Wabash.

Class Agents Letter

Class of 1977

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WARNING:
This is a two cups of coffee letter with a lot of classmate news. Settle in as you read.



Remember? Details on Page 9

CURRENT NEWS FROM WABASH

"Campus is messy, but messiness is progress," – Wabash President Scott Feller.

If you happen to visit the academic halls of Crawfordsville right now, you'll see a lot of silver chain-link fencing around the campus. The college is putting in a new centralized air conditioning system that will 'feed' the entire campus, so there's a lot of underground work going on. Also, there's significant progress on the new Community Center (successor to the Sparks Center). The redo/updating of Knowling Fieldhouse is well underway, and the college is also fully renovating International Center on West Wabash Ave (at the home of the late Hall Peebles).

There has been an enormous decline in net tuition revenue across the country over the last decade as the "demographic cliff" has arrived. Because of declining birthrates following the 2008-2009 great financial crisis, there will be fewer high school graduates in the years to come. Recruiting bright, talented men is increasingly competitive, particularly as the percentage of men attending college has declined, and colleges are responding with generous merit- and need-based financial aid packages. President Feller noted in his report to the Board of Trustees that there are now over 1,000 colleges and universities offering free tuition based on certain family income levels. For many private colleges, net tuition revenue has fallen to levels equal to public flagship universities. The road ahead will be bumpy.

IN ACADEMICS: Wabash has made huge strides in both areas over the last decade and now boasts the highest four-year graduation rate in the GLCA. The four-year rolling average for Wabash is 73.3%, while the GLCA median is 67.5% (and just 60.6% for men). That rate is

22 percentage points higher than the average for Indiana's four-year private colleges. Dean Todd McDorman says that we're in the midst of an era when Wabash will boast three of its best-ever four-year graduation rates.

IN ADMISSIONS & MARKETING: This fall's new class numbers 248 men and the goal for next year is 265 new students. Tyler Wade '12 has been appointed as the new admissions director, saying that his job is to "find the best and brightest young men in the country and show them what's possible here." You can help Tyler and his team attract current high school juniors and seniors who will form the classes of 2031 and 2032: the students who will bring us to Wabash's Bicentennial. You can refer a relative or young man of promise you know at **wabash.edu/refer**. Tell Admissions how you know him, too. A name is a lead; a name with a relationship attached is a conversation they can start.

IN ALUMNI & GIVING: As the Princeton Review continues to release college rankings, our alma mater continues receiving high marks. We are the No. 2 ranked college in the entire U.S. for best alumni network, and No. 5 in the country in a new category, "Make an Impact" which Princeton Review defines as community service opportunities, student government, sustainability efforts, and on-campus student engagement. You can see this story and others by clicking on the link: **https://www.wabash.edu/news/story/13631**

Wabash had a record-setting year in fundraising, including 40% alumni participation for the 13th straight year, which is a remarkable accomplishment. The college ran a small deficit in its operating budget in 2025-2026. And while its endowment (a little north of $500 million) seems strong, ***on a per-student basis our endowment is less than that of DePauw, Oberlin and other GLCA colleges***.

MONON BELL GAME: Wabash (now 5-4) will be facing DePauw University (now 8-1) in the 132nd Monon Bell Classic on Saturday, Nov. 14 at Scheumann Stadium at Ball State in Muncie. The is the first time the game has been played at a neutral site since 1922. You can buy tickets through Ticketmaster at **https://www.ticketmaster.com/monon-bell-game-2026-depauw-vs-muncie-indiana-11-14-2026/event/0500652E93295721**

Alumni, parents, families, and friends who can't make it to Muncie for the game in-person can still join others in supporting the Little Giants at a telecast party in your area. All of the details can be found here: wabash.edu/mononbell

CLASSMATE NEWS

You should have received an electronic "update us" form at some point over the past couple of months. We're grateful to all of you who took the time to complete it. What we've gleaned is below. You can add your update here: **https://forms.gle/FZEeTrrbA47bdExh6**.

