

Thank you, Steve!

After 25 years, the Fall 2019 “Last Glance” issue was Steve’s last as editor of Wabash Magazine. Without his knowing, we asked readers for memories and reflections. The response was so overwhelming that we couldn’t fit them all in the print edition, so we’ve posted the full versions here.

Steve Charles came to Wabash College in 1994, shortly after email arrived on campus, but still a few years prior to the College having a website. Timing is important because Steve’s arrival—and his subsequent conception of and contributions to *Wabash Magazine*—have been as important to the evolution of Wabash communications as either of the other two.

The magazine Steve found when he arrived in Crawfordsville wasn't *Wabash Magazine*. It was called *Wabash Notes*, and it was pleasant enough. Totally acceptable. Absolutely fine. (Paul Boger '87 had briefly led *Wabash Notes* in some exciting directions, but he moved on to another publishing job before a lot of his ideas and visions could be fully realized.)

You could keep going and rattle off a list of adjectives describing *Wabash Notes* that wouldn't technically offend it, but in so doing, you would probably cement it to its ascribed slot on the spectrum of campus publications—somewhere north of banality but often south of brilliance.

If you've been (or known) an editor, you know the term is a proxy for a thousand different roles. This is especially true at *Wabash Magazine*. Steve works equally well at the atomic or galactic level. He can revise a sentence, rewrite a paragraph, reshape an article, reshoot a spread, redefine the theme of an issue, or reimagine an entire publication. For 25 years, he has done this while delicately tiptoeing around the egos of his writers, standing ground against the demands and shortcomings of printers, juggling feedback from readers, and remembering he has bosses. Some of his bosses are human and sitting nearby, while others are the ghosts and traditions of an institution nearing its 200th birthday.

Even then, “editor” can't aptly describe Steve. At his core, he's an immensely talented photojournalist and publishing visionary. I visited him a few times in one of his early Wabash offices, where his chair was nestled among stacks and stacks of organized clutter. Manuscripts. Photographs. Blueprints. Story drafts. Stacks of cassette tapes. The puzzle pieces of chaos were resting patiently, waiting to be assembled into something great, like you'd see in the office of Albert Einstein or Peter Frederick.

Steve speaks calmly and softly, but he's ready to belt out a raucous laugh. And I admit a small amount of perverse glee knowing he's mortified to be the subject of praise and thanks. That's the Hoosier in us. And for all that work, look what we've done to him: We've worn him out and blanched his beard to the color of first snow. “Keep it coming,” he would always say.

I was fortunate to do some work for Steve in his early years at Wabash. He graciously trusted me with some assignments that let me profile many different, interesting Wabash men: Heads of industry, famous costume designers, engineers, teachers, fly fishermen, reporters. His requests to me were few but non-negotiable: *Get into their head a little. They're doing important work, but why? How did their time at Wabash shape them? Tell us without telling us.*

Every time I'd submit a story, it would include an apology to Steve for going over word count. And every time, I'd pull out that tired excuse I first heard from Bert Stern—an evergreen *mea culpa* for going long. "I would have written a shorter piece," I'd say, "but I didn't have time." He'd always laugh charitably. "We'll find the space."

I know some of this backstory because I was around when Steve came to Wabash. In fact, he and I were vying for the same job. We both made it to the top three candidates. At the end of the process, I had a message on my answering machine:

"Erik. Jim Amidon. Call me when you get a chance."

I knew then I was sunk.

"We've decided to go a different way," Jim said when I called him back. "He's a good guy. His name is Steve Charles. He has some good experience and I think he'll do a good job."

He did a good job.

Sometimes we throw around the term "Wabash Man" like we're gatekeepers of an exclusive little club. Selfishly, I wondered in 1994 whether Steve could do justice to Wabash, not being a "Wabash Man." I didn't wonder long. Somewhere along the way, the question became irrelevant.

Steve, you earned your letter long ago. You're a Wabash Man, and I couldn't be prouder or more grateful of the work you've done for the College. Thank you.

-Erik Dafforn '91

Steve Charles gets it. And the "it" can be almost anything. He gets how the *Magazine* functions for this community. He gets this community and sees the underlying, significant threads that need illumination. He gets how to tell the story. He gets how to listen. Steve, a consummate writer and talented storyteller, allows the narrative to surface. He trusts the process. He is gentle, sensitive, honest and so comfortable in his own skin.

