

FarmHouse Fraternity at Michigan State University

A Pictorial History

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Part Eight of Nine: Revival and New Challenges --
From 1980 to 1989

Tony Korican '55 (top right), at the time principal at Bridgeman High School, provided a link between the actives during the 1979-1980 school year and our not-so-distant past. Tony had returned to MSU and enrolled in the College of Education seeking his Master's degree. With a year's leave of absence from work, he was free to spend a fair amount of time in East Lansing, thus eliminating his need to commute from south-western Michigan on a daily basis. Tony made contact with the Chapter and, as we had an extra room at the Sunset Street House, we were able to accommodate his needs for a room which he could use four days a week. Tony's presence, coupled with the return of Housemother Dee Knox, was invaluable in stabilising the Chapter, which was in its third location in three years. We bid Tony a fond farewell at Founders' Day 1980. An additional benefit, upon his return to Bridgeman, was the arrival one year later of two pledges from that high school: Mark Krieger '81 (second right) and Earl Zelmer '81 (pictured later). An interesting side-story regarding Krieger, an Animal Science major, is that he and his family farmed land leased from the estate owned by former heavyweight champion of the world, Muhammad Ali! [Photo source: 1956 and 1982 composites]



The tumultuous 1970s had closed on a high note for MSU FarmHouse and in the spring of 1980, the Association Board decided that the active chapter now had sufficient numbers and stability to move back to 151 Bogue Street for Fall term.

Pictured at left on the front steps of the 526 Sunset Street house are some of our Board members and Chapter advisors from the 1979-1980 academic year: (from left to right) Dr. Maynard Hogberg IA '64, Ed Messing '74, Daryl Barwick '72, Bill Holmes '58, and Brent Wilson '67. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



Come September 1980, we were back! As most members busied themselves moving furniture and belongings into the House, President Ken Brodbeck '78 detailed a crew to weld the FarmHouse Crest back onto the front of our House! This picture was taken several years later as it shows the energy-efficient tan and brown panels which replaced, in the early 1980s, the original olive green exterior panels. We added the split-rail fence in 1981. Also note that the honey locust trees in the front yard are considerably larger than in the photos from the 1960s section. [Source: MSU FarmHouse website]

Just prior to the start of that school year, five of us piled into Roy Messing's old Chevy Malibu, dubbed the "Caribou" and drove (somewhat belatedly after we locked the keys in the trunk while still in the FarmHouse parking lot) to Columbia where we attended Conclave at the University of Missouri. From left to right: Dan First '79, Jim Lang '80, Ken Brodbeck '78, Mark Havitz '77 (Association delegate), and Roy Messing '77 (Chapter delegate). Believe it or not, the socks Havitz was wearing were actually in style at the time! Ditto for Dan First's hat! [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



This Conclave marked the 75th Anniversary of FarmHouse Fraternity. Those who attended were privileged to meet D. Howard "Daddy" Doane MO '05, pictured here in a Conclave reception line with his wife Nancy. Doane, then 97 years old, was the last living founder, Claude Hutchison having passed away earlier that year. Special guests of the Conclave, Mr and Mrs. Doane were on hand as guests of honor for the 75th Anniversary celebrations. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



Transitions continued. After 21 years of unparalleled service to MSU FarmHouse, as cook and Housemother (and sometimes both), Mother Dee Knox re-retired in December 1980. Not even the most ardent active member or alumnus can claim 21 years living in and around FarmHouse! She is pictured at left, dancing in the chapter room of the Sunset Street house with Dave "Flicker" Eppelheimer '73. Flicker and Mother Dee were the instructors for the House-sponsored dance lessons that we all took during the 1979-1980 academic year. Dave's brother Chad '75 is pictured seated at the lower right corner of the photo. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]

Upon her second retirement, Mother Dee lived in Manhattan KS with her family. She enjoyed retirement for most of that time, but suffered from Alzheimer's Disease during her last few years. The photo at right was taken in the fall of 2000. Mother Dee passed away on December 7, 2002 and was buried back in Michigan at the family plot in Sebewaing.

Her son-in-law is Gerry Kuhl '65 (pictured then in the insert and back row center of the family photo) is a Cooperative Extension Service Beef Nutrition and Management Specialist at Kansas State University. He received the 1985 Outstanding Young Industry Specialist Award from the Midwest Section of the American Society of Animal Science. He married Lisa Knox. Lisa passed away in 1999. The other women in the photo are Mother Dee's granddaughters. [Source: 1966 MSU FarmHouse composite, Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



In a lighter moment near the end of that term, several actives donned our western best and re-wrote a bunch of Willie Nelson songs with our own lyrics to “honor” Steve “Tex” Dragt at his December 1980 graduation. Left to right: Tom Read '79, Mark Havitz '77, Karl Ehnis '78, and John Main '79. Al Wheeler '80 is obscured behind Ehnis. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]

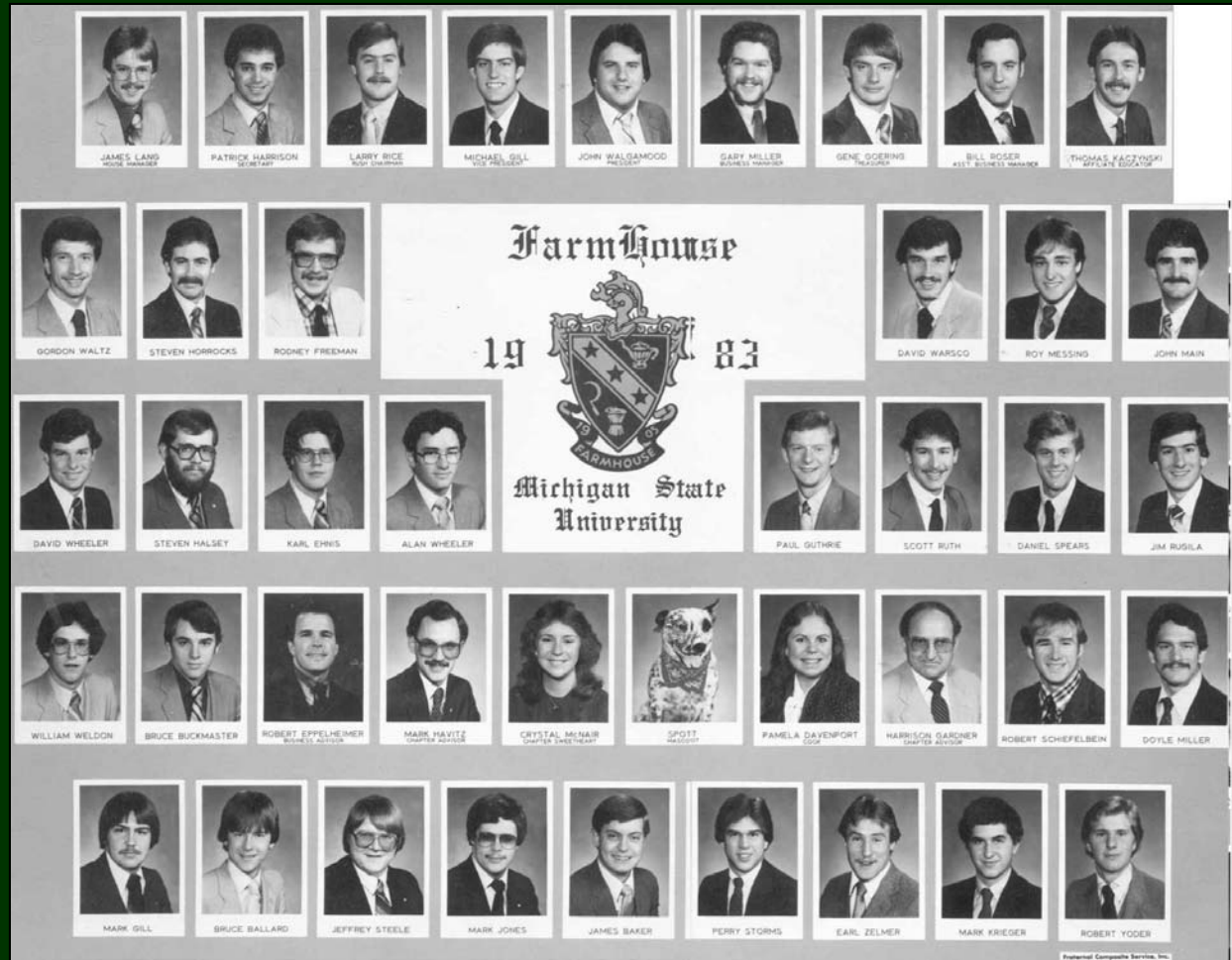


FarmHouse started Fall term 1981 with a large pledge class (we still called them Affiliates at this point), and retained all 12 of them! Here they are at their formal activation ceremony. From left to right: Gordon Waltz '78 (Affiliate Educator), Earl Zelmer, Dave Wheeler, Paul Guthrie, Rich Miller, Bruce Ballard, Bill Roser, Joe Kelpinski, Steve Halsey, Perry Storms, Mark Jones, Mark Krieger, and Gary Miller. The spacious 151 Bogue Street living room and its vaulted living room ceiling was surely welcome after three years in cramped quarters! [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



