

Tributes to Alex Steele from his brothers of the BGA Class of 1967

On the following pages are tributes to Alex Steele, gathered from emails sent by his brothers of the Battle Ground Academy Class of 1967 in the days after his death on October 23, 2012. These tributes reflect our deep feelings for and admiration of Alex, as well as our grief and sorrow at his passing. They are our unedited memories and emotions.

We, his classmates, are lessened and saddened by Alex's absence, but are brought closer together at the same time. Alex has given us one last gift of strengthening us and our bonds with each other, and helping us to realize more completely what an amazing life can accomplish, and to strive for that in each of our lives.

Thank you, Alex. See you on the other side, brother.

Compiled by Alex's classmates,
Eddie Lunn, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Battle Ground Academy
John Hampton, Class Webmaster

Please note: I've taken the liberty of making short notes to clarify situations and people for those who are not Alex's classmates. The notes are in italics. I have also put the "From" email lines in bold to help readers to distinguish one email from the next.
--John Hampton

10/31/12 01:12:57 PM

Alex Steele Memorial

Driver identified in fatal Brentwood crash

Posted: Oct 23, 2012 10:10 PM CDT Updated: Oct 24, 2012 07:12 AM

Posted by Kevin Young - email

BRENTWOOD, TN (WSMV) -

Officials have identified the man who died in a wreck Tuesday evening in Williamson County.

William Steele III, 63, of Brentwood, died in the single vehicle, single occupant wreck which was reported about 8:30 p.m. along Holly Tree Gap Road.

The Tennessee Highway Patrol said Steele was traveling northbound when his 1998 Aston Martin SCF went off the right shoulder of the road, struck a utility pole and rolled over.

The vehicle stopped at the bottom of a ditch, trapping Steele inside, THP said.

Steele was wearing his seat belt, but he died from his injuries.

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From: Hickerson, Marion W III [mailto:Marion.W.Hickerson.III@morganstanley.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 3:41 PM

To: The Class of '67

Cc:

Subject: RE: '67 BGA Memorial pics

I regret to tell you guys that our classmate Alex Steele was killed in a one car accident in Williamson County last night,his family was out of the country and I don't know any further details.I just found out myself. Chip

From: Hugh C. Howser Jr. [mailto:HHowser@dickinson-wright.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 2:22 PM

Subject: Alex Steele

I am sorry to advise everyone that Alex Steele was killed in a single car accident last night in Williamson county. His wife was out of the country and there are no arrangements as of yet. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.....hugh

Hugh C Howser Jr.
Dickinson Wright PLLC
424 Church Street
Suite 1401
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Main (615) 244-6538
Direct(615)780-1102
Email:hhowser@dickinsonwright.com

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Alex Steele Memorial

From: Norman Davis [mailto:bunza1313@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 3:47 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

That is just awful news! So very sorry to hear. Norman

From: Ralph McCracken rwmc911@comcast.net [mailto:rwmc911@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 3:48 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

Me too....tragic!

From: Judge.Frank Clement [mailto:Judge.Frank.Clement@tscmail.state.tn.us]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 3:54 PM

Subject: Alex Steele

This is so tragic.

I understand it was a one car accident not far from his home.

Although communications have been difficult as Sondra and the girls are in Italy to help with a new grandbaby there, the body has been released to Marshall Donnelly Funeral Home. No specific arrangements yet but the family hopes to have the service Monday or Tuesday at First Presbyterian.

If and when I learn more details I will share them with you.

Frank C.

From: Don Denbo [mailto:ddenbo@COM-INS.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 3:58 PM

Subject: RE: Alex Steele

Awful...but what a blessing that we all got to be with him one last time!

Don is referring to our 45th Class Reunion on 10/12-13/2012

Donald S. Denbo

President

Commercial Insurance Associates, LLC

Phone: (615) 515-6008

Fax: (615) 515-6008

ddenbo@com-ins.com

From: Judge.Frank Clement [mailto:Judge.Frank.Clement@tscmail.state.tn.us]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 4:01 PM

Subject: RE: '67 BGA Memorial pics

I was just advised the service will be Monday at Noon at First Presbyterian, I do not yet know about visitation.

The obituary is expected to be in Friday's paper.

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Alex Steele Memorial

From: rwm911@comcast.net [mailto:rwm911@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 4:08 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

Really tragic!

From: Eddie lunn

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 4:15 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

Brothers of '67,

PLEASE take care of yourself! This is so tragic and such a loss. Pray for Alex's family, now.

Eddie

615/973-3100

Lunn@boisco.com

From: rwm911@comcast.net [mailto:rwm911@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 4:20 PM

Subject: Re: Alex Steele

So true!

We just do not know when our ticket is punched, so I continue to say, " live like u r dying" cause we r!