On the occasions when Steve has visited my studio, he instinctually understands and connects the dots. His observation skills are finally honed. He recognizes how one's life is connected to one's research, which is connected to one's teaching, which is connected back to one's life.

We learn from each other. We are friends. He gets me.

-Doug Calisch

Steve Charles is one of the greatest storytellers in the history of the Wabash people. Yes, I mean people, because his work has been about the people.

I have known Steve almost from his arrival to campus. He was dedicated from the word "go." In early 1997, he reached out to me to develop a focus group of alumni to talk about the magazine. All of Wabash knows that the magazine has been A+ since he started to work on it. The magazine is loaded with humanity, history, and humor such that even readers who have no connection to Wabash would be interested, informed, and inspired.

Steve the Storyteller is always attuned for a story, especially one that connects humanity and Wabash. In 2017, he and I were having an impromptu conversation on campus. I commented about a story on adoption in the latest issue. The article quoted the wife of an alumnus as saying "Life is what happens to us when we are making other plans." I said to him that that quote actually is attributed to a Wabash alumnus from the early part of the 1900s. Without missing a beat, he yanked a pen from his pocket and began taking notes on the palm of his hand. He can be delightfully unique.

It did not take long for Steve to make his mark on Wabash alumni. In February 2005, within 10 years of his becoming editor, the Indianapolis Association of Wabash Men honored Steve as its Man of the Year. He is one of two men to get this award who was not an alumnus, professor, president, dean, or administrator. That fact alone reflects the high appreciation by alumni for this premier storyteller. In my many years with the IAWM, no recipient of this award was more humble, more thrilled, or more deserving than Steve.

-Jon Pactor '71

The Wabash Magazine is consistently the best college or university magazine my wife (Cindy DPU '69) and I read. *WM* stands above them all. Steve has done a wonderful job.

-John A. Burrell '69

Wabash Magazine is the best publication of its kind, from just about any perspective, that I have encountered. I pick up my mail at the box by the road, and drive up the 200-yard long driveway, then shuffle through my harvest. Occasionally I have remained seated in my car as I read articles in *WM*. At least once, I read the whole thing before I went in the house. That's a good standard for any publication.

-John Lennes '66

We are the most unlikely of friends—Steve Charles is a gifted writer, a super-talented storyteller, a genius at magazine design, and a pro photographer. I am... an over-the-hill fighter pilot. Somehow, we hit it off... and my life is richer because of it.

In the absolute simplest of terms, Steve made me better in many ways.

As to my attempts at writing, he never criticized. He was always quick to applaud my efforts and then kindly suggest some rewrites. They were always qualitative upgrades that made my efforts better.

With photography, he is someone who truly appreciates how the visual ties into the story. He dropped several hints along the way as well—my favorite line: “you almost can’t get too close, Tom.” In other words, zoom in!

When we talked about various campus-related subjects, he was always able to see past the “needs fixing” to the “glass is more than half full.” He always brought me back to focus on the most important element—the unbelievable impact Wabash has on the lives of those who pass through her halls. I always walked away from those chats thinking “Steve is right.”

As to our community, Steve has impacted Montgomery County, Crawfordsville, and Wabash. He’s an active volunteer—how he finds the time I have no idea. Steve is very involved, but it is Steve’s ability to tell the story of Wabash College and our Wabash family that sets him apart. I know each and every issue was a labor of love for Steve... he holds the record for “all-nighters” at Wabash for student, staff, and faculty alike!

My favorite memory? During Alumni Chapel a few years ago, Steve was honored by the National Association of Wabash Men when they named him an Honorary Alumnus. As he left the Sanctuary, he walked to the back of the Chapel. I shook his hand and congratulated him. Steve had an ear-to-ear grin... and tears running down both cheeks. At that moment, I knew how much the honor meant and what this good place meant to Steve. I will never forget that moment.

Steve leaves us with size 17 shoes to fill—he’ll become the crew chief for a go-kart racing team that features a young, talented driver—Steve’s grandson. That transition, my friends, is the liberal arts in action.

Steve has told the story of Wabash for 25 years in an almost magical way. I am convinced his efforts have highlighted our College to the world, and made us a better college, a better place, and better people. You simply could not ask for more. Well done, my friend!

-Tom Runge '71

I sometimes like to think that Steve is the hidden Renaissance man of Wabash.