In 1982, Minnesota hosted Conclave where, on behalf of the MSU Chapter, undergraduate delegate and fifth-year senior Roy Messing, MI '77 accepted the Most Improved Chapter Award from International Board member Cal Messersmith NE '61. International Board member Roy Wilson PU 71 takes a seat in the background. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]

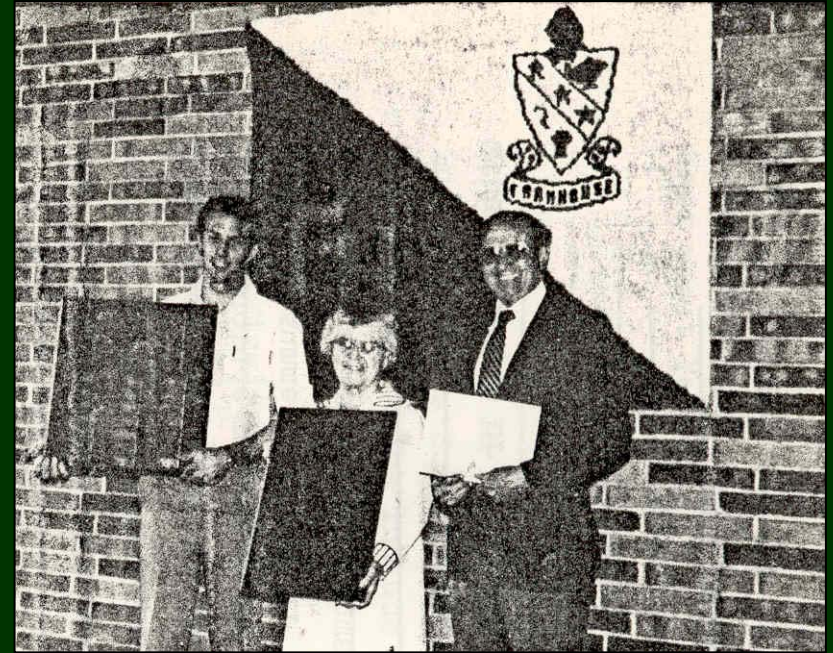
As evident in the 1983 composite, our numbers had climbed significantly. With growth came growing pains. The traditional FH camps, humorously referred to internally as the “cowboys” and “Bible beaters” sometimes clashed over policy issues. But, lead by presidents Ken Brodbeck '78, Joe Hickey, '77 (neither pictured here) and Charlie Wolgamood '79 (top row center), we persevered, as none of us wanted to return to the conflict-ridden, membership-short environment of the 1970s. [Source: 1983 Composite]



Consistent with other aspects of Chapter life in the 1980s, our scholarship rankings fluctuated. In general, however, rankings were stronger than they had been through most of the previous decade. Highlights included copping the all-fraternity scholarship trophy in both 1981 and 1988.

In an effort to encourage consistent levels of excellence in this area, the Russel J. Kleis Scholarship awards were unveiled in the Spring of 1981. The awards recognized actives with both the top GPA and the most improved GPA for each academic term. Dr. Kleis' widow, Agnes, is pictured at right holding the Kleis Scholarship plaque at the 1981 Founders' Day ceremonies. She is flanked by that year's Doane Award winner, Ken Brodbeck '78 and Snyder Award winner, Harrison Gardner '49.

The Chapter also developed the Karl T. Wright Alumni participation award in the early 1980s. In contrast to the nationally sanctioned Snyder Award which recognized long-term commitment and contributions on the part of a Chapter alumnus, the Wright Award recognized ongoing commitment of (usually younger) alums who maintained close ties with the MSU Chapter. [Photo source: Spring 1981 *Spartan Scribe*]



On the community service and social fronts, FarmHouse remained active in, among other things, Red Cross Blood drives, the local CROP walk, and the MSU Small Animals Day during the 1980s.

Also popular was a back yard lawn party originally titled the "Bob Seger Fest" which made its debut in 1981. Segerfest remains a popular MSU event.

This early 1980s image features officers from the Little Sisters of the Pearl. An important member of the MSU FarmHouse family was Julie Dryer (top row, far right). Roy Messing '77 recently recalled that, "Julie's family raised turkeys in the Holland area. I recall one year a car load or two of actives and LSPs visited her farm. The group helped prepare turkeys for upcoming Thanksgiving feasts. I recall putting the bodies (minus heads) into to scalding hot water. When the birds were removed from the water, their feathers were plucked. I guess they came out easier with this method. I think Ken (Brodbeck) and Gordon (Waltz) may have been in on this trip. I recall watching the turkeys continue to cram themselves into a "corn-crib" fence to watch us watch them. You would make a sudden move and listen to the birds gobble in a wave that worked its way to those on the far side of the pen." [Photo source: Personal collection of Ken Brodbeck. Text source: Personal communication with Roy Messing]



Julie was seriously ill at the time, however, battling lupus. Roy noted that "Gordon and I visited her in the hospital during the summer of '82. The trip was on Gordon's motorcycle so I'm sure it was in the summer." Marcia (Foss) Lang, another LSP added that "she died in 1982 either late summer or early fall as I recall. I remember going to the funeral home as well as visiting her in the hospital. She was a wonderful person and I still think of her often." For the record, the other folks in the photo with Julie include (top row, from left): Mary Beth Williams, Gordon Waltz '78 (LSP Liaison), Sally Drews, and bottom row (from left) Brenda Roberts and Marty Chilicutt. [Text source: Personal communication with Roy Messing, Marcia Lang & Charlie Wolgamood]

Although positive contributions of the LSP were numerous, relations with the active Chapter were sometimes strained as well. As noted earlier, FarmHouse continued to struggle with the role of this auxiliary organization at both the local and international level.

Here's a photo of an formal dinner held in the Chapter dining room during the early 1980s. I won't try to identify everyone in the photo, but those facing the camera while seated at the table in the foreground include (from left to right) Bruce Buckmaster '80, Brenda Roberts, Jim Rugila '81, and Pam Davenport. [Source: Personal collection of Charlie Wolgamood]



This large Spartan delegation (below) at the 1984 conclave hosted by the Colorado State Chapter saw, after years of debate, the official vote to disband the Little Sisters of the Pearl (although the MSU FH LSP program continued for at least two more years as it was mentioned in both 1986 and 1989 *Spartan Scribe* reports). FarmHouse pledged instead to create and nurture a women's fraternity.

We did just that and Ceres (named for the Greek goddess of Agriculture) had, as of 2001 9 chapters and 3 interest groups! Ceres became independent after 10 years of mutual growth and consultation with FarmHouse. To date, however, there is no Ceres chapter at Michigan State.

