

# Wabash '91

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Gentlemen and Spouses (we know you read these, too),

I start with a few pieces of personal news. In July, I started working for Wabash as assistant director of engagement in the Alumni and Parent Relations Office. Yes, I'm actually working for Wabash College.

During my first meeting with Alumni Director Steve Hoffman, I addressed the volunteer roles I've had with our alma mater and whether I should continue them now that I'm on staff. With regard to Class Agent, we both agreed that you all deserve someone who will speak to you *outside of campus* about what's happening *on campus*. Therefore, after 26 years, I'm stepping down as your Class Agent. Never fear, though, you'll still be hearing from me. And along with classmates Roland Morin and Brad Weaver, you're very well represented on the Wabash campus.

When Kip, Scott Seay, and I started as your Class Agents in May 1987, we sent you letters—through the mail. Our class pioneered the Where Are They Now form, a class blog, and a Facebook group. The role of Class Agent has changed, but the core mission hasn't: to keep the class engaged in Wabash. When students ask me how I first started my involvement in Wabash as a young alumnus, I always point to Class Agent and the society of alumni it connected me to.

My sincere pleasure has come from serving the Largest Class to Matriculate and Graduate from Wabash College. Thank you so very much for the privilege of serving all of you.

## STEPPING IN

So when I talked with Kip about this development, we discussed some guys who could take on the duties. We wanted someone who kept up with the happenings of campus, had good knowledge of what all of you were doing, could create excitement during a Day of Giving, would make sure we had a great turnout at Big Bash, and would communicate regularly with you.

I'm pleased to announce that Erik Dafforn and Mike Langford are joining Kip as your Class Agents.



*Yes, I raided their Facebook photos, and yes, I found one of Daff in a tux.*

## MONON MISCHIEF

Damned if I can find the shirt from our freshman year: DePauw to Hell, Where's the Bell? Monon Bell Heist '88. Those FIJIs weren't caught. Neither were the Sigma Chis who stole it a decade later. Then, the Dannies didn't resort to surveillance cameras and pressure sensors.

I'm sure you've heard about [the caper](#). But you may not have heard these two stories. One of the attorneys for the perpetrators was [Mario Massillamany '98](#), who stole the bell his senior year. The quartet were ordered to community service, namely cleaning the stands after the Game. Wabash fans picked up after themselves; the Dannies did the opposite. But the football team, students, parents, Wabash fans, and President and Mrs. Hess [helped them clean up](#).

And yes, Wabash won 22-21 on a gutsy two-point conversion and two fake field goals in the same series. The Bell is back in Crawfordsville.

## FACULTY TRANSITIONS

Greg Castanias '87 posted: "Wabash friends, I have some sad news. **Vina Mikesell**, Phil's beloved bride of many years, died suddenly today (August 15) after a short illness. Even if you didn't know Vina, she knew you, especially if you graduated between 1982 and 2008, because she's the one who hand-lettered your name on your diploma. May her memory be eternal." ([Story](#))

Only a handful of professors remain who taught when we were students. **Kealoha Widdows** just celebrated her retirement. ([Story](#)) But I can tell you, with great assurance, that the faculty currently teaching our students engage them, challenge them, and support them. Recently, I attended

**Dr. David E. Wilson** passed away on September 12 in Ohio. Many know Dr. Wilson as a mathematics professor at Wabash from 1966-2000 and an honorary alumnus '70. I recall his teaching fondly as a freshman taking Calc 1. We all seemed confused as we slogged through, until that one class where all his talk of triangles suddenly made perfect sense. He always showed great patience and had such a dry wit. As a swimmer, I talked with him often as he always served as head timer during home meets. Dr. Wilson was a wonderful teacher and will be missed. A memorial service will be held next spring.



## UPCOMING MILESTONES

2018 marks some significant commemorations:

- The Wabash Writing Center celebrates 35 years tutoring students on their papers.
- The Wabash Swim Team celebrates 50 years as a varsity sport.
- The Wabash Football team will battle the Dannies at home for the 125<sup>th</sup> Monon Bell Classic on Nov. 10.

Expect more details to come.

## COMING IN FEBRUARY: ALUMNI SURVEY

I assure you that the College won't sell you a directory that will become outdated as soon as it's printed. Instead, the Alumni Office is working on a survey so that you can let the College know how it can serve you best.

## HONORS SCHOLARS SHUFFLE

Last school year, the Obama Administration changed the guidelines for parents filing for student aid. As the deadline for submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) moved to the fall, Wabash Admissions pivoted as well. The decades-old Honor Scholar Weekend moved to the first week in December with a retooled format and name. A few weeks ago, the campus hosted Scarlet Honors, which provided more of a look into campus life. Students attended classes, painted the Bench, rang the Monon Bell, and attended a Chapel with **Steve "Soup" Campbell '92** addressing high school seniors and their parents. So far, the change seems to be paying off in increased deposits, accepts, and financial awards. Admissions still retains a March event, now called Scarlet Celebration, which attracts a greater number of deposited students and officially starts Rush. With a student-run Taste @ Wabash, where folks could sample food from 13 local restaurants, Dance Marathon benefitting Riley Hospital for Children, and a four-team swim meet, campus visitors were treated to a busy weekend.

