

## REMEMBERING DAN ALLAN (1942-2022)

We met at Alpha Chi Rho at the University of Illinois in 1960 or '61 – more than sixty years later, I can't be sure if we were in the same pledge class, as I was initiated in early 1961, and Dan in October of that year. Either way, we hit it off immediately. Dan could see humor in everyday situations, a trait much valued at the Crow House. We knew that within the challenge of getting an education, we also needed to laugh, play some softball and flag football, trade stories of how we got to where we were and what we wanted to do, while trying not to take ourselves too seriously.

The stories from that time are as endless as the characters in the House, and Dan was one of those characters. One example: the strange brew manufactured for testing and tasting in Dan's room, in those years of no-booze-in-the-house. The experiment consisted of blending something like after-shave lotion and Coca-Cola. The verdict: thumbs-down.

One Friday night, fairly late, Dan and I were at Kam's, a favorite campus hangout, ready to feast on hot beef sandwiches. Famished, I tore into mine, then noticed Dan wasn't eating. "What are you waiting for?" I asked. Dan glanced at his watch and replied, "It's not midnight yet." We'd had more than one beer, but somewhat-Catholic Dan waited another two minutes so he wouldn't be guilty of eating meat on Friday.

Although I was a year ahead of Dan in school, I remained on campus after graduation to go to grad school, so we saw each other at events such as the annual softball game with our Crow counterparts from Purdue. The games were held on a farm halfway between the two schools, and involved a certain amount of beer-drinking and a haphazard ball game.

Another commonality: like some other Brothers, Dan and I took on the challenge of staying with the ROTC program through junior and senior years, going on active duty with the Army after we graduated as 2nd Lieutenants.

Our paths diverged after college, but in the early 1970s, while visiting my hometown, Memphis, I went on a blind date. The girl mentioned being from Atchison, Kansas. I said that my friend Dan had been the city manager in that town. "Dan Allan?" she exclaimed. "I knew Dan – we went out a few times." I didn't press her for details. Turns out that, at age 28, Dan had been the youngest city manager in the entire United States!

Years down the road, it was a treat when Dan and his wife, Martie, came to the L.A. area at Oscars time, meeting my wife, Jeanne, for the first time. True to form, Dan made a point of talking and joking with people who were camping outside the Oscars venue – not something most folks would bother with, but we all got a kick out of it. Another too-seldom get-together came during the festivities around the 2013 Illini Homecoming game in Champaign, along with a gathering at the House. The fact that Dan (with Martie) and others from the '64 class had made the trip, in part, to see Brothers from the class of '63 celebrating their 50th anniversary, spoke volumes about the bond forged in our college days.

I do wish our paths had not led us to opposite sides of the continent, but that's life – and a good one it was for Dan, with a good career, a wonderful wife, children and grandchildren. We talked a couple of times in the weeks before his final trip to the hospital this year (2022). The bond that was forged as Brothers in AXP more than sixty years earlier was ne'er broken, for which I'll always be grateful.

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Figurehead, obverse, scatterbrain, false, philistinism

It's beyond ironic that the Former Guy – you know, the Big Orange Scatterbrain – has come out in favor of doing away with certain provisions in the Constitution, or maybe the whole document. Then he tried to walk back his blistering comments. It apparently hasn't occurred to him that the Constitution was at the heart of his so-called victory in 2016, when he was elected by a minority of U.S. voters, thanks to the good ol' Electoral College. His accession to the presidency was a false victory – it was legal, but false – he'd convinced only a minority of voters to support him. In fact, if there were ever an American president who was just a figurehead, it's this guy. I propose the U.S. mint come out with a new coin, the half-cent piece, made of cheap tin, with the Former Guy on the obverse side and a donkey's rear end on the reverse, in other words, an ass on each side. And guess what? – he'd be proud of it, setting aside his philistinism for what he'd consider a work of art – kind of like his hair-do.