

## Class of 1997 History

Even though we're among the youngest reunion classes here today, it's still hard to believe that we graduated from F&M 10 years ago, and began our time on campus nearly 14 years ago. Although we look to the classes that came before us for pearls of wisdom and first-hand accounts of important moments in Fummer history, we too have a few of our own memorable occasions to share.

The class of 1997 was among the first to benefit from having its residence halls "wired" for "the internet." Communicating via e-mail, or Eudora, with classmates, professors, and fellow students was a relatively new technology and cell phones weren't even used by the general population as of yet. The term "Dorm" was then frowned upon and the word "freshmen" was the new "f" word. The words "residence hall" and "first years" were embraced in order to convey a greater sense of a community residing together in the hallowed halls of Schnader, Marshall Buchanan, and North and South Ben. We were also one of the first classes to benefit from the first-year seminar, where students lived together on the same hall and attended the same seminar together in the fall of their first year. Dean Drum taught *Autobiography & Life* and Kent Trachte taught "Many Faces of Power," just to name two.

In our time at F&M, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Steinman College Center and saw the ice rink on Harrisburg Pike with its exterior faces of Benjamin Franklin and John Marshall taken down in order to make way for the Alumni Sports and Fitness Center. The new ASFC provided an Olympic sized swimming pool for the Swim Team to practice and compete, as well as multiple amazing spaces for all teams to utilize. Not only did the ASFC provide benefits to F&M athletics, but also provided large-scale space for campus events and programming – such as concerts, dinners....and graduation ceremonies ....a harbinger of things to come for the class of 1997.

In programming spaces like the ASFC we were fortunate enough to hear Maya Angelou speak. We attended performances of INXS, LIVE, and Billy Joel. We cheered on the F&M football team as they won a conference championship, and cheered the men's basketball team as it took first place in the NCAA Division III national championship meet, taking their place in the Final Four.

We became Resident Assistants, Orientation Advisors, and brothers and sisters. There were 7 fraternities and 3 sororities on campus, all part of a then de-recognized Greek System. We witnessed the tearing down of George and Martha, the lovingly-named water towers visible from campus. We performed in *Rock-A-Like* and musicals such as *Guys 'N Dolls* and *Pirates of Penzance*, right here on this very stage in what was once known as just Hensel Hall.

During our time at F&M we endured endless fire alarms, snowstorms that cancelled classes and blackouts that shut down power campus-wide, yet the greatest natural "not-so-disaster" that would affect us was yet to come.

On May 18th of 1997, our class walked down Hartman Green to pomp and circumstance, yet this would not be the last time we were convened as a class at F&M. Shortly into our commencement ceremony, the heavens opened and the graduates, faculty, staff, friends and family were caught in a torrential downpour. We were quickly instructed to head for the Alumni Sports & Fitness Center which had been set-up as a back-up rain location for our ceremony. Yet, once we got there, it was soon discovered that the entire graduation set-up, thousands of chairs and all, had been struck down once the outdoor ceremony was underway! Everyone pitched in – professors, students, moms, dads and grads and the space was reassembled in time.

Getting all the diplomas back in alphabetical order was another story....but in due time the Class on 1997 was the only class in F&M history to walk twice at graduation. And it's our pleasure to convene once again on this equally memorable occasion today.