

UNC Class of '66 50th Reunion Speech
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May 7, 2016

Thank you Bill! It is so good to see everybody.

You know, Thomas Wolfe was wrong when he wrote “you can’t go home again.” Old Tom never took into account reunions like this. Because we are home again, if even for just a short time.

These 50 years have gone by in a hurry. There we were, a bunch of fresh faced, Weejun-clad graduates filled with hope and ambition, clutching our diplomas. Eager and pretty much clueless. There was a war going on. The Age of Aquarius was on our doorstep. The world was changing. And we were ready to face life head on.

And now we are back again. Classmates from 22 states, and at least three other planets, are here. We’ve gathered again, in the long shadow of the Old Well, to enjoy good times and share memories made better with the passage of time.

I was thinking that in past reunions, we’ve poked a lot of fun at each other about getting old. But this time, it’s for real. And it ain’t so damn funny any more.

Wouldn’t you like to find out who coined the phrase that “70 is the new 40.” The only time *that’s* true is when you people drive on the interstate.

Let’s face it. We’re now elderly. Old people. Geezers. Coots. Codgers, cougars and Blue Hairs. We’re squeezed in somewhere between the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boomers. And I’m not sure where we fit.

We are sort of geriatric anomaly: Active, mostly vibrant old folks in zumba classes wearing cross training shoes, baggy shorts and Depends.

Our kids are having a hard time figuring us out.

Aging is not normally a pretty sight. But, you all are looking good. Like a large bowl of over-ripe fruit.

Heck, you don’t look a day older than when you were here at Carolina. Of course, back then you looked like you were 70 years old.

Okay, so, I have been asked to make a few housekeeping announcements. But first, a word from a couple of our sponsors.

Tonight’s program is brought to you by:

- Weed Eater – Maker of the world’s first gasoline powered nasal hair trimmer.
- Potty Mouth – Just a tablet a day keeps those cuss words away.
- And by, Forget Me Not memory tablets. “You’ll be senile for only a while.”
- And by, Drs. Nipp and Tuck, plastic surgeons. “You’ll never close your eyes again.”

Okay, a few ground rules: Please turn up your hearing aids.

Please do not die during this speech. If you do, please have someone raise your hand.

We ask that you do not nap during this evening’s program. Some of you have already started. (I’ve noticed a couple of face plants in the chocolate cake.)

Just a reminder that “walkers” are not permitted on the dance floor. Otherwise they would have been called “dancers.”

We will pause for frequent bathroom breaks during this program. You may need help figuring out which bathroom to use under our new state law. But it wouldn’t be the first time some of you guys barged into a ladies room “by mistake.”

If any of you are on Cialis or Viagra, please let us know when your four hours are up.

I noticed Bill Schmidt was walking around with a suppository in his ear. I told him about it. He told me “Oh, now I know where I put my hearing aid.”

John Harmon was telling me he was solicited by a young woman in Carborro last night. She said “old timer, would you like some super sex?” John told her he’d prefer the soup.

I heard one of our physician classmates went back to visit the med school. The school put out an alert on campus that one of cadavers was out for a stroll.

One of our female classmates decided she would try her luck at streaking again in Polk Place. I heard a student ask “what was that?” Someone else replied “I don’t know, but it needs ironing.”

I asked a widowed woman in our class this morning who she was seeing. She said the urologist.

Jackie Cooke was in a bar on Franklin Street last night and was asked if she knew how to dap dance. She thought the guy said lap dance and then things got really ugly.

Now there are plenty of tell-tale signs that let you in on the dirty little secret that you're really around the bend. Here are just a few of those:

- Did you know at our age, you can be arrested for driving while impaired just for driving.
- Medical subjects are now the main topic of conversation. You compare PSA numbers. You discuss ED, hip replacements and stool softeners.
- Prunes are now a good thing. Bridge is a contact sport. Restless leg has turned into a dance step.
- Remember when you never wanted to get behind that old guy in the men's room at halftime? We ARE that guy.
- I heard a new one the other day: toileting. Toileting? Lord. They've made a verb out of a bathroom fixture.
- And, folks, what is it with facial hair? Seriously. It's almost like when you reach 70, here comes the beard. And some of you *guys* are growing them too.
- How many of you think cellulite is that little flashlight on your mobile phone?
- Another troubling sign is your sweetie says "let's go upstairs and make a little whoopy" and you answer: "Pick one, I can't do both."
- Your friends compliment you on your new alligator shoes and you're barefoot.
- "Getting a little action" means you don't need to take a laxative today.
- "Getting lucky" means you found your glasses.
- An "all nighter" means not getting up to go to the bathroom.
- Some of you here tonight have on shoes that don't match. Some of you are wearing sandals.
- Some of you have been through the McDonald's drive-through only to have the perky young woman at the window ask you "are you sure you should be driving?"
- How many have rented the same movie three times? And enjoyed each viewing?

- Here's how to tell you're ready for "the home". For men, if you have ever worn one of the following: A bolo tie, black socks with plaid shorts, or those large, or old-person wrap-around sunglasses.
- And, for the ladies. Have you ever: Tried to make a phone call on your TV remote? Still think Wayne Newton is a sex symbol? Gone to the country club with a curler still in your hair? Worn one of those swim suits with the little skirt around the bottom? Or, owned a T-shirt that spells out "I am woman, hear me roar" in sequins?