As always,

RALPHIE

From: Silvey, George [mailto:george.silvey@jostens.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 4:34 PM

Subject: Re: Alex Steele

Wow! I cannot believe this. We are so fortunate to have spent our 45th reunion with Alex-- the memories that are racing through my mind. Alex was certainly one of my heros in our class

From: John Hampton [mailto:john@jhamptonphotography.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 4:43 PM

Subject: Alex Steele

Brothers,

I'm re-sending this tragic news because some of you may not have heard about our classmate, Alex Steele, who died in a one-car accident on 10/23. From our classmates:

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Alex Steele Memorial

Chip Hickerson: I regret to tell you guys that our classmate Alex Steele was killed in a one car accident in Williamson County last night, his family was out of the country and I don't know any further details. I just found out myself. Chip

Norman Davis: That is just awful news! So very sorry to hear. Norman

Frank Clement: This is so tragic. I understand it was a one car accident not far from his home. Although communications have been difficult as Sondra and the girls are in Italy to help with a new grandbaby there, the body has been released to Marshall Donnelly Funeral Home. No specific arrangements yet but the family hopes to have the service Monday or Tuesday at First Presbyterian. If and when I learn more details I will share them with you. Frank C.

Don Denbo: Awful...but what a blessing that we all got to be with him one last time!

Frank Clement, second email: I was just advised the service will be Monday at Noon at First Presbyterian, I do not yet know about visitation. The obituary is expected to be in Friday's paper.

Eddie Lunn: Brothers of '67, PLEASE take care of yourself! This is so tragic and such a loss. Pray for Alex's family, now.

Ralph McCracken: So true!

We just do not know when our ticket is punched, so I continue to say, "live like u r dying" cause we r!

As always,

RALPHIE

I will continue to keep everybody in the loop. And may I add my sorrow, and condolences to Alex's family. Like Eddie said, please take care of you and yours. I DO NOT want to miss ANY MORE of you at our 50th!

From: Steve Robinson [mailto:SRobinson@fca.org]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 4:43 PM

Subject: RE: '67 BGA Memorial pics

My BGA Brothers ...

Oh, how we need to pray for Alex wife and two girls. I cannot imagine ... Just another reminder of the brevity of life. At the Sat. evening reunion, Johnny Hahn, Bilbo and I were talking ... specifically about Alex – and how “nice, friendly, and kind” he was to us “Franklin Country Bumpkins”. I told Johnny I thought we should tell Alex that ... so I went over and got him (he'd been talking with Mike Burton a good while) and asked if he could come over when finished. He did, and Johnny told him what we'd all said about him - with Bilbo and I heartily agreeing. Alex wasn't even aware of his kindness and friendliness to us - guess we never know the little things we do, that'll impact someone ... amazing how we all remembered this 45 years later

When I heard this tragic news from Bill Armistead, I remembered two comments made years ago - that both that greatly impacted me ...

□ “Nothing is so sure as death – and nothing so unsure, as the time.”

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Alex Steele Memorial

□ "You'd better make sure when it comes your time to die, that all you have to do ... is just die."

Know his family will greatly appreciate our prayers. Ya'll sure mean a lot to me, even though I seldom see most of you. I want to be in Heaven with you BGA brothers one day – and have a '67 reunion there! Sure glad "the best is yet to be".

Big Daddy

Steve Robinson

Fellowship of Christian Athletes

2603 Elm Hill Pike – Suite C, Nashville, TN 37214

Cell: 615-516-9821 email: srobinson@fca.org

Office: 615-889-8808 Fax: 615-889-8090

From: John Hampton [mailto:john@jhamptonphotography.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 4:48 PM

Subject: PS

I've emailed Lyle Hampton about this terrible news. Alex was at the lunch for Lyle at Dick's when Lyle was visiting. I'm sure Lyle would want to know.

Lyle Hampton was the senior US History teacher for our class at BGA.

--

Best,

John

From: Hickerson, Marion W III [mailto:Marion.W.Hickerson.III@morganstanley.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 5:24 PM

To: Steve Robinson

Subject: RE: '67 BGA Memorial pics

I could not have said it so well, but could not agree more, he was a very kind and thoughtful person.

From: rwmc911@comcast.net [mailto:rwmc911@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 5:26 PM

To: john@jhamptonphotography.com

Subject: Re: PS

good move, John

i am visiting "the Hampster" next month and i am sure he would want to know!

From: Grant O'Neal [mailto:grantonealm2@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:14 PM

Subject: Re: Alex Steele

John and all,

10/31/12 01:12:57 PM

Alex Steele Memorial

So very sorry to hear this terrible news. Ralph is right - let's appreciate every day and every blessing while we can.

From: S Staples [mailto:stapless91@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:19 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

Steve Robinson-

We are so lucky to have you among our brotherhood. Until you wrote I could not find the words to reply to this loss. I was not surprised to read your story of Alex's kindness. I am so sorry for his family's loss. I hope we all have gotten a reminder of how fragile our time here is and how lucky we are to have our families and each other.

Bless you all.

Jazzy

From: John Hampton [mailto:john@jhamptonphotography.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:23 PM

To: rwm911@comcast.net; lunn

Subject: BGA memorial fund for Alex and others?

Hello Ralph and Eddie,

How horrible! I have another reason to regret not being able to make the 45th reunion; I'll never see Alex again. He was a true gentleman, and I miss him.

I know we have a BGA fund in Mike Mott's memory, as is good and proper. Is there another BGA fund specific to fallen members of our class? If not, could we create one, so that all our absent classmates are honored? We keep and maintain Mike's fund, no question; but I think ours is a very important class, whose members have made massive contributions to our world, and deserves a memorial fund all its own.