Front row left to right: Beth Brodbeck, Nora Fisher, Barb Jedele, Julie Schoch. Back row: Dan Spears '82, Mark Havitz '77, Perry Storms '81, Doyle Miller '83, Ed Barton '59, Mark Gill, 82, Bruce Ballard '81, Rob Yoder '82, Brett Wilson '67, Dave Wheeler '81, Nick Meyer '84. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]





With our rising membership, Chapter members were again active on campus. Rich Miller, '81 (left) was the latest man to experience the thrill of thundering out of the north tunnel of Spartan Stadium with the rest of the Spartan Marching Band! [Source: 1982 Composite]

Seven of 13 members of the 1982 MSU Meats Judging team, one of the tops in the nation, were FarmHouse men. They included (at right from top to bottom) Tom Kaczynski '81, Jim Baker '81, Pat Harrison '81, Jim Rugila '81, Bob Schiefelbein '81, Bruce Buckmaster '81 and Dave Wheeler '81. It seems self-evident that 1981 was an outstanding year for Animal Science pledges! [Source: 1982 Composite]

Rugila, in particular was legendary for his ability to balance copious extra-curricular activities, excellent marks and the occasional party. Jim completed his DVM at MSU, received his Ph.D. from Texas A&M in the 1990s and embarked on a career related to embryo research. Buckmaster was one of the better athletes in the House at the time, playing safety on our intramural football team while wearing cowboy boots, a bit of almost under control power forward in basketball, and riding various species of livestock for the MSU Rodeo team! Many actives were also members of Block and Bridle with Harrison serving as President and Kaczynski Vice President of that organization. Most of these men stayed affiliated with the beef industry. Baker, Harrison and Schiefelbein all remained in production agriculture. More on Bob and his family will follow later in this section.

Joining Buckmaster on the MSU Rodeo team were John Main '79 and Steve Halsey '81. With respect to academic honoraries, Jim Lang '80 was initiated into the Sophomore honorary, Tower Guard. Larry Rice '80, Jim Rugila '81, and Mark Havitz '77 were initiated into the ranks of Alpha Zeta in the early 1980s.



Informal activities also occupied our time. Here, Steve Horrocks looks on as Tom Kaczynski challenged Jim Rugila to a pre-dinner time game of backgammon in the 151 Bogue Street living room. [Source: Personal collection of Charlie Wolgamood]



FarmHouse was once again respectable in campus intramural sports. A hail-Mary from Roy Messing '77 to Earl "The Pearl" Zelmer '81 (inset), who made a stunning Kirk Gibson-like running full-speed straight-over-the-head catch, helped FarmHouse shock the defending fraternity champions from ΣΑΕ in the first game of the 1981 season! The action photo shows a Messing to Al Wheeler '79 screen pass during a game played that season on the Munn arena gridirons. Bruce Ballard added "I don't remember losing to AΓP in any sports events during my time there (or I have a very selective memory). I do recall one football game with AΓP, during my Senior year, where we won quite handily; probably 45+ to ~7. Also, my Freshman year, I believe that we beat them in football." [Photo sources: Mark Havitz personal photo collection, 1982 composite]



FarmHouse basketball teams lead by Bruce Ballard '81 and Dan Spears '82 (top) began dominating the hardwoods and we regularly advanced well into the fraternity division playoffs. Ballard recalls, "During the early '80's we had a pretty good basketball team-- one year coached by Gene Goering '80 (middle). He broke his wrist in one of our 6 a.m. practices, and became our full time coach. Did a great job, as we went deep into the playoffs, and possibly undefeated in the regular season. Those 6 a.m. practices were tough; not only getting out of bed, getting to the IM (I remember one snowy morning, when our car was stuck and we were pushing it out of drifts around Shaw Hall), but then we would beat up each other in practices. One person, who only knows 110% is Bruce Buckmaster '80. Didn't matter if it was 6 AM or 6 PM, he was always at 110% with elbows flying. Good player too." Bruce and Dan also recalled that the back-up point guard was Steve Halsey '80 (bottom). "About 2 - 3 times per game, he would take a shot at the top of the key, and yell 'SHOT!' Sometimes, we wouldn't need to rebound!" Goering, now a veterinarian in northwest Ohio, also served a term as Chapter president. Spears owns Mackinaw Landscape Service in Grand Rapids. Halsey, a UP native, is Fleet Manager for a Marquette-based Northwind Express. [Quote sources: Personal correspondence with Bruce Ballard. Photo source: 1983 FarmHouse Composite]



Bruce Ballard recalled several lighter moments from the 1980s with some stories reminiscent of Jim Hunter's tales from the 1960s: "Charlie Wolgamood '79 (top) was my Big Brother. Once during my Freshman year, I got into a little bit of trouble with him and Dave Mose '79 (2nd) at the House and ended up locking myself in a room on the basement floor. While they were getting a key to get to me, I crawled out the window and ran back to Shaw. I went into Shaw through the back doors (Freshmen smarts told me that they would be waiting for me at the main entrance), then smugly walked down the hall to my room. Well, as soon as I turned the hallway corner, there they were! A chase ensued through crowded halls and stairs in Shaw. I ended up outside again, and waited them out for a few hours until I was able to return to my room."

"During my Senior year, we started a tradition where the Pledge class would try to kidnap an active for a weekend. It was the active's objective to get the active back before Sunday Noon. Well, Friday night, I went with a few pledges and actives to a movie, and then went with a couple pledges to McD's. On the way back to the House, they threw me into a car, put a pillowcase over my head, and we headed east on Grand River. We ended up at a mobile home park off of I-69 in a trailer owned by of a friend of Dave Hemker's '84 (3rd from the top). I don't recall all of the pledges, but I believe Fred Smith '84 (4th) and possibly actives Chris Heyer '84 (5th), Dan Misiora '84 (bottom), Steve Ferris '84 (pictured later) were also involved. We were playing poker, when another car with pledges showed up. While folks were shaking hands, I went to the bathroom, but instead ran out of the back door. This is when the problems started. It was about 11:00 p.m., and I ran until I found a trailer with lights on. Knocked on the door, and proclaimed 'I've been kidnapped! May I use your phone to call friends at MSU.' They stated that they didn't have a phone and shut the door. So I started walking to the entrance to the trailer park. Fred was cruising the park and saw me at the side of the road. He gunned it and they caught me. Meanwhile, my friends in the "trailer without the phone", called the police and told them that someone was kidnapped at the trailer park. Soon we had a couple police cars and quite a few residents around our trailer. Seems that the residents didn't appreciate the college kids around their neighborhood at 11:00 p.m. After interviewing each of us to ensure that a real kidnapping didn't take place, the police gave us 10 minutes to evacuate the residence (and not come back). We ended up at one of the pledge's apartments for the rest of the weekend. They threw a couch in front of the door with one person sleeping on it, and another couch in front of the balcony. I had enough excitement for the night, that I didn't even try anything." [Text source: Personal correspondence with Bruce Ballard. Photo source: 1982, 1983, 1985 Composites]



Men from three places were particularly visible in FarmHouse during the 1980s. Given its prominence in Michigan's agriculture industry, it is no surprise that "The Thumb" has long been fertile recruiting ground for the Fraternity. Some "Thumb Bums" from this era include (from left) Roy Messing '77, Bruce Buckmaster '80, Randy Buckmaster '87, Mark Jones '81, and Jeff Steele '82.



Messing's exploits have been documented earlier. The Harbor Beach native is currently a banker in Cleveland, OH. Also as noted earlier, Bruce Buckmaster, was a solid athlete, albeit with rather narrow preferences for footwear. He refused to own a pair of sneakers! Bruce Ballard '82 recalls that "once he [Buckmaster] came from work at one of the MSU farms directly to an IM football game. He played a few downs, then the ref noticed that he was wearing cowboy boots, and told him to get off the field. So, Bruce walked off the field for a few downs, then went back in the game barefoot! Didn't last many downs until the ref noticed and kicked him out of the game. Never had to worry about Bruce-- almost nothing could stop him." Bruce's younger brother Randy served the Chapter in a variety of capacities including House Manager but tragically died in 1991, victim of a brain aneurism. Harbor Beach's Mark Jones, a brilliant computer scientist with a flair for a good prank, did wonders for the House GPA and currently works for Lucent Technologies in Aurora, IL. His best friend Jeff Steele, like the Buckmasters originally from Mayville, returned to the Thumb and works in the insurance industry out of Port Huron. At the time of this writing, Jeff's daughter is a member of the Spartan Marching band. [Quote source: Personal correspondence with Bruce Ballard. Photo source: 1982, 1983, and 1988 Composites]

