

# "WEARING THE CAPTAIN'S GOWN"

By Gene Yontz

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**Three of my favorite people have passed away during the writing of this book. Kent Young, Aunt Donna, and Uncle Jim. Miss you very much.**

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# Introduction

I taught school for thirty-one years before retiring on March 1, 2012. In 1984, I began taking notes about funny and special moments that happened during my teaching career. This book contains quotes and responses to questions my students have made over the years. I have written stories that have a funny side, but a few are serious in nature.

Writing this book was a bucket list item for me and I found it to be more difficult than expected. There are seventy-six stories in this book which are true, but one story is fiction. As you are reading, try to determine which story is not true. There will be a time when I will ask you for your selection of the fictional story.

The 1975 World Champion Cincinnati Reds had the “Great Eight” which included: Pete Rose, Joe Morgan, Ken Griffey, George Foster, Johnny Bench, Tony Perez, Dave Concepcion, and Cesar Geronimo. Well I have my “Great Eight” which includes Gene Yontz (Dad), Edith Yontz (Mom), Rick Yontz, Randy Yontz, Craig Yontz, Terry Yontz, Nicholas Yontz, and Ashley Yontz. I hope you enjoy the read.

I would like to give a special shout out to my daughter Ashley for typing the book. You are the best. Thank you very much. Love, Dad.

One Liners

“I can’t wait to graduate and wear the captain’s gown.”

# Education

## Water Balloons



*What a crew!*

It was the last day of school in May of 1999. A field day is held at the conclusion of each school year. We received a heads up about a possible water balloon fight between the kids. We confiscated all of the water balloons as the kids

### Short Answer

What pope preceded Pope Benedict XVI?

Correct Answer: Pope John Paul

Student Answer: "Pope John Paul Jones"

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entered the building in the morning. The kids were not happy, but that's the way it goes.

It was a beautiful day and all of the events went well. At the conclusion of the day, we gathered all of the students together for one final time.

One Liners

"I love how a skunk smells."

While the kids were being assembled, three teachers took all of those water balloons we collected up on the roof. When the kids were within range, those teachers bombed the rugrats that were below. Funniest thing I've ever seen! After school hours, the staff and kids had a huge shaving cream fight. We all had fun.

## **Field Day**

The time period was the early 1990's. It was the last week of school for a student teacher. The sky was full of sun and the kids were enjoying a field day. An 8<sup>th</sup> grade boy decided he would catch a few rays on a slide. He took his shirt off and positioned himself lying on his back at the top of the slide with his arms behind his head.

The whistle blows for the kids to line up and go inside. This boy had lodged his arms in the railing and was stuck. There were numerous attempts to remove this boy from his agony, but nothing worked. In the end, the fire department was called in and disassembled the slide removing the student. Reminds me of Flick in The Christmas Story.

## Kindergarten

A friend of mine is an elementary physical education teacher. He has twenty-eight years of experience. He wanted me to share this story with you.

At the beginning of each school year, the teacher should discuss the rules and expectations for each class. This teacher begins day one with a kindergarten class. He instructs the little ones on what to wear to school on days they have gym class.

One Liners

"I thought I would kill one bird with two stones."

Trying to share a little humor with the class, my friend said, "Girls you probably shouldn't wear a dress or skirt and that goes for you too boys."

One Liners

"I used to be able to high jump nine feet."

A 5-year-old boy responds, "What do you think we are, a bunch of F\*\*\*\*\*?"  
Incredible!

## Retaliation

I arrived at school at 6:45am and parked toward the back of the building. I would cut through the gym to get to my

One Liners

“I eat so much,  
I’m surprised  
I’m not obese.”

classroom. The custodian would sweep the gym floor before school and leave his broom under a stairwell. There were times I would take the broom and hide it. It didn’t take long for him to figure out what was going on.

I was waiting for retaliation on his part.

I was teaching a morning class and the custodian entered my room unannounced. I knew something was up because he never showed his face in my classroom. I’m near my desk as he entered my room. He had his hands in his pockets. He had planted a fart machine in my desk and had the controls in his pocket. He activated the machine to “thunderous” applause from my students. It was hilarious!