If you answered "yes" to any of these, you are ready for "the home."

Well, enough of that. Let's get serious.

Once again, our statisticians have been hard at work compiling some valuable and interesting numbers about our class.

To begin with, it's been 18,252 days since we graduated. That's 2,600 weeks.

During that time, we have watched 109,000 hours of TV: That adds up to 12.4 years. Many of us have grandchildren that age.

We have slept 146,000 hours. That's almost 17 years. Or, the equivalent of missing high school.

We have consumed 29 million alcoholic beverages during the past 50 years. Some of you drank about a third of the total your sophomore year alone.

As before, we have been tracking your efforts to lose weight over these past fifty years. Looking around this room, your efforts have met with varying degrees of success.

Collectively, though, I can report that our class has dropped 1.2 million pounds, or about 600 tons. Half of that during the past two months.

That's the weight of about two Boeing 747's or three blue whales. I will stop the analogies there.

Unfortunately, we, as a class have gained back 2.6 million pounds over the years, giving us a net weight gain the equivalent of 133 African elephants or 18 Sherman tanks. The class of 1966 was never accused of being losers!

Picture a mound of fat measuring 1.2 million cubic feet, or about the volume of 6 Goodyear blimps. That could turn Kenan Stadium into a giant Jello mold.

We have also begun to shrink. Our class is now, collectively, 150 feet shorter than we used to be.

If this keeps up, I, for one, will need a booster chair in restaurants.

And speaking of short, people also say we have short attention spans at our age. That we can't concentrate. I don't think that's true....oh, look, there goes a chicken.

Our classmates have been married an average of 1.7 times since we graduated. I do want to thank some of you fellows for bringing your grand daughters to tonight's event.

We have had enough hair transplants to totally cover the outfield at Boshamer Stadium.

For those of you who actually have hair you have used 600,000 gallons of hair coloring. Enough to fill Navy Pool. Which reminds me that some of you have yet not passed your swim test.

Medically, we've done pretty well as a class: 749 heart attacks, 14 heart transplants, 27 lobotomies, 1,802 hemorrhoidectomies, and 6 brain transplants.

One of our classmates received a brain from a Duke graduate and was immediately killed.

Another got a brain from a State student. He turned to hog farming in Hoke County and entered the hollerin' contest in Spivy's corner. (*Apologies to Richard and Chuck*)

Since we graduated, our classmates have taken more than 27 million naps. Some of you are adding to that total right now.

But when we think about it, since we left campus, we have lived through and pretty much survived one of the most interesting, tumultuous and in some ways glorious times in the history of America. Until the latest presidential campaign that is.

We have fought in five wars. We have watched the rise and fall of great nations. We have witnessed the assassination of a president and gathered, dazed, on Franklin Street to try to make sense of it all. We lived through the Cuban Missile Crisis, Woodstock and Watergate. We lost Dean Smith and Bill Friday.

We watched a man walk on the moon and the birth of the civil rights movement. We saw the Tar Heels win four and almost five NCAA men's basketball championships. And women's soccer teams win more than we can count.

We watched The Fugitive and Bonanza, the Beatles, Johnny Carson, Survivor, and American Idol and Downton Abbey. We ended each day with Walter Cronkite telling us “that’s the way it is.” And it was.

We have seen the birth of the Internet and powerful computers you can hold in the palm of your hand. And social media and large screen TVs and electric cars. Our first African-American president. 3-D printing. Facebook. Genetic medicine. Artificial intelligence. Bottled water. The fall of the Berlin Wall.

We get advice from a strange woman named Siri and live in a scrambled world of Tweets, PDFs, GPS, Jpegs, PDAs, ISPs, LOLs and BFFs.

These are all wondrous things. But how much would we give:

- For just one more fall afternoon in Kenan Stadium where the men wore ties and the women sported fancy party dresses and gaudy corsages the size of volleyballs?
- A Menataur spitting up all over your date? That was a time when we actually HAD dates!
- Just one more Beat Dook parade? One more keg party. Another pickled egg at the Shack? One more cheeseburger at the Goody Shop? Or a Zoomburger Steak? A double gambler at the Rat? Or a large orange drink from the Scuttlebut?
- One more pickup basketball game in Woolen Gym?
- One more pack of nabs and a Pepsi, thinking it was a complete meal.
- Just one more viewing the “birth of a baby” film in Dr. Peacock’s hygiene class? A case of Iron City beer for \$3.50? Another panty raid. A bouquet from the Flower Ladies on Franklin Street.
- Another road trip to Sweet Briar or Hollins or Mary Washington or Saint Mary’s or Women’s College.
- Another shot at Duke in Carmichael. One more chorus of “Aye Zigga Zumba.” Just one more German’s concert in Memorial Hall.
- Just one more set with Maurice Williams and the Zodiaks? Or the Tams? Or another Jubilee at McCorkle Place? One romp in the Aboretum as you told yourself “tonight’s the night.”

These things are gone now. But not gone forever, because they live on in the dreams and memories and folk lore of not just Carolina, but those of us who lived through a golden age on this campus.

It was a Camelot of sorts in a place and a time that shaped our world and molded our lives in ways we never knew or appreciated then.

Fifty years. Gone almost in the blink of an eye. Years that will stay with us as real and as wonderful as they were.

It is up to you to keep them alive. And always, always, Hark the Sound.