

Class of 1984 History

By Steve Price '84

Most of us first met each other in August 1980 – there were 540 of us then. In short order, we went through not only Convocation but also Playfair and academic testing. As we were moving into our dorm rooms, Lech Walesa led the Solidarity strike at the Gdansk shipyards, Billy Carter was a regular feature of the front pages, and Bruce Springsteen was rehearsing at Clair Brothers in Lititz. Before the end of our first year, John Lennon had been killed, Ronald Reagan had been shot, pledging had been endured, and what would become lifelong friendships started to jell.

Over the course of the next three years our Class would contract to four hundred and forty-four members. We chose our majors. Classes, athletics, Sunday movie night, and fraternity parties became our comfortable world. As we moved towards graduation, F & M was changing and so were we. Racial diversity and sexual orientation became issues on campus. The existence of the Greek system was under attack. Unbelievably the college raised tuition at the beginning of our senior year to \$8,100.00 and on campus room and board went up to \$2,800.00. When we graduated, a College Reporter article from May 1984 stated "Grads Face Improved Job Market". However, the article concluded most liberal arts graduates would average a salary of just \$16,000.00 a year.

A lot has happened since 1984. Our wages have risen but our childrens' tuitions have risen faster. Our concerns and commitments have undoubtedly changed. The way we view the world has been altered by this quarter century of experience.

Yet, the method by which we process information and form our thoughts remains rooted in what we learned in four short years at F & M.

The education we received here was our greatest gift, and was best summed up by Professor Athey in a few short words. An F&M education, he said, taught us "to doubt, investigate, and decide". May this ever continue, both in our individual lives and as a class.