



## Class Agents Letter

### Class of 1972

#### Class Agent

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Gentlemen:

As this challenging year finally comes to end, I decided I need to step up, get off the couch, and send out a long-overdue Class Letter to my dear Class of '72. I sincerely hope all of you and your families have been able to stay safe and healthy. I sincerely hope your jobs and/or hobbies and/or retirement situations have not been too affected by the pandemic. I really would love to hear from all of you about your year 2020, and how you came through it all. I also want to wish a mass **"Happy 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday"** to most of you! The stories of how you celebrated this milestone would alone be very interesting to me and to your class, I'm sure. So let me know. I was lucky to be able to actually have a party (a "surprise party" organized by my son, Rich, and daughter Katie) back in mid-February, just days before the national lockdown due to Covid 19. **Don Lawton** was able to attend, plus a number of my other close Delt Fraternity brothers were invited, but unfortunately not able to attend... but did so in spirit. I appreciated being invited to attend two "Zoom" virtual 70<sup>th</sup> birthday gatherings, one for **Paul Gojkovich**, and another for **Bob Ivancevich**. I was grateful to see to see everyone, even though it was on a computer. **Pierce Klemmt** and **John Failey** attended those as well. I'm sure many of you shared the same experiences.

Since my last letter, many things have been happening at Wabash, all of them very positive, given the situation our Alma Mater was in, as well as every other learning establishment across the country. More on that later. I also do have some updates from a few of you since my last letter. I just hope all of you and your families are doing well. Now that a vaccine has been approved (as of this writing), we will hopefully be able to get together as an entire class in Crawfordsville, at Wabash for our **50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Big Bash** in June, 2022!

Ok, here's an update on a number of things:

### **News from the College**

**New Wabash President** Just to make sure you know, **Dr. Scott Feller** was elected as the 17<sup>th</sup> President of Wabash College by a unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees earlier this year. Scott (and his wife Wendy) have been a part of the Wabash community for over 20 years as a Professor of Chemistry, and his last six



years as Dean of the College. Over the years, Scott has been an integral part of both leading and executing the on-going strategic plans for the College, and as best I can gather, his transition of leadership has been seamless. I've had the pleasure of "meeting" Scott during two Zoom meetings over the past few months: One, the annual Class Agent's Meeting in September, and the second, a Chicago area Alumni gathering in December. From just hearing about Scott's leadership this year during the pandemic, plus hearing about his plans for next year and beyond, I'm very confident that Wabash is in great shape as we move forward into 2021.

**Admissions** The College rung-in 247 new students in August, a slightly lower-than-anticipated number, but also quite good given the recruiting challenges of the pandemic. Overall, the College's enrollment is higher than it was a year ago. Admissions recruiters have pivoted to entirely remote recruitment, though small numbers of prospective students and their families were able to visit campus for carefully planned activities.

Admissions applications for next year are up over this time last year. From December 10-12, more than 300 prospective students participated in a virtual experience of the Wabash classroom taking one of 23 courses in a newer type of Honor Scholar Weekend called Scarlet Honors Weekend.

[https://www.wabash.edu/news/displaystory.cfm?news\\_ID=11645](https://www.wabash.edu/news/displaystory.cfm?news_ID=11645)

**College Life** Led by President Scott Feller, Wabash completed a successful Fall 2020 semester starting two weeks early, forgoing a fall break, and concluding finals before Thanksgiving. The great tradition of teaching and learning continued as students, faculty, staff, and administration worked together to keep Wabash 97% residential. As with most small colleges, courses were taught with a mixture of in-class/ in-person classes and remote classes. Spring 2021 semester will start a week later in January with seniors taking their oral comprehensives first via Zoom before they return to campus to take the written portion of the exam in person. There will be no spring break, and the campus hopes to finish up in May at the usual time with the aim of physically graduating the Class of 2021 on May 16 along with the Class of 2020 who graduated virtually last May.

