

Tribute to Bob Good (1935-1998) and Jim Warren (1935-2004)

Bob and Jim were two of my best friends at the Academy of Arcadia. We started the first grade together and along with nine other classmates (out of the twenty-one who graduated together), completed twelve years of school together. In twelve years you get to know a person pretty well. Along the way our small band of brothers added Jim Steyer, who moved in during the fourth grade, and lost Larry Myers, who moved away in high school. We also ran around with Duane Beamer (d. 2006), who was a grade ahead of us, and Marilyn Plotts (Cunningham), Shirley Lenhart (Collins), and Carol Lee Kieffer (Good). We had many good times together, but most of the time in those early years, it was just Bob and Jim and me.

I tried several times to write tributes to Bob and Jim, but I kept having difficulty because all the stories seemed to run together, to intertwine...so I decided to write a joint tribute to these two great friends.

Bob lived on a farm about three miles northeast of Arcadia, Jim lived on a farm about three miles south west of Arcadia and I lived on a farm five miles south west of Arcadia. You might say we were farm boys! Our elementary years went quickly...and our lives revolved around sports at recess periods. We have had many wonderful teachers: Mrs. Brenner in first grade; Mrs. Amstutz in second grade; Mrs. Arthur in third grade; Miss Cole in Fourth grade; Ms. Rosie

Fox in fifth grade; and, Miss Bessie Fox in sixth grade. It says something for the Academy that those were the only teachers that we had in the first six grades...wonderful teachers who loved us and knew everything about us (You couldn't get away with anythingif you made a mistake in the third grade you still paid for it in the sixth!)

Mrs. Brenner and Mrs. Amstutz were the mothers you needed when you really wanted to stay home with your own mother; Mrs. Arthur encouraged us to try new things and love sports; Miss Cole was our introduction to the real world...you didn't do it, you failed); and the Fox Twins introduced us to hard work and the arts. I wonder how many folks can say they had six teachers for the first six years of school. I believe they gave us our educational foundations...and a feeling that we could succeed...that you could make it in this world.

I don't think Bob and Jim particularly liked the book parts of school, but who did? We would rather play ball and take care of our animals on the farm. Our sports high light in the elementary years occurred when we were in the third grade. Mrs. Arthur mentioned to a colleague. Mrs. Covert, the high school business teacher, that her little third grade boys could probably beat the fourth grade basketball champions in Findlay...Howard Elementary School.

In that her husband, Mr. Covert, was their coach, a game was quickly arranged for the following Saturday at the WMCA in Findlay. Well, we packed our duffle bags, or the closest thing we had resembling duffle bags, and went to the

big city of Findlay to play. We arrived early and went to the local five and dime store to have our picture taken while sitting in one of those coin operated photo machines. We walked around, imagining that folks were saying to themselves, "There goes that good team from Arcadia." No one probably even noticed we were there! After a hard fought game, we lost 2-1. Larry Myers was our "high point man," and our defense was nearly perfect! We claimed a moral victory...after all, they were the champs of a large city and they were one year older than us.

Junior high school passed quickly (We called it the seventh and eighth grades in those years! No fancy junior high school terms at the Academy!) By this time, Bob and Jim and I were close friends, but we never spent a night at the other's home, we hardly ever saw one another during summer vacation, we didn't have Little League or Boy Scouts or a local swimming pool or camp or anything. We didn't go to the same churches. We each worked on the farm during the summers with our Dads...that was our life. Work and doing things with our families. Bob got to do exciting things because his Dad was also the school custodian and he got to have a "real job."

Our lives really changed during the high school years! We may not have had club and activities, but we were farm boys and farm boys got to have driver's licenses at age fourteen!

Yes, fourteen! The note on the license said we could only use an automobile if we were doing farm work or school activities...but what else was there for us? Baseball and basketball and football and plays and dances were school activities, were they not? We got around...and our parents never seemed to worry about us. Truthfully, we never violated their trust, but were pretty free to go and come as we pleased.

Bob started studying more and Jim became fanatical about learning mathematics, because he had decided he wanted to be an engineer. He surpassed everyone at the academy in Mathematics and even won awards at the district level. We were all involved in the Future Farmers of America Club and participated in animal judging, pest hunts, construction projects, debate teams, and the raising of our own animals and crops.

Bob raised championship Holstein cows and bulls and showed them all over the state. Jim raised goats and crops. We all played football, basketball and baseball and we each won league awards in those sports. Bob was the center in football, Jim the end and I was the halfback. In basketball, Bob and I were guards and Jim was a forward. In baseball Jim was the first baseman, Bob an outfielder and I was the third baseman.

After high school, Jim married Marna Romick (from our hated, but better rival, Arlington) and Bob married Carol Lee Kieffer (We all knew he would do this). Bob became the Superintendent of Building and Grounds for Findlay High

School and Jim graduated from Tri-State College in Angola, Indiana as an engineer and completed his whole career with Cooper Tire and Rubber Company (While farming hundreds of acres of land including his family farm.) Bob died after a long, and painful battle with heart disease and Jim died unexpectedly at the steering wheel of his truck at one of his farm fields.

Over the years, we stayed in touch and every time we would meet, it seemed like we had just been together the week before. Like in our youth, we didn't get together often, except when Ruth and I were back in town to visit our families. Bob and Jim only came to our home in Twin Lakes a time or two...they just didn't like to travel. We never had fights, we never had much to argue about, we liked being together, we understood each other.

Bob was gentle and had a dry sense of humor. He hated swimming but loved all other sports. He mostly loved his wife and boys. He spent his entire life in Arcadia and never regretted it. He was where he wanted to be. Bob lived the quiet life many folks only hope to achieve... he followed the Academy teams and knew everyone who played...and they knew him.

He had roots that ran deep...and they were in Arcadia. Jim, like Bob, never strayed from his roots. He built a home on the family farm and lived his entire life there. He always told me how happy he was to live on the farm and to be able to

farm the land that was his. Jim always told it the way he saw it, and I believe he died with few regrets. He was revered by his community, as evidenced by the outpouring of folks who came to his funeral.

Bob and Jim and I shared a role model, Coach Bob Robinson. Coach Robinson, is now in his eighties and living in Avon Lake, Ohio (The city he went to as high school basketball coach and later Superintendent, after leaving The Academy). Ruth and I drove coach Robinson and Elsie, to the funerals of Bob, Jim and Duane. Coach Robinson was very young when he started coaching us (Just a few years older than us), and he talked about each of us all the way to Arcadia and back to Avon Lake.

He remembered certain plays that each had run, dinners at his home, bus rides all over the county, points and touchdowns scored, and stories about our parents and girlfriends. It reminded me of how lucky we all were to attend such a small school and to have teachers who cared so much for us. Bob and Jim were great guys, great friends and solid men. They cared for others and others cared for them...isn't that what we would all like to have others say about us?

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