Editing the magazine, taking great photographs: this we see. But I didn't know that he was a songwriter, too, until my senior year. Late that fall semester, Steve approached me to ask if I would like to sing with his folk band in a service at the Episcopal church. He'd written a song about the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus and needed a "different kind of voice" than his own to perform it. The song was beautiful, and I was honored to play a part in making it come to life. Storyteller, songwriter, photographer, musician: Steve carries around these manifold talents with the greatest humility imaginable, and our campus will be impoverished by his absence.

-Sam Vaught '16

I graduated from Wabash and moved far away from Crawfordsville in 1955, so I have no first-hand knowledge of Steve Charles. However, I appreciate his mark on the magazine; it has been an obviously high-quality effort. I generally read it cover to cover. My experience at Wabash has been very meaningful to me.

In addition, on two occasions, there have been references to people I've known but were 50 years or more out of touch. One, a fraternity brother, I was able to contact again. The second, James D. Adams, a former trustee, was largely responsible for my education at Wabash, and the article brought back many pleasant memories. So, I'm indebted to Steve for his efforts.

-Bob Kellogg '55

I met Steve in 2001 but I still remember his generosity, and warm embrace of diversity. He is the only person that I remember as a co-member of Wamidán, the world music ensemble, and was always very much at home with our community of international students. He helped make Wabash our home away.

I wish I could be there for his farewell party. Great guy!

-Godred Yemofio '01

My dealings with Steve have always been a pleasure. He's pulled essays out of me that might not otherwise have been written, but, beyond that, his beautiful spirit has nourished me. And his alumni magazine is lightyears beyond any other I've seen.

-Bert Stern '62

Steve Charles has been my most important link both personally and through *Wabash Magazine* since I met him when I returned to the campus for the 40th reunion of the class of '69 ten years ago at my first Big Bash. He asked me to be on the editorial advisory board of the Magazine which was an honor given the role that the magazine plays in connecting the current state of the College to its past. Typical of Steve and the other communication staff, they did all of the work while I followed the continuing evolution of the *Magazine* into electronic media while maintaining the extraordinary quality of the print edition.

-Richard Elson '69

Steve published my story about flea markets, my dad, my son-in-law Will Skertic '11, and my friend Cochise in the Fall 2014 issue on "Work." I have never had another editing experience like it.

Steve came to the muzzle loading championships in Friendship, Indiana, in June of 2014 and took a ton of photos and videos of the event and the flea markets surrounding it. He worked with me on the story all the way through. Because my first telling of the story was way back in 2007 when I gave the Eric Dean lecture at Wabash, I wanted to include Eric, plus Bill Placher, in the story. Steve was very patient and empathetic as he guided me through that. Nobody else could possibly have understood the relationship among these very disparate people and events.

Cochise and dad died about 2 months apart in 2017. I got a really nice note from Steve about dad and me.

I've published in a lot of magazines and newspapers, but I've never had an editor "get it" quite the way Steve did in this odd story that was personally very important to me.

-Art Farnsley '83

My contact with Steve goes back to when he made a visit to Boulder, Colorado. Steve had sent a note saying that he wanted to visit and was writing articles about Wabash grads in their community. We visited some of the areas that I was active in and then he came to our home.

Steve has a knack of communicating in a way that is very disarming and open. Pretty soon you are visiting a man you probably have not met before but feel like you have known most of your life. It was a fun experience and I certainly enjoyed the opportunity to visit with Steve.

-Bob Charles '59

Steve drafted the *Magazine's* mission statement, "Life in this close-knit learning community is shaped by meaningful relationships." One of my most meaningful relationships with Wabash College has come through the *Wabash Magazine*.

I work in the field of communication disabilities. I believe the first article Steve wrote concerning my work was a sensitive treatment of a young man with cerebral palsy who was and who found himself to be quite handsome. He wished to be the first person with disabilities featured on the cover of *Gentleman's Quarterly* magazine!

Over the years, I've looked forward to the arrival of the *Wabash Magazine*. Now that I am in my seventies, I look with trepidation to the Obits. My two closest, life-long friends, dating back to Logansport High School, David O. Justice and Courtney B. Justice, were both lost to me more a decade ago. Thus, one of my most significant contacts with the Wabash community has been the *WM*.

Steve performed one of the great services possible to the Wabash community through the high-quality of his journalism. He will be sorely missed.

-Bruce Baker '65

Of all the works I was called upon to read as a student at Wabash, none has stayed with me moreso than Alexis deTocqueville's "Democracy in America," for two reasons. The powerful and insightful ability to capture what has historically been the very soul of America with prose that both captures and sustains what is good and distinctive and... well, American. His writing is pitch perfect and consistently on target.

