



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

**September 5, 2023**



## **Freshmen Arrive, Classes Resume, Connections Made**

The above headline could have been written on September 10, 1967. On that day in history, we arrived for Freshman Sunday. This year, freshmen reported on Freshman Saturday, August 25. These future Wabash Golden Little Giants are the same as us when we arrived 56 years ago, and different, too. We are connected.

Like us, they arrived as introverts, extroverts, and just run-of-the mill verts. They arrived mostly by car. So did we. But, I saw a first on August 25. A student arrived in a mammoth RV, which seemed to have the square footage of Baxter 101.

Like us, the men of the Class of 2027 are inhabiting dorms and fraternities, but their amenities are nicer than ours were. They will eat better and more nutritious food than we did, or at least they have a better chance to do so.

Like us, they will have to get their feet planted on the Wabash ground. Like us, they will dig into academics or dig themselves in a hole. Like us, they will have to go to class, develop social skills, and learn *Old Wabash* with varying skills in singing.

They will have a surfeit of technological ways to communicate, though they probably do not know how to make a collect call home. But, like us, they will grab their weekly paper edition of the *Bachelor*, the Voice of Wabash since 1908. By holding and reading it, they will connect, as we did, to the past, present, and future of Wabash College. If they do not know the meaning of surfeit, they won't be looking for the definition in a paper dictionary if they bother to look it up. Is there a word for the reluctance to use a dictionary?



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Like us, they are coming to a beautiful, serene campus in western Indiana while the outside world is in turmoil. We arrived when racial relations were roiling, and they were still roiling when we graduated on June 6, 1971. Today, our society is roiling in bigotry stoked by voices on endless websites, blogs, tweets, social media, and other unchecked channels that did not exist a half century ago. The wild west of media intensifies the need for current students to learn more than we needed how to decipher what is true and what is real. Still, our times connect with theirs.

Eight African-Americans were in the Class of 1967, which probably set a Wabash record for most in one class. Other classmates included a few Asians and a few Jews. A few classmates were immigrants or foreign exchange students from Europe or South America. I am not aware of any Hispanics. Today's student population is much more diverse—in some ways. There are many Hispanics, blacks, and Asians, though fewer Jews than in 1967. Still, the base remains—most are Hoosiers. All of us chose a liberal arts college with a desire to better ourselves. The Class of 2027 has done the same.

This issue highlights two connections. I recently came across a Wabash publication that our classmate Keith Nelson wrote as a junior. He sought to encourage blacks to enroll at Wabash. I think it is a beautiful piece—blunt, candid, and courageous. It is reprinted in this letter with his permission.

One can read it, and correctly so, as a story of the times of Wabash College, or more narrowly as of the times of just black students at Wabash. But, I favor reading it as the story of one young man, who came to Wabash College in 1967. He grew into a student and a student leader. While the world was in turmoil, he set out to do something about it. His leadership then led to what is now the Malcolm X Institute Of Black Studies, so meaningful to the men and women of Wabash College for a half century.

A second article is from Tom Runge '71 and Carol Runge H'71 about their special connections of Wabash and their grandsons. Tom is a retired colonel in the U.S. Air Force.

I ask myself as new Wabash students arrive: Who will be the next Keith Nelson? Who will be the next leader in the military like Ret. Adm Alex Miller or Runge? Who will be the next leader in academia like Steve Wildman, or in politics like John Ryder, or in medicine like John Hubert, Trey Holland, and several other classmates? Who will be the leaders in business and community affairs like so many of us? Who will become Wabash trustees such as classmates Mike Dill, Holland, and Miller?

I do not know who they will be. I know that the men of the Class of 2027 like us will become accomplished men. Like us, they will become responsible citizens and gentlemen. The world needs men of such caliber. They are worthy of our support. We are connected.

## **Connections--The Runges & Wabash**

**By Tom Runge '71 And Carol Runge H'71**

We were thrilled when Wabash College's legendary class agent, Jon Pactor, asked us to submit a short piece for the famous Class of 1971 class letter, titled *Pactoracles*.

