



Calev, Suzanna <suzanna.calev@wilkes.edu>

Some thoughts for the record

3 messages

TO 202 <michellini@verizon.net>

Sat, Jun 22, 2019 at 10:52 AM

To: cnbreiseth@aol.com, jeg@strategicinitiatives.com, jrodech@ptd.net, suzanna.calev@wilkes.edu, michellini@verizon.net

Dear Friends and colleagues:

This seems to be the most familiar format for me to write things even though it is not an efficient way to record history.

As I have tried to give context to the artifacts from WW I and WW II that I intend to transfer to the Archives I want to communicate these thoughts to you first. As you know I have constantly asked myself, "What prompted those few Trustees at Bucknell to even consider establishing and financially supporting a Junior College in Wilkes Barre, a fragmented community of ethnic hostilities and certainly an exploited labor force where production of anthracite coal was the top priority. There was no organized labor force and much of the cultural structures of company town enclaves and ethnic communities was intended to keep it that way.

As I look at the WW I artifacts on my shelf I remember the stories I overheard as a child and you saw an example of how the memory recorded the childhood walks with my aunts singing the songs of the WW I soldiers. Their brother, my Uncle Frank Marchetti had served in France and I believe even survived a "Gas Attack" but I never directly heard a word about the war mentioned by Uncle Frank.

Similarly I remember on my fathers side of the family stories of my Uncle Leon Michelini, who also served in France, but who also "never" spoke a word about his experience, but their "Helmets" sit here on my shelf and will be among the artifacts in the Wilkes Archives.

My father was also drafted for WW I but caught pneumonia in training camp and almost died in the Flu epidemic of 1918 that killed almost 18 million people around the world. Born in 1925 I grew up during the depression years. My father was a "Roaring Twenties" entrepreneur and with a young family of three children became a pauper in the financial crash of 1929. His survival and care for his family during those depression years is a different story.

My point is that I grew up in the post WW I years and remember almost total disruption of the political structures of a world of "Royal Families" to a world of competing ideologies. I remember being aware of the Civil War in Spain during the thirties in which other nations took sides experimenting with new forms of warfare that most of the world ignored. Germany introduced aircraft into the war in Spain as I recall and totally different forms of warfare were replacing the static "trench" warfare of WW I and large armies of Cavalry continued to be part of military resources and strategy. Some rebels like George Patton saw the "tank" changing potential but it was a tough sell.

Even more apparent to Americans were the political ideologies sweeping across Europe. Empires were replaced by new leaders with totally new ideologies. Hitler and Nazism; Mussolini and Fascism; Stalin and Communism. I am not writing a political history but trying to understand the changing world for the United States in 1933. I clearly remember the Roosevelt election, the CCC camps, the WPA, etc. the governments efforts to revive an American economy and that basically ignored the rest of the world. Japan was extending a Pacific empire and taken over large parts of mainland China, but who cared? Americans sure didn't and until Pearl Harbor was dominantly isolationist. America started design and production of aircraft and tanks but it was very low key and euphemisms like "Lend Lease" covered a preparation that only history can appreciate. How Roosevelt pulled that off amazes me.

I don't mean to be writing American history but trying to understand the economic and cultural change occurring in 1933?
Who in their right mind was thinking about providing education to the "uneducable".

Strangely, a few days ago I received a communication that had at the top of the page a quotation attributed to Margaret Mead.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has".

Does that give context to the institution we gave much of our lives to and reflect the very best of mankind and human nature that we were part of ?

It makes me feel pretty good.
Francis J. Michelini
"Dr. Mike"

To: TO 202 <michelini@verizon.net>
Cc: cnbreiseth@aol.com, jrodech@ptd.net, suzanna.calev@wilkes.edu

Always good to hear your thoughts Mike. Tim

Sent from my iPhone
[Quoted text hidden]

Calev, Suzanna <suzanna.calev@wilkes.edu>
To: TO 202 <michelini@verizon.net>

Mon, Jun 24, 2019 at 8:05 AM

Printing this out as well****

[Quoted text hidden]

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

Dr. Francis J. Michelini

Wilkes College's second president, serving 1970 to 1975

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, October 15, 2019

Weckesser Hall

Welcome

Dr. Paul S. Adams '77, MS '82

Interim President

Reflections

Dr. Thomas F. Kelly '69

Battle Professor, Binghamton University School of Management

Dr. Christopher N. Breiseth

Wilkes University's fourth president, serving from 1984 to 2001

Ms. Lisa Michelini Spengler

Daughter of Dr. Michelini

Musical Selection

"The Lord Bless You And Keep You"

Performed by the Wilkes University Chorus, led by Dr. Lucsa Levy

Closing

Dr. Paul S. Adams

*You are invited to enjoy refreshments in Weckesser Hall
immediately following the ceremony.*

FAIR-LEA
NOXEN, PENNA. 18636

5/22/73
WILKES COLLEGE

MAY 25 1973

President's Office

Dear Mike:

Thank you for your courteous invitation and your generous letter. Both are appreciated.

