

Wabash.



Class Agent Handbook
January 2026

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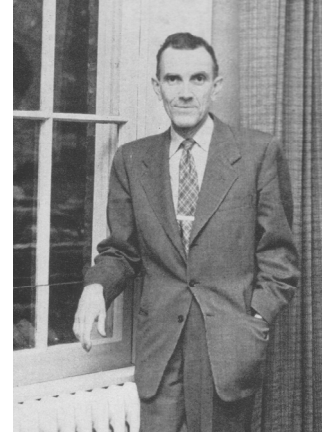


September, 2005 – 50th Anniversary of the Society of Wabash College Class Agents

THE SOCIETY OF WABASH COLLEGE CLASS AGENTS

Brief History

The Society of Wabash College Class Agents traces its beginnings to 1955 when the newly appointed director of alumni affairs, Myron G. “Phil” Phillips ’27, started the Society. Phillips had a vision of keeping graduates connected to the College in a meaningful way through the efforts of a group of class agents. Each agent would be the conduit for information, on the College and on fellow classmates, communicating with every member of the class.



Myron Phillips '27

Phillips’ early efforts have matured as **The Society of Wabash College Class Agents** with over 120 class agents and a governing executive committee directly linked to the board of directors of the National Association of Wabash Men (NAWM). Each graduated class has one or more class agents and collectively these men comprise the Society. The executive committee, in coordination with the Office of Alumni and Affinity Group Engagement (hereinafter, “Alumni Office”), provides oversight for the Society and two of the committee members, who serve as co-chairmen of the committee, also serve on the NAWM board of directors.

Mission

The Society is a major element of the College’s initiative to engage alumni as a strategic advantage. The Society exists to keep Wabash in contact with her alumni body and to gain alumni support of and participation in the ongoing efforts of the College.

Today there is more communication between the College and its alumni body than ever before. From the College’s web site and social media accounts, to the Alumni Office’s emails about upcoming events, to *Wabash Magazine*, to the periodic Trustee Newsletter, to Annual Fund information pieces, Wabash alumni receive a myriad of communications from the College. In addition, the number of alumni events, on- and off-campus, has risen tremendously over the past two decades. However, these information pieces and events, as good as they are, can’t replace the personal touch of a class agent when writing a letter to his classmates, contacting them via social media or building interest in the next class reunion. It is that personal nature of class agent communications that makes them an effective force in helping the College pursue its mission.

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Roles

The roles of the Class Agents can be divided into three categories: 1. Communicate with classmates, 2. Help with class reunions, and 3. Assist with the College's fundraising activities. You will find resources listed in our descriptions below.

1. **Communicate with classmates.** Historically, a class agent stayed in touch with his class primarily through the writing of periodic letters¹. These letters carried news of the College and of classmates and served as major source of information to alumni. That has all changed with the advent of the Internet, email, and the latest forms of electronic communications. Class communication has moved into the electronic age with many classes establishing a presence on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. One thing that has not changed is the role of the class agent – he remains the central figure in crafting class communications and is free to select the content and delivery method for all class communications. *Past experience has shown the best class agent communications offer a combination of updates on the personal and professional lives of classmates and a report on College news from a personal standpoint.* To help, the Alumni Office provides an entire system of information and support:
 - a. **Document formatting, production, and mailing done by the Alumni Office.** Obviously, a class agent can directly post a communication piece on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. For those pieces going to the class as a letter/email, the class agent or guest author² simply needs to send the document to alumni@wabash.edu. A staff member takes care of formatting, reproducing and mailing/emailing³ the agent's letters. To aid in production, the office prefers electronic copies of letters in *Microsoft Word*. Once the class agent sends the piece to the Alumni Office, his work is done!
 - b. **Class Agent Alerts.** When there's breaking news on campus, the Alumni Office will email a "Class Agent Alert" to all class agents.
 - c. **The Bachelor.** The *Bachelor* – published each week during each semester when classes are in session – provides the class agent with current information on Wabash from the student's perspective. *The Bachelor* can be found on-line at www.wabash.edu/bachelor.
 - d. **Other class agent's letters.** The most recent copy of the letters to each class are available on-line at: www.wabash.edu/alumni/class_leaders.

¹ Some agents also make it a point of emailing and phoning their classmates, often to ask for updates on their personal and professional lives.

² The college has experienced some success at distributing class communications authored by someone other than a class agent. These communications have been successful as fundraising appeals, calls for reunion attendance, and just a fresh, different perspective.

