## GENE BUZZARD

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It seems appropriate that I am writing my first Yale paper in twenty-four years one day before the deadline. Procrastination dies hard. My life since Yale is probably not too different from the norm—marriage (for twenty-four years), the draft, Vietnam (as a clerk), law school, back to the hometown to practice law, three children and an income too high to qualify my children for financial aid and too low to make payment of college expenses comfortable.

My connections to Yale have grown ever more tenuous (I’ve even managed to lose track of roommates), but my time at Yale has been important to me. I remember gratefully the opportunity to study Chaucer, Joyce, and Boll. I remember the agony of struggling, and ultimately failing, to make sense of people like Heidegger and Husserl, and I feel relief rather than shame in admitting that their stuff was, and undoubtedly still is, beyond my ken.

I remember reading before I started Yale that it was a very competitive place; that there was a good deal of pressure to rise to the top of whatever activity you chose to undertake. I also remember consciously deciding not to compete with anyone on any level, but rather to try to learn as much as I could. In retrospect, it seems to me that I might have learned more if I had competed more.

I also remember the Yale community being more self-critical than any other group I have been around. It seemed to me that we constantly battered ourselves. If you are going to be self-absorbed, as college students are, then self- criticism seems a healthy activity.

Yale left me with slightly battered ego and with a sense of missed opportunities, but also with what I think are the marks of a good liberal education: a faith in the value of intellectual rigor and honesty, an exciting exposure to our intellectual and spiritual heritage, and a sense of duty to our society. All in all, I think we were fortunate to have been there.