



150 Stories for 150 Years

Third Time's the Charm

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I arrived at Wilmington College as a faculty brat in August 1968 when my father became Dean of Faculty. A week later, I left for freshman year at Oberlin, the fifth generation in my mother's family to attend the school.

Oberlin was overwhelming. I'd been valedictorian at my upstate New York high school and active in music and sports. At Oberlin, practically everyone was valedictorian. My English teacher kept giving me B-minus. Oberlin has a famed conservatory, so my flute playing wasn't good enough for the wind ensemble.

I had a good piano teacher and found some opportunities to accompany soloists. I found my crowd at Oberlin in folk dancing and the just-formed Collegium Musicum. I played field hockey and was the slowest member of the swim team.

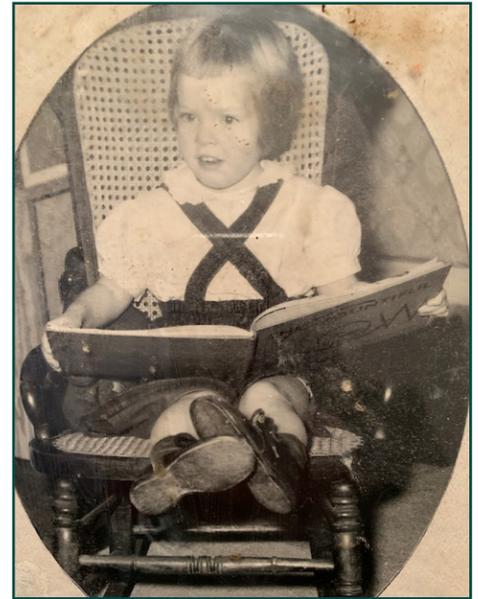
So, when my sophomore year swept me off an emotional cliff, I came "home" to Wilmington and enrolled as a "special student."

I lived at home and bicycled to and from campus, even late at night. Through that year, I discovered comparative literature with Cliff Hardie, devoured both halves of American History Survey with Larry Gara (8 a.m. class six days a week), and threw myself into music, theatre and folk dancing.

Meanwhile I plotted out my Oberlin return, based on the interests I'd discovered at Wilmington: officially declare a BA (non-conservatory) music major, unofficially build a comparative literature major (Oberlin's English major was strictly British and American, and I wanted the world), and indulge a new-found passion for physical anthropology.

But somewhere around the time of a disappointing sophomore piano jury exam back at Oberlin and Wilmington's stirring response to the Kent State and Jackson State killings, I realized Wilmington had taken hold of me.

I'd found a comfortable pond where I could get a solid and fulfilling education with some phenomenal





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professors, learn stagecraft, folk dance both at Wilmington and Antioch, and study music with people with whom I thought I was worthy of playing and singing.

I returned briefly to Oberlin as a junior, but my heart wasn't in it. I enrolled in the Wilmington Class of '72 and didn't look back. I vividly remember almost every course and/or professor. I had a senior piano recital and played the "5th Brandenburg Concerto" with the orchestra.

After graduating, I did Wilmington Summer Theater at least once. I don't think I'm imagining that Steve Haines wrote a children's musical of Winnie the Pooh. I still remember the tune for "We're going on an expedition, it's neither a trip nor a mission."

When I chose to live with my parents while completing my doctoral dissertation, I returned to the Collegium, taught lifesaving and folk dancing for the PE Department, and also taught at Southern State and Chatfield.

Now it's almost 50 years since we graduated. My parents have a memorial bench in the Arboretum. Wilmington College has changed so much, but it's still A Place Where I Belong, and I hope to be back there soon.

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