

**ARCHBISHOP WILLIAMS HIGH SCHOOL**

*Address to the Class of 1964*

**David Skill '64**

**Carmen Mariano '64**

***David Skill:***

So who were we, the AWHHS Class of '64?

We lived as close by as Braintree and Quincy, and as far away as Canton, Hingham, Hull, Hyde Park, and Scituate and everywhere in between, a third of us came from Quincy.

Despite the fact the school sits in Braintree, my old hometown came in a distant second with 22%

Our classmates from Weymouth and Milton were similar in number 29 and 26 respectively accounting for 12% and 11% of our class. Despite the fact it was 20 miles away, Scituate sent 16 students who became part of the illustrious Class of '64.

Welcome to all from near and far!

You know, as we were preparing for this reunion, I got thinking back to the many nicknames that, for a variety of reasons (some probably thankfully, long forgotten,) just stuck to certain members of the Class of '64:

“Reverend” – Bob Kowalski

KB – Kathy Bailey

“Benny” – no not the candy nun Sister Ann Benedict – but our own Arlene Benedict

Then there was “Bunny” Brinkert

Janice “Crash” Columbus

Chickie and Maddi Fleming

The man who was known not by one, but by two nicknames both having to do with basketball – John “Hondo Tito” Francis

What about “Fuzzy” Jack Gantley? Hey, that’s what the yearbook says!

Big T – Tim Graham – our three sport leader – football, basketball and baseball – when did he have time to study? Oops, don’t ask!

Father Tom Kopp – Il duce? I know it stands for leader but wasn’t that Mussolini’s nickname?

Manning or Wardo – Ed Manning

Tom McMackin – I think it was Sister Ann Benedict who insisted on calling him Thomas McMahon

And, my all time favorites include Ray “El Watusi” Martucci, Mattalooney Richard Mattulina and Paul “Pablo Pizza” Pizzi

And just how did Donny May get the nickname “Tilt” anyway?

More importantly, who put the Dapper in Dapper Dan McCarthy?

Speaking of McCarthy’s – just who is responsible for naming Frank “Spitcurl”? Buy that man a drink!

And what of “Kegger” Barry McGonigle or as he was also known “McMonocle”)

More names to recall – Tom “Picker” Paquin, “Cosmo” Ryan, Red Dog Sirois and, of course, “Clairol” Carol Tarzia.

I know you want to get back to socializing with your classmates, so we’ll wrap this up. But let’s not forget that 45 years ago we were here in this very gym for all those Friday afternoon rallies – our now President Carmen Mariano as master of ceremonies, Mary Monahan at the piano and many of us embarrassing ourselves singing - or at least attempting to sing - such classics as “Hey-La-De-La-De La-De”.

Oh, there was one difference between then and now here in the gym – the bleachers – yes, finally within the last year the bleachers which we came to know and love (?) were sent to the scrap heap and replaced with these new ones.

Hey Carmen, did the Board of Trustees ever actually authorize that purchase! The rumor is you ripped them out yourself! Anyway, great job! Those old bleachers were known for their splinters!

Seriously, all of us on the Reunion Committee hope you have a fabulous time reconnecting with your classmates and we sincerely hope you enjoy the music we’re playing tonight, that very same music that filled the tinny speakers of our little transistor radios and could also be heard echoing through the gym at those Friday night mixers.

Oh, and, if you hear a slow song you would like to dance to over the course of the evening, breathe easy – there will be no nuns with flashlights telling you to “make room for the Holy Ghost”!

Enjoy!!

Thank you ever so much for coming and making this reunion the best ever!

***Carmen Mariano:***

Thank you David, and thank you everybody –

Ladies & Gentlemen, someone once asked Winston Churchill how to make a good speech. Mr. Churchill replied, “Just start with a powerful opening, and end with a meaningful close. Then, put those two things as close together as possible!”

Tonight, I will listen to Winston Churchill. That’s right, tonight I will be short, I will be sweet, and I will be seated; I promise.

But before I am seated, I will read you a letter and an email. Then, I will tell you a story. The letter comes first. It is a beautiful letter, and it reads like this:

*My dear friends,*

*Loving greetings from Kentucky to the Class of '64!*

*I have so many wonderful memories of your senior year. You, being my first class at Archie’s, introduced me to its rich tradition, and taught me what a privilege it was to be part of its history.*

*I remember so well the pride you had in your school, your support of athletic and academic events, your friendly respect for teachers and for one another--that spirit so unique to Archie’s.*

*I recall how courageously you responded to tragedy, but also how wholeheartedly you entered into fun times, enjoying life with your friends.*

*You touched my life in a special way, and I am grateful to you.*

*Now, you have gathered to renew friendships, share memories, and have fun. Celebrate Archie’s; but also celebrate yourselves! By being WHO YOU ARE, you have contributed much to the spirit and tradition of Archbishop Williams High School.*

