

## Roger Harris - Berry High School Class of 63'

Just reading some of the accomplishments of our classmates; I am just blown away. Who would have thought that we had it in us? Probably some of our teachers saw something in us we didn't see in ourselves. For some of us, it was a good woman who had more faith in us than many of us had in ourselves.

After leaving Berry in 1963, I entered Virginia Commonwealth University and graduated in '67 with a degree in Advertising and Marketing. While in college I met and married Ann, my wife of almost 38 years and referred to as the Queen (probably has something to do with "high maintenance" tendencies she has and unfortunately has also passed these same traits on to my daughter). When they say "for better or worse"; my wife's part was probably for worse and I got the better.

In 1967 I had the pleasure of Basic Training in Ft. Dix, tank driving in Ft. Knox, and Combat Engineer OCS at Ft Belvoir in Northern Virginia. After goofing off as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt, I was sent to Nam in August of '69 and ran convoys thru II Corps South. I also had a brief visit to Cambodia in April of '70 that I wouldn't recommend as a tourist stop. I wouldn't want to do it again but I learned a lot about Roger Harris and lots about leadership and getting things done.

After leaving the Army I returned to Virginia and got a job as a sales rep for R H Donnelley Corp. I left Donnelley in 1987 and went over to Bell Atlantic basically doing Yellow Pages sales and sales management. I have stayed in Richmond for my entire career and except for building the Queen bigger houses, I never had to relocate.

I retired in Sept of 2003 as the brain trust in Verizon had an early buy out to drop the payroll. No longer do I worry about work but they gave me a lovely parting gift of \$\$ to ease the transition. I considered running a charter business on the Bay, as I am a licensed boat captain by the Coast Guard, but decided why take something I love to do and turn it into work. Since most of us have worked since we were 14, I figured we are due time off for good behavior.





Like most of my classmates, I have had my share of awards from work and the Army. As I look back over the past 40 years, what a corporation thinks of me pales in comparison to how my kids and grandchildren look at me. I guess I am in awe that a red neck kid from the hills of North Carolina could have had the great life I have had. I have a 35 year old daughter, Catherine that lives in Greenville, NC that has given us two wonderful grandchildren and a son, Jim, who works in Charlottesville, VA. Both of my kids ended up a heck of a lot smarter than me. They

were good students and more importantly, great people who put up with me growing up. My wife, Ann, went back to school and got a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree in accounting and is a CPA working for The Library of Virginia. I currently spend my time attending basketball games and fishing on the Chesapeake Bay. For those of you that haven't experienced the Chesapeake Bay, I can only say that it is one of the best spots on earth. I usually get up early and watch the sun rise and take my boat, The Miss Ann II, out fishing. We catch flounder in the summer and have probably the best Striped Bass fishing on the East Coast in the fall.

As I reflect back on time spent at Berry, I think that the class of '64 was more closely knit than other classes. You seem to have stayed in touch better than our class. I want to thank you for including the class of '63 in your reunion. Needless to say, I haven't seen some of you guys in 40 years and look forward to being in beautiful downtown Rome, GA in June.

For those of you nearing retirement, I can only say it just gets better. It's great going to bed and not caring what time you wake up in the morning. I do what I want to do when I want to do it (assuming that the Queen approves of course!). I'm off to Talbot's to pick up something for the Queen, see you in a month.



“You can take the boy out of Berry but you can't take Berry out of the boy.”