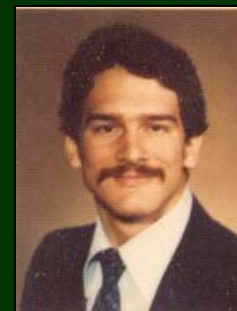
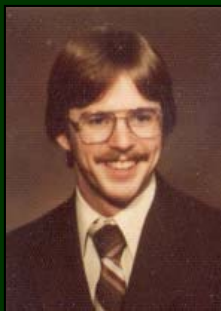
Ionia County was also prime FH territory in the late 70s and early 80s. Joe Hickey '77 (from left) and Dan First '79 have been introduced previously. Tom Read '79, was Dan's best friend. Lover of a good joke, Tom was among the first actives to break out the balloon-tossing funnelator on a warm spring day. He was also the first to break out the snow shovel on a cold winter day. Thanks to Tom, FarmHouse always had the cleanest sidewalks in East Lansing throughout the early 1980s! The long-time Fenwick area farmer has recently diversified his operation from cash crops to beef. Chris Simon '80 was a typically dependable FarmHouse man. The Pewamo area dairy farmer and his wife Patty are currently raising triplets! Dave Benson '80 brought spirit and leadership to the House when he pledged. Dave is a CPA and lives in Jackson, MI. Steve Horrocks '80, like Dave an Ionia native, was a close friend to many brothers. A food systems major, we enjoyed visiting Steve's elephant ear and fish wagons at various southern Michigan fairs. Dan Gratz '84 supplied some information on Steve Ferris '84 (far right), one of the House's more colorful characters! "His parents had a dairy farm in the Lyons area. He graduated from Ionia in 1983, where he was nicknamed Festus. He started off in the Ag Tech program, switched to the 4 year program for a year, and returned to the Ag Tech program. One term when I roomed with Steve, He came back from break with what he thought was the lowest GPA in the house. I had to break the news to him that I was .02 lower and we were on probation. Although Ferris grew up on a dairy farm, he was a cattleman from hat to boots. After MSU, he worked as a manager of a purebred show herd in Canada, where he met his wife Sue. Dave Thompson, Phil Bodeis and myself made a memorable trip to Canada (I believe the nearest town was called Holstein) to see Steve. A few of us also made a return trip a few years later when he was married. Steve and Sue have two kids and are living in the Ionia area, just a few miles from where he grew up. It's been a couple of years since I last saw him, but Steve always remains a down-to-earth, great judge of character that he is. I recall a consultation with FH top dog Bob Off, during a time of declining membership and poor attitudes, Bob was trying to pump us up on being good brothers. Steve stood up and said, "Most of the guys in the house are more concerned about taking a shit than they are about brotherhood." We were a little embarrassed, but we also knew he was right. In our own way, that was the kind of kick in the ass that we needed." [Photo sources: 1982, 1983, and 1984 Composites. Quote source: Personal correspondence with Dan Gratz]



The Centreville “Mafia” included six men (pictured from left) from that southwestern Michigan community. Jim Lang ‘80 and Larry Rice ‘80, were the first to be initiated. These inseparable buddies were both outstanding students and helped key the Chapter’s academic resurgence. Jim later received his Ph.D. from the University of Arizona and currently sits on the Geology faculty at the University of British Columbia. Winner of the College of Agriculture’s outstanding student award for which he was granted Life Membership in the MSU Alumni Association, Larry subsequently received a law degree from the University of Illinois and later returned to practice both law and farming near Centreville.

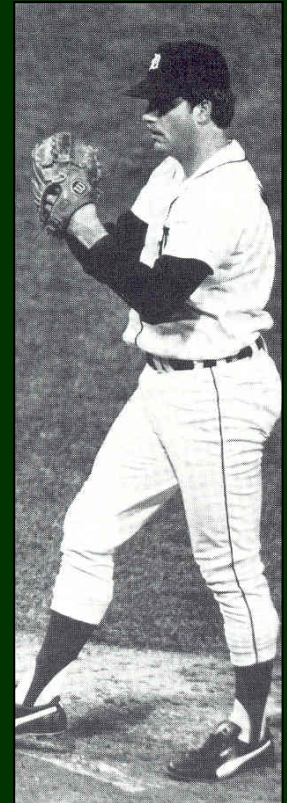
Gary Miller ‘81 was always quick with a joke and was also noted throughout the House for his encyclopedic knowledge of The Three Stooges! Gary is currently project engineer with Wilkins and Wheaton Engineering in Kalamazoo. Perry Storms ‘81 came into the House with strong leadership credentials, having served alongside his pledge mate Joe Kelpinski ‘81 (not pictured here because he wasn’t from southwestern Michigan) as an FFA state officer. Perry, nicknamed Farns after a B movie character named Farnsworth, held numerous positions in FarmHouse, including that of Vice President and President.

Paul Guthrie ‘81 pursued a career in medical technology, first working in Houston, TX before, like most of the Centreville men, relocating back in southwestern Michigan. Paul currently works as the Chemistry Supervisor at Bronson Methodist Hospital. Doyle Miller ‘83, Gary’s cousin, also returned to Centreville after graduation and now pursues a career in recreation management, having taken over the family business, managing the family business Eddie’s Hide-A-Way campground. Doyle remains an active gardener and is active in his church community. [Source: 1982, 1983 Composites]

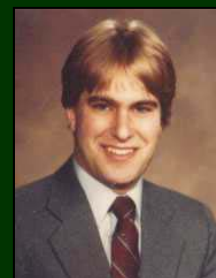
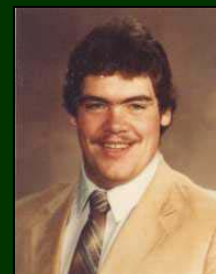


We also turned our attention outward during this time. MSU FarmHouse sent delegations to new chapter chartering ceremonies at three universities during the early 1980s: West Virginia, Tennessee Tech, and Illinois State.

Travelling to Morgantown, WV were Steve Horrocks, Gary Powell, Mark Havitz and Roy Messing. Highlights of that trip included sampling a bit of Iron City beer at a pub in Wexford, PA where we stopped for lunch and singing John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" at the top of our lungs with some of our Mountaineer brothers while driving back to the dorms from West Virginia's post-ceremony celebration. Spartan representatives at Cookeville, TN were Rod Freeman '82 (top right), Bruce Ballard and Mark Havitz. One enduring memory from that trip, which itself was a spur-of-the-moment decision launched at supper on Friday evening, was driving through Ohio listening to Ernie Harwell and Paul Carey call a Detroit Tigers game on WJR. It seems that Tiger pitcher Milt Wilcox (bottom right) had his best stuff that night and our excitement grew as he retired opposing batter after opposing batter (I don't recall whom the Tigers were playing, however). We were driving through Cincinnati when Wilcox entered the 9th, no-hitter still intact. Even Rod Freeman, one of the least sports-oriented guys in the house, groaned with disappointment when Wilcox gave up a single with two down in the inning. We settled for the consolation that the up-and-coming Tigers won the game. Bruce Ballard recalls that Rod "was a comic book fanatic. Always had a few new comic books every week. I hope that he kept them -- he may be rich." A second highlight occurred at the Saturday evening post-chartering party where we huddled in the corner and traded stories with Jerry Striegel ND '80. Striegel, one of the brilliant leaders of the high-flying NDSU chapter, offered plenty of sound advice for keeping the MSU chapter on the rise. Tragically, Striegel drowned a few years later in heroic fashion while trying to save a foundering child off Central America's Pacific coast. [Photo sources: 1983 composite, *Detroit Free Press*. Quote source: Personal communication with Bruce Ballard]



