

**RESPONSE FOR 1960 - 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON**  
**Saturday, May 29, 2010 – 50-YEAR CLUB**  
**Paul A. Tidemann**

I think there has been a mistake! It was just five years ago that we were fully engaged as Gusties on campus! We remember seeing really old people walking around campus when we were getting ready for commencement. Why, we even remember that our commencement speaker was the Rev. Paul C. Empie, Director of the Lutheran Council U.S.A. You all remember him, right? He did raise the question about whether organized religion might be unethical. Sounds like a pretty current issue!

I was walking around on campus a couple of weeks ago and noticed all the younger people around, but I wondered what they thought when they looked at me—a guy just five years older than them! In our first years we ate our meals in the basement of Uhler Hall, but, as I recall, we got to experience the new Dining Services in our senior year. It is also neat that Christ Chapel is finally finished and that the Class of 2010 has experienced it now for two years!

Of course, we had compulsory chapel and if you missed more than 10 times in a semester you had to go in and apologize to the Dean. Some of us remember chapel in the Little Theatre building. It had a slanted floor and a few of our classmates were involved in the marble gig when, across the back row or two, folks brought marbles to let loose during Dr. Wilhelm Linss' sermon, knocking their way against the metal seat legs and bouncing against the stage. And who could forget those who put thumb tacks on the piano hammers the day Esbj was preaching making the piano sounded a bit more like the Flame Bar. Esbj, who put up with a lot, looked pretty grim that day!

Has anyone managed to get an A in Dr. Lloyd Hollingsworth's Handball Class? You had to beat him in handball to get an A. I know I almost did it! – Not!

I noticed the radio tower north of the campus and I think that station is now called KRBI. That stands for *Krough Really Builds Individuals!* But we did not have a tower for our campus radio station which was called KGAC and which has now been co-opted by Minnesota Public Radio. We broadcast through the electrical circuits of the college!

This could go on and on—but here are a few other quickies: the Art Barn, the Chester Myrum Fieldhouse where Anne Shumate sang!, Whitey Skoog's first year as basketball coach and Bill Nordstrom who was a mainstay in basketball and in Don Roberts' baseball squad; Ma Young's great food and tough supervision; Philip Knautz' Gustavus Choir (and we remember his death just a few weeks ago); North Hall, the bookstore next to South Hall; Steve Lundgren playing the roles of Othello and Jonah; Mel Hammarberg as editor of the yearbook and seminar-presenter yesterday on his research on Mormonism Today; our great nurse classmates who had a gathering a couple of days ago and many are with us today; twin homecoming stars - Lin Eckman, queen, and Lou Eckman, as attendant; our senior football stars Dick Rood and Rollie Hanks, co-captains, and Bob Swiggum, Bob Fenske, Dick Johnson, Bill Beck, Dick Loomer, Tom Carlson, Bob Krough, Pete Nyhus, Ray Olson, and Quentin Carlson, under Holly's great coaching led to an undefeated conference season and the eighth championship in the '50s; several of us sang in the Choir, played in the Band and in the Orchestra; a couple of us were on the debate squad with our mentor, Prof. Bill Robertz; and, finally, our classmate Jim Anderson's dad, Ren Anderson (public relations director), and his mother, Sylvia, who really ran that office; and, of course, our classmate Dave Carlson's dad, Dr. Edgar Carlson, president of Gustavus for 24 years! Then let's add one more gift of ours to the college: Dennis Johnson, who was sports editor of the *Weekly* and the yearbook, became an ordained Lutheran pastor, and later served as Vice President for Church Relations at Gustavus, and became President of Gustavus for the years 2002 and 2003! If you have not heard his story, ask him, about how he and Carol were walking up the Hill in March, 1998 when the tornado was coming and quickly gathered everyone they could find into a shower area in Lund Arena for protection while the tornado roared overhead. Gustavus owes a lot to Dennis for his leadership following the tornado. And our Class owes him a lot for years of service as our Class Agent!

Yes, it has been 50 years—really! We are pleased to be the class which has broken a Gustavus record for more than 50% attendance at this reunion. We are glad to have met the challenge to the class of 2010 by surpassing our pledge challenge of \$1,000 which the 2010 Class more than met! (Our Reunion Committee made this happen with a total gift of \$1,400!) We also went above and beyond the goal of \$25,000 to activate our Class Endowed Scholarship for new

students which now stands at \$34,150. And, we are really happy to have presented President Ohle a check to Gustavus for \$300,500 as our 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion class gift. Virtually 70% or 146 persons in our class are donors!

I could go on for another hour blowing our 1960 horn about persons and events, but let me say a few things about the heritage of Gustavus. I say these things as a non-Swede, for my ethnic heritage is Danish, Czech and German! I was being pressed to consider Wittenberg over Gustavus. I may have been influenced a bit by my pastor in the mid-1950s in Bloomington, Illinois, the Rev. Dr. Harold Skillrud, who, with his wife, Lois, are celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of graduation from Gustavus—and besides, I have Minnesota roots having been born and lived my first 12 years in Albert Lea, Minnesota.

Gustavus is a college which has influenced a lot of people, has given growth of mind, body and spirit to so many through its 148 years. There are lots of notable people who walked these halls and walkways—persons like poet/author Bill Holm, Minnesota Governors Luther Youngdahl and Harold LeVander, Judge Paul Magnuson, historian James McPherson, theatre director David Esbjornson, sculptor Paul Granlund, and Minnesota Speaker of the House Margaret Anderson Kelliher. But, you know what I think is even more remarkable are the persons who came here and graduated, who came from small towns, tiny high schools, small farms and whose lives have been quiet witnesses to the importance of everyday people and places. Many of them went back to or resided elsewhere in places perhaps not seen as noteworthy, but which are part of the gift of this nation and this world.

Gustavus was the place where my mind, heart and spirit broke out of their overly-pious, parochial and somewhat narrow confines. I was mightily influenced by the international, global experiences in politics, national affairs, and issues of justice and broadened Christian understanding that I experienced here as I attended public lectures and presentations beyond the classroom which were perhaps the forerunner of what are now the amazing Nobel Conferences.

Gustavus was a place where I found how to be more myself and to know that I did not have to measure up to someone else's standards in order to be cared for.

So, this class of 1960 is honored to take its place in the 50 Year Club of Gustavus Adolphus College. We hope that our witness and influence as alumni will inspire others to come here to study and that our support will continue to undergird the life of this college.

I'm used to saying AMEN at the end of a sermon—which this was not—but I say AMEN because what that means is "So be it!"