As he put it so eloquently, "I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there... in her fertile fields and boundless forests and it was not there... in her rich mines and her vast world commerce—and it was not there... in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution—and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great."

The other remarkable aspect of his work is that his insight into the institution about which he wrote comes from an "outsider," rather than a native son, yet the many facets of his work consistently capture the diverse subjects with both precision and affection, whether describing the fabric of America or, as in his lesser known work, "A Fortnight in the Wilderness," which dates to one year before the founding of Wabash College and captures what was then the American frontier... Michigan Territory.

Steve's editorial journey over a quarter century since arriving at "his America" captures not only the fabric of Wabash as a close-knit community but also evolution from a well-

intentioned but largely amateurish publication into a top-5 ranked publication produced by a College or University with no formal journalism program.

Over the course of 25 years, a rich portrait of over two generations of motivated alumni, inspired faculty, and memorable administrators has been forged which describes a powerful force and voice to the Hoosier state and beyond. Steve's vision has given life to and put a face on Wabash's inspired mission statement.

Here's to a quarter century of vision, continuity, creativity, and imagination. Here's to Wabash's Alexis deTocqueville.

-Larry Landis '67

I have so appreciated Steve's leadership of the *Magazine*.

Steve has taken our alumni magazine from quite pedestrian to world class. The quality of the writing, art, and substantive content captures the ethos of Wabash, issue after issue.

I have been so proud of the magazine over the years that I have eagerly shared many articles with total strangers to Wabash as well as with potential enrollees.

Steve clearly loves Wabash, and the magazine which he has led so passionately proves the point!

-Bruce Polizotto '63

I want to compliment Steve Charles for creating a persistently engaging, perceptive, and persuasive collegiate magazine. I have had numerous opportunities to compare *Wabash Magazine* with other alumni publications and know that Steve has produced the best written, most engaging, and visually most attractive publication.

Wabash Magazine reminds me that I am part of a conversation about the campus community, and embraces the challenges of describing what happens among our alumni, our faculty, and our current students. Steve has made it the one publication that never lays about unread. For those of us living far away, Steve's work attracts our interest and causes me to return to campus whenever I visit central Indiana.

To Steve I say, yours has been a faithful record of a special place over a quarter of a century. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement. We can only hope that the likes of you will pass this way again.

-Ron Brown '67

In the Summer 2008 issue of *Wabash Magazine*, Steve captured a family photo that means a lot to me. Our son, Professor Jeremy Hartnett, stepped out of the commencement procession in his regalia to greet his 9-month-old son, Henry at Henry's first commencement.

This photo shows both Steve's good sense to be in the right place at the right time to capture a fleeting moment and his sensitivity to write a wonderful piece on remembering what is truly important. This speaks to both Steve's journalistic skills and to his humanity. He will be missed.

-Dale Hartnett

Steve had been at Wabash for just a year or two when I got to know him. Steve was always good for a quick and engaging conversation about what was going on with me, the next game, or whatever the issues of the day on campus were. Anyone who has read his incredible work on *Wabash Magazine* can attest to his writing skill. It takes a special talent to find the story and light it with the appropriate angle to really bring dimension to his subject matter. I will certainly miss our visits when I come back to campus and reading his work in *Wabash Magazine* and wish him a happy retirement.

-Benjamin A. Whitehouse '99

While the voice of the student body is published weekly in the Wabash College *Bachelor*, as far as we alumni are concerned, Steve Charles has been our faithful quarterly contact for keeping us up to date on campus life, the faculty, and student activities for many, many years.

We Wabash Class Agents would have little to report to our classmates without Steve's communications to us. He truly has well served as "*the voice of Wabash*" for we alumni of the college.

Best wishes to you, Steve, upon your richly deserved forthcoming retirement.

-William J. "Bill" Reinke '52

Steve's impact on Wabash men was his ability to capture our developing lives beyond a photo. He takes astonishing photos and pairs it with his gift of telling the story of the people in those photos. I saw Steve around campus events often but it was our trip to Kenya where I got to know him as a person. His calm and collective spirit went on a journey of discovery. One that led us to all terrains and people from all walks of life. The pictures he took there I

still cherish but the time he took to talk about our experiences once we were back in our dorms was more important.

