

Shipmate November-December 2026
Duke Longworth
23 September 2026

I can smell the fall air now! The colorful leaves are blowing throughout the Yard, and football is in the air! I always enjoy visiting the Yard during football season, and I enjoy the '71 tailgate! I hope to see you there!

First up is a note from **Tom Laboon**: “Hi, Duke! Hope this note finds you and your family well. I was in Virginia Beach for two weeks this month and had a chance to visit the *USS Laboon (DDG-58)* that is in the BAE shipyard. Great opportunity to meet the CO, CDR Dorei, and Command Master Chief for about 45 minutes to hear their tales of fighting in the Red Sea. Their accomplishments in 2025 were sufficient to earn them both the Arleigh Burke Trophy AND the Battenberg Cup! Awarding them was the last official act of ADM Caudle, Commander U.S. Fleet Forces Command, as he assumed his new role as CNO. The **FIRST** time any ship has won both awards at the same time. BZ to the LABOON and its crew!! The ship is 30 years new! Can't wait to get them back to sea and prove their worth again!! Go Navy! Tom.” What an accomplishment! I am certain your uncle, Father “Jake” Laboon, is very proud of his namesake ship!



Tom admiring the *USS Laboon* awards

Tom Galloway sent this note: “Duke, Wonders never cease! Our classmate, **Wayne Jordan**, has been a recluse for years. That said, last week I was able to dynamite him out of his home in Birmingham, Al and take him to the Golden Nugget Casino in Biloxi, MS. We spent three days there. Didn't quite break the bank but brought home more money than we started. In the photo below, taken in front of the Golden Nugget, (L-R) are Commander Knoll (Penn State), Wayne and me. I know a bunch of guys would love to see a picture of Wayne,

so if there is room in the next Shipmate that would be ideal! Best regards, Tom.” Well, done good and faithful Classmate!



At the Golden Nugget

Here's a love story from **Mike Lynch**: “Duke, Helen Christine and I were married August 8, 2026 at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Easton, MD. 1971'rs in attendance were Karen and **Cass Young** and Meg and **Bob Wagoner**. In picture below (L-R) are Karen and Cass Young, Meg Wagoner, Chris Lynch, Mike Lynch, and Bob Wagoner. After the lovely church ceremony, guests adjourned to a lively reception at Miles River Yacht Club in St. Michaels MD.



The Gunther-Lynch wedding party!

“At 77 I could be the oldest class member to get married. What follows is our 'Chris and Mike Lynch, A Modern Love Story.' It should be noted that we jokingly refer to this as our third wedding. In 2019 we wanted to get married in the USNA Chapel, but when they said we

needed to complete six months of pre-Cana training, we got married in the Easton Court House. Following that we had an Episcopal Church blessing for our marriage. Five years later we returned to the catholic church in which we were both raised. Two years later our return was made official with our marriage on August 8. Hoping you will share this with our classmates. See everyone at the tail gates, Duces Virum, Mike.” What an awesome love story!

“Our love story: Here is how Chris Gunther and Mike Lynch, two people who had lost their spouses, met and fell in love. Over the past fifty years, Chris and Mike were both married to their first loves for over 47 years each, before becoming their caregivers through terminal illnesses lasting more than ten years.

“We met online on ‘Super Bowl Sunday’ and texted back and forth for about a week before losing track of each other. We shared our thoughts and frustrations about online dating; not sure we would ever get where we thought we wanted to go.

“We rediscovered each other on April 12, playfully bantering in texts. That day, Mike did something impetuous and at 4:30pm asked Chris to dinner at Outback Steakhouse in Annapolis. The dinner meeting opened the floodgate of chemistry; it was a very special experience for both of us. We both cancelled upcoming dates to spend more time together, cementing our bond and becoming engaged. We were married in the Talbot County Courthouse on April 29, 2019; and after the blessing of that union on June 22, 2019, at Christ Church in St. Michaels, MD we are spending the rest of our lives together.

“Call it coincidence, or fate, or the hand of God, some of the things that brought us together are:

- Our late spouses both spent their early years in southern Anne Arundel County.
- Mike’s late mother-in-law, Jane Katski, taught Chris’s late husband, Bob Gunther, in second grade at Tracy’s Elementary School.
- Chris and Mike both have long ties to the Annapolis Yacht Club through their spouses’ families. Chris’s mother-in-law, now ninety-one and still very much ‘with it, enjoys retelling many of these stories and looks to more in the future.

“We are ‘young loves’ looking forward to our future life together in our home in Easton Club East in Easton, MD. We also look forward to travelling to the USNA Class of 1971 55th reunion coming up next year. Call it crazy, but we both feel there is ‘love at first sight!’ Mike, what a great love story! May you have many happy years together!

Next is a note from **Jim Waddell**: “Duke, The Columbus Chapter sponsored a baseball outing on August 22 to watch the Columbus Clippers play the St. Paul Saints. ’71 was well represented. Although we sold 45 tickets to alumni, family, and friends, no other class had as many participants as ’71. In the photo below (L-R) are yours truly, **Wayne Hallenbeck**, and

Chuck Janes (plus the guy in the white shirt who was irritated that we were blocking the aisle.). Columbus has a very active chapter. Even though our largest body of water is the Scioto River there are quite a few alumni in the area. I welcome anyone visiting Central Ohio to contact me and perhaps we can have a mini reunion. And all three of us are attending the 55th reunion. See you in October! Jim Waddell.” Excellent work by the Columbus Chapter! BZ!



