

# WABASH COLLEGE



**Class Agent Handbook**  
March 2006

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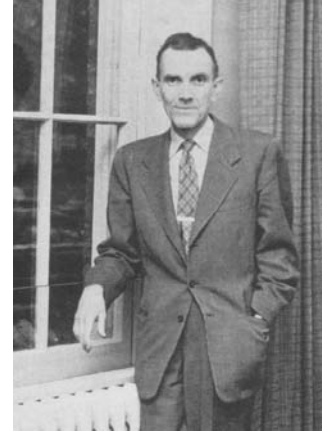


September, 2005 – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society of Wabash College Class Agents

# THE SOCIETY OF WABASH COLLEGE CLASS AGENTS

## Brief History

The Society of Wabash College Class Agents traces its beginnings to 1955 when the newly appointed director of alumni affairs, Myron G. “Phil” Phillips ’27, started the Society. Phillips had a vision of keeping graduates connected to the College in a meaningful way through the efforts of a group of class agents. Each agent would be the conduit for information, on the College and on fellow classmates, communicating with every member of the class regardless of how far they had moved from the College or how long ago they had graduated.



Phillip’s early efforts have matured as **The Society of Wabash College Class Agents** with over 130 class agents and a governing executive committee directly linked to the board of directors of the National Association of Wabash Men (NAWM). Each graduated class has one or more class agents and collectively these men comprise the Society. The executive committee, in coordination with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, provides oversight for the Society and two of the committee members, who serve as co-chairmen of the committee, also serve on the NAWM board of directors.

## Mission

The Society is an element of the College’s initiative to engage alumni as a strategic advantage. The Society exists to keep Wabash in contact with her alumni body, increase the alumni body’s understanding of the mission and values of Wabash, and to gain alumni support of and participation in the ongoing efforts of the College.

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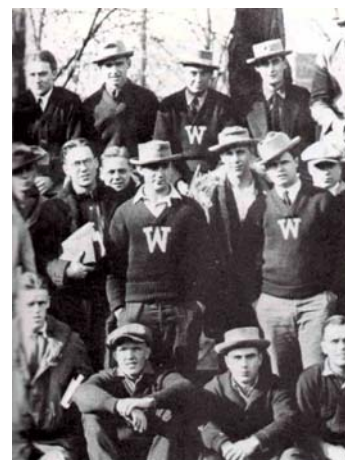
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Today there is more communication between the College and its alumni body than ever before. From the *Wabash Magazine* to the Trustee Newsletter to Annual Fund periodic information pieces, Wabash alumni receive a myriad of communications from the College. In addition, the number of alumni events, on- and off-campus, has risen tremendously over the past several years. However, these information pieces and events, as good as they are, can’t replace the personal touch of a class agent when writing a letter to his classmates or building interest in the next class reunion. It is that personal nature of class agent communications that makes them a powerful, positive force.

## Roles

Class agents carry out the following roles:

1. **Communicate with classmates.** The class agent stays in touch with his class primarily through the writing of periodic letters<sup>1</sup>. Class agent letters are a fundamental part of the overall College communications plan. The class agent selects the content of the letters based upon whatever information he deems important. Past experience has shown the best class agent letters offer a combination of news on past and upcoming College events, coverage of campus news, and as much information about classmates as possible. To help, the Alumni and Parent Relations office provides an entire system of information and support:



- a. **All letter formatting, production, and mailing done by Alumni and Parent Relations.** The class agent simply needs to send the letter to Alumni and Parent Relations. A staff member takes care of formatting, reproducing and mailing /emailing<sup>2</sup> the agent's letters. To aid in production, the office prefers electronic copies of letters in *Microsoft Word*. Once the class agent writes the letter and sends it to the Alumni and Parent Relations office, his work is done!
- b. **A monthly bulletin called the Communiqué.** Each class agent receives the Communiqué which includes items of interest about Wabash – upcoming events, faculty and staff changes, construction updates, news on the sports teams, interesting information from the Wabash Archives, etc. The Communiqué is sent as an email and is also posted on the web. The email version allows the class agent to easily “cut and paste” stories from the email or from related World Wide Web links. Class agents not using email will receive the same Communiqué, with copies of the news items, mailed to their preferred address.
- c. **The Bachelor.** The *Bachelor* provides the class agent with current information on Wabash from the student's perspective. Most class agents get the *Bachelor* online at <http://bachelor.wabash.edu>. This allows them to receive the newspaper the same day it is published on campus. As with the Communiqué, class agents without web access can receive a printed copy of the *Bachelor* in the mail.
- d. **Other class agent's letters.** Class agents automatically received the letters from the classes on campus during their time as students – the three classes before and

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<sup>1</sup> Some agents also make it a point of emailing and phoning their classmates, often to ask for updates on the personal and professional lives.

