

THE NEWSMAN

CHRONICLES

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ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL

By David Taft

This is the beginning of a new feature leading up to our 50th re-union. I have been tasked with editing and publishing reflections from the class of '70 on their experiences, memories, take away's or whatever from St. Joseph High School. I would ask all of you, my classmates and friends of the school, to add your own essay. Send it to me davidtaft52@gmail.com and we can develop a catalogue of our thoughts.

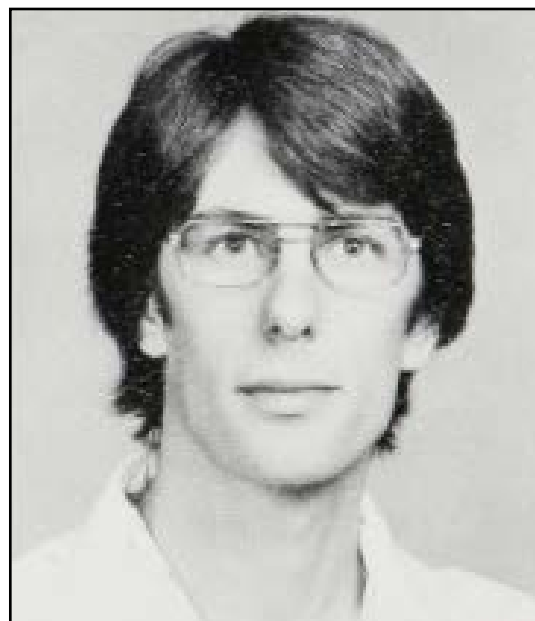
My own personal reflection of St. Joe's seem to be more positive the older I get. Not that I had a lot of negative experiences. However, we were all in our teens when we were students and well, enough said.

As most of you, my fellow classmates, know I had the privilege of teaching at our alma mater from the Fall of 1974 until June of 1978. It was, to say the least, an interesting experience. Not only for being my first adult job but also for seeing our high school from a very different perspective. Some of you may recall that during our junior year a certain history teacher took exception to my wearing blue jeans to school. I really do not know why. Anyway, as I was leaving the classroom headed to the main office, I recall hearing a fellow classmate say, "Mr. Radican he knew he wouldn't get past you." Now flash forward to me, the religion teacher, regularly telling students, "No. You cannot wear your jacket in class, and I do not care if this is 8th period and you have worn it all day." I guess times change as I know I certainly had not.

For the most part I enjoyed being a student at St. Joe's. The schoolwork was not always pleasant. However, there was a sense of pride that I think we all had to some extent being a Viking. We all knew our parents went out their way to enable us to attend the school even when it seemed they may have been sending us there as a punishment. The camaraderie among us, the students, was exceptional. It was my impression that we, the class of '70, became closer knit as each year passed. Sometimes it seems we were one big clique by the time graduation rolled around. Think Neff road parking lot after the baccalaureate mass. Of course, there were people who did not get along, but I do not recall instances



Bad Boy Dave - 1970



Teacher Dave - 1975



Anticonformist Dave - 2020

where there were open hostilities our senior year, notwithstanding the war stuff. At least amongst the students. Between the faculty and students that is another issue. It seems certain that we all developed friendships that mattered to us. Think how we would have stayed in contact if the email chain had started at graduation. For me, the spirit of our class was best exemplified by Bob Gliha. Bob was a friend I met in junior year and now I especially regret not having remained in contact with him after graduation.

We all recall the mod schedule that was instituted our senior year. By the way, this method of scheduling was no longer used at St. Joe's when I started teaching in the fall of 1974. This radical scheduling allowed for some interesting educational moments. I can recall a fire on the beach during third period. Most memorable was skipping school, there were four of us, we went to the United Way and signed up as volunteers at the Rosemary Home. Looking back, I wonder if the experience of the Rosemary Home would have been a part of my life if it were not for the crazy schedule.

Being a neophyte teacher in the fall of 1974 I was somewhat amazed that me, a guy who graduated in the upper 95% of our class, was being tasked with teaching young men. What were they thinking? Had the inmates taken over the asylum? Interacting with the faculty as a colleague rather than a student was eye opening. Primarily what I saw were decent men who cared about the students and the school. They found value in helping young men, in having helped us, develop as young men. We were privileged to be students at St. Joe's and enjoyed a great blessing because of these men. I do not know how else to express it.

I was even fortunate enough to engage with Joe Radican. Joe was the principal for the first two years that I taught. The first time I visited him in his office I was surprised I did not end up in Sinbin. I received some guidance that helped me be a little better as a teacher. I needed the help.

My recollections of St. Joe's continue now that we the class of '70 are reconnecting in various ways. You, my classmates and friends continue to impress me as decent people. Now there are exceptions, as I vowed when taking on this task without mentioning names Neil, Bill and Greg know what I mean.

We all know the world is full of good people, but it was the people at St. Joe's that made it easier for me to try to be decent. It is a with great pleasure that I am reconnecting with classmates. Many of whom we only knew each other in passing.

I see the Marianist model of community as "family like" and that has stayed with me. Thank you for being classmates and friend.

Peace