As the family will be present for Fuchs's graduation it seems appropriate that I sit with them. This I plan to do, so it will not be possible for me to be both a part of the family group and of the faculty.

It is encouraging to read your reports which indicate that substantial progress is being made. I was particularly impressed by your comments about the maintenance of standards. After all, a college which does not maintain intellectual and cultural standards can make no pretense of offering a liberal education.

During the years I was able to exert some influence at Wilkes the attainment and maintenance of intellectual and cultural standards and influences were always paramount.

Just the other day, I came across notes outlining the steps that could be taken to maintain standards even though enrollment should be seriously reduced. These precautions included a limitation

5/22/73

FAIR-LEA
NOXEN, PENNA. 18636

report the size of the faculty and of the plant.
It is likely that these recently formulated plans
were based upon my experiences in 1936 and
during World War II when adjustments
were made which enabled us to maintain
standards while limiting, and in some in-
stances curtailing our enrollment.

Sincerely,
G. W. H. H. H.

May 24, 1973

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effortless, to close to more expedience, and ought to be avoided
out of hand. We were surprised at how nonetheless this objection
did lose force the more we regarded the person of Dr. M and

"We're all in this boat together."

- Dr. Francis J. Michelin

Known as "Dr. Mike" to generations of former students and professional colleagues, Dr. Michelin passed away on Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019 surrounded by his family at the Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill. Born Nov. 9, 1925 in Clifton, N.J., he was the son of the late August and Angelina (Marchetti) Michelin.

Dr. Mike's early college years at Seton Hall College were interrupted by military service during World War II in the Army Air Corps. He served in the Rhine Campaign in the European Theatre of Operations as a radio operator with the 9th Air Force and 3rd Army. Following his discharge, he returned to Seton Hall where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry, earned his Master of Science degree in Biology from the University of Delaware, and his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Michelin was the first Wilkes president to ascend from the academic ranks. He joined Wilkes in 1955 as the third full-time faculty member in the biology department. In 1963, he became dean of academic affairs, where he would leave his mark in the development of programs and majors.

After becoming president, Dr. Michelin helped to ensure the University's survival after the devastating flood caused by Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Using a boat owned by the University, Dr. Mike pitched in and rescued Wilkes-Barre residents stranded by the flood. The driving force behind what was known as "Operation Snapback," Dr. Mike brought together the campus community to assist in recovery efforts and ensure that campus was ready for classes in the fall of 1972.

In 1975 he was asked by fellow presidents to serve as the President of the Commission of Independent Colleges and Universities. His service in that position earned him recognition from state and federal associations in the form of the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities "Sheepskin Award" for exemplary service to Pennsylvania higher education, and the "Henry D. Poley Memorial Award for Outstanding Advocacy Service to American Higher Education" awarded by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Since 1992 the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania awards the "Francis J. Michelin Award for Outstanding Service" to individuals who have distinguished records of service to higher education in the Commonwealth.

On Nov. 10, 2015, Wilkes celebrated Dr. Michelin's legacy by dedicating the residence hall at 80 West River Street in his honor. The "Michelin Greenhouse" on the roof of Wilkes University's Cohen Science Center is also named in his honor.

Mike was preceded in death by his wife of 55 years, Anne Marie (Sterner) Michelin and by a brother August and a sister Lucia. He is survived by three daughters, Michelle Hardman, Lisa Spengler and Lucia Michelin; grandchildren Erin Crank and husband Brent, Steven Hardman and wife Ryla, Elizabeth and Jeffrey Spengler; great grandchildren Emmett and Emerson Hardman Crank.

Dr. Mike was a frequent visitor to campus and regularly attended events, often traveling in his bright red sports car. Dr. Mike made a lasting impact on Wilkes University and the entire Wilkes-Barre community. The University extends our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to members of the Michelin family.

5/30/72

Dear Dr. Farley:

Ever since I received your letter announcing your retirement from active involvement at the College I have been groping for some way to communicate to you my emotions, as well as those of all people, past, present and future, who have been, and will be, influenced by Wilkes College. I have tried to do it personally but I know I would break down and cry. You have certainly been a father to Wilkes College, but in a very real and personal way you have been a father to me. The major part of my adult life has been lived under your leadership, your guidance, and your example. In our conversations about the family we have agreed that the unspoken is of far greater significance than the spoken. Because what you have meant to me, is such a very small part of what you have meant in thousands of lives, it is very difficult for any who are close to you to feel very adequate in saying this to you.

