

# MESSAGES TO THE CLASS OF 2021 *FROM THE CLASS OF 1971*

## JILL DAYTON DAVIS '71



Dear Class of 2021, My prayer for you is that you will rise above the disappointments of the COVID era with an attitude of gratitude that will carry you through whatever you face in the years ahead. There is never a tragedy in this life that doesn't carry – for the children of a Sovereign God – great blessings and the seeds of something wonderful, if we're willing to look! God bless you as you graduate and forge ahead in all the days of adventure the Lord has planned for you (Ps.139:16).

## MARILEY BECKER FERENS '71

As I look back on my 4 years at Westmont, I remember all the upheaval in the world, including in Santa Barbara: Vietnam War protests; world-wide democracy and civil rights student movements; National Guardsmen killing Kent State University students; the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy; California wildfires and damaging earthquakes; the Santa Barbara oil spill, and more. Please know that those of us who graduated 50 years ago have a deep connection with you and the traumatic years you have just been through: more wildfires; the coronavirus pandemic; race and justice issues; political strife and threats to our democracy. The major disruption to your education is one thing we did not experience, but we know that your resilience to learn in new ways has served you well and will continue as you move into the next phases of your lives. God's blessings on you all!



# TED '71 AND SUE '71 JANOSSY

Congratulations to all of you in the Class of 2021!

You've done it. You've completed years of hard work, even though it was interrupted by the worst pandemic since 1918. Now your adventure really begins.

First, an introduction. My name is Ted Janossy. I may be an old man now, but 50 years ago I stood where you are at graduation (albeit without the face mask). I don't consider myself a spokesman for the class of 1971, nor was I outstanding in any way as a Westmont student. While at Westmont I met and (much) later married Sue, who is now my wife of 43 years. You'll meet her if you read her letter.



I've been asked to comment on the following questions:

- How did you and your classmates experience national and worldwide distress and uncertainty in your college days?
- What have you found helpful for maintaining hope and joy with changes and challenges in life?
- What impact has a Westmont education made on your life?
- In a sentence, what advice do you have for 2021 graduates?
- Share a humorous story, joy, regret, or surprising observation you've made that relates to being a part of the Westmont Community.

My time at Westmont had nothing of the stress of a pandemic. Well - there was the minor demonstration in front of the Dining Commons when Cesar Chavez was organizing farm workers. And the country was involved in the Vietnam War, which had all of the male students on campus attending college under a 4 year student deferment. Student war protests occurred on several campuses across the country including UCSB, where students ended up burning the Bank of America in Isla Vista.

But I was fairly insulated from all this. You see, I came to Westmont as a sophomore. Being on a 4 year student draft deferment and having wasted my freshman year at a junior college, I was always carrying 18-21 units trying to finish a 4 year degree in 3 years plus summer classes. It kept me pretty busy, and my main memories mostly involve the Library and the Chemistry Lab. I never even made it down to Stearns Wharf at the beach. Also, without computers, cell phones, and online media, you had to actually make time to keep up on the news and events.

I was also a fairly new Christian, having accepted Christ during my senior year in high school. I found the Life and Literature of the Bible class by Dr. Gundry very informative and helpful. It exposed me to many differing interpretations of questions debated in Christianity and also laid a good foundation for continued Biblical study over the years since.

After graduation and working for a year, I attended Loma Linda University School of Medicine. I can tell you that Westmont prepared me well for medical school, and that my Biochemistry class there was pretty basic compared to Dr. Stewart Ensign's course during my senior Westmont year. I

went on to practice Anesthesiology in Minnesota at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, and some years later in Minneapolis when I decided on a clinical rather than an academic practice.

A sentence of advice for life after Westmont? I can't really answer that in one sentence, so let me ramble on for a bit.