**>Regarding Sports**, the North Coast Athletic Conference suspended all sports through Dec. 31. Athletic teams have been holding modified practices, and the Allen Center is open with new restrictions. Wabash joined with members of the North Coast Athletic Conference in suspending athletics practices and related activities from Wednesday, November 25, 2020 through January 1, 2021. The NCAC also announced the cancelation of officially sanctioned competition and championships in winter sports. This decision also encompasses varsity sport programs that do not officially participate in the NCAC (wrestling and volleyball). AD Matt Tanney and his staff will begin to create plans for how to reinstate structured, sport-specific workouts, practices, and related activities in January. Though the College had no Homecoming game this fall, the Sphinx Club in

coordination with the Student Affairs Office still held the annual **Chapel Sing** on Sept. 17! Lambda Chi won for the second year in a row.

Next Fall, the College looks forward to the long-delayed **127<sup>th</sup> Monon Bell Classic**, scheduled for November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at the brand new **Little Giant Stadium**. Here's a couple of photos supplied by the College:



**Annual Fund/Advancement** The Annual Fund year ended June 30 on a record note at more than **\$3.5 million** in unrestricted gifts; about **42%** of alumni contributed. (We were very close to that. Thank you!!) Adding gifts from the Giant Steps Campaign and grants, the College set another record by raising more than \$25 million in the fiscal year. The Alumni Office also launched a new program, "Whenever. Wherever. Wabash.," which provides virtual engagement opportunities for alumni and friends..."whenever and wherever".

<https://www.wabash.edu/www/>

If you have not given to Wabash at any time this calendar year, your contribution is sincerely welcomed and appreciated, particularly now!

You can still make a gift in 2020. Here's how:

- Email: [giving@wabash.edu](mailto:giving@wabash.edu)
- Phone: 877-743-4545
- Online: [www.wabash.edu/give](http://www.wabash.edu/give)

**Building and Grounds** In addition to the new Little Giant Stadium, President Feller told us that an in-depth study continues of the infrastructure needs of the "Campus Life District" (including Lilly Library, Sparks Center, and adjacent buildings), while conversations about programming in a new Campus Center continue. Lots of exciting changes!

## News from '72

Heard from **John Acton** almost a year ago. So sorry, John, for this late report. I hope most news items are still correct:

"After a career in Manufacturing Engineering and R&D with General Motors in Illinois and New York and being widowed in 1998, I retired early in 2000 and returned to my first love - Education. I transferred my unused Indiana Secondary Social Studies Teacher's Certificate to New York, got another Master's Degree and had tons of fun as a secondary school librarian here in Massena, NY. After surviving a widowmaker heart attack (is that an oxymoron?) a few years ago I retired from Education. I now keep busy volunteering at the local Boys and Girls Club library and teaching history when I feel like it. My busy life is complete with my "new" wife of 19 years, six children and stepchildren and nine gorgeous grandchildren who all live everywhere BUT Massena, NY.

John had the pleasure of visiting with Frater **Chris Hilt** (TKE) in Sedona, AZ almost two years ago. "We didn't have nearly enough time to reminisce about the good times at the 'Bash. Belated Holiday Wishes all of my old friends from college...Especially **Ed Chapman, Reed Birney, Bob Phillips, Steve Brown** and all the other surviving Class of '72 Tekes."

**Gary Wolf** writes: "Janie and I continue to enjoy Belize, though I've spent half my time back in Tennessee for solar work the last few years. Have only done volunteer projects here -- the ranger station at a nearby national park, a solar pump for a crocodile sanctuary, and electrifying a fish farm run by the country's only residential drug & alcohol rehab facility. You can still find us on Facebook at Banana Cabana Belize, but we've renamed our place the CocoaCabana since we planted cacao on our 12.5-acre slice of the Third World, along with hundreds of other trees, bushes and flowers, from black pepper and vanilla to tropical fruits and birds of paradise. The toucans and parrots drown out our conversation pretty effectively most happy hours, Janie and I have discovered the joy of dominoes in old age. Greetings to all from the very deep South!"