### Mr. Mendenhall

I was in my first year of teaching at Indian Valley Middle School. Mr. Mendenhall was the assistant principal. He was quite a character. A very interesting individual with a tremendous imagination.

Short Answer

What do you think is going to happen?

Student Answer: “I don’t know. It depends upon the future.”

I was in the middle of teaching a class full of 8<sup>th</sup> graders. One of the students in the back near the door raised his hand. I called on him. He told me he thinks there is a cat outside

## Wearing The Captain's Gown

### Short Answer

Who is the patron saint of children?

Correct Answer: St. Nicholas

Student Answer:

“Michael Jackson”

the door. He heard meowing and scratching at the bottom of the door. I went to check it out. I heard what the student heard. I

opened the door and there was Mr. Mendenhall down on all fours scratching the door with his fingernails, and meowing his heart away.

I loved my years teaching at Indian Valley.

## Halloween

I hate Halloween. Every year it rolls around the kids get dressed up and it becomes such a distraction. I can never get anything accomplished on that day.

I am sixty-three years old and have only dressed up one time while teaching. A friend called me up the night before and asked if I would dress up.

I said, “Absolutely not.”

After about five minutes of persuasion, I agreed. My friend was in the Air National Guard. My job was to wear his boots and bottom fatigues. He wore his shirt and cap. We went as an upper and lower G.I.

Gene Yontz

## Adam's Apple

In 1985, I was teaching an 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies class. I forget the question I asked, but I remember the response I was searching for, "Adam's apple". After a series of incorrect answers, I started giving clues. My first clue was "this man's name was found in the Bible." No

response. My second clue was "this is part of a man's body." A hand went up immediately in the back of the room. I called on Tim.

He said, "Peter."

Every student in the room cracked up. I was laughing on the inside but had to keep my composure. I took Tim out in the hallway, which appeared to the kids that disciplinary action was going to be applied.

I said, "Tim, that was the funniest damn thing I have ever heard. But, I need you to go back in there with a frown on your face."

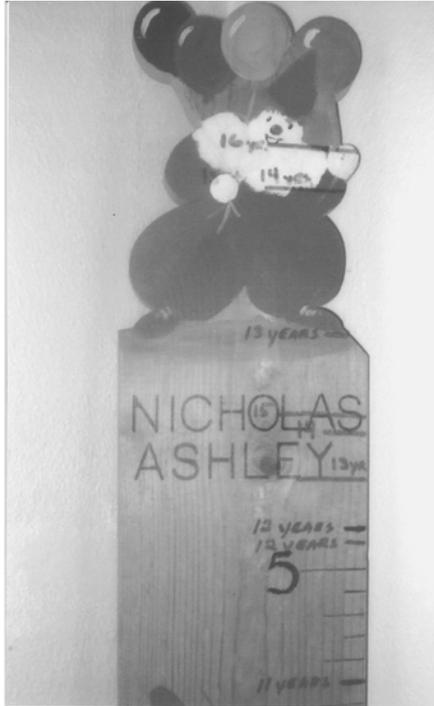
It is now 2018 and the two of us still laugh about it.

### One Liners

I told the class that Mount Everest is in Nepal. A student replied, "What's it doing over there?"

## Expecting

It was my initial year at Indian Valley Middle School. We were pregnant with our first born, Nicholas. The principal made an announcement there would be a brief meeting after school. The school day concluded and I headed toward the library. I entered the room and noticed many wrapped packages. I thought to myself, did I miss something? It turned out to be a baby shower for me. I still have the growth measuring board they gave me. It is a priceless possession.



*Baby Shower Gift*

## Tables Turned

One of my friends is the biggest practical joker I know. Well the time had come to put the shoe on the other foot. Our school nurse had an idea that turned out to be brilliant. She put out a directive that all school employees were required to give a urine sample ordered by the superintendent.

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My friend asked me, “Are you going to comply?”

I said, “Sure.”

He replied, “I’m not going to because I think it’s a joke.”

As the school day progressed, my friend told me he turned in his sample and it contained Mountain Dew.

I said, “I don’t know if you should have done that. I think this thing is on the up and up.”