Jon asked us to talk about our two grandsons who are students at Wabash. (Spoiler alert: we're hoping we'll get one or two more!)



**Owen Runge**, Class of 2024, hails from Aldie, Virginia. He's the son of Chris (Class of 1994) and Lisa Runge. Owen searched for and visited several schools before deciding on Wabash during his senior year at Stone Bridge High School.

Owen is majoring in Computer Science and German. He's an independent who started in Morris (It looks the same as when Tom was at Wabash!!!) and was fortunate to move over to Rogge Hall. Owen has participated in an immersion trip and finished a semester abroad at Heidelberg University. Recently, Owen made a 90-minute presentation...entirely in German!

Owen enjoys playing soccer at the intermural level, and he's served as a computer science tutor.

Owen was recently inducted into Phi Beta Kappa as a junior.

**Karston Runge** hails from the other coast of the United States – Los Altos, California. He's a member of the Class of 2025. His proud parents are



Jeremy Runge (CA) and Stacey Shanklin (FL). Unlike Owen, Karston had his heart set on Wabash from the start. His campus visit was tough – right in the middle of Covid! He was very fortunate, though, to meet with track Coach Clyde Morgan and Professor Rick Warner. Despite social distancing and masks, Coach Morgan and Prof. Warner were phenomenal. Karston was hooked, and so was his Mom.

Karston is an Econ major and a member of the Wabash Track and Field team. Last year he had the opportunity to compete for Wabash in the NCAC Conference Meet.

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Karston started out in Morris Hall as well but pledged Phi Delta Theta in his second semester, freshman year. This past year he served as the social chairman for the fraternity.

Of course, we enjoy seeing the guys on a regular basis. We also get the opportunity to get some home-made "goodies" to them.

Both of us have watched as these young men have grown right before our eyes. They have done well in the classroom and with their fellow students. We could not be prouder of them, or more thankful for what Wabash has done for them.



*Karston, Carol, and Owen*

*Ed Note: Tom may be the only classmate who has had both a son and grandsons attend Wabash. Carol and he grew up in Crawfordsville and married before Tom graduated. After he retired from the Air Force, he served as the Wabash director of Alumni and Parent Relations. The National Association of Wabash Men named Carol an honorary alumna in 2016. The Runiges have been loyal Wabash supporters. Just one example: Carol often cheers at Wabash sporting events while Tom photographs the action. Thanks to them for this article.*



# Dear Brother



from  
BLACK STUDENTS  
at  
**WABASH COLLEGE**



## Dear Brother

First let me introduce myself, I am Keith Nelson: black, a junior and currently serving as President of the Afro-American Student Union at Wabash. The Afro group is in it's third year and has grown to be one of the most active and viable groups on campus. Why was it founded? Three years ago the few of us here decided to form a group to meet the special needs of black students, and to serve as a forum which would bring blackness to Wabash in the form of speakers, drama groups, artists, etc. Perhaps we have done our job too well, because our members are now involved in every facet of college life from the "Soul" program on the student owned radio station, to Admissions, to the Trustee Committee on College Life.

Well, that gives you a very brief introduction to the A.A.S.U., however, the main reason for this letter is to sell Wabash College to you, but not to sell you on Wabash College — that we hope you will do for yourself. College is too important a decision to trust in the hands of others, so I would simply like to pose some questions to help you make that decision.

Do you believe in being an academic prostitute? If not, look out when making your college choice, too many colleges and universities are buying black students with scholarships just to have their quota of niggers. There is no quota system at Wabash and black students are not bought as if from the slave block. A growing number of black students are admitted each year at Wabash, because each year more apply. Black students, like all applicants, are reviewed in all areas, not just academic achievement or athletic honors, but in terms of what they can contribute to the Wabash Community.

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Do you think your grades are too low or test scores below the average student? Forget it! If you think Wabash is what you want for the next four years don't hesitate to apply and let our Admissions Committee make the final decision. You will be considered for admittance on an equal basis with the boy who has a B+ average and 1200 college boards. Some of the black students here have been admitted with "below normal test scores and grades" and they are making it through four years at one of the best small colleges in the country. This doesn't mean it is easy, but hard work is involved in anything worthwhile.