Next is a lot of classmate news:

Paul Van Ness



Paul and Debbie Van Ness

Personal update: I married my high school sweetheart, Debbie, but waited until I was 67 to do it. Since retirement in 2016, I've traveled extensively hiking, biking, skiing, fishing, hunting, camping…we've been blessed with good health and want to go while we can. I wanted to stay involved in my community so I am on a museum board and on the board with a conservation foundation. Debbie and I have been remodeling the family farmhouse in Waveland and hope to see everyone there at The Bash. Debbie has two children ages 37 and 35, both married. Lindsay and her husband have adopted 4 children 3 - 6. Greg and his wife have one child age 5. It's busy! Both families work with Debbie in her millwork business. Grandchildren: Quintin is 6. Zoe is 5 as is Roman. Josey is 4 and Watson is 3.

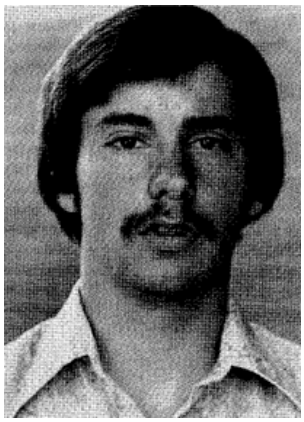
Professional update: After graduation, I attended law school at DePaul University living with classmates Brad Bott and Dan Rizzardini. Upon graduation, I moved to Dallas where I was in private practice for 10 years doing primarily insurance defense litigation. I started the State Farm in-house litigation firm in Dallas Texas in 1992 and after 15 years, I was promoted back to corporate headquarters in my hometown where I had oversight responsibilities for 10 of those offices around the country. I retired in 2016. I LOVE retirement.

Any other highlights from the past year (like travel)? This year has taken us to Peru to explore Manchu Picchu and Ecuador to tour Quito and snorkel in the Galapagos Islands. In September we leave for a cruise which starts in Tokyo, Japan and ends in Seoul, Korea.

Any message: Hope we all will be there at the Big Bash!

Which classmates would you like to hear from? Any and all!

Richard Shapiro



1977 Yearbook

Personal update: Divorced with two (2) kids and four (4) grandkids. I spend most of my time working and when I'm not working, I spend my time with my family and friends. I have two (2) children, both boys, ages 48 and 40. The oldest is currently in between jobs and the youngest is an Engineer. Grandchildren: 4, ages 3-12

Professional update: I am the sitting Judge for the Town of Lowell. I also work for Hoeppner, Wagner & Evans, LLP, in Valparaiso, Indiana, where I do their estate planning.

Which classmates would you like to hear from? My pledge brothers from the Fiji house.

David Long

Personal update: Grandkids; Golf; Reading; Writing; Traveling; Hiking. I have two sons, one in real estate and one in defense industry. Wife Melissa is retired from TV anchor career. Four grandchildren: 15,14, 3, and 2.

Professional update: Self employed consultant

Any other highlights from the past year (like travel)? Switzerland last year; France this year

Any message you'd like to send to classmates or your Class Agents? See you at the 50th. Thanks to the Beast (Paul) for arranging this info sharing process!

Which classmates would you like to hear from? My PBs.

Robert Kunkel

Personal update: I'm a retired physician for one year and spend time playing golf and taking our 3 dogs for walks. I have been married to Barbara for 37 years with 4 children and 3 grandchildren with the fourth due in 5 months. Our oldest daughter Emily has been married to Ben for almost one year and they live in Nashville. Emily works designing offices and Ben is an investment banker. Jacob is married to Catherine for four years and they have a 3 year old son Jaxon and are expecting another baby in 5 months. Jacob works for Spectrum and Catherine raises and grooms horses. Our son Joey is an engineer and his wife Elizabeth is a pediatric intensive care nurse. They have a daughter Andi who is 4 and a 4-month-old son Isaac. Our youngest daughter Gracie works for a medical equipment company and her husband Pat is an investment banker. Grandchildren: Andi is 4, Jaxon is 3 , and Isaac is 4 months

Professional update: Retired for one year from being a full time faculty physician with Bethesda Family Practice Residency program where I did my training in the late 1980s.

