

S. Roseberry - PLEASE RETURN ✓

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Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow alumni and class of 1953

I would like to begin by thanking the alumni association for their recognition of our class, the class of 1953. Our class was composed of seven girls and six boys for a total of 13. Seven of our classmates, Ruby Bruce, Geneva Norris, Barbara Smith, Susie Warman, Arlin Hooker, John Cleffman, and Leroy Stockdale completed all twelve years of their education at Saluda. I joined the class in 1944 as a fourth grader, followed by Chasteen Williams in 1948, Carolyn Henderson in 1949 as a freshman, Bill and Jim Ingraham in 1951 as juniors and Maydell Ligon in 1952 as a Senior.

I think our class was unique. I cannot remember any disagreements among us. We were all very close, and friendships were in groups rather than as individuals. As I remember only two members of our class ever dated each other and that was Chasteen and Ruby, who are today Mr. & Mrs. Chasteen Williams. Ruby was the only girl that Chasteen ever dated, at least that is what he has always told Ruby. I think it is safe to say that the class of 1953, never set any academic records, or at least I didn't. My parents would have been proud to have had a bumper sticker on the back of their car, proclaiming their son an average student in the Saluda school. Our class graduation speaker was the Indiana superintendent of public instruction. This was all due to the influence of Mr. Danglade, a close friend of the superintendents.

Every branch of the armed services was represented by our class. Bill Ingraham Navy, Jim Ingraham Navy and Army. John Cleffman Navy and Airforce, Chasteen Williams Army, Leroy Stockdale Army and myself the Marine Corp. complements of two of my good class mates, who came out to a job where I was working and said we should join the service, since three of our class had already joined. I asked then what they had in mind and of the them said they thought we should join the Marine Corp. I told them that I did not want any part of the Marine Corp., but would consider joining the Army. They insisted it had to be the Marine Corp or else. To make a long story short, seven days later I found myself at the Marine Corp Recruit Depot in Parris Island, South Carolina, absent of my two classmates, who had a change of heart. I will not divulge the names of the individuals, except to say that one of them has used that same good

salesmanship that got me in the Marines, to sell all of us cars over the past few years. I harbor no hard feelings as it was the best thing that ever happened to me. John Cleffman and Jim Ingraham both made careers out of the military. Jim was the first and only person to land a Huey helicopter in Saluda Township. He surprised his parents by landing in their yard one day. Jim retired as a Captain from the Army and John as a Master Sergeant from the Air Force.

Almost a year ago to date we lost not only a classmate, but a good friend, Bill Ingraham. There is one thing I will always remember about Bill, and that was a question he was always asking. The question was, what would happen if an unstoppable object hit an unmovable object? He would then just stand there and look at you with that silly grin on his face. I think that best describes our friend Bill. I think it would be inappropriate at this time, to not mention Alma Abbott, another classmate, although she did not graduate with us. She was with us for eleven years. She was a good friend and confidant and above all she was a lot of fun. I remember the last time I saw her. I was walking across the Wal-mart parking lot, when I heard someone call my name. I turned around and there was Alma. I hardly recognized her, as her body was ravaged with cancer. She threw her arms around me and said Maurice how in the hell are you? That was our friend Alma. She died a few short weeks later.

I would like to go back to 1944, the year I joined the class as a fourth grader. Mrs. Gladys Johnson was our teacher, better known to us as Miss Gladys. I fell in love with her on my first day in class and that love lasted until her death. She was a fine teacher, who took a personal interest in all of her students and who had the ability to draw the best from each of you. I remember that first day in her class as if it was yesterday. It did not take long for one to realize that Miss Gladys was in firm control of her class and was not about to tolerate any disorder. If you were caught talking or disrupting the class in any way, you would find yourself at the blackboard with your nose in the center of a circle which always seemed to be two inches taller than you were.

