

Reflections of the Class of 1991

By Margaret Topken Quinn

Shortly after our arrival at Franklin & Marshall in the fall of 1987, we witnessed Wall Street's Black Monday. By the end of our four years, the financial pendulum had swung the other way and we saw the Dow Jones Industrial Average close at over 3,000 for the first time in history. While we worked on our Mac Plus and Mac SEs (the ones WITH the internal hard drive) the first known webpage was written and the first person had been convicted for releasing an Internet Worm. As we used maps to navigate downtown Lancaster, the first 24 satellites of the Global Positioning System (GPS) were sent into orbit.

We saw environmental changes on campus and off. Brendan Shane began F&M's recycling program; the Exxon Valdez ran aground spilling 11 million gallons of oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound; and fellow Fummers went to South Carolina to assist with post-Hurricane Hugo clean-up efforts. Diane Bankert led the charge to bring Teach for America to our campus and F&M's Habitat for Humanity Chapter was born.

We witnessed history in the making as David Souter & Anthony Kennedy were sworn in as US Supreme Court Justices and as George Herbert Walker Bush defeated Michael Dukakis to become our 41st President. We watched the past come alive again as the German battleship Bismarck was located 600 miles off the coast of France. On our own campus, Richard Kneidler took over the Presidential reigns from James Powell.

We participated in student-run productions of Pirates of Penzance, and Damn Yankees, Fiddler on the Roof, Little Shop of Horrors, and Davy Jones Locker. We watched the administration perform in Fum Follies. We helped the Women's Lacrosse Team make F&M history, the Men's basketball team ride to the Final Four and helped the Greek system remain active at F&M despite de-recognition. Our classmates lead various on and off-campus groups but still found time to hang out in Ben's Underground, do our laundry, eat meals at Hallmark and Woods and even found time to watch the premiers of Seinfeld and The Simpsons.

We were saddened by the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing. We rejoiced as Communism fell and celebrated the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany. We celebrated the release of anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela. We witnessed the start and end of the Iran-Iraq War, and saw patriotism and selflessness first hand as we watched classmates like Trevor Onest put his studies on hold to fight in Operation Desert Storm.

During our years at F&M, we felt the void of public figures who passed. Perhaps someone from our class will become the next Salvador Dali, Mel Blanc, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copeland, Alvin Ailey or Martha Graham. Perhaps one of us will fill the void left by writers like Samuel Beckett, Roald Dahl or Max Frisch. Or, perhaps, our class may turn out a new Sammy Davis Jr., Pearl Bailey, Jim Henson, Danny Thomas or Lucille Ball.

I know one thing for sure: the class of 1991 is a diverse, community-minded, strong-willed, and compassionate group of leaders who continue to make a difference in the world.

