Class of 1969 History

Ours was a class that exemplified the transition in the college, the culture, and the country. Even before we had set foot on campus, each one of us had been unalterably changed by the circumstances of our time. We reflected the era that has been put into a nice, neat package called "The Sixties". Some people consider the start of what we consider "The Sixties," as the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November of 1963, followed by the appearance of The Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964.

We arrived on campus as a class on September 1965. We started out as 477 and four years later, on graduation day, we were almost one hundred fewer. One fifth of our class held class office in high school. Nineteen were captains of their respective high school football teams.

In the summer of '65, each of us learned the name of our roommate, and our dorm assignment. In preparation for discussion at freshman orientation, that summer we were required to read Walden by Henry David Thoreau; Walden 2 by B.F. Skinner; and The Secular City by Harvey Cox.

We enrolled at an all-male college with a student code of citizenship that included these words: "Conduct becoming a gentleman is expected of a Franklin and Marshall student at all times and in all relationships. It is expected that every Franklin and Marshall student is mature enough to understand what constitutes gentlemanly conduct without explicit rules to cover each occasion."

Clearly, they don't make gentlemen the way they used to.

The schedule of expenses for the 1965-66 school year was the following:

Tuition (full-time): $850.00 per semester
Room rent: $400.00 per year
Board in College dining hall: $530.00
Graduation fee: $15.00

At the opening convocation, Dr. G. Wayne Glick, dean of the College, told us to "Discover what it means to be a free man and sail, don't sit." In a bit of understatement, he observed, "Life in mid-1960 is not simple."

The transitional nature of our class started early. As callow freshmen, we were required to wear the traditional "dinks" or beanies, which were emblazoned with one's class year. In previous years, the Class of 1967, had "67" on the front of their dink; the Class of 1968 had "68" on the front of their dink. Our dink had "1969." A couple of us wrote a tongue-in-cheek (no pun intended) to the College Reporter protesting this unequal treatment.

At our first all-class meeting, Dr. O.W. Lacy, who had just arrived from Trinity College to

become Dean of Students, looked out upon us and said (in so many words): "Those dinks look ridiculous. If I were you, I'd get rid of them." Which we did. No other freshman class at F&M would ever again wear dinks.

Dr. Lacy quickly became a cult figure on campus, even earning his own comic strip as a superhero named, of course, Owlman, who fought evil-doers such as students who parked illegally.

In November of '65, our class elected three members of the Student Council: Bruce Croushore, James O'Neal, and David Goldstein.

The politics of the day was integral to our lives. The Vietnam War was escalating, and it was a constant backdrop to our college years, as were the rise of the civil rights and feminist movements.

F&M was hardly a radical campus, compared to Columbia or Berkeley. In fact, in November of 1965, a petition supporting U.S. policy in Vietnam, signed by 1,080 members of the College community, was presented to Secretary of State Dean Rusk in Washington. Although we didn't take over administration buildings or go out on strike, opposition to the war was beginning to form, with a chapter of Students for a Democratic Society.

Nationally, the American Association of University Professors AAUP voted to stop submitting student ranks to local draft boards, a move that a narrow majority of F&M faculty approved. There was a Student-faculty "Speak-In" at Hartman Oval to discuss the war, and later a Draft Symposium for students seeking alternatives to being drafted.

In the Fall of 1967, opposition to the war began to grow with the Student Faculty Committee for Peace in Vietnam. The F&M chapter of SDS came out in opposition to recruitment by military and industry groups. In the March 28, 1969 issue of the College Reporter, SDS charged, "the function of Franklin & Marshall College is the training of middle and upper class students for elitist positions in society." Looking back on that statement forty years later, you'd have to agree that the College succeeded.

America was undergoing a change in race relations. A Black Power Committee was formed by the small, but influential group of African-American students on campus. In March 1967, James Farmer, former national director of the Congress of Racial Equality, and a legend in the civil rights movement, addressed the Government Club. A year later, March 1968, Muhammad Ali, who had been stripped of his crown as the heavyweight champion of the world, spoke to a large turn-out of students about the state of race relations. Although Ali said that "The only hope black people have is through the man Elijah Muhammad and his philosophy of total separation," after his speech, he playfully joked and "sparred" with students of all races.