'71ers at the Saints vs. Clippers game

Sadly, two classmates have passed away since my previous column.

Middleton Russell Leiter Train, better known as “Tony” to friends and family, passed away on Friday, August 28, 2026. He was surrounded by his immediate family in Portland, OR. Tony was born May 1, 1947, the second child of Middleton George Charles Train and Audrey Nancy Campbell Train of Washington, D.C.

Tony was a sixth-generation Washingtonian. The Trains originally settled in Massachusetts, descending from John Trayne, who immigrated from Scotland in 1635. Tony’s mother’s family were a prominent family in Chicago in the late 1800s who eventually moved to Washington D.C. Tony’s great grandfather, Levi Zeigler Leiter, was a partner in an emporium called Fields, Palmer & Leiter. Tony’s grandmother, Nancy Leiter Campbell, travelled to India where she met her husband Colin Powys Campbell, who was an aide-de-camp to Nancy’s sister’s husband Lord Curzon.

Tony grew up in Washington, D.C. where he attended the Sheridan School and Landon School for boys before boarding at The Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut at age thirteen. Overlooking the ocean, the family spent their summers in Coolidge Point, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts in their beloved summer home. A true sea lover, he always felt at home sailing, swimming, and adventuring the coastline.

He spent his collegiate years at the United States Naval Academy and The University of the South, Sewanee. He served in Vietnam with the U.S. Navy from April 1970 to April 1971. After returning to Washington D.C. he met his wife, Robyn.

They were married in Washington D.C. on October 29, 1977. They bought their first home together in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where Tony was employed by a tugboat company as their insurance claims officer. Still loving the sea, Tony's highlight in this role was when he flew to Florida to join the crew travelling by tugboat through the intercoastal waterways of Florida.

Robyn and Tony enjoyed their first year of marriage in Washington Square, Philadelphia, later moving to Fort Washington where they raised their three children, Charles, Nancy, and Mary. Tony prioritized time with his family, with whom he was an extremely affectionate and proud father. Always a successful provider, Tony had a varied career as a small business owner and later a paralegal.

The love of travelling was a family generational interest instilled in Tony from a young age. Whether it be memorable family holidays, Robyn and Tony travelling on their own, with friends, or meeting their children overseas during their collegiate years, the adventures together were cherished. Tony was a man of impeccable manners, who knew the art of making everyone around him feel at ease. Storytelling came naturally to him, in the form of creative writing or holding a captivated audience at one of Robyn and his dinner parties. Tony's stories were famous amongst those who knew him.

Tony was a fast walker, who craved distance for his stride to reach its potential. He walked miles every day through the Fort Washington State Park behind his home. He loved walking on his own, or with family, if you could keep up. When Tony and Robyn moved to Portland, Oregon in 2018 to be closer to their children and grandchildren, he still walked. Tony was diagnosed with Parkinson's shortly after their move across country, but as long as he could, Tony pushed on to reach his five miles a day no matter the time it took.

Well-known to those who knew him, he always felt his greatest achievement was his successful loving marriage to Robyn and the character of his grown children. Tony valued family, and he was endlessly proud that his children created the same family life he loved. Tony was a bright light always shining for those he adored, we will miss him tremendously.

He is survived by his wife, Robyn Jennings Train, his sister, Alexandra Campbell Train Totten, and his son and two daughters and their families: Charles and Brittany Train and their children Alice and Colter; Nancy and Ben Coburn and their children, Hunter, Lyon, and Campbell; Mary and Aaron Ghattas and their children Brooks and Ruben; and loving nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held at Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church on Friday, October 2, at 10am. In lieu of flowers, Tony's family requests donations to the World Wildlife Fund in his honor.

Walt Barton passed away in Memphis Tennessee on 16 September following a long battle with cancer. Walt came to us in June 1967 following a short tour as a Navy enlisted man and was appointed to USNA as a qualified alternate by the Secretary of the Navy. Walt graduated out of the 28th company and served on the *USS Duluth (LPD-6)* in the Western Pacific in the Vietnam combat zone. He then proceeded to Pensacola where he earned his wings of gold as a Helicopter Pilot. Serving in various commands for the next 18 years, he retired in 1993 moving to Highland Falls, Texas. Following two post graduate degrees, Walt became a fulltime psychotherapist eventually running a mental health clinic for severely mentally ill patients in Dallas, Texas. Walt fully retired in 2008 and, moved to Memphis, Tennessee. There are no funeral or services scheduled planned.

Too soon, it is time to close. Please keep our classmates and their families in your prayers for good health, healing when needed, safety in travels, and strength to meet every challenge. **Today** is a gift – life is precious and too short! Love passionately, give, and share your time and blessings generously with others – as we are richly blessed so may we richly bless others. Our leadership at home, in our social circles, and in daily routines is vital to maintaining our nation's constitutional republic. Our training to think critically and to analyze problems is necessary to solve our nation's challenges. Now is the time to shape the future of our great nation as we strive for a more perfect union. There is plenty of work remaining as we increase our wisdom! Time, tide, and column due dates wait for no man!

Duces Virum, Duke