



Class Agents Letter

Class of 1974

Class Agents

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Wabash Men of 1974:

It's been awhile since you heard from your Class Agents, thus this letter is overdue. I (Paul) attended the J. B. Bachman '61 Class Agent Forum last month in Crawfordsville. Mark had a prior commitment to a grandson's birthday party in Detroit, though he did report he had had his annual heart check-up at the Cleveland Clinic and everything was looking good. He told me to take good notes so that's hopefully what you'll see below.

I did not stay for the football game. The kickoff was delayed an hour due to lightning in the area and then the second half was delayed again by lightning. The game finished under the lights at Crawfordsville High School around 8 pm with a Little Giant victory. We traveled to perennial powerhouse, and the newest member of the North Coast Athletic Conference, John Carroll University this weekend where the Little Giants were defeated 28-31. We play Ohio Wesleyan at home on Saturday.

I ran into Kurt Homann on my way across the mall to Hays Hall for the meeting. Kurt was on his morning walk through campus. Kurt said he's still working.

I traveled to Normandy (actually Paris, Bayeux, and Normandy, France and Southampton and London, England) in June for the D-Day commemoration and a visit to numerous World War II sites with my son's father-in-law, Phil Hager, and a group from Bedford, VA. Phil lost his wife last year and needed a traveling companion so my wife volunteered me. Quite interesting and moving.



I had surgery at IU Health in Indianapolis at the end of July to correct a rare, old man's throat malady called Zenker's diverticulum (Google it). I was on a soft food diet for five weeks until returning to Indy to have the “clips” removed from my throat on September 2. Back to solid food now!

Per Mark's instructions to take good notes here are some highlights from the Forum:

- We were introduced to our new Dean of Students, Scott Brown. Scott is the first non-alumnus to serve in this capacity in about 40 years.
- We were also introduced to the many new and improved resources of the Ramsay Archives by Archivist, Nolan Eller '11.
- Director of Alumni and Affinity Group Engagement, Ron Dostal, emphasized his departmental goal of ENGAGEMENT to strengthen both the college and our respective classes. The old model of one or two class agents per class is being scuttled. The Class of 2025 will have eight Class Agents. If you want to join Mark and me – STEP UP!
- The federal charitable contribution income tax deduction for non-itemizers is returning for 2026. Single filers will be able to deduct \$1,000 while married couples may deduct \$2,000. Non-Indiana residents especially may want to hold their donations until after January 1, 2026. Your gifts will still count for Wabash's fiscal year. Indiana residents still may claim their college tax credit.
- The Sparks Center has been completely demolished. Nothing there but a hole in the ground with excavation six feet deeper than originally planned due to water issues. Construction of the new community center is expected to take two years. Dining is at “Grub Hollow” near the tennis courts.
- 270 new students enrolled this year with 908 men on campus. Most ever students on campus. This comes close to our record enrollment of 923; however, some of those men resided off-campus.
- The demographics (declining birthrate, fewer men enrolling in college, high cost of education) have made recruiting “brutal.” We are targeting the southwest U.S., especially Arizona and Texas. That's where the college age men reside.

- Our Annual Fund collected a record amount of almost \$4 million (\$3,983,898) in fiscal '25 with an alumni participation rate of 40% for a twelfth straight year. We are seeing fewer small dollar donors whereas the college's model is built on participation.
- Our endowment at 6/30/25 was a record \$440 million and growing.
- We have reduced the percentage of our endowment spending to below 32% of our annual budget which allows us to increase the risk in our portfolio. Investment returns over the last five years have exceeded 10%.
- The administration's focus for our 2032 Bicentennial will be a philanthropic celebration for our third century.

Please let us hear from you even if it is just news about your latest surgical procedure or the new prescription you're taking.

Yours in Wabash,

Paul Tipps and Mark Dewart
Co-Class Agents 1974