A month after Ali appeared on campus, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis. Two hundred students gathered at the steps of Hartman Hall for a silent vigil for the fallen civil rights leader.

Back in those days, people of all political persuasions were welcome on campus to make their case. Among the speakers during our four years were Barry Goldwater and George McGovern; Rep. Robert Taft, Jr. and Theodore Sorenson,

This being the Sixties, drugs gradually became a factor. In 1967, Dr. W. Pahkne, professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, told a Green Room audience that the dangers of LSD have been emphasized with no consideration given to the beneficial uses of the drug in both psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Also in 1967, during Parents Weekend, there was a discussion of "The Generation Gap"

In September 1968, the campus hosted a debate on LSD between Dr. Timothy Leary and Dr. Sidney Cohen, a psychiatrist. Can anybody recall what was said?

In 1967, F&M changed its grading structure, replacing the old four point system which allowed for only five broad grading classifications: A,B,C,D,F, the new system moved to numbers: A=4.0; A-=3.7; B+=3.3, etc. At the beginning of each semester, before classes started, a student could select to take the course on Pass/No Pass basis. No more than one such course could be taken in a semester and no more than four could be taken in four years.

Student government was turned on its head in February 1968, when students voted by an 84% majority to abolish the Class Council, the Student Council and Student Senate, to be replaced by a system where concerned students could "represent themselves before the faculty, administration, trustees, or before any other party, without the interference of an intermediary which, in actuality, does not accurately represent their interests," according to a petition signed by 50 campus leaders. The faculty responded by voting to create a faculty governing body with student representation.

Entertainment on campus also reflected the era. Motown Records was in ascendance and we hosted almost all of that label's top acts, including The Supremes, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, The Four Tops, The Temptations, Martha and the Vandellas, and the Marvelettes. And we also got to see Duke Ellington, Ray Charles, Richie Havens, Sam and Dave, Johnny Mathis, Jerry Butler, Al Hirt, Maynard Ferguson, Herbie Mann, Woody Allen, Bo Diddley, Dionne Warwick, The Lovin' Spoonful, Lou Rawls, The Young Rascals, Simon & Garfunkel, Jefferson Airplane, Linda Ronstadt, Paul Butterfield Blues Band, and The Beach Boys.

No discussion of our college years can exclude the absence of our female counterparts. We famously bussed girls in from schools such as Wilson, Goucher, Harcum, Cedar Crest and Bryn Mawr. Who could forget the sight of the community of Franklin & Marshall gentleman, many wearing the blue windbreakers of their respective fraternities, ogling the young ladies who disembarked from the bus to face instant evaluation?

In 1966, class treasurer Bob Greenspon told the College Reporter that our class was going to raise funds for social activities through a concession stand in the front lobby of Mayser Gym during all sports events.

For every coke or bag of potato chips you buy," said Greenspon, "you will bring another girl from Hood or Wilson."

As we are all well aware, ours was the last class to graduate from an all-male F&M. The seeds for co-education began before we arrive on campus. In May 1965, the faculty sent a petition to president Keith Spalding calling for immediate action to have the college become coeducational.

On December 10, 1968, The Board of Overseers approved coeducation for the fall of 1969 and announced it would forward its recommendations to the Board of Trustees for consideration at a special meeting. The vote was 6 to 1 in favor. In a special January 17, 1969 edition of the College Reporter, the headline said it all: "Coed Approved!" In a photo-op, caption "Brave New World," three students stood by a headstone inscribed, "Monas T. Cism, 1787-1969." It was later announced that co-education had raised the standards for admission.

Actually, F&M had already dipped its toes into the co-educational waters in 1968 when it granted permission for the wives of full-time students to be admitted as part-time or special students in regular day-time courses whether for credit or audit. One of the women, Anne F. Presley told the College Reporter: "Your classroom is tense as far as having a girl in it goes. Nobody speaks to me. I know that guys aren't used to seeing girls in the classes—only on weekends as dates."

On June 8, 1969, we participated in the 182 Annual Commencement of the College, and headed out into a world that had been radically changed since September 1965. Four decades later, we return to a vibrant, exciting campus. And some of us wonder if we could be accepted into today's F&M. Doesn't matter, though. We've already made it.