



Class Agents Letter

Class of 1968

Class Agent

Jim Roper

Alumni and Parent Relations Office

301 W. Wabash Ave.

Crawfordsville, IN 47933

765-361-6360

alumni@wabash.edu

wabash.edu

March 26, 2020

Dear Friends in the Class of 1968,

I hope this finds you healthy. I DO get my screens and take my pills! Yeah, wash the hands. I have read and re-read the fall 2019 issue of *Wabash Magazine*. As usual, I was truly impressed with that wonderful picture of what is going on with the college and its offspring—us. This issue was Editor **Steve Charles's** final effort as he is retiring. I have met him only a few times, and I did take the opportunity to express my appreciation for his work. He will be missed. I enjoyed reading every article in Steve's final issue. From President Hess's note about the new stadium and the razing of the old, a current student wrestling with symptoms, notes on our freshman quarterback, and even a kind observation by one of our own, **Harry McGonigle** from Kutztown, PA. Side note: I had some early secret moves in my military career, and each time that magazine found me. Right away. Once in Laos, now declassified. Once in Cambodia. I thought they had spies or maybe a satellite. Turns out, as I learned a few years ago, the only guy I really kept in touch with, Beta brother **John Hudson, MD**, was passing my new APO zip code to the magazine. Hilarious at the time. **Check out WM in detail if you are used to just scanning. JR**

I found President Hess's Remarks to Jay R. Allen '79, Chair of the Board of Trustees to be worth thinking about—the A, B, C's of Wabash

In his report to Trustees and our guests Saturday morning, President Hess led us through what he sees as the most important ABCs of Wabash. The "A" is for Admissions, our highest priority. Our strategies for recruitment in Chicago and Texas have been successful thus far, and we continue to grow our presence in Indiana. We have an excellent team of recruiters who are functioning at a high level. "B" is for Budget and Building. Reducing the endowment draw to 5.5% strengthens our financial foundation, while investing in critical capital projects like Lilly Library and the stadium are important long-term investments in the College and the first-class educational experiences we provide our students. "C" is for Capital Campaign and Communications. The Giant Steps Campaign is growing our endowment as well as laying the foundation for long-term growth through deferred gift commitments, while cash gifts are giving our operating budget a significant boost. Communicating – across campus and to alumni around the world – is important and the College is seeking ways to improve lines of communication to further engage our students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents and friends.



1-13-20 Wabash wrestled to fourth place Saturday in the finals of the 2020 U.S. Marine Corps/National Wrestling Coaches Association Multi-Divisional National Duals Meet held in Louisville, Kentucky. The Little Giants, ranked third in NWCA rankings, earned a top-four finish at the national dual meet tournament for the second consecutive season after placing fourth at last year's competition. Roper adds: **I counted 66 schools entered in this tournament.**

I received a nice note from our **Dan Vannatter, Colonel, US Army, Retired**. He included 3 stories of his service in Vietnam, so I will relay to you in three parts. Here is Part 1:

Memories of My Interactions with General Cushman



When I first met BG Cushman in the Delta in Vietnam he was the Deputy Commander of the Delta Regional Assistance Command (DRAC). As one of his Special Security/Privacy Communications Officers, I interacted with him near-continuously for nearly 18 months. Three of our interactions stand out in my mind. To me they represent what a superb leader he was, but also the human side of this very inquisitive, intelligent senior leader. The following recounting is as accurate as I am capable and the timeframes are 'in the ballpark.' The Three Interactions:

1. Introduction to DRAC, BG Cushman and GEN Abrams' visit;
2. Seven Ohio University Students visit the DELTA; and,
3. The RF/PF Adventure.

1. Introduction to DRAC, BG Cushman and Gen Abram's visit

In mid-June 1970 I was re-assigned from MACV HQs to the Special Security Detachment in Can Tho to support the CG and DCG at the DRAC HQ. BG Cushman was the Deputy at that time and he was very impressive, all-business in demeanor and I was anxious to make a good first impression. Unfortunately for me, BG Cushman was not at all pleased to have a 2LT in the DELTA as the XO of his Special Security Detachment. He had previously had a Major and a Captain and was now saddled with a Captain and a 2LT. This dissatisfaction manifested itself in being totally ignored by BG Cushman.

He refused to speak to me, look at me or acknowledge that I was present, even when I gave the morning Intelligence briefing to him, the CG and the staff. This continued even after he was promoted to MG and took over as the CG of DRAC; so, for a few months I seemed to not exist. I was extra careful the entire time to always be on my best behavior and totally military in manner and demeanor.

