June 6, 2012

Gentlemen of ‘62,

Well, it has come to pass, Big Bash Reunion celebration. Best wishes to all who helped, in true Wabash spirit, with this wonderful event. Had not health incidents sadly interrupt the travels of several of our classmates who had planned to attend, we would have made a clean sweep of the awards. More about those individual health issues later in this letter. But let us focus upon our accomplishments and to bask in the sunshine for this coming year. J.B.Bachman, class agent for ’61, was most envious of our capture of the Chapel Sing - something that eluded those Many Milers last year. Special kudos to Terry and Johanna Fewell who served both as creative director and choreographer, also to Phil Johnson who lead us during the chapel sing. Video at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgQh-PCe12E&feature=youtu.be

Here is a summary of the final activities and awards taken from the Wabash website.

Big Bash 2012 concluded Sunday morning with the Awards Brunch in Knowling Fieldhouse. Wabash alums celebrated a Big Bash or records.

Director of Alumni Relations Tom Runge announced that the 351 alums signing the register made 2012 the third biggest Bash in the weekend’s nine years.

“Also those super young guys from the class of 2007, cold showers and all, set a new record for the fifth-year class reunion,” Runge announced. “We also had five classes win the Donor Challenge, the second highest number of classes to ever do that. Congratulations to the Classes of 1962, 1977, 1997, 2002, and 2007.”

Wabash men traveled from 31 different states and Washington D.C. as well as one alum coming from Switzerland to be a part of Big Bash.

The 1909 Trophy Cup Winner was the Class of 1962 with 30.3 percent of the class returning for the Bash. Terry Fewell and Thom Feit accepted the award from President Patrick White. The 1928 Attendance Trophy Winner was the Class of 1967 with 48 alumni signatures in the registration book. The Class of ’62 trailed the winners by just one attendee.
The Robinson-Ragan Award for Alumni Chapel Sing was also taken by the Class of ’62. The Class of ’67 was second with the class of ’07 winning third. Runge offered an honorable mention to the class of 2002 which had one participant – Ryan Daming!

The Dorman Hughes ’43 Award is presented by the alumni office to salute class agents who go above and beyond in organizing their class reunion. The office decided it was a tie this year with Thom Feit and Terry Fewell of ’62 along with Craig Miller and Justin Castle for the Class of 1997.

The Edmund O. Hovey Annual Giving Award also went to the Class of ’62 who ran away from the field with 65.79 percent participation from their class making a gift to the College.

The Class of 1962 took center stage at Friday’s Big Bash Banquet at Wabash College. Not only was each man introduced and presented with his 50th reunion medallion, the class stood proudly when it presented College President Patrick White with a check for $2.7 million.

The oversize check presentation culminated a five-year 50th reunion gift campaign, which was chaired by David Downen.

The large turnout by the Class of 1962 was owed to the dedicated efforts of a leadership team representing each living unit, Dave Downen, Tom Gaisser, Don Kerner, Tom Lauritzen, Jack McHenry, Kiefer Mendenhall, Gene Nelson, Duncan Thomas, Class Agents Thom Feit and Terry Fewell. Forty seven members of the class returned to celebrate 50 years since their graduation.

President White accepted the stunning $2.7 million gift from the Class of 1962, saying, “This shows us that you can rise to any challenge.”

The goal for the 50th reunion gift was $1 million. “When you go this far over goal, it’s worth another round of applause,” the President urged, saying, “thank you, thank you, thank you.”

The President welcomed all alumni back to campus — those from near and far.

“I welcome you not to a new Wabash, but to your Wabash… the best of Wabash endures in each and every one of you… And in coming to know one another anew, you will find Wabash anew, and find Wabash worthy of your support and loyalty.

“Wabash is still transforming the lives of young men, just as it transformed your lives.”

Members of our class also presented two of the colloquium session offered during the weekend. Here are summaries of those sessions.
"Homeless and On the Road"

During a colloquium session at Big Bash 2007, Barbara and Thom Feit ’62 told classmates about their experiences owning a bed and breakfast in Indianapolis. Five years later, they’re “Homeless and on the Road.”

On Friday, Feit joined classmates Don Hill and Tom Houk (pictured here) to proclaim the benefits of living much of the year traveling the country via motorhome.

