

Glen Morie Donated \$1,000,000 in Memory of Sandy Markey and Charlie Metz

By David Treadwell

Most members of our class will remember the poignant hit song, "Alfie" which includes the line, "What's it all about, Alfie?" Written by Burt Bacharach and sung by Dionne Warwick in 1967, the song encourages everyone to reflect on the true meaning of life. Fulfillment comes not from self-indulgence but from empathy, understanding and genuine love.

Glen Morie took the song's message to heart when he decided to donate one million dollars to the General Fund of the College in memory of classmates Sandy Markey and Charlie Metz. It was the largest donation to the General Fund in the history of the College. By far.

While Glen wanted to honor these two world renowned scientists, he was most driven by his lifelong friendship with these two special Polar Bears from the Class of 1964. As he noted in announcing the gift to the College, Glen wrote, "I have always believed 'The Offer of the College' captured the essence of my experience at Bowdoin. However, I have now come to realize it should include one more phrase: 'to live in a community where you can meet other students who will have a presence in your life as long as you live.'"

Most donors of large sums to the College designate a specific purpose for the funds, such as a building or scholarship or endowed chair. Glen took a more pragmatic approach to the gift. "Bowdoin has to pay its bills, and I wanted to help the College do that with no strings attached."

As Glen notes, "These two guys helped build the reputation of the College by their significant work so they should be recognized."

Charlie's obituary highlighted his significant achievements. "Metz, a recognized leader in using mathematics to assess and improve the accuracy of diagnostic tests, made contributions to radiological imaging, nuclear medicine and computer-aided diagnosis. He developed the 'Metz filter,' widely used to enhance resolution and remove distractions from nuclear-medicine images. He was perhaps best known for extending receiver operating characteristic analysis to the medical imaging field and for providing, free of charge, an extensive package of computer software to more than 10,000 registered users worldwide."

A tribute from Susan Amara, Scientific Director, National Institutes of Mental Health, highlighted Sandy's achievements. "At NIMH, Sandy founded and led the Laboratory of Neurotoxicology, where he used mass spectrometry to research the molecular mechanisms of normal and aberrant cellular protein architecture and the biochemical pathology of behavioral diseases. That is to say, he was doing proteomics (and sharing data) long before it was 'sexy.' ...He was on the team that first identified the compound MPTP (1-methyl-4-phenyl-1,2,3,6-tetrahydropyridine) as a cause of chronic Parkinsonism when it was detected as an impurity in a contaminated batch of desmethylprodine/MPPP."

This extraordinary million dollar gift, however, is much more than a well deserved recognition of two esteemed scientists. It's about the depth of Glen's friendships with Charlie and Sandy, the strength of their enduring bonds.

“Charlie was my roommate in law school,” says Glen, “and he was brilliant. But most important, he had great judgment, a deep understanding of people. He really cared about me, and he really cared about his other friends. When I was in Vietnam, he kept in touch with me more than anyone in my life, including my parents and my brother. He was just a good guy.”

At the memorial service for Charlie, fellow Polar Bear classmate Bruce Lutsk echoed the “good guy” theme. “Charlie’s nickname at Bowdoin was ‘Spider,’ because his gait resembled that of a spider...seeming to move with arms swinging together and legs flailing out a little bit. He relished being known on campus as Spider. I think it was the first and maybe the only nickname he ever had. It was recognition that he was one of the guys.”

Glen met Sandy at a recruiting event for Bowdoin as teenagers and they ended up rooming together all four years. At the memorial service for Sandy, Glen spoke to their relationship. “He was a science guy and I became a government major. Yet sometimes I think we knew each other better than we knew ourselves. When I was in need he was always there, and when I was in pain he felt it too. We had an enormous impact on each other’s lives. When I told him he should take a philosophy course from a professor I particularly admired, he said ‘OK’ and really enjoyed it. When we once visited his sister in New York City, he suggested I ought to attend some classes at Columbia Law School with his brother in law. I did and ended up becoming a lawyer.”

During my conversation with Glen Morie in preparation for writing this piece, he said he wanted it to be about Charlie and Sandy, not about him. Fair enough, Glen, but you deserve some time in the spotlight if this story is to be fully appreciated.

Glen went to New Woodbury High School, an inner city school in New Jersey. His parents never went to college, although his older brother attended Brown. At Bowdoin he hit the ground running — and asking questions. “I had this childish enthusiasm about my academic experience,” he remembers. “I had Professor Pols for philosophy my first year, and I’d go in and ask him these stupid questions. Eventually, he said to me, ‘You have brains. You’re getting it.’”

At one point, Hannah Arendt, a German American historian and philosopher and one of the most influential political theorists of the 20th century, visited campus. “Professor Pols arranged for me to meet with her one-on-one. I have no idea what we talked about, but you don’t get that type of experience anywhere else.”

Glen Morie’s record-setting gift provides just the latest example of the extraordinary generosity of the Class of 1964. As Vic Papacosma notes, “The fingerprints of the Class of 1964 can be found all around campus.” He’s right. Our classmates names can be seen on playing fields and buildings and even a Polar Bear sculpture at Pickard Field. Our influence is less visible but no less important in the successes of the students we’ve helped fund through scholarships or shaped through mentorships.

Thank you, Glen Morie, for your amazing generosity and for reminding us that at Bowdoin we lived in a community where we met other students who continue to have a lasting influence on our lives.