It is now in the afternoon. My friend began to question his Mountain Dew decision and submitted an authentic urine sample.

At the end of the teaching day, the principal called for a short meeting in the library. Everyone filed in. The principal thanked Mr. Norris for being the only person to comply with the directive. April Fools! It was a classic!

One Liners

I asked this girl, “Do you kiss your boyfriend after you eat those Flaming Hot Cheetos?” She replied, “He doesn’t mind, he’s from Mexico.”

Short Answer

Who is Jessie Jackson?

Correct Answer: civil rights activist

Student Answer: “Ain’t he one of the Jackson Five?”

One Liners

“In horse racing, bet on the long shot. You’ll only win one out of ten times, but at least you’ll have a fifty-fifty chance.”

### History Humor

If you attended middle school before 1990, you probably remember film strips. I was teaching an 8<sup>th</sup> grade history class this particular day. Ninety-nine percent of the time, I would preview the film strip to address the important points. This time I didn’t and the following happened. Everything was going well until I hear, “When General Cornwallis beat off the troops at Yorktown.” The kids laughed and so did I. At least they were paying attention.

### Lawnmower

Some of my students took their academic classes in the morning and worked a small job in the afternoon. Many of my students needed spending money. This particular young man, the same one that wanted to “poke a dead body with a stick”, worked for the school mowing grass. I received a phone call from a teacher

One Liners

“Did the beaver see his shadow on Groundhog Day?”

Gene Yontz

One Liners

“Can a man be a nun?”

telling me that she saw the student dancing with a lawnmower.

I said “What kind of dance is he doing?”

She replied, “What?” and hung up.

Some people have no sense of humor!

## Tree Crew

One of my students only had one semester to graduate from high school. He informed me he was going to drop out and join a tree crew to make some money. I literally begged him not to do this, but he went ahead with it.

Five years later, I ran into him at a local gas station. We exchanged pleasantries and he told me he had a son and named him after himself.

One Liners

“There are catfish in the Ohio River that are bigger than us.”

I said “You named your son, D\*\*\* A\*\*?”  
We both laughed, me more than him.

## Watergate

I was beginning a lesson about the Watergate scandal. I asked the class if any of them knew anything about this part of our history. Not many hands went up, but I was surprised this one boy wanted to respond. I called upon him and I said, "Have at it."

He started off well, explaining about the break-in at the Watergate Hotel. He talked about the reporting of Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward of the Washington Post. The names of G. Gordon Liddy, Richard Nixon and Deep Throat were also mentioned. He knew President Nixon resigned in August of 1974.

I was very impressed with his knowledge on this topic. He concluded with, "And then Harrison Ford pardoned Richard Nixon."

One Liners

"Is Easter on  
Sunday this  
year?"

## Turkeys

In the 1970's, a guidance counselor at a local high school printed up certificates stating new teachers would receive a free Christmas turkey, redeemable at a local grocery store. He placed the certificates in the rookie teachers' mailboxes on the last day prior to Christmas break.

A few of the innocent people tried to place their order. Obviously, not one order was filled. When the teachers returned from Christmas break they began to ask questions. They were informed this had become a tradition. Not too many people knew who was the prankster, but I did.

Short Answers

What is the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment?

Correct Answer: Gave women the right to vote

Student Answer: "Thou shall not kill."

**Recruiting**

A friend of mine was a guidance counselor at the local joint vocational school. Part of his duties were to visit high schools in the county and recruit students to attend J.V.S. He would explain the courses and programs offered for the following year.

This particular day he was visiting an alternative school. This was probably the final stop for many of the kids. My friend entered the classroom and introduced himself to the classroom teacher. The next words spoken in that classroom came from a student in the second row.

He said, "What's that M--- F--- doing here?"

The classroom teacher just shrugged his shoulders and the guidance counselor proceeded. Unbelievable!

One Liners

"Whoever thought of the Ten Commandments was a smart man."

## Lunch at Wendy's

The last few years of my teaching career I taught C.B.I. (Career Based Intervention). The students would attend academic classes in the morning and work a job in the afternoon.