Everywhere I go in our region or in the state, you are regarded as the prime example of what conviction, vision, leadership, and integrity, coupled with devotion to a job and to people, can accomplish. Despite your occasional and very human doubts there is an undying respect and gratitude for what you have accomplished for Wyoming Valley. It will never die, for the future history of this institution will carry your medallion as the keystone in the chain.

of growth representing Wilkes College. It will recall to all future generations its origins and the dedicated leadership of the "father" of this institution.

In a deeply personal way I hope I have not failed you. My shortcomings are many and the challenges to all in higher education are great. As I worry at these prospects however it only serves to make me realize the more what confronted you in the years of crisis like 1936, 1945, 1951, 1960 and God knows how many more. Those all were periods of crisis in our society and in education.

In many ways our present challenges are more amenable to solution because you not only survived those crises, but in so doing built so solidly. Wilkes can face these crises with confidence because of the character you have given it, and this is the most difficult to express. It is the intangible that is at the heart of an institution, of each of its policies and practices. That character is what we treasure most of all, and what presents the greatest challenge to preserve. Believe me, we will try our best, knowing all the while that we can never measure up to your example as well as we might wish.

Please accept my humble thanks for the kindnesses you and blessed Mrs. Farley have showered upon all of us.

Forgive me for being so inadequate in expressing my undying love, respect, and affection for you.

Mike

5/22/78

Dear Dr. Farley - a personal note

I've made a very serious mistake which I now sincerely apologize for. Reasons which may have seemed valid no longer seem relevant or significant. At various times in the past two years I was encouraged and advised (including by some board members) to recognize that transition from the founder-leader, an obviously strong, dominant personality - required a demonstrated independence, etc. etc.

I was a damn fool!

I should have been drawing on your strength, not ignoring it. All I can say is that precisely because you were always so strong, I had to show I could stand alone. Now forgive me.

In all honesty I have worked hard to try to make Wilkes better. You are aware of cost pressures, enrollment trends, etc. that absolutely require some tough decisions on tenure, reappointment, cost analysis of programs and on and on. The antagonisms that have resulted from changes I felt had to be made are being reflected in negative reactions to almost any proposals for staff adjustments to meet changing conditions. Some departments such as history and physics are extremely difficult to deal with.

I hope the minutes of various meetings will fill you in on much that has been happening. I look forward to discussing them with you.

I sincerely hope you will present Lindsey her degree at commencement. Your rights to involvement at this college superseded ~~mine~~ or any Boards so from here on out I'm going to be me in my love and respect for you. Your image is on that medallion of affire forever - no one else's.

Humbly and respectfully
Mike

To: Dr. Gene Farley

From: P. Rizzo

Date: February 21, 1969 (Sorry it's late)

In Search of a President

Since receiving the request for suggestions about the next president's qualifications, some of us have been arguing with some heat and perhaps little light. But the following is the gist of these exchanges.

There is a great deal to be said for bringing in a fresh personality, some individual free of any relationship with the present trustees and administration and cheerfully innocent concerning the intimate past of the community and Wilkes. The college thus might be re-launched, even re-born, after its long and very prosperous single-president career. Such a fresh personality might be conceived as one having a solid professional and/or academic pedigree, personal strength, good judgment, and compassion coupled with a will to resist dangerous threats to intellectual freedom and community property. We believe there ought not be the slightest abatement of the sort of rigor Gene Farley has maintained for all the years of his administration. Indeed, we think the greatest care ought to be exercised to avoid a person who tends to vacillate (from perhaps too much thought) or waver (from too little determination). Not least, there ought to be some sort of evidence available attesting to the new president's natural capacity to detect the charlatans and operators among those who use the noble rhetoric traditional to academic pursuits. Sad as it is to contemplate, the colleges of the world must expect a steady increase of those pressures already being felt in this, the early period of what may be a protracted siege.

There ought not to be any predisposition towards a person from any specific academic discipline or business or government service. It is a man, not a type or species of professional, who will fill this difficult position. Said another way, it ought to be the personality who is seized for the job, not some imagined benefit that will accrue to the college because, let's say, a person formerly was governor of Nevada or shared a Nobel prize in 1957 (thrilling as either of these prospects might appear).

Where is such a fresh, innocent, strong, compassionate, sensible, solid, and percipient person to be found? And would such a person welcome the challenge of Wilkes?

In brief, he who argued for seeking a president outside the known bounds of Wilkes made a very strong case (if for no other reason than this: a far-ranging imagination easily conceives what close-to-home reality does not readily exhibit).