A good update from **Tom McShane**: "We still live in our Del Webb retirement community in Ocala, FL. Aside from cancelling some trips, including one to make

a presentation at the 2020 Big Bash, we haven't suffered much from the virus and shutdown. Our part of Florida didn't get many virus cases, although stores and restaurants shut down for a while. Our community swimming pool was closed for about 6 weeks – that was hard given the warm spring we had. Fortunately our golf course remained open – one person per cart and no socializing on course property afterwards – but it was a nice bit of normalcy. Our daughter and her family live on Long Island, NY, and we typically see them several times a year. Our daughter is an executive with the NYU Doctor's Group and has been swamped with work. She doesn't commute to NYC these days, but will be going back soon. We'll all be relieved when it's feasible to travel again (I'm ready to go somewhere!)"

I got a message from **John Bridge** a few months ago. He has written a book about the "Story of Trinity Episcopal Church" in Indianapolis, Indiana. The book is called "***Be Thou My Vision***". Having been born and raised in Indianapolis, and growing up at Trinity Episcopal, I purchased the book on Amazon, read it from cover to cover and thoroughly enjoyed it! Beyond this great history of the church, the book provides a fascinating, complete history of the founding of Indiana (the State), and Indianapolis (the capital city), both of which I think most of you will find very interesting. It's listed on Amazon and other on-line sources "where fine books are sold". As you may know, John has practiced law for over 40 years, first in NYC then Indianapolis. He and wife Cathy live in Indy with their two dogs and parrot...

Speaking of gifted book authors, **Steve Brammell** just told me that he too just published a new book called "***Red Mountain Cut***". Says Steve: "These are short stories I wrote for Birmingham Magazine every month when I was living there and working as a freelance writer. I finally returned to Indiana after decades away and I'm now living in Indianapolis where I am in the wine trade, and still publishing short stories and poems in various literary journals." Here is a link to Steve's book":

<https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/red-mountain-cut-by-steve-brammell/>

Steve went on to say: "**Bert Stern** and I have been emailing of late. He says he is old and tired and his memory is not very good. I bought his last book of poetry "What I Got For the Dollar" on Amazon a few years ago when I began writing poetry again. It's great."

Steve says he has maintained communication with **Steve Crowley** and **Steve York**. "**Crowley** is a retired teacher (Frankfort International School) living in Oberursel, Germany, with his German wife. He has a college age son, and a teenage daughter. Crowley is still writing poetry." "**Steve York** recently retired from Homeland Security (he retired from the Marines and became an FBI agent, then was reassigned to Homeland Security when that agency was formed). He and his wife, Debra, who he met at a Kappa Sig mixer with the DePauw KAT

house our senior year, just bought a new house in suburban DC. They have two adult daughters, one who writes children's books and young adult fiction”.

Steve (Brammell) continues: “I worked as a freelance writer in Birmingham, Alabama, for quite a while, and finally returned to Indiana (something I said I'd never do). I finally got married in 2008 to a woman from Michigan City who lives in Indy. I moved to Indianapolis in 2010. It's interesting to live in a place where a Wabash license plate or t-shirt provokes people starting a conversation with you. My next writing goal is publishing my two historical novels set in the Indiana Dunes. I have the third part of the trilogy but it's not quite finished”... *“I am so thankful, more so each year, that I went to Wabash, especially the period I was there. It prepared me for life more than I could have imagined”.* Amen, Steve!

Steve closed with a funny memory from **Ralph's Mother**: “Do you remember Euripides from Wabash? I remember him at the rock concert during the Ralph's Mother fest in the spring of '69 in the Experimental Theater. I think a band named the “Finchley Boys” were playing and the lead singer brought out a snake, holding it over his head, and walked down into the crowd.” Ahhh, great memories!! Thanks for all the great news, Steve...

Ok, that's all for now, but I wanted to catch you up on everything I had regarding Wabash and our class during 2020. PLEASE email me with some news about YOU!!

Have a great Holiday and New Year. I'll be much better about timing for my next letter!

All the best,

**Rick**