One of my favorite students was Mark. He worked at Wendy's during the lunch shift. I met with Mark at Wendy's to talk about a few things before he went on the clock. Mark ordered a chicken sandwich. I settled for some type of salad.

It was winter and I remember it being quite cold that day. Mark and I just sat down to eat and he saw someone in the parking lot that needed help. He told me he would be right back. Shortly after Mark left the table, a woman sat down in Mark's seat and began to eat his sandwich. Obviously, I was surprised. I immediately thought a practical joke was being played on me, so I didn't react.

After a few minutes had passed, she was still eating Mark's sandwich.

I said to her, "That's Mark's sandwich."

One Liners

A male student wore a kilt to school and was sent home. A student responded, "You can't send a kid home because of his religion."

One Liners

"Didn't the Virgin Mary eat the fruit?"

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She didn't respond, just kept chomping away. A few more minutes passed and Mark returned to the table. He had a stunned look on his face and said, "What's going on?"

One Liners  
"Man, I was close. I was only off a lot."

I said, "Do you know her?"

He said, "No, do you know her?"

I said, "No!"

Bottom line, this lady came in from off the street. She was dressed in warm clothes and didn't look like she had missed many meals. Before she was removed from the restaurant, she asked me if I was going to finish my salad.

## Sunday School

Some of my friends attended Sunday school at a church in central Ohio. They were approximately in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The minister gave the kids an assignment. The kids were to memorize the names of the books in the Bible. They were given two weeks to get this done.

One Liners  
"They test three people a week for a urine example."

The time had come for the gang to divulge their knowledge of the titles. The minister called on Ray who wasn't

## Wearing The Captain's Gown

the most diligent student.

Ray began with, "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John went to bed with their britches on." The minister saw no humor in Ray's response. Ray's buddies did.

### Tommy

I was teaching a sophomore class at a local high school in 2002. I had a great rapport with this student, we'll call him Tommy. We teased each other quite a bit, but nobody got hurt.

My principal was a great guy. He cared about the kids and liked to have fun. He agreed to help me play a joke on Tommy. I handed Mr. Vanuch the script to read.

Mr. Vanuch called into my room at 10:20am and said, "Mr. Yontz, is Tommy there?"

I replied, "He's sitting right in front of me."

He said, "His mother called and had a few messages for him."

I said, "Go ahead."

Mr. Vanuch began to read from the script.

He said, "Tell Tommy his ballet lesson has been cancelled for today. His Scooby Doo underwear is in at JC Penney's and his Victoria Secret catalogue application has been

One Liners

"This is a joint  
vacational school."

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denied because he is underage.”

It was great! Entire class laughed and so did Tommy. His mom also thought it was funny. I wish all of the parents had a sense of humor like hers.

## Homework

I’ve always believed that if a student completed an assignment, it was my obligation to give it a grade. A student in my class told me he knew a teacher that would sometimes put a grade on a paper without looking at it. He also said he could prove it. I said, “Okay, Prove it.”

One Liners  
“What is your  
New Year’s  
Revolution?”

The kids were working on an assignment in class. This boy had written a letter to his girlfriend along with the completed assignment. At the conclusion of the period, the teacher walked around the room and collected the papers. The teacher mistakenly picked up the boy’s letter to his girlfriend. When his letter was returned, the student had received seven out of ten points. SAD!!!

## Short Answers

What do you know about the Garden of Eden?  
Student Answer: “Mary and the rest of them  
were in there naked.”

## Orchestra Class

My planning period was at the end of the day. Because of overcrowding, my classroom was used for a small orchestra class. I was allowed to stay in the room if I chose. Some days I did, some I didn't. This happened one day I stayed.

I was sitting at my desk working on a few things. After warm ups, the group started to play a song they had been working on for some time. I noticed the instructor was becoming increasingly frustrated. After about a minute into the song, the instructor began waving his arms and stopped everyone from playing. He then pointed to a boy and said, "You are a beat off."

### One Liners

A high school basketball coach was talking to his players about improving their work "ethnic".

### One Liners

A high school principal referred to something crazy happening as "lucradous".

The instructor was a well-liked, retired marching band director. I believe he was teaching this class to stay active and for his love of music. This wonderful gentleman has passed. R.I.P.

