

Franciscan Alumni Association

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Spring 2019

Established May 28th, 1989

Serving Provinces of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. John the Baptist

www.franciscan-alumni.org

Franciscan Alumni Reunion Plan June 20-22, 2019

The Franciscan Alumni Association is pleased to announce that this year's Chapter reunion will be held in Southfield, Michigan. The Franciscan Friars of The Church of the Transfiguration will be our hosts for major events. Come share food, drink and life experiences with your brothers and their guests. Please start making plans now to join other alumni at what is sure to be another rewarding weekend of Franciscan fellowship and spiritual reunion.



Duns Scotus College

Southfield, MI 48075

Phone: (248) 350-2400

Courtyard by Marriott Detroit
Southfield

27027 Northwestern Hwy
Southfield, MI 48033

Phone: (248) 358-1222

Reunion events and activities:

Please inform the reunion committee as to which activities you plan to attend. Send email to

Reunion Hotel:

Best Western Premier Detroit Southfield
26555 Telegraph Rd
Southfield, MI 48033

The hotel features non-smoking rooms with king-size beds. The rate for attendees is \$89.00 per night plus approximately 13% tax. This rate includes breakfast.

All reservations may be made directly through the hotel at (248) 358-7600 or https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.23171.html?groupId=Z31BU2J3. Please ask for the "Franciscan Alumni School Reunion" group block by Friday May 24, 2019 to get the special rate.

Other hotels in the area:

Quality Inn
26111 Telegraph Rd
Southfield, MI 48034
Phone: (248) 368-6130

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Southfield-Detroit
25100 Northwestern Hwy

2019Reunion@franciscan-alumni.org.

Unless stated otherwise, each person will be responsible for their own bill at each dining event.

Thursday June 20, 2019

Evening - Social for early arrivals Dinner at nearby Shields Restaurant. Drinks afterward at the hotel bar, the Nomad Grill.

Friday June 21, 2019

8 am Morning prayer in a hotel meeting room

Tour of St. Dominic Church

Lunch - together at a local restaurant or on one's own

Tour of St. Aloysius Church

Dinner - Provided gratis by the Friars at Transfiguration Friary, 25231 Code Rd, Southfield, MI

Evening - socializing

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2019 Reunion Plan (Continued)



Saturday June 22, 2019

8 am Morning prayer in a hotel meeting room

10:00 - Tour of the former Duns Scotus College.

Lunch - together at a local restaurant or on one's own

Possible tour of the old Sarah Fisher Home for Children and/or a tour of the current St. Vincent/Sarah Fisher Home

4:30 - Mass at the Church of the Transfiguration, 25225 Code Rd, Southfield, MI 48033

The following times are approximate:

5:45 - Group Photo after Mass and before dinner

6:00 - Dinner in the Transfiguration Parish Hall (\$20 adult / \$10 child)

7:30 - Stories from bygone years, either from HS or College, by Friars in attendance

8:00 - FAA Chapter business meeting

8:30 - FAA Awards presentation

9:00 - Remembrance Ceremony

9:15 - Chapter Close with the Ultima

Sunday June 23, 2019

8 am Morning prayer in a hotel meeting room

Breakfast and farewells

2019 Milestones:

60th anniversary of the start of the lay student program at Duns Scotus College — Dennis Kirby is working on special activities for these alumni. Dennis can be reached via email at den.kirby@frontier.com.

30th anniversary of the founding of the Franciscan Alumni Association.

60th anniversary for the class of '59.

50th anniversary for the class of '69.

40th anniversary for the class of '79.

Seems Like Old Times... Years fall away at reunion of seminarians

By Bill Farris, OFM '68



arations began in earnest.

The first invitation dropped into my inbox on May 9, 2017, from classmate Mike Hertel: I'm toying with the idea of driving to Cincinnati for the Friday and Saturday parts of the reunion," he wrote. "It would be great to catch up with a few of the guys from the class of '68." In the following weeks 238 e-mails would collect as more and more classmates got involved in the planning.



supplemented and tweaked our shared memories of our friar teachers, misadventures, good times and deceased classmates.

