



150 Stories for 150 Years

'Like Camelot, Wilmington's Still That Magical Place It Always Was'

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Worship at Dover-Randolph (Quaker Meeting in northern New Jersey) had just ended, when a slightly older fellow stood up and said: "I'm Dwight Stoddard, from Media, Pennsylvania." (important, because I was then in high school; the week before, my parents had taken me looking at colleges in eastern Pennsylvania, and we'd gotten caught in a traffic jam there) Naturally, I introduced myself, and he was a Wilmington College student! He "talked-up" WC with my parents and me. I applied and was accepted. My official visit went so well. I greeted my parents the following morning with: "Our search has ended!" OK, not everything's perfect - September 1965, on campus, and an incompatible roommate. But that encouraged me to overcome shyness and meet a new one (Bill Samuel) for the following semester. By the time I received my diploma in June 1969, my friends and acquaintances had grown exponentially. I was even introduced to my only real girlfriend (Barbara Weinhouse) in the middle of my sophomore year.

Wilmington was large enough to offer varied cultural experiences, like an excellent Theatre Department, and I was able to hear Duke Ellington's Jazz Band play. But it was small enough so I could interact with fellow students from varied racial, political, economic and international backgrounds.

Of course, I liked the interlocking WC seal, but I think the modern WC "Hands-On" symbol is a stroke of genius! Whether it was helping assemble seating in Hermann Court, or simply ringing the Victory Bell after a football game win, Wilmington College was a wonderful community to be part of. I had great professors, and plenty of opportunities to thrive. I worked in the Language Laboratory, was a projectionist for Campus Films and a representative on the Student Senate. Even though I'd known about amateur "ham" radio in grade school, there was enough interest in it at W.C. I became one! (and operate to this day).

Winter Break (1969-70), Barbara broke up with me. I'd attended only one (not intentionally) reunion - my 10th, in 1979. Thanks to e-mail, in September 2013, Barbara apologized for how she'd dumped me. (Even though we're both happily married to other people, we can still be friends).

Finally, my 50th class reunion last September. Some buildings are new, others have been re-arranged somewhat, but like Camelot Wilmington's still that magical place it always was - where among the first people I saw were two of my best friends, Justin and Rachael Lapoint. And when I was hanging out with Barbara, (I'd not seen her since the break-up), it was just like old times. I was even able to visit with one of my favorite professors, Dr. Larry Gara, (and his wife) before heading back to New Jersey. He passed away two months later.

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