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## Buzzy

The location was Crawfordsville, Indiana. Ms. Russell was teaching a kindergarten class full of five year olds. One of her students, I will call him “Buzzy”, had a problem with authority. Every time Buzzy was challenged by Ms. Russell, he would call her the “B” word. There were numerous conversations with Buzzy and his parents about the situation. Nothing seemed to work. Just by chance one day Ms. Russell picked up Buzzy and put him on her lap. Their relationship changed dramatically. Anytime Buzzy was positioned on Ms. Russell’s lap the “B” word was not used.



One Liners  
“Give me a  
pacific  
restaurant.”

There was a vast improvement between teacher and student. Ms. Russell had Buzzy on her lap and noticed he had something in his mouth.

Ms. Russell asked, “What do you have in your mouth?”

He reached into his mouth and pulled out a wad of tobacco.

“Where did you get that Buzzy?” she said.

Buzzy replied, “On the sidewalk outside of school.”

## Skyscootus

The year was 1960. The location was 2015 Redleaf Drive in Louisville, Kentucky. I was six years old and visiting my Aunt June and Uncle Bob. Behind their residence was a large

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cornfield. My uncle told me to never go in the cornfield because the "skyscootus" would get me. It was his way of making sure I didn't wander off.

### One Liners

"Did you have him sign it before he died?"

Fast forward to 2010 in Springfield, Ohio. My students were working on an assignment in class. My classroom was located in the rear of the building. The entire south side of the classroom was a series of windows. Looking out those windows you saw nothing but trees. I don't know what possessed me to do the following, but I did.

Out of nowhere I shouted, "Oh my God! There's a skyscootus!" The kids made a dash for the windows.

"What are you looking at?" one kid asked.

I said, "There's a skyscootus out there."

"What's a skyscootus?" another student questioned.

I said, "Well they are difficult to describe. It is a mix between a bird and a squirrel. They're very tough to spot because they can camouflage themselves."

"There it is! It just jumped from that big tree to the little one." I said.

After about five minutes, the kids returned to their seats.

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They asked me how do you spell “skyscootus”. They began to google it.

## Password

I thought I had seen it all. Those of you who are old enough to remember the game show “Password”, understand how the game works. As a source of review sometimes we played “Password”. I was the host, Allen Ludden. The winning team stays for the next game. The losing team is replaced with two other competitors. We were in the middle of the game and I hear this beeping noise.

I said, “What’s that?”

One of the girls playing the game reached down her blouse and pulled out her cell phone.

She said, “That’s just a reminder to take my birth control medicine.”

One Liners

“What was the name of the Wendy’s girl?”

She didn’t bat an eye and returned the phone to its original position. Times have changed.

## Pictionary

When completing a lesson, sometime as a means of review I played a form of Pictionary. The lesson being taught dealt

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### One Liners

"My aunt married my uncle."

with the situational advantages the white man had over the indians.

I printed the word "revolver" on an index card. I asked for volunteers to participate. Many hands went up and I picked a student at random.

I showed this young lady the card and she began to draw a picture of a revolver on the board. The kids were allowed to make a guess at any time. I noticed the drawing started to take a questionable shape. Many kids began to giggle. At the conclusion of the drawing, I asked this student to step back with me and admire her artwork. She was very embarrassed, but was laughing. Funny stuff! I continued to play Pictionary, but chose my topics a little more carefully.

### Short Answers

How can you tell who the Major League scouts are at a baseball game?

Correct Answer: radar guns

Student Answer: "They're the ones with the radiator guns."

## Hooky

From 1981 to 1984, I taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade at a parochial school. A young man played hooky for three days. His older

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brother covered for him at school. When we put two and two together, they were in deep doggie-doo.

Our principal did not believe in corporal punishment, so cracks were off the table. The mother of the two boys came to school and requested both of her sons be cracked. The problem was she wanted me to do it. I wasn't crazy about the idea, but I agreed to carry out her request.

I instructed the boys to take everything out of their back pockets and make sure they didn't move. I positioned the brothers facing each other with their hands flat on a desk. I applied three cracks to each boy and split the board on the final crack.