Then, in the early Fall, we received notice that GEN Abrams was coming from MACV to the DELTA to visit MG Cushman and DRAC HQ. I received a call from MG Cushman's office requesting the private use of our Special Security conference room for him to have a private conversation with GEN Abrams. Obviously, we agreed. They were to arrive approximately 1000 the following morning. Our conference room, which was a Top Secret/Special Security Facility, was inspected, prepped and ready for their visit. The gate guards were alerted and standing by to open the security gate.

At 1000 there was a knock on the steel reinforced door to our office; I slid open the 'peep hole' and visually recognized MG Cushman and unbolted the door and swung it open. There stood both MG Cushman and GEN Abrams. I was about to say 'welcome' when Gen Abrams recognized me from MACV, reached out and grabbed my hand and while shaking it, asked me how I was doing. I answered positively and we chatted briefly, about two or three minutes, and I asked him how he was feeling (knowing that he had been briefly hospitalized in Japan very recently) and he responded, "very well now!" The look on MG Cushman's face was almost one of startled, but he did smile and say something positive to me as they went passed me and into the briefing room.

From that day until I departed the DELTA in September a year later I was "Cushman's boy!" He called on me to look over every message he wrote and planned to send to GEN Abrams, even in the middle of the night (once I was awakened at 0330 and told to come to MG Cushman's quarters to review a message he had prepared with his Chief of Staff and his Deputy; I was in gym shorts, no contacts, and had to read the message by holding the message right up to my face. His Chief of Staff asked me if I needed to borrow his glasses- they all laughed). I made several trips to the DRAC HQ to answer MG Cushman's MACV questions each week and developed an affection and respect for MG Cushman's thoroughness, professionalism and dedication to doing the right thing. He once said to me, "Vannatter, if only everyone would do things the right way, the Army way, the first time, we would not have so many problems and we would get a lot more done!" I have no way of knowing how my tour there would have unfolded if GEN Abrams had not made that visit, but, because he did, I had the most rewarding and interesting relationship with one of the Army's greatest leaders, MG John Cushman.

From Steve Hoffman:

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the College has decided to postpone Big Bash reunion weekend. Originally scheduled for June 5-7, the 2020 event will move to the fall. Steve Hoffman will update us on specific plans as they develop. You can always find current Big Bash news at www.wabash.edu/bigbash. If you already registered for Big Bash, you will be hearing from us in the near future regarding the status of your registration.

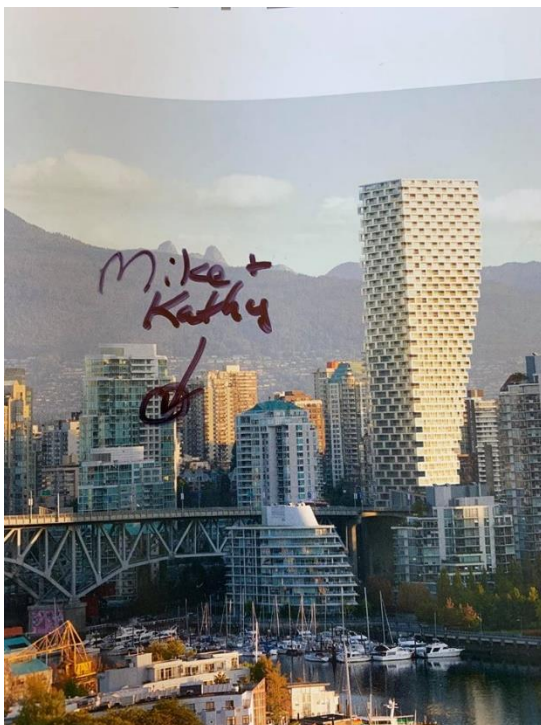


Wabash Sweeps Three Matches at Max Servies Wrestling Duals - 01/18/20 07:24 PM

The fourth-ranked Wabash College wrestling team rolled to three victories Saturday to easily win the 2020 Max Servies Duals held in the Knowling Fieldhouse. The Little Giants defeated 23rd-ranked Millikin University 42-3, won 38-6 against Manchester, then closed out the meet with a 43-0 shutout of Kentucky Wesleyan. The dual-meet tournament is named for the legendary former Wabash head wrestling coach, athletics director, and alumnus.

03-09-20 I just received a nice note from Beta brother and football great, "**Cody**" Roeder '66, who retired a few years ago from the California Supreme Court. He has successfully beaten esophagus cancer, **and I hope we can meet up on his next pass through Colorado Springs.** He raises cattle now and sits on the board of the Rodeo Hall of Fame. He was recently inducted into his High School Hall of Fame in Seymour, Indiana, and is lovin' life.