Any other highlights from the past year (like travel)? I just returned from Hilton Head Island vacation with the whole family and was able to play golf with Dr Mark Stutz who was one of my Fiji pledge brothers.

Any message you'd like to send to classmates or your Class Agents? Looking forward to seeing everybody at the reunion

Which classmates would you like to hear from? The ones who have not shown up in the past for homecoming, DPU and other reunions

Kevin O'Shaughnessy

Personal update: Golf, Travel

Professional update: Retired Flight Attendant (35 Years)

Any other highlights from the past year (like travel)? Ireland September 2025

Mark Stutz

Personal update: Retired. I stay busy by playing in 2 jazz bands, singing in a chorus or two, and playing golf 3 or 4 days a week. I have 2 sons. Oldest works for western Michigan Univ. and the youngest is a mechanical engineer with Corning. 4 grandchildren ages 3 to 11

Any message you'd like to send to classmates or the class agents? Looking forward to seeing everyone. Don't forget the special event on Thursday, June 3 at Paul Van Ness's farm.



Still there – Dan Broughton and Greg Birk found the plaque with their Wall Street Journal Award names on it in Baxter Hall back in Sept.

Daniel Rizzardini

Personal update: Retired March 2026, Married, 2 kids, 8 grandkids. Hobbies golf, piano, exercise, volunteer psychologist, reading, travel. Spending excessive amounts of time taking care of physical health!! Spouse retired. Two sons; oldest lives in Waco, Texas, Marketing Consultant, Part time farmer, 4 kids. Son lives in Seattle, brand strategist, Seattle Kraken, Sounders. Grandchildren: ages 7, 6(2), 5, 4(2), 1, newborn

Professional update: Retired Psychotherapist

Any other highlights from the past year (like travel)? Traveled to Waco, Seattle, Florida, Victoria, Long Island, Michigan. Shoulder surgery-ouch!

Any message you'd like to send to classmates or your Class Agents? Thank you for keeping us informed and engaged. Look forward to seeing everyone for reunion

Which classmates would you like to hear from? Hope to see and hear from all. It will be fun to see the "final product" from all of that raw material!

Steve Brownlee

Personal update: Karen and I bought an old horse ranch in 1999 and raised our 4 boys on the ranch. Karen had a horse breeding operation that bred performance quarter horses for Reining and Ranch Riding. We still live on the ranch but gave up the breeding operation. Since retirement we have spent time traveling and spending summers in Colorado at our

cabin. I have started playing golf again and between ranch work and golf keep my days full. After years of long distance dating between Wabash and Oklahoma State, Karen and I were married in 1978. She was a special education teacher and retired to raise for very active boys. Our oldest Brian is 43 and an insurance underwriter for travelers insurance. Kyle is 41 and owns a shipping logistics company. Greg is 40 and owns a international big game hunting company and literally travels the world Ben is 34 is board certified in otolaryngology and facial plastic surgery and is a partner in my old office Eastern Okla ENT. We currently have 5 grandchildren ages 6-2 yo. 3 boys and 2 girls

Professional update: I was a practicing Otolaryngologist at Eastern Okla ENT for 38 years. For 18 yrs I also served on the Managing Board of Directors of Tulsa Spine and Specialty hospital that we were able to develop from a 4 operating room 18 bed hospital with 10 physicians to 10 operating rooms and 38 bed hospital with over 50 physicians. I finally pulled the trigger and retired at the end of 2024.

Any other highlights from the past year (like travel)? We have definitely increased our travel since slowing down and retiring. We travelled to Thailand, safari in Zambia, and this spring spent 3 weeks traveling on the Classic trains of Switzerland and then the Tuscany area of Italy.

Thomas Barley

Personal update: Retired for four years now taking care of an 1852 historic house and playing as much golf as the hideous Indiana weather will allow. Remarried nine years ago to Dianne O'Connell. I have a step grandchild Rowan, who just turned two in August.

Professional update: I practiced emergency medicine and internal medicine of all types for 40 years. Now actively retired two years.

Any other highlights from the past year (like travel)? I just returned from a family reunion in Minnesota and I'm looking forward to going to the breeders cup in Lexington Kentucky in a few weeks. To. Gr

Any message you'd like to send to classmates or your Class Agents? Go Wabash.