<sup>2</sup> Class agent letters are typically emailed to all alumni with an email address and mailed to the remainder of the class. If a class agent wants the letter mailed to everyone, all he needs to do is ask.

after. In addition, all of the most recent class agent letters are available to all alumni on the Wabash web site: ([www.wabash.edu/alumni/class\\_agents/recent](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/class_agents/recent)).

- e. **Monthly classmate updates.** The Alumni and Parent Relations office provides all class agents with monthly updates on the latest classmate news<sup>3</sup>.
- f. **Alumni eServices.** All Wabash alumni have access to Wabash's on-line alumni data base through **Alumni eServices**. This data base is updated every day and provides a number of different search options – class year or years, locations, majors, fraternities, etc. Each alumnus has an individual user name and password available from the Alumni and Parent Relations office.
- g. **Class rosters.** The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations can provide updated information on all classmates including address, phone number, email address, and other class specific information. This information is typically distributed as a *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet.
- h. **Color printing/campus photographs.** Thanks to the generosity of several class agents and other alumni, the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations has the ability to include color photographs and illustrations in letters. In addition, staff members have digital cameras and can include campus photographs if desired.
- i. **All the help and support needed.** The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations and the Society of Wabash College Class Agents will help class agents with guidance on writing letters and with useful information that might be included in the letters.



2. **Communicate with the College.** Classmates place special value on the communications they receive from their class agent(s). The same value applies to communications emanating from the class. A class agent has the unique opportunity to hear from several members of his class and to occasionally “take the pulse” of his classmates. Any time the class agent hears or senses information that might be of value, he should immediately direct those communications to the College. The class agent should start with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations – the staff is ready to assist in every way possible.
3. **Help with class reunions.** The Alumni and Parent Relations Office is primarily responsible for planning and running the **Big Bash**, Wabash's yearly reunion weekend<sup>4</sup>. Class agents do not need to worry about menus, venues, or any other details. The class agents' primary role is to raise awareness of the reunion and to urge classmates to attend. The



<sup>3</sup> See Appendix III, “Where Are You Now?” This is the form you can have mailed to all of your classmates along with your class agent letter.

<sup>4</sup> Held the first weekend of June.



only effective way to generate good attendance is through a contact person in each living unit – more details can be found in the publication *Roadmap for a Reunion* available from the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations. One other task the class agent has for the reunion weekend is to develop a simple program for the class dinner. The College, as mentioned earlier, has several resources that make the reunion buildup simple and easy:

- a. **Planning booklet.** The College provides a continuously-updated *Roadmap for a Reunion* which provides guidance on the entire reunion weekend as well as some helpful suggestions.
  - b. **Class rosters.** These rosters (in *Microsoft Excel* format) facilitate contact between classmates. They are emailed, whenever possible, to allow the list to be sorted by state, College living unit, etc.
  - c. **Alumni web site** ([www.wabash.edu/alumni](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni)). The alumni web site offers detailed information on the **Big Bash** weekend and an easy, on-line registration form for reunions. In addition, the web site lists members of each reunion class who have indicated they plan on attending the reunion.
  - d. **Staff support.** The director of Alumni and Parent Relations serves as a focal point for reunions. In addition to class agent letters, the office staff can mail special, class-specific “Save-the-date” and reminder cards.
4. **Assisting the College’s fundraising efforts.** The class agent is not expected or required to do active fundraising for the College. However, the class agent, by his own example of giving, and by communicating with his classmates about the goals of the College, the status of current fundraising efforts, and reporting on your class’s contributions, can be a valuable partner in the College’s efforts. After all, without the continued support of the alumni body, Wabash will not be able to grow and prosper. Most class agents integrate a report on the class’s “honor roll” (listing of those class members who have given in the current fiscal year) into their class agent letters. To assist the class agent in that endeavor, the Annual Fund office provides periodic updates on giving percentages as well as donors sorted by class. This allows the class agent to get a comparison of his class’s participation as compared to other classes and his classes performance the previous year.

## Expectations

The Society of Wabash College Class Agents expects the following<sup>5</sup> from its members:

1. **Leader and Role Model.** The Society expects its members to be positive leaders and role models who are actively engaged in the life of the College. Class agents are in a unique position – they have the potential to be “informed insiders” and to share that knowledge and insight. Class agent letters should provide a balanced dialogue and be

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<sup>5</sup> These expectations are derived from a list of expectations developed at the 1997 Class Agent Forum.

presented in a responsible, factual fashion. A class agent's efforts, on behalf of Wabash, within the College community and with external audiences, have a tremendous impact on the College's ability to remain independent and to grow and prosper.

