



WABASH COLLEGE

Class Agents Letter

Alumni and Parent Relations

P.O. Box 352

Crawfordsville, IN 47933

Web site: www.wabash.edu

Email us: alumni@wabash.edu

Phone: (765) 361-6369

Class of 1951

Class Agent

Richard H. Griesser
rgriesser@rocketmail.com

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Dear Ladies and Men of the Wabash Class of 1951:

I am humbled and embarrassed that I am finally getting around to writing you. It has been almost a year since my last letter.

First, some good news. I'm happy to tell you that '51 was once again among the top 5 Wabash classes in participation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014. Of 68 possible donors we had 37 who actually gave for 54.4%. The leader was the Class of 1961. The all school average was 40.15%.

I am particularly proud of you for two things. One is that you accomplished this record with very little prodding from me. I'm equally excited that we had six widows who choose to donate in their husband's memory. What wonderful Little Giants you all are!

I've asked Michele to include a listing of the Class of 1951 Honor Roll with this letter. Many thanks to all. I think we've been in the top four or five every year for at least twenty-five years.

Ray Bentley

Ben Calacci

Jim Clark

Marianne Cullinan

Joe Daszek

Bill Dunbar, Jr.

Bill Ellis

Mary Ellen Finch

Alan Gise

Chuck Goering

Dick Griesser

Elmer Halwes, Jr.

Warren Jackson

Stu Jacobs

Bob Joel

Ted Jube

Paul Kortepeter

Holly Lasalle

Ellwood Lewis

Bill MacDougall

Don Martin

Dan McLaren

Don Mefford

Bob Montgomery

Bill Orman

Don Partridge

Allen Pierson

Margaret Regnier

Janice Rhoads

Bob Rogers

Bob Saxton

Jack Schenck

Jack Schick

Don Shepherd

Joe Smith

Bill Von Der Lehr

Carol Yoder

On the other side of the coin things have not gone too well for me. I haven't felt too well for about a year. I thought my attempt to go to Homecoming last year would be my last trip to my alma mater. You may remember that trip ended with my car accident just south of Milwaukee.

For over a year I've been swimming at the Y three or four times a week. My workouts were getting harder to do and getting shorter. Where I was doing twenty minutes of very slow breast stroke, ten, even five minutes were getting harder and more tiring to do. I was blaming my COPD.

In March I was taken to the ER with congestive heart failure. I was revived but got the news that I had two valves that needed repair or replacement as well as I needed two by-passes. They figured on about a seven hour operation would do the trick. I had two problems with that. One, my age, I am 85 and two, my severe COPD.

Now all this happened on the same day as I received a phone call telling me I was accepted for an Honor Flight to Washington DC on May 8. Anything we would do would have to be after that date. This gave me more time to think about it and make my plans accordingly. The Honor Flight was a fantastic experience, all that they said it would be. I had a wonderful 4'10" cardiac nurse push me around Washington, making sure I had oxygen and acted as my official photographer. Upon our return we were greeted by a good two thousand people jammed into our Appleton airport.

Preparations continued for the operation with tests and consultations with other doctors until I made up my mind to not have it. Even if I lived through it there was not any assurance that I would recover and live any kind of a normal life.

I had to sell my children and even Beth on why I was saying no.

The last week of April I had another congestive heart event, worse than the first. I have no memory of the ambulance trip to the ER, nor what they did there. My wife called my children to come to the hospital to say their goodbyes.

Somehow I rallied and it looked like everything was going to be okay. Everyone went home including Beth who was getting some things for my hospital stay when the nurse called to

say I'd taken a turn for the worst and she should call my children. They all came to the hospital to again say goodbye.

Again I came out of it and was soon up talking with everyone.

I spent four days in the hospital and then was sent home with the suggestion of Home Hospice.

On Father's Day I saw or talked with all of my children except my youngest, Christopher who I thought was either working or sleeping prior to going on night shift. I called him after supper when I still hadn't heard from him. I got his answering service. About nine-thirty I'm ready for bed when the doorbell chimes. Upon opening the door I'm confronted with all my crying children and the news that Chris had died in his sleep. He had died of a meningitis and flu. He was forty-seven and became engaged to the girl of his dreams on Valentine Day. His death is still a shock. I never thought I would bury one of my children.

This is where I am today. I am home most of the time. I have a nurse who has been seeing me twice a week until now when it's down to once a week. I'm on oxygen 24 hours a day; I take some pills and use a nebulizer four times a day. I also weigh myself every day to make sure I don't have sudden surge which would indicate a buildup of fluid in my lungs. Did I mention that I have to take a water pill each day to insure I spend plenty of time in the bath room each day?

I do get out a little and have a wheel chair and portable oxygen for anything more than a very short walk. Things could be worse.

Best regards to all,

Richard H. Griesser '51