

With the Korean War underway and the Air Force ROTC Program nearly mandatory, 305 Freshmen and Sophomores signed up for ROTC, with mixed motives – a chance to serve our country while preserving draft-proof status. Many of our classmates ended up going directly into the military following graduation. Outstanding careers followed, with some going right to the top in their respective units. With many captains and colonels in the Air Force, one of our members is former Base Commander and eventual 3-star General -Carl Smith. Likewise Jim Zimble rose through the ranks and became Naval Surgeon General.

Others of our Class of '55 went on to graduate and professional schools. In fact about one-third of our classmates went into the medical field, ten percent into the ministry, another ten percent into education, about five percent into the legal profession. And political careers were followed simultaneously by quite a number of us, including Mayor Hank Eberle, who also relates that memorable football game against American International.

Fifteen (15) almost Draconian Freshman Regulations greeted us, the Class of 1955, that September day 1951, with our pants rolled up to the knee and dinks placed precariously on our heads and with the regulations stuffed in our rear pockets for quick retrieval. The Student Weekly ran this alliterative headline "Fighting Freshmen Foil Soph's Siege, with a photograph of the Pants Fight that night before.

Tuition for 51-52 was \$275/semester or all inclusive R&B plus tuition for the entire year was \$1150. Lester Lanin, with his handouts of colored hats, graced the Moose Ballroom, E. King St, at Homecoming Dance.

One of our most famous classmates, of course, was Hollywood star Roy Scheider, who passed away much too soon. In fact as of this year more than eighty of the Class of '55 are deceased.

Some of us remember our phantom classmate T. D. Horton with particular affection. T. D. Horton was the protagonist of an educational experiment. Late one night in the Chi Phi fraternity, several of our classmates developed the theory that the college American History course was superfluous. After 18+ years imbedded in the American culture, 11th grade American History and 12th grade Civics (aka Problems of Democracy, though nothing problematic about democracy was ever suggested), after all these recent and distant exposures, F&M students gained nothing from another American History course and also lost the opportunity for learning something less familiar.

To prove our theory, we decided to enroll a phantom student in Dr. Thurman Philoon's American History. That student would attend no classes, read no one's notes and never even

glance at the assigned books. When the roster was circulated at the first class, one of us added T. D. Horton as a late enrollee. At each exam, one of our small group appeared and dutifully answered all the questions on T.D. Horton's behalf. T.D. did well; he picked up a few A's, but apparently faltered slightly on the final and a book review (not having read the book) and managed only a B for the course.

When it came time to formally record the grades, apparently the Registrar questioned Dr. Philoon about this student for whom there was no record. By that time one of us had shared our experience with a friend on the faculty, and the story swept through the faculty like a fire in a wind-swept forest, all of which subjected the unfortunate Dr. Philoon to repeated collegial jibes concerning the whereabouts of T. D. Horton. But even more unfortunately, this notoriety transformed a serious educational experiment into a college prank. American History lived on as a curricular staple, and T. D. Horton receded into F&M lore, where he remains as a fond memory.

Hank Eberle and Dusty Ritter remember vividly that memorable 1952 football game against American International, in Springfield. Two unbeaten teams met in a David and Goliath struggle, a totally undersized F&M team taking on the "dirtiest team I've ever seen in college football, who could give the pros a few pointers", according to assistant coach George McGinnis. "Every time I got hit" said 145-pound Pee Wee Johnston, "I'd stick my face in the ground. I knew that was the only way to avoid getting a fist in my mouth". But in spite of all the rough play (165 Springfield yards in the few penalties actually called), the Dips were able to put on a great comeback to snatch victory from defeat, with two touchdowns in the final three minutes. The storyline of the game is unbelievable, with Dusty Ritter setting a national record for total yards by an individual that stood for more than a decade. Three of his touchdown passes were caught by Hank Eberle, none more spectacular than his final "almost impossible catch" for the winning touchdown with no time remaining on the clock, when "he somehow leaped up among several black jerseys, snared the ball in the air and fell to the ground, converting what seconds before looked like a heartbreaking loss into a glorious 40-38 victory" (quoting the legendary sportswriter George Kirchner).

It would be impossible to name all of our classmates who have served their Alma Mater in so many capacities. Two of us returned to teach, tens of us have served on the Alumni Council and Board, some have served as Trustees. You know who you are and what you have done. We know personally how much this means to Franklin and Marshall College and how grateful the college is to our Class of '55.