

**CLASS OF 1958 REFLECTION**  
**by Ron Buckwalter**

The class reflection is intended to address how an important event or events that occurred during our four years at F&M impacted us as students. Obviously, the impact is in the eyes of the writer of this reflection, who in this case scoured four years of Student Weekly's (SW) in the hope that such an endeavor would reveal how world and national events, such as Rosa Parks in 1955; Salk's polio vaccine in 1956; Soviets launching Sputnik in 1957; and President Eisenhower ordering troops to enforce desegregation of schools; to name a few, impacted our class.

There was also a presidential election in 1956 which got more SW coverage than any other important event. It was interesting to note that (the staunchly and entirely democratic F&M government department notwithstanding), F&M students, by a decisive majority, liked Ike. And while an SW article on February 12, 1958 reported an AP wire story stating that college students were talking a lot about Sputnik and the USA's response to it, the February 19, 1958 SW edition the very next week reported that over 50% of the members of the student body had attended the first night showing of a Brigitte Bardot movie, reportedly banned in Philadelphia, so they could view it before it would be banned in Lancaster.

As a class of young men only, could it be possible that a salacious movie had the greatest impact upon us?<sup>1</sup> My opinion is:

Probably not, for as a class, we were at the dawning of the great civil rights movement of the 60's. Brown v. The Board of Education, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court 1954 decision which declared segregated schools to be unconstitutional; Rosa Parks and her singular act of bravery in sitting in the front of the bus; and finally President Eisenhower's dispatching of soldiers to enforce desegregation impacted us in perhaps undefinable ways at the time. But clearly, we were in a position to evaluate and understand the tumultuous 60's because of that impact.

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<sup>1</sup>The author invites other opinions on this momentous question.