Which classmates would you like to hear from? All my 77 Kappa Sig Brothers

And Jimmy Parker too! (Interview/phoner with John Kerezy)

Q) Was earning All American honors in football the highlight of your career? Anything in particular you remember?

A) Two specific incidents always come to mind. One was when we played Evansville. They had three players I played with in high school and one I played against. It was a lot of talking



Jimmy Parker

going on with Cleveland pride on the line. It was not malicious. They were ready to go to war with me which was a bonding experience. My senior year I was the only minority on the team and was subjected to a number of cheap shots, but one game specifically comes to mind was Washington U in St. Louis. They started the game and continued the entire time trying to throw me off and a number of my teammates stood with me. That incident stays with me.

Q) After college you had two pro tryouts -- one with the Browns, one with Toronto Argonauts. What were those like? What do you recall?

A) Both featured a series of agility drills, 20 and 40 times. Both had about 50-75 guys there. The Browns was one day, three times and in Canada it was a two-day event. I made it to the last 6-8 before they sent me home.

Q) What took you to Germany? What was that like?

A) My wife was a teacher in the military school system [DODDS] where I was a contractor at Ft Rucker Ala. They offered the opportunity to go to Germany and we took it. It was a two-year tour and we loved it, ended up staying for eight years. I was Community Food Service Director over 11 clubs there.

Q) You coached, too in Germany. Who were some of the 'name' athletes you coached or coached against while you were there?

A) I started coaching kids [mine and my friends] in football and basketball. After half the season the second year I was asked to coach Army unit level, which made more opportunities possible. I was promoted to Community level [where bases play each other] I coached three players that made the taxi squad in the NFL and 2twothat had tryouts in the NBA. I coached against Dirk Nowistski in basketball, and Shack O'Neal, and Michael Strahan in football.

Q) What professors and or coach/staff members do you remember most fondly from and at Wabash?

A) One was Snowy Simpson the basketball coach. I never played for him (after football I was beat up and needed time to rest] but he and I had a number of long talks about a number of topics and I valued his advice.

Q) What was it like going from urban Cleveland to rural West Central Indiana?

A) I found the biggest thing was fewer distractions. It made it much easier to focus on school. The other big thing was the brotherhood which was a bond with my classmates.

Q) What's your career now? (Or if you're retired or retiring soon, what from?)

A) I have had a number of businesses in addition to my "job" [three night clubs, four auto shops at different times, and I found bank funding was an issue with expansion in all cases. Through research, I found a large number of nontraditional funding sources and private money lenders and began a funding company names Premier Advanced Lending [PAL] 12 yrs ago. That's what I'm doing.

Jimmy and his second wife, Rochelle, have six children and three grandchildren.

50 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH – NOVEMBER 1976

Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter garnered 297 electoral votes to become the 38th president of the United States. Spain took major steps towards reform, establishing a path to democracy about a year after the death of dictator Francisco Franco. Arab League peacekeeping forces moved into Beirut and the airport opened there after five months of closure during the Lebanese Civil War.

You couldn't buy it yet in Crawfordsville, but the Sex Pistols 45 rpm single "Anarchy in the U.K" was released in late November. And it would be a while before making its way to The Strand, but the sports action film "Rocky" premiered in New York.

Rod Stewart's "Tonight's the Night" was atop Billboard's Hot 100 pop charts for much of the month, but another notable song working its way up the charts was Gordon Lightfoot's "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" (By the way, if you like good non-fiction books, I highly recommend John U Bacon's book about the ship's 1975 sinking,)

Many of our moms and dads were glued to their TV sets on November 7, when the 1939 film "Gone With the Wind" aired for the first time on broadcast TV (NBC). The network aired it in two parts over consecutive nights (with the intermission just the way the film was), and it earned a (then record) 65 percent share of TV viewers.

George Harrison appeared with Paul Simon on Saturday Night Live. The two sang "Homeward Bound" and "Here Comes the Sun" together. And radio signals from the U.S. Viking 1 probe, which landed on Mars earlier in 1976, helped prove Einstein's general theory of relativity.