There will be times in your life things go according to plan, and some (maybe many) times when they seem to go awry. Some important things may remain unfulfilled or unaccomplished, and these may leave a hole in your life. But the things that we have as well as the things we lack make us who we are. The holes are a part of the whole. And even unfulfilled wishes and regrets can be a part of God's plan to use us for His glory.

These times may cause you to wonder if God is really involved in guiding your life as we have been taught. Don't despair. Trust in His love, faithfulness, and providence (a good word, seldom used these days). You may find that your new course or situation is actually helpful or even preferable to what you had in mind.

Joseph (Jacob's son) experienced a lot of things going wrong during his life. A section of a poem about him comes to mind...

"But do not be in haste, or chide  
Your God, that He should wait and hide  
His purposes for now. He knows  
When we should understand, and goes  
About His work with perfect pace.  
And putting every piece in place,  
He leads a faithful man at last,  
By night, to stand where he can cast  
His eyes in light across the ways  
That made no sense for years, and praise  
The hand that led him all his days,  
And brought him through the baffling maze."

(John Piper, 1997)

God will occasionally give you a reminder that He is still there. Keep a lookout for them. They may even seem like "coincidence". They may be there for your guidance, or more often just to reassure you that He cares about you and really is involved in your life. Albert Einstein once said, "Coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous."

I'll give you one example from personal experience. A few days after I had accepted Christ, I found a small Gideon Bible at home. On the back page there was a place to write your name and the date you met the Lord. Years later in Minnesota, I came across this little Bible and looked at my signature. I was amazed to see that the date written there was my wife Sue's birthday. Coincidence or providence? No drastic life changes occurred nor problems solved, just a heart-felt reaffirmation of God's care, planning, and guidance over the years.

On a lighter note, the last question refers to a story of being part of the Westmont community.

Since Sue began as a freshman and I came a year later as a sophomore, many people at Westmont already knew her. She was active in art, drew posters for movies, and did an illustration for the

cover of the yearbook. She was/is also completely deaf, the only one on campus at the time. So when we started dating, people would say, "Hi, Sue. Oh, and you must be her boyfriend." That's it - Sue's boyfriend who nobody knew because he was always in the Chemistry lab, etc.

Well, 2 years ago when we moved back to Santa Barbara, I saw a person wearing a Westmont sweatshirt in the cafe. He looked a lot like Ron Mulder, who had been a sports coach at Westmont. So I said "Hi" and that Sue and I were from Westmont. Of course he immediately recognized Sue and said, "Hi Sue. Oh, and you must be her husband."

But that's OK. You can call me Mr. Sue - fine with me.

I'll finish up by saying that Westmont was a really great experience, prepared me well for medical school, taught me a lot about God, the Bible and being a Christian, and given me friends that have lasted through the years.

In summary - Stay strong in the Lord. Trust him - He really does care. Notice the "coincidences". Don't despair, and don't be discouraged. Keep in touch with your Westmont friends, which is much easier now with the internet. And above all, don't get so involved with this world that you forget that we are all "sojourners in a foreign land", that "...(we) desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one."(Heb. 13:16).

See you there if not before, Ted Janossy, '71



Congratulations on your graduation from Westmont College! I remember my graduation day at Westmont 50 years ago. 50 years? Where did the time go?

Before I proceed to answer the five questions Westmont asked me, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I am Sue Solomon Janossy, Class of '71. I was born normally, but at age of 3, I had bacterial meningitis, which resulted in my becoming profoundly deaf. My parents started me in a preschool where a speech pathologist worked with me in speech and lipreading. I have pretty much continued with speech lessons over all these years, but not during this pandemic. As a youngster, it was my own decision to stay in regular school instead of attending a school for the deaf.