While on the Kenya trip we attended a show with traditional dancing from Kenya. Suddenly one of the dancers grabbed me and brought me on stage to dance. Steve captured it in the photo attached. Little did Steve know we would be switching seats soon. They called him up to partake and I quickly took over as photographer to capture the moment. It was a memorable moment to be able to capture the person behind the lens

Beyond that trip, I have always felt a warm welcoming spirit around Steve and I am excited whenever I come across him on campus when I visit Wabash. I hope he realizes he has made a huge impact on our lives as Wabash men and I wish him nothing but the best.

-Alejandro Maya '13

In his quiet, unobtrusive but extraordinarily creative and perceptive ways, Steve had multiple profound impacts on Wabash.

In the content of each issue, and cumulatively, he's been a masterful story teller, bringing Wabash and its mission to life; he's been an exceptional living historian of the people of Wabash and their contributions to the College and the world; he is a continuous example of one of life's most difficult achievements – substantive, uplifting excellence sustained over time.

We owe Steve our heartfelt thanks and our best efforts to continue his high standards and compelling content in days to come.

-David Shane '70

I will never forget Steve coming to Columbus as we were starting our free clinic (Volunteers in Medicine). He met with us and wrote about our efforts to make health care accessible to those without insurance, and you included pictures of the six Wabash physicians who were volunteering at VIM.

I looked forward to our paths crossing whenever I was on campus, as Steve always took a few minutes to ask about what was going on in my life and to fill me in on life at the college. I saw him in the chapel at my 60th reunion. Although we didn't have the opportunity for a conversation, I reached out and touched his arm, and he gave me a big smile.

I am grateful for how you have elevated the *Wabash Magazine* to a first-rate, outstanding publication that makes all associated with the college proud. Steve, you are some Little Giant!

-Sherm Franz '59

Having been on the Wabash campus the entire time of Steve's tenure as editor of *Wabash Magazine*, it will be sad for me not to see Steve with pad and pencil in hand working out in the Fitness Center on the treadmill or elliptical as he doggedly edits articles for the *Magazine*. And I will miss unexpectedly encountering Steve on campus and engaging in lengthy conversations about cars, writing, or Wabash people and events.

Reading alumni magazines from other institutions, I can confidently say that ours, under Steve's guidance, is far and away the best. The *Magazine* reflects Steve's essence—compassionate, friendly, curious, and astute. Beyond our serendipitous campus conversations, my working relationship with Steve involved his interviews with me and his occasional class visits as he prepared stories for the magazine and website. I particularly enjoyed having Steve visit my class during my last semester of teaching when he would occasionally drop in to see how the "History of Herzog" experiment was progressing and curious to know how I could possibly link *The Boys of Summer* or *Death of a Salesman* with my own life. After class, he would share his own views about our topic that day, comment on some of the students' responses, and admonish me for my reticence to talk more about certain personal topics—always pushing me to do more introspection.

I also enjoyed our interview sessions. Steve was simply a superb interviewer. He arrived at his assignments well prepared and genuinely interested in both his topic and interviewee. He quickly moved the interview into a thought-provoking conversation rather than a stylized Q and A session. Because of his probing and often unexpected questions, I always came away from these sessions learning more about myself and that day's topic. Especially when Steve would interview me about a book I had published, I would leave that conversation thinking that my writing and thinking would have been much better if I had talked with Steve first.

Finally, Steve is a superb writer and storyteller. The articles for the Wabash website or for *Wabash Magazine* based on our interviews or class visits always made me seem much smarter than I really am and certainly more interesting. I am currently in the process of writing a memoir, and I am hoping that my informal conversations with Steve will continue. I desperately need access to his friendship, good sense, probing questions, and storytelling advice. Steve, I hope retirement treats you well and a new sports car roars into your future.

-Tobey Herzog H'11

Steve Charles is a conversational vampire. One bumps into him on campus, or at the farmer's market, and after initial pleasantries, one is likely to be taken over, mind and body. After thirty minutes or so, we wake from a kind of daze, and realize stories and ideas have been sucked out of us that may, or may not, find their way into the next issue of *Wabash*

Magazine. Somewhere, perhaps in Transylvania, or growing up in the Southwest, Steve developed the superpower of listening with an intensity that cannot be resisted.

Steve's ability to listen, while sometimes disconcerting to the interviewee, is central to learning and to the liberal arts, and has been a gift to this College. He can talk with anyone, from any field or background, with depth and understanding. Like any great student, he manages to personally connect to a subject, displaying a genuine interest that pushes the conversation toward greater and greater complexity.

