

REMARKS AT UNC SIXTIETH CLASS REUNION DINNER, MAY 6, 2014

In the middle of the last century we came here from different places with different stories, but we had two things in common: we were children of the Great Depression, and we had watched a generation barely older than our own go off to war.

Seeing a gold star go up in a window of the house next door, as I did, is something you do not easily forget. One of our classmates, a Polish war orphan, Harry Pawlick, had been adopted and brought to the United States by the Army unit that had found him wandering alone in a combat zone.

The legend of Dr. Frank Graham still hovered over the University, but those who came home from World War II determined to make theirs a better world, the Bill Fridays, the Bill Aycocks, the Terry Sanfords, the Dick Philips, were only beginning to emerge.

And, though we might have seen possibility in some of our peers, the paths to leadership and accomplishment that they would take were, for the most part, not yet predictable. We did not know it, but we were indeed seeing the birth of another generation of leaders among them.

For example, as we read a Daily Tar Heel Editor's columns about gracious living, taking to task some of the campus' aesthetic shortcomings, who would have predicted that Charles Kuralt would first win the Ernie Pyle Award for print news reporting and a decade later help usher in a new generation of television reporting?

Or that his predecessor as Editor of The Daily Tar Heel, Rolfe Neill, would go on to lead the largest newspaper in the two Carolinas?

Or that a first-year law student, Frank Daniels, who chaired the Men's Honor Council that tried the instigators of the first panty raid— for “ungentlemanly conduct”— would go on to lead the state's other large newspaper?

Or that Ed Yoder, a young Daily Tar Heel writer two years behind us, would someday win both a Rhodes Scholarship and a Pulitzer Prize?

There were two young fellows a class behind us who collected splinters on the bench on a lacrosse team that was so poorly regarded that every school we beat the

year before had dropped the sport. Who would have predicted that one of them, Hugh McColl, would help to create and then lead the nation's largest bank, or that the other, Sherwood Smith, would someday lead one of the state's two largest electric power companies?

Who would have guessed that the fellow leading a platoon of Marines-to-be in the Naval ROTC Unit a year ahead of us, Travis Porter, would someday chair this University's Board of Trustees?

Or that the Battalion Commander of the NROTC unit, marching around campus on Wednesday afternoons in our senior year, rendering a sword salute to President Gordon Gray as we passed South Building, would someday take the place of a legendary radio talk show host and himself become a legend, or that he, Ty Boyd, would sixty years later be in charge of this evening's program?

Our class produced leaders in other fields: judges, one of whom, Gordon Battle, is here; a law school dean, Kenneth Penegar, a long-time United States Congressman, Alex McMillan.

Who might have guessed that a controversial student named Allard Lowenstein, who came and went during our time here and who was the RA in the football dorm my first year in law school, would someday lead the movement that persuaded Lyndon Johnson not to seek a second term and would help to plant the seed that led to our withdrawal from the tragic mistake that was Vietnam?

And who would have guessed that Julian Robertson, who was a year behind us, would someday invest a part of the fortune he earned on Wall Street in scholarships to allow bright students to find out for themselves the difference between Carolina and Duke?

Or that one quiet classmate who, after himself acquiring remarkable personal wealth, would choose not to rest on his laurels. Instead, he made his first venture into public service as chair of his local school board, helping to provide moral leadership to make the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education* a reality in his community? Who, even then, would have foreseen that this would ultimately lead Dick Spangler to the presidency of the Greater University and the presidency of the Harvard Board of Overseers?

The list could go on and on, and whether or not we made headlines, the part of the world in which each of us has lived our lives has enjoyed the benefit of what we took away from this place.

We were members of the silent fifties. We knew the rules and we generally followed them. We boys wore coats and ties to football games and our dates wore dresses, stockings and heels. Young women could not come here until they were mature twenty year olds with two years of college behind them. It would be years before they could come as freshmen.

There was a separate page for each girl in the Yackety Yack beauty court, but in most years, women's athletics rated only a single page in that yearbook. It would be forty-one years before Mia Hamm, Class of '95, would graduate.

Coeds had to be in their rooms at eleven on weeknights. My wife, Emily Urquhart, '55, who could not be here tonight, tells me that was often a relief, rather than a nuisance.

And so, we all went back to our rooms at eleven, tuned to 680 AM on our radio dials and listened to the first disc jockey most of us had ever heard, listened as he read a dedication for each song he played. Do you remember?: "From a boy at the Phi Delt House in Chapel Hill who wants a girl in East Rock at St. Mary's to know that he is thinking of her tonight."

It was an era when the music of popular songs flowed smoothly, rather than assaulting our eardrums, and the words were poetry, and not outpourings of narcissism.

Each night that program on WPTF ended with the same song, sung in three-quarter time by Eddy Howard, as host Jimmy Capps signed off with a tip of the hat "to Phil Ellis in master control."

In the remaining twenty seconds of the time that Ty Boyd allotted to me, I propose to stir your memory by reciting the words of that song. You may find them more meaningful now than you did sixty years ago, especially in the reference to the sky a few lines from the end.

I will try to recite it in waltz time without ruining your evening by breaking into song. It went like this:

“So, here's to you, may your dreams come true,
May old Father Time never be unkind,
And through the years, save your smiles and tears.
They are souvenirs; they'll make music in your heart.

“Remember this, each new day's a kiss,
Sent from up above with an angel's love.
So here's to you, may your skies be blue
And your love blessed, that's my best to you.”

E. Osborne “Ozzie” Ayscue, Jr. '54