

Reflections of the Class of 1976

By Ilene Kent

Looking back 35 years to identify just one news story that impacted who we, The Franklin and Marshall Class of 1976 became later in life, was both challenging daunting. We headed out into the real world the very year that our nation celebrated its 200th birthday.

We had the privilege of attending a small liberal arts college at a time when many others our age were halfway around the world fighting a war of which few at home approved. Our class was the last of many where the boys had to register for the selective service, and then received a lottery number indicating their chances of being conscripted in the US military. Was this the event? Maybe.

Was it the iconic “they re all gone” from ABC Sports Newscaster Jim McKay in reference to the Israeli athletes murdered in Munich as many of us were making the long trek from home to Lancaster for the first day of our amazing four-year journey. The tragedy played out on the world stage has had repercussions to this day. Maybe this is it.

Then of course there was the “free love” movement – or so I heard . . . I was a coed at a school that until just a few years earlier was all men! Woohoo! Women were being given opportunities that prior generations could only dream of. Men still outnumbered women by a ratio about 3:2 and Planned Parenthood was quite the place to see and be seen – or not. I can remember a particularly embarrassing visit where I was spotted by one of the Lambda Chi boys who swore up and down he wouldn't “spill the beans.” Well, I m not sure I need to tell you how that worked out. And then, just a year after we arrived in Lancaster, the Supreme Court, in an histsd

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It happened in June of '72
An open door at the Watergate, was found askew
The guard saw some men who shouldn't be there
And what followed thereafter was the Watergate Affair.

George McGovern did lose that November
By a landslide that all were sure to remember.
In hindsight of course, we surely must ask
What were you thinking, you silly jack ass!

As freshmen in college we could not fully take in
How important it was this silly break in.
Missing tapes and all we would hear about for years
And for many it meant all new careers.

Woodward and Bernstein, "Investigators R Us"
They believed in liberty and "In God We Trust"
With Deep Throat they met to discuss what had happened
And at the end of it all 'twas the President Nixon was deeply chagrined.

Resign, Nixon did, to no one's surprise,
After one Saturday Night, with his Massacre so ill-advised.
Agnew the VP had chosen to resign, so new President Ford
Said, Dickie, here's your pardon.

To those of us in '76 we had enough of Dick and his Dirty Tricks
We learned that to question authority is good
But most of all we learned that if ever we wonder
It's important to question before the country goes under.

Headlines in . . .

1972

Watergate Break In

Munich Massacre: while there are many evil events throughout history, the Massacre of Israeli Olympians in 1972 extremely shocked the World and dramatically changed World events

1973

US Supreme Court legalizes abortion in Roe v. Wade

Vietnam War ends

American Indian movement occupy Wounded Knee, SD to dramatize group demands

1974

Richard Nixon resigns as president

Nixon is granted full pardon by President Gerald Ford

Patty Hearst is kidnapped by Symbionese Liberation Army terrorists

1975

Last American forces leave Vietnam and Saigon falls to the communists
President Ford is targeted for assassination twice

1976

Jimmy Carter elected President
US celebrates its Bicentennial
Viking I lands on Mars
Legionnaire s disease strikes convention in Philadelphia