I experienced this over the years, working with Steve on subjects as far ranging as Jewish men and violence, an immersion class trip to New York City, and recently the film *The Hustler*, talking non-stop as we shot pool in the Malcolm X Institute. Steve always asks pointed questions that show that he's done his homework on the topic, questions that pushed me to think even more deeply about the subject at hand and sharpening my focus. As a regular reader of *Wabash Magazine*, I know Steve has interacted this way with everyone who has submitted work. He has helped us all become better writers, and he has also done so through the example of his own writing, which is always carefully crafted, meaningful, and moving.

Finally I want to mention what I consider Steve's signature contribution to the content of *Wabash Magazine*, the "A Man's Life" section. It's no surprise to anyone who knows me that I was not happy with the Trustees' 1991 decision to remain all male. I remember saying to myself (and to others) that the only way to justify the decision would be to make reflecting on masculinity, its strengths, weaknesses, and infinite variations, a central part of what we do at Wabash. I can't recall when Steve introduced this section, but over the years it has included some of the most trenchant reflections on what it means to be a man that I've seen published anywhere. I hope that in retirement Steve might consider editing a book collection of his favorite "A Man's Life" columns. An even broader audience than the Wabash community would no doubt benefit from such a book. Are you listening Steve?

-Warren Rosenberg H'98

Steve Charles is Some Little Giant.

I have admired him and his work for years, and he is a good guy. Wabash could use more like him!

-Gordon Colson '58

Steve Charles is a true gentleman and a wonderful example of our mission statement.

-Cal Black '66

Steve brilliantly expanded the new communications trend at Wabash—giving the college new ways of looking at itself and its traditions and, just as important, new ways of conveying the college and its traditions to the world outside its walls.

Thanks to his innovative skills and sensitive feel for the school's soul, Steve made *Wabash Magazine* not just an alumni publication but an engaging expression of the liberal arts ethos. The most compelling example was his groundbreaking issue on mental health at a critical moment when Wabash, like the rest of the country, was wrestling with tragedies that called out for that ethos as a remedy. Wabash's special voice is much richer for the quarter century he spent there.

-Tim Padgett '84

I have never met another person who elicits deep, honest, and emotionally rich conversations as well or as quickly as Steve. As a young faculty member, I had occasion to speak to Steve when we would cross paths on campus, and I was always struck by how quickly we would end up sharing stories of childhood. When leaving the Allen Center we might start a conversation about the beauty of the arboretum when the leaves change, and by the time we reached Baxter we would have to pause on the steps to finish our conversation about what it was like to try to be a good dad when we did not get to see many examples of good dads in childhood.

Those conversations made me realize that I had to get him into my Fatherhood class to speak to my students about being a step-father. His visit in November of 2017 was every bit as moving as you would predict. He modeled what it meant to be both emotionally vulnerable and brave, honest yet humble, articulate yet uncertain. In the subsequent class my students spoke about how moved they were, as well.

I will deeply, deeply miss Steve's presence on campus. He reminds all of us—and especially the data nerds in our ranks—of the necessity and power of a good story.

-Eric Olofson

I will always remember how engaged Steve was to everything happening at Wabash. Any performers acting in the Theater productions could count on Steve making the show. Often, he would come two nights. He would always stay after the show to talk with the cast and director. I will never forget discussing my character with him after the premiere of "Deadfish, Idaho," a play written and directed by Professor Michael Abbott '85.

Steve, thank you for your appreciation and honest criticism. I always felt like if you enjoyed the show, then we had done well.

-Joe Hisch '02

Steve (and his wife CJ) are some of my closest friends from my time at Wabash. I have many memories of them, but the one I would like to mention comes from my years as a student at Wabash, when Steve and I were both members of Wamidan. We performed an astonishing variety of songs on many instruments (including a sea shanty on endongo, endingidi, and amadinda), and one of our concerts included South African gumboot dancing. Steve, one person who attended the concert—I think her name was CJ—told me that I was a better gumboot dancer than you. I would like you to know that I disagreed. I think your gumboot dancing was superlative. Maybe you'll find time to do more in retirement?

