

Class of 1970

Class Agent
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This Newsletter is all about the celebration of our Graduation's 50th Anniversary in September. Having twice planned to gather to celebrate the unique college experience that we share, we are finally getting together in Crawfordsville this September. We can also celebrate our survival of the last half century. We experienced unusual challenges as we graduated and as we planned our celebration. We have more reasons to celebrate than many classes.

May 1970 - May 2020

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...in short, the period was so far like the present period...."
With these words, Charles Dickens opened his Tale of Two Cities. These same sentiments could appropriately be applied to the month we graduated and to May 2020.

We spent our college years in the shadow of the Vietnam War. The month before our graduation was marked by the invasion of Cambodia, and the killing of unarmed American students in Ohio and Mississippi. Who among us back in 1970 could have guessed that 50 years later our country would be in the grip of a pandemic that would kill 10 times more Americans than the Vietnam War. The calendar has been less than kind to us. But as Bill Placher said at our graduation, we had some fun along the way, and we are still standing. Bill's graduation speech is attached.

Our 50th Reunion: September 10 and 11 in Crawfordsville.

Who: Any member of the Class of 1970 and their spouses.

Where: Hampton Inn 2895 Gandhi Drive [\(765\) 362-8884](tel:7653628884)

The college will provide us with a code soon to allow us to book at the Hampton Inn with a special rate. More on that soon.

When:

Friday, September 10, 2021

1:00 - 3:30 PM

Hampton Inn Meeting Room

We'll get together in a special meeting room from 1 PM onward. This will give us a chance to greet one another, have a drink and begin to share stories. Later in the afternoon we can move on to the campus to have a look around.

3:30 - 5:30 PM

Campus

Park on campus and take some time to walk around campus. Visit with friends and basically enjoy the Class of '70 family reunion opportunity. The college is arranging an informal meal for us for us on campus this evening.

5:30 PM

Campus Meal

We'll grab a dinner and a seat to eat and talk with one another in a special area the college is setting up for us. Like any reunion, we'll talk among one another and enjoy the chance to catch up with our classmates. We don't have anything formal planned for the time after dinner, but a lot of us will be spending time together on campus, in Crawfordsville, or back at the Meeting Room in the Hampton Inn.

Saturday, September 11, 2021

Campus

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Registration. Check in with the staff and sign the official *Alumni Register*

8:30 AM

Morning Walk. You can go short or go long. Both will be available.

9:30 AM

Campus Tour. Tour the campus with your student guide.

11:00 AM

Chapel Sing

11:30 AM

Lunch (All) - Shared with the class of '71, giving us a chance to visit with them.

12:30 PM

Class Photographs

1:00 - 6:00 PM

Wally's Pub is Open

1:00 PM

Wabash Today. President Scott Feller will welcome you to campus and provide an update on the College.

2:00 - 2:45 PM

Colloquium

3:00 - 3:45 PM

Colloquium

3:30 PM

Campus Tour. Tour the campus with your student guide.

4:00 - 5:00 PM

Living Units Open for Visits - Another chance to talk with our friends from the class of '71

5:30 PM

Banquet (All) - Each alum will receive a medallion from Wabash at this meal.

Sunday, September 12, 2021

While we have no class activities planned for Sunday, living unit members may want to use Sunday to share a breakfast or brunch together. Each group should plan whatever activity you would like to share.

Preparing for the Reunion

Class of '70 eBook

Whether you are able to attend the Reunion or not, we hope you will contribute to a class eBook in a couple of ways.

1. Class of '70 Wabash Anecdotes

Please mail printed documents or email electronic documents containing your anecdotes, including photos, if any, to me at the addresses listed below. I only ask you to use the first or third person voice in your writing. If you send an electronic document, please **DO NOT INCLUDE** any formatting. That's right, please include unformatted text no matter how you create an electronic document. In all documents (electronic or paper) please use 12 font text. All materials will be in the public domain once they are in this document. There is no limit to how many anecdotes anyone can provide. My advice is to keep each anecdote short, but there is no strict limit.

2. Class of '70 Biographies

Please send me biographical information and a photo of yourself to include in our ebook. The limit on each biography will be 25 lines on a standard U.S. Letter page. With electronic documents, please use unformatted size 12 font. Since the editor is a volunteer, your bio will be at his mercy.

When: Provide your anecdotes and biography to me by July 5.

Where: Send your anecdotes and biographies to me at either:

Ron Shelby or rshelb7@yahoo.com
4025 Silver Palm Drive
Vero Beach, FL 32963

You will have access to the ebook, so you can read, print or download it.

Campus Update

Fall semester essentially shut down most activities on the Wabash campus. As spring brings renewal to the trees and grounds, it is bringing some renewal to student life on campus. Seniors took comps in January. A massive snow storm blanketed the campus in February. There is no spring break. The big news is that Wabash students should be eligible to get the Covid vaccines tentatively on April 9. Academics continuing with classroom instructions where possible. Otherwise, they are virtual. The Glee Club gave a concert in Chadwick Court on March 26. The singers wore masks and were properly distanced.

