

Class of 1968

Class Agent  
Jim Roper

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**Dear friends in the Class of 1968,**

Hope all is well where you are. I feel sadness over our losses. Nick and Mike were great friends.

Wonderful guys. Guess it's our turn to grow old, BUT ...

I still walk (2 miles) to the gym most days, even when it's cold in Colorado. Yes, I take a bunch of prescribed pills and feel pretty good most of the time. And yes, I serve as a Block Captain with our Neighborhood Watch. Still watching and still reading—has anyone read ***Damn Lucky***, a memoir of WWII about the 100th Bomb Squadron—that has somehow made the TV screen as *Masters of the Air*? Let me know. Stay active if you can.

In October I went to the 40<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Grenada Jump. 40 years. Wow. But people in Grenada celebrate October 25<sup>th</sup> as their Independence Day. The Ranger Handbook used to have ONE reference to the Air Force. It said, "If the FAC is killed, get his radios." Funny. Actually, they never leave a fallen comrade.

You know, after Wabash, most of our class joined the military. Vietnam split the country right down the middle. Worse than now because the bodies kept coming home. Never mind the fellowship which paid for grad school. Never mind the scars. I think WAR should be one of the Enduring Questions Wabash studies.

Dr. John Hudson (Wabash roomie) and I were planning trips to Indianapolis, when we learned that a \$100 room costs \$500. Just for those weeks of our travel. Actually, \$497, plus tax. I joined a hotel group called an Honors program, but there's nothing honorable about gouging customers. I said that to a hotel clerk, and she agreed.

Maybe someone can set me straight on this issue. Is it new??? Gen Z???

One of the trips included the JB Bachman Class Agent Forum. Sorry.



Let's start with something exceedingly pleasant. Read on ...



Terry Smith and his clan.



We received the sad news of the passing of classmate Michael Wright on January 13

**Michael Earl Wright passed away Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, at Indianapolis, following a stroke. He was born Nov. 21, 1946, at Crawfordsville, to Dorman E. Wright and Loretta Connell Wright. He attended Crawfordsville public schools, graduating from CHS in 1964. He attended Wabash College, graduating in 1968. Mike was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity.**

**He lived most of his adult life in Bloomington and Indianapolis. He served in the Army Reserve. Mike was an athlete and outdoorsman. He earned six varsity letters in high school, quarterbacking the football team and playing catcher in baseball. He was a hunter and avid fly fisherman. He loved dogs. He was also an accomplished two-step dancer.**

**Surviving are wife Linda Wright of Indianapolis; brother David (Beth) Wright of Holland, Michigan; and sister Terri Wright Harvey of Georgetown, Indiana. No service is planned at this time.**

.....  
and the passing of Nick Pitz on November 24.

**It is with a heavy heart that we announce the death of our beloved husband, father and friend Paul Nicholas “Nick” Pitz. Born February 2, 1947 in Indianapolis, IN to Paul and Roseann Pitz, the oldest of six siblings, Nick entered Heaven on November 24, 2023.**

**Nick graduated in 1964 from Cathedral High School in Indianapolis where he gained a love of academic competition, placing first in an Exercise in Knowledge Competition. Nick graduated from Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana in 1968 with a BA in German and English after having studied abroad his junior year at Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany, a year that instilled a life-long love of all things German. He was a member of Delta Tau Delta Fraternity. After graduation, Nick was**