In a “pledge” raid reminiscent of the 1960s, Bruce Ballard ‘81 and Dan Gratz ‘84 recalled a visit paid on the Ohio State Alpha Gamma Rho Chapter. Bruce began: “Along with me were [pictured from top to bottom] Dan Gratz, Steve Ferris, and Scott Acker. We left MSU pretty late (around 10 or 11 p.m.) and arrived in Columbus around 5 a.m. We had to drive slowly because it was extremely foggy that night in Ohio. When we left MSU, we didn’t know what we were going to do--just wanted to road trip to OSU to be different (most folks always road tripped to Purdue, if I recall). Anyway, along they way, we decided to go to AGR, act as MSU AGR pledges, and get as much AGR stuff as possible. Luckily for us, most of the AGR house was awake (some drunk, some with hangovers), doing an all-nighter to get their float ready for Homecoming (it was a Friday morning). I must admit, the folks at AGR were very friendly and we pulled off the charade. We were given quite a bit of stuff, including by-laws, a trophy of some sort, flag, etc. Also, lucky for us, they didn’t walk us back to the car, because a few of us left our FarmHouse coats there. Anyway, it was quite a success, and we made it back in time for a 11:30 a.m. test on Friday. I know that the MSU AGR house didn’t appreciate what happened. Later in the week, the OSU Prez called the MSU Prez about his pledges, and both were quite surprised during the conversation. A few weeks later, OSU played football at MSU, and an OSU AGR stopped by our House and we returned the presents.” Dan added: “They certainly were hospitable to us, and I recall that someone from our group gave them tickets to a MSU-OSU game that was upcoming the following week when their chapter President, Dane S. Ray, was going to be on the MSU campus for something-seats among many FarmHouse Alums! He’s the one who stopped by to pick up a few of their things (they were so drunk that night, I don’t think they knew what they gave us). Another nice note with this; I don’t think Scott Acker had ever liked me much before this trip. I was getting to know Ferris and Ballard had always been great to me, so this was a great ice-breaker for Acker and I, and the start of a good friendship. Just what a road trip should do!” [Photo source: 1983 and 1985 Composites. Quote source: Personal correspondence with Bruce Ballard and Dan Gratz]



We weren't the only ones who travelled during the 1980s; occasionally we stayed at home and waited for people to come to us! For example, MSU FarmHouse hosted the 1982 Regional Leadership Conference, welcoming FarmHouse and LSP delegates from Purdue, Illinois and Kentucky, and West Virginia. It was great to pose, with all of our visitors, for a full-group picture in front of our fireplace where members of ATΩ had stood from the fall of 1977 through the spring of 1980. [Source: Summer 1982 *Pearls & Rubies*]



Pictured during a chapter-by-chapter break-out session are (from left to right): Dave Warsco '81, Al Wheeler '80, Tom Woelmer '80, Steve Horrocks '80, Earl Zelmer '81, C. J. Gauger IA '37 (facilitator), Joe Hickey '77, Rich Miller '81, Bill Roser '81, and Steve Halsey '81. The man seated in the foreground with his back to the camera is unidentified. Steve Horrocks was in especially fine form that weekend, emerging as one of the stars of the Conference! [Source: Summer 1982 *Pearls & Rubies*]

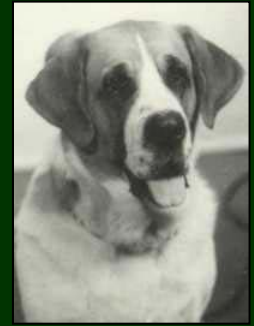
About the time this section of the FarmHouse History was under development, I received an e-mail from Jim Hunter '65. Reminiscing about his days in the House, Jim wrote: "I think we all knew it was against House rules, and that maybe we were also breaking some East Lansing laws, but the fact of the matter is that Mother Clark was not the only female living in the House. Her name was Elke, and she was German. I don't think she could speak a word of English, but she did seem to understand the things we said to her. She spent most of her time in the B.F.O. and hung out with the guys down there. As I remember, she seemed to prefer Mike Reeves. One of the things that she (and also the guys) enjoyed was a game that grew to be known as a Chi O (short for Chi Omega). The name has misty origins, but it seems to have something to do with some brothers' experiences with some girls from that sorority. She would lay on her back with her feet in the air, and have one or more of the guys rub her belly. It was usually accompanied with some moaning and whining. It just doesn't get much better than that. I did find one picture of her in my collection, and a believe it was taken when she was young, and first came to live in the house."



If you're like me, you probably thought that Jim was referring to a woman when you first began reading that story! Mascots like Elke have long been a part of fraternity life and FarmHouse is no exception. Although pets have only sporadically occupied the House, it is certainly appropriate to make note of several mascots and their contributions to the FarmHouse community. The late 1970s and early 1980s, especially, were high times for FarmHouse mascots. [Quote source: Personal correspondence with Jim Hunter]

Elke and Mike Reeves '65 [Photo sources: Personal collection of Jim Hunter, 1966 composite]

Tilley (top right) never lived in the House, but often visited in the company of her master Bryce Bollwahn '75 and Bryce's fiancée Cindy. Tilley, a gregarious Saint Bernard, even had her own FarmHouse cloak and was the first Mascot to grace our composite, doing so in 1978 and also appearing in 1979! [Photo source: 1978 Composite]



Mickey (not pictured) was a Golden Lab owned by Rusty Plummer '74. In the year following his graduation from MSU, Rusty often brought Mickey with him when he visited FarmHouse during the spring of 1978 at the Beechwood Apartments and the following year when we had a more spacious yard at 435 MAC Avenue. Several actives nearly gave Rusty a heart attack when Mickey chased an errant frisbee throw into the street. Fortunately, the passing drivers were alert and stopped in time to avoid an accident.

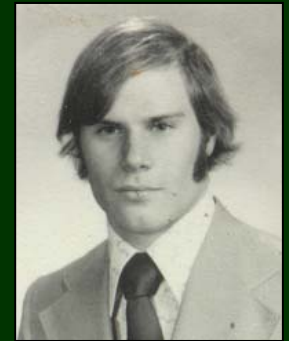


Dooley (center), owned by Dennis Hasenick '79 was Mickey's daughter. She made frequent appearances in the House during the 1979-1980 school year when we lived at 526 Sunset Street. After leaving FarmHouse, Dooley lived a long and happy life on the Hasenick farm near Springport. [Photo source: Personal collection of Dennis Hasenick]

Spot (bottom right), a Queensland Blue Heeler owned by Pat Harrison '81, was the first mascot since Elke to actually live at the House. Spot had free run of 151 Bogue Street from 1981 through 1983 but especially liked to patrol the halls of the third floor and visit the Beef Cattle barns. Spot's mortal enemies included the three vacuum cleaners owned by the Chapter. Whenever one sprung into action, whatever the floor, he was quick to attack and do his best to prevent the Active in question from completing his appointed House Duty! Following Pat's graduation, Spot spent his retirement years living near Coldwater with Pat and his wife Dilley. [Photo source: 1983 composite]



FarmHouse Chaplains have always been a special breed. Indeed, it's safe to say that the office of Chaplain is not particularly common with respect to most contemporary fraternities. Like many FarmHouse men, the guys pictured here had the guts to declare their religious faith at a time, and at an age, their early 20s, when it wasn't exactly cool to do so. Dave Huber '76 (top right), Jim Woelmer '79 (middle) and Al Wheeler '80 (bottom) were among the men to hold this office during this era. Woelmer entered the ministry after college and has, for some time, served as a Lutheran pastor in Nebraska.



Weekly Bible studies were common and, though I must admit I was an infrequent participant, often drew a half-dozen or more men. One of Jim's projects as House Chaplain was to organize monthly church visits. Most Sundays we were on our own; some guys went, others slept in. But once a month we would travel en-masse to one guy's church. I remember visiting Christian Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and other denominations during my FarmHouse years. And I recall how I looked forward to the Sunday when we all visited my home church, Westminster Presbyterian, on Lansing's west side. Each church had a slightly different perspective, but the overall theme was consistent. Sometimes I believe we would all do well to better remember that.