2. **Four Letters Per Year.** Each class should receive four class agent letters per year. Appendix II contains a sample four letter plan developed by an award-winning class agent. For classes with more than one class agent, the writing duties can be dividing in whatever way is easiest for the class agents themselves.
3. **Support the College Financially.** Each class agent is expected to make a financial gift to the College annually – preferably early in the fiscal year. This allows the class agent to demonstrate his leadership. As with any fund-raising initiative, the key is annual participation. Wabash can and will operate from a position of strength if the alumni body supports the effort every year. As leaders and role models, the Society expects class agents to lead that effort.
4. **Support Recruiting Efforts.** The Society expects its members to play an active role on recruiting students for Wabash. By sharing admissions information with the class, class agents can have a wide ranging impact on Wabash's overall Admissions efforts.
5. **Return to campus often.** Class agents are expected to return to campus on a frequent basis with the goal of returning once every year if possible. A campus visit provides the agent with an opportunity to see what's new on campus and to observe what remains the same. A campus visit also provides an opportunity to renew bonds with faculty, staff, and students. One way to accomplish this is to return whenever possible to the **Class Agent Forum**. The Forum is held on campus the weekend of the first home football game each season. Planned and administered by the executive committee and the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, it is designed to bring the class agents together, to provide updates on the College and to share common interests and concerns. The Class Agents' Awards Dinner is held in conjunction with the Forum and includes the presentation of the annual class agents' awards.

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**WABASH COLLEGE**  
**ANNUAL FUND**

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### **Selection Process**

Class agents are, first and foremost, volunteers. They give of their time and talent to keep their fellow class members in touch with the College and each other.

Volunteers from graduating classes apply for the position and are interviewed by members of the Alumni and Parent Relations office. In addition, these candidates are afforded the opportunity to

meet with current class agents in an effort to get a real sense of the position. This process begins late in the first semester, senior year and concludes shortly after the beginning of the second semester. This gives the new class agent ample opportunity to get to know more of their classmates and hopefully begin the communication process before Commencement.

Class agents for matriculated classes, those replacing a departing agent or joining others on the role, emerge as a result of a call for volunteers from the College and/or from the class itself.

## **Terms of Service**

There is no such thing as a normal term of service for a class agent. Some class agents have served the College and their class for over 50 years! Others begin their service several decades after their graduation. In some cases, class agents resign their posts because of the demands of their personal and/or professional lives. The College and the class will always accept a class agent's resignation – no questions asked.

There's really only one planning factor to take into account when considering serving as a class agent – the timing of the next class reunion. Class reunions happen every five years and a class really has an advantage when their class agent has been in place and “up to speed” before the reunion planning timeframe begins. Conversely, the best time to make a class agent change is right after a reunion, when memories are fresh (lots of new material for the class agent letter) and there's ample time to build upon connections renewed at the reunion.

Class agents who consistently are not performing their roles to the level of expectation may be asked to step down by the executive committee or the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations. This action is only taken when all other attempts to help the class agent are exhausted by both the executive committee and the College.

## **Executive Committee**

The Society started the executive committee in 1991 to oversee the performance of the class agents and serve as an advisory board for the College. Elections to the executive committee are held each summer in accordance with the *Constitution of the National Association of Wabash Men*. The following guidelines apply to the executive committee:

1. The business and affairs of the Society shall be directed by its executive committee in concert with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations.
2. Executive committee members shall be alumni and class agents as defined by the College.
3. The officers of the committee consist of two (2) co-chairmen who shall serve for a term of two (2) years. The co-chairmen are selected by the executive committee and their terms should be staggered for continuity. The co-chairmen will preside at all committee



meetings, have the right to vote on all questions, appoint sub-committee chairmen and co-chairmen, determine the composition of any sub-committees, and otherwise serve as spokesman for the Society. The co-chairmen shall serve as *ex-officio* members of all sub-committees of the executive committee and have other duties as the executive committee may prescribe from time to time.

4. The executive committee consists of:
  - a. Officers of the committee as defined above:
  - b. Five class agent representatives, three (3) to be elected in each even-numbered year and two (2) to be elected in each odd-numbered year by the Society. Each representative shall serve for a term of two (2) years;
  - c. The director of Alumni and Parent Relations, *ex-officio*;
  - d. The director of the Annual Fund, *ex-officio*;
5. Each executive committee member shall hold office until his successor shall be elected.
6. A committee member shall not be able to succeed himself after serving two (2) full terms, but shall be eligible for re-election after a lapse of a period of one year from the expiration of his last term of service.
7. The terms of office of the committee members as prescribed above shall commence on July 1<sup>st</sup> and run through June 30<sup>th</sup> in the year in which the term expires.
8. Interim vacancies among the executive committee shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of the committee.
9. All committee members serve at the pleasure of the executive committee. A member may be removed from office by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the executive committee members then in office.
10. Each committee member shall have one (1) vote.

