

Millard G. Laney

Berry Academy

Class of 1964

Class President 1964, 1963, 1962

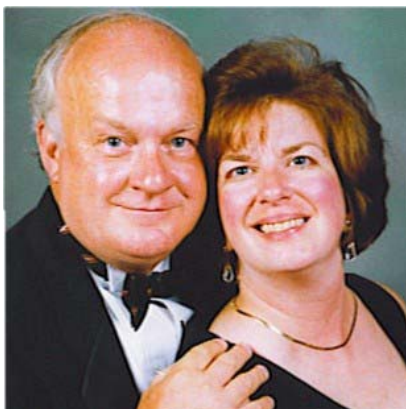
It was June 6, 1960 and it was my first day at Mount Berry School for Boys. At that time of my life my Mother had passed away when I was 11 years old and I was living with my father in a boarding house on 5th Ave. in Rome. My father passed away when I was a junior at Berry. We had one bedroom, one bed, and a kitchen and shared a bathroom with the others in the house. I was basically on the streets at age 12. I had attended East Rome Jr. High in the 8th grade. My father worked at Mixon Filling Station on the forks at the Rome 5th Ave. Bridge. Every time the Berry bus went to Rome it passed that gas station and my old house.



My first day at Berry Mr. Geraldson was the first person I met. Mr. Loveday must have been out of town. I was assigned to Pilgrim Hall on the first floor. I was dropped off at Pilgrim Hall and was escorted to my room. In my room I had a chest of drawers and a metal frame bed with a very thin mattress. I lay down on the bed and looked at the ceiling and saw black soot all over the ceiling, which was due to the coal burning furnace. I said to myself, "This is heaven".

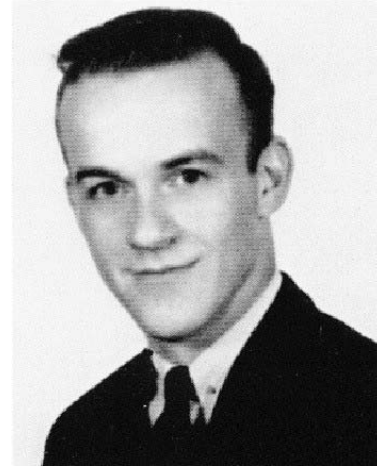
I heard a bell clanging and my roommate, Johnny Foster a senior, told me that meant that dinner was ready. I followed other boys down this sidewalk to Hill Dining Hall. As you all know we ate family style. I remember the dinner, as it was Canadian bacon, canned green beans and corn fritters with syrup. I said to myself, "This is heaven".

And for 4 great years I lived in heaven, as Berry was my home and only home for that time. I spent every Christmas and summer at Berry and most Holidays. Before I went to Berry I had a terrible inferiority complex due to my mother passing away, living conditions, etc. But at Berry, we all were the same as we all wore the same clothes and we all were our family. That was what was so great about Berry- we all were the same and had the opportunity to excel on our own merits- not from what we had or who we were. That environment, each of you and all our adult mentors changed my life. I am sure we all have stories of someone helping us in a crisis, etc. I can assure you that Mr. Loveday was always involved to support us even though we were not aware. My junior year when my father died I was going to quit Berry and go into the Marines, but Mr. Wood and Mr. Loveday made it possible for me to stay. One of many stories we all have. Now for the rest of the story.



I did graduate from Berry and was very honored by being accepted to Berry College. I spent four more years at Berry but during college I never ran for a class officer position. After

graduation I was selected for a position in the Army Dietetic Program and a Second Lieutenant rank. I spent the summer of 1968 at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX for Basic Training and then was sent to Denver, Colorado for my internship which lasted a year. Then I was assigned to Fort Benning where my first daughter was born. I was there for 2 years and accepted a position as Chief Food Service Director in Bangkok, Thailand for 2 years. My second daughter was born in Thailand. I had numerous other assignments such as San Francisco and Purdue University in Indiana where the Army sent me to get my Masters. Then I was the youngest ever Dietetic Internship Director at Fort Sam. I learned to fly at Fort Sam and it was a thrilling experience. I left Fort Sam as a Major and went to Monterey, California, then to Fort Campbell, Kentucky where I was Project Officer for the Food Service of a new hospital being constructed. My final assignment was at good ole Fort Bragg, NC. Here my son was born and it was my longest assignment as I kept turning down other assignments. I retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel on November 1, 1988. My career in the Army was very rewarding.



I immediately went to work for the Marriott Corporation. This was great to be selected to work for such a great company. I was a General Manager of a large facility in Syracuse, NY. I was there about 6 years where I met my love of ever- Darlene-. We later moved to Baltimore/Washington DC area where I was a District Manager for 17 facilities. After a couple of years there I discovered a position open in Florida and was accepted and moved to Sarasota/Bradenton area. I covered the Southwest area of Florida for Marriott. Within a year Sodexo purchased a portion of Marriott and I was to be sent to Kentucky, etc. I left the company, obtained my Real Estate Licenses and sold for a while. I was asked to take a position as an Account Executive with the largest Title Co. in Florida and I did. It was great for 4 ½ years until they were most recently bought out. I left due to corporate changes and was selected as the statewide manager for the marketing/sales team for First Fidelity Title Co., which is owned by WCI. WCI was selected as the best builder in 2004 for upscale high priced homes. I have been in my present position for 3 months. All and all, I have lived many lives and have always felt Berry was my savior and lifter to do my best. I have many fond memories of you guys.

I am happily married to a great spouse. My oldest daughter, Christina, is married and has 3 children. She lives in Kennesaw and her husband is the video manger at the Phillips Arena. My second daughter, Melody, was married last year, lives in Boston where her husband works for the Boston Red Sox. Both daughters received diplomas from Syracuse University. Then there is my son who is a student at Mercer University and finally working on his grades to keep his scholarship in cross country.

P.S. We have a great pooch- his name is Penney. Looking forward to seeing everyone soon.

*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*