

Jim's Perspective...

Springtime and a Dance

My dad's birthday was in late March. I always pause, and think back about how lucky I was to have such a wonderful role model to show me what it means to be a man. His wife and children came first – he always came last. He was kind, respectful, and extended his unconditional love to all of us – always. He also emphasized that we should always try to find a little happiness each and every day. I think too, about his later years when he developed Alzheimer's disease. He spent the last 8 years of his life struggling with this disease which ultimately led to life in a nursing home. As his mental abilities deteriorated, he reached a point where he didn't know who any of us were. He also forgot how to talk. At one point towards the end, I sat with him one afternoon in a garden at the Madonna nursing home. There was soft music playing. He liked it. Suddenly, he grabbed my hand, stood up, and started to dance with me. It was ballroom dancing or kind of a waltz. I think he had maybe forgotten the difference between a man and a woman. This dance, in one sense, is very sad, but in another way, I was glad to offer him something that he liked and wanted to do. There is another aspect of my dad that provided me a unique experience in my life that most kids never have. He was the editor-in-chief of the Lincoln Star newspaper for many years. When you are the son of the editor of a major metropolitan newspaper, you have experiences with the press that most kids never have. Below is a story about me and the press involving another dance!

It was the spring of 1968, Janie and I were seniors at Pius X high school. Pius held three formal dances during the school year. There was the Homecoming dance in the fall, the Crystal Ball in December and in the spring, there was the Inaugural Ball. The Inaugural Ball included the crowning of a king and queen, and a prince and princess. All of the students in the school voted for boys and girls to be royalty at the dance. Janie started teasing me and suggesting that I run for king. She seriously wanted me to do it. I dismissed it at first, but with her encouragement I finally decided, "what the heck!" I'll give it a try!

I remember that each of the three grade levels at Pius elected several boys and several girls for king and queen. Then, the night of the dance, all the kids at the dance voted for a king and queen from this select group of candidates. The boy and girl who had the second-highest vote total were prince and princess. One thing I specifically do remember is that during the process of our senior class nominating boys for king, Janie was my biggest supporter. She was kind of my campaign manager as she waltzed through the halls at Pius and urged her classmates to vote for me. At some point before the dance, it was announced at school that I was voted by my senior classmates to be a candidate for king of the Inaugural Ball along with various other candidates voted in by the other two classes. I am sure after this happened I told my parents about my candidacy. I don't remember the conversation, but I am sure they were thrilled for me. I am also sure, that the two of them were somewhat astounded by this development. They knew their boy as somewhat shy and a bit of an introvert. Not the sort of young man that would compete for king of a formal dance at the high school. However, I know too that they were aware that in the last few years, I had become more confident, outgoing, and more comfortable with myself. They knew why. I had a girlfriend, Janie, standing by my side. A cheerleader, and one of the most

beautiful, intelligent and popular girls in the school. She made all the difference in the world about who I was.

And so, the night of the dance arrived. We were all visiting and speculating about who would be royalty. The band was warming up, preparing to play dance music for the evening. Then I noticed something different. Two men in suits and wearing Fedora or Stetson hats entered the gym. One had a big camera. It was the press! It was a reporter and a newspaper photographer who showed up to do a story about the soon-to-be-elected royalty. This is what happens when your dad is editor of a newspaper! All students at the dance cast their ballots. Several nuns and priests counted the votes. Consequently, there was no chance of voter fraud! Someone stepped before the band's main microphone on the stage in the school gymnasium where the dance was held and announced the royalty. I was elected King! Yes, King James I! The loyal subjects of the Doblerian Kingdom gathered around me and congratulated me. What a night! Paper crowns were placed on the head of the king and queen. Indeed it was a fun evening. The reporter and photographer did their work and below is a picture of the king and queen which appeared in the Lincoln Sun newspaper. This wasn't my dad's paper, but this is what the journalists in Lincoln did. I remember the Lincoln journalists always had a professional friendly association among all of them (I think there was a The Lincoln Press Club), and they all met on occasion for evening cocktails which was often how they learned what everyone's family members were doing. They usually put news articles about a fellow journalist's family in a local paper other than the paper where that journalist worked. Note too, back then it was all film photography. No digital stuff – no cell phone cameras.



Yes, in the spring of 1968 I was a different young man than I was as a sophomore at Pius, and as stated above it was due to a wonderful girl who always stood by me, no matter what! I finish with a song in her honor! It includes a symphony orchestra which you seldom ever hear in pop music today. I also love the vinyl album! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5i9vT8wGY8>

James B Dobler

Jim Dobler, CPCU

PIA Legislative Coordinator

Questions or Comments? Please email jbdobler@outlook.com