02-07-20 Here's our **Iron Mike Gallagher**. Yep. I think he's doing it right! He's figured it out!
The caption says High above Zihuatanejo Bay!



03-02-20 Home of **Mike and Kathy Gallagher**. Not a lot of lawn to mow or snow to shovel there.

The Princeton Review is Out

From Steve Hoffman: Thank you for making these excellent rankings possible.
Here's the story: https://www.wabash.edu/news/displaystory.cfm?news_ID=11557

We showed up in these rankings and lists:

- The Best 385 Colleges
- Best Midwestern
- Best Value Colleges
- Top 75 - Best Value Colleges #26
- **Best Alumni Network** #1
- Best Career Services #5
- Best Classroom Experience #13
- Best College Newspaper #10
- Best Financial Aid #22
- Best Health Services #15
- Best Schools for Internships #1
- Best-Run Colleges #13
- Everyone Plays Intramural Sports #5
- Great Financial Aid #13
- Lots of Greek Life #4
- Most Accessible Professors #3
- Professors Get High Marks #10



Terry Smith 02-26-20 At spring training for the 2020 World Series Champions.



3-5-20 Ah, those **1968 Phi Delts** preparing for golf in Florida. **John Leahy, Dan Susie, Russ Dukes.** Lookin' better than good!

Support Wabash

To refer a prospective student to Wabash [click here.](#)

To inform the Schroeder Center for Career Development of internship, employment, or recruiting opportunities [click here](#)

To make a gift to Wabash [click here.](#)

In Case You Haven't Heard

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IN — Wabash College President Gregory D. Hess is stepping down at the conclusion of the 2019-20 school year to become the Chief Executive Officer of IES Abroad. IES Abroad provides premier study abroad and internship programs around the world. Hess was elected the 16th president of the College in 2013.

“It has been the opportunity of a lifetime to lead Wabash College over these last seven years, and I’m tremendously proud of what we have accomplished together,” President Hess said. “The Wabash student experience is unique; it combines the timelessness of a liberal arts education with timely elements that prepare our students to outperform in the future. Those things — and an expectation to be gentlemen and responsible citizens — allow our young men to flourish throughout their lives.”

[Michael Dybel](#) March 10 at 10:15 PM ·



I was at the Kennedy Space Center having a “blast” at the Astronaut Training Experience. I was the Commander in a simulation of a launch and docking maneuver with my crew of three and ground support, walked on Mars and collected rock and soil samples using virtual reality gear, experienced a simulation of microgravity while making repairs to the “space station”, and used a simulator to experience a Mars landing and surface rover ride to a base camp on Mars. Finally there were talks about the International Space Station, food and other necessities in space, and launches in NASA’s future. Beam me up, Scotty!



On March 10, 2020, Bev and I became the very proud and happy grandparents to our first granddaughter, Charlotte Anne Bertoncini. We wish Laura, Mark, and Charlotte much joy and love as they embark on their life journey together. I am so happy on becoming a grandfather!



3-15-20 Wayne Kornas re-appeared on Facebook. The caption claims he is retired from ER Doctoring. He's the one on the left.

President Hess just sent an update that you can read here:

<https://mailchi.mp/150179919abf/wabash-board-of-trustees-newsletter-3256529?e=ce6acc3d4c>

Worth a complete read, but it starts like this:

March 18, 2020

To the alumni, parents, and friends of Wabash College,

As some of you may be aware, on Tuesday I made the exceptionally difficult decision to suspend in-person teaching and learning at Wabash for the remainder of the semester. Guided by recommendations from federal, state, and local public health authorities, as well as our own campus healthcare professionals, we were given no choice but to suspend our face-to-face tradition of liberal arts education.

This Virus Thing is a Big Deal

I hope everyone is clear of the nasty coronavirus. I guess the safe thing to do is behave like you have it, and then try not to infect anyone else. Some of the procedures I read about are onerous. If you are home, then maybe you have time to send me some news and photos of what you are up to. Our kids are all at home. The college boy is doing tv classes. Also logging into School-ology is the high school senior with the added drag of missing his cancelled senior year of baseball. (A catcher, he batted .556 last year.) Fortunately, he has signed a Letter of Intent to play NAIA ball at a small college in Kansas. The twins 6th grade class is ginning up some kind of distance learning program for parents to supervise/execute! We will survive this thing, and I hope a real investigation with consequences follows. So, take good care please send news!

Best regards,

Jim Roper '68