We all looked forward to the three recesses that we were given each day. We would all

gather around a large Maple tree that is still located on the west side of the playground and to the right of the boys toilet. The boys would challenge each other to see who could climb the highest or jump from the highest limb, always keeping a close eye to see if the girls were watching. As I remember, the only playground equipment available was a slide, which was located on the north side of the playground, in front of what is now Hezzie Taylors lawn mower shop. Later on a merry go round and swings were added, but at that time the old maple tree was the center of attraction, and around it friendships were bonded that would endure not only through the isolation of summer, but for a lifetime, one of the few things, time does not rob from us. Another favorite gathering place for the boys was the toilet, where one could carve his initials in the wood siding, and where some of the older students were brave enough to express their views of a teacher. This involved some risk as one was exposing not only his handwriting, but also his spelling which could be a dead giveaway as to who committed the crime. My most vivid memory of the toilet gathering was when Timmy Hyatt, a fellow fourth grader would lower himself down into the toilet pit, until only his hands could be seen, tightly clutching the sides of the toilet seat. He would then slowly emerge and challenge us to repeat this feat. To my knowledge no one ever did. Timmy, a couple of years older, was somewhat an idol for us fourth grade boys, as he carried his own cigarettes and knew a little more about the birds and the bees than we did. I think something that all of us remember about Timmy was the day Miss Gladys, as part of our class assignment, called on each of us to come before the class and present a riddle. When Timmy's time came he stepped to the front of the class and asked us what the difference between a bus driver and a baby was? Five minutes went by and no one could come up with the answer. In the meantime Timmy was shuffling from foot to foot, quite proud of the fact that he had stumped the entire class. Finally Miss Gladys instructed Timmy to reveal the answer. I don't think it would be appropriate to reveal the answer here, and I can only say that Miss Gladys grabbed him by the collar and his feet did not touch the ground until he was firmly planted in Mr. Bowyer's office, where one could hear the unmistakable whack of the paddle. Years later, when Miss Gladys was teaching in Madison, she would frequently stop by my office for a few minutes of conversation. She laughed about the riddle incident and said she walked right into it totally unprepared.

Over the years, Miss Gladys and I became very close friends. She told me about the discrimination she faced in the school system as a young divorcee. I will always feel indebted to her and was proud to be chosen as one of her pallbearers.

Having completed the fourth grade, the boys moved on to Mr. Hooker's room, while the fifth grade girls stayed with Miss Gladys for the year. Any romances that developed in the fourth grade soon faded due to the class separation. I think we all would rate Mr. Hooker right up there with Miss Gladys when it came to discipline and teaching. We would spend the next two years in his class. Our class was the first to have a sixth grade basketball team. I arranged the game with someone from Eggleston by the name of Popeye. This took several weeks to arrange due to our limited access to the telephone on both ends. Mr. Hooker agreed to be our coach. We won the game which was played at our gym during the noon hour. I think Mr. Hooker was as excited about it as we were. Over the years, all of the boys in our class were frequent visitors to the Hooker household, since Arlin was a classmate. Mr. And Mrs. Hooker always treated us as if we were family. I was always amazed at the transition of Mr. Hooker the teacher, always dressed in suit and tie, and the farmer Mr. Hooker, dressed in gum boots and work clothes doing his chores.

Our class, back together again and having completed the sixth grade, moved into junior high. I am not sure some of us were ready for the newfound freedom and discipline required in moving from class to class. We had several teachers for the next two years. Floyd Stillhammer, better know as Chis, taught us History. I remember him as a nice guy, and when not teaching he could be found smoking a cigarette in the teacher's lounge, located in the boiler room of the gym. While the boys were learning to play basketball under Mr. Benham, the girls were in Mrs. Myers Home Economics class preparing for their role as future housewives. Mr. Benham was not only a great math teacher, he was also a great basketball coach, always making sure you knew the difference between a front and a back pivot. We played a lot of basketball the next two years, traveling around the country with Frank Taylor's independent team.

It was somewhere in our junior high period that Miss Mary Sample came to Saluda and introduced us to the world of fine arts. She not only taught English, but organized an orchestra and a girl's drum corps. I can't remember all of the members of the orchestra, but I do remember a few. John Cleffman played the drums, Nelson Hay and my brother Joe were on the trumpets, myself on the trombone, Susie Warman and Carolyn Henderson were violinist. Some of the members of the drum corps were Shirley O'Neal, Alice Bennett, Peggy Hostettler, Shirley Jackson and I am sure most of the girls in high school. The orchestra and the drum corps performed as a group in some of our local opera houses, such as the Hibernia Community Center, and the Pleasant Point School. I also believe the drum corps performed at some of the home basketball games.