In high school and college, where I was the first deaf student, it wasn't easy. Those days, there was no established program of interpreters for the deaf in sign language or oral. No computers/smartphones where you could quickly get lecture notes from classmates. No transcription app like we have now (I LOVE that app!). So, my method to get notes in class was to use carbon copy stabled to a blank sheet and put under a classmate's sheet. This way, after class, I would get a copy of her notes. This was the method I used through high school, four years of Westmont and two years of Loma Linda University in dental hygiene program. It was hard work. It took persistence to get the info I needed for classes and consistent creative thinking to overcome any obstacles I



encountered. Whew. I earned a B.A. in Sociology at Westmont and a B.S. in Dental Hygiene. I practiced as a dental hygienist for a number of years until I got married to my love, Ted Janossy.

1. How did you and your classmates experience national and worldwide distress and uncertainty in your college day?

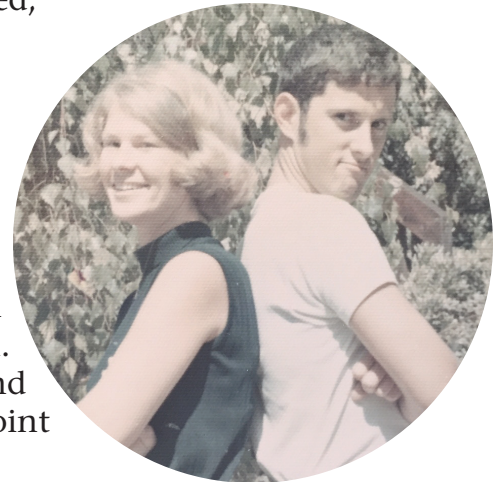
When I was at Westmont, I was pretty focused in trying to keep up with classes, assignments and getting notes from my classmates, so, as a result, I often was not that aware of what was happening outside of Westmont. We were pretty insulated. Those days we did not have computers/cellphones, etc. Plus, I could not hear news from the radio. We did not have TV in our dorm room. To get the world news, I had to go to the library and take the time to read the newspapers. Basically, I was aware of Vietnam War overseas. We had a few students who came home from the military and came to Westmont as students. I remember some students were protesting with signs, lining the walkway from the Dining Commons up to the parking area. It was nothing like the pandemic you all have experienced.

2. What have you found helpful for maintaining hope and joy with changes or challenges in life?

So, for years after Westmont, with changes and challenges in my life, I look at them as being a part of God's will in my life. Lots of time I would be confronted with an impossible obstacle or a real problem. I would ask the Lord, now what do I do? What do You want me to do? I want to follow You and honor You. I listen to the the Holy Spirit in my heart for the direction to go. More times than not, things would work out. Sometimes it is not what I expected, but God had an even better plan for me. I get a lot of joy and contentment, knowing God has a plan for my life. (Romans 8:28)

3. What impact has a Westmont education made on your life?

I came to know Christ as my Savior in my early teens. So, at Westmont, I was open to learn all I could about the Bible. I found that Dr. Gundry's class in studying the Bible from Genesis to Revelation was the most meaningful class and gave me a strong foundation. My interactions with my classmates, other friends on campus and professors helped me to be stronger in Christ and shaped my viewpoint of what the Bible says.



While at Westmont, I went on two trips with Westmont students and professors. On the first trip, we went to San Francisco to explore the sociology of different groups of people. Because I grew up in a very sheltered home life, this SF trip opened my eyes to the various lifestyles there. Wow. Big learning experience there. On the second trip, I traveled with a large Westmont group, touring Europe for 6 weeks. This was at a time when the Berlin Wall still separated East from West Germany. We visited East Berlin, a place I will never forget. It was a stark contrast compared to West Berlin. West Berlin was a colorful city bustling with stores and people with bright colored clothes. But, East Berlin was so different in mood and feel. There, I saw people dressed in drapery clothing. Their faces looked sad and unsure. Likewise, the shops and restaurants seemed lifeless and deprived of colors. While we ate at one inn, an East German guy came up to me and gave me a handwritten letter. Puzzled, I read his broken English writing. He had been talking to some of the Westmont students, so he knew we were Americans. He wrote that we should be thankful for our freedom in our country, something that he does not have in his country. His letter affected me deeply. Those two trips gave me a more awareness of what is happening in the world.