### **Annual Awards**

There are three awards designed to recognize the contributions to the College and the alumni by high performing class agents. The executive committee makes the selections and the awards are presented at the annual Class Agents' Awards Dinner held each fall.

1. **The Warren Wright Shearer Hall of Fame Award** is the most prestigious of the three. In 1991 the National Association of Wabash Men established this award in honor of a great Little Giant: a student, teacher, Dean of the College, Acting President, and Class

Agent extraordinaire. It is awarded in recognition of extraordinary performance by a Class Agent in all roles and duties including: class communications, class financial contributions, recruiting, and Little Giant spirit over a period of time, not necessarily a year.

2. **The Myron G. Phillips Most Outstanding Class Agent Award** was established in 1963 by the Alumni Board in memory of this outstanding Wabash student, Professor, Assistant Director of Admissions, and Director of Alumni Affairs. It is awarded annually to the Class Agent who performs most significantly in his roles of communicating with his class, encouraging class financial contributions, recruiting new students, and exhibiting Little Giant spirit.
3. **The R. Robert Mitchum Most Outstanding Young Class Agent Award** was established in 1979 by the Alumni Board to honor a long-time Director of the Wabash College Glee Club and Director of Alumni Affairs. Established to encourage classes graduating in the last ten years, it is awarded to the Class Agent who has demonstrated outstanding performance in discharging his duties as Class Agent in the areas of class communication, class financial contributions, new student recruitment, and Little Giant spirit.

## Appendix I – Staff Directory and Web Site Information

### Office of Alumni and Parent Relations

#### Staff

**Director** - Tom Runge '71  
765-361-6371, [runget@wabash.edu](mailto:runget@wabash.edu)

**Associate Director** - Mike Warren '93  
765-361-6053, [warrenm@wabash.edu](mailto:warrenm@wabash.edu)

**Alumni Career Officer** - Lu Hamilton '76  
765-361-6168, [hamiltol@wabash.edu](mailto:hamiltol@wabash.edu)

**Coordinator of Alumni and Parent Communications** - Michele Tatar  
765-361-6369, [tatarm@wabash.edu](mailto:tatarm@wabash.edu)

**Alumni Secretary** - Heather Bazzani  
765-361-6360, [bazzanih@wabash.edu](mailto:bazzanih@wabash.edu)

*You can also contact the Alumni and Parent Relations Office at  
[alumni@wabash.edu](mailto:alumni@wabash.edu)*

#### Location

The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations is located in The Bill and Ginny Hays Alumni Center on the north side of Wabash's campus. The address is 418 W. Wabash Ave. We are open weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feel free to drop in for a visit!

#### Web References

Wabash Alumni - [www.wabash.edu/alumni](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni)  
Class agent related information - [www.wabash.edu/alumni/class\\_agents](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/class_agents)  
Communiqué and Class Agent Report – [www.wabash.edu/alumni/communique](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/communique)  
Bachelor – <http://bachelor.wabash.edu>

## **Appendix II – Annual Plan for Four Letters**

### *Yearly Plan – Four Letters*

#### **September letter**

1. College news
  - a. Communiqué information
  - b. Information on newest freshmen class
  - c. Report on last reunion (if applicable)
  - d. News from Class Agent Forum (if applicable)
  - e. Homecoming fast approaching
  - f. Football schedule
2. Recommendations
  - a. Ask classmates to identify candidates for induction into the Wabash College Athletics Hall of Fame. The NAWM Board of Directors will select Athletics Hall of Fame inductees at their upcoming January meeting (every even year-2004, 2006, etc.)
  - b. Recommendations should be sent to the Alumni Affairs office
3. Classmate updates
  - a. Provide updates on classmates
  - b. Remind them to always keep the College updated on contact information
  - c. Push next reunion (if applicable)
4. Admissions
  - a. Recap last year's statistics
  - b. Cover upcoming deadlines (applications)
  - c. Recommend senior referrals
  - d. Recommend campus visits
  - e. Report referral statistics for the class
5. Annual Fund (GWF) information
  - a. Overall results from previous year
  - b. Class performance – your class and years before and after
  - c. Mention all donors for previous fiscal year with special mention of last year's 1832 Society donors

