



## 1974 Tornado Remembrance

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Name: John Horner

Class Year:

Connection to the College: College President

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### **Please share your memories of April 3, 1974.**

*Tell us whatever you'd like at whatever length you'd like. Feel free to share stories of the impact of the tornado weeks and months after the event.*

*Excerpt from Dr. Horner's personal notes, submitted by Heather Horner Holt, daughter of President Horner.*

....Soon after Jeff was born, colleges were seeking me out as a candidate for the position of President. One such institution was Hanover College in Indiana. Anne and I visited the campus in the summer for 1959 on our way to Washington. Hanover wanted us to come and the college seemed like a "good fit" for us. The Board of Trustees offered us the position which we accepted. At the age of 35, I was the youngest college president in the United States at the time. We moved to Hanover in November, 1959. Of course, I had become well acquainted with the institution through documents but now had to get to know the people.

Hanover is a Presbyterian related college. It is the oldest four-year private college in Indiana, founded in 1827. The institution has many distinguished alumni including governors, senators, Vice President of the United States, author of the Pure Food and Drug Law, a renowned actor, outstanding clergyman and inventors.

What were the specific problems I faced when we went to Hanover?

- Revision of the an outdated curriculum
- An aging faculty
- Renovation of buildings
- Necessity of more endowment funds
- Strengthening of the library
- Acquisition of science equipment
- Construction of new buildings
- Architectural and landscaping improvements
- Overseas study

To tackle the curriculum problems, we were able to obtain a major gift from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. This grant permitted us to free up certain faculty members to study curricular revision. This study undertaken by faculty and administrative officers led to the adoption of The Hanover Plan which became the prototype for liberal arts curriculum across the country. The Hanover Plan constituted a major step forward.

Activation of endowment funds, dollars for the construction of buildings, money for library books and science equipment that ultimately came from major donors whom we cultivated relationships over many years. To name a few of the donors who, we in many cases, became close personal friends:

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J. Graham Brown  
Dorothy B. Lynn  
Mary Black  
Ethel Goodrich  
(Illegible writing) Ide  
G. David Thompson  
Charles Lynn  
Lilly Endowment, Inc.  
Carroll Cheek  
Richard Petticrew

The decades of the sixties brought the additional children to the family. In 1960, Heather Ellen joined the family and Scott Edward appeared on the scene in 1963. The two new additions helped fill the President's house which has 21 rooms and 6 baths. The children attended the Southwestern School System and went on to college from Southwestern. Joanne and Heather to DePauw, Jeff to Vanderbilt and Scott to Northwestern.

One of the great benefits of living on a college campus is the appearance of distinguished guests. These guests were entertained in the President's home. The guests that visited among others were the following:

Everett Dirksen  
Sir Edward Heath  
General Westmoreland  
Charles Kuralt  
Woody Harrelson  
Vincent Price  
Lillian Helman  
Governor Bowman  
Jesse Owens  
Edmund Muskie  
Scott Carpenter

Campus growth is a fact of life in an institution of higher learning. During our tenure at Hanover, the following buildings were constructed and/or renovated.

New Buildings: Duggan Library, J. Graham Brown Campus Center, Center for Fine Arts, Wiley Hall, K. Parker Hall, Kappa Alpha Theta House, Beta Theta Pi House, Phi Delta Theta House, Lyam S Ayres Field, Maintenance and Administrative buildings.

Renovated Building: Parker Auditorium, Classic Hall, Hendricks Hall, Goodrich Hall, Ide Hall, Donner Hall, Faculty Office Building, College Library and Lynn Gymnasium.

Significant events shape the destiny of an institution of higher learning. The most significant event in the history of Hanover College occurred on April 3, 1974, the day the infamous tornado hit the Hanover campus. The "big blow" took no lives on the campus but the property damage amounted to \$10,000,000. The tornado was also the most cohesive in the life of the college. It brought more unity to the campus than one could ever imagine. The team spirit was genuine and long-lasting. Everyone "pulled together" for the common good. There was some question as to whether the college would continue to operate; however, the resolve of the campus community and the Board of Trustees would not be denied. This resolve not only repaired the wounds that made the institution better. The college maintained its operations for the remainder of the academic year and opened on the appointed date the next year.



(He wrote of the sabbatical that our family took in Greece that the Board of Trustees so graciously granted us and his thoughts on the comradery of other college presidents served in the area with while at Hanover.)

The last days and months of a collegiate administrator are spent doing several things: consolidating the past and preparing for the future. Although it is difficult to put the task and results in finite terms (numbers), it is obvious that considerate progress had been made over thirty years - student enrollment had expanded, endowment has been increased millions of dollars, faculty salaries had been increased, over a dozen buildings had been constructed or renovated, the image of the college had been enhanced, the Board of Trustees had been strengthened and the college had no deficit spending and no debt.