

Class of 1983 History

By Scott Fasnacht

It was a hot and sticky August afternoon as we paraded into Mayser Center for the college's first convocation. One day on campus and we already made history -- a fitting start for the 547 of us enrolled that fall. We were a class described by the Director of Admissions as, "... a group probably slightly stronger than the past few classes," and "... better equipped for the rigors of collegiate life."

And life was rigorous. We were challenged right away, and every day, by an amazing faculty that were not only our teachers, but also our mentors, and friends. We endured the blizzard of '83, lost our fall break for a reason never clear, and shared our library with a legion of construction workers. It was a time before computers when you had to work a little harder, think a little broader, and type a whole lot better.

We were engaged in the current affairs of the time -- debating issues from nuclear proliferation and apartheid to Reaganomics and star wars. Many of us voted in our first presidential election and it's likely we all pondered the question, "Famous or House of Pie?"

We embraced the arts. On stages in Hensel Hall, The Green Room, and The Other Room we brought to life the characters in *Godspell*, *Hecuba*, *Pippin*, and *Three Sisters*. We paid our dollar to see, and participate in, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. The film series, guest lectures, and dance recitals provided a necessary diversion to our focus on academics.

We were proud to wear the blue and white in athletic competition. From the gridiron to the hardwood court we sustained the Diplomats' legacy of success. In our senior year, the women's lacrosse team finished second in the nation and during their four years on campus, the members of the men's track team never tasted defeat.

We knew how to have a good time. To the sounds of the West Philly Speed Boys, the Hooters, and the Sheep, we crowded into fraternities at every opportunity. Local establishments like Hildy's, Lauzus Hotel, and The Town Tavern appreciated our patronage and we even closed our time at F&M with a "Last Hurrah."

Our last day on campus was much like our first. We once again gathered in Mayser on a wet and gloomy afternoon. When Blair Zyken received his diploma, we were once again part of school history -- the last class to graduate under President Spalding's tenure.

It's fair to say we were well equipped for the rigors of collegiate life and thanks to our time here at F&M we became well equipped for the challenges of real life. We've moved on to become educators and legislators, bankers and brokers, and, of course, doctors and lawyers. But before we were any of these, we were the Class of '83.