

Class of 1952

Class Agent

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Dear '52ers

I have been authoring our Class '52 Agent Letter now for more than a half century.

My 90th birthday was August 7, which makes me cognizant that I am now really an Old Man. Indeed, today there now are less than twenty of us still alive who are Wabash '52 classmates.

So I had better get going with this Letter while I still have a prospective, albeit now limited, readership.

News — If You Please

In my latest Letter I provided an update on our classmate **Paul Arnold**'s retirement activities, which report was warmly received by the rest of our class. But I have received no news from other classmates, with one noteworthy exception: **Jack Ewing**'s very interesting report follows as the next item in this Class Letter.

Solution: I plan on making some telephone calls to members of our class and report the results to you in a future Letter.

A year ago this September, Paul wrote to me about a new book by Feynman, author of *Surely You Are Joking!* I replied that I would take his recommendation with me when I next visited the St. Joseph County Library or the Barnes & Noble bookstore, both of which are two miles away from my front door, but in opposite directions: Southeast and Northwest. What follows here is a copy of the PS which I sent back to Paul almost a full year ago on September 19, 2019:

Now if I can just remember which (either the library or the Barnes&Noble bookstore) is located southwest and which is located northwest from my home. I am good to go, as we used to say in our days of yore.

Two things bother me most with old age setting in: (1) I have to hold onto the railing when using the stairs now even in my own home. (2) My memory is slipping. Oh, I remember my Wabash days very well. But as to what I ate for dinner last night? I have no idea. Not even a clue.

Say, this PS is pretty good. I might consider using it in a future Letter. Now, if only I can remember who composed it so that I can get his permission to do so

Report from Jack Ewing

“I attended Wabash for only 2 years but I considered this as my best education for a lifetime. My first year, I lived in Kingery Hall and parked my old Model A Ford on the hill in front — battery dead we had to push it off. My two best friends were **Dick Weber** and **Bob Pillard**. We did a lot of crazy things like camping out in the open at a nearby state park together and smoking cigars. My second year I lived in the Kappa Sigma house, found many new friends and played a lot of late-night table tennis.

“I transferred from Liberal Arts to Purdue Engineering school for the next 3 1/2 years. I lost a lot of credits and considered this as my education for a job. My first year at Purdue, I found out that both Dick Weber and Bob Pillard had died back at Wabash. With a BS in Mechanical degree I had no trouble getting work as a Field Engineer with Schlumberger Well Surveying. I spent 7 years surveying and shooting oil wells in the Gulf Coast from dusty

East Texas to the swamps of Florida. I made good money but this was a hard life and I had little time to spend with my growing family of four children.

“I moved the family to Knoxville TN. After 3 months waiting for my security clearance, I went to work at the Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant. This was the production facility for hydrogen bombs as part of the DOE Nuclear Weapons Complex. I spend my first two years there as an Assembly Engineer. The Cold War was on and the plant was running at 24/7. Then DOE overloaded us with test shots in the rush to beat a moratorium on above-ground testing, In September of 1963, I changed jobs and titles many times after that, but worked mostly as a Systems Analyst developing new software for production control. In all I retired after 37 years. Last year I was diagnosed with leukemia. I suspected my two years in the assembly radiation areas may have cause it. Y-12 agreed with that suspicion and I won a cash settlement and a DOL White Card to cover my cancer expenses.

“Yes, we did our traveling: Europe and the East Coast from Nova Scotia to the FL Keys by motor home. My children are all grown and living nearby now. My wife has Alzheimer’s and we intend to stay in our home as long as possible. We still manage to get to the Smokies and enjoy the many lakes in our neck of the woods.”

— *Thank you Jack, for that fascinating report.*

About Books

Past '52 Letters have praised others of our class who authored books. Among them were **Bill Etherton** for his book *Good Night and Good Sports*, plus **Paul Arnold**’s *Wisdom of the Guides*, followed by a novel co-authored with his wife Carol entitled *Divided by the Light*, and three works by our Maine classmate **James Blake Thomas**: *Afterthoughts*, *Passing Thoughts*, *A Potpourri of Thoughts*, *Meandering Thoughts*, and *Idyll Thoughts*. (Please advise if I have overlooked a classmate author so that any oversight on my part can be corrected in a future Letter.

At long last, it is my turn to author a book. My *magnum opus* is entitled ***A Hoosier Trial Lawyer's NOTEBOOK***. It was published in 2019 by Hawthorne Publishing of Carmel, IN. You can buy it through Google for \$35 plus postage. Or better yet, buy it from me at my address shown at the close of this letter, and I will endorse the book to you and also pay the postage. (In that way I can also follow up and get news from you about your activities for use in a future Class '52 Letter.)

