

Mileposts

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There are certain future events in our lives that we have no difficulty taking for granted. We seem to harbor no doubts about reaching various graduation dates, legal voting (and drinking) ages, marriage, discharge from military service, senior citizen discounts, and anniversaries. Others are more in question—reaching an acceptable retirement age with a fully vested plan in place, attaining seniority levels that ensure advancement, paying off a car—or a mortgage!

One milestone that never seems to be taken for granted, even as its proximity makes it more of a fact, is the golden jubilee or fiftieth anniversary of your college graduation. If you bring it up, you usually are met with “It can’t be” or “You’re kidding!” When reality finally sets in, you realize just how fortunate you are to be able to attend such a celebration.

About a year ago, I was asked to serve on the committee for the golden jubilee celebration of my own graduating class. My assignment was to seek the whereabouts and current condition of a group of classmates and make certain that the alumni office had the proper information for the invitation to the actual event.

It was a bittersweet experience! The joy of locating an old pal too frequently was mixed with the discovery of a critical illness or, worst of all, a death of someone remembered as a great companion. It was a wake-up call to reality, indeed.

But the percentage of success was high, and on the scheduled date a reasonable representation of the St. Peter’s College class was in place, standing tall and erect—not as tall and erect as 50 years ago, to be sure, but a great sight. Thank goodness for

nametags! But after the identifications were made, it was as if we were picking up right where we left off the last time we were together.

It was a time of reviewing lots of changes—not just with us, but also with the make-up of the college itself. During our tenure it was, like most Jesuit colleges, strictly male. Since the early ’60s it has been co-ed. That has brought both cultural changes and a bright group of school leaders and achievers. Many new buildings have been built, and a complete change in course offerings has taken place. To many of us, the most dramatic change is in the presence of laymen and women in the key administrative and faculty leadership roles, replacing the Jesuit priests who traditionally held those positions. We are hardly unique, as those changes have taken place at

nearly every Jesuit college.

At these events, a reference always is made to your class culture compared with that of the current graduating group. It struck me that in every college and university in the United States, the classes of 1953 and 2003 have a lot more in common than we might think—especially in the type of world situation that greeted all of us.

In 1953 the Korean War was in its final stages, but just about all of us had military obligations that would have to be met in the near future. (I was in the Army almost immediately after graduation!) Korea was not the only concern. The Cold War was in full gear. We had an ever-present eye on the Soviet Bloc’s potential for nuclear war. This potential, never taken lightly, had been highlighted by several incidents in which the nuclear secrets of both Great Britain and the United

States were passed on to our adversaries. Our future was being put on hold, and we wondered what the world would be like when we reached the milestone of honorable discharge.

The members of the class of 2003 also are witnessing the winding down of a major conflict. Although mandatory military service does not seem to be in the future for them, the threat of terrorism right here is constantly with us. We also have new players in the adversarial area. The Korean truce of 50 years ago still has to be finalized with a formal armistice and peace treaty. On the contrary, North Korea has developed a new set of muscles and is anxious to show it off. Other nations now seem to be anxious to do some saber rattling. Each one gets our attention—and we had better pay attention.

Just as our two classes share some concerns, we share in the wonderful growth of science, technology, health care, and ease of travel, in lifestyles unique to each generation. No doubt the career paths of the 2003 graduates frequently will lead them into a previously unknown business. When I think of where we were in 1953 and where we are now, I can only marvel at what lies ahead for the class of 2003! What will *their* golden jubilee be like?

When I started out, the term *sales engineer* was completely foreign to me, but it led to a most rewarding life spent for the most part in the company of mechanical contractors and mechanical engineers. Every day was a learning experience—and is to this day. The days of pocket protectors, slide-rules, drafting aprons, and drafting boards have given way to the days of information capacity and design systems that not only increase efficiency and accuracy but also bring a capability to store so much. The construction technology of our initial

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INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

efforts now seems almost like building a log cabin. Research is more and more a part of material handling, transportation, and sophisticated system design with ever-improving control and safety systems—areas that once were considered rather dull operations.

If our own experience in just one industry has been so spectacular, just think of what the class of 2003 has in store!

So to all the new alumni: Rest assured that you are not the first class in history to start out with major concerns. Be confident that our great country

does rise to the moment of difficulty. The moment might be difficult to handle, but it will pass.

Start your own series of milestones. Plan to look back in 2053 and take inventory of how the world, your family and careers, your faith, your country, and the marvels of science and industry have affected you. Compare your career, as it winds down, with your initial ambitions. Before you know it, you'll be on the committee for the golden jubilee reunion of your own college.

In the words of my sainted Uncle Herschel, "Why not spend some time

in determining what is worthwhile for us, and then go after that?" ■



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AUTOCAD ACTION

Figure 5. The New Buttons



toolbar buttons, click the X in the upper-righthand corner of the ASPE

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Leaders toolbar. You will now be able to use your flyout to activate all of the buttons. When you use the buttons, they should work as shown in **Figure 6.** ■

Figure 6. How the New Buttons Work



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