

The Class of 1970 entered with 398 freshmen and graduated with 341 members on June 7. Some of those 341 were transfers from other institutions, but the vast majority were not. So the class remained relatively intact.

When the Class of 1970 graduated, the United States was in the midst of domestic upheavals stemming in part from the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia on April 30, and in part from the shock over the killings of four white students at Kent State University on May 4 and of two black students at Jackson State College (now University) on May 14-15. Although F&M had been described a year or so before by the New York Times as an alleged oasis of tranquility as compared with so many other colleges and universities, in truth F&M was hardly free from student--and faculty--protest. If, a year before our class entered, a petition supporting U.S. policy in Vietnam had been signed by 1080 members of the F&M community, as the song says, the times were a changing. Not only had there been an increasing number of campus--and off--campus--demonstrations about the War and about other issues since we entered, but in that not so merry month of May 1970 student dissatisfaction with several college administrative decisions resulted in a student strike. The doors of some campus buildings were chained, with students blocking entrance to offices and classrooms. Administrative offices--including that of President Keith Spaulding--were occupied for a short time, thankfully without damage. F&M (wisely, in my view) did not seek an injunction against the blocking of classes, but the campus was inevitably tense. Still, things had certainly quieted down somewhat once the spring semester was finally over and most students who were not graduating had left campus.

How many of us remember the name of our commencement speaker? Amherst College Professor of English Benjamin DeMott, who later published a version of his speech in *Change Magazine*, a prominent publication on higher education. His article detailed debates at Amherst similar to those at F&M among faculty over how to balance widespread anger on campus with the national and international events noted above with the need to retain academic standards. Some F&M professors, like their counterparts at Amherst, insisted that classes must be taught, that assignments must be fulfilled, and that exams must be taken regardless of what was going on off campus; others at both schools argued that those national and international events demanded a different response and that students would, in effect, learn an equivalent amount outside of the classroom instead or as well. Not surprisingly, neither side usually convinced the other. Not surprisingly, either, ideological differences became personal and permanent.

F&M had a modest number of African American students, but they accomplished a great deal in illuminating racial issues both locally and nationally. Some established a Black Power Committee that helped bring to campus both James Farmer, former director of the Congress of Racial Equality, in March 1967, and a year later, Muhammed Ali. Ali drew a large audience, spoke passionately about the sorry state of race relations in America, but also joked and "sparred" with black and white students alike. A month later Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis. Hundreds of students, faculty, staff, and others gathered on the steps of Hartman Hall for a silent vigil.

It would leave a false impression, however, to suggest that most of our four years were shaped by political or other protests. Far from it. Most class members were at F&M for a liberal arts education leading to good jobs and, in many cases, graduate and professional schools, medical and law school above all. F&M was (and remains) highly regarded for the academic and professional achievements of so many of its graduates. This attracted lots of us in the first place.

What DIDN'T attract lots of us was the absence of women students. But in 1966 many leading liberal arts colleges were still either all male or all female. It was a common price to pay for a first-rate undergraduate education. If, on the one hand, this obviously made for fewer distractions from one's studies and other activities requiring concentration and discipline, on the other hand, it made seeking women collegians elsewhere a weekend preoccupation for many.

On some weekends buses of women from nearby colleges would circle Hartman Oval; on other weekends there were dances and related social events held at those nearby institutions: Byrn Mawr, Cedar Crest, Goucher, Harcum, and Wilson Colleges. F&M would, of course, change permanently--and, I think most of us would agree, for the better--with the coeducation that began in 1969-1970. However, before then F&M had given permission to the wives of full-time students to be considered for courses, whether for credit or as auditors, as part-time or special students. So, before our senior year, we were, to a small degree, In the Company of Educated Women, to borrow the title of Barbara Miller Solomon's important 1985 book. In any case, F&M was hardly alone in embracing coeducation in our years and in the years soon after.

The campus itself was so much smaller--and, let us be frank, so much less aesthetically appealing--than it has since become. In particular, the two looming water towers did not enhance anyone's views. Does anyone miss them? Meanwhile Lancaster was hardly the cosmopolitan city it has since become.

Common experiences of dorm life included stereo blasts at nearly all hours, (false) fire alarms on the coldest nights, and water fights between dorm floors. Those who found Sage Food Service not quite up to four star quality soon learned to patronize the House of Pizza and Maria's Subs.

To the credit of those students and administrators responsible for booking major acts, thanks for bringing to campus concerts in Maser Gym by such top acts of the time as the Four Tops, the Temptations, Richie Havens, the Righteous Brothers, the Young Rascals, Ramsey Lewis, Jr. Walker and the All Stars, The Association, Smokey Robinson, Three Dog Night, the Supremes, Blood, Sweat, and Tears, Martha and the Vandellas, Ray Charles, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Peter, Paul, and Mary. A rather impressive list!

I would like to acknowledge a special thanks to the late Professor of Government Sidney Wise for bringing to campus countless foreign films for weekend entertainment. I am surely not

alone in noting that I was educated outside of the classroom by watching films I might otherwise have never seen by masters of the cinema unbeknown to most of us.

On the athletic field, our sports teams achieved only modest scoreboard success overall, especially as compared with some slightly earlier and many later classes. To be sure, the athletic facilities then were nowhere as outstanding as they have since become. Moreover, save for the College Reporter, there was little media coverage of our teams and usually sparse attendance at home games.

And, as Division III students in nearly all sports, our athletes did not enjoy athletic scholarships and were not excused from classes for away games. Still, several teams far exceeded the .500 season mark: the swimming teams of 1966-67 and 1968-69; the cross country teams of 1968-69 and 1969-70; and the wrestling team (which WAS Division 1) of 1966-67. Moreover, when F&M football was MAC co-champion in 1968, the team included many class members. Finally, F&M lacrosse came of age in our senior year under the leadership of Hall of Fame Coach Ross Sachs and scored impressive victories over some traditional powerhouses.

If one athlete from our class deserves mention by name, it is surely Thurmon Bullock, now an F&M Sports Hall of Famer. His F&M records in the High, Triple, and Long Jumps still hold. A second notable athlete was F&M's first Lacrosse All-American, Rusty O'Brien.

Today some of us have already retired from our respective occupations or plan to do so soon, though I don't. Regardless, surely all of us have for years now been offered membership in the AARP. The initial invitation invariably puts one's life in perspective.

I think that most of my classmates would concede that the famous Chinese proverb "May You Live in Interesting Times" applies to our college years.

True, some scholars claim that the proverb isn't Chinese at all, while others who insist that it is remind us that it was nevertheless meant as a curse. However, and no matter what has happened to each of us since June 7, 1970, we were all fortunate to be in college when the nation was changing in so many ways and when we had endless opportunities to think about and often debate those changes. Having a Protest Tree near the bookstore as a place to post messages was a small but important sign of the freedom of speech that should be a hallmark of all serious colleges and universities but, alas, has never always been the case.

No less important, we were fortunate to be in a liberal arts college that valued knowledge for its own sake and not solely for material ends. The fact that so many of us were already committed to a career doesn't contradict this crucial element of our studies. True, as a college professor for thirty-five years now, I envy the unprecedented access of my students to information and communication that we, of course, found infinitely harder to obtain in our college days. But I don't envy them the less exciting times that they generally experience as compared with ours.

As the years pass, I for one look back on my F&M years fondly and hope that my classmates do as well.