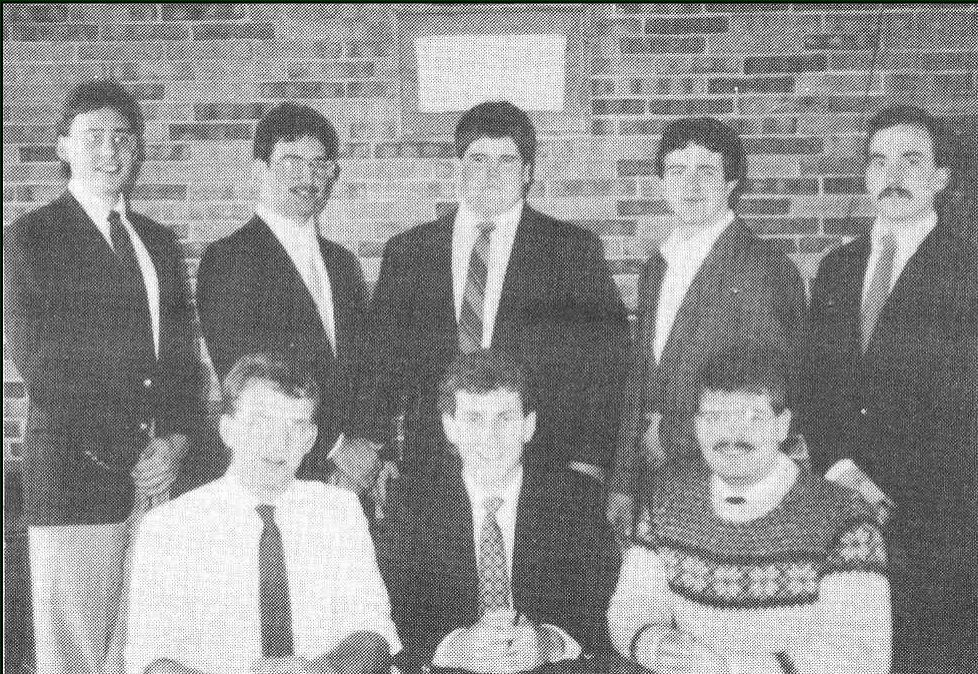


My most vivid memory though, is of a visit to First United Methodist Church in Mason. Gordon Waltz '78 (left) took about 20 of us to his nearby hometown one Sunday for a service and a pancake breakfast. We filled two pews. As occasionally happened, the minister announced our presence prior to the service: "Gordon Waltz is here with his FarmHouse Fraternity brothers from Michigan State." Then, quite unexpectedly, the entire congregation rose and gave us a standing ovation. Of course we were all somewhat embarrassed. I first remember thinking "Wow, all we did was show up." But I also realized that things like this were part of what makes FarmHouse unique. We showed up! We showed up, indeed! [Source: 1977, 1980 and 1982 Composites]



Chapter numbers waned in the mid-1980s, but the dip proved temporary and the roster swelled once again in the latter part of the decade. As usual, it is difficult to single out specific individuals for recognition, but notable initiates from the latter part of the decade included, in the first group from top to bottom, strong House leaders Steve Patterson '87, Blain Immink '86, and Tom Nugent '89. [Source: 1985 and 1990 Composites]

Pictured below is the officer corps from Spring term 1989. Under the leadership of President Blain Immink (front row center) and the other men pictured, the House was a formidable force with respect to campus organizations, social events, and fraternity athletics. Others pictured include (clockwise from top left): Rick VerBeek '86, Rush Chairman; Kevin Weidmayer '87, Secretary; Mike Leen '86, Treasurer; Todd Gerwig '86, Steward; Jeff Howard '87, Affiliate Educator; Steve Patterson '87, Vice President; and Scott Tilton '89, House Manager. [Source Spring 1989 *Spartan Scribe*]



Also noteworthy, Rob Yoder '82 (top right) and Dan Gratz '84 (pictured earlier) served the House as officers and, following graduation, as Chapter advisors. Bruce Ballard recalled “we were planning a party, and someone commented to Rob that, when he has a little to drink, he seems to become very uninhibited when approaching co-eds. His comment was ‘I don't do anything special, women just flock to me!’ Thereafter, his nickname was ‘Flock to Me’.” Rob's older brother Dan '73 was a mainstay in the House as well. Dan has made his career farming in the northern lower peninsula and in the UP.



Dan Gratz recalled a few stories from his “active” days, including a bit about FarmHouse athletics: “Our football team was never much, but we did beat AGR every year as Bruce Ballard said. I remember one IM game that Bruce threw a touchdown pass to me. I happened to be standing in the end zone, hoping no one would throw to me for fear of dropping the ball. Joe Kelpinski '81 (second right) and Arend Tensen '84 (third right) were all over top of me like I had won the Heisman. Everyone should have a great moment in sports!” Gratz currently works in Ag sales in southwestern Michigan, Kelpinski works for the MSU Agricultural Extension service and Tensen is an attorney in New Hampshire.



Phil Roberts '52 (bottom right) was an active member on the Association Board during the 1980s. His story follows. Phil, for some time the State Director for the US Department of Agriculture and later active in the banking industry, left a strong impression on men from the 1980s. I've included recollections from three men : Roy Messing '77 recalled “I know Phil served at least a full term on the Association Board and I may have finished his second term before he passed. Phil became very active after he relocated back to the Lansing area. I recall that Phil played a big part in one of the larger Crescent Ball and Founder's day events of the era. I also think that the house had some renovations that were more than modest under that board guidance. When Phil moved there from Kalamazoo, his wife Velma was a cook for one of the sorority houses.” [continued on next page]



[Photo sources, 1953, 1985 and 1990 Composites. Quote sources, personal correspondence with Bruce Ballard and Dan Gratz]



Roy continued: “Their daughter Amy was an active in one of the houses. This was maybe a year or two out of college. I remember that there was some event that the House had and I let someone talk me into inviting a group from her house to attend. She took it the wrong way and thought that we had a date. Dating the boss's daughter wasn't a good idea in my book, so some how I talked my way our of that one. Joe Hickey and I both worked for Phil at Comerica. The bank started pulling out of the agricultural market in 1986 and I left in 1987. Phil and Joe hung out longer than I. Phil and Velma moved up to the Traverse area and he did consulting for farmers and agribusiness.”

Dan Gratz '84, responding to Roy's comments, wrote “Phil was a fantastic go between for the actives and the Association Board. We had a tough year in 84-85, with only 11 actives living in the house during spring term. [Some Board members were] tossing out the idea of renting out the house to others again, but Phil made things very workable for all involved. He was instrumental by involving some other alums with the Association Board. I'm sure that's how Joe got involved with the Chapter affairs around the time of the 50th Anniversary. These few helping hands improved the morale of the actives at a time when we really needed it.”

Finally, Joe Hickey '77 added: “I would have to credit both Roy Messing and Phil Roberts with my success in the appraisal business. Roy with a great tip on a job opening at Comerica Bank and Phil with the encouragement to apply and jump in with both feet. I also remember riding to a Comerica Ag Lending Group retreat somewhere in the northern lower. Phil and I where traveling up US 27 and Phil said ‘this field coming up on the left is where I know that I am in north county as there is always a deer there’ and sure enough he was right. We also had a good discussion about the future of the House. They were struggling some with financial problems as membership was down. He was very interested in how the we (FH) made it back to the Bogue Street address when membership had dipped back in the late 70's. More importantly how did we keep everyone active and in good spirits. I think the intention of this discussion was not so much for his education as it was for mine. It became clear to me that Phil though I could contribute again to the FH alumni board.” [Text source: personal communication with Roy Messing, Dan Gratz, and Joe Hickey, May 2003]



I'd also like to recognize some important MSU FH "Imports" at this point. These are men from other Chapters who have made substantial contributions to research and teaching at Michigan State while also serving the Fraternity in various advisory and board-related capacities: Carter Harrison WI '24 (not pictured) provided 50 years of service to MSU as crop and soil science professor. Dr. Harrison continued to advise and work with students, including FarmHouse men, for 20 years after his official retirement in 1971. He funded a scholarship in his name. Dr. Harrison died 2000.



