



Penn Class of 1972



Classmates,

I just returned from Homecoming weekend where we administered a severe beating to the Princeton Tigers, just as we did in our inaugural Homecoming experience in the fall of 1968. I have a vivid memory of sitting in the press box on that afternoon in Franklin Field with the other DP sportswriters, none of whom had ever witnessed a victory over our dreaded rival. It would take another four years before that feat was duplicated.



In all likelihood this month's memoir writer was not at that game. David Barrett, whom I do not believe I have ever met, was a commuter student who worked in his parent's store most days with the possible exception of a Penn rugby game which took place on a Saturday afternoon. While David's experience as an undergraduate differed drastically from that of a student who moved from home and lived at Penn, it is clear that the defining historical events on campus concerned the Vietnam war or its impact upon us. If you were to scroll through the memoirs which are listed on our class website, you will see that more of them are based on the effect of the war than any other topic.



Dr. Barrett was born and raised in Philadelphia and attended Central High School. While at Penn, he majored in civil engineering (structures) and played rugby. After graduation he worked as a structural engineer in Center City before returning to Penn where he obtained his doctorate in Applied Mechanics. He also worked at that time for Franklin Institute Research Laboratories. Before the labs closed, David took a position with a small company and then entered civilian service with the Naval Air Development Center where he discovered a fundamental property of phase transformation and generated five patents. After the NADC merged with the Naval Air Warfare Center at Patuxent River he finally left the Philadelphia area for southern Maryland. Initially Dr. Barrett served as head of Structures Research and Development at the Center and now is the Director of Engineering Education and Research Partnerships. He also is an adjunct associate professor at the University of Maryland where he teaches undergraduate mechanical courses. Previously David taught graduate mechanics at Penn State – Great Valley campus.

Dr. Barrett is married to the former Gail Edwards, who “made his life complete.” They have three children -- Rachel Elizabeth (30), Adam David (28), and Joshua Michael (25). Their fourth grandchild is on the way. Like many of us, David does not like the nomenclature “UPenn” for our alma mater; to him it will always be Penn. He also points out that, based on the location of the gym, the pet store, the bar, and his apartment, Rocky Balboa lived in Kensington rather than south Philly.

To get David’s spin on his years at Penn, please click [here](#) to access memoir number 37 in our series, “The Best and the Brightest.”

On October 9, 2015 I received memoirs from David Rockwell and Alan Cotler to meet the goal of “45 for 45.” As previously stated, I will continue to run submissions until the 45th Reunion. If you would like to make a contribution to this series, please email me at Friar72@gmail.com.

Our first pre-reunion event took place on Monday October 19 for New York City residents at the home of Patty (Braun) Silvers. The accompanying photo shows most of the '72 grads who made it to this very festive cocktail party. In the words of Patty, it is “good to know that our class still has some sturdy drinkers.” The second mini-reunion will be on Saturday December 12, 2015, 2:00 to 5:00 PM, at my house in Fairfield, NJ. Evites will be sent to all central and northern New Jersey classmates in early November. If you do not receive one but would like to attend, please email me at the above address.



Best,

Jeff Rothbard
President, Class of 1972