

Charles P. Downey - Berry High School Class of 1964

I'm like Roger Harris, I'm blown out of the water about the accomplishments of our classmates, but I'm not surprised. I knew that we were a very special group of students while at Berry.

Going to Berry came natural for me. My mother graduated from Berry High School for Girls. During my childhood she assisted four boys in applying to attend Berry High School. Three were accepted. Whenever she had the opportunity she gave a tour of the campus. When I entered Berry, September 1960, the last student she helped was Curtis Dobbs (Preacher), who was a senior at the time. He took me under his wing and made my transition to the Berry life very smooth.

After four years at Berry, I wanted to see what was on the other side of the Gate of Opportunity. I went to West Georgia College and graduated with a B.S. in Business Administration. I met my wife, Jane, there.



Ten months after graduating I enlisted in the Army because I was on the Draft Board's most wanted list. I went to Fort Dix for Basic Training, Fort Polk for Infantry Training, Fort Belvoir for Engineering OCS, and Fort Lee for Quarter Master Training. Thanks to Tricky Dick Nixon I spent the rest of my time at Fort Bragg. A group of us at Fort Bragg received orders to Vietnam and then our orders were cancelled. So, on one better say anything bad about Tricky Dick in my presence.

After my discharge from the Army, I tried selling real estate during the 1973, 74, and 75 Recession, when the interest rates were over 10%. I came to the realization that I was not a salesman. In September 1975 I started working for Fulton County, the largest County in the State of Georgia. I've worked in the Finance Department, Housing Authority, Tax Office, and now I am working for the Board of Commissioners in the Clerk's Office as a Technology Operations Analyst. As the title implies, I work with the computers in the office.

I am proud of two accomplishments. The first is earning a Black Belt in Karate at the age of 42. The second was creating the Information Technology Leadership Program while I was the President of the Georgia Chapter of Government Management Information Science.

One of the most interesting stories I heard at Berry was told by a senior when I was a freshman. The senior said that he was a regular customer of Peggy's, the local brothel in Rome. Peggy's was well known throughout the land. He knew all the ladies that worked there. He said one Sunday he was eating his dinner in Hill Dinning Hall after church when he looked up in amazement to see a lady from Peggy's sitting next to Mr. Gargis at the faculty's table. Can you imagine what Mrs. Loveday would have done, if she had known that Mr. Loveday was having Sunday dinner at the same table with a professional prostitute? What do you think Mr. Geraldson would have done? Oh well, food for the imagination.

Jane and I have been married for 35 years. We have 2 children (Chad and Sandra), one son-in-law (Jeff), and one granddaughter (Skyler). We are very proud of all of them. Needless to say, Skyler is the center of life now.

***You can take the boy out of Berry but you can't take Berry out of the boy.
Berry Academy 1964 to 2004 & 40 years later***

