

### Class of 1977

#### Class Agents

Greg Birk [gregbirk77@gmail.com](mailto:gregbirk77@gmail.com)

Herm Haffner [hermhaffner@yahoo.com](mailto:hermhaffner@yahoo.com)

John Kerezy [johnkprof@gmail.com](mailto:johnkprof@gmail.com)

Alumni and Parent Relations Office

301 W. Wabash Ave.

Crawfordsville, IN 47933

765-361-6360

[alumni@wabash.edu](mailto:alumni@wabash.edu)

**wabash.edu**

Dear Classmates,

Have to begin this letter with some sad news. **Joseph O'Rourke, Jr.**, who taught speech and debate at Wabash for 37 years, died at the end of August at age 93. Affectionately nicknamed "Papa Joe" by his adoring students, O'Rourke joined the Wabash faculty in 1960 and taught continuously until his retirement in 1997. Together with Vic Powell, they produced generations of articulate communicators and brilliant lawyers, as well as state and national debate champs. O'Rourke chaired the Speech Department (now Rhetoric) for 20 years.



Joe was a proud native of Missouri and received his bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Missouri. Long-time *Wabash Magazine* Editor Steve Charles captured that impact perfectly in his [coverage of Joe's retirement ceremony](#). Memorial gifts may be made to the Joseph O'Rourke, Jr. Award in Rhetoric, which is presented to the graduating senior with the best senior project in the Rhetoric Department. Gifts may be made through the Wabash Advancement Office, 301 West Wabash Avenue, Crawfordsville, IN 47933, online at [wabash.edu/give](http://wabash.edu/give), or by phone at 877-743-4545.

Students, faculty and staff at Wabash are also mourning **Roland Morin's** sudden death. Roland headed up Career Services and CIBE at the college, making both top ranked in the country. Many in our class wouldn't know Roland, but **HERM HAFFNER** and I met with him on many occasions in our role with the National Association of Wabash Men. He is one of the reasons why 95% of Wabash graduates routinely achieve their "first choice" in post college destinations (graduate school, law school, medical school, careers, etc.). He'll be sorely missed.

**CLOSER TO OUR HEARTS** – It's our sad duty to let you know that **BILL SALO** is no longer with us. He passed away at his home in Red Creek, NY in June. Bill and his wife Marcia Lyn were married in the blizzard of '78. Bill had five children and eight grandchildren. For those wishing, contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association in Bill's memory. <https://donations.diabetes.org/site/Donation>

**STEVEN ROCKWELL** checked in with us recently. He retired as the village of Romeoville (IL) Community Development Director in 2019. Steve and LINDA's oldest granddaughter Emma began her studies at New York University this month after earning National Merit Semifinalist Honors at Hamilton Southeastern HS in Fishers, IN.

**KUDOS TO US** – The college's annual giving campaign for 2020-2021 was nothing short of amazing. In a year when alumni were unable to even visit campus due to Covid-19, Wabash had 43% of its alumni supporting it through gifts. The Class of '77 is one of the leaders. We had 71 percent of our class making a contribution to Alma Mater last year, the exact same percentage that we had the year before. Our class ranked No. 2 in our "decade cohort" with only the Class of 1971 (celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary) have a greater giving percentage. Even more spectacular IMHO is that fact that our five-year average percentage of alumni giving is 75%, and that's the highest among every class between 1970 and 1982. While I'm not the "money man" in our Class Agent Group (Herm is much better), there is a lot of loyalty and commitment to Wabash behind these terrific numbers. Your support adds great significance to the words "When college days are past, as long as life shall last, our greatest joy will be to shout the chorus." (*more below*)



Our class's All American defender **JIMMY PARKER** and long-time equipment manager **CHICK CLEMENTS** are among those honored at the new Little Giant Stadium. Look for these and other photos when you enter the facility this fall.

**FOLLOWING THE COLLEGE** – By now most all of us know that Wabash regularly broadcasts video on its YouTube channel, and sometimes it Live Streams events such as sports contests. Here is the channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/wabashcollege> Also, here's a link to the most recent event in the system, the Chapel Talk delivered on Thursday, September 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4064TN68oTU> There's so much going on at Wabash, and some of if you can "join" without leaving your living room due to streaming and social media as well.

### **HALL OF FAME/HOMECOMING/NEW STADIUM/BIRK HONORED**

– By now you've all received plenty of information about the Sept. 17-18 Homecoming Weekend, the Dedication of the new Frank Navarro Field and Little Giant Stadium, etc. I had an opportunity to visit the facility last month (*see photo at left*), and it's amazing. It puts most Division III and a lot of Division II college facilities to shame. Greg, Herm and I hope many of

you can come back to the campus and see this facility in person on/around September 18, Homecoming day.

The night before (Sept. 17) is the Wabash Athletics Hall of Fame banquet and induction ceremony. At this event the college will rectify something long overdue, the welcoming of **GREG BIRK** into the Hall of Fame. **If you are coming to any homecoming festivities, would you let us know? It's simple! Just text your name and the word HOMECOMING to me (John) at 234-542-4487.** We are planning on having some designated tables for our class at the Homecoming Luncheon. We just need to know how many tables we'll need, and your communication will help that. Thank you!

**OTHER COLLEGE NEWS** – President Scott Feller will be inaugurated as the 17<sup>th</sup> president of Wabash on Friday, October 8. The college received more than \$3.6 million in annual giving, including the \$1,375,279 donated by 5,833 givers on the Annual Day of Giving in April. You can find details about that here: [https://www.wabash.edu/news/displaystory.cfm?news\\_ID=11765](https://www.wabash.edu/news/displaystory.cfm?news_ID=11765)

**UPDATE** – Thank you for all the notes and emails about my health. I'm pretty blessed right now. After a six-and-a-half hour surgery on June 28, I spent five more days recuperating in the hospital. I'm on the road to recovery, but I won't be at "full strength" for another 2-3 months. However the biopsies which the surgical team took in the procedure have come back, all negative. So I'll be on the "watch list" for quite some time now, but as I type this class letter I'm cancer free. Right now I'm classified as a "stage three double survivor" medically speaking.

In mid-August I had the honor of speaking to the football team about the Wabash spirit, especially **Wabash Always Fights**. Hope you will enjoy this video as much as the team and coaches did. Here's the link: <https://youtu.be/CoBJQ9qTv6w> You can learn more about my health situation and story through the blog [www.jkerezy.wordpress.com](http://www.jkerezy.wordpress.com)

**FINAL THOUGHT** -- "Everything is hard before it is easy." -- Goethe

*John Kerezy*

PS – thought you'd enjoy a "look" at the back of the helmets of the football team this year. The "FN" is in honor of Coach Frank Navarro, who passed away earlier this year.



And if you want to purchase football tickets, here's the link to information about that:

<https://sports.wabash.edu/news/2021/8/24/2021-wabash-college-football-tickets-on-sale-now.aspx>