

## Class of 1959 History

By C. Darrell Lane, M.D.

Franklin College founded in 1787 having united with Marshall College to form Franklin and Marshall College in the late summer of 1955 was 168 years old. In early September more than 360 first year students from multiple states and dissimilar backgrounds and representing more than 225 high schools converged on the F&M campus in Lancaster, bought books and supplies, received dormitory assignments, met new roommates, and paid the single semester \$325.00 tuition. Total tuition listed in the college catalogue for the two semester 1955-56 academic year amounted to the staggering sum of \$1,310.00. The entire class assembled for the first time in Hensel Hall for welcoming remarks by President William W. Hall, Dean of the College James M. Darlington and Dean of Students Richard H. Winters. We were informed about a variety of conduct guidelines, academic performance expectations and procedural regulations. The freshman uniform of the day consisted of dinks and rolled-up pants legs. Physical in-hand possession of the college Blue Book was a required necessity. The mandated Hartman Hall dining room dinner dress code was jacket and tie. No mention was ever made apropos the laundering frequency of blue button down shirts or khaki trousers. At least from a distance we appeared respectfully civilized. Everyone carried an average of 16-17 credit hours. We may have considered ourselves ill-used by compulsory chapel attendance on Tuesday morning, but, this obligation could be easily met by attending only six of ten possible choices, although September 15th and October 5th chapels were specifically designated for the Class of '59. Additionally there was required attendance at convocations (any 4 of 5 choices) and assemblies (any 3 of 4 choices). Recall this T. S. Eliot quotation which appeared in every chapel bulletin: "What life have you if you have not life together? There is no life not in community, and no community not lived in the praise of God." If true meaning escaped then might the distance of time, fifty years for example, provide a fresh understanding and appreciation?

A blizzard of classes, sports, weekend fraternity "smokers" or "rush parties," exams, formal dances, etc. created and rapidly filled hectic demanding schedules. The on-campus Student Weekly newspaper reported a Class of '59 revolt against freshmen hazing by upper classmen (primarily sophomores) on the last Tuesday in September; it lasted all of one day with full compliance by Wednesday. Exactly what leverage was exercised to accomplish this rapid reversal is not mentioned. One dark autumn evening a traditional freshmen-sophomore skirmish resulted in naked students scurrying back to their dorms, some minus their dinks (that is "diNks") in addition to their clothes. The lovely treed campus "stretching long", changeless yet ever changing with the seasons, the solid red brick Georgian "halls and buildings", the tolling of the Old Main "tower and bell with solemn knell" for Tuesday morning chapel and on Saturday afternoons after a football victory--all mystically conspired with relentless precision to weld the class into a cohesive unit. Spring of the freshman year brought "Hell Week" when pledges with their paddles experienced the right of passage into Greek fraternity brotherhood. Humorous incidents brought welcome relief from the academic grind and enriched our lives. The comedic pageantry of Dr. Shively's gagging flock of botany students following in the wake of the swift long legged professor sprinting across campus in the tree identification exercise (taxonomic genus-