#### **Late November-early December letter**

1. College news
  - a. Communiqué information
  - b. News from Class Agent Forum (if applicable)
  - c. Monon Bell Results
  - d. Updates on winter sports
2. Recommendations
  - a. Ask classmates to identify candidates to be awarded an alumni award of merit (for contributions to the College, their community, or their chosen profession). The

- NAWM Board of Directors will select these award winners at their upcoming annual spring meeting in May. Recommendations should be sent to the Alumni Affairs office (alumni@wabash.edu)
- b. Ask classmates to identify candidates for the award of the Alumni-Admissions Fellow. These awards are given to alumni for extraordinary effort in recruiting students for Wabash. Recommendations should be sent to Steve Marcou in Admissions (marcou@wabash.edu).
6. Class mate updates
    - a. Provide updates on classmates
    - b. Remind them to always keep the College updated on contact information.
    - c. Push next reunion (if applicable)
  3. Admissions
    - a. Recap important statistics
    - b. Cover upcoming deadlines (applications)
    - c. Recommend campus visits
    - d. Recommend junior and senior referrals
  4. Annual Fund (GWF) information
    - a. Class performance to date
    - b. Remind of tax year end giving
    - c. Mention donors for the year with special mention of all 1832 Society members

### **Late January – Early February letter**

1. College news
  - a. Communiqué information
  - b. First semester review
  - c. Updates on winter sports
2. Recommendations
  - a. Ask classmates to candidates to be awarded an alumni award of merit (for contributions to the College, their community or their chosen profession). The NAWM Board of Directors will select these award winners at their upcoming annual spring meeting in May. Recommendations should be sent to the Alumni Affairs office (alumni@wabash.edu)
  - b. Ask classmates to identify candidates for the award of the Alumni-Admissions Fellow. These awards are given to alumni for extraordinary effort in recruiting students for Wabash. The NAWM Board of Directors will select these award winners at their upcoming annual spring meeting in May. Recommendations should be sent to Chip Timmons in Admissions (timmonsc@wabash.edu).
3. Classmate updates
  - a. Provide updates on classmates
  - b. Remind them to always keep the College updated on contact information
  - c. Push next reunion (if applicable)
4. Admissions
  - a. Recap important statistics
  - b. Cover upcoming deadlines (applications)
  - c. Recommend campus visits



- d. Mention push for Honors Weekend
- e. Recommend junior referrals
- 5. Annual Fund (GWF) information
  - a. Class performance to date
  - b. Mention donors for the year with special mention of all 1832 Society members

**Late May – early June letter**

- 1. College news
  - a. Communiqué information
  - b. Commencement recap (if applicable)
  - c. News from Class Agent Forum (if applicable)
  - d. Updates on winter sports
- 2. Recommendations
  - a. Please identify candidates to serve as Alumni Trustees and members of the NAWM Board of Directors. The NAWM Board of Directors will select candidates for election at their upcoming fall meeting (held annually at Homecoming).
  - b. Recommendations should be sent to the Alumni Affairs office (alumni@wabash.edu)
- 3. Classmate updates
  - a. Provide updates on classmates
  - b. Remind them to always keep the College updated on contact information
  - c. Push next reunion (if applicable)
- 4. Admissions
  - a. Recap important statistics
  - b. Cover upcoming deadlines (applications)
  - c. Recommend campus visits
  - d. Mention push for Honors Weekend
  - e. Recommend junior referrals
- 5. Annual Fund (GWF) information
  - a. Class performance to date
  - b. Remind of fiscal tax year end giving
  - c. Mention donors for the year with special mention of all 1832 Society members

**Appendix III – “Where Are You Now?”**

**“Where Are You Now?”**



Wabash Class of \_\_\_\_\_

While you are holding this in your hands, take a moment to fill it out and send it to: Wabash College, Alumni and Parent Relations office, PO Box 352, Crawfordsville, IN 47933. While you're at it, why not contact a fellow alum or professor you haven't talked to in a while?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Business Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Home Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Interested in serving your class as a class agent? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe \_\_\_\_\_ Not yet \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Interested in helping the College with fund raising? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_**

**Family Information**

Single  Married  Partnered  
(Spouse/partner's name) \_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Divorced  Widowed  
 Father of (kid's name/s) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdays \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Latest Employment and Education Information**

Unemployed  Self-employed doing \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employed (where) \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Looking for work  Retired  
 In school at (where) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Working toward a (degree) \_\_\_\_\_ in (field) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Writing a book on \_\_\_\_\_

I'd really like to hear from (classmate/s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Any other interesting news? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_