I am presently engaged in writing a sequel to ***NOTEBOOK***. The new book has the working title of ***RANDOM THOUGHTS***. It has nothing whatever to do with trial work. Let me know if any of you are curious, in which event I will delve deeper in a future Letter.

Reunion in June, 2021?

Our 69th Class Reunion on Campus in June of next year 2021, is a real possibility. Interested? Please consider this question and let me know ASAP.

Why the rush? Well, you will please recall that classmate Dick Daniels chaired our 50th reunion in May of 2002, and was very successful in doing so. He began planning and arranging for such in the fall of 2001, and it became his primary extracurricular activity during the ensuing six months.

What I am really requesting is for some one of us few 90 year-old survivors to step forward and fill the gap left by Daniels' demise. Volunteer, anyone? Please?

I still remember the effort that Dick put into that reunion. He used the telephone, the computer e-mail system, and even the old-fashioned U.S. Mail to encourage attendance. And it all worked! Indeed, our class broke all Wabash records for our 50th reunion — and I suspect that our percentage of class attendance record still stands.

A New Logo

“Wabash educates men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely.” This is a relatively new logo currently in use in communications received from the college and I thought it worthy of being passed along in this Class '52 Letter.

Here is another logo which is much older, but also quite expressive. The author is Elihu Baldwin, President of Wabash College in 1836, a scant four years after its 1832 founding:

“Our purpose is never to rest while Wabash College shall lack any advantages for the student, which are offered by the highest class of American colleges.”

A Donations Request

No Class Letter would be complete without a request for donations to our Alma Mater. So as to not disappoint, here goes the request for this year:

With the Covid -19 infestation on our collective doorsteps, there will be all kinds of requests for charitable gifts from each of us — especially this year. And all for very good reasons.

So before the anticipated inundation of requests for contributions hits all of us in the closing months of 2020, we should individually and collectively **consider Wabash** as a potential recipient high on our list. Young men headed off to college for the first time will most likely be fewer in number — not just because of Covid - 19 — but also because of the continued decline in the economy as 2020 comes to a close.

Colonel Bill G. Rippy

d. January 30, 2020

Inducted into the LaPorte high school football hall of fame in 1988, upon graduating from LaPorte HS in 1948, our classmate Bill Rippy went to Wabash for three years when he then enlisted in the US Air Force. Indeed he made the Air Force his career.

Colonel Rippy flew multiple fighter aircrafts, including 267 combat missions in Vietnam. He was the first pilot to land a F-84F dead stick successfully.

Following retirement, he became a Hospice volunteer and served in that capacity for a quarter of a century.

Bill is survived by his wife Shirley, a sister Sue of Plymouth, a daughter and two sons plus numerous grand & great-grandchildren.

Some Little Giant!

Donald Bates Miller

Oct 14, 1930 - May 26, 2020

Don started out his college career with our class in the fall of 1948, and then switched to MIT where he earned a BS degree followed by a Master of Business Administration degree at Stanford University. He was a legacy member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity.

He was instrumental in the development of products recognized by millions, including Jif Peanut Butter, Crisco Oil, and the Duncan Hines line.

Don served as a 1st lieutenant in the U.S. Army. Survivors include his wife of 66 years, Sally, two daughters and numerous grandsons and great-grandchildren.

Some Little Giant!

A Few Closing Thoughts

I close this Letter with two thoughts from Hugh Vandivier '91, of the Wabash Advancement Office:

Because of the CARES Act, you can add up to \$300 of your Wabash gift to your standard deduction on your 2020 household's federal taxes, even when you choose not to itemize.

A strong Alumni Giving Participation percentage helps Wabash stay in the top spot as #1 Alumni Network. Increasingly, prospective students and their families cite this as a strong reason they consider attending Wabash.

And here is another closing thought worth sharing:

“No better heritage can a father bequeath to his children than a good name;
Nor is there in a family any richer heirloom than the memory of a noble
ancestor.”

— Alexander Hamilton

Repetition

As is my custom after doing an initial draft Class Letter, my wife Liz reviews it before we go to press. She tells me I have previously written all of the “More About Books” column as it appears above on pages 2-3. I checked. She is correct. (See pages 3-4 of my Labor Day 2019 letter.) But what the heck! Old age has its rights and

privileges. Among them are the right to repeat. As a sign at my desk reads:

*At my age, I've Seen it All,
Heard it All, Done It All,
I Just Can't Remember It All.*

Cordially,

Bill

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