

Oh how we lived at F&M in interesting times. Our four years were bracketed as freshmen by the assassination of a president and the rising tide of civil rights awareness and as upperclassmen by divisions on our campus, as elsewhere, over the war in Vietnam. In between, we accumulated the makings for memories – some lasting, some faded – of our four-year transition to the rest of our lives.

We entered F&M in September 1963, only a few weeks after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke in Washington of his dream. Dr. King's speech reverberated on campus. Dr. King's "Letter From Birmingham City Jail" was our freshman reading assignment, and Professor Sidney Wise of the government department led our freshman orientation discussions on what was described at that point as "the racial question." Dr. King himself arrived on campus to speak in December to a capacity crowd in Mayser Gym as part of the Topics

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On campus, there were the perennial discussions about such hot topics as the quality of the food and laundry services. A successful protest at

society. F&M taught me to think with a broad perspective, to communicate and write clearly, and to welcome the free exchange of thought and ideas.

Forty-five years ago (not to mention that it's nearing 49 years since I began my F&M matriculation) is a long time back to remember much of anything! However, there are times in our lives when the world stands still for us and we remember them years later, like it was yesterday!

The first such moment for me was during my first semester on campus. It was a late November afternoon in 1963. Having entered F&M with the intention to pursue a pre-law History major, my attention was drawn to the fascinating subject of Introduction to Psychology taught by Professor Dr. Kenneth Brookshire, Department Chair. I was deeply engrossed in the darkened Psych laboratory conducting "perception" experiments, when suddenly and unexpectedly the lab door flew open, allowing an intrusive stream of light to pierce the darkness, accompanied by a haunting shriek, "The President has been shot!" With that, the door closed. I felt alone, isolated, confused and a little bit frightened. So is my recollection that fateful Fall day when President John F. Kennedy was killed in a Dallas motorcade.

The second recollection is not nearly as dramatic or world-changing, as my first. However, it remains a source of pride for me personally and positively affected the Campus environment that F&M students still enjoy to this day. There was a growing need for a new College Center – a place of community, a place where students and organized groups like the Oriflamme yearbook and Student Weekly/College Reporter newspaper staffs could work, relax and call home. But where should such a facility be built on campus? The feelings were strong and passionate among students, faculty, alumni and administrators alike. Should Hartman Hall be razed? What about East Hall?

Everyone had an opinion on the possibilities proposed by the architects. F&M College President, Keith Spalding called together a student committee to participate in a long-range Campus plan to incorporate a new College Center. I was privileged to be part of this group. Our recommendation was ultimately adopted and the College Center was erected. So began a major change in the ever-changing/expanding campus footprint that today looks better than ever and can be enjoyed more than ever by the F&M family of today.

Given that I cannot remember much on demand these days, I am amazed how vivid my memories are of my days at F&M. Letter from Birmingham City Jail and Dr. King's visit, Vanderzell, Wise, Michelak, JFK's assassination and being among the first hundred into the Capitol to see his coffin, snowball fights with geology majors, the Green Room, intramural basketball championship, Eastern Regional Wrestling Championships in Maysers, hiding

from fraternity brothers on the top of the water tower, visiting ZBT's UVA chapter, my very popular Nash Rambler with the reclining front seats, Bill Lacy and Fuzz Ulrich, as student government president, working with Keith Spalding, 606 West James, Daisy Mae and mainly any number of great guys to be around.

Most of all F&M taught me how to think, not what to think, and gave me the confidence that I could do just about anything I put my mind to. What a gift in my life.

John F. Burness
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1963—hitching-hiking from Maine to Lancaster, not knowing a soul except Don Hendler from prep school. Meeting a roommate who while nice was so different in every way—background, interests and upbringing. Playing football and realizing I could do this well here. Deciding between government and classics as a major but loving them both after I bombed in advanced physics. Listening (and cheering) between study sessions at the library to Howard Cosell narrating Cassius Clay beating all opponents he was not supposed to. Joining Chi Phi after they and I decided we would be good for each other. Having a friend like Foster Ulrich who supported me in every way. Playing on an undefeated football team then becoming captain and all conference. Having friends like Dan Jenkins, Randy Collins, JD Smith, Lewis Zemsky and Jimmy Smith. Sponsoring incoming pledges like Alton Stone and Frank DeGenova, the first Italian American to get into Chi Phi. Being mentored and taught by friend Sid Wise (that lasted until his death) and upstarts Victor Falkenheim and Stan Michalak about the appropriate roles of government in society. Most of all learning about power in this country and what a real economic democracy should be. These lessons and knowledge I carried with me though graduate school, into my health science career and until this day as we fight for universal health care, policies to reduce the impact of global warming, and against the never-ending US war economy that benefits few.

Arriving at F&M in '63, I settled into a high ceiling antique Hartman Hall room for my first year. Known as a potential "fire" trap, this term came to life on a cool fall Friday night when I walked into the laundry below the "snake pit" and found a waste barrel with a small fire in it. I dragged it outside and left it to burn to ashes.

The following year, Tom Morris & I moved into the Phi Kappa Sigma house on James St, another antique. Along with our brothers, we painted and remodeled. In our junior year we worked as dorm counselors

beautiful. And because there are lady "Diplomats", one hard and fast rule of our '60's dormitories is no more: "no women in sight between midnight and morning".

Early in our first semester of freshman year, Dr. Gerry Enscoe made a prediction during an English Composition class: Much of what we would take away from F&M would be learned outside the classroom in terms of living and working well with others and building lasting relationships. How true it was. Two of my closest friends are fellow F&M alumni. And then there's that young lady I met at a SUB Hop. By happenstance, the college newspaper staff finished our work early that Friday evening in February of our sophomore year, and I had time to attend the SUB Hop. Now, after more than 40 years of marriage, I can still picture her in the red dress she wore that night we met.

Something else of value we took away from F&M was an approach to lifelong learning. Facts and figures are quickly forgotten, but what recurs is a daily need to learn something new – a daily need to approach a problem from a new angle. At F&M, we learned how to learn, and for that I am grateful.

Laughter is not a bad beginning for a friendship.

Remember the first day of college a long time ago?

I eagerly thumbed through the Freshman Handbook to see who was going to be my roommate and couldn't wait to meet him. We met, talked and laughed in the middle of Hartman Oval. I remember it well.

A freshman year is not long, but long enough not to forget the one person who made that year pleasant and friendly. Many simple and small things happened, but each large enough to make a lasting mark on my life and a contribution to my fond memories.

Likewise, it's hard to forget all the guys on the floor, in the dorm and in the freshman class. Each had a unique set of characteristics that made each of them fun to be with. Exceptional guys with innumerable assets and not many liabilities at all. At least that's the way I will remember each of them.

That was a chapter, but not the book. May our paths cross again in the future, because of the memories and for the fun of it.

Looking forward to our 50th.

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The F and M experience was, for me, different than the traditional college experience. After graduating from high school in 1956, I attended college for a semester plus and, realizing I really was not ready to be in college, I quit. I went to work for seven years, was married and had two sons. Around 1964, we realized I would not advance much further in my work without a college degree.

We accepted a major disruption to our lives and I entered F and M with the need to graduate in three years because of finances. College presented a real challenge, not only because I had been out of school for a while, but, because my wife needed to work full time, I worked about 30 hours a week, I needed to be a husband and dad, and, I needed to get our oldest son to school in the morning and the youngest son to day care before my first class.

F and m presented a real learning environment--not just the "traditional" class, but, real interactive opportunities, such as when Dr Everett would put you "on the floor" and challenge you for most of the class with a series of challenging issues that you might face as