On Friday morning a group from our class visited several special places in Over-the-Rhine, stopping for a quick visit at the Motherhouse, and then on to St. Anthony Center next door. There we were treated to an overview by Chris Schuermann, Executive Director of St. Francis Seraph Ministries, of the work done for the poor and homeless in OTR. More than one classmate told me later how impressed they were with what had been done to transform the old St. An-



Above, the class of 1968; top, a stroll down memory lane at the reunion

Our freshmen class at St. Francis Seminary numbered 80 students. Four years later in 1968 there were only 30 of us in our graduation class. The next phase of seminary life would resume at our college in Southfield, Michigan, after the summer break, but as we left, when would all see each other again.

Fifty years later, the Franciscan Alumni Association gave the opportunity to come together at the yearly reunion it organizes every June. Fortunately our class had several individuals who were ready to take on the task of locating classmates scattered around the United States. Soon we had e-mails for almost everyone and prep-

Someone proposed that we each write up a 500-word summary of the previous 50 years. As the reunion drew nearer we all had in hand the collection of well-written, humorous, and reflective autobiographies. Our conversations over the three-day reunion often referred to the information they contained.

Shared memories

We started on Thursday evening, June 21, with a get-reacquainted supper. Binders and scrapbooks



Dan Knadler '68, Mike Hertel '68, and Mark Soehner '76

2018 Reunion, Continued

(Continued from page 3)

thony Messenger building into a center of services for neighbors in need.

Friday afternoon we gathered at Winton Woods for a picnic featuring bluegill caught and fried by Mike Pine. The conversations flowed into the evening at a restaurant in Glendale.

Saturday's activities were focused the old seminary grounds, now a retiree community. For many of our class, this was their first opportunity in 50 years to walk through the halls and woods. Although I return there more often, many of my class hadn't visited since an earlier reunion in '83. Being there with them triggered memories that hadn't stirred in many years, like this one:

During the final months of our senior year, several classmates kept busy with a covert digging project in the woods. Over the years it came to be known simply as "The Hole." The reason why it was dug remains a secret, and as to its location, that became a mystery. At the reunion, several of us spread out through the woods behind the Poor Clare Monastery trying to find traces of our work. Some sinkholes looked promising, but the only thing we found was an old Coke bottle. Fifty years had erased all traces of the clandestine excavations.

Reconnecting

We joined the other alumni for the final hours of our reunion, beginning with Mass in the chapel, dinner in the activity room (the main study hall) and the regular business meeting of the Franciscan Alumni Association. Our classmate Fr. Al Hirt was presented with the Humani-

tarian Award. I felt blessed that five of our faculty from so long ago were able to join in the reunion: Bill Pellman, Fr. Valentine Young, Fr. Ric Schneider, Fr. Tom Richstatter, and Fr. Murray Bodo.

At the close of the evening as the crowds dispersed, a small group of us took a sentimental walk around the building, remembering the friendships that were made and the dreams that were shared so long ago.



Top, Ric Schneider '50 and Warren Hebert '75

Middle, Bill Pellman '52, Bill Farris, John Bach, Jim Shrepfer, Bob Kennedy (all '68), Frank Jasper '64

Bottom, Norbert Bertram '60 and Mike Pine '68

2018 Reunion, Concluded



Henry Beck, '70 J. D. Moya '70, and Rick Gardner '75

What did this reunion mean to me? I was happy to see everyone and discover that the years have been kind to us. We went our separate ways in 1968 when so much of our world was shifting under our feet. It was heart- warming to me to see that we had all found our footing, found someone to love, had raised families and

engaged in meaningful work, but most of all, were able to return and find each other again.

The e-mails have continued, though the pace is slowing down now, with messages such as:

"It was great spending a few days with so many friends where the polarization and distrust of today's world seemed to just disappear."

"For me and many in our group, it felt like both a special and magical week-end. Hard to describe. Best felt."

"Our journeys have been long, and for many, arduous. But now that we're old men, or nearly so, how did we turn out? Pretty well, if you ask me."



Above, Bill Farris '68 preaching at the reunion Mass



Fr. Aubert Grieser Memorial Glee Club — IN CONCERT!



Several alumni had graciously responded to the call for singers that was printed in last year's spring newsletter. They learned their parts from recordings that were sent via email and a single 2-hour rehearsal.

