

The Roster “Rebel Rouser” (Issue 8)

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1/01/13 Well, did you know this about ?Bill Knippa '65

In the '60's, Ye Old Breezeway was often a spot to lean a shoulder against the wall and talk to girlfriends or at least “observe” which girls were coming out of the gym. “Meet you at the Breezeway” was common.

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Well, in the last 45 years the LEE athletes have periodically reported a mysterious gust of wind in the Breezeway. LEE lore has it that this is the remnant of what was once the phenomenon of a rare indoor cyclone in the old gym. A Rebounding Cyclone! Not throwing off shards of metal and wood, but potentially lethal elbows and knees. Even “sharp and powerful talons”, claimed the most fearful of cagers. A competitive force of man and nature was in play, which only a stoic and hardnosed Coach Bobby Roberts could comprehend. This competitive force was “Work Ethic Bill” frightening game opponents and even teammates in practice.

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Remember, Bill saw basketball as his 2nd choice of sport to carry him into college. Bill's eye was on the “pig skin” as his gateway to attend a prestigious military academy and study medicine. This was no “pipedream”Bill's scholastic and gridiron honors in his Junior season already had colleges at his threshold.

But, torrential rains and a devastating knee injury were looming in Corpus Christi. Heartbreak!

Yet, his boyhood mentor, Pastor Guido Merkins, has earlier guided him into a more mature understanding of setting life goals and holding himself accountable for attainment of those goals. “I'm going to be an Honor Student and make the varsity as a Sophomore” were early self-declarations, which Bill humbly made and achieved at LEE.

Bill is off to Trinity University on an academic scholarship to begin his journey in the field of medicine. Before completion of his first semester, he has an awakening that his heart and future are not in medicine, but in theology. He is off to 4 years of undergrad study at Concordia College in

Austin. He is now utilizing a scholarship awarded to him by the Optimist Clubs of Texas as the 1965 “Young Texan of the Year”. He is even more committed to his change in direction.

Now young William Bennett Knippa is migrating abroad to the UK to study Theology under an admired mentor at the prestigious University of Cambridge. A beautiful and historical pinnacle of learning built 500 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is not meant for him to participate in “Proper Sporting” at Cambridge. They don the Sporting Blue for Varsity Matches against Oxford in sports like Rowing, Cricket, Chess, and Tiddlywinks. Tiddlywinks!!

Young W.B.K. is walking the lanes; crossing the foot bridges; standing at the steps of great colleges, museums, and chapels. He is now at a cultural crossroads. All this is happening without him in the “proper” footwear for such a dignified pinnacle of academia. For a year, he is immersed in his studies at Cambridge, proudly wearing his back home cowboy boots. He is still one ‘One of Ours’.

A year later and he is back in his native land attending Concordia Seminary in St. Louis for 3 years. His goal is to obtain his Masters of Divinity, which is required to be ordained as a Lutheran Minister. Goal accomplished!

His thirst for learning now takes him to the University of Texas, Austin to obtain his Masters and Doctorate in Psychology/Counseling. All of these studies are ultimately about his passion to work in the field of Relationships. He is building his playbook to bridge with his long time work ethic. That playbook is about his journey:to healing and enriching those Relationships, which enrich the lives of others through his ministry and counseling.

In addition to his ministry, Bill is a practicing Psychologist. He is the Senior Pastor at Bethany Lutheran Church in Austin. He has been at the 50 year old Bethany Lutheran Church for the past 35 years. He continues his passion for learning and personal growth. He has done post-doctoral work at the prestigious Menninger Clinic and in family counseling. He is still on a journey of continual education through attending classes. He speaks at seminars and retreats on topics related to Christian Living,

marriage, family, and personal and professional growth. He writes and publishes numerous articles on Relationships.... for example his column in "The Family Counselor" in The Lutheran Witness.

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That competitive force is still alive in Bill. He now competes against stones in the paths of others in their most crucial Relationships. He knows it's a "loong game", but it is what he has prepared for.

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One of Ours, Dr. Bill Knippa Ph.D., Building and Enriching Relationships