Miss Mary was also responsible for the first and only stage curtain Saluda ever had. She invited Mrs. Ivan Morgan, wife of the owner of Morgan Packing Company over to see a class play, and before the evening was over, Miss Mary had solicited \$250.00 from Mrs. Morgan for the curtain. I believe Miss Mary and Mrs. Morgan were college classmates. At the time I don't think any of us realized the tremendous effort and money put forth out of her own pocket by Miss Mary to accomplish all of the things she did for our school. She was a beautiful person, with a great gift for life. She left Saluda at the age 70 to enroll in a study course at Indiana University.

That same year we lost another teacher to retirement, a man known more for what he didn't say than what he said. He was a legend, Omer Bowyer, better known as Prof. I never had him for a teacher, but two instances involving Mr. Bowyer stand out in my mind, one involving myself and a fellow classmate. We were playing keep away with someone's hat in the hall outside of his classroom. All of the sudden his door opened and he took me by the arm and led me over to his desk, where he then seated himself and continued to teach his class. I stood there for the next thirty minutes trying to avoid any eye contact with his class. When the bell rang,, the only words he said were, "you can go now". I don't ever remember having any conversation beyond that with him. The other instance was being in study hall while he was teaching a Latin class up front. The school was on a party line and the phone was located on his desk. If the phone rang too

many times, interrupting his class, he simply took it off the hook and left it for the remainder of his class.

Having completed junior high, we moved upstream to high school, where the current was much stronger. This would be our class's first encounter with advanced mathematics. The subject was algebra, taught by Mr. Benham, and was a required subject as much of the freshman classes were. I can't speak for the rest of the class, but algebra definitely was not for me. Even with Mr. Benham's brilliant teaching ability, and some applied disciplinary action from my father, ( and I want to stress the word applied) I barely squeaked by. It was at this time I made the decision to have nothing more to do with advance mathematics, especially geometry and trigonometry and if I wanted to know how tall the flag pole was, I would climb the damn thing and measure it.

Over the next four years we would encounter many different teachers, some I can only remember by name: Ray Tatlock, a principal who was from Vernon, Indiana, Raymond Hall from Jeffersonville, also a principal who had a resemblance to Jay Leno; Mr. Ponice, principal from Greenwood; Mrs. Sims who taught English and I believe from Hoopston, Illinois; John Bare, from Saluda, better know as Dugan; Mildred Wood who taught English, Latin, and History, was from Madison. In our senior year, our class served as ushers in her home during the Madison Tour of Homes.

I think everyone in our class would agree with me in saying there were three teachers that stood out above the rest and they were Delbert King, Doris Patton, and above all John Dangle. They were not only our teachers, but also our friends and confidants. Each brought a new era to Saluda. Mrs. Patton organized the first proms and taught us how to do the two step. Delbert, to my knowledge, organized the first field day and girl's basketball tournament, where some of us boys were cheerleaders. As I remember, the junior class won the field day. Mr. Dangle, the principal, was a unique person. He took a special interest in each of his students, having the ability to see something special in each of us. Mr. Dangle, who lived in Vevay, would remain in Saluda, if there was going to be a night function at the school, such as basketball games. Several

times on those occasions, Mr. Danglade invited me out to dinner. We ate at a different restaurant each time. The entire evening would be spent discussing social, political, and religious issues. He was a strong environmentalist. He proved this by organizing a demonstration against locating the Air Force Academy at what is now Marble Hill. He sent me a clipping from the Madison Courier of this demonstration while I was in the military. I think if John Danglade were living today, he would be proud to call himself a liberal. Outside of my parents, John Danglade did more to influence my social, religious, and political views than any other person. If you talk to any student of Mr. Danglade you would find they could tell you of some personal relationship they had with him.