³ Class agent letters are typically emailed to all alumni with an email address and mailed to the remainder of the class. If a class agent wants the letter USPS-mailed to everyone, please ask the Alumni Office to do so.

e. **Classmate updates.** The Alumni Office provides class agents with periodic updates on the latest classmate news⁴.

f. **Alumni eServices.** All alumni have credentials to access eServices, which includes:



1. A database of all alumni which can be searched by class years, fraternities, and other attributes on **Alumni eServices**. This database is updated every day and provides a number of different search options – class year or years, locations, majors, fraternities, etc. Each alumnus has an individual user name and password available from the Alumni Office.

g. **Class rosters.** The Alumni Office can provide updated information on all classmates including address, phone number, email address, and other class specific information. This information is typically distributed as a *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet.

h. **Color printing/campus photographs.** The Alumni Office can include color photographs and illustrations in letters. In addition, staff members have digital cameras and can include campus photographs if desired.

i. **All the help and support needed.** The Alumni Office and the Society of Wabash College Class Agents will help class agents with guidance on communications and with useful information that they might include in their letters. The Office can also include the “Where Are You Now?” Form in class communications as one avenue to solicit more class member information (Appendix III).

2. **Help with class reunions.** *The class agents’ primary role is to raise awareness of the reunion and to urge classmates to attend.* The Alumni Office is primarily responsible for planning and running the **Big Bash**, Wabash’s yearly reunion weekend⁵. Class agents don’t need to worry about menus, venues, or any other details. The single most important area for a class agent to concentrate on is the effort to generate good class attendance. **The only effective way to generate good attendance is through a network of living unit representatives.** You can find more details in the publication *Roadmap for a Reunion* available from the Alumni Office. The College, as mentioned earlier, has several resources that make the reunion buildup simple and easy:

a. **Planning booklet.** The College provides a continuously updated *Roadmap for a Big Bash Reunion* that provides guidance on the entire reunion weekend as well as some helpful suggestions.

⁴ See Appendix III, “Where Are You Now?” This is the form you can ask the College to mail to all of your classmates along with your class agent letter.

⁵ Held the first weekend of June.

- b. **Class rosters.** These rosters (in *Microsoft Excel* format) facilitate contact between classmates. They are emailed, whenever possible, so class agents can sort them by state, College living unit, etc.
- c. **Alumni reunion web site** (www.wabash.edu/bigbash). The alumni web site offers detailed information on the **Big Bash** weekend and an easy, on-line registration form for reunions. In addition, the website lists members of each reunion class who have registered for the reunion.
- d. **Staff support.** The director of the Alumni Office serves as a focal point for reunions. In addition to class agent letters, the office staff can mail special, class-specific “Save-the-date” and reminder cards.

NOTE: Wabash welcomes all alumni, families, and friends to Big Bash, regardless of whether or not that class is celebrating a reunion. Be sure to encourage your class to attend the many activities during that weekend and catch up with older and younger classes they attended Wabash with as students.

- 3. **Assisting the College’s fundraising efforts.** *The class agent can actively support the ongoing efforts of the College by: his leadership and example of giving to the College, communicating with his classmates about the goals of the College and the status of current fundraising efforts, and by reporting on his class’s contributions.* The mission is clear: Without the continued support of the alumni body, Wabash cannot grow and prosper. Class agents can find updated giving information on their classmates in the Class Agent portal through eServices, from Annual Giving in the periodic alerts, or by contacting the Alumni Office.

Expectations

The Society of Wabash College Class Agents expects the following from its members:

- 1. **Leader and Role Model.** Class agents should be positive leaders and role models who are actively engaged in the life of the College. Class agents are in a unique position: They can serve as “informed insiders” and share that knowledge and insight. Class agents should provide a balanced dialogue in their communications and present them in a responsible, factual fashion. A class agent’s efforts, on behalf of Wabash, within the College community, and with external audiences, have a tremendous impact on the College’s ability to remain independent and to grow and prosper.
- 2. **Periodic Communications.** Each class should hear from one of their class agents on a periodic basis. Appendix II contains a sample four-letter plan developed by a class agent. For classes with more than one class agent, divide up the writing duties in whatever way is easiest.

