

## Class of 1978 Reflection

**By Tony Doris '78**

I'm waiting on the cold, stone steps for the library to open on a Sunday morning. Leafless branches of tall oaks frame the brick faces of Old Main and Diagonthian. A snowy pathway curls past those venerable halls, then slopes down toward the classrooms where professors gave the assignments that led me to this threshold at this marrow-chilling hour.

Outside the gates of F & M, like the dusting that turned this college green to white overnight, an era of anger calms with the end of a war, the shamed resignation of a president and the guilty pleas of his men. Women and blacks assert rights barely realized and stubbornly resisted. A strange disease kills legionnaires at a Philadelphia convention. Annie Hall lah-di-dahs her way into American hearts. Israeli commandos free hostages in Uganda. The United States celebrates its 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. Inflation soars, the economy dives. A nuclear physicist Navy submariner-turned-Georgia peanut-farmer takes the tiller. A treaty brings peace between Israel and Egypt. An American cult leader lures followers to Guyana. Coneheads from Remulak "consume mass quantities!"

As the wooden doors crack open, spilling the library's warmth on the steps before me, I shake myself off like a wet Labrador, walk up the steps, under the columns and into the light. I remember a dim stairway, a small, uncomfortable chair in a corner of the musty stacks with barely enough of a writing-top to fit a pad and pen and the day's required reading.

How much of what you labored to learn do you remember? To me it's like snow in the wind. But somehow, long since we left those books, teachers and friends behind and ventured through those college gates and into the world, we carry it with us every day, wherever we go. Think of us as light that spilled out the library door on a blustery day in 1978.

## 1974

- House Judiciary Committee adopts articles of impeachment charging President Richard M. Nixon with obstruction of justice. Nixon resigns, the first President to do so.
- Vice President Gerald R. Ford of Michigan sworn in as 38th President, pardons Nixon.
- Heiress Patty Hearst kidnapped by Symbionese Liberation Army.
- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, author of *The Gulag Archipelago*, deported From Russia.
- Grand jury indicts Nixon aides Halderman, Erlichman, Colson.
- India has A-bomb.
- Grammy for record of the year: "*I Honestly Love You*," Olivia Newton-John.
- U.S. Population: 214 million. Unemployment rate: 5.1 percent. Life expectancy: 72 years.

## 1975

- Pol Pot and Khmer Rouge take over Cambodia.
- Saigon surrenders and remaining Americans are evacuated, ending the Vietnam War.
- Apollo and Soyuz spacecraft link in space.
- John N. Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman found guilty of Watergate cover-up.
- Saturday Night Live premiers.
- President Ford escapes two assassination attempts.
- U.S. unemployment rate: 8.1 percent.

## 1976

- Israeli airborne commandos attack Uganda's Entebbe Airport and free 103 hostages held by pro-Palestinian hijackers.
- Supreme Court rules that blacks and other minorities are entitled to retroactive job seniority. Court also rules that death penalty is a constitutionally acceptable form of punishment.
- Nation celebrates Bicentennial.
- Mysterious disease strikes American Legion convention in Philadelphia, eventually claiming 29 lives.
- Jimmy Carter elected US President.
- Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift* wins Pulitzer Prize for fiction and Bellow wins Nobel Prize for Literature; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* wins Academy Award for best picture. Paul Simon's *Still Crazy After All These Years* wins Grammy for album of the year; The Captain and Tenille's *Love Will Keep Us Together* wins record of the year.
- Apple Computer developed in a garage
- US Air Force admits women to its ranks for the first time.
- Air France and British Airways begin the first regularly scheduled commercial supersonic transport (SST) flights.
- *Viking I* lands on Mars.

## 1977

- Jimmy Carter pardons draft resisters.
- David Berkowitz is accused of being "Son of Sam."
- Deaths: Groucho Marx, Elvis Presley, Charlie Chaplin.
- South African activist Steve Biko dies in police custody.
- Nuclear-proliferation pact is signed by 15 countries, including U.S. and U.S.S.R.
- First woman Episcopal priest ordained.
- Supreme Court rules that states are not required to spend Medicaid funds on elective abortions.

## 1978

- Followers of the Rev. Jim Jones commit mass suicide in Guyana.
- U.S. Senate approves treaty to turn canal over to Panama by year 2000.
- Former Italian Premier Aldo Moro kidnapped by left wing terrorists and is found slain.
- Pope Paul VI , dead at 80; new Pope, John Paul I, 65, dies unexpectedly after 34 days in office; succeeded by Karol Cardinal Wojtyla of Poland as John Paul II.
- "Framework for Peace" in Middle East signed by Egypt's President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Premier Menachem Begin after 13-day conference at Camp David led by President Jimmy Carter.
- Supreme Court in Bakke case bars quota systems in college admissions but affirms constitutionality of programs giving advantage to minorities.
- Louise Brown, the first test-tube baby, is born at Oldham Hospital in London.
- Recombinant DNA techniques are used to produce human insulin.
- Sony introduces the Walkman, the first portable stereo; Eagles' *Hotel California* wins Grammy for record of the year, while Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* wins album of the year; Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* wins Oscar for best picture.
- F&M Class of '78 graduates.
- U.S. Population: 223 million; unemployment rate: 6.4 percent; life expectancy: 73.5 years.

SOURCE: Infoplease and other websites.