

Class of 1977

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## COMMENCEMENT 2026

There were 217 seniors who received their bachelor's in ceremonies at the college on Saturday, May 16. Student speakers were **Precious Ainabor** and **Quinn Sholar**. With today's streaming technology, Wabash alumni and friends were able to watch the ceremony live. You can see the recording of it if you wish via the link below. It was the 188<sup>th</sup> commencement ceremony, and president Dr. Scott Feller rang out the graduating class of 2026 with the very same bell which President Thaddeus Seymour used, Caleb Mills' bell, for that same purpose when we received our diplomas on May 15, 1977.



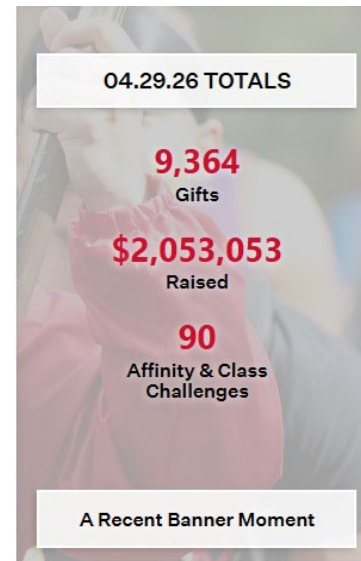
<https://www.youtube.com/c/wabashcollege/videos>

## DAY OF GIVING (DOG) THANK YOU!

There were 9,364 total gifts to Wabash, adding up to more than \$2 million, through 90 affinity or matching challenges, on the DOG back on April 29. The number of gifts and the total amount given are both records. No surprise that the Class of '77 also lead the way in a high percentage of our classmates doing a variety of challenges, including:

- Gary '77 and Joanne Reamey surprise challengers.
- Tom Bauer Class of 1977 challenge
- Rhenwick Young (Basketball and MXIBS)
- Steve Rogers (Beta)
- Ted Ferguson (Red Pack Track & Field)
- Paul Van Ness (FIJI)
- Steve Rogers (Glee Club)
- Tom Boyer organizer of the Mental Health challenge, which also included William Catus, Marc Adams, Ted Ferguson, and Steve Heimann
- Randy Allen, Rick Batchelder, Jim Evans, and Steve Wakefield (Delt)

If you were one of the 9,000-plus donors, many thanks for your support. Apologies to anyone we've omitted. Thrilled to have so many classmates involved in the DOG.



## BIG BASH 2026

We want to encourage you to head back to Wabash for its annual Big Bash reunion THIS YEAR. It's on June 5-6. Medicine is the general theme for the Friday talks, titled **Paging Dr. Wally: A Symposium on Healthcare and the Liberal Arts**, and one of the speakers is our own DR. BOB EINTERZ. From the early registration numbers, we know that TOM BOYER. TED FERGUSON and ROBIN STOUT are among those who have signed up. I'll be there also, as will PAUL VAN NESS. Hope you can join us too.

If you're within driving distance, it's AOK to come just for activities on one of the days. You don't have to purchase a thing to attend some events, such as the Chapel Sing competition on Saturday morning.

If it is your first-ever Big Bash, the college has a "bundle" plan which save you \$15 or so if you sign up for all the meals and festivities. The link is just below.

If you come, even for just a couple of hours, SIGN THE REUNION BOOK that's at the registration desk at Chadwick Court! We'd love to "send a message" to the college that a lot of the members of the Class of '77 support and love their alma mater.

Link: <https://www.wabash.edu/alumni/reunion/schedule>

BTW – Greg is working with STEVE ROGERS and BOB BRANDT on a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary bourbon too! We'll unveil the details at this year's Big Bash. More details about this in the next class letter.

## Where are we right now?

### *A brief update on your class agents*

#### **CHEERS TO 50 YEARS!**

Shortly after the end of our junior year, HERM & KITTY HAFFNER tied the knot in Fort Wayne. This month they are celebrating 50 years of marital bliss. They are enjoying time in one of their favorite places – Florida – as I write. Anniversary blessing to you two! The two live in Crawfordsville and still maintain their Total Solutions business. Herm continues to coach business owners, and Kitty helps the elderly (those much older than us) who need to downsize, declutter and/or empty out homes, and transition into better housing arrangements. Her clients have included about a dozen of our former Wabash professors and/or spouses and/or Wabash alumni. BTW, Kitty also celebrated her birthday recently too.