Maybe this isn't the right time for me to suggest it, but I wanted to put the idea out there before it flew my mind.

Take care, and I'll see you at Alex's service on Monday.

--

Best,
John

From: rwm911@comcast.net [mailto:rwm911@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:30 PM

To: john@jhamptonphotography.com

Cc: lunn

Subject: Re: BGA memorial fund for Alex and others?

J,

10/31/12 01:12:57 PM

Alex Steele Memorial

excellent thought!

let's discuss in the very near future!

Ralphie

From: John Hampton [mailto:john@jhamptonphotography.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:30 PM

To: Steve Robinson

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

Steve,

How beautifully stated! Thank you. I'm so happy that Alex knew how much his kindness meant to you--and others--and that he was so appreciated. Adding to your kind and true statements, let me say that it's always the right thing to do to tell someone that you love them, appreciate them, and care about them. Don't wait, because our time here is unsure.

Best,

John

From: Newton Cannon [mailto:nccaptains@scottsboro.org]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:32 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

As glad as we are that we got to visit with Alex one last time, I thank the Good Lord that Alex got to see his new grandchild before he passed away. He was a proud Granddad, and I know how hard this must be on his family. As Eddie said, "pray for them now", but we need to keep them in our thoughts and prayers, as this will be hard for them for some time.

Newton

From: rwmc911@comcast.net [mailto:rwmc911@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:34 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

ALEX STEELE = A TRUE GENTLEMAN

From: lunn

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:37 PM

Subject: Re: BGA memorial fund for Alex and others?

John,

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Alex Steele Memorial

I agree with your direction. I have always looked at Mike's fund as a '67 fund. To me it is sort of like Mike is having a party and we're all invited, some of us later than others. Logan Jackson also has a fund, too.

I will talk to the development department and ask if there could be a "'67" umbrella name that includes all our brothers past and future.

Eddie
615/973-3100
Lunn@boisco.com

From: rwmc911@comcast.net [mailto:rwmc911@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:46 PM

Subject: Re: BGA memorial fund for Alex and others?

GOOD THINKING!

NO WONDER I DIDN'T THINK OF IT!

From: Frank Witherspoon [mailto:fwspon@bellsouth.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 6:56 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

'67 Brothers--I'm just reading this and I'm stunned. While I consider Alex to have been a very close friend, I completely agree with Steve that he was a close friend of all of ours. He was a warm and caring man. So glad we could all get together for the 45th.
Frank

From: Walter Green [mailto:greenwr7@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 7:14 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

I am so sorry. My loss of Debbie still burns: my heart goes out to the family. This is another kick in the gut that keeps me focused on the important things in life. Glad I spent some time with him at reunion. Take care, guys.

From: John Griffith [mailto:john.griffith@mybga.org]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 7:25 PM

Subject: Re: Alex Steele '67

Eddie--

I just heard that earlier tonight. That is terribly sad for his family and his classmates. I know the school will want to keep informed of the arrangements. I am terribly sorry to hear this sad news.

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Alex Steele Memorial

From: Mike Greene [mailto:mgreene@lester-greene-mccord.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 7:28 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

Betty and I are so sorry to hear the news about Alex. During our hour and a half drive home Sat. Night from the now infamous 45th, we discussed the night and our impressions. We talked about who was there and of course, who was not (we know who you are!). It was very enjoyable and I appreciate all that was done to make it a great event.

Alex was always, in many ways, the standard we looked up to - class, character, honesty. A great guy and friend to all of us. RIP Alex Steele. We will not forget you.

From: John Hampton [mailto:john@jhamptonphotography.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 8:18 PM

Subject: Re: BGA memorial fund for Alex and others?

Hey Eddie,

I didn't remember that Logan had a fund, as well. And, I think there could be no finer representatives for our class than Mike and Logan. Those funds should definitely go on. I was just throwing out an idea for a whole-class fund that would be a blanket for us all, and not to supplant Mike's and Logan's funds. I also don't want to dilute giving from our classmates and others; if there are too many opportunities to give, one or more funds could suffer. You, Ralph, and the financial gurus at BGA are the ones to figure all that out. I have strong and happy memories of Logan and Mike, but even stronger memories of us all, and I wanted us all to be remembered somehow.

So, take my suggestion as just that. Sorry if I'm coming across a bit maudlin right now, and maybe not thinking 100% straight, but you know where my heart is. I mean only the best for my class.

Best,
John

From: Bill Booher [mailto:bboo549@msn.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 8:59 PM

Subject: Alex Steele

To My '67 Classmates...

Well, I sit here tonight with a heavy heart and, practically in reality, almost in disbelief...

We never know 'for whom, and when, the bell tolls'...

I second all the comments, especially by Big Daddy and George...

It was just ten short days ago when we were all together...

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Alex Steele Memorial

Alex and I had some real quality time at the corner of the bar on Saturday night...most of you all had sat down to eat, and he just arrived from the Vandy game...

He was enjoying an ice cold Guinness Stout draft bought from the front bar, and I was having a Crown and water...we both enjoyed a 'few'...

We had a great chat about our days at BGA and the Class of '67, then the conversation turned to what was happening 'today'...

I inquired about his personal and business activities, and he told me what he was up to...family and business, with no pompous ego...hell, we all were aware how successful he was in his business endeavors...