Then, during the concert later that evening, the ragtag Memorial Glee Club managed to provide an enter-

taining, nostalgic performance for the 100 attendees at the 2018 reunion. The audience was invited to join on the song refrains, and together they raised the roof!

The most challenging piece of music was *Salve Sancte Pater*, from Falconara's *Transitus*, with its three-part harmonies.

The rest of the program was a collection of fun songs that Fr. Aubert often used in Glee Club performances and the music classes he taught:

Saints Come Marching In
Crawdad Goober Peas
Sixteen Tons My Old Ford
Bless 'Em All Drunken Sailor
Little Brown Jug
Good 'Ol Mountain Dew
Old Time Religion

The 2018 Memorial Glee Club:

Paul LaRou '62	Gary Wintz '65
Henry Beck '70	Rick Kasper '70
Bill Linesch '70	Warren Hebert '75
Mike Niklas '75	Joe Sears '75
Paul Landers '76	Steve Schmidt '76
Doug Dobrozsi '77	Frank Lopez '77
Tom Shumate '77	Joe Edwards '79
Michael Niehaus '81	

Sally Bales (wife of Gary '72) posted her videos of the concert online at

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1BVWFQaSuNCg2aiv0wqBbunHRYI5JRAHg>



The final song of the Glee Club concert: Salve Sancte Pater

Friday Tour and Celebration

On Friday of the 2018 Reunion weekend, many alumni and guests were treated to lunch at St. Anthony Center, a hub of services all in one place to serve the poor, which is located in the 40,000 square-foot building that previously housed St. Anthony Messenger offices. Chris Schuermann, executive director, told us about the many ministries there and then led us on a tour of the facilities that provide everything from meals to baby diapers to cooking skills to healthcare to showers and haircuts, and more! It was a humbling experience for many of us to see such dedication, generosity, and love toward our sisters and brothers in need.



The next event was an open house at the Franciscan Archives followed by vespers in the chapel at St. Anthony Shrine/Friary. Vespers with the friars was a very spiritual and nostalgic experience reminiscent of evening prayers during formation years at the seminaries.



Steve Schmidt '76 and Steve Simon

After dinner, Savio Russo '62 and others shared fond memories and anecdotes about Franciscan life and values.

Following vespers, we gathered for dinner, which was kindly provided by Steve Simon '76, who operates a Skyline Chili restaurant in Cincinnati.



Preaching by Example

Each year the Franciscan Alumni Association pays tribute to those who have gone above and beyond in the service of others.

On Friday evening at St. Anthony Friary, Brother Gabriel Balassone '51 was given the Christian Life Award "for his exemplary living of the Christian virtues of humility, service and gratitude."



On Saturday, Rick Kasper '70 presented to friar Al Hirt '68 an FAA Humanitarian Award for his 13 years of ministry with African-American communities in New Orleans and Kansas City and his bridge-building ministry with LGBTQ folks. Al has also worked pastorally with

many divorced and remarried Catholics, as well as the homeless. Also, Al initiated the process to establish a chair of Catholic Studies at the University of Cincinnati, a bridge between church and academia.

Joe Groh '73, unable to attend the reunion, was presented a Humanitarian Award



for his work to raise funds for victims of spinal injuries. He established the Joseph Groh Foundation ([http://josephgroh-](http://josephgroh-foundation.org/joes_story.html)



joes_story.html) after he suffered spinal injuries and a broken neck in a 2008 biking accident. Mike Thomas '74 presented Joe's award.

More 2018 Reunion Photos



St. Francis Seminary
Class of 1968 Reunion
June 2018

Back Row: Steve Robinson, Jim Schrepfer, David Reske, Denny Dombkowski, Mark Giles, Mike Moran, Bobby Kennedy
Middle Row: Fr. Al Hirt, Pat Halsmer, Dan Knadler, Rod Freudenberg, Dave Rowland, Fr. Bill Farris, Tom Vanderhoof
Front Row: Denis Palmer, Denny Erard, Mike Hertel, Steve Merkel, Mike Pine, Jerry Bill, Johnny Bach



Gary Wintz '65 and Jack Wintz '54



Joe Sears '75, Rod Freudenberg '68, Tom Shumate '77, Paul Landers '76, Mike Niklas '75



The Franciscan Alumni Association recently scanned a collection of negatives found in the photography dark room. Most of the photos were from the 1970's.

