

# Memories of Raymond Reunion 2006

*Mary McDonald, class of 1977*  
*November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006*

I keep searching for the perfect metaphor to capture the essence of my experience of the 2006 Raymond Reunion. "Close Encounters of the Raymond Kind?" Or maybe, "Meetings with Remarkable Raymondites?"

I came to the party at Wendi Maxwell's on Friday evening with Barbara Kraus, a friend and one-time Raymond roommate, and Jack Lawson, a friend from Raymond who became my husband. We were among the first to arrive that balmy late afternoon. Wendi's broad, terraced yard abutting a canal was the perfect setting for a gathering of the tribe (as John Williams calls it).

I remember hanging out in the kitchen, heating my dish, and chatting with old friends and newly arrived guests both familiar and not familiar to me. All evening I eased myself from one conversation to the next, sampling the mix. I felt a sense of familiarity and kinship with people I had gone to Raymond with, people from earlier cohorts whom I had met at previous reunions, people married to Raymondites I had never met, and people I have grown to know a bit from the email listserv.

A potluck dinner arrived and was consumed, in waves. My husband Jack played finger-style guitar. Later, Wendi warmed up the evening singing jazz tunes. We left around 9:30, and people were still arriving as we went out the door.

Saturday morning, my friends and I took a mini-tour of Stockton, visiting old haunts like our apartment on Jamestown. After going through the brunch line in the Elbert Covell dining room, we landed in the Raymond Common Room. Our numbers had increased from the evening before. In fact, all day more and more people arrived.

I sensed a somewhat different atmosphere compared with Friday night. Not only were there more of us, but we were on campus. Did we congregate more in cohort groups? It seemed that way to me. I was excited to see so many people from third floor Price of 1973-1974. There were at least 10 of us! Darn, I forgot to get a picture of us all.

Things were pretty unstructured until 3:15, when we gathered in the auditorium of the Wendell Phillips Center. Walking into Wendell Phillips, I had a rush of memories. I remembered classes there and visits to profs in their offices. I remembered Berndt Kolker in residence in the corner office on the second floor. As I entered the auditorium, I remembered a class I had with Bob Orpinela in that room.

Back to the present time, it was "Back to the Future." Adam Englund fascinated us with his presentation of a vision for an offshore, ocean-based airport (and potential residential community) for San Diego. He called it Euphlorea (pun intended). This is actually a very serious proposal that is a culmination of Adam's life experiences before, during, and after his time at Raymond College.

After Adam's presentation, some of us stayed for a productive business meeting of the Raymond Phoenix Institute. The minutes from this meeting will be posted elsewhere on this website, so I won't go into detail here, except to say that the meeting reinforced my feeling that the spirit of Raymond can continue into the future.

Moving from Wendell Phillips back to the Raymond Quad, a feeling of fellowship swept over me. All of us congregating here valued our Raymond experience enough to come here this weekend. I sensed that for many of us Raymond retains a very special place in our hearts. Corny as it sounds, I thought of the words to the musical "Camelot": "Don't let it be forgot that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment, that was known as"... Raymond College.

John (Charlie) Dyer shared his feeling with me that Raymond had magic like the Hogwarts School in the Harry Potter stories. Magic...that's a good word for it.

Dinner was served in the Raymond Great Hall. We sat at round tables, not the same old wooden tables I used to sit around at lunch with David Burke and company. Yet they evoked that memory and reinforced the feeling of familiarity.

The faculty were honored and applauded. John Williams, John Tucker, John Smith, and Neil Lark were all there that evening, and I know that Walter Zimmerman was around at some point that weekend. Boy do those guys look great, and their wives do, too. They continue to inspire!

The tribe also honored and thanked Nicholas Carroll who worked very, very, very hard to pull together this reunion. (Some of us do have a sense of what you put into it, Nick. Thank you again.)

After an auction of Raymond memorabilia led by Paula Britton Sheil, some of us convened to the Common Room to dance. Bill Burnside had hauled professional sound equipment up from Santa Cruz, and he later followed Jack Lawson as DJ. Others remained in the Great Hall to listen to live jazz performed by Bob de Leo.

I was among the dancing crowd. It was very Raymond and very fun. We danced as a group. It did not matter if we were in couples. It did not matter if we were in our forties, fifties, or sixties, because we were not. We were all somehow in our twenties once again, only more relaxed and more sure of ourselves.

I did not attend the Sunday morning coffee klatch at Dave Wellenbrock's, so I cannot report on that. But I did take away from the reunion a heightened sense of community. Something is growing amongst us. Whether or not we know all of the other Raymond alumni, we share our Raymond experience. There were definitely differences between cohorts in how they experienced Raymond. Yet it was always Raymond. There is a shared perspective, perhaps. And Raymond gave us all a kind of foundation for our adult lives.

###