Then, he immediately asked me to bring him up to date on what I was doing...Alex was just a real class guy with tremendous care, concern and dignity...

With all he had achieved, I really felt that night he was still most proud to be a member of the BGA Class of '67...

God Bless Us All, and May God Bless Alex and his Family, and May The Good Lord Shed His Grace On Thee...

My Warm and Best Regards to All,

Bill Booher

PS – Big Daddy...I don't claim to be 'a great Christian'...I try hard to be a good Christian, and I pray fairly often...but I think I'm gonna get down on my knees and have one of them real good long prayers tonight...

From: Silvey, George [mailto:george.silvey@jostens.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 9:19 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

Steve, you are such a Rock for all of our class. How lucky we are for you to say so many of the words and things we are all trying to say. I am again at a loss of words. I will say I do LOVE every member of our class, and each and everyone of you has had such an important & significant impact on my life.

From: Benny [mailto:doublebarrel49@comcast.net]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 10:04 AM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

Benny and I are just getting the news of Alex's death and we are so shocked. While he will want to reply later today, I would like to offer on behalf of our family, our deepest sympathy to his

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Alex Steele Memorial

family and all his classmates. I have been fortunate to know all of you since Benny and I have been married for 43 years and its beautiful to see such love and mutual respect your class has for each other. You have been blessed with a wonderful experience of attending school together, some of you from elementary age. None of us should ever take for granted the opportunity we have to share and relish these precious memories. All of you have a special place in my heart including Alex, with his gentle way of moving through a room and making you feel acknowledged. He was truly a gentle Man.

From: George Armistead [mailto:biggeorge@newbusinessnashville.com]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 10:32 AM

Subject: Alex Steele -Parish news 10-25-12

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Amelia Watson <AWatson@fpcnashville.org>

Date: Thu, Oct 25, 2012 at 10:26 AM

Subject: Parish news 10-25-12

Dear Friends at First:

William Alexander Steele III died October 23, 2012. He was the husband of Sandra Steele of parish 32 who lives at 565 Beech Creek Rd S, Brentwood 37027-3431, tel # 370-9006. His daughters are Britt Genevieve Steele and Olivia Ruth Steele who live at the same address. His aunt is Damaris Steele of parish 9 who lives at Blakeford in Green Hills, Apt 414, 11 Burton Hills Blvd, 37215-6152, tel # 665-1375.

The service for Alex Steele will be Monday, October 29 at 2:00 PM in the sanctuary with visitation from 12 – 2 in Courtenay Hall.

The filming of "Nashville" in the sanctuary Monday is postponed.

From: rwmc911@comcast.net [mailto:rwmc911@comcast.net]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:27 AM

Subject: THE WONDERFUL LIFE OF ALEX STEELE

HEY GANG aka MY BROTHERS,

I CANNOT SEEM TO GET ALEX OFF MY MIND ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ALL SPENT TIME TOGETHER JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO!.

I STILL FEEL THAT I HAVE HAD THE WIND COMPLETELY KNOCKED OUT OF ME!!

MY HEART & PRAYERS REALLY GO OUT TO HIS FAMILY AS THIS TRAGIC EVENT WILL BE HARD FOR ALL TO ENDURE.

AS FOR ME, I MENTALLY REFUSE TO MOURN ALEX'S DEATH, BUT RATHER I CHOOSE & SERIOUSLY SUGGEST THAT U JOIN ME TO CELEBRATE ALEX'S WONDERFUL LIFE!!!

I TRULY FEEL THAT WE WERE ALL VERY FORTUNATE TO SHARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF IT WITH HIM!!

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Alex Steele Memorial

HE IS A PART OF EACH OF US!

AS ALWAYS,

MAD PIG

From: Hickerson, Marion W III [mailto:Marion.W.Hickerson.III@morganstanley.com]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:46 AM

Subject: RE: THE WONDERFUL LIFE OF ALEX STEELE

Amen

From: Benny [mailto:doublebarrel49@comcast.net]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 12:49 PM

Subject: Re: '67 BGA Memorial pics

I am absolutely speechless. Thankfully Nancy Faye is not. I'm so appreciative of our time together at the reunion, but the loss of Alex is hard to handle. Everyone please take care!

From: Don Denbo [mailto:ddenbo@COM-INS.com]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 1:44 PM

Subject: RE: THE WONDERFUL LIFE OF ALEX STEELE

All:

Other than feeling shocked and empty yesterday when I heard, I really wasn't ready until now to try and put these feelings into words. Yesterday, I used the word "awful" and it is still the word that most comes to my mind. I don't actually feel sad, I just feel beaten, punch drunk, incredulous...you get the picture! I can't help returning to our good fortune in being together at our reunion. Just think how much worse it would have been if we hadn't had the chance to be with Alex.

Naturally, we didn't know that in addition to everything else, we were saying "Goodbye". Life just doesn't work that way! I must say that I have been moved and comforted and absolutely filled with pride at the words and thoughts we have shared with each other. Somehow our unique shared experience forged something special and wonderful for us. It is for those of us who remain to honor this one of our own who has fallen, but-more importantly-to use this powerful emotional event to overcome our grief together and bind ourselves tighter together.