Overall, Westmont was a hard school, but it gave me a well-rounded and solid education to help me face life as I went onward after graduation. When I went to Loma Linda University School of Dentistry for my dental hygiene training, I found it was easier to study and the exams were not as hard as I thought it would be. Westmont had prepared me well. Thank you, Lord

4. In a sentence, what advice do you have for 2021 graduates?

**\*\* Class of 2021, from here on, stay in touch with your good friends or group of friends from Westmont through letters, emails, phone calls, visiting every so often and keep your friendship alive forever....yes, forever. \*\***



The above is my advice. As a freshman living at Page Hall, I met a lot of new friends, five girls in particular. For our sophomore year, all six of us were together at Clark Hall, Suite P. From that point onward, until we graduated from Westmont, we were together in that same suite except for a few changes, when one of the suite mate got married to a Westmont fellow and another went to out of state university for a year. After we graduated, one of the girls and her husband went overseas as missionaries for several decades. We did not have computers then, but we had a desire to keep in touch. So, we wrote to each other every month by using a round robin letter. It was wonderfully fun to get that fat letter containing 6 letters. I simply took my old letter out and put in an updated one and send it off to the next person in the list. Years later, when computers and email became more widespread, we used email to communicate with our Round Robin friends. And lately, during this pandemic year, we have been using Zoom monthly to communicate. Also, every few years since graduation from Westmont, we would meet for a RR reunion. We had a number of reunions at my home, and loved having them over. The next reunion we are hoping to have will be this coming fall at Westmont Homecoming. I am in awe that the Lord has made it possible for all six of us continue to be friends and have the desire to be together for 50 years. Strong unbreakable friendship, deep love for Christ, appreciation for our alma mater continues....

5. Share a humorous story, joy, regret, or surprising observation you've made that relates to being a part of the Westmont Community.

Sharing a story that relates to being a part of Westmont community? I'd like to share about that Westmont guy, Ted, whom I finally married. Yes, I said "finally" because it took 10 years from the time we met to the time we finally got married. I have lost the count of the times we broke up from the time we were at Westmont to Loma Linda University to the time we were in different states working in our professions. Somehow we seemed to find each other again and again. And now, I say with a smile that we broke up 99 times and got together 100 times.

While at LLU, Ted asked me to marry him, but I declined as I was focused on my new career. Two years later, before he left for internship, he asked me again to marry him. Again I declined because I felt he should be with women who can hear, and not be stuck with a deaf woman like me. (Yes, I did tell him that!) Another two years went by....I did date a few decent deaf men, but none of them looked at Christ in the same perspective as I did. I had my heart set to marry someone who put Christ first in his life. After much thought and feeling discouraged, I told

the Lord, okay! This is it! No more dating! I am tired of it! I decided to let the Lord guide me whatever. I changed my hairstyle, got a few new clothes, and tried to figure out how to live as a single woman with a career and a heart to serve the Lord.

Later, during a visit in Montana to my former suite mate and her husband, also a Westmont alumnus, my friend sat me down and told me how much Ted would like to see me again. Unbeknownst to me, Ted had been talking to her from Minnesota. Some moments later, she got Ted on the phone and helped restart our communication. About a month later, I flew back to the midwest, this time to Minnesota, to see Ted. It felt so right to be with that Westmont guy. There, he asked me to marry him for the 3rd time. And I said, "Yes!" Four months later, we were married. Married now for 43 years and going strong.

Well, as I look back, I think of many times we had broken up. I had declined Ted's proposal twice. By the time his third proposal came, I realized that God had not given up on me. He had included one of my Westmont suite mates to get us together once again.

Thank you, Lord!  
Sue Solomon Janossy, '71

***CONGRATULATIONS,  
CLASS OF 2021!***  
***Welcome to the Westmont  
Alumni Family***



**WESTMONT**