A professional scanning company did most of the work, first cleaning each negative, then scanning the images in high resolution, and finally adjusting the brightness and sharpness.

Then click on the group name Franciscan-Alumni.org (appears at top of the list on the screen) and click on Photos (which is on the left side). Then click on Albums and finally click on the photo album you wish to see. Whew!!

By the way, this is a “closed group,” so you need to have a Facebook user name and password, which is totally free, and you also have to request to be a member of the Franciscan-Alumni.org group. Facebook should ask you if you want to join the group.

Also, feel free to add descriptions or stories to individual photos in the albums. You can also tab (i.e., label) faces that appear in the photos, as long as those faces belong to people who are members of Facebook. It's easy to do this. The addition of stories and names will make the photo albums even more entertaining!

A few of the photos from the first album that's been uploaded are shown below.



Prayerful Retreat Morning

Thirty alums and family members gathered together on Saturday morning, June 23, 2018, at the Poor Clare monastery on the old seminary property for a retreat morning together.

Sr. Doris and Sr. Vickie opened the retreat with prayer and then presented a picture of the sisters' community and ministry.

They also shared a video that you can find at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-r0AeQDtGLQ>
[A Life of Prayer and Contemplation Poor Clare Nuns Cincinnati](#)

During the mid-morning break, many participants checked out the handsome "hermitage" on their property (photo at right).

Barbara and Paul LaRou '62 and Warren Hebert '75 (above right) shared inspirational—and sometimes humorous—stories about how their wives and their families have helped them to "incarnate" the Franciscan charism in their everyday lives.

Michael Niehaus '81 and his wife, Stormy, and their family prepared a delicious Mexican lunch for all.

We also reflected together during this morning about the "Revitalization and Restructuring Process" that six USA provinces are in the midst of as they prepare for union in 2023.



Volunteer Legal Help Sought

The Franciscan Alumni Association is looking for someone with legal knowledge of not-for-profit organizations in the state of Ohio. We need help to ensure we stay compliant with state and federal agencies regarding proper documentation. This is not a regular board position, rather it would be an occasional, consultant role. If you can help or if you can recommend someone, please contact a Board member or send email to faaboard@franciscan-alumni.org.

Holy Is Your Name

A reflection on The Lord's Prayer, composed during the 2018 FAA Reunion by Gary Bales '72

Abba our Father, I Am, the same
 who was, is and will be forever the Lord
 To establish your kingdom, your son Jesus came
 Lord, we strive to do your will as it is in heaven
 Those who belong to the world seek their fortune and fame
 Meet our needs Lord today; give us our daily bread
 By your death on the cross, you held no grudge or blame
 You forgave our offences; so must we forgive others
 Our wild selfish spirits we ask you Lord to tame
 We must love one another, so our joy will be full
 Jesus, you healed the blind and you healed the lame
 By your stripes we are healed; protect us from all evil
 O come, Holy Spirit, enkindle the flame
 Your gifts freely given to renew the whole world
 To the least of yours, Lord, we will serve without shame
 Take our hands, Lord, and make us instruments of your peace
 Holy is your name

Franciscan Alumni Association

**St. Anthony Friary
5000 Colerain Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45223**

www.franciscan-alumni.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Please Help Us Help Others

The Franciscan Alumni Association helps members connect with each other, find former classmates and teachers, and share in the common bond that drew us to the ideals of St. Francis.

Members of the Association also perform good deeds and support worthy causes. A few examples of benevolence:

- Restoration of the Peace Garden and pond (former SFS)
- Rebuilding the gazebo roof, assembling a windmill (former SFS)
- Franciscan Alumni website, database, photos
- Assistance to various Franciscan needs (several over the years)

Please help us continue to do good. Contributions may be sent to:
Franciscan Alumni Assn
5000 Colerain Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45223

You can also volunteer to help by sending email to:
volunteer@franciscan-alumni.org

The Franciscan Alumni Association newsletter is mailed to approximately 1,200 members for whom we have addresses. The only cost of production is the expense of printing and mailing. Additional stories and photos are available on the website. Thank you for your interest and support!

Franciscan Alumni Association Board of Trustees

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