

Class of 1966

Class Agent
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October 2024

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Dear Men of '66,

Through the years Wabash has been very fortunate to have terrific employees in a variety of positions who handle behind the scenes work. They seldom get recognized but are dedicated to Wabash and their important work. Brent Harris is an irreplaceable employee who makes things happen that you and I take for granted. The PA system has to work, announcers are interviewed and hired, statistics for athletic events are recorded, streaming of athletic events for fans is critical, athletic event programs are designed and printed, liaison with other college administrators is vitally important (especially with DePauw!), public relations with the media “spreads the fame,” students are hired and trained for careers after Wabash, and the list goes on! So, let's learn more about Brent from his perspective.



I am privileged to begin my 26th year as athletics communications director at Wabash College. Growing up in Crawfordsville and following Wabash athletics through my father's passion for sports, I seemed destined in some ways for this position. He took me to Wabash football and basketball games when I was in junior high and high school. That allowed me to see both the 1977 national runner-up football and 1982 national championship basketball teams play and begin to understand the rich history of Wabash athletics. Rob Johnson even recruited me to run cross country and track and field at Wabash, but my passion for theater led me to Illinois State University to study lighting and sound design.

My experiences at Illinois State led me to a position at the Tilson Music Hall at Indiana State University as the in-house technical director. This opportunity showed me that professional theater was not the future I desired, bringing me back to Crawfordsville to work for WCVL radio as an on-air announcer while I decided what I would do next professionally.

Working in local radio allowed me to make connections with Mike Haynes, who would go on to handle play-by-play duties for the Colorado Avalanche, Jeff Nelson, currently the broadcast statistician for Fox Sports working with Kevin Burkhardt and Tom Brady, and a young sports information director at Wabash College, Jim Amidon. I began covering Wabash athletics as a media member, getting to know legendary coaches like Rob Johnson, Greg Carlson, Mac Petty, and Gail Pebworth (although I already knew a bit about Gail as she and my mother were both kindergarten room mothers when I attended John Beard Elementary School with Gail's children, Carl and Marjorie). I also began covering the Indianapolis Colts and Purdue University when time allowed, once again developing network connections with legends like Bill York, the "Mayor of Indianapolis Professional Sports," and Jim Vrugink, the athletics communications director for the Boilermakers.

As in radio, management changes led to the ending of my employment at WCVL. The Journal Review reached out and hired me to work with technical systems at the paper after a brief stint

in the circulation department. Mr. York also offered me an opportunity to work the home Colts games as a booth statistician for visiting radio and TV networks covering the games. I also got the chance to work with Lingner Group Productions out of Indianapolis to learn about professional television. Terry Lingner, the company's owner, and my immediate boss, Jamey Fishman, were instrumental in teaching me the behind-the-scenes technical aspects of television production, a skill that pays dividends today in my work with the Wabash College Video Network.

I spent several years at the Journal Review and began volunteering at Wabash athletics events through my connection with Jim Amidon. I served as the basketball PA announcer and assisted in the football press box on game days. When I was able to move to Seymour, Indiana, to work with another paper in the Freedom Communications chain, I made the move. Still, I continued to work with the College and the Colts while also adding duties as the in-booth statistician for the Purdue Football Radio Network for two seasons.

My work in Seymour allowed me to gain skills working with computer systems. I worked with the newspaper to develop a new, radical idea of bringing the newspaper to the Internet. I would occasionally return to Crawfordsville to also work with the Journal Review to create an Internet presence for its publication. During one visit, I stopped in to see Jim Amidon and congratulate him on the birth of his daughter, Sammie. My timing was perfect – Jim had just learned that the current sports information director was taking a position at another school. Jim took me to lunch and talked about my application for the position. He had to convince me that my skill set fit the position, but after the discussion, I sent in my resume. A few weeks later, I was back on campus to interview with the same group of coaches I had covered during my media career. Two weeks after my interview, I walked on campus as the new sports information director, starting my now 26-year and counting career covering Wabash student-athletes.

Fall is a beautiful and exciting time to be around the Wabash campus, and perhaps some of you will return to Crawfordsville to enjoy an athletic event, concert, lecture or just to walk the paths of the past.

“These fleeting years...”

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