

F & M REUNION REFLECTIONS – Class of 1964

AS I SEE IT, A REFLECTION LOOKS BACK OVER A PERIOD OF TIME AND REFLECTS OR MUSES OVER WHAT HAS BEEN, WHAT IS COMPLETED AND THEN PERHAPS REFLECTS ON WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, WHAT COULD WE HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY. FREQUENTLY THE “WHAT IFS” ARE MORE NEGATIVE IN NATURE AND REFLECT ON UNFULLILLED PLANS, OR PLANS THAT WENT ASTRAY. I WAS TOLD THAT THE BASIS OF BUDHISM IS TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT AND NOW. THE PAST IS OVER AND CANNOT BE CHANGED AND MUCH OF THE FUTURE CANNOT BE ANTICIPATED, SO DEVOTE YOUR ENERGIES TO THE NOW AND PRESENT. ANOTHER WAY OF PUTTING IT CAME FROM AN OLD FRIEND RESPONDING TO MY FEIGNED DISMAY AT THE PRICE OF A DAILY SKI LIFT TICKET. SHE SAID TO ME “HEY POWERS, PAY FOR THE TICKET AND ENJOY THE DAY, THIS AIN’T A DRESS REHEARSAL YOU ARE IN”. GOOD ADVICE. LIVE IN THE NOW!

WE STARTED OUR TIME AT F & M WITH A STRONG CLASS OF 402 YOUNG ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENTS. FOR MOST OF US IT WAS THE FIRST TIME AWAY FROM HOME AND FAMILY. WE LOCATED OUR ROOM AND MET OUR ASSIGNED ROOMMATES. AS AN ASIDE MY FIRST CHORE WAS TO LEARN HOW DO USE A DIAL PHONE. IN OUR TOWN IN VERMONT WE STILL HAD OPERATORS WHO SAID “NUMBER PLEASE”. OVER THE COURSE OF 4 YEARS 161 OF OUR FELLOW STUDENTS WITHDREW LEAVING OUR ORIGINAL CLASS WITH 241. ANOTHER 38 WERE ADDED DURING THE YEARS LEAVING OUR GRADUATING CLASS AT 279. LIFE LONG FRIENDSHIPS WERE FORMED. WE ALL CHOSE A COURSE OF STUDY FOR A MAJOR, MANY WITH FUTURE CAREERS IN MIND, AND AT THE SAME TIME RECEIVED THAT BROAD PHILISOPHICAL MAINSTAY OF COLLEGE, “A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION”. AT THE SAME TIME, WE LEARNED HOW TO

CONDUCT RESEARCH ON MULTIPLE LEVELS OF DISCIPLINES AND OUR VARIOUS EXPERIENCES DURING THE FOUR YEARS HELP TO PREPARE US TO TAKE OUR PLACE IN SOCIETY. WE JOINED FRATERNITIES AND CLUBS, WE RAN A NEWSPAPER AND A RADIO STATION, WE INTERACTED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION ON VARIOUS LEVELS WITH VARYING DEGREES OF SUCCESS. WE LEARNED HOW TO CONDUCT ORDERLY PROTESTS FOR PERCEIVED INJUSTICES AND A FEW TIMES RESORTED TO PHYSICAL DEMONSTRATIONS. THE PROTEST TREE BECAME A CENTRAL LOCATION FOR POSTING NOTICES.

WE WENT ONTO CAREERS THAT COVERED THE GAMUT FROM POLITICS TO INDUSTRY, FROM EDUCATION TO FINANCIAL PLANNING AND ALL THE OTHER DISCIPLINES IN BETWEEN. MANY OF US MARRIED AND STARTED FAMILIES. AS OUR CAREERS WERE MATURING OUR FAMILIES GREW AND REQUIRED A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT. THOSE CHILDREN HAVE NOW MADE MANY OF US GRANDPARENTS AND SOME OF OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN HAVE ATTENDED OR ARE ATTENDING F & M.

SO AS WE LOOK BACK AND REFLECT ON OUR FIFTY YEARS WE CAN SEE WONDERFUL SUCCESS STORIES AND HAPPY TIMES. I LIKE TO THINK F & M PREPARED US WELL TO MEET THE VARIOUS TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS THAT HAVE CROPPED UP ALONG THE WAY. THERE ARE TWO VERY DEFINING EVENTS WHICH I THINK CHANGED THE WAY WE THINK AND LIVE. THE FIRST BEING THE ASSASSINATION OF JFK AND THE SECOND BEING THE LONG AGONY OF THE VIETNAM WAR. I AM NOT SURE WHAT THE LESSONS OF THESE TWO EVENTS ARE, BUT THEY CERTAINLY WERE SIGNATURE TO OUR GENERATION. THEN, OF COURSE, WE LOOK TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF

THE INTERNET AND COMPUTERS AND LAPTOPS AND THE IPAD AND IPHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA. NO ONE EXCEPT BILL GATES AND/OR STEVE JOBS COULD POSSIBLY HAVE ANTICIPATED THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY AND ITS EFFECT ON OUR SOCIETY, THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE AND THE WAY WE WORK.

IN CLOSING I WOULD POINT OUT THAT OUR GENERATION, COMING OUT OF THE ASHES OF WWII AND THROUGH THE MID AND LATE FIFTIES WITH THE PRESIDENCY OF DWIGHT EISENHOWER, AND THEN SUFFERING THE NUMBING EFFECTS OF MILITARY CONFLICTS THROUGH OUT THE WORLD, AS WELL AS THE HORRIFIC RISE OF TERRORISM, HAVE MANAGED TO ADAPT TO CHANGE AND HAVE CONSTANTLY STRIVED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW WORLD SOCIAL ORDER. CERTAINLY, OUR FORMATIVE YEARS AT F & M SERVED US WELL AND PREPARED US AS BEST AS POSSIBLE TO HAVE BEEN ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF AMERICA. AS WE TURN THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ROLES OVER TO A NEW GENERATION WE CAN LOOK BACK WITH A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND PRIDE AND AT THE SAME TIME LOOK FORWARD TO MANY MORE YEARS OF USEFUL AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND WITH OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS. THANK YOU FRANKLIN & MARSHALL. I CAN TRULY SAY I WOULD NOT TRADE MY FOUR FORMATIVE YEARS HERE FOR ANYTHING. AS I STATED IN MY COLLEGE RESUME' FOR THE 50TH, THESE WERE TRULY MY GOLDEN YEARS.

Mike Powers "64"