



The members of the Class of 1950 gathered for a class portrait during Friday night's stag party at Buffalo's Naval and Serviceman's Park.

Canisius' Greatest Generation Reunites

Pictured below:

- (1) Nancy Eberle and Robert A. Jerussi '50, PhD;
- (2) John B. "JB" Walsh '50; (3) Joseph H. Czora '53, MS '54 and Leo A. Bauman '51.



While thousands of veterans converged on the nation's capital September 9 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the peace treaty with Japan, Canisius alumni, many of whom are World War II veterans, reunited at Buffalo's Naval and Serviceman's Park for a reunion of their own.

These men and women are now known as The Greatest Generation, a moniker given to them by former NBC News anchor and author Tom Brokaw. His book, of the same name, chronicles some of America's citizen heroes and heroines who came of age during the Great Depression and the second World War, and went on to build modern America.

Robert A. Jerussi '50, PhD, was just one of 120 Canisius veterans, alumni and friends who attended the college's Greatest Generation Reunion weekend. The occasion also marked his 55th class reunion.

"There are many alumni here from the Class of 1950, like me," said Jerussi, who now lives in Fairfax, VA. "But what is so nice is that all Canisius alumni who graduated between the war years (1941-1953) were invited to this Greatest Generation Reunion. I have seen people who I knew from the classes of 1948 and 1952!"

Several people came from out of town, including **Leo A. Bauman Jr. '51** who traveled from Rockville, MD to attend with his long-time friend **Joseph H. Czora '53, MS '54**. The men first met at Canisius. They even served as "best man" at each other's wedding. "We ended up spending the entire evening with guys we hadn't seen in years," said Bauman.

As guests reconnected with former classmates and friends, they also remembered those they have lost. "This evening has been just wonderful," said Nancy Eberle who met her husband, the late **George E.**

Eberle '50, while working as a secretary in the Canisius College Athletics Department. Eberle attended the Saturday evening reunion dinner at the Montante Cultural Center. "For the widows in attendance, I think the only thing that could make this evening more special would be if our husbands could be here with us."

War veterans or not, those in attendance could not help but reflect on just how World War II and the Korean War impacted their lives, their *alma mater* and their country.

"A lot of us have war stories," said **John B. 'JB' Walsh '50**, a World War II veteran who led the effort to plan and promote the Greatest Generation Reunion at Canisius. **"World War II and the Korean War affected everyone differently but the one positive thing we all share is that our part in the wars gave us access to the GI Bill, and that enabled us to attend Canisius and receive a college degree."**

First introduced as a way to create opportunities for World War II veterans, the GI Bill provided federal aid toward hospitalization, the purchase of homes and businesses, and education. Back then, the bill subsidized tuition, educational materials and living expenses for veterans attending college. As a result, veterans were able to attend the educational institutions of their choice and secondary education was no longer limited to the socially elite.

With higher education suddenly available to millions of veterans, colleges and universities were forced to transform due to overcrowding. In its June 2, 1949 edition, the *Courier Express* newspaper reported that Canisius had the highest percentage of veteran students enrolled under the GI Bill of any college in the Eastern United States.



Canisius' Greatest Generation Establishes Scholarship

In recognition of the GI Bill that provided so many alumni from the classes of 1941-1953 with the opportunity to attend college, the alumni of these classes have initiated a campaign to fund an endowed scholarship to be named **The Greatest Generation Scholarship – A Tribute to the GI Bill.**

This scholarship will provide a legacy from these alumni for deserving Canisius students to obtain an invaluable Jesuit education.

This scholarship would be awarded every four years to an incoming freshman who is in the top 10 percent of his or her high school's graduating senior class. In addition, the student must demonstrate substantial community and school involvement. The student will receive **The Greatest Generation Scholarship** throughout his or her tenure at Canisius as long as a 3.0 GPA, and school and community involvement are maintained.

To contribute to this scholarship, please contact Marion Mittler, director of endowed scholarships, at 716-888-8217 or mittlerm@canisius.edu.



Pictured above (l-r): Arlene C. Mercer, Lewis R. Smith '50, John A. Mercer '51, Audrey N. McCarter; pictured far left: James J. Redmond Jr. '42; pictured left (l-r): Robert D. Wischerath '52, Thomas P. Glynn '52, John P. DeLuca '51.



The Class of 1949 graduated 190 students and all but 15 were World War II veterans. The following year, the Class of 1950 graduated 412 students, which made it the largest graduating class in the history of the college until the mid 1980s.

The GI Bill also transformed the demographics of the student body at Canisius. **Donald J. Barnett '50** recalled, "The age disparity was much different from a normal entering class between the ages of 18 and 23." In fact, Barnett can remember attending classes with students in their early 30s, who were parents to children as old as 14.

Whether they were returning students or new to the college, the older veterans brought accumulated experience and maturity that strengthened the classroom experience and the college's sports programs. **Jacque E. Austin '50, John DeLuca '51, Donald E. Hartnett '51, William J. 'Moose' Hymes '49, Alfred A. Masino '50, Michael G. McGuire '52** and **Robert J.**

Stoetzel '52, all of whom attended the Greatest Generation Reunion, can recall their dramatic upsets over City College of New York (CCNY) in 1950 and 1951. "Their victories," said DeLuca, "came under the leadership of Coach **Joseph P. Niland Sr. '46**, who was an All-American athlete on the basketball team before the war." At the time, CCNY was the premier basketball team in the country, and had won both the National Invitational and NCAA tournaments.

George T. "Skip" Ganey Jr. '50 can remember Canisius fans "lining up outside Buffalo Civic Stadium to watch the football team compete." Ganey relived some of the team's triumphs when he reconnected with former teammates **Raymond J. Jacobi '50, Robert A. Jerussi '50, Edward J. McMahon '50, MS '67, James J. O'Brien '52** and **Anthony C. Rocco '48**, at the reunion.

"The years after the war were such a special time," said Nancy Eberle, "and it has been so nice to reunite with so many of the

people you cared about in those days."

The people, noted Walsh, are perhaps the greatest benefit of the GI Bill. **"It created a large bank of loyal alumni who are willing to support the college in future years."** ■



Friends from the Class of '53 reunite at the Greatest Generation Reunion. Pictured (l-r) are: George W. Wopperer '53, James D. Burke '53, Donald F. Harter '53, Frederick J. Bough '53.