The college plans on a commencement in the new football stadium. The ceremony will involve the classes of 2020 and 2021. Last year's class had a virtual graduation and have already received diplomas. Commencement will be 10:30 a.m., Saturday morning, May 15, 2021. The early start provides flexibility in case of foul weather.

Athletics

The spring athletes are back in competition. Volleyball started its first Wabash season. Track is underway. Baseball is 7-7. The students can, with some limitations, have visitors at their fraternity houses and dorms. To visit the campus, we would need to be invited as a guest.

Dr. David Phillips

David Phillips, professor of chemistry, passed away on March 4, 2021. He served on the faculty from 1968 to 2004. He was Wabash's first inorganic chemist. He and I had become friends from our common interest in preserving and promoting the history of Wabash College. He finished Max Servies' book on the history of Wabash sports. Along with Dr. John Zimmerman he authored Wabash College, An Illustrated Campus Tour. He also authored The Pioneer Chapel, A guide to the portraits. He supported Wabash students and the community, including his attendance of many of the college's athletic and cultural events. He was 83.

Stay safe, guys. See you on Campus.

WAF

Ron Shelby
Class of 1970 Agent

Resources

For more information on how the Wabash campus continues residential teaching and learning through the pandemic: <https://www.wabash.edu/covid/>

For documents, including weekly updates from President Feller and Ann Taylor: <https://www.wabash.edu/covid/documents>

For the latest in events on campus, many of which you can join virtually: <https://www.wabash.edu/calendar/> or <https://www.wabash.edu/www/>

The Bachelor: <https://www.wabash.edu/bachelor/>

Ideas for your Biography with thanks to Tom Petska

Biography primer

Name, address, and contact information:

Marital Status:

Children and Grandchildren:

Education and Training:

Personal and Professional Highlights and Accomplishments:

Activities and Interests:

Attached is a piece by Frank Reynolds regarding our Commencement in 1970.





The ABC Evening News...June 9, 1970 ...Commentary...Frank Reynolds...

“I know there is much evidence, from current polls and recent elections to support the view that college students are not necessarily the most beloved creatures in the land these days. Their long hair seems to be getting into everybody else's, and it is easy to get a roar from almost any audience by denouncing them as unwashed punks who want to tear down the establishment.

Almost any audience, but, I want to suggest to you tonight that other audiences this unsilent spring have heard a very different message.

Those who have attended commencement exercises, and others who are now beginning to talk to their returning sons and daughters have heard denunciations not of the students—but of contradictions in American life and problems at home and abroad that have made the students so angry.

And, who are these people—the parents of today's college students? They are card carrying members of the silent majority—that's who.

The other day, I attended a commencement ceremony at a small mid-western college noted for its' strict curriculum and conservatism. The main speech was delivered not by some aging prophet like me, but by a member of the graduating class. There were no obscenities—no personal attacks on any political leader—just a calm and thoughtfully worded rejection of hypocrisy and double talk and an almost plaintive plea for honesty—for understanding and peace.

At the end of the young man's talk—which contained no trace of self-righteousness, the silent majority rose from their folding chairs and gave him and his class mates a standing ovation.

Perhaps there is a temporary political advantage to be won by denouncing the students and no doubt people are tired of hearing the shouts of the wild men who make so much noise, but we are now hearing an equally disturbing message from our sons and daughters, most of them non-violent and that standing ovation the other day suggests we are listening.”

Some Thoughts of Hope In Time of War

Commencement Address
by William C. Placher

Wabash graduates, according to the admissions brochures, go on to prominent graduate schools, to pre-professional training, to important posts in business. This year, instead, a large number go on to be drafted into the army. Of those, many will serve in Vietnam, some will be wounded, perhaps a few will die. There's no way of figuring the exact percentage in advance. But seven Wabash men have already died in the war in Vietnam; and nearly all those who enter the armed services, whether killed, wounded, or eventually discharged unhurt will spend much of the next four years learning, not how to be teachers, lawyers, researchers, or businessmen, not how to begin their families, but how to shoot a gun, to drive a bayonet into a stomach, to kill.

All the traditional phrases about the glorious opportunities that await us as college graduates ring pretty hollow.

I didn't want to talk about the war. You're tired of hearing about it, and I'm tired of thinking about it. But I found I just couldn't be honest with you or with myself and talk about anything else. I am not a political scientist or a military expert; I cannot lecture you on the complexities of the present situation. But I think I can describe my own experience as a college senior graduating in the sixteenth year of American involvement in the Vietnam War, and maybe some of the conclusions I've drawn from that experience will have some meaning for you.

In 1955, when most of us who are graduating today were in the second grade, Secretary of the Army Bricker assured the American people that within a year or two the Communist threat in Vietnam would be ended and that country would no longer need American assistance. In 1963, when we were sophomores in high school Secretary of Defense MacNamara promised that American advisors in Vietnam would be home by Christmas. A year later, Lyndon Johnson was elected President on the promise that American boys would not have to fight a war for Asians. Four years later, Richard Nixon was elected President on a promise to end the war in Vietnam. And a year and a half after that, the first American boys were killed in Cambodia.