Donald S. Denbo

From: John Hampton [mailto:john@jhamptonphotography.com]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 2:22 PM

Subject: Fwd: Re: Alex Steele

Brothers (including you, Lyle),

10/31/12 01:12:57 PM

Alex Steele Memorial

I took the liberty of emailing Lyle Hampton the news about Alex. His reply is below. Alex was at Lyle's lunch at Dick's when Lyle visited in August. I'm very glad that Lyle had that "one last visit" with Alex then, in happiness and friendship, even though none of us knew that.

Lyle, thank you for your words and thoughts, good and true and heartfelt; and for wanting to keep up with our ragtag bunch. It is we who should be thanking you for putting up with us and enriching our lives, so I will say, on behalf of the BGA Class of '67, "Thank you, Mr. Hampton!" You will always be a part of our class, as I hope we are a part of your life.

Best,

John

From Lyle Hampton:

John: I am not good at adding messages, but perhaps you can convey my condolences to the gang. You ALL have been special all these years. I'll never forget your kindnesses in putting up with me. It was a thrill for me to see Alex and several of you at Ralphie's in August. With near sobs & tears. As always, Lyle

From: Melissa Davis [mailto:bunza1313@comcast.net]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 2:28 PM

Subject: Re: THE WONDERFUL LIFE OF ALEX STEELE

Alex grew up on Trimble, I on Lynwood. We played b-ball together from age six through '67. I sat at his kitchen table so often as Ruth fed us cookies and milk. Sure, we were competitive. But we were friends. I have always maintained tremendous respect for Alex. He treated me in like manner. Just a couple months back I received an email from him. I will greatly miss him. He was a mensch, a first class mensch.

Though I have seemed to all to have little interest in my classmates, nothing could be further from the truth. I relished my days with you as my classmates. Obviously, I have not been overly extroverted and socially active with my classmates. It has not been for lack of respect for each of you, nor for lack of appreciation for our time together. I served two consecutive terms as President of my fraternity during my four years at college. Have I ever attended a reunion for my class of '71? No. Whether it be '67 or whether it be '71, I recall each with true love. Each of us has some quirky characteristics; staying in touch has certainly been a shortfall of mine. Should God bless me with five more years, I will be at the 50th. I'll even host the 50th.

And I will see many of you on Monday, for Alex was way up there in my book and I'm thankful to have had his friendship and leadership for all these years. I will cherish Alex.

My classmates, you are a very, very special bunch.

My love to each of you, Norman

From: John Hampton [mailto:john@jhamptonphotography.com]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 2:29 PM

To: Don Denbo

Subject: Re: THE WONDERFUL LIFE OF ALEX STEELE

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Alex Steele Memorial

Don,

Thank you for your good words! You have very eloquently summed up--the best I've heard--why we are who we are, and what makes our class unique. I am an only child, but now I know what it's like to have brothers. And I thank each and every one of you, and am proud to be in your number.

Best,
John

From: rwm911@comcast.net [mailto:rwm911@comcast.net]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 2:58 PM

Subject: Re: THE WONDERFUL LIFE OF ALEX STEELE

HEY NORM,

UR COMING TO THE 50TH IS THE BEST NEWS I HAVE HEARD IN TWO DAYS!!

THANKS

From: Newton Cannon [mailto:nccaptains@scottsboro.org]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 3:44 PM

Subject: Re: THE WONDERFUL LIFE OF ALEX STEELE

WHY WAIT 5 YEARS TO GET TOGETHER AGAIN ?? HOW ABOUT A 46TH NEXT FALL ??

Norman- It is great to hear from you !

Newton

From: Frank Bell [mailto:bullbell1949@yahoo.com]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 3:45 PM

Subject: Class of 67 Alex Steele

It is a sad time for our class & my thoughts also go out to Alex's family.

The emails over the past two days have exhibited what a unique & close class we have. Honestly I did not know Alex as many of you did. At the reunion he sat across from me during dinner & we talked for some time. Probably more than during the 48 years since I enrolled in BGA. Even though we seldom crossed paths during our days at BGA & virtually never since then I still feel a connection & a loss.

My time in Franklin @ BGA is full of many great memories of friends & classmates. The reunions are very special & give each of us an opportunity to renew friendships. Every five years I say I hope to see friends before the next reunion, but seldom follow up. Maybe during

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Alex Steele Memorial

this next five years I will do a better job of making it a priority to take the time & make the effort to be a better classmate & friend.

Life is truly a gift. We should share it with our friends.

God bless Alex's family during this tragic time in their lives.

And may God bless each of you & see us safely through until we meet again.

Frank Bell

On Oct 25, 2012, at 5:40 PM, "Melissa Davis" <bunza1313@comcast.net> wrote:

Eddie,

What a special, very nice comment you shared with me earlier today! Thank you.

Warm regards,

ND

On Oct 25, 2012, at 5:13 PM, "John Hampton" <john@jhamptonphotography.com> wrote:

Brothers,

I've updated our class website with a memorial to Alex. After awhile, I plan to copy and record all the wonderful email tributes to and memories of Alex that you have sent. It's important that they be remembered along with Alex, as they are parts of his life that go back almost fifty years. Moreover, they are the parts of Alex that have remained with us, and will be here even after we've joined him. I believe they are the best parts: distilled by time, and therefore timeless.