species-common name-uses) created the unavoidable analogy with the Pied Piper of Hamelin. There were always stragglers, and the spring sessions were especially noteworthy because of the number of lagging sneezing students with pine pollen allergies. At a basketball game (home games were played at the Lancaster Armory on North Queen Street; the Mayser Physical Education Center did not exist) a group of freshmen determined that there should be a more unique and dignified cheer, something more appropriate to our designation as "Diplomats." Assorted suggestions were considered with the eventual unanimous selection of a rousing "FIGHT TENACIOUSLY." To everyone's profound but not entirely unexpected disappointment it never caught on. The Dietz Hall custodians were taxed to the limit when a second floor dorm room door was set ablaze with resulting predictable chaos. What were they thinking? And then there was the solemn funeral observance for the dead crow during finals. This ritual was complete with the reading of appropriate Bible passages, mourners and internment. Pre-med students may have pondered what malady caused this poor creature's untimely demise; pre-law students may have inquired as to what tragic accident took place, what negligent person may be at fault, or was this death the result of something more sinister; preministerial students seized this golden opportunity to prematurely practice their calling by providing a proper dignified send-off into avian eternity; and English, Humanities and other Liberal Arts majors with stoic resolve accepted the reality that this was not Poe's raven, but, alas, it was all they had. The one day per week when all AFROTC cadets wore their Air Force blue uniforms and later marched in formation was always special. The parade ground now contains dormitory buildings. In our sophomore year a memorable exercise (a persistent credible rumor suggests Chi Phi involvement) consisted of pushing a jeep up planks laid on the Hartman Hall steps and "shoehorning" it into the lobby. Dean Winters seemed bewildered. An amusing published photograph showed Professor Sidney Wise appearing similarly perplexed during the 1956 presidential campaign when he discovered the bumper and trunk deck of his Studebaker containing both "I like Ike" and "Stevenson" stickers. He feigns confusion, is scratching his head, and we can assume, knowing his good nature, is quite amused by this college caper. The winter season with mantles of fresh snow created a picture post card campus beauty, but recall the late spring surprise blizzard of 1958? Everything came to a halt for days. The beautiful white dogwoods in the quadrangle along with other flowering plants and budding campus trees heralded springtime. Football games actually had wooden goalposts that could be and were torn down after a victory with segments of painted timber and splinters shortly thereafter adorning frat house and dorm rooms. A short list of essential local off-campus businesses includes The College Barbers, Kegel's, Hildy's, downtown Lancaster stores, and the train station. The F&M Band under the direction of John Peifer was a source of perennial pride. The band and glee club directed by Hugh Gault actually cut an LP record. When illness, injury or preventive maintenance (immunizations) required medical intervention the East Hall infirmary with no nonsense nursing staff filled the need. The college physician Doctor James Z. Apple served faithfully for years, and later became president of the American Medical Association.

True to the avowed objectives of a Liberal Arts College we were exposed to a plethora of cultural instruction and activities both within and beyond the classroom. In November 1955 a Green Room gem, The Caine Mutiny Court Martial, superbly directed by Dr. Darrell Larsen exceeded expectations for small college theater. This production was just one of a

long list of stellar productions. Later, as the senior class, we had the collective wisdom to show respectful appreciation by dedicating the Oriflamme-1959 to this remarkable "energetic and scholarly" faculty member who was a "priceless legacy." In December 1956 Dr. Millar Burrows spoke about the biblical significance and translation progress of the Dead Sea Scrolls scarcely a decade after their discovery. In January 1957 the newly elected college president Frederick deWolfe Bolman, Jr. introduced the Book Of The Semester program. Foreign language study was enhanced by the creation of a Language Laboratory on the third floor of the Keiper Liberal Arts Building, replacing the World War II era aeronautical laboratory and classroom. In March 1958 Henry Hull gave a wonderful monologue performance as Mark Twain. The Student Weekly contained a single comic strip, Arnold, a student at fictional Clutchmoor College, whose favorite expletive was "Oh ish!" and who so precisely proclaimed our academic objectives by declaring "I love to associate with cultured college folks."

