

50 Years Ago... And Here We Stand

Fifty years ago, we arrived at Hampton Institute as young dreamers—wide-eyed, determined, and ready to claim our place in the world. We came from cities, towns, rural communities, and even from across oceans. We brought different cultures, beliefs, talents, and ambitions. What we found was more than a college. We found a home.

We became roommates and classmates. Greek sisters and brothers. Study partners. Debate rivals. Lifelong friends. We became a family forged by shared purpose and shaped by the timeless beauty of our “Home by the Sea”.

Hampton did more than educate us. Hampton prepared us. Those words we heard so often—“When you get into the real world...”—soon became our reality. And into that world we went. Some to graduate schools and professional schools. Some directly into careers. All of us stepped forward with courage, faith, and a Hampton foundation beneath our feet.

The 1970s carried us into bold fashions, disco rhythms, first apartments, first jobs, and first real responsibilities. Those early years tested us. They strengthened us. They confirmed that yes—we had received an education for life.

By 30, we were building careers. By 40, we were building families. By 50, we were balancing work, service, and legacy. Our children grew. Our communities grew. And so did our impact. We returned to Hampton for homecomings and reunions, celebrating accomplishments and honoring the bond that never faded.

Now, here we are—70ish and golden. Three scores and ten. Fifty years since we crossed that stage.

What a testimony.

The Class of 1976 has truly let our lives do the singing. We have become physicians, nurses, attorneys, scientists, educators, entrepreneurs, authors, counselors, public servants, and leaders in countless fields. We have lifted communities. We have mentored generations. We have represented Hampton with excellence wherever life carried us.

Our legacy is not measured only in titles—but in lives touched, barriers broken, and doors opened for those who followed. And yet, even as we celebrate, we pause with gratitude and reverence for our classmates who are no longer with us physically. Their contributions, their laughter, their brilliance remain stitched into our shared story. We honor them. We carry them with us.

This Golden Reunion is more than a milestone. It is a declaration. We came. We learned. We led. We built. And we are still standing.

As we celebrate this 50-year journey, may we continue to live with purpose, health, and joy. May each day be filled with meaning. May we cherish the friendships that began on those sacred grounds by the water. And may we always remember that we are forever connected—by history, by experience, by Hampton.

“They not golden like us”.

With pride and gratitude
Lorethia Wilson Roberts Class of 1976