## #ONEWABASH

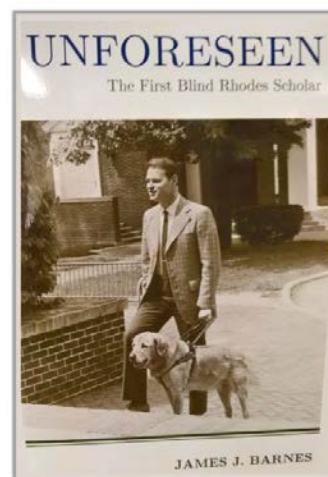
The end of the year fast approaches and at this writing, no one has really seen the tax reform legislation. Regardless of what transpires from the legislation, if you'd like to make a tax-deductible gift to the College for 2017, click over to [wabash.edu/give](http://wabash.edu/give).

When we were new Class Agents, Kip and I would often hear older alumni refer to us as "The Best Class Money Could Buy." Well, we sure have given back on that investment in us. Year after year, the Class of 1991—Wabash's largest class, mind you—routinely leads the pack on percentage giving. On April 19, classmates **Rich Calacci, Drew Crousore, Mike Hawksworth, Troy Hockemeyer, John Keith, Roland Morin, and Tim Oliver** joined Kip and me to issue a class affinity challenge. Your giving that day placed us 8<sup>th</sup> of all Day of Giving class challenges, and we came in 6<sup>th</sup> in class gifts.

## CLASS UPDATES

Lots to catch up on since our last letter in April, so here's what your classmates have been up to.

**Dr. James J. Barnes** – Our honorary classmate wrote a memoir, *Unforeseen: The First Blind Rhodes Scholar*. Here's the blurb: "James J. Barnes has never let the absence of sight define him. Born with limited vision, from a young age he was singled out for his love of hard work both in the classroom and on the sports field. As an undergraduate he was named First Citizen of Amherst College as was then awarded a Rhodes Scholarship, only to lose his sight entirely during his first year in Oxford. Now an eminent historian and beloved teacher, this is not a tale of triumph over adversity, but rather one man's account of how he has responded to what life has given him by giving back to others."



**Nick Cronk** – Nick visited campus in October. Here's a tweet from assistant coach Olmy Olmstead '04.



**Olmy Olmstead**  
@CoachOlm

Follow

Honored today to have @WabashFB former coach & '91 alum Nick Cronk attend my O-Line film session. He recruited me in 1999.  
**#SomeLittleGiant!**

8:03 PM - 4 Oct 2017

**Kevin Holle** – Last month, Wabash Admissions accepted Kevin’s son, John, to the Wabash Class of ’22, and he will attend in the fall. I’m seeing lots of sons of classmates and guys we attended Wabash with on campus visits (e.g. Tom Fisher, Mike Langford, and Jay Zach).

**Tom Kilbane** -- “Four of 5 gents are from Class of 1991 celebrating good over evil at O’Sullivan’s in Forest Park, IL as Wabash defeated DPU in the 124th Monon Bell Classic.” (Brett Miller, Tom Watson, Tom Kilbane, and Rod Mohler)

**Jeff Insko** – Ran into classmate Brad Graden in Empire, Michigan in July. Jeff has also been battling a pipeline running through his property. ([Video](#))

## Wabash Legacies

I ran some numbers on legacies:

- 59 alumni have sons who currently attend Wabash
- Of those, 31 guys we attended Wabash with are fathers of 38 current students
- 4 of our classmates (Troy Hockemeyer, Eric Strehl, Rick Stults, Dennis Wilson) have sons here.



**Matt Hanson** – Matt is running for reelection as Morgan County Judge in 2018.

**John Lustina** – Praise the Lord and pass the pilsner. John has entered the craft beer fray with Beer Church Brewing in Buffalo, Michigan. I’ve visited, and the TWR is delicious. ([Story](#))

**Luke Messer** – On July 26, the 6<sup>th</sup> District Indiana Congressman announced he’s running for the U.S. Senate Seat against incumbent Joe Donnelly. For the May 8 primary, he’ll face off against two other Wabash grads: Congressman **Todd Rokita ’92** and Jasper businessman **Mike Braun ’76**.

**Roland Morin** – Already leading the Center for Innovation, Business and Entrepreneurship (CIBE), Roland was appointed Director of the Schroeder Center for Career Development. ([Story](#))

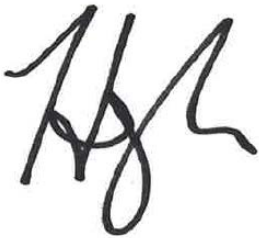
**Hugh Vandivier** – I had a fun fall. The NAWM awarded me with the Frank W. Misch Alumni Award of Merit at Homecoming, and the Sphinx Club invited me to deliver a Chapel Talk on Oct. 19. ([Video](#))

**Matt Vessely** – Matt is regional president of 1<sup>st</sup> Source Bank, who was recently profiled in the Times of Northwest Indiana. ([Story](#))

**Marcus White** – Marcus is the VP of civic engagement for the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. Here's a recent interview with him in the [Milwaukee Business Journal](#).

So, Gentlemen, that's the story. My best wishes to Kip, Mike, and Erik.

Wabash Always Fights,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AJL' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.