

Class of 1977

Class Agents

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Hi Classmates! Greg, Herm and I actually have quite a bit of news (lots of it good) to share with you as we turn the calendar from February to March and the page from winter to summer. Let's dive right into the details...

\$25 MILLION – That's the amount of the grant Wabash received from the Lilly Endowment in December. The grant's purpose is to collaborate more closely with the greater Crawfordsville community to improve quality of life. The grant will help fund a campus and community engagement center, support an early childcare center, nurture and sustain the nonprofit ecosystem, and work closely with the growing Latino community. The grant enables Wabash to hire a Director of Latino Partnerships and establish a Latino Community Center in addition to supporting the La Alianza student group.

A portion of that money will assist the college with the construction of a new "community center" (sort of a working title). It is a two-year project which will cost about \$80 million. Groundbreaking will occur after Big Bash in June. Here's a link to the college's news release with details:

<https://www.wabash.edu/news/story/13231>

PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS – Wabash's outstanding academic standards continue to bring opportunities for today's students. Three current Wabash students will be doing extensive study abroad programs in the near future as recipients of Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarships. Another four Wabash seniors have received Orr Fellowships. These are guaranteed two-year salaried positions with some of Indiana's most dynamic, high-growth businesses.

FIRST BLACK STUDENT CELEBRATED, HONORED – Wabash commemorated John R. Blackburn (pictured at right), the first Black student to attend the college, with a series of events in early February. After extensive investigation, Associate Professor of English and Black Studies Timothy Lake discovered his identity. Seventeen of Blackburn's descendants gathered on the Wabash campus to celebrate and honor his legacy, and the College presented them with a posthumous honorary degree in tribute to Blackburn.

SAVE THESE DATES: Wabash's *Annual Day of Giving* is set for April 24. Watch for details. And this year's *Big Bash* will be on May 31-June 2. Hope you'll join us three and make plans to attend! We're sure some of your classmates will be there. [Registration is open.](#)



TIME CAPSULE: Fifty years ago this week, the hammer of the law came down on seven former Nixon White House aides, including H.R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman and John Mitchell, who were indicted on charges of conspiring to obstruct justice as a result of the 1972 Watergate break-in. "All in the Family" was the top-rated show on television. "The Way We Were" (Barbra Streisand), "Seasons in the Sun" (Terry Jacks) and "Dark Lady" (Cher) were the top Billboard pop songs when this new disc jockey named Casey Casem was syndicating his "American Top 40" radio show early that spring. "The Exorcist," "The Sting" and "Blazing Saddles" Remember? "I want you to round up every vicious criminal and gunslinger in the West. Take this down!"

RECONNECTING: Herm, Greg and I are going to make an effort between the next few class letters to reconnect with "haven't heard from in a while" classmates and provide some brief updates for you. Here's the first effort, with Greg doing the 'heavy lifting' of reaching out to find them.

BOB LEIGHTON married Kathy Auchter (DePauw '77), and the two lived together in Florida for 25 years. They have two adult sons. Bob is a retired civil/environmental engineer, now living in beautiful Kenosha, Wisc. Bob and Kathy are now divorced. You can reach him at bleighton530@aol.com or at 224-339-4634. Hope some of Bob's fellow Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity brothers might catch up with him.

ANDY ROBERTSON has retired – three times -- only to come back twice to fill in interim roles, with Indiana University Kokomo. Andy said he's not been back to Wabash since an Education Forum on campus about nine years ago, and he's looking forward to being back in the near future and to coming back for our 50th reunion in 2027. He'd like to see RICK WHEELER once again. These two lived in Wolcott/Morris Halls, if my memory serves. You can reach Andy at swampcreek28@gmail.com.

BARNEY QUICK is a freelance writer, jazz musician, and an adjunct faculty member at Indiana University Columbus. He is also a former president of the Indian Council of World Affairs. Barney says he's forever indebted to professors Bert Stern, Don Baker, and Don Herring for honing his skills as a professional writer. You can reach Barney at 812-374-4807 or at barneyquick@yahoo.com. Be sure to connect with him, fellow Kappa Sigma fraternity brothers.

AND SEEKING: If anyone in the class is in touch with LARRY WALKER or VIDAS GVOZDZIUS or JOHN DOWNING, let Greg or Herm or me know?

RIP CHICK CLEMENTS



Our honorary class member Thomas Duane "Chick" Clements died peacefully at Wellbrooke of Crawfordsville on Feb. 15 at the age of 89. A Korean War veteran, "Chick" worked as the Athletic Dept. Equipment manager for Wabash from 1966 to 2003. He was inducted into the Wabash Athletics Hall of Fame in 1993, and a suite in the new Little Giant stadium was dedicated in his name in 2022. Chick was born May 25, 1934, at Crawfordsville, to Ruth and Vernon Clements. He graduated from Crawfordsville High School in 1952. He briefly attended Butler University on an athletic scholarship. He then served in the Korean War.

After returning from the war, he married Janet Payne in June, 1956; his life-long partner of 64 years. He worked as the Athletic Department Equipment Manager for Wabash College from 1966 to 2003. While at Wabash, he was made an Honorary Alumnus, Class of 1977. Chick was a mentor, advocate, friend, and father-figure to generations of Wabash men. He was as devoted to the Wabash community as it was to him. It was his devotion to the spirit and place of all things Wabash that made him "some Little Giant." In 1998 he was inducted into the Wabash College Athletic Hall of Fame. And in 2022, a Little Giants Football Stadium suite was dedicated in his name. There was no memorial service: In lieu of flowers, please donate to your local animal shelter or rescue.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Another honorary member of our class, Coach ROB JOHNSON, celebrated his 83rd birthday earlier this month. He's pictured here at a previous Big Bash with GREG BIRK.



FINALLY: UPDATE & BRIEF NEWS FROM ME

I'm still teaching at Cuyahoga Community College, but I was able to arrange my teaching schedule to spend much of the winter (thus far) in Florida. Kathy and I enjoyed getting together with PAUL FERGUSON and his wife CHRISTY a couple of times.



John Kerezy (pictured at left with Herm Haffner on the right)

If we become regular "snowbirds" here each winter, hope to connect with RANDY RIPPY, who's moved to Lakewood Ranch recently from Minnesota, and other class members living in the Sunshine State either in winters only or year-around.

Kent State University Press is now undertaking a peer review of my second book, a biography with the working title of "Jesse Owens: Sensation, Superstar, Survivor, and Symbol" with publication expected in 2025. This little

column, surrounding Black History Month, Presidents, Olympians and Snubs, is a small part of it: <http://eyeoncleland.com/2024/02/16/black-history-month-olympians-and-presidents/>

AT DEADLINE -- We learned Saturday that Wabash will be competing in the NCAA Div. III basketball tournament for the third year in a row. We defeated Wooster 75-64 in the NCAC tournament championship at Chadwick Court on Saturday. This means Wabash will play in the national championship tourney somewhere this weekend!

KEEPING UP – We always list ways to connect with Wabash. Here's one more for you: You can access all news releases coming out of the college here: <https://www.wabash.edu/news/archives/>

Best for Wabash Always,

John

John Kerezy