunion at Big Bash. They were much older than we are now (and they still are). They marched, they sang *Old Wabash*, and they had a jolly good time. They inspired me to organize a 55th reunion. Most classes don't have reunions after the 50th.

The Class of 1959 loved Wabash. We love Wabash. And as Mike Dill '71 used to say: Wabash, It's about the people. So, I encourage the people of 1971 to return to campus this June.

Register at

<https://www.wabash.edu/alumni/reunion/schedule>



Classmate Keith Nelson was a founder of the Afro House in 1967. It has evolved into the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies.

Important Items For 55th Reunion

Friday, Alumni-Faculty Symposium:
12:45 pm.

Friday: All Campus Casual, Friendly Dinner, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Campus Walk, 8:30 a.m.

Saturday Chapel Sing, 11 a.m.

Saturday Lunch

Saturday, Class Photo 1 p.m.

Saturday, Our Class Dinner at 6:45 p.m.

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The Class of 1971 competes in the Chapel Sing at Big Bash in 2011. We had a great time although Dean Moore looks board stiff. Sixteen classmates are in this photo. Unfortunately three of them have passed away. Four of them have signed for our 55th.

Classmates: Donate Your Artifacts

Please provide me any archives from our era or allow me to assist you in donating them to the college's archives. Contact me at pactorlaw@iquest.net, jonpactor@gmail.com, or by phone 317-695-2555. Please don't throw anything away. Artifacts can be:

athletic letters
bills or receipts from Crawfordsville eateries, stores, hotels
blue books and other examinations
college i.d. cards
fraternity memorabilia such as party favors, pledge policies, photos
Glee Club records (paper and vinyl)
Interfraternity Council records
letters as in correspondence
minutes and notes of student groups
pennants
photos of college life, Wabash, past poems
programs from varsity sports
playbills from the Scarlet Masque

report cards
Student Senate records
Student Strike records
Textbooks
Tuition Bills
Yearbooks

Commencement 1971

The College has very recently made commencement addresses available for listening. I started listening today to Eric Dean's prayer and Mike Carroll's talk on June 6, 1971.

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Donate To The Wabash College Annual Fund

Thanks to classmates, spouses, and widows who have donated to the annual fund during the current fiscal year. The fiscal year will end on June 30.



Our dollars are important to keep Wabash strong. We cannot just presume it. Liberal arts schools are facing challenges, financially and otherwise.

When we donate, we say “thanks” for our own good education, for our great Wabash professors, and for wonderful Wabash friendships. Thank you for the donors on the list below. We can donate by mailing a check to Wabash College, Advancement Office, 301 W. Wabash Ave., Crawfordsville, IN 47933, by contributing online at wabash.edu/give, or by calling the college at 877-743-4545.

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Pete and Amy Toft
Jim and Barbara Unger

Thanks for reading *Pactoracles*. It is my honor and responsibility to serve the Class of 1971. Please contact me with news, comments, questions, or aging tips.

Jon Pactor '71 (That's My Class And Was My Age)
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