

Class of 1966

Class Agent  
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Dear Men of '66,

### THERE IS A SCHOOL BELL!

In 1957 my father, Carroll E. Black '28, was hired by President Trippet to be the admissions counselor in the Chicago area. So we packed our car and left Des Moines, Iowa and headed to Crawfordsville for a brief training period before moving to the Chicago suburbs. We ended up in St. Charles, Illinois where I met Charlie Bell. He and I became immediate friends and have been friends throughout junior high school, high school, Wabash and to this very day. We have never had a cross word with each other-just respect, trust and a lifelong friendship. Charlie agreed to provide a message for this class letter that I believe you will enjoy. Not many of us have a school named for us, but Charlie does-Charlie Bell is SOME LITTLE GIANT!

Change is the essence of life.



I have recently pondered that phrase as I've grown older. Change has been a theme my entire life. Some change has excited me, some sent me wondering.

As I left Wabash I contemplated my future. What might I do? I had too many interests to decide on one path to follow. Cal's February, 2024 class letter affirmed that I am not alone in that indecision. But one thing has not changed, love of our alma mater. Three gentlemen from the class of 2023 spoke of their appreciation and affection for Wabash.

Cal, my life-long friend and classmate from 8th grade through Wabash and beyond, invited me to join him as a football coach at our old high school where he taught. Having no plans for my future, I decided to join him. And thus began my entrance into education with the freshman coach, Cal Black, at St. Charles High School. What fun! Oh, and I had to get a job teaching. That was an easy change. I met with the Superintendent, John Wredling. After we discussed stories about my family, whom he knew quite well, he offered me a job teaching fifth grade and a coaching assignment at the high school.

My life focus changed. I fell in love with teaching and found a life-long direction. After about four years of coaching and teaching, I had finished a Masters Degree in Education and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Education at Northern Illinois University.



I was then asked to replace a 40-year veteran principal at an elementary school in rural St. Charles. As I attended the veteran's retirement party, I was approached by an elderly lady, my first grade teacher, whom I had not seen since first grade. She congratulated me and presented me with a piece of 11x18 "construction paper" that I had drawn in her first grade. I was amazed!

I continued as an elementary principal throughout the terms of many Superintendents. The changes that come with a new superintendent deepened my relationships with the other seven principals in the school district. Many of the teachers that I worked with wondered how they could ever enforce the one rule that my schools had: conduct yourself as a lady or gentleman at all times.

Over the next 25 years, I helped lead St. Charles Boys Baseball, working mornings with T-ball kids and afternoons preparing baseball diamonds for evening games. During the winter months, I found high school basketball players to referee Biddy-Basketball League games for elementary-age boys. We twisted a lot of fathers' arms to coach and involve every member of their team.

After working with so many local parents, my two buddies, the Graham brothers, and I knew about every family with elementary age boys for over 33 years. When change came again, retirement, a new elementary school was being built for the opening of the school year in September of 2000. The parent committee chose to name it Bell Graham Elementary School. We were very honored.



My wife, Janet, and I raised three children during this time. They have faired well over the years presenting us with nine grandkids who are now changing their lives with high school and college education through marriage experiences. We are busy attending many grandkid related events. What a pleasure!

John Lennes provided an email and it is included here.

Thanks for encouraging these outstanding men to transmit their uplifting and well-expressed thoughts and reflections.

On a sad note, but a somehow peaceful and comforting one, I attended Greg Garman's service. I was struck by a video shown of Greg (a few days before his passing, it was said), singing a solo beautifully in public. He still sounded great, and he truly put himself into the effort, as he always had. Sad, yes, but restorative at the same time.

The Annual Day of Giving will take place in April (more on that in the April letter and from the College), and it seems appropriate that our class should challenge all other classes to break the record we set last year. To refresh your memory, our goal was to make 171 gifts-one for each living member of our class. We passed that goal in a hurry and ended up with 270 total gifts. So, is there a class out there that can beat that record?? We shall see, and in the “spirit of Wabash” let's hope some other class can set a new record.

'Our voices and hearts combine...’

Cal