Wabash is hardly Utopia; it has problems just as all colleges and universities have problems. However, Wabash has one unique advantage: it's trying to do something about its problems. This has involved black students to a large degree. For example, when the question of courses in Afro-American Studies came up, it was black students serving on a committee appointed by the Dean of the College who helped plan the Black Studies Program now in operation. In the near future there may be an Institute of Afro-American Studies operating on a limited scale, and much of this plan will be drafted by black students.

If I came to Wabash, what obligations would I have to the A. A. S. U.? None! Membership in the A. A. S. U. is purely voluntary and based on interest and that alone. We do not pressure a black student into the group, but the fact that all of the black brothers on campus consider themselves members in some way, says much for the organization.

What is expected out of me as a black student? Nothing special, you, like all students are required to follow the only written rule: "to act as a gentleman at all times." Wabash deals with people — not numbers. At Wabash you are a human being and are treated that way.

Will I be able to receive special help at Wabash? Certainly? A very strong sense of community surrounds Wabash and any student or professor is willing to help you in some special area. The doors of the administration and faculty are always open and it is usually unnecessary to make an appointment to see anyone. This openness and friendliness can be seen everywhere at Wabash from the class room to the Scarlet Inn where everyone at one time or another during the day drops in for conversation and coffee. In fact, if a professor or administrator is not in his office he usually can be found in the Inn, hunched over a cup of coffee talking about anything from last night's basketball game to new college policies under consideration.

Is Wabash looking for people like me? Yes, if you are reading this — then Wabash is interested in you. We realize it is becoming more important each day which college you attend. Your choice of college will have a direct influence on your later life. It is one of the most important decisions you will possibly make on your own. On your own, because only you are best able to decide what you want. You are showing independence and intelligence by looking at this booklet and not following the crowd — looking only at local, state supported, large universities. You are the type of man needed at a "small, independent, liberal arts college for men."

What about you Keith? Why did you come to Wabash? I've been asked that question several times in the last three years. There is no one answer. When looking for a college, I looked for a small place, and this in itself narrowed the choices. A place relatively near home, this too cut the number down quite a bit. I heard about Wabash and became interested, applied, (if you don't have the necessary application fee — apply anyway, the fee can be waived) and then I visited the college. I found Wabash able to meet every test except one. Money! Wabash

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College too say the least, is expensive, and I found myself waiting to see what I would be granted in financial aid before I could make my final decision. So, I guess my decision to come here depended upon scholarship aid, and through loans and by working I've been able to cover the expenses left after my scholarship. And I can honestly say — I'm attending the college of my choice.

My freshman year was hard and grades didn't come easily. So why did I come back? Several people, among them my parents, the Dean of Students and my advisor expressed confidence in me and felt I could make it. "If you're good enough to get in, you can make it — if you've got guts," was one of the Dean's comments to me. So, I stuck it out. My sophomore year I found Wabash to be a lot easier, especially after I had changed my study habits!

However, don't get me wrong. I am a black first and a Wabash man second — that's why I'm interested in you. Given current social conditions Wabash is what a black student needs, you have a chance to be a chance to be a man, competing among men on an equal basis perhaps for the first time in your life. You are not a number and you will never be just another black face. At Wabash, you are an individual respected for your uniqueness. So, if you don't want to be an academic prostitute or a slave on the auction block going to the highest scholarship offer, look into Wabash College. Or better yet, send in an application — it will be the best decision of your life!

Yours in Brotherhood,  
Keith Nelson '71

**Wabash Wins The Gentlemen's Classic**

A gutsy play gave Wabash a thrilling one-point victory over the Tigers of Hampden-Sydney, 29-28, in the Gentleman's Classic, September 2.

The Tigers, a men's college with an enrollment of about 1,700 in Hampden-Sydney, VA, regained the lead 28-21 and then forced Wabash to punt. With time running out, they had the ball and the game in their hands. Wabash forced the Tigers' to drop the ball which Wabash hands grabbed. A Wabash TD closed the gap to 28-27. A two-point conversion thrilled the fans, including classmates Trey Holland, Fred Haase, and me who watched via the computer.