#### **STILL RUNNING**



GREG & CARROLL BIRK just returned to Switzerland after a terrific visit seeing family and friends in the U.S. Of course they spent time in Crawfordsville, and Greg also ran the Indy Mini marathon at the beginning of May. They also saw STEVE & DIANA ROGERS (photo at left), and Greg reconnected with a host of his cross country and track cohorts too, including several Class of 1989 runners he'd recruited to the college.

BTW, Greg, Herm and I are divvying up our responsibilities for the Big Bash '27. Greg is the "gifts" person, Herm is the "people" person and I'm the "events" person. Some duties will overlap, but this is a delineation you might keep in mind as you hear from various classmates in the run-up to our reunion next June. **YOU HAVE MARKED JUNE 3-6 ON YOUR CALENDAR, right?** We'll have a pre-Big Bash event on June 3, with the main events on June 4 and our reunion dinner on Saturday, June 5. **Again, Save the Date!**

### **FINALLY CALLING IT A CAREER**

I attended my last commencement as a faculty member at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) on May 15, I will wrap up my teaching career (my third career) at the end of July, after teaching couple of online courses. My "last lecture" so to speak was in a Comm 1010 class (public speaking). According to the folks at Ohio's State Teachers Retirement System, I'll have about 21 years in the system when I'm done on July 31. I have been collaborating with the college to do a 10-year update on the book "Some Little Giants," whose original authors are now deceased, Max Service and David Phillips. It'll be out and about at the Wabash College bookstore sometime in 2026-2027.



The bigger news is that Kent State University formally notified me that they've accepted my manuscript about Jesse Owens. So, the new biography, titled "Jesse Owens: Sensation, Superstar, Survivor, Symbol" will be published and will become available at KSU Press come Spring 2027. Kathy and I will keep you posted, and chances are good that if you live in the Midwest (Big Ten country) I could be on some form of book tour there in 2027 also.

### **SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED HONOR CHICK**

More than 100 alumni and friends contributed \$\$\$ for the Duane "Chick" Clements (H. 77) equipment cage at Wabash, which was dedicated this past winter. Your generous contribution helped us memorialize one of the college's finest men, a dad-away-from-home dad to members of our class and for generations of Wabash men who came afterward. (See a photo of the sign on the next page.)



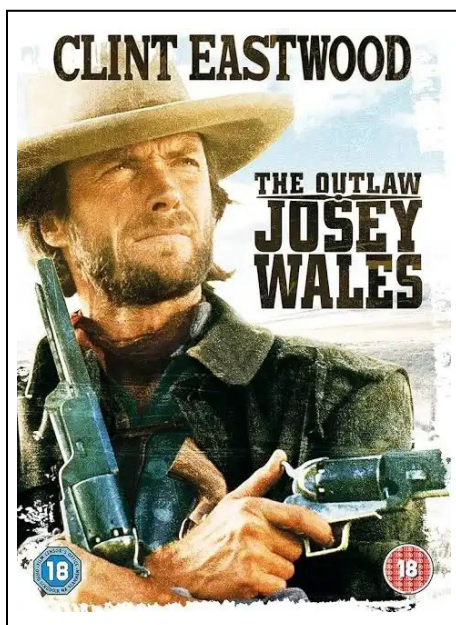
PS – We’re getting early word that Wabash will be launching another capital fund raising campaign later this year, in conjunction with the college’s 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming up in 2032. We’ll give you the details once we learn more. Hope they’re going to do some updating and renovating on classic Center Hall, as it still hosts classes more than 150 years after its initial construction. Some days, in my mind, I can still hear that bell ringing from the top of Center Hall.

## QUICK QUESTION FOR YOU

As we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of America in 2026, **what do you remember most about 50 years ago – The Summer of 1976 – in your life?** If you have a story you’d like to share with your classmates about something you did or someplace you went in May-June-July-August of 1976, connect with me at [johnkprof@gmail.com](mailto:johnkprof@gmail.com). We’ll share stories in the next class letter. (Maybe you went to Philadelphia to celebrate?)

## FINALLY: 50 years ago

We were all hearing too much of Paul McCartney & Wings “Silly Love Songs” on our radio. Once in a while we’d get “Love Hangover” from Diana Ross and/or Marvin Gaye’s “I Want you” playing. On the TV, “All In The Family,” “Sanford and Son,” “Happy Days,” and M\*A\*S\*H” were among the top-rated shows. In June, we’d be seeing “The Omen” and “The Outlaw Josey Wales” at the movie theaters. Can You Dig it? Out of Sight? Bummer. Keep On Trucking were some of the expressions we were using in conversations. And, of course, the USA celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> birthday in July.



Hope to see some of you at the Big Bash at Wabash next month!