Alex's passing is many things: tragic, sad, untimely, and terrible are just a few. But what I see shining through our tears, beautifully expressed in email after email, is that, once again, a brother's death has brought out the best in us, has brought us closer, has opened our eyes and our hearts and helped us see us, our world, and our places in it with a greater clarity than before. As Ralph said in his great email, let us celebrate Alex's wonderful life! He has given us all one final gift. Let us thank him, each in his own way, and above all, let us be mindful and joyful that we had the privilege of knowing Alex.

--

Best,
John

On 10/25/2012 6:16 PM, Bobby Akin wrote:
Classmates:

Great e-mails, words well spoken and truly heart-felt...Just like the entire class I am still in shock over this tragic event as I spent two great recent evenings, like yourselves getting to know Alex again after 5 years of absence from his presence. Alex was still the same old Alex I once knew at BGA 45 years ago, more concerned with U and your well being than himself. Alex was never an "I or Me" person, he was a "we" person who truly lived and embodied a successful life. He was materialistically successful, but even more successful as a human being who truly cared and gave of himself in his concern for others: family, friends, loved ones, classmates and teammates. The Franklin group can testify that for two nights Alex was more interested in talking about our group and how we grew up together, went to school together and our lives before we all met at BGA. I will keep this mail short as I have more to say about Alex and my experience with him as a classmate at BGA. Sorry, I have just returned from a funeral in Belle Meade for Rogers Buntin, a dear family friend of my parents.

John, I am so glad you will be collecting all of these wonderful tributes to Alex for Sandra, this is the same that our Sewanee e-mail club has garnered for three fallen football teammates we lost this year as a tribute to go to their widows.

This has been a very rough year for losing friends, classmates, teammates and family members, but the encouraging news is that we still have each other and we all carry a piece of Alex with us, each and every one in our memories and remembrances. Life is a cycle and even though Alex's physical cycle has ended, his eternal spiritual cycle continues. My prayers and heart felt condolences go to Sandra, his two daughters and now his grandchild and as long as their journey on this earth continues, then Alex Steele will live on.

Robert

On Oct 25, 2012, at 7:02 PM, "Grant O'Neal" <grantonealm2@gmail.com> wrote:

Well said Don and others.

I have been unable to shake a deep sadness about Alex. Like Frank Bell, as a dorm rat at BGA, I didn't have a lot of interaction after hours, in study halls, etc with Alex and many of the "townies." But we were all part of something unique at BGA - an experience that has had lasting positive impact. Sure, it's both the brutal suddenness with which it happened and the concern for his family in their grief. But deeper down, it's about facing our own mortality (we are "men of a certain age" now) and the realization that each of our moments on Earth are precious. Alex's death starkly reminds us to cherish what really matters. Friendships matter. I often pray to thank God for the many blessings and experiences I have had. I always reflect during those prayers on the beauty of the friendships I have. I am so thankful for the many enduring friendships among the Great Class of '67. Bless you all, and Alex and his family.

On Thu, Oct 25, 2012 at 2:44 PM, Don Denbo <ddenbo@com-ins.com> wrote:

All:

Other than feeling shocked and empty yesterday when I heard, I really wasn't ready until now to try and put these feelings into words. Yesterday, I used the word "awful" and it is still the word that most comes to my mind. I don't actually feel sad, I just feel beaten, punch drunk, incredulous...you get the picture! I can't help returning to our good fortune in being together at

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our reunion. Just think how much worse it would have been if we hadn't had the chance to be with Alex.

Naturally, we didn't know that in addition to everything else, we were saying "Goodbye". Life just doesn't work that way! I must say that I have been moved and comforted and absolutely filled with pride at the words and thoughts we have shared with each other. Somehow our unique shared experience forged something special and wonderful for us. It is for those of us who remain to honor this one of our own who has fallen, but-more importantly-to use this powerful emotional event to overcome our grief together and bind ourselves tighter together.

Donald S. Denbo

On Oct 25, 2012, at 7:13 PM, "Silvey, George" <george.silvey@jostens.com> wrote:

Norman, you were so missed at our 45th. I mean this sincerely. I cannot tell you how many classmates asked where you were and why you were not with us. I am ecstatic you will be @ the 50th. I look forward to seeing you Monday

On Oct 26, 2012, at 12:17 PM, "Harry Ford" <h.ford@insightbb.com> wrote:

After the funeral, we should all get together and have a toast to Alex and talk Harry

On Oct 26, 2012, at 12:39 PM, "John Hampton" <john@jhamptonphotography.com> wrote:

Brothers,

The photographer who did our reunion pix has very kindly extended the print order deadline indefinitely. Eddie Lunn told her about Alex, with the thought that more of us would want prints from that special evening, for many of us, the last one we spent with Alex. Here is their email exchange, with her email address. Thank you, Eddie, for thinking of us!

