



Class Agents Letter

Class of 1955

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Bob Kellogg

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Dear class of '55,

We've heard from several of our classmates since the last letter. Some sent pretty complete resumes, some newsy letters and others sent the minimum "where are you now" sheet. Trying to be fair to all, I'll edit their comments, passing along the basic story as best I can. All were very welcome as I can still visualize them on campus as they were 65 years ago.

Dave Nail sent a summary of his work experience. Perhaps you remember, Dave was a speech major at Wabash. He sold insurance in his spare time while in school. After graduation, he went to work for the old Aetna Insurance Company. During his 30-plus year corporate career he worked his way up the management ladder until he was V. P. Marketing with Aetna International, supporting the company's international affiliates on distribution and agency management issues as well as training and development in fourteen countries around the world. He was the main speaker one year at an international convention of 3000 life insurance agents in Hong Kong. Dave retired in 1993 and Aetna sponsored a "farewell trip" for him and his wife, Lois, to each of the South American and Asian affiliates with which he'd worked. Two months after retiring, Aetna asked Dave to return as a consultant to continue his training and speaking roles. A few months later Aetna top management decided to become the "largest Hospitalization Insurer" and began divesting all other forms of insurance and buying up smaller Hospitalization insurance companies.

This proved to be a disastrous move for Aetna, but for Dave, many of the companies that purchased Life Insurance activities from Aetna had no staff with international experience, so Dave, again, served as a consultant, working with agencies he'd helped to initialize. His final trip was to India in 2002. He thinks he's finally retired.

In connection with Dave's story, I'm reminded of **Bob Donley**, a friend and fellow Lambda Chi, who was also in the insurance industry. Bob passed away in 2015, so I will tell his story for him.

They are an interesting comparison: Both Dave and Bob were speech majors at Wabash. After graduation, Bob joined an Indianapolis Insurance agency. After a few years, he formed his own agency in Indianapolis. He realized small businesses had a hard time providing retirement benefits for their employees, and further, there was an insurance product that would fulfill that need. Bob was successful selling this product and wrote a small book describing his techniques. The book became well known in the



industry and Bob was asked to speak at insurance conventions, becoming nationally known as a speaker.

So, we see the direction of two very successful Wabash graduates. As Al Capp would say; one was an “inside man” at the skunk works, while the other was an “outside man” (If we consider the Insurance Industry a “Skunk works” equivalent) Both of these talented individuals leveraged a Wabash education to their benefit. Norwood Brigrance would have been proud of both men.

Personally, I can identify with Dave. I was the first one in my family to graduate from college (if you ignore distant cousin Wade Frederick, Wabash '54) and the first to work for a large corporation. (Another “skunk works”) So, I certainly appreciate that my Wabash education made it easier to navigate corporate life as well as enhancing my general quality of life.

Now some sad news. Wabash has received late notice of the passing of some of our class: These are much abbreviated notices. The College has complete obituaries.

December 12, 2014. **John T. (Jack) Riley** of Talking Rock, Ga. Passed away after a long battle with Pulmonary Fibrosis. His three sons, Bruce, John and Jeff claim he was the best father they ever had. (Obviously inheriting some of Jack's sense of fun.)

October 16, 2018. **J. Harold (Hal) Lesh** died in Versailles, France after having fought Leukemia for six months. Hal spent most of his time in Europe after Wabash, working As an English Language teacher, journalist and translator.

August 25, 2020. **Reverend Dr. Thomas Michael** of Gwynedd, Pa. departed this life peacefully. Tom was a Presbyterian minister and pastor of several churches, then joined the faculty of Rowan University where he was instrumental in creating the MBA program.

Continuing with the mail from classmates:

Duane Blume wrote a good summary of his activities since Wabash, and included a copy of an article that appeared a few years ago in Wabash magazine. The opening paragraph of his letter to me summarizes my thoughts precisely:

“The story of my history after leaving Wabash is one that was not even in my wildest dreams. A Midwestern Hoosier flatlander who was presented with unique opportunities in the world” –he continues “of high altitude research and mountaineering.”

Mine was a different world of manufacturing garments, but it also was on the cutting edge of some manufacturing techniques, and took me to people and parts of the country I'd only seen in books.

Duane became one of a few men in the world expert at the physiology of oxygen use at high altitude, developing technology used by climbers of the world's highest peaks. And, he did some of that climbing, himself. His has been a very unique experience, and a very satisfying one.