-Joe Warfel '04

Steve embodies the mission of our College in the most genuine, yet silent, ways. He owns the voice of inclusion at Wabash, sharing profiles of those who are not the loudest or most-known but have something of interest to share with our community. He is also the one who recognized that more than one-third of *WM's* readers were women and made immediate editorial changes to feature their stories, bylines, and contributions to Wabash. He is the one who supported my history projects—both for the classroom and for the College—by staying late to discuss and providing feedback to many drafts. Behind all of the stories Steve told is a lesson he shared many times during my college years—every life has meaning. He believed that sharing in the pain and joys were equally part of our experience at Wabash. These are lessons that endure.

-Mark Shreve '04

Besides my appreciation for Steve Charles' work product over the years, many people outside the Wabash community who have read my copy of his work have told me they are impressed by the quality of the *Wabash Magazine*.

-George A. Brattain '63

Steve was everywhere, it seemed. Or rather, was at nearly every Wabash event when I was on campus.

I was one of the videographers for the football team, perched above the Allen Center and the track-connected entrance, right by the flagpole. He sat up there with me for a spell to take pictures from that vantage point and took one of me just before kickoff before the 119th Monon Bell Classic in 2012, my last with the team.

Steve has a trait that I admire when I find it in other people: he is genuine. That sincerity always comes through. Maybe that is an ingredient in his ability to find the right shot, or better yet, to tell people's stories.

I am glad that he has been a part of mine.

-Rudy Altergott '13

Steve Charles encouraged me to treat writing as more than a job. He modeled this every day. As an intern in Communications, I recall sitting in his second-floor Kane House office on hot summer days to undergo countless revisions for a story to be "just right." His investment helped me capture memories that I will forever treasure such as friendships with Wabash legends Vic Powell and Bill Cook, and an early reflection on the importance of educational equity while on the College's first immersion trip to Kenya.

For many years, Steve has brought out the best in people to tell the stories of "This Good Place," and his contributions as editor of the *Wabash Magazine* have been both labors of love and a gift to us all. Some Little Giant!

-Kyle Bender '12

The list of stories I could tell about Steve Charles would be a lengthy one. Steve spent a good number of years as an integral part of the Wabash community (they don't give Honoraries to just anyone, you know) and I'm just glad that all of my four years were among them.

Steve became an important part of my life when I was spending the summer of 2016 on campus as an intern in Hovey Cottage. That summer, I wrote an autobiographical account of my life as a soccer player for the *Wabash Magazine*. In candor, the story didn't have much place in the *Magazine* because it was so focused on the sport—Steve showed me how to make it a story of the people I knew who had an impact on my life. It was a summer-long process of writing and rewriting that personal essay and it helped me develop as a writer—which I now do professionally. In the story, the most important person is my maternal grandfather Charlie, who passed when I was in middle school. My fraternal grandfather passed in autumn of 2018. So, in a way, Steve was a grandfather figure for the last 7 months of my collegiate life.

In my last three years at Wabash, Steve was always a point of support for me. Sophomore year, for example, I was asked if I would write an opinion for *The Bachelor*. I couldn't think of a good topic, though, but I knew exactly who to turn to. I went to Forest Hall and by the time I walked out of Steve's office, he had not only guided me to a topic but also gave me wonderful resources for writing the opinion and insights into the origin of Wabash's mission statement—specifically what it means to live humanely. Courses like Freshman

Tutorial and EQ forced me to ponder that question, but Steve Charles was one of the people at Wabash who identified the need to live humanely and he continues to pursue it into his retirement.

I am notoriously rambly and I cannot help but share one more story. As college days pass, we have to prepare for the real world. As a rhetoric major who had worked all my four years plus two summers in the Communications Office, I had my heart set on working in marketing. During spring break 2019, I interviewed for a position in the South Bend area (where I live) and felt really optimistic about my chances at getting the job. Well, I got a phone call just before my 8 AM class that I did not get the job. Disappointed and slightly discouraged, I walked out of Hays Hall and who should I meet but Steve Charles. I can't pretend to remember how that conversation went verbatim, but Steve did pass on his wisdom—as he always did—saying that getting that first job is always tough but the key would always be showing your worth. It was that wisdom that refocused and motivated me, but that was just Steve. Riotously funny when the occasion called for it, but wise and knowledgeable the rest of the time.

There is no denying: Steve has the mind of a writer and a damn good one. A man ahead of his time—did you know he wrote a children's story about dinosaurs years before Steven Spielberg made an adaptation of a certain Michael Crichton book? Steve is one of, if not the most, empathetic, understanding people I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. Enjoy your retirement you wise drinking bird!

-Christian Wirtz '19