



150 Stories for 150 Years

A Lifechanging Letter and a Suitcase

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The year was 1950, and my senior year in a class of 12 at Penn Local School. There was no money for college, so I was working the 4 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. shift at the Malta Manufacturing Company cutting wooden window and door frames and planning to do as such for a long time after graduation. It was at this point that my high school principal and American Government teacher showed me a letter that the school had received from Wilmington College, a school of which I had never heard.



The letter stated that WC had arranged for 125 job positions at a new company coming to town by the name of the Randall Company. Two students by alternating days could fill one spot giving work to 250 students. My principal suggested I might want to check it out. So, when fall came. I was off to WC with \$300 and a worn-out 1936 Plymouth. So, for the next four years, it was off again on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the 4 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. shift operating a double-end bender. However, four years later, I graduated with \$500 and a decent 1950 Ford; no money from home and no debt. Of course, the charge for a credit hour was \$7.50. It was an opportunity that WC students had then that is an impossibility in today's climate.

The four years at WC were enjoyable, instructive and provided many lifelong friendships. The education prepared me for a career as a teacher and a guidance counselor.

But where does the suitcase come in? During my sophomore year, I had observed that if we sat on the porch at Twin Ash, the dormitory for freshmen girls, as they arrived to check in for their first year, we could watch to see if there were any good looking ones. So it was that I saw a pretty young lassie by the name of Marilyn Joyce Gast get out of a car with a bunch of boxes and a suitcase. I felt it a duty to offer to carry her suitcase. That was 68 years ago, and I have been carrying that girl's suitcase ever since. Of course, it didn't happen that quick. I still had two years of college, a year of teaching in Xenia because it was close to Wilmington, and answering a two-year tour with Uncle Sam. Finally, in 1957, we were able to tie that lasting love knot.

The last 62 have been a breeze!

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