Larry Connor NE '54 (top) served for some time as chair of Michigan State's Department of Agricultural Economics. He also supervised agricultural development projects in Upper Volta [Burkina Faso], Thailand, and the Philippines. He and his wife taught several generations of MSU FarmHouse men some basic rules of etiquette (like which side of the plate takes the fork, which way to pass the food, and how to greet people at social events). Dr. Connor is currently Dean of Agriculture at the University of Florida. [Photo source: [Pearls & Rubies](#)]



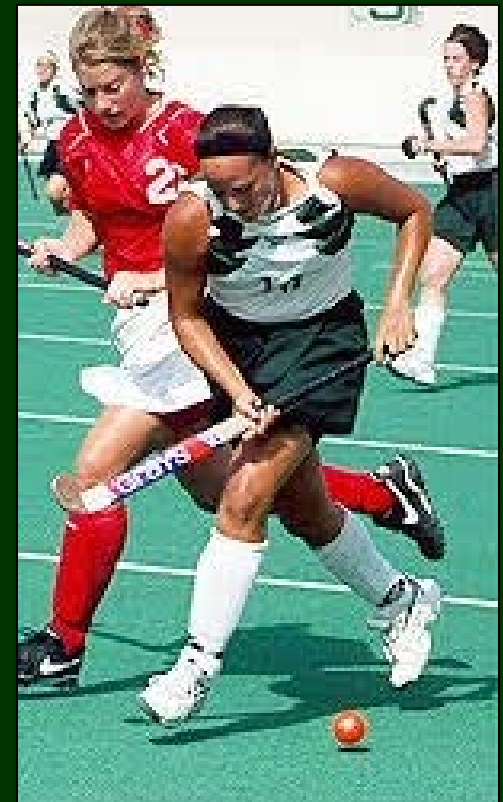
Harlan Ritchie IA '54 (middle) has been named an MSU distinguished professor. Dr. Ritchie won Saddle and Sirloin's national 1994 Portrait Award, the meat industry's highest honor. He worked in the swine industry to produce leaner more muscular hogs, and also on cattle industry programs focusing on maximizing lean growth. Dr. Ritchie won the 1992 Animal Industry Service Award and the 1983 Extension Award from the American Society of Animal Science. [Photo source: [Pearls & Rubies](#)]

Maynard Hogberg IA '64 (bottom) has served MSU as professor and Chair (for 18 years) of the Department of Animal Science at MSU. He is a swine specialist and served as MSU FH Association Board President during the crucial late 1970s/ early 1980s era. Hogberg was honored in 2002 with a Resolution of Commendation from the Michigan Pork Producers Association in November 2002. [Photo source: MSU website]



With respect to the broader campus community, evolution continued. After a decade of growth, women's sports were back in force. The all-business 1980 women's swimming and diving team provides a bit of contrast to the 1925 outfit pictured earlier! [Source: 1980 *Red Cedar Log*]

The field hockey team played in Spartan Stadium during the 1980 and 1990s. They rose to national prominence in 2001. In fall 2002 they took up residence on their own facility built on the infield of the track and field complex. The new digs suited them well as MSU made its first ever appearance in the NCAA field hockey final four that fall. [Source: MSU website].



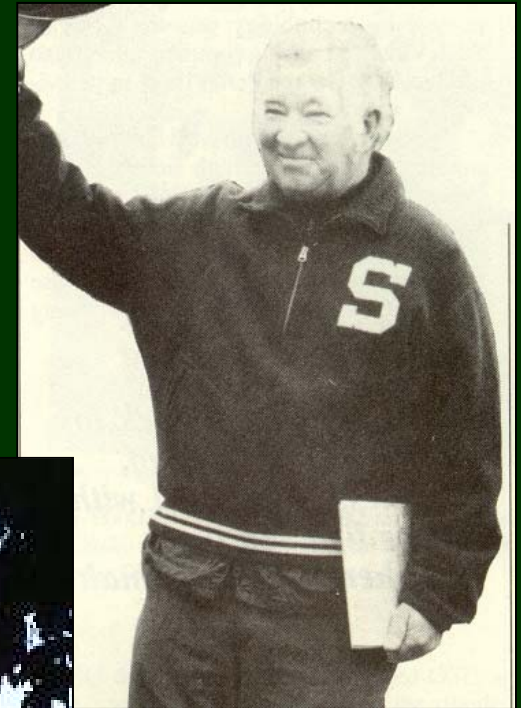
Scott Skiles, later coach of the Phoenix Suns, was perhaps our highest profile mid-1980s hoop star. Football's Lorenzo White was a finalist for the Heisman Trophy in 1987 and Mike Donnelly lead a resurgent hockey team. All three of these athletes (top right) made their respective marks in professional sports. [Source: Fall 1986 *MSU Alumni Magazine*]

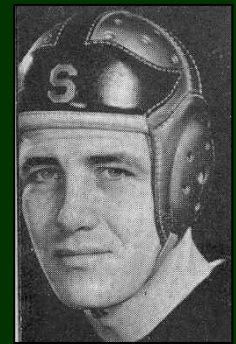
George Perles lead the 1987 Spartans back to the Rose Bowl for the first time in 22 years where we beat the University of Southern California on January 1, 1988. Emotional team members carried him off the field after a big victory (middle).

The 1984 team (pictured at right), one of Ron Mason's finest, made it to the Frozen Four. The 1986 team did them one better by capturing the NCAA title. MSU beat Harvard in the finals. [Source: Spring 1984 *MSU Alumni Magazine*]



Legendary former football coach Duffy Daugherty (right) passed away in December of 1987. Though he did not live to see the team perform in the 1988 Rose Bowl, Duffy was aware that the Spartans were Pasadena-bound for the first time since January 1, 1966 after capturing the 1987 Big Ten championship. His memory was honored with the new football practice facility, a building which also houses the MSU Sports Hall of Fame. [Source: Winter 1988 *MSU Alumni Magazine* and MSU website]





Former Spartan athlete (above) and longtime MSU administrator Jack Breslin (top left) also passed, but lived long enough to see the foundation of his legacy. In 1989 the Breslin Center replaced 50+-year old Jenison Field House as the venue for Spartan basketball. A fraternity man, Breslin was a member of Alpha Tau Omega.

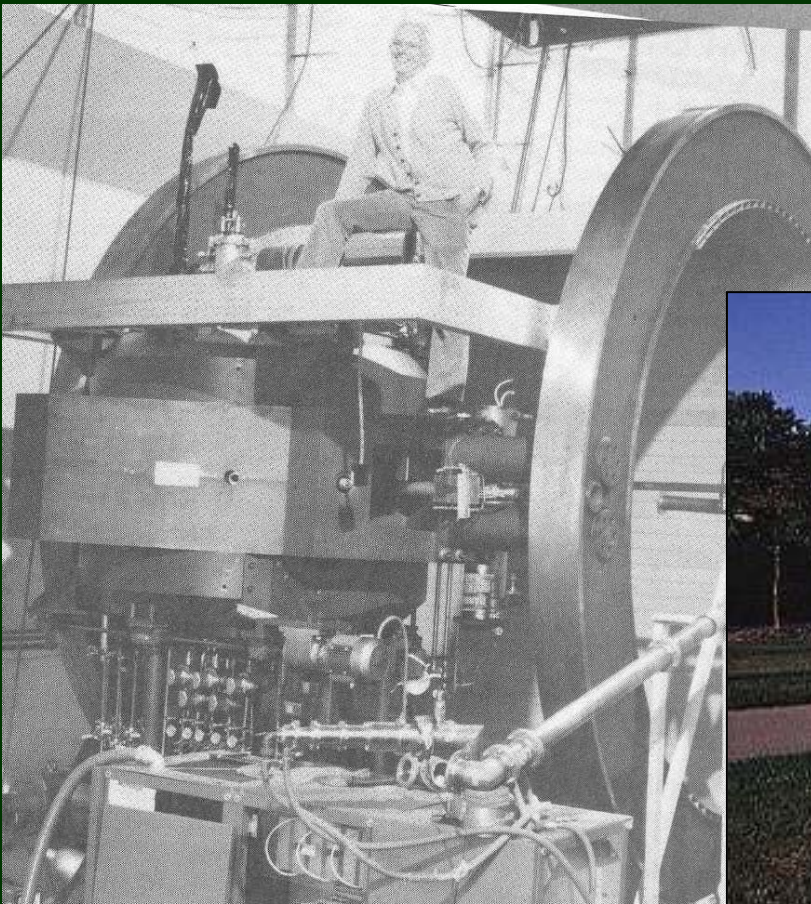


Future NBA star and philanthropist Steve Smith was the first bonafide Spartan star to grace the new court. Located across Kalamazoo Street and just to the west of Jenison Fieldhouse, the Breslin Center took land which had been occupied since the end of World War II by a now dwindling sea of Army-surplus quonset huts. [Source: Winter 1988 *MSU Alumni Magazine*]