MORE ABOUT OUR BIG BASH REUNION, JUNE 3-4-5-6, 2027

Greg, Herm and I want you to save all four days, June 3-6, 2027, on your calendars. **First,** we will have a "pre Big Bash" social and remembrance gathering on Thursday, June 3, at the farmhouse of Paul and Debbie Van Ness in nearby Waveland. IMPORTANT: If you know of a deceased spouse, please pass along name and details to BILL CATUS or ROBIN STOUT. The two are helping our class by assembling a Remembrance Booklet which will be made available that night. Bill's email is **wcatus3@gmail.com**. Robin's email is **rst5984@aol.com**.



L to R: Bill Catus, John Kerezy, and Rhennie Young taking in the Wabash vs. Ohio Wesleyan football game in Oct.

We are MISSING some biographical details about the following deceased classmates. If you have an obituary or can provide information to Bill or Robin, please do so:

Thomas Blake
Terry Endsley
Joseph Markovich
John Roberts
Garry Sekema
David Williams
Michael Carr
Mark Kendra
Duane McKay
Michael Rogers
Mark Shaffner
Michael DeLorenzo
John Mann
Michael Ringlespaugh
Charles Salesman
Russell Todd

Next, Friday, June 4 will be the annual Big Bash Symposium at the college, as well as a Friday "all class" gathering. Details forthcoming.

Then Saturday, June 5 will feature morning activities on the campus, Chapel Sing, an all alumni lunch, and reunion photos. NOTE: There will be special programs and activities for Wabash alumni spouses on Saturday. Watch for details.

Saturday evening will be our 50th class reunion dinner. We're inviting Professor David Hadley, honorary class members ROB JOHNSON and GREG HUEBNER, TOBEY HERZOG, and others from our era who are still with us to attend.

Finally, Sunday, June 6, there will be a close-the-weekend farewell brunch.

Speaking of Greg Huebner, PLEASE WATCH this video we've made, featuring him, about attending the Big Bash. **https://youtu.be/hVnxjCPHnIs**

AS WE APPROACH LATE NOVEMBER

Wabash hosted a Founders' Day event remembering November 21, 1832, when five Presbyterian ministers knelt in the snow to pray for the college they were founding on (what was then) frontier territory. We are all beneficiaries of what these men began in 1832, and in 1833 when Caleb Mills held the first classes at our alma mater.

In a college Chapel in 2007, Wabash celebrated the 175th anniversary of its founding with an address titled "An Uncommon Dream." Here is an excerpt from it:

> At Wabash, liberal education is not a package to be acquired, nor a problem to be solved, but a constantly renewed question, a disposition of the heart and mind as much as a curriculum. The liberal arts mark a way of being in the world, topped off by the Gentleman's Rule. The men of Wabash own this rule. The recognize the defining terms of "citizen" and "gentlemen" lie a lifelong project of critical thinking and exploration of ethics, art, and culture reaching for a complete understanding of what it means to be a man. – President Patrick White

Back in December 1981, Wabash opened its sesquicentennial observance with a Founders Day convocation featuring a speech by WILLIAM PLACHER '70, professor of philosophy and religion. His words included this:

> So colleges like Wabash have to keep fighting for the kind of education that emphasize questions rather than answers, that opens people's minds and expands their horizons....But we live, for sure, in a world that needs saving. Bureaucratic jargon disguises moral issues and human pain. Experts retreat to the role of skillful technicians, unwilling to make judgments about values, and leave the championing of public morality to bigots and extremists. Never have we needed more people of common sense and integrity, people who ought to be the products of a college like this one.

Bill Placher and Patrick White's words resonate with us today, in how we live and how we influence others, even in the beginning of our retirement years. If you want, be glad to email you a copy of either Pres. White's Founders Day Address of 2007 or Dr. Placher's Dec, 1981 Founders Day Chapel Address. Email me at **johnkprof@gmail.com** and let me know which one you'd like. And include a little news about what's happening in your world with the ask.

Best for Wabash Always,

John

John Kerezy, class co-agent