

WABASH COLLEGE



Class Agents Letter

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Class of 1981

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June 19, 2006

Report of the 25th Reunion of the Wabash College Class of 1981, by Peter Wright

Fellow Classmates:

We did it!

We reconnected. Many of us had not spoken or seen one another in the 25 years since we graduated and yet that was no barrier to great conversations and a great experience. Over the course of the weekend I spoke with some guys more than I did in the four years we were in school together. A number of guys returned to the campus for the first time in a long time.

We reminisced. We talked about some of the more memorable events, either to us personally or in the history of the College. We shared our recollections of that autumn evening when we stormed out of the Chapel and down to DePauw to reclaim the Monon Bell. We listened to Professors O'Rourke, McLean, and Mielke recall particularly memorable College presidents, faculty members, and students (the O'Rourke laugh is still instantly recognizable).

We remembered. The Rev. Jeff Buck led us in a brief and informal Memorial Service to remember our classmates who have passed away since our graduation: H. Marshall Greene, Jim Knoop, Terry Simmons, Jeffrey Van Hove, Tarleton Ware, Bret Willard, John Gunnum, and James Christian. The service was filled with funny and touching stories of our departed classmates such as Marshall Greene's attempt to assassinate "President" Mike Robak; Jim Knoop's split personality, and Jeff Van Hove's predilection for wearing shorts - even in the dead of winter.

We had a remarkable dinner. It was the company that made the reunion dinner at the new Sigma Chi house such a memorable experience. Andy and Anne Ford joined us for dinner. While Andy Ford was not the President when we attended Wabash, the current success and strength has very much to do with Andy and the administration he has assembled over his 13-year tenure. Andy really, truly, and deeply understands what Wabash is all about and is able to articulate that understanding and take action upon it. Andy is a gifted leader and speaker and his presence alone would have made the evening special.

Following dinner, we were asked to introduce ourselves and our spouses and then say something about what we are doing. I wished we had captured this evening on videotape, although it is beyond current technology to capture the feeling and the mood in the room. Man after man stood up and spontaneously and elegantly and in many different ways relayed how Wabash has made a difference in their lives and made these men leaders in their communities. There are too

many great stories to tell and so you will have to ask me or better yet talk to any of the others guys about what happened on Saturday night.

Classmate Jay Want sent some of us a note that I wanted to share with all of you because it really is a message to all who attended our reunion and all who were with us 25 years ago:

"I am still puzzling the thought that Wabash really does deliver on the promise of developing liberally trained minds for the world, something I may have doubted in my younger days. But there they were sitting in the Sigma Chi dining room, the proof that the college kept its promise. In obvious and subtle ways, these men had become the leaders of their communities. And they had done so with conviction, humility, and a sense of humor. How can society make every college do that, instead of merely being a ticket punch on the way to a job? I suppose that's exactly what they're trying to figure out at Trippet Hall.

"In any event, I returned from Crawfordsville, not quite understanding what happened there, this weekend or twenty-five years ago, but thankful for both. I appreciate your role in making those experiences for me, then and now.

We rallied. On Sunday morning, we ended where we began the reunion planning year that began in September, with Stephen Pavay, Mike Robak, Tom Elliot and myself meeting at the brunch along with David Powell, Nicki Bauer (my wife) and daughter, Audrey, and Tom's wife, Jane. Tom Runge kidded us by noting that with a couple of weeks to go before the Big Bash weekend we might get by with a single table or maybe two at the reunion dinner because our Class of 1981 registration numbers were so low. Tom's kidding came in the context of awarding our class the Class of 1928 Reunion Award for having the most alumni return (as recorded in the reunion book). We had 44 guys return in what was the largest reunion weekend ever for the College (a total of 324 Wabash men returned). Go see for yourself:

http://www.wabash.edu/photo_album/home.cfm?photo_id=3520&photo_album_id=346

Because of the participation and contributions of all those who attended and some who were unable to attend, but helped to add to the experience, I think we can all collectively say we raised the bar and set the mark for other classes to target.

Andy Ford closed his remarks at the brunch by asking everyone to tell one classmate about the reunion weekend experience. I don't think Andy's request will be a chore for the returning members of the Class of 1981. I expect that we will be telling as many of our fellow classmates as we should happen to see between now and the 30th reunion in 2011. In fact, some of us are already talking about getting together again soon.

Mark September 16th (this fall) for a pitch-in tailgate/cookout behind Hollett Stadium. Chris Braun will provide the grill and meat (hamburgers, hot dogs, and Italian sausage) along with some refreshments and condiments. It will be set up at least 2 hours before kickoff. More details to come, but get it on your calendar now.

More Big Bash Weekend Information

The following links are to photos and stories on the Wabash website that capture some of the moments of a most remarkable weekend, including the very interesting food and wine pairing colloquium that Stephen led and the fun of the Chapel Sing (we will have to work on the production values but we did sing the song in tune and with considerable volume):

http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/news.cfm?news_ID=3618

http://www.wabash.edu/photo_album/home.cfm?photo_album_id=339

http://www.wabash.edu/photo_album/home.cfm?photo_album_id=340

http://www.wabash.edu/photo_album/home.cfm?photo_id=3489&photo_album_id=343

http://www.wabash.edu/photo_album/home.cfm?photo_id=3536&photo_album_id=347

http://www.wabash.edu/photo_album/home.cfm?photo_id=3500&photo_album_id=344

http://www.wabash.edu/photo_album/home.cfm?photo_id=3514&photo_album_id=345

Reunion Planning Committee Members

Chris Braun, Shawn Crane, Tom Elliott, Douglas Kvachkoff, Mark Lazar, Mark McGrady, Stephen Pavv, Phil Purcell, Mike Robak, Rob Stevenson, Bob Seward, Monty Woolsey, and Peter Wright.

Members of the Class of 1981 Registered in the Reunion Book

Michael Bettice	Chris Braun	Rev. Jeffery Buck
Allan Clauser, Jr.	Dr. Douglas Coplen	Shawn Crane
David Dingley	Dr. Thomas Elliott	Eric Faires
Louis Fenoglio, Jr.	Joseph Fistrovich, Jr.	Larry Frye
Dr. Gustavo Galante	John Helm	John Hilbrich
Dr. Shawn Ireland	Dr. W. Terry Jones	David Ladd
Dr. Mark Lazar	Michael Leagre	Dr. Rolf Loescher
Mark McGrady	Douglas McKay	Dr. David Miner
Jon Myers	Dr. Jerome Noll	Stephen Pavv
David Powell	Michael Robak	Dr. Kurt Rupenthal
F. John Stark III	David Steiner	Robert Stevenson III
Ronald Vogel	Timothy Walsh	Dr. Jay Want
Thomas Weber	Paul Wittenbraker	Monty Woolsey
Peter Wright	Kent Yoder	Randall Zromkowski
Michael Zurawski		

There were some other guys who showed up after the Reunion book was pulled from the day (it was able to be signed between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.). I know that Dr. Kevin Trewartha showed up on Friday night. Any others that didn't make the book? Let us know.