From: LEA RUTHERFORD <phototwin1@bellsouth.net>

Date: October 25, 2012, 4:35:02 PM CDT

To: lunn <lunn@boisco.com>

Subject: Re: reunion pics

I hate to hear that. I know everybody must be really upset. Of course, anyone can order a print anytime. Feel free to pass along my email address if they want to get in touch with me directly.
Lin

On 10/26/2012 1:55 PM, Allen Muse wrote:

This is my first time to chime in on this string, since I am still getting over the shock. I sat beside Alex at the "Lunch with Lyle" a few days ago. John, what I wanted to say is that throughout all of this you have done an amazing job of keeping everyone in touch and sharing current information. It's helped me immensely. Thanks

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--Allen Muse

On Oct 26, 2012, at 2:31 PM, "rwmc911@comcast.net" <rwmc911@comcast.net> wrote:

I SURE WANT ONE EVEN THOUGH HAVE NOT SEEN THEM YET!!

HELP!

On Oct 26, 2012, at 3:52 PM, "Benny" <doublebarrel49@comcast.net> wrote:

I just got my reunion picture from Friday night at the Crow's Nest. Unbelievable. Nancy Faye and I will be in Atlanta Monday for the birth of our newest grand daughter. Our thoughts and prayers will be with Alex's family. There have been several mentions of getting together before out 50th. Just tell me when and where.

On Oct 26, 2012, at 4:06 PM, "Newton Cannon" <nccaptains@scottsboro.org> wrote:

Work schedule will not allow me to attend Alex's service on Monday, but I will lift a glass on Monday night in his memory, as well as Mike's, Terry's, Chip's, Logan's and all of the rest of the great BGA class of '67.

Stay safe and well-

Newton

On Oct 26, 2012, at 5:31 PM, "Frank Witherspoon" <fwspoon@bellsouth.net> wrote:

I am in Newton's situation and will toast all of us Monday evening. We were all so fortunate to have been with Alex on such a happy occasion at The 45th. I whole-heartedly agree with Benny--an annual event?
Frank

On Oct 26, 2012, at 4:51 PM, "Silvey, George" <george.silvey@jostens.com> wrote:

I plan on being there

On Oct 26, 2012, at 2:12 PM, "Harry Ford" <h.ford@insightbb.com> wrote:

Would anybody be interested in getting together after the service and having a toast in honor of Alex? I think we all need to rally around each other.
Harry

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On Oct 26, 2012, at 3:09 PM, "Steve Robinson" <SRobinson@fca.org> wrote:

Great idea Hump, on getting together after the service Mon.

Steve Robinson

On Oct 29, 2012, at 3:44 AM, "paul chrisman" <woodypaul49@att.net> wrote:

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: paul chrisman <woodypaul49@att.net>

To: Jack and Vicki Milam <jandvmilam@gmail.com>

Sent: Mon, October 29, 2012 3:36:46 AM

Subject: Re: Class website

Fellas,

As a fateful hurricane Sandy and perfect storm of gigantic proportion couple and take aim at our Eastern Coasts, and I yet spread the ashes and mourn the loss of a beloved son of 21 who passed almost exactly one year ago, my personal contemplation on these inevitable and infinite mysteries is well primed. But like many of you, I struggle with this similar but different sort, it seems, of great loss, or life changing event, which from all the emails, and like the coming storm, we seem to sense is of greater magnitude than we might be prepared to absorb. I too am unable to articulate the complex churning in my head, heart and guts, the memories and reflections, on this most intelligent and rightly dedicated, engaging, multifaceted, beautiful and deeply spiritual man, so always approachable, open and generously sharing of any and all his hard won broad experience and much deserved blessings, due gratitude for which never lacking, unquestionably trusted life long friend, SO ALWAYS THERE... for any or all of us, instantly reachable, wherever he was on the vast planet or whatever he was doing, ALWAYS THERE.

This question... Am I the only one of us that thinks he spent more than occasional times, phone, lunch, social visit or email with Alex than anybody else in our class? I bet I'm not, and is that because of me reaching him or him reaching out to me? Am I the only one of us who somehow came to realize in time that Alex had my back covered, and not just with advice or counsel, but in ways I am yet discovering! He was a broadly powerful and giving human being, supporter of any good and noble causes, ardent, consummate lifelong student ever in conscious pursuit of deeper spiritual truth, its expressions and meaning through works of beauty in all arts, motion, form. He contained such innocent spontaneous passion, in the moment awareness and appraisal, creative ideas, fluidity in solutions. He was unafraid and eager to experience all of life on life's terms. And I could go on for paragraphs about many other wonderful aspects of his character, his playfulness, his sportsmanship, his love and devotion for his family, his gentleman-ship, his natural ethics, he was just a great great man, so beloved and now so much more missed than we perhaps expected. A few firsthand observations might help in understanding.

He once expressed to one of my older sons in my presence that to be successful at anything, one must focus and study, learn, keep your eyes open and be ready for opportunity and when it knocks, seize it!! Don't dilly dally 2nd guess or mess around, grab hold the horns and drag that steer to the ground! Alex's life in many ways was a sensational and epic rodeo.

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He had a passion not just for great cars, but incredible performance of every artistically designed and incredibly engineered thing on the planet! And he rightfully enjoyed consummation of very many of his never untastful desires and rewards of his passionate pursuit.