Jay Crittenden has started his seventh decade in the medical field. After a tour in Viet Nam, he ended up in Pensacola and continues to practice Radiology and Radiation Oncology there. He empathizes with my move south to Tupelo, admitting he married a girl from Biloxi, Ms. When they disagree, she still reminds him he's a Yankee. (End of discussion)

Ken Crossman's widow, **Cecily**, sent a note saying, "From the day he arrived on campus, he was embraced and cared for by Wabash." Ken did construction work to supplement his scholarship and Byron Trippett helped Ken get into Harvard business school after Wabash... Ken was working for an international cosmetics Company in 1960 when Cecily and Ken married. In 1965 they went to seminary at Emory University and afterward Ken was a United Methodist Minister until he retired due to ill health in 1995. Ken died in 2004. A grandson, Jack Sullivan, is a sophomore at Wabash.

David Eades is in Champaign, IL, Preparing to move to a retirement community. He spent most of his working career in real estate development. David has five daughters.

Charles Hardy lives in Lafayette, in, after having spent most of his active years at Indiana University in Bloomington. He claims he took Ben Rogge's advice about an ever growing government and chose to work for it. His biggest gift to Wabash College is his daughter, Jane, who is a tenured faculty member in the Spanish Department. Her Husband has been in the Economics Department for fifteen years.

Robert Ogle is widowed, retired, living with his son, Mark, and daughter-in-law Annette, in Carmel, In. Robert graduated from I. U. Medical school, married Jewell H. Hodge, served as a Capt. Medical corp, U.S.A.F. hospital, Wright-Patterson, Dayton, Ohio 1960-1962. Then in private practice in Greenwood, In. until retiring in 1988.

Charlie Reinhardt married a DePauw girl and lives in a retirement community in Kennett Square, Pa, the mushroom capital of the U.S. and maybe the world. After Wabash came I. U. Medical School and internship in South Bend. Then two years in the air force followed by a residency at Ohio State U. Then a career in occupational health and toxology with DuPont in Wilmington, De.

Charlie served on an NRC committee that worked with the Army destroying nerve agents. One assignment took him to Johnson Island in the Pacific, so small it felt like landing on an aircraft carrier.

Charlie also had the very pleasant experience of presenting an award given by the Manufacturing Chemists Assoc. to Ed Heanisch, his, and our, beloved chemistry professor at Wabash.

Charlie's son, a physician, is now on the faculty at I.U. Med. Sch., his Alma Mater.

Leland (Lee) Thornton retired in 1996, 1997 or 2007 and lives in Marshall, Mi., about 10 miles from Albion. He had a broad career as a teacher of art history, ranging from high school level through community college to University level. Lee has published articles, books and videos on the subject. A few years ago he invited the president of Albion College, Mauri Ditzler, to speak at the Marshall Rotary club. That day there were five Wabash grads in attendance (including Mauri) and 2 Albion grads.

Jean Paul Trenary is retired, living in Fort Wayne, In. (I've tried calling Jean Paul, but no luck)

O.K., it's time for another plea. We are all interested in your experiences. But, for me to write an occasional letter, I have to have your input. I can't make this stuff up. Some things that became commonplace for you may be unique and interesting to the rest of your classmates. I know it's a pain, but please take a few minutes to jot down some of your experiences. You can brag if you want to. I've come to believe all Wabash graduates are prepared to face and conquer almost anything.

Here's my story: I'd been in Mississippi only a few weeks when I was assigned the Engineering work in the rural Baldwin plant. One day a supervisor came up to me, and with her Southern accent said, "Mister Kellogg, bang dog, when I bluster gobble it western ate up twang do I want thing what if barrels roll or then should I Partridge the fence?" (Those are her exact words as near as I can remember) Now, of course, I couldn't make sense of it, and didn't know how to reply---My mind was racing --was there some kind of emergency in the plant? I smiled as best I could in my panic and asked her politely to repeat. She repeated, and I could recognize she repeated word for word, but still I had no clue what she was talking about. Now I was sweating. This was my first major assignment. I asked her to repeat again. She did, and again I recognized the same words, still meaningless to me. I smiled what surely must have looked like a sickly smile to her, nodded my head and walked away.

Eventually I learned to understand and even speak Mississippi English. A couple of years later on a vacation back home in Indiana I was shocked to hear what my old friends and neighbors sounded like. It was the "Hoosier twang". The folks in Mississippi must have thought I was a real foreigner.

Keep those cards and letters coming!

Respectfully,

Bob Kellogg
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