



Bruce E. Miller – Class of 1961

“My favorite was Mr. Orlyn Lockard, my drafting teacher, who challenged me with college engineering courses when I ran out of things to do in my 4 years of drafting. Naturally, I was forced to repeat them when I went to college; which was ridiculous. Another teacher, Mr. Don Livasy, wowed the whole 8th grade shop class by doing push-ups with a 150 lb. student sitting on his back. Being a poor physical specimen myself, I was especially impressed by this feat.”

High School Years

My family lived at 7129 Tracy during high school. I had two younger siblings who went to Southwest. Although I didn't notice or care about it at the time, I guess I would be considered a loner.

Outside of classes, I made good money on weekends caddying at Oakwood Country Club with my friend, Ron Zolotor from Paseo, who got me in there because he was Jewish. I worked after school at various grocery stores and in my spare time took care of a fleet of neighborhood lawns owned by elderly people. Some of this money I “wisely” invested in various home-built go-kart contraptions which I used to race around the local streets and infuriate the local cops, the neighbors, and my family members. My life as a traffic law scofflaw was born!

Actually, thinking back, it was born at age 11, when I got to drive a Caterpillar D8 (a BIG tractor) around some country roads in Idaho. I also drove a 4-speed on the floor truck on the same day. I now own a motorcycle which is electronically limited to 186 mph. While riding my bike home from SE on the last day of school in 8th grade, a car moving at high speed hit me at Meyer Blvd. and Prospect while running a red light. I remember breaking out the windshield with my right elbow and seeming to fly forever before landing on my butt in the street while my bike was ground to spaghetti under the car. There were at least a dozen witnesses standing around saying to me, “you might be hurt.” Amazingly, my only injury was a slightly skinned left elbow from landing in the street. That safety education

example has served me well in my 40 some years of riding motorcycles: Never trust traffic lights or drivers.

The big memory for me was Sputnik in 1957. It scared the hell out of this country. Since I was fairly lucky at math and a natural gearhead, I was guided into a rocket science future in mechanical engineering.

After High School

I attended Northwestern on a full academic scholarship and got booted after one year because I picked the wrong friends and we disrespected their educational system. The moral of the story is: “pick your friends carefully because you will end up doing whatever they do.” Needless to say, I received a very good education there, just not in academics.

I basically wasted 50 years of my life trying to diagnose what was causing my semi-permanently infected, acute, poison-ivy-like skin lesions; more commonly known as severe atopic eczema. The doctors were helpless idiots, and worse, almost killed me more than once. Come to find out, it was FOOD! If I stick to a monk’s diet of broccoli, beans, brown rice, olive oil, salt, water and NOTHING else, I can survive without large doses of corticosteroids which were slowly killing me.

After getting fired from Merrill Lynch back in 1963 for too much “scratching on the job,” I became an investor. Since I needed a job where appearance was irrelevant, I worked at TWA on their airplane’s avionics to support my investor career. I have used this story several times to cheer up my minority friends down or bitter about human prejudice. My OWN tribe rejected me because of my ugly skin. I dropped out of polite society almost 50 years ago; although I did attend the 40 year SE’61 reunion and am tentatively scheduled for the 50th.

As one who has lost most of his humanity and feels like a wounded bear most of the time, I am amazed and grateful there are people like Phil Rhoads and you too, Diana Bay, still around, who have the energy and optimism to take on a project like this newsletter. That letter by Preston Washington is a gem. Most of my memories are like nightmares. That’s why I haven’t written more.