

Communications

Readers' comments, ideas, and opinions

Former Freshmen

Editor,

Congratulations to you and Alix Mitchell for the warm and interesting article "The Freshman Experience" in the July issue of *Syracuse University Magazine*.

Insight into the feelings of freshmen brought back a rush of memories over a couple (nearly a few!) decades of time.

My class of 1958 was the first to occupy Watson, the newest dorm on campus at the time. The feelings I had were very similar to the ones Alix uncovered in her article. The apprehensions, fears, and procrastinations were the same. Throughout it all, somehow, I survived.

Looking back, I guess the greatest surprise was the discovery of one's self. I'm grateful to the University for showing me how to explore and enjoy learning, a process that continues to influence my life.

Bob Topor '58
San Diego, Calif.

Editor,

Your article "The Freshman Experience" really touched a nerve. As I read the article, I kept remembering the fondness, fun, and frustrations of my freshman year.

One very important element during my first week at SU was the Goon Squad. The squad members greeted us at our cars, generally helped us around campus, and were very much a part in helping freshmen keep their feet on the ground.

I'm very surprised that no mention was made of this important group of "advisors." Is the Goon Squad still in existence?

Jeff Winik '74
Kendall Park, N.J.

Editor's response: The Goon Squad is still very much in existence; this fall, approximately 400 "goons" helped freshmen move in on campus and showed them around. A new opening-week schedule required goons to work two days this

year; as always, though, they volunteered eagerly and performed to rave reviews.

Editor,

This week [Aug. 4-10] is one fraught with remembrances for me. The papers are full of stories concerning the 40th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing on Aug. 6, 1945; by chance, I was attached to the same Pacific bomber command as the crew of the *Enola Gay*, although I was unaware of that plane's existence and its momentous mission. . . .

But Aug. 6, 1943—two years earlier—was also a significant day in my life. It was the day I reported for active duty with the U.S. Army and was shipped off to Syracuse University (against my will, as I had expected to be sent to Princeton University) as a student in the Army Specialized Training Program.

I mention all of this as prologue, because I have just gotten around to reading your editorial and the article "The Freshman Experience." After the war, I came back to Syracuse under the GI Bill, and my first full year as a college student was nothing like that described by Alix Mitchell.

It was a very difficult time for veterans who were not yet fully assimilated into normal society, for a university not prepared for our onslaught, and for the nonveteran upperclassmen, who were even less able to deal with "frosh" older than they and not as readily intimidated by them as new students were expected to be. Those were the days when freshmen were expected to wear orange beanies to define their place in the on-campus pecking order.

Theodore Lustig '48
Fort Lee, N.J.

Editor's note: The following letter was written by one of the dozens of 1984-85 freshmen interviewed for the "The Freshman Experience."

Editor,

I just finished reading "The Freshman Experience" again. I

can't remember how many times I have read it. I really enjoyed it.

After I read it a few times, the article got me feeling that I have a chance—so much so that last week I changed my mind about staying home in Brooklyn and going to St. Francis College. I decided to return to Syracuse on probation. I've got to find out if I can prove myself here. At least I'll know for sure. In addition, because I've been at SU for a year, I know about the classes, the size, and other aspects of the University. There can't be any more excuses about being "lost" in a big school.

So this is my goal for the fall. I had a productive summer, and I found out a lot about myself.

Peter J. Goyco '88
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Top Teachers

Editor,

I was pleased to read "A+ for C-Owen" in *Syracuse University Magazine*, April 1985. Pleased, but not surprised. I am a class of 1976 drama graduate, and during my undergraduate studies I attempted to ferret out "gut" courses outside my major. I was never more delightfully challenged, stimulated, and intellectually entertained in a classroom than in courses taught by Professor David Owen.

My greatest delight was to learn that Prof. Owen is still at it and that others are benefiting from the work of one of the finest teachers I have ever encountered.

Sandy Moore '76
New York City

Editor,

I very much enjoyed your feature on "C-Owen." He is indeed an extraordinary, walking, living, human library of knowledge. I've had the fortunate pleasure of taking a couple of his literature courses.

Thank you for your publication—excellent work.

Dennis W. Hale '83
Auburn, N.Y.

Editor,

Soon after the mail arrived this morning, my wife [Elizabeth Cox Blake '36] came into my study, where I was working at my desk, and said that she had found something so good in the July issue of *Syracuse University Magazine* that she wanted to read it to me. It was your affectionate tribute to William Park Hotchkiss. We were both delighted with it.

It is a fine piece of writing and gives a superb description of "Hotch," both in the classroom and in his home. The article prolongs his memory in a very touching way. Although I knew "Hotch," I never observed him in the classroom, and you made me see what I missed.

Nelson M. Blake
Deerfield Beach, Fla.

Editor,

I was fortunate enough to have William Park Hotchkiss as my freshman advisor, and our similar western Pennsylvania backgrounds helped me alleviate a severe case of homesickness. I believe he taught at Allegheny College.

I wasn't one of his students (I didn't care for that area of history), but I do recall his home you so vividly described.

Robert Martin '60
Erie, Pa.

Editor,

Being in Professor Hotchkiss' class was the most profound experience I had at Syracuse University.

As most of us knew, he was suffering a throat ailment, which would shortly end his life. Maintaining his unique sense of humor, as well as classical expertise, he touched our hearts with his dedication. During his last semester, he used a microphone in the classroom, which was crowded and yet held all of 45 seats. We all stood in unison, applauding and crying at once after his last lecture. It was a moment I will cherish forever.

Tim LaBoria '70
Denver, Colo.