Several prominent academic buildings were also added during this era. The new Communication Arts facility (below left) took its place just west of the Packaging and Natural Resources Buildings. When the Telecommunications Department and WKAR (old building pictured top right sat near the site of the present day Breslin Center) moved to these new digs the only remaining quonset hut was retained as a campus museum piece of the gone-by post-WWII era. [Source: MSU website, *MSU Alumni Magazine*]



Construction of the Cyclotron Laboratory (below right) dominated campus news in the early 1980s. Two cyclotrons were installed in the 1980s. The K500 was completed in 1982. The K1200, which came on-line in 1989, is now the high-energy half of the two coupled cyclotrons; acceleration begins in the K500, and the beam from the K500 is injected into the K1200 for further acceleration. The system can accelerate nuclei to speeds of 90,000 miles per second and can create a magnetic field 100,000 times that of earth – enough to lift 120 city busses! The K1200 is pictured below left with professor Henry Blosser (Dr. Blosser is not a FH initiate). *U.S. News and World Report* ranks the MSU nuclear physics Ph.D. program as number two in the nation. [Source: *MSU Alumni Magazine*; <http://www.nscl.msu.edu/>]

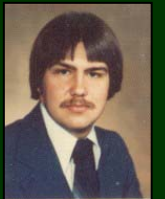
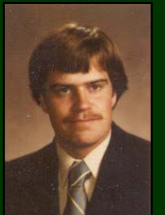


With respect to the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the showcase facility of the decade was the new Plant and Soil Science Building which opened for business in 1986 allowing several departments such as Horticulture, Crop and Soil Sciences, and the like, to consolidate under a single roof on the southeast side of campus. The campus greenhouses and horticulture gardens were also re-located to this facility.

[Source: MSU website]



A few more profiles of some 1980s personalities will serve to conclude this section. The three Gill brothers, Dave (top), Mark (middle), and Mike (bottom) were important members of the Chapter, holding a variety of offices. Although they hailed from the downriver community of Carleton which, Mike was always quick to remind us is the “Home of Rock and Roll,” Dave and Mark were rather quiet guys better known for methodically going about their business than for raising a ruckus though Mark had a knack for the practical joke. Mike, the most effervescent of the brothers, was active as a Chapter officer and generally served as a morale booster whether times were good or bad! Bruce Ballard recalled “I remember one night, walking into the dining room and seeing Mike mopping the floor, singing ‘Jane’ (Starship). He was dancing with the broom. Wish that there were digital movie cameras back then.” My favorite memory of Mike involved watching him in the Chapter room discussing popular music with a fraternity guy from New York who was on campus for a Greek exchange. Mike was literally reduced to speechlessness when it became apparent that the New Yorker had never heard of Bob Seger! All three brothers currently live and work in the Detroit area. [Source: 1981 and 1983 Composites, personal correspondence with Bruce Ballard]



Bob Schiefelbein '81 came from a large and interesting family in Minnesota. His parents Frank and Frosty Schiefelbein, innovative beef farmers, sent eight of their nine sons to college. Most chose different universities. For example, eldest son Frank III went to Minnesota where he was a member of FarmHouse. Rick went to Iowa State where he also joined FarmHouse. Bill also made his way to the University of Minnesota and pledged FarmHouse. Bob came to MSU. Donnie went all the way to Texas A&M where he was a pledge with the FarmHouse colony there in the mid-1980s. The nine brothers were also noted high school wrestlers and the family was featured by *Sports Illustrated* magazine in the early 1990s. The article focused on their respective wrestling careers and their relationship to their farm and to each other. At the time of the writing, most of the brothers and their families made a living off of the home farm. The article noted that "Seven of them work on the farm; two more are dying to. On the living room wall is the sheet music for *Amazing Grace*. The Schiefelbeins are one for all and all for one. Nobody gets a paycheck. The single goal is the betterment of the farm."



From left: Danny, Bob '81, Rick, Tom, Frank III, Mike, and (foreground) Bill Schiefelbein posed at the family farm in 1991 for *Sports Illustrated*.

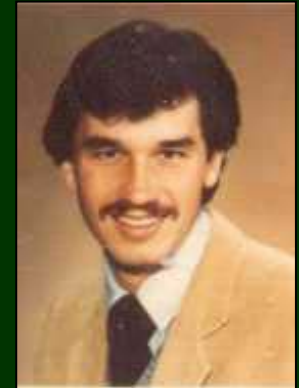
The *SI* writer, Douglas Looney, made a strong tie between the work ethic of wrestling and the work ethic of farming. He continued, "In an age when the idea of dedication sounded old-fashioned to some people, the Schiefelbein boys were dedicated. Wrestling teaches that. It also teaches, perhaps better than any other sport, physical toughness. And beyond that it teaches mental toughness. Talk on this early morning turns quickly to farming, as it has always done around the Schiefelbeins'. 'So what if the farm fails?' somebody asks Bob. 'It won't.' 'But what if --?' 'It won't.' That's clearly the end of this line of questioning. Bob is rock-solid resolute. Wrestling taught him that. Farming makes him practice it." [Quote and photo source: *Sports Illustrated*, April 22, 1991]

The men of the eighties had some great times, made everlasting friendships, and learned invaluable lessons about life. In that sense, the men of my era have a lot in common with FarmHouse men everywhere. No, we weren't perfect. Our scholarship rankings fluctuated, we argued, occasionally put-down and hurt each other and, in my opinion, as a group we were too tolerant of social injustices that occurred both within and around us. But we were brothers. And now if necessary, some 20 years later, I'd still run through a brick wall for every single guy, as likely he would for me.



I'll finish this component of the Pictorial History by introducing two guys who aren't with us today. Perhaps no men better exhibited the FarmHouse spirit than Steve Skrobak '78 and Dave Warsco '81. Yet, in many ways, they were total opposites. Steve Skrobak (left), hailed from Harrisville in the northeast corner of Michigan. He was a quiet, introverted Clark Kent look-alike who, because he was diabetic, lived in Mason-Abbott dormitory all four years where the cafeteria had a special menu. Skrobs had a subtle sense of humor. In Winter Term 1978 when we did a mock composite for Greek Week, Horticulture major and fruit specialist Steve chose to have himself photographed in a snow bank kneeling next to to grapefruit, supposedly growing on a bare twig. Skrobs or Skobane as we alternately called him, rarely broke character, but one notable exception occurred during informal activation in Fall 1978 when he brought down the House with an unrepeatabe comment after one of the new actives failed to answer an easy history question. Skrobs reverted to his quiet, introspective character the following day when parents and families arrived for the formal activation ceremonies.

In contrast to Steve Skrobak, Dave Warsco (right) was from St. Joseph in the southwest part of the state. Dave was an outgoing, self-assured, Clark Gable look-alike. Sports weren't really his thing, but he was a natural in social settings and he was blessed with musical talent and a good stage presence. It was under his guidance that FarmHouse returned after at least a dozen years' absence to Greek Sing (re-titled Songfest), paired with Alpha Xi Delta in 1983 in a performance featuring the music of Marvin Hamlisch. Dave and Steve Horrocks '80 were regularly prone to livening up the House atmosphere by breaking into impromptu Tazmanian Devil dialogues! But my favorite Warsco story originated when he took me shopping at a sporting goods store just prior to deer season. Dave was an avid bow hunter. His mission this time was to buy something that would camouflage his scent while in the woods. We west drove through Lansing, not stopping until we reached a little shop on the other side of Grand Ledge. He eventually found what he was looking for -- a bottle of skunk-scented cologne. And believe me, it was realistic! I couldn't believe this profound display of self-confidence. Here was a guy for whom women campus-wide would swoon and he had the audacity to buy skunk cologne in the presence of a guy who couldn't get a date at the Chicken Ranch!



Like most FarmHouse men who comprised the active Chapter for a portion of the 1980s, I am well established professionally and my family is maturing. I'm pretty happy with this stage of my life and have no desire to be an undergraduate again. But that's partially because I can still, on occasion, visit with my friends from those times. Not so with respect to Skrobak and Warsco. They've been gone for some years now; Dave in 1983 to a dune buggy accident, and Steve in 1989 to diabetes. So I miss them most of all because I'll never see them again while I'm on this earth. And any of you who have ever had a brother know that, somehow, that just doesn't seem fair.