From the inside, we of course considered the obvious: Francis Micheline (hereafter referred to as Dr. M). The stubbornest single objection, peculiarly, was because such a choice seemed too effortless, too close to mere expedience, and ought to be avoided out of hand. We were surprised at how nonetheless this objection did lose force the more we regarded the person of Dr. M and

pooled and averaged out our experiences with him. I suppose, like many another in many a similar situation, we have taken our academic dean too much for granted.

In any event, we applied the same criteria to Dr. M as to the hypothetical outsider. Would he, for instance, satisfy the desire for "freshness"? One person remarked: who thought Harry Truman would turn out to be so full of splendid surprises? (No further parallels were intended) It didn't settle the matter, but it gave us pause. How would Dr. M perform in the number one position instead of the number two? We came back to this point later on, under questions of strength.

We all agreed Dr. M was not innocent about the relationship of community and college. But here we were nearly unanimous that for all its virtues, we did not actually want innocence. As a matter of fact, this became a key point for supporting Dr. M's candidacy. Dr. M is intimately familiar with the interlocking historical relationship of the community and the college, and has functioned easily and freely within that established framework. The thought occurred to us: suppose the trustees should decide to alter this policy traditional to Wilkes? We feel confident that Dr. M could certainly be trusted to carry out their wishes with understanding and from the right background perspective.

Regarding Dr. M's strength as an administrator, we had to agree that it was a difficult factor to evaluate absolutely. With both a number one and number two administrator strong in the way that our number one has been strong would have imposed a mighty big strain on Weckesser. It's always a troublesome path at best for number two. Besides, genuine admiration and respect, and a courtesy born of natural good manners and gentlemanliness in Dr. M all conspired to inhibit Dr. M's making obvious displays of characteristics connoting powerfulness of personality. (These are only our opinions, of course.) And everything in this regard was probably further complicated by Dr. M's deep understanding of Gene Farley's inimitable labors in the development of Wilkes College. What one could say outright is that there's no chance adversity will ever defeat Dr. M, who has had his own good share of it in life and has in addition perhaps learned a thing or two from Gene Farley's example.

Caritas, compassion--this is another quality no good man goes about parading. This much is certain: if one were to invite to one place all those persons in Wyoming Valley who would give testimony to Dr. M's multiple concerns, one would need more than just a large room to assemble them.

Despite his heavy college duties and manifold responsibilities in community service, Dr. M has never let his professional standing as a biologist and teacher deteriorate. This is an amazing fact, and is a tribute to both his energy and his sense of the fitness of things. With his professional history as a scientist and his experience in

undergraduate and graduate education programs, we would be hard put to come up with a person near or far who would be as instantly at home with the several disciplines and as thoroughly at ease with the interdisciplinary graduate and undergraduate problems of Wilkes College.

Whether or not there was any "successor-grooming" in the career of Dr. M as academic dean, the fact remains that Dr. M now has an unrivaled intimacy (Dr. Farley aside) with the immediate condition of the college, and a practically unmatchable awareness of the college's past. That theme again: Wilkes' past. Given the nature of our college, this seemed a crucial point. Reading the accumulated yearly progress reports can not be the same as having been instrumental in the making of that progress. And the total past of the college, we believe, is too fresh a memory of the present to be easily glossed or ignored.

What about the future? What sort of future could be generated out of Dr. M? We had no answers here, and few questions (surprisingly). On the basis of all the evidences we had of his judgment and general percipience, we agreed we certainly would have nothing to fear concerning the direction the college might take under his leadership in company with the trustees.

Thank you.

Philip Rizzo

WILKES COLLEGE
WILKES-BARRE
PENNSYLVANIA 18703

June 30, 1970

Dr. Francis J. Micheline
148 Dana Street
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

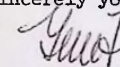
Dear Mike:

To those of you who have been associated
with the College throughout the years, I wish to express
my gratitude for your loyalty and dedication.

Only because of the wonderful support that
has been offered by so many has it been possible for us
to move ahead.

As my final act as President, I wish to thank
you for your continued encouragement and inspiration.

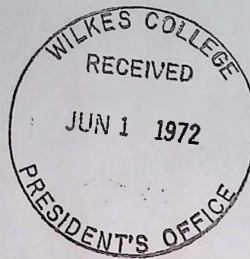
Sincerely yours,



President

ESF:mc

STAPLES



WILKES COLLEGE
WILKES-BARRE
PENNSYLVANIA 18703

May 31, 1972

Dear Mike:

Many thanks for your very warm and
gracious letter of May 29.

It is heartwarming to know that our
association has had some meaning to you.

If, in the future, I can be of service
to you and to the College, please call upon me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Francis J. Michelini".

ESF. pc

Dr. Francis J. Michelini
WILKES COLLEGE
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

STAPLES