The Tigers set an all-time record—fewest penalties in a game. They were called for no penalties. Wabash was called for only two. The teams played as gentlemen. Each team accumulated 399 total yards and had one turnover.

Wabash will play next on September 16 when the team visits Butler. Kick-off is scheduled for 6 p.m. Watch in person or via the internet.



## **News From Classmates**

**Skip Adams**, who lives in Georgia, plans to attend the Beta Theta Pi anniversary in October. He writes: "My oldest daughter, Kristin, and I attended the annual [Sun Valley Writers Conference](#) in July. It's a 3-day event with talks by many of the most prominent fiction and non-fiction writers in the U.S. In the months leading up to the conference I read about 15 of the most recent books by these authors—the most concentrated reading I've done since college/law school. Sun Valley is a beautiful setting for this exchange of ideas among many of our great literary minds. I highly recommend it."



## **News From Campus**

**Homecoming will be September 21-23.** Let me know whether you will be on campus. If so, I will try to arrange a time that we can gather to chat and have a photo. The Little Giants will take on Oberlin at 2 p.m.

**Beta Theta Pi** will celebrate its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary on campus, October 27-28. The plans include a panel discussion on the fraternity's history on Friday. This discussion may be opened to the public. The Betas will have a ribbon cutting ceremony for the renovation of its first floor. Before a big Saturday evening banquet, they will have a tailgate before the Wittenberg game.

**Kirk Eichenberger '71** retired in 2005 after a career as a forester with the U.S. Forest Service. His wife Peggy and he are living on Bainbridge Island, just a short ferry ride from downtown Seattle. Their kids and grandkids live nearby. He says that they "are spending a lot of time exploring the wonderful Pacific Northwest," as shown in this photo which he supplied.

**Giant Steps Campaign Closes.** The college raised about \$250,000,000 in the Giant Steps campaign that closed on June 30. Thanks to all classmates and spouses for their contributions to the campaign.

**Rankings And Ravings.** *Fiske Magazine* has named Wabash as one of the best and most interesting colleges in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, and England. *Money* magazine lists Wabash as one of the Best Colleges in America among more than 700 schools. It considered Wabash's small class size, accessible professors, student-faculty ratio, financial aid, and the Gentleman's Rule. I mentioned *Princeton's Review* in the last letter.



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**Donate Your Artifacts To Old Wabash**

In each issue, I encourage us to donate artifacts to Wabash. Who reads this? One Wabash man of the Class of 1967 (yes, 1967) did, and I am helping him donate things. You, too, can donate, and I will help you if need be. The college has a fund to help defray costs for donations of artifacts. Call or e-mail me if you think that I can help you.

**Thanks To Classmates Who Donated In The Last Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year ended on June 30. Our class come in at 43.3% of our solicitable roll. Thanks to classmates, spouses, and widows who donated.

For the 10<sup>th</sup> year in a row, alumni participation surpassed 40%, a marvelous accomplishment. The annual fund raised more than \$3.8 million dollars, a marvelous and critical accomplishment for a school of Wabash's size.

Thanks to the following gentlemen and ladies listed below who have already donated to the current fiscal year through September 4.

Steve and Doris Covey  
Andy and Marta Dziubinskyj  
Ron and Janet Israel  
Clark and Susie Johnson  
Brad and Trudy Johnson

Dennis and Jane Myers  
Jon and Andrea Pactor  
Carl and Judith Royal  
Lain Whitaker-Ryder, widow of  
John Ryder

Please donate by mailing a check to Wabash College, Annual Giving, P.O. Box 352, Crawfordsville, IN 47933 or by contributing online at [wabash.edu/egift](http://wabash.edu/egift), or by calling the college at 877-743-4545.

When we donate, we say "thanks" for our own good fortune, for our great Wabash professors, and our Wabash friendships. If you are reading this letter, you care about Wabash. Thanks for caring.

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



Your Brother In Wabash,

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