

Welcome Speech

Tom Lukish (10/4/2024)

- It is my honor and pleasure to welcome you to our 65th Naval Academy Class of 1959 Reunion. We started our journey together during the summer of 1955. We have had our unique and special friendship for almost 70 years. It is a privilege to be able to stand here and talk to you, after all these years, about this friendship which is founded on Trust, Loyalty and Support.
- In preparation for this special gathering I did a little research, and I came away from that inquiry with a very deeply meaningful message that I would like to share with you.
- I checked to determine if the Class of 1954 had a 70th Reunion. Yes, the Class of 1954 had its 70th Reunion in April of this year, right here in Annapolis.
- I called Major General Bill Hoover United States AirForce, the President of the Class of 1954 to talk to him about their Reunion. It was a most enjoyable conversation. I didn't ask Bill how old he was but I assume he is 92 or 93 I think he enjoyed talking with me as much as I enjoyed talking with him. As I mentioned a minute ago, I came away from my conversation with Bill with a very profound and deeply personal and meaningful message.
- I would like to talk with you about it.
- Bill Hoover lives in northern Virginia, not too far from Annapolis. He helped organize and plan his Class Reunion along with his Reunion Committee. However Bill did not attend his Class Reunion. Bill is the primary Caregiver for his wife of 70 years in their home. Bill did not want to leave his wife in the care of someone else for 3 days, so he could not attend his Class Reunion. Tomorrow night we are going to honor our wives with a special recognition of how important they have been in our lives. Major General Bill Hoover proves that recognition
- At the Class of 1954 70th Reunion held in April of this year, there were 17 Classmates and 9 family members in attendance for a total of 26 attendees. Here at our 65th Reunion we have 62 Classmates and 60 family members for a total of 122. That's 21% of our attendance. If I am still President of this Special Class in 2029 we will have a 70th Reunion. Each of us has very special people in our lives. With that in mind and with a much smaller expected attendance in 2029, I would like to ask you to consider this 65th Reunion as an opportunity to express to those special people in your lives just how special they have been and why. Don't wait for the next Reunion. Don't miss this opportunity.
- I think some of you have heard me say this before, "I think in life we are all just walking each other home, Please enjoy the walk."