

Reflections on a 40th Reunion – Class of 1975

If you are like me, you play a variation on this game with yourself.

As a test of where I am at a certain moment in my life, I ask myself who was as old as I am now, when I first arrived at a particular place in my life.

Let's try this with F&M.

I am now 62 years old; who was as old as I am now when I got here?

For you Government majors, like me, you might think of Sid Wise. Here was an accomplished guy, a master of the universe. He knew everything. Has to have been older than me. Nope. I looked it up. When we all met him, in 1971, he was 47 years old, 15 years younger than us. Stanley Michalak, who we are seeing tonight at our class dinner? He was in his mid 30s!

To those of my classmates who were not government majors, I apologize for my focus on that department, but I assure you this works for every department, or the first place you worked. Try it, you'll see.

So while it is true that 62 is -- we all hope -- the new 42, we are old. This is not bad, by the way. But it is true.

There's one reflection.

So how else do we do this?

How does one write class "reflections" forty years after the end our collective existence as a class gathered together for four years in this lovely, even idyllic, space in Lancaster, Pennsylvania?

In 250 words, no less.

We could talk about the tumult in our national life when we were in college, how after growing up in the normalcy of the late fifties and early sixties, we witnessed during our four years in Lancaster, among other

things, the resignations of both a President and a Vice-President for outrageous criminality, and the humiliating evacuation of the last American marines from Viet Nam as we ordered our caps and gowns in April 1975.

But we were not alone, the whole nation lived through that. As much as we'd like to think so, we are not unique, . . . alas.

Or you could ask, how did we cope with life after graduation? Did we live the good life -- and we are not so old to ask are we still living the good life and will we live it in the future? And I don't mean with BMW's and vacation homes, as nice as they are, but have we lived interesting, valuable lives for ourselves, our families and our communities.

Well, there are as many answers to that as there are people in this room, all doing our best in our own ways. There is no real collective reflection we all share on that matter, just that we hope we have been successful in that way, or may yet someday figure it all out.

So let's just leave it at this: Now, 40 years later, let's just acknowledge that from this vantage point, our time on this campus was wonderful. We had fun here. I know I did. I loved it and did not want to leave. And, I hope, to one degree or another we learned to think critically about ourselves and the world, which is, after all, why we were here.

For that we thank this special place.