

Reflections of the Class of 1951

By Bob DeChant

We began our journey at the end of a massive World War II. Ours was one of the largest classes F&M had ó 382 members. Almost half of us had already served in the Armed Forces and were older than those who had just finished High School. They had the opportunity to attend College under the GI Bill which paid for tuition, books, and room and board. Some were married and all were most interested in getting a degree, a job, a family, and moving on.

Several significant world events occurred during our college years. The first use of the term engaged, and we won! Think about ho y"vjg"õEqnf"Y ctö"chhgevgf"{qw"cpf"{qwt"ectggt0

The next year, 1949, Chairman Mao Tse-tung declared China a Communist state. Notwithstanding the tremendous economic progress China has since made, they are still a communist state.

In 1950, U.S. forces invaded Korea. Some WWII veterans were called back into service. Maybe some were in our class. Sixty years later, the troops are still there.

In our last year, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death. Also, the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution was passed to limit the Presidency to no more than two consecutive terms. Not a bad idea which has seemed to work very well.

Several significant events also occurred on campus. In our sophomore year, Fackenthal Laboratories were enlarged to the tune of a half million dollars.

Junior year was sort of laid back . . . more severe freshman regulations, dedicating the Lab

Some Recollections, F&M Class of 1951 – in 2011.
By Dale Heckman and Bill Rader

A memoir of our 4 years, 1947-'51 must nestle within the unique context of that time. People, both military and civilian, were now exploring their futures after a horrific worldwide war. The college now could chart its new course after hosting a budget-saving Navy training program. Some classmates had experienced military action, and some professors had served "close in." (Rumor had it that the strange shuffling walk of one professor came from leaky boots on the winter front.) Fred Klein told of observing the Nazi build-up in 1930's Europe. Bob Pitcher had worked in our wartime U.S. government. The U.N. was just then being born. *In such a context*, we plunged delightedly into our tasks of serious learning, reaching out for new friends, trying new abilities, stretching ourselves. Ever in the background lurked three new facts: (a.) The Atomic Age. (b.) Aggressive, Soviet-style communism, and America's budding paranoia in reaction to it. (c.) Growing awareness of the enormity of the "Holocaust" mass murder of Jews,

It would take another entire essay to tell about our favorite faculty members and, even then, how could we select only a few for our diverse class? We honestly cannot recall any certified "villains" in that wonderful cast of faculty characters, and nearly all who taught us then were surely at F&M because they enjoyed interacting with undergraduate students. So, symbolic of that, we simply recall an evening of fun in our freshman year when Prexy and the three deans performed as a very harmonious barbershop quartette. Such a harmony, who could forget?