“We ran the bed and breakfast in Indy for years, but we’ve turned the page on that,” Feit said. “And this is a lifestyle with which we’ve fallen in love.”

With photos from their adventures displayed on the screen in Hays 104, the three men described the different avenues each had taken to becoming motorhome vagabonds. Barbara and Larry Ritzenthaler ’62 were originally to be part of the panel discussion. However treatment for Larry’s battle with prostate cancer precluded their attendance. In his stead, he provided a wonderful summary of their travels of enjoying the travels via their “home on wheels.”

Don and Kathleen Hill have been full-time travelers since 2005 and frequently visit well-known destinations during off-season months.

“Yosemite [National Park] is gorgeous, and it’s even more marvelous when you have the whole park to yourself,” Hill said.

Tom and Gayle Houk were initially interested in camping while traveling and progressed from a two-man tent to a 40-foot diesel pusher motorhome in six months. They’ve traveled thousands of miles, but Tom said “one of the secrets to traveling this way is taking your time.

“This is the time to learn about where you are, to get to know the people, to get to know your family.”

Houk described with awe a recent trip which took them to Glacier National Park’s famous “Going-to-the-Sun-Road” on the first day it was open for the season.

“It leaves you wondering what we have ever do have the opportunity to live such a life.”

Wabash Men Help Build Cancer Treatment Services

With a Wabash graduate as its founder and CEO, it should be no surprise Wabash men have helped Dick Stephenson ’62 build the Cancer Treatment Center of America into a premier service for cancer patients.

Stephenson talked about his family and growing up along with the creation of CTCA. Wabash men have played a big role as employees for the company. Stephenson shared stories and talked about the CTCA approach to patient care.
As noted above, several members of our class were suddenly unable to attend our reunion.

**John T Hays III** – In an Email sent just prior to the Big Bash, John tells what happened: *June 2012 was going to be a very special reunion for me, but I guess it was not to be. A few months ago, I was diagnosed with trigeminal neuralgia, which my doctors described as the worst pain imaginable. There is no cure, and the medication is strong, but I had it handled until two weeks ago, when I fell, my head hit a piece of steel, and I was hospitalized with a cerebral hemorrhage. Please know that I am with you in spirit,*

**Robert Twesten:** Upon arrival in Indianapolis, Robert suffered an issue with his heart while still at the Indianapolis airport. Taken to IU-Methodist hospital, Robert was diagnosed with a heart issue, but not needing surgery. With Robert being discharged from the hospital, he and Darby flew home to MN.

**Charles “Toni” Moores:** Complications from a severe case of diverticulitis, which we understand is leading toward surgery for a release of the pain involved kept Toni and Harriet from joining classmates at Wabash.

**Larry Ritzenthaler:** As mentioned earlier in this letter, he needed to stay in FL to continue a cancer treatment procedure. During a recent phone call, Larry was very positive and looked forward to visits by classmates to his FL home or TN cabin.

During the weekend there was not only a series of activities, amply opportunities to exchange comments with classmates and revisit our college along with landmarks of the campus. While there were a variety of memorial events including; meal events, sharing of life events, comments by President White, however from my perspective it was the Memorial Chapel when we paused to remember those classmates who are no longer with us. The clear, sharp tone of that most iconic of symbols –the Caleb Mills Bell echoed through the Pioneer Chapel as President White “rang out” our friends of the past.

Our Class of 1962 Reunion photo. Names shall follow in a later letter. In the meantime, you are welcome to identify who you believe are the names of each of these fine men. Game On!
Annual Fund Drive Deadline

As relationships have been the bedrock of the Wabash experience for nearly 180 years. The same is true today: Professors spend extra time with students so they gain the most from their courses; coaches push their athletes to maximize their talents in pursuit of excellence; alumni provide wise counsel, career advice, and internships for eager Wabash men. These relationships are – and always have been – the essence of Wabash. And each year loyal and generous alumni and friends make gifts to the College that enables these relationships to flourish.

For those few who did not join in the Class of ’62 fund drive, take a moment and reconsider and make a gift to Wabash today and recognize those teachers, coaches, classmates, and fellow alumni and honor them for the difference they make in the lives of Wabash students.

Gifts made to the Annual Fund by **June 30, 2012** will count towards the 2012 Annual Fund goal of $3.125 million and will be included in the **Challenge of Excellence** goal of $60 million.

Wabash Always Fights,

Thom