

PRESIDENT NUNES REMARKS TO CLASS OF 1969

[names in **RED** are 50th reunion attendees]

Dear Friends,

When we of a certain age think back to our time in college, we are reconnecting.
Reconnecting to a specific place.
Reconnecting to the people who brought that place to life.
Reconnecting to a moment in history that's gone forever.

Even if **your** moment in history happened to be 1969, a year that has had an out-sized impact on the American psyche.

What we are really reconnecting with, however, is an earlier iteration of our selves. Thinking back to who we were and imagining how that person – buoyed by the dreams and hopes of a future fully intact and ready to be realized – became the person we are today.

Now, I didn't know you back in 1968 and 1969. However, Concordia College respects its history, and our carefully digitized archives turned up a few things.

One was a thoughtful rumination on the closing of the Concordia Prep School after nearly 90 years. The author concluded by giving thanks to God for His protecting and guiding hand in the school's influence on generations of students including **JOSEPH SUPP** and **ELWOOD MATHER**. We give thanks too, and will always honor the Prep School for providing Concordia College with its origin and firm foundation.

And what was the Junior College class thinking about in their years here?

Back when annual tuition including room and board set your parents back fourteen hundred and forty-five dollars – nine hundred fifty for church service majors.

Back when you celebrated Homecoming with the theme **It Was a Very Good Year**.

One anonymous freshman from your class – perhaps even one of you – wrote in The Concord just after Orientation: "We were now all part of a gang, a united gang...everyone had a feeling of belonging."

What else did the archives reveal? Some grumbling about "farcical and invalid" freshman student government elections. Instructions for air raid alerts. Guidelines for meeting selective service requirements.

And **a lot** of soul-searching about the many students who regularly declined to attend daily chapel.

There was also excitement around the dedication of the new field house-gymnasium, and the very first home game! DR. CLYDE “COACH” KAMINSKA’s Clippers, including Ralph Thomas, Frank “Earl” Marino and Glen “Killer” Martin, trounced St. Pius X 104-68 in front of a full crowd. The score was much closer at the half – but that didn’t stop Coach from emptying the bench so that every man on the team could have the privilege of making history by playing the first game in the new gym.

That sort of thoughtfulness was what led President of the Student Association Craig Schultz, now Pastor Craig Schultz and currently in Alaska serving as an Intentional Interim, to write:

“Concordia has something special about it that simply cannot be put into words – something you will experience in your stay here.”

I believe that the “something special” young Craig wrote of had a lot to do with his classmates, whose college-age iterations of themselves offered a window to their futures.

Classmates like MARGE VOGLER, whose very thorough reporting on Student Senate meetings provided some answers about that irregular chapel attendance. While President Meyer contended that students would rather spend the 20 minutes hanging out and smoking, students themselves offered excuses including: “the chairs are too close together,” “there aren’t enough hymnals” and “even our teachers don’t attend.”

Young MARGE also chaired the decorating committee for Sadie Hawkins Weekend – apparently a very exciting event in a time when gender roles and expectations were a bit more clearly defined than today. That spirit of volunteerism never left MARGE BRUNING, who has gifted the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League with decades of service.

School spirit – or lack of it – was addressed with a healthy dose of sarcasm by honor roll freshman PAUL WEBER, who wrote, “If problems such as the “clean-up project” do not get student support there will be no common feeling or spirit holding us together! But then, who wants spirit? It only brings pride in the campus, fellowship, and relaxation – that none of us really need.”

Young PAUL also made his voice heard – along with WILLIAM PHIPPS – in The Campus Quartet. Their rendition of Lida Rose was not only a highlight of the school’s production of *The Music Man*, conducted by DR. RALPH SCHULTZ, but apparently also lit up the Sadie Hawkins dance. Our Distinguished Alumnus REV. PAUL WEBER never stopped singing – combining his love for God and song into a highly distinguished career in sacred music.

Presidential politics arrived on campus with Choice ’68 - a national collegiate exercise in civic engagement. Student representatives campaigned for each of the six presidential candidates in the lead up to a mock election. In March of that year, young BILL STAVEY’s candidate Nelson Rockefeller was second only to Richard Nixon, who held the lead at 21% in Concordia’s straw poll. For the record, Ronald Reagan polled last at 2%. And Bobby Kennedy was in the middle of

the pack at 14% - although, of course, no one would get the chance to vote for him. **BILL STAVEY** is still interested in presidential politics and history – spending his retirement as a living history interpreter and avid reader of historical non-fiction.

You here tonight are a remarkably giving group of people, who, decades before the words would be enshrined in Concordia's mission, are living your **passion, purpose, and service** every day:

As lifelong teachers, like **JANE CROSBIE BORCHIN, SUSAN HITESHAW KELLY, SUE JOCKERS PAISLEY, FAITH REDLITZ SURPRENANT** and **LINDA LUKE GERLACH**. Through musical ministry, like **LINDA FIKE BAHR** and **MARK MEYER**. As mental health counselors like **JUDITH EICHMANN ALLEN**; and as dedicated Lutheran servants like **LYNN GLARSON MCCORMICK**.

During your time at Concordia a student named Susan Markey asked deep questions about whether the students engaged in Christian studies on Concordia's peaceful campus were too sheltered from a real world dominated by Vietnam, societal conflict, space exploration, and "way out hippies." **Is Concordia Reality?** was the name of her essay.

After thoughtful consideration, she concludes that even in the relatively small world of Concordia, students were gaining valuable exposure by living with people whose ideas were not always like their own. And that **most importantly**, in her words, "We must not lose sight of our higher goals and our God...we must become an influence upon the world of today and tomorrow by letting the reality of God and His purpose for our lives shine forth."

Reconnecting with your younger self and the goals that that young woman articulated so beautifully can mean looking to Concordia College today, where students are living the future that YOUR generation imagined.

Today's Concordia reflects a real world, where a diverse array of God's children – traditional students, international students, intellectually disabled students, adult learners, first-generation college students, veterans and career-changers – engage with an ethics-infused curriculum on their way to careers with meaning: in education, healthcare, business and, yes, church work.

A place where not enough students attend daily chapel (or Morning Reflection as we call it) – but we're working on it!

A place where, just as in 1969, students are developing their passion, defining their purpose, and offering their service to influence the world of today and tomorrow – letting the reality of God and **His** purpose for our lives shine forth.