Can we be blamed for growing suspicious about what our government tells us about Vietnam? We are promised a rapid American withdrawal, but we have been hearing such promises literally most of our lives. We are told that Americans are fighting for the right of the Vietnamese to choose their own government, but we have read Dwight Eisenhower's admission that if free elections in Vietnam had not

been prevented by the United States in 1955, Ho Chi Minh would have won an overwhelming victory. We are told we fight for the American way of life, but when we see black men oppressed in the ghetto, when we see those who exercise their constitutional right to protest called "bums" or shot down, we find it hard to see the Vietcong as the greatest threat to American freedom. We are told that the Vietcong, who have not been defeated by all of America's military power, are somehow going to be beaten by a South Vietnamese army which has yet to show any eagerness to fight, and we wonder if "Vietnamization" isn't another word for "political expedience", when it becomes easier to let young men go on dying than to publicly admit that one's policy has failed.

I do not ask that all of you share this viewpoint, only that you try to understand the experience behind it. I may be wrong, but surely it is possible to be honestly wrong. Surely it is possible to be patriotic and hate what's happening to the country you love. Possible to hate a war, not out Communism or anarchism, but because it's killing your friends to no good purpose.

In 1907 Ezra Pound came to Wabash College to teach English, lived in a house over there on Grant Street. A few years later, after World War I, he wrote some lines peculiarly appropriate for the class of 1970:

These fought in any case,
and some believing,
pro domo, in any case . . .
Some quick to arm,
some for adventure,
some from fear of weakness,
some from fear of censure,
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,
learning later . . .



some in fear, learning love of slaughter;
Died some, pro patria
non "dulce", non "et decor" . . .
walked eye-deep in hell
believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving
came home, home to lie,
home to many deceptions,
home to old lies and new infamy;
usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

To all this there are no easy answers, and I do not propose to insult you by offering any. Yet I do not want to dwell only on a note of despair. Had this speech been given ten years ago, I could have been very fashionable and tried to depress all of you. That was a time when some college students loved to attack the apparent self-satisfaction of their society and speak at great length of "alienation" and "existential anguish." Time has proven true their suspicion that all was not well. But today, in the midst of war, with cities and campuses alike erupting into violence and mankind apparently fated in the end to sink under the mass of its own garbage, it surely takes no particular insight to be depressed. And so it may prove worthwhile to look for reasons for hope. Let me offer you, then, three fragments to shore up the ruins of the times.

The first is from Albert Camus' novel *The Plague*, in which a doctor recounts the grim struggles of his city when swept with an epidemic of the bubonic plague and at the end explains that he has written this "To state quite simply what we learn in a time of pestilence: that there are more things to admire in men than to despise."

It's hard not to think of this as a time of pestilence for our country. But perhaps we can begin to learn the same lesson. We began, I think, to learn it at Wabash the week after Kent State, when we found that our college president was more courageous, our faculty more receptive, our students more concerned than we had expected. The years ahead will be difficult, and it may be beyond the capacity of any of the people around us to solve any of the real problems. But wherever we go, some people will try to help us, some people will care about what happens to the world, some people will show their love in the way they live, and we may learn, in a time of pestilence, that there are more things to admire in men than to despise.

The second lines come from a poem W. H. Auden wrote when Sigmund Freud died. Of those, like Freud, who battle the demons that beset men, he wrote:

... For every day they die
Among us, those who were doing us some good
And knew it was never enough but
Hoped to improve a little by living.

This is a time when it is hard to be both honest with yourself and proud of yourself. A few brave soldiers hate to kill but are willing to die; a few go to jail for their principles; most of us sell out somewhere in between. And if my birthday makes me safe from the draft, so I don't want to take any risks by causing trouble, who am to judge anybody else?

Well, most of us aren't heroes; we already knew that. But these are challenging times, and even ordinary men sometimes respond to challenges. In the years ahead, in the

army, on the campus, in the corporation, many of us may, for reasons we will never quite understand, act more bravely or speak out more honestly, than we had quite intended. We may do some good, and know it will never be enough, but hope to improve a little by living.

My third beacon of hope is a movie called "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." Two very appealing outlaws are constantly threatened by pursuers and shot to death in the last scene. Yet though everyone sympathizes with them, the film is hilariously funny, and no one leaves the theater depressed. I suspect this is because, while the heroes or antiheroes or whatever are surely among life's losers and end up shot, they have a hell of a lot of fun along the way.

There's a feeling around that if one can't actually do anything about Vietnam or racism or pollution, one can at least have the decency to be miserably unhappy. I think that's stupid. A real concern for these problems makes us want to seize the joy that remains in the world. Whether it's the joy of a summer hike in Turkey Run, the joy of being with someone we love, the joy of creative accomplishment—all these are good; all the evil in the world can't change that, and it's a strange attitude indeed that makes us try to do in the name of good what evil could never accomplish.

I said I would offer no easy answers, and I trust I've kept that promise. The class of 1970 does not enter a world full of nothing but glorious opportunities. But perhaps we'll learn that there are more things to admire in men than to despise; perhaps, knowing it will never be enough to change the world, we will act more honorably than we expected we would; perhaps we'll have a lot of fun along the way. It wouldn't be a bad life.