

Robert Weakley – Berry Academy Class of 1964

When I reflect back on things it was really a fluke and should have been impossible for me to have attended Berry Schools. I was basically happy as a freshman with my High School in West Palm Beach, Florida. A 1963 Berry Academy graduate by the name of Gary Evans was already a student at Berry. He lived in the same town as I but I did not know him until our mothers had made their acquaintance through a job related situation. After a discussion among our mothers it was somehow decided I would attend Berry beginning as a sophomore. That first year Gary and I roomed together and got along quite well.



Little did I know at the time but money in my family was scarce during those years. My father left us and did not contribute to any support for the family. On my mom's meager salary it is quite amazing she was able to make ends meet and have enough for Berry. I remained at Berry during holidays to work additional hours to help with the tuition. Those of us who remained at school during the holidays were always invited by Mr. and Mrs. Wood to their quarters for dinner and family orientated activities. Mr. Wood was a good man in my eyes and left quite an impression.

During the summer between our junior and senior year I attended summer classes at home in order to gain enough credits to graduate early in January 1964. I was not able to return to Berry for the formal graduation but believe me all of you were with me in my heart on that graduation day.



Bob and his wife Kathy on a very recent trip to Sydney,

When I returned home in December 1963 I immediately went to work as a maintenance worker for RCA at the local manufacturing plant. In September 1964 I gave it a good try for college but found I just could not adapt to their program. And, as we all know, school and work are a hard combination to endure for any length of time. Because of Vietnam and my desire to serve without being drafted I enlisted in the USAF. What an experience!

I found it to be scary but at the same time the most absolute way of learning the real value of life itself.

Upon discharge in December 1969 I returned to my home in West Palm Beach and began employment as a police officer for the Town of Palm Beach in January 1970. I worked there for 7.5 years and then became a Palm Beach County Deputy Sheriff until January 2001. A total of 32 years. Sure doesn't seem like it! During those years I spent a few as a road patrol officer but most of my career was directed to being a detective. Most of that time was directed to the homicide division during the drug-war times of South Florida. We were busy people then! Also while on the department I learned to fly and did fly police helicopters.

I married in 1974 however she died in early 1978. My present wife Kathy and I just celebrated our 25th anniversary. She also retired after 27 years in law enforcement. Kathy had two daughters and they both still live in our immediate area and are both very resourceful and successful. One is on the executive level of a major property management corporation and the other is a fingerprint identification technician for law enforcement. In 1984 we built a two-story home by ourselves (no contractors involved) and still reside there. It took 18 months of intense labor and internal controversy but we now know it was really worth it. Truly, a task of blood, sweat and tears.

Our free time together is spent traveling. We just finished climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge on our latest vacation. I have had many personal interests over the years of which the most prominent is flying. I have owned an aircraft until recently and still try to keep up-to-date on all the fantastic navigation and electronic gadgetry in the aviation world.

Presently I am teaching as a volunteer instructor for computers at a senior center a few days a week so for those of you not indoctrinated be advised there are folks in their late 70's and 80's learning to be proficient with them everyday!



Lastly, since my "official" retirement, I've been operating a private investigation agency since June 2000. This is gratifying work in that I am able to pick the cases in which I wish to become involved. My years of law enforcement experience have certainly paid with this endeavor as I don't have to start out on first base as others without the experience.

Looking forward to see all of you in June! Can't wait!

Bob Weakley