3. **Support the College Financially.** The Society expects each class agent to make an annual financial gift to the College – preferably early in the fiscal year. This allows the class agent to demonstrate his leadership. As with any fund-raising initiative, annual participation is crucial. Wabash can and will operate from a position of strength if the alumni body supports the effort every year. As leaders and role models, the Society expects class agents to lead that effort.
4. **Support Recruiting Efforts.** The Society suggests that each class engage alumni who can assist the Wabash Admissions Office by talking with prospective students who have applied to Wabash and/or are admitted – persuading them to enroll. The Admissions Office will also welcome referrals of high-caliber prospects for Wabash who would benefit from a Wabash education. And by sharing admissions information with the class, class agents can inspire our alumni even further and have a wide-ranging impact on Wabash’s overall Admissions efforts.
5. **Return to campus.** The Society expects class agents to return to campus when they are able. A campus visit provides the agent with an opportunity to see what’s new and to observe what hasn’t changed. A campus visit also provides an opportunity to renew bonds with faculty, staff, and students. One way to accomplish this is to return to the annual **J.B. Bachman ’61 Class Agent Forum**. Traditionally, the Forum is held on campus during one of the first home football games. Planned and administered by the Alumni Office, the Forum brings the class agents together, provides updates on the College, and shares common interests and concerns. The Class Agents’ Awards Ceremony is held in conjunction with the Forum and for presentation of periodic class agents’ awards. The Alumni Office also hosts a Virtual Class Agent Forum in the early spring each year (typically late March or early April), available on Zoom.



Selection Process

Class agents are, first and foremost, volunteers. They give of their time and talent to keep their fellow class members in touch with the College and each other.

For class agents of graduating classes, the staff of the Alumni Office, working in conjunction with the Dean of Students Office, identifies candidates. The goal is to select enough class agents for each class to provide adequate coverage and leverage the personal relationships formed during students’ four years on campus.

Class agents for matriculated classes, those replacing a departing agent or joining others on the role, emerge as a result of a call for volunteers from the College and/or from the class itself.

Length of Service

There is no such thing as a normal term of service for a class agent. Some class agents have served the College and their class for more than 50 years! Others begin their service several decades after their graduation. In some cases, class agents resign their posts because of the demands of their personal and/or professional lives. The College and the class will always accept a class agent's resignation with no questions asked.

We really take into account only one planning factor when considering serving as a class agent: the timing of the next class reunion. Class reunions happen every five years, and a class really has an advantage when their class agent has been in place and "up to speed" before the reunion planning timeframe begins. Conversely, the best time to make a class agent change is right after a reunion, when memories are fresh (lots of new material for the class agent letter) and there's ample time to build upon connections renewed at the reunion.

Class agents who consistently are not performing their roles to the level of expectation may be asked to step down by the executive committee or the Alumni Office. This action is only taken when all other attempts to help the class agent are exhausted by both the executive committee and the College.

Executive Committee

The Society started the executive committee in 1991 to oversee the performance of the class agents and serve as an advisory board for the Alumni Office. Elections to the executive committee are held each summer in accordance with the *Constitution of the National Association of Wabash Men*. The executive committee consists of two co-chairs (who, by virtue of this role, serve as the Class Agent Representatives on the NAWM Board of Directors) and six at-large committee members.

Awards

There are three awards designed to recognize the contributions to the College and the alumni by high performing class agents. The executive committee makes the selections and the awards are presented at the annual Class Agents' Awards Dinner held each fall during the Forum.

1. **The Warren Wright Shearer Hall of Fame Award** is the most prestigious of the three. In 1991 the National Association of Wabash Men established this award in honor of a great Little Giant: a student, teacher, Dean of the College, Acting President, and Class Agent extraordinaire. It is awarded in recognition of extraordinary performance by a Class Agent in all roles and duties including: class communications, class financial contributions, recruiting, and Little Giant spirit over a period of time, not necessarily a year.

2. **The Myron G. Phillips Most Outstanding Class Agent Award** was established in 1963 by the Alumni Board in memory of this outstanding Wabash student, Professor, Assistant Director of Admissions, and Director of Alumni Affairs. It is awarded to the Class Agent who performs most significantly in his roles of communicating with his class, encouraging class financial contributions, recruiting new students, and exhibiting Little Giant spirit.

3. **The R. Robert Mitchum Most Outstanding Young Class Agent Award** was established in 1979 by the Alumni Board to honor a long-time Director of the Wabash College Glee Club and Director of Alumni Affairs. Established to encourage classes graduating in the last ten years, it is awarded to the Class Agent who has demonstrated outstanding performance in discharging his duties as Class Agent in the areas of class communication, class financial contributions, new student recruitment, and Little Giant spirit.

Appendix I – Staff Directory and Web Site Information

Alumni Office

Contact the Alumni Office at alumni@wabash.edu

Location

The Alumni Office is located in The Bill and Ginny Hays Alumni Center on the north side of Wabash's campus. The address is 418 W. Wabash Ave. We are open weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feel free to drop in for a visit!

Web References

Wabash Alumni -- www.wabash.edu/alumni

Big Bash Reunion -- www.wabash.edu/bigbash

Class agent related information -- www.wabash.edu/alumni/class_agents

Bachelor -- www.wabash.edu/bachelor/