It was a perfect, warm, breezy October evening. I can easily picture Alex, at ONE with a perfect car of his dreams on a road he loved to drive, cruising sweetly, in complete ecstasy,...then.. maybe a deer?? Maybe nothing at all, but somehow, in those brief but last moments on this plane, I choose to think that the spiritually ultimate opportunity knocked, and ever prepared he was ready, totally fearless, he seized it..... And Oh God, may he be carried safely now and forever in your bosom and through those Sublime Heavens that with accurate interpretation of his amazing life and example we hope, we know, must await all of us. I know for a fact he'll be most interested in your latest model chariot, (and I can hardly wait to understand cosmic strings and supersymmetry!)

Fellas, Alex was one great, sweet, wonderful man and we have all been mightily blessed with his presence, (such might be tougher to say about the likes of BB or DD... just kiddin guys) Paul Chrisman

On Oct 29, 2012, at 9:42 AM, "Judge.Frank Clement"

<Judge.Frank.Clement@tscmail.state.tn.us> wrote:

Gentlemen,

I cannot express how impressed I have been with the many heartfelt comments of our class in the wake of Alex' death. His passing is a great loss for so many reasons. It is, however, a tribute to him and to our class that so many of you have had such beautiful and admiring things to share. Although his physical presence is now missing, he will live on in many ways; this is because his life time deeds remain in the hearts of those he touched.

Frank C.

From: "John Hampton" <john@jhamptonphotography.com>

Subject: Alex's memorial service

Date: Mon, Oct 29, 2012 5:16 pm

Dear Brothers,

Sue and I just got home from Alex's memorial service. If you were there, you know how beautiful it was, and how many people were there to pay their respects to Alex and remember his life. I'm very happy that I got to reconnect with so many of you! Sitting there, surrounded by people who loved Alex, and who were loved in turn, and listening to the tributes to him, I thought of Ralph's email: THE WONDERFUL LIFE OF ALEX STEELE. It brought home to me the importance of celebrating who we are, who we have become over these 45 years. This is always true, but is most important when we've lost a friend. So, let us celebrate Alex and celebrate ourselves!

Kiss someone you love for no reason--or for every reason.

Call up an old friend out of the blue just to catch up.

Take a walk in these beautiful autumn woods.

Sing an old favorite song and remember what made it special to you.

Really pay attention to what a friend or family member is saying to you; it's not always the words that convey their meaning.

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Finally (for now), make as positive a difference in our world as Alex did. This last one is hard, because Alex set the bar high. I think he would agree with Robert Browning, when he wrote:
"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?"
-- Andrea del Sarto

Cheers.

--

Best,
John

On Oct 29, 2012, at 5:59 PM, "John Hampton" <john@jhamptonphotography.com> wrote:

Brothers,

Over the last six days since Alex's fatal car accident, you have sent dozens of emails, expressing your feelings of sorrow, grief, and loss most eloquently and beautifully. Most of you wrote what I'd consider to be tributes to Alex, saying who he was and what he meant to you. I've suggested that I collect the emails and edit them into a memorial tribute to him, and a number of you have liked that idea.

Eddie Lunn has already begun the collection and collation job. Bless you, sir! I will take his substantial contribution and add subsequent emails to form the tribute. What I'd like to know from EACH of you who emailed is:

Do I have your permission to include what you wrote, verbatim, in the tribute? I promise not to edit your words. I ask because, as an erstwhile photographer, I've become quite familiar with copyright laws, and want to know that it's OK for me to do what I suggested.

If you'd rather I not include what you wrote, just say so, and I'll not. Sometimes we all say things--en famille, so to speak--that we don't want repeated outside our group. And that is perfectly fine: no guilt.

FYI, I will include the tribute on our class website and will email Alex's widow Sandra a copy. Feel free to make copies and email them or print them as you see fit. I will certainly email you all when I've had a chance to "make it so".

Cheers.

--

Best,
John

On Oct 29, 2012, at 6:34 PM, "Silvey, George" <george.silvey@jostens.com> wrote:

Wow John! You are so right on every count. Alex always set the bar very high, but there are others with Alex who set the bar high, and because of all these people, our class is the BEST BGA has ever seen. We all achieved more as individuals because of these leaders. We can never take anyone in our class for granted. I know speaking for me, everyone in our class has had an influence on my life

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"Judge.Frank Clement" <Judge.Frank.Clement@tscmail.state.tn.us> wrote:

Well said John.

I am sorry I did not get to visit with you yesterday.

And what a turnout, a real tribute.

Take care,

Frank

From Ralph McCracken on 10/31/2012

Greetings All My Brothers,

"LIFE IS SHORT"!!

In recognition of the simple fact mentioned above and as evidenced by recent events, THE GREAT BGA CLASS OF 1967 has decided unanimously to hold a Class Reunion on every Saturday night during the third weekend of October for as long as we last!

We will begin this annual get together on October 19, 2013 @ 6:32 pm @ Dick's Last Resort in Nashville Tennessee. Details to follow, but go ahead and save the date.

This Celebration shall include all classmates who can make the event along with our selected spouses and friends.

Please note that this important happening will occur whether u can make it or not. No brag, just fact and if u cannot make it, u will be talked in a negative manner but also forgiven.

If u should have comments, suggestions, questions, etc. I suggest u call someone who cares or just give me a shout.

As Always,

RALPH W. McCracken aka Mad Pig
President, The Great BGA Class of 1967
615.665.7025