The History Department had us purchase the daunting two-volume Growth of the American Republic by Morison and Commager (1950). The Federalist 1815-1822 Monroe period was known as the Era of Good Feelings, a characterization which could similarly describe our college Eisenhower years, although just as in the 19th century this time was not without serious national as well as international problems. December 1955 saw seamstress Rosa Parks refuse to relinquish her bus seat in Montgomery, Alabama resulting in her arrest and rekindling a thinly veiled smoldering tinderbox now threatening to erupt into a full fledged conflagration. Also in 1955 the junior senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy, published his book Profiles In Courage which won the 1957 Pulitzer Prize for biography. January 1956 marked the celebration of Benjamin Franklin's 250th birthday with the issuance of a 3-cent first class postage stamp. That October Homecoming weekend continued to honor Franklin with appropriate frat house front lawn displays, the convocation Founder's Day address "Franklin and Education" and a Green Room comedy "Ben Franklin". (In 2006 Franklin's 300th birthday was similarly honored, this time with a quartet of four different 39-cent postage stamps.) Meanwhile in 1956 Europe there was the upheaval of the Hungarian Revolution against Communism. Associate Justice of the Supreme Court William O. Douglas gave the North Lectures on "The Bill of Rights" during assemblies in May 1957, but in September when we were juniors President Eisenhower found it necessary to send armed federal troops to insure court mandated desegregation when nine African-American students enrolled at Little Rock Central High School. During our sophomore year 700 U. S. military advisers were sent to southeast Asia to assist the South Vietnam government following the vacuum created by ending the French colonial Indochina experience, and there remained the disquieting east-west cold war donnybrook. Nothing focused this more vividly for the F&M community than the assembly of 17 October 1957 when USAF Major David Simons (a Lancaster native, F&M '43, Jefferson Medical College '46) dazzled us with his description and photographs of his 19-20 August balloon ascent in a sealed gondola to over 100,000 feet, an early NASA experiment to accumulate "human factor information which must be considered before designing a manned space aircraft." Doctor Simons further explained that this experiment represented "a logical step in the conquest of space." Ironically this presentation occurred just thirteen days after the world was electrified by the USSR's successful launch of the first sputnik on 4 October. Who

could have foreseen the astounding achievements and history altering events of the next decade?

The college faculty, our teachers and mentors, in every department were learned, dedicated, capable, accomplished and caring instructors to whom we owe so much. The Class of '59 had numerous star athletes, musicians and performers who brought excitement and pride to the entire college. A countless assortment of personal recollections enrich each of us frequently, perhaps daily, bringing joy as well as introspective reflection. Leafing through the Oriflamme can be a refreshing exercise in historical recall. These memories need to be shared at this 50<sup>th</sup> reunion.

During our senior year of 1958-59 the college catalogue now listed annual tuition at \$900.00 with total college expenses of \$1,735.00. As always personal expenses were not included. One organization of enigmatic origin which annually received special mention was the Skiing and Outing Club. Its bohemian mien members portrayed overall objectives of somewhat vague, strange and mysterious purpose, but it continued to unaccountably exhibit perennial survival. Just where did that barren ground caribou head mount hanging above the Student Union second floor fireplace come from? Where is it now?

Graduation on Monday 8 June 1959 was upon us like a speeding locomotive. How many of us recalled that just fifteen years had lapsed since the Allied forces stormed the Normandy beaches? The College was now 172 years old, and it was exactly 106 years since the dedication of the two merged academic institutions, Franklin College in Lancaster and Marshall College from Mercersburg, on 7 June 1853. In September 1955 graduation day seemed an eternity away; now the question was where did the years go? Our graduation speaker was Robert W. Sarnoff, President of NBC and coordinator of the television series Victory At Sea. F&M made him a member of the Class of '59 by bestowing an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree. He was to later serve as chairman of the board of trustees of the college. One new graduate was overheard to lament that he just completed four years of college and was now unable to read the \*#@\* Latin diploma. Fortunately a small translation card was provided. We departed, just as we had assembled four years earlier, along divergent paths, to the work place, to graduate school, to marriage and parenthood, to the military, to the multiple diverse and unique walkways of life.

The college campus remains quite familiar and inviting, yet so much has changed. Buildings have been redesigned and structurally rebuilt, often with a completely new purpose. The honey bees have long since ceased returning to their hive through a modified second floor window above the main entrance of Frackenthal Laboratories. Hartman Hall, East Hall, the Quonset huts, George and Martha water towers, the Scholl Observatory, the two massive copper beeches on either side of the road just outside the north end of Dietz Hall with decades of history carved into their smooth bark, the road itself and the Hartman Green circular drive--all are gone. New spectacular buildings housing unimaginable learning, athletic and dormitory facilities have been added, and the campus has been vastly expanded with projected plans for even more remarkable developments. More poignant is the passing from the scene of college professors and classmates who shared our world at this formative period, who occupied essential interwoven character roles in these

cherished reflections which are so wonderful to relive. Their loss takes a bit of each of us; they are sorely missed.

“We hail thee, Alma Mater. We honor thy traditions and those who’ve gone before.” We do indeed!