*My thoughts and prayers are with you. Enjoy; God bless!*

*With love and gratitude,*

*Sister Virginia Bauer*

*(Charles Francis)*

We also received an email from another very special person. It goes like this

*Dear Friends from 1964,*

*Every blessing on your return to Archbishop Williams High School! If you object to my interrupting conversations, please address all complaints to Anne Boyce Baker who asked me to share my story after leaving AWHS.*

*At the direction of my Community, I enrolled in a doctoral program at Tufts University in the fall of 1966. While I was a student there, Tufts made it possible for me to spend a school year in London and five additional months in continental Europe for study and research. Of course, very interesting travels accompanied these experiences.*

*In 1970 I graduated and returned to teaching in Louisville. Naturally, I corresponded with some friends I had made in Europe. One of them, Sister Sarah Clarke, an Irish artist I had met in London's Victoria and Albert Museum, greatly influenced my life. From Sister Sarah I learned of the unjust "settlement" in 1920 of Ireland's 1916 rebellion against England's occupation of Ireland. To cut this long, sad, complicated story as short as possible, I realized to a greater degree the importance of politics for a follower of Christ. He was Himself a victim of Roman oppression, as we affirm when we say, "suffered under Pontus Pilate." If you saw the 1995 Oscar-nominated film, "In the Name of the Father," you know the unjust treatment of the Conlon family by British courts. I met the Conlons through Sister Sarah and supported their efforts for justice as I could.*

*During the 1980s I joined many other Louisvillians in The Council on Peacemaking and Religion. Among our projects were efforts toward a Nuclear Freeze and opposition to the Reagan-Bush support of the Contra Wars in Central America. In 2002 when George Bush began promoting his invasion of Iraq, we formed the Committee to Stop the War against Iraq. We lost that cause, of course, on March 19, 2003, so we re-grouped as The Louisville Peace Action Community to oppose this war.*

*In recent years I have read many helpful books concerning peace and justice. If you have not read Boston GLOBE columnist James Carroll's House of War, I recommend it highly. Your class is in my thoughts often as I am currently reading James Douglass' 2008 book, JFK and the Unspeakable. The shock and sorrow we experienced on November 22, 1963, return frequently as I read this carefully documented account of Kennedy's assassination. I think you would find this book compelling.*

*Certainly, formal education has continued to be important in my life. Two unusual teaching experiences occurred with our Sisters in Belize for ten weeks and in India for three months. Of course, these were important times of learning for me.*

*As I close, two quotes occur which I should like to cite for your consideration. The first is from a Protestant theologian whose name escapes me: "The good Christian has a Bible in one hand and the morning paper in the other." It is important, certainly, to keep the two balanced. The second quote that I hope also motivates my political efforts is Pope Paul VI's superb sentence: "If you want peace, work for justice."*

*Thank you, dear friends from 1964, for listening to some aspects of my post-AWHS story. Enjoy your time together; I am sure Father Moran is blessing you from his high place in heaven. I close this letter as I opened it: sincere good wishes for God's grace to you and yours. Of course, you are in my prayers daily; please keep me in yours. Thank you.*

*In Christ the Teacher,  
Sister Mary Andrea, SCN*

So much for my letter and my email. Now, for my story. And like all my stories, this one is ...true.

In February, my wife Dee Dee had a birthday.

Just before that special day, I asked her for some advice.

"Dee," I asked, "Your big day is coming. What can I get you for presents?"

She thought for a minute and said, "Carmen, you haven't been home before 10:00 one night in the past two weeks.

I almost never see you.

The only present I want for my birthday is your presence."

"Carmen, Dee Dee went on, "On my birthday, I want you to be present."

Ladies & Gentlemen; trust me, I was present on Dee Dee's birthday; or I would not be standing here.

And Dee Dee made a great point, as she always does.

Our presence is valuable.

It is also expensive.

For us to be in one-place costs us all the other places we could be in; and that is expensive!

Tonight, this room is full of your presence. They are wrapped in smiles, and tied with ribbons of memories.

Tonight, this room is full of your presence.

I thank you for that; as your president; as your classmate; and as your friend.

And now that I've thanked you for the present of your presence, I'd like to thank you for something else.

What is that?

I thought you'd never ask!

Now that I've thanked you for your presence, I'd like to thank you for our future.

What do I mean?

Well, our school would have no future if it had no past and it would have no past if it had no you.

As our alumni, you gave our school its past and you give our school its future.

That future will always include you.

It's true. Each of you and all of you will be part of the fabric, the fiber and the family that is Archbishop Williams High School forever.

Its doors, its arms and its heart will always be open to you.

So stay close, please.

And be proud, please.

Because a long time ago, you picked a good school, and you picked some good friends. You did not pick those friends for then, and you did not pick them for now. You picked those friends for then and for now.

You picked those friends - you picked these friends for life.

So be proud of your good taste in schools and of your good taste in friends.

And know that our good school has a great past and a great future thanks to good friends like you.

Now have you got that? All that? Good! Now just don't forget.

And look out, world because here comes Archbishop Williams High School!