



1974 Tornado Remembrance

Name: Steve Fritsch '75

Class Year: 1975

Connection to the College: Alumnus/alumna

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.

I came out of the library and the sky was looking crazy. I went back to the Lambda House. I went up to the rack room. Sirens were going off and I looked Southwest. All of a sudden there was the Tornado coming right at us. We got everybody out their rooms and headed downstairs into the dining room. We got under tables. The Freight Train sound was loud and it seemed to last for a while, but it was probably 15 seconds. We survived. Then it was peaceful and sunny. We stepped out the side door and looked toward the library and it was shocking the destruction. Copper strips around power poles and so many trees and power lines down. No power, no water, no communication. The water tower was totally destroyed. Cars damaged in the parking lot.

We had a great leader in President Horner. I had the opportunity to see President Horner's notes in the archives 17 years after the Tornado. As a student I was not a great fan of the President because he was the enforcer of all the rules that put our Fraternity on probation all the time. But he showed great leadership for the whole campus community after the tornado. From accounting for students to using the Fraternities as security that night, two-hour shifts, 8 to 10 members at a time, all through the night to protect the campus. The decision was the next day for the students to leave. I got a ride to Indy arriving at 5:30pm. When my parents let me in the first thing they said to me was "what the hell are you doing home and you look like a mess." Indianapolis media did not report on our tornadoes. There were so many tornadoes across Indiana. They did not realize what I was trying to tell them until we were able to come back to school several weeks after the tornado. April 3, 1974 at 3:51PM is a day I will never forget. The landscaping and reforestation of the campus had to be the largest contract Davey Tree Company ever had. They were there thru Spring of 1975. The trees that surround the outfield fence of the baseball field were planted after the tornado. Today those are huge.

Steve Fritsch '75