Throughout our high school years we looked forward to many special events, such as ball games, school fairs, and Christmas parties, but nothing created more excitement than the annual junior and senior trips. Our first trip as a junior was to New Orleans. We left right after graduation on Harry Schirmers school bus and drove all night. I remember one of our stops for gas, was near Birmingham, Alabama at a small gas station, located in a rural area. It was the first time I had ever seen the segregation and poverty of the South. I remember thinking how glad I was to be from Saluda and on my way to New Orleans.

We drove on towards New Orleans, by way of Mobile, giving most of us our first view of the Gulf of Mexico. We were glued to the windows. We stopped in Biloxi, Mississippi for lunch at a small restaurant on the left side of the street. The building is now a Marine Electronics Shop, where my son Warren and I purchase all of our Marine Electronics. After lunch we drove to New Orleans arriving at the Desota Hotel late in the afternoon. It would be the first time that some of us had ever ridden an elevator. The Hotel is still on Barome Street, completely restored under another name. In fact, very little has changed in New Orleans. The trolleys, river boats and of course the French Quarters are all still there. All of us remember the Court of the Three Sisters, one of New Orleans better known restaurants. My wife and I recently had dinner there and the waiter asked if any of us had eaten there before. I said I had fifty years ago. My wife and I visit New Orleans often as we have a home nearby. If some of you care to retrace your school

trip, which I have done many times, taking the back roads, you will find that very little has changed. The only thing you won't find is the excitement and anticipation that you had riding Harry Schirmer's old school bus down the road.

Our senior trip was to St. Augustine, Florida, again leaving at night after graduation. We drove all night arriving in Atlanta, Georgia, in the afternoon. We spent the night in the Patton Hotel located on Peachtree Street, the main street in Atlanta. We had dinner that evening at a table looking out on Peachtree, where I remember ordering watermelon for dessert. We were all quite impressed with Atlanta. We experienced two problems on the trip, both involving some immature juniors. One was in the Patton Hotel where one of the juniors outside the watchful eyes of us seniors found their way to a trap door leading to the roof of the hotel. Upon hearing of this we rushed to the top floor and out on the roof. I must admit, it gave one a bird's eye view of not only Atlanta, but Stone Mountain some twenty miles away. We informed them, that since this was their first offense, we would not inform the teachers, but expected better behavior from them in the future.

We continued on to St. Augustine by way of Jacksonville, Florida. Somewhere between Jacksonville and St. Augustine, Harry's bus threw a rod and we had to be towed the rest of the way by a wrecker. Arriving in St. Augustine I remember Mrs. Patton was not satisfied with the hotel where we were to stay, so we moved across the bridge to a motel, which is still standing today.

It was the first night at the motel that we had our second problem with some of those immature juniors. It was late and the teachers were already in bed, or at least we thought they were. I noticed two taxis had stopped out front. Being quite curious as to what was going on, I opened the door and saw some of those immature juniors getting into the taxis. I immediately alerted some of my fellow seniors of the situation and we rushed out the door and confronted them. I could not believe that it was twelve o'clock at night and they were headed for the beach, which was a few miles down the road. We tried to talk them out of it, but being immature, they would not listen. After some



more discussion, we seniors decided we should go along to chaperon them since they had already paid for the taxis. Before leaving, I ran back in the room to retrieve the insect repellent. We certainly wanted to make sure that we kept the girl's legs and backs rubbed down, preventing any mosquitoes bites. And as I remember we did a good job of checking often to see if the repellent had washed off. Looking back on this, we were very lucky, swimming at midnight at the St. Augustine beach can be very dangerous due to the narrow inlet from the Atlantic. We visited all of the tourist sights, and I remember one was a reptile farm where Alice Bennett was brave enough to coil a snake around her shoulders. Bill Ingraham bought a baby alligator. The alligator, not surviving the trip back home, died somewhere in the Pan Handle of Florida. We gave it a proper funeral with preaching and singing, before throwing it out the window. Just think, if that alligator had not died, Saluda Creek would be infested with alligators today.

I want to close by thanking my lovely wife Kendra for her patience in listening to a story that she has heard me tell at least a hundred times before.