drafted into the U.S. Army, and after nine months serving in Kentucky, New Jersey and Maryland, he used his language skills to earn a military position in Worms, Germany for 15 months. Although he was honorably discharged from the military on August 8, 1970, he returned to Germany as often as he could and wasn't afraid to take on hard work just to be there. After his discharge, Nick earned a Master's Degree from Northwestern University and finished all qualifying courses and exams for the Ph.D. program when he met the love of his life, Barbara Waters, on August 17, 1973. They were married exactly a year to the day after they met and moved to Toronto, Ontario Canada to begin the adventure of their 50 years together. They welcomed daughter Megan in Toronto and son Andrew after their move to the Quad Cities. While working on his Ph.D. dissertation and living in Toronto, Nick discovered his love of teaching and thought that he could contribute the most as a high school teacher. He earned a teaching degree at the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, and spent the next 11 years teaching at various high schools in and near Toronto as well as teaching Saturday German language classes. At Barbara's suggestion, they both learned to ski, and Nick spent several years teaching skiing as a licensed Canadian Level II instructor both in Canada and at Sundown Mountain in Iowa. Nick also became certified and coached high school basketball in Canada. He spent his life teaching and encouraging others, firmly believing that anyone could learn, whether it was German language, skiing, or to approach others with empathy and compassion rather than to judge or condemn them. Over the course of his 40+ year teaching career, Nick held many jobs, but most fulfilling were his 23 years at Moline High School until retirement in 2014. He was fortunate to be able to take students to Germany every other year. After retirement, he continued to teach part-time at Rock Island, Davenport North, and Davenport Central High Schools until his second retirement in 2021. He never lost his interest in academic competition and took great joy in watching students grow as he coached the Moline High School Scholastic Bowl Team for many years, winning the Illinois State Championship in 1999. He was asked to coach Team Illinois in a national meet where his teams won back-to-back National Championships in 2007 and 2008 and was inducted into the Illinois Scholastic Bowl Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Nick loved people. Barbara called him her "front man" when it came to meeting new people, and his outgoing approach to life led him to become involved in the community. He served on the Board of Directors of the German American Heritage Center as well as on the program committee and was an active volunteer and Germany reading group discussion leader. He was active in his church, and he and Barbara organized and served meals to the hungry for 15 years.

He took joy in his Stammtisch friends who meet once a week to speak German over a beer. He made friends wherever he went.

Nick's greatest love was for his family, and he gave time and energy to support and encourage them. He coached his son Andrew in several sports, had long discussions with Megan, often about politics, and was always available for extra homework help. He loved family vacations tent camping in national parks, but they also visited the Bahamas, Cayman Islands, and Cozumel. After their children were grown, Barbara and Nick started to travel and visited many loved places as well as new places such as Greece, China, Italy, Spain, Australia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Ecuador and the Galapagos, South Africa and Zimbabwe, Iceland, Egypt and Jordan, New Zealand, Scotland and Morocco, in addition to Alaska, Curacao and Turks and Caicos. They were blessed to have been able to spend three weeks last summer driving through Germany and visiting much loved places.

Nick is survived by his wife Barbara, daughter Megan and her partner Jake Viano, son Andrew and his wife Elora, and son Nathan Gropp as well as brothers Mike Pitz (Faye) and John Pitz (Jill), sisters Janeann Pitz (Reinhard Pollach), and Marylynne Pitz (Mark Weitzman), sister-in-law Judy Waters and several cousins and nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by parents Paul and Roseann Pitz, in-laws Leo and Dorothy Waters, brother Tom Pitz, brother-in-law Bill Waters, as well as several aunts and uncles.

Friends and family can attend a visitation for Nick at Weerts Funeral Home on Thursday, November 30, 4-6:30. A funeral and celebration of life will be on Friday, December 1 at 10:00 at Bettendorf Presbyterian Church followed by a short interment service with military honors at Memorial Park Cemetery (Rock Island) and a reception at Biaggi's Restaurant (Davenport) following.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to River Bend Food Bank, Salvation Army (local branch), Bettendorf Presbyterian Church, or the German American Heritage Center.



Last we heard, Mike Dybel was in Thailand, one of my favorite places. I spent a year there helping insure the peace agreement in Laos survived. Ten former Raven FACs (Forward Air Controllers) were in Udorn training Cambodian pilots, but the real mission was to go back to Laos if the shaky peace agreement failed. The Peace agreement was authored by Ambassador John Gnther Dean and others, I followed him to Cambodia next assignment, where he was the ambassador. **Congratulations to Mike for his world travels and for keeping all of us informed.**

## Campus News



**VOTE**

Alumni voting is now open for the Board of Trustees and National Association of Wabash Men Board of Directors. You can vote online at [wabash.edu/alumni/vote](http://wabash.edu/alumni/vote) until April 23. After you make your selections and press **Submit Vote**, you will receive an email to confirm your vote.

I've found out that Wabash's annual Day of Giving is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24 and this year's theme is "Celebrate Wabash." Last year, Wabash raised more than \$1.6 million in one day, which was more than \$2,100 for each student.

**Dan Susie sent me this report 3-3-24:**

**Hope all is well. John Leahy, Russ Dukes and I met for dinner in Fort Myers this past weekend. Here, left to right, are John, me and Russ. Hard to believe that we first met 60 years ago this coming August.**

**Dan Susie '68**



Hear hear! Makes you wish you were a Phi Delt. I am calling this a wrap. If the thought inclines you, then MEET your buds, take a picture, and send it to me. Life is good. Short, but good.

**Jim Roper '68**