

Class of 1983 Reflection

By Maura Condon Umble

The Class of '83 began and ended our F&M experience by parading into Mayser Center for our convocation in steamy August of 1979 and for our graduation in rainy May of 1983. Both days were momentous not only for us but for the College as well! Ours was the first ever convocation, and ours was President Spaulding's last graduation.

We remember with fondness (and maybe some embarrassment) our beginning days at F&M, getting to know each other during Playfair. Remember "I want a standing ovation!"? We recall battling with construction workers to find a place to study in the Fackenthal Library, often resorting to driving over to the huge, multi-story library at Millersville University to study. We called it "studying" and find it a little strange that students today call it "work." We used electric typewriters and were really impressed with a few classmates whose fancier typewriters had one line of memory! We couldn't have imagined that five years later, every incoming student at F&M would be required to have a desktop Mac.

We were saddened to see a bed sheet hanging outside someone's window in Ben Franklin during our freshman year announcing "Lennon is Dead." These were definitely the days before social media! We learned about world events via bed sheets instead of Facebook. Many of us proudly voted in our first presidential election between Reagan and Carter in 1980. If we were lucky enough to have a television in our dorm's lounge, we gathered to watch the results. And then we gathered around the TV again the following year, horrified to learn that John Hinckley had attempted to assassinate President Reagan. During our junior year, we feared Tylenol laced with cyanide and went back to aspirin. The declaration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's birthday as a national holiday in 1983 ushered in a new era of embracing civil rights and committing to civic engagement that today are hallmarks of the F&M experience. We embraced our professors and our classes, some of us more than others. During mid-term and exam weeks, the pre-meds would line up at the door of the Library to await its unlocking each morning (we called it the "throat line" – short for cut-throat) and hurry to dinner at 4:30 to make it quickly back to the library. Some of the rest of us were more concerned with the burning question: "Famous or House of Pie?"

All the while, we embraced the arts. On stages in Hensel Hall, The Green Room and The Other Room, we brought to life the characters in Godspell, Pippin and Three Sisters, and we participated in the screening of The Rocky Horror Picture Show. We enjoyed the weekly film series, guest lectures and dance recitals.

We were proud Diplomats in athletic competition. In our senior year, the women's lax team finished second in the nation and the men's track team was undefeated during our four years.

We certainly knew how to have a good time whether listening to the West Philly Speed Boys, the Hooters, hanging out at Hildy's and the Town Tavern, spending Wednesday nights at Chi Phi and Thursday nights enjoying Blue Whales at Kappa Sig.

Now, 30 years and a couple of weeks after our graduation day, we're back in Lancaster, enjoying the Marriott at Penn Square, texting with our college-aged children, thinking about how soon we can retire, but all the while we still want a standing ovation!