I enjoyed absolutely nothing about this experience. This was the only time I have ever cracked a student. Thank God!

Thirty years after the incident I ran into one of the brothers. He told me that day put his life on the straight and narrow. He is happily married with two kids and has a good job.

One Liners

"I'm half white, that is why I have a pancake butt."

## Jo Jo

Cassidy Jo wasn't feeling well one day during her kindergarten year. In fact, she threw up in the cafeteria. She was sent to the nurse's office. The stomach flu was going around school. When Jo Jo entered the nurse's office it was packed with sick children. The nurse instructed Jo Jo to wait outside. A half hour had passed and things began to thin out in the office. The nurse went to get Jo Jo in the hallway, but she



*"Just doing what I was told."*

wasn't there. They searched the entire building and couldn't locate this little sweetheart. The principal ordered a "lockdown" and the authorities were called along with Jo Jo's mother.

This story has a happy ending. Jo Jo was exactly where the nurse had told her to wait ... "Outside". She was in a shelter house. Beautiful!

One Liners

"A fly pukes  
on you every  
time you try  
to move it."

Gene Yontz

## Being a Student at St. Raphael in the 1960's



*First kid in second row. I have the big ears.*

Attended 8:00am mass Monday through Friday before school.

9:00am school began.

Wore white shirt and tie everyday.

Could not talk during lunch.

Religion class was held everyday.

Went to confession once a month (there were times I made up things I didn't do).

Walked to and from school grades 1 through 4.

Had to hold textbook

at a certain angle

(knuckles were cracked – Sister Agnes Bernadette).

Served mass whenever needed.

One Liners

“Egypt is somewhere in Spain.”

## Wearing The Captain's Gown

When folding hands in praying position/right thumb over left.

### Short Answers

What is another name for Lou Gehrig's disease?

Correct Answer: ALS

Student Answer: "LSD"

## My First Day at CCHS

I went to Catholic Central High School in Springfield, Ohio. I was nervous and curious as was every other fifteen-year-old in 1968.

I picked up my schedule in the main office and hurried to homeroom. After the teacher took attendance, announcements began over the PA. I received three demerits for talking during announcements. I hadn't even been to an academic class yet. Those were the only demerits I received in my entire high school career. The teacher made an example out of me, which I incorporated into my disciplinary strategy. Start tough, you can always lighten up.

## Hay is for Horses

In 1968, I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at St. Raphael. Sister Mary Anina was my teacher. At the end of a Friday, one of the kids was misbehaving.

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She shouted, "Hey!" directed at that student.

I opened my big mouth and said "Hay is for horses."

Sister replied "Mr. Yontz, you will be staying after school for that comment."

I asked, "Can I call my mom for a ride home?"

"Make it snappy," she replied.

I returned to class and Sister wanted to know what my mom had to say.

My mom said, "Have a nice walk home."

It was 4.6 miles in the winter. Lesson learned.

## **B+**

I was very fortunate to be the father of two very smart kids with a great work ethic. Nick and Ashley were both members of the National Honor Society. Also, they were both in the top ten of their graduating class.

During Ashley's high school career, she received a B+ in an art class. All of her other grades were A's. My daughter is a perfectionist. She was a little annoyed with the B+, but not upset.



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### One Liners

“If we don’t get it right, do we get it wrong?”

I said to her, “Don’t worry about it too much, I received a B+ in high school.”

She replied, “Yeah dad, but that was one of your good grades.”

She was right.

Ashley had at least a 4.0 GPA every year. I also had a 4.0 GPA, but it took me two years to accumulate it.

## What Are the Chances?

When I was attending Ohio Dominican College, one of my good friends Craig Raagas told me a story about a guy he went to Notre Dame High School with in Sherman Oaks, California. I told Craig that sounds like a guy I went to grade school with at St. Raphael in Springfield, Ohio. His name was Mike.

After many years, I sent Craig a picture of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade baseball team at St. Raphael. Mike was in the picture. Craig called and told me it was the same guy.

What are the chances that a guy I went to grade school with in Springfield, Ohio moved 2,500 miles away to California and ended up in the same high school with a great college friend of mine?!