

Name:
Graduation Year:
Years Attended:
School attended before The Heights:
College attended (please note degree):
Current Occupation:
Current City of Residence:

With reference to the years you attended The Heights only, please share specific recollections, examples, memories, or takeaways of the following:

Please note, all examples below are fictitious

Academics

- The classroom experience. Events, memories, and takeaways. (Please use specific examples, and note grades/years.)

Poor Example: The Heights was one of the best periods of my life! Everything was amazing and I owe so much of who I am today to my time there.

Better example: Joe McPherson's presence in the classroom was impressive. I took latin with him freshman year (1999). I was new to The Heights but I remember thinking this teacher was larger than life, he really left that impression on me. He was always dressed well and he carried himself like a dignitary. His voice bellowed from his large frame and he would always tell stories during class, such as when he rowed crew for Harvard as an undergrad or spent time in the Amazon jungle researching a book he was writing (you never actually knew if the story was true or not!). Once when the class was getting out of hand he took out a large wooden plank and smacked it on someone's desk and said in his strong voice, "let me introduce you to the Board of Education!" He was an incredible teacher and the reason I studied Classics in college and went to law school.

Better example: Art History with Mr. Cardenas was wild. Most of the year was spent preparing for the AP test, which had become incredibly standardized by that time. I remember my senior year (2019) someone brought in a shovel and everyone signed it. I forget the reason, but it was connected to the test. I took a trip last summer to Rome and could point out much of what I saw there because of that class.

Better example: I recall traveling to Nationals for a debate tournament sophomore year (2016). Mr. Maxham drove us to New Jersey. One kid was so nervous beforehand he threw up.

Faculty

- Specific teacher interactions. Faculty influences, positive and negative. (Please use specific examples, and note grades/years.)

Poor Example: The teachers at The Heights were an incredible influence and made me the man I am today.

Better example: Matt Morin, was my varsity basketball coach (2000). He was tough. Everyone was always terrified of going to practice because we'd have to run suicides if anyone messed up a drill. I

always remember him shouting, "Don't cheat the drill!" and getting red in the face. We had a warm-up routine called "Lakers" and part of it involved running around the court. Sometimes you'd cheat and cut the corners to make the route quicker. But he'd notice this and call us out, making the point that the drill existed for a reason and that we were cheating ourselves by cheating the drill. I think about that line all the time today when I'm at work. Don't cheat the drill! He was a great basketball coach.

Better example: I recall when Mr. McPherson (Rich) announced to the class his engagement. We were in 4th period, Calculus, senior year (1982). We somehow convinced him to let us smoke cigars during class to celebrate!

Better example: A family member passed away from cancer my junior year (1993). I was in the chapel one day after school and Mr. Royals came in and saw me and he came up next to me and just started saying out loud (no one else was there), tell him about it, let him know, he's there, he knows what's going on, let him know you're upset, tell him he made a mistake, no he didn't make a mistake, but tell him that anyway! It was such a personal way of praying, and it really was praying. I think about that often.

Better example: I recall as a freshman (1998) playing pick-up basketball every Wednesday after school with Fr. Uhen and whoever else showed up. I was new to the school and was shocked to see a priest playing basketball with the students, and even more shocked that he wasn't taking it easy on anyone. In fact, he was one of the best players on the court!

Facilities

- Your perception of, and experience on, The Heights campus while you attended. (Please use specific examples, and note grades/years.)

Poor Example: The Heights campus was always a little embarrassing compared to other schools. I never understood why they didn't make it nicer.

Better example: We had a Senior parking lot (1994) where the outdoor basketball courts are now. It was covered in gravel and the rocks were always denting cars. There was a rule that seniors were allowed to smoke there.

Better example: I remember as a sophomore (1997) hearing others students complain about how ugly our campus was compared to Georgetown Prep. I never thought about a campus needing to be beautiful until that moment. But the campus is fantastic now!

Better example: The Living Room was shocking for me to see as a freshman (1991). It seemed so interesting to have a real living room in a school. It made it more like a home. Students would sit there and have conversations. It was very adult. I also remember watching the NCAA tournament there. There was a TV playing the games all day long. When games were really close, no one went to class (faculty included).

Athletics

- Specific athletic recollections, particular highlights. The Heights team experience. What was the school's reputation in that sport? (Please use specific examples, and note grades/years.)

Poor Example: Being part of a team at The Heights taught me a lot about sportsmanship and teamwork. I'm very grateful for playing sports at The Heights.

Better example: We didn't have a basketball gym when I was a senior (1987). But we had a great team. I remember one winter Mr. McPherson (Rich) made us shovel snow from the outdoor courts just so we could practice. It was freezing! But the word got out and a news crew from NBC came to campus and filmed a piece on us for the news! They couldn't believe kids at a prep school had to shovel their own courts in order to practice! What's even crazier is that we went undefeated that season!

Better example: We played Gonzaga at home in the semi finals of the WCAC soccer championship in 2018. We tied, and the game went into PKs. The field was packed. The Gonzaga boosters had their drum. It was our first season on the new turf field. It was a nail biter, but we won. It was almost better than winning our first WCAC championship, which we did a few days later at CUA.

Spiritual

- Particular interactions with, and recollections of, Heights chaplains. (Please use specific examples, and note grades/years.)

Poor Example: The chaplains at The Heights were terrifying.

Better example: Fr. X was a huge sports fan. Whenever you'd go to confession with him he'd always relate something you did to sports. One time for penance he made me run three miles. I didn't think you could make someone do that! But to this day I think about him whenever I go running.

Social

- Specific memories of: class trips, retreats, school games, school festivals, work projects, prom, etc. (Please use specific examples, and note grades/years.)

Poor Example: The things we did outside of the classroom were some of the most memorable parts of my time at the school. It was great.

Better example: I remember helping to construct the gazebo that's near the parking lot for our Senior project (1992). Well, really just a handful of us (include names). We'd work all day and make burgers on the grill for lunch. We spent an entire week with Mr. Ned Burns. And it's still there! I built a shed a few summers ago in my backyard and knew how to do it because of that project.

Better example: We went to a college fair at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds my junior year (1995). Mr. X never counted the students at the end when we got back to the van, and when he took off I got left there. I had to find a payphone and get some friends to come back and pick me up.

Additional Reflections

- Why did you come to The Heights?
- Do you recall your first introduction to The Heights?
- What was the school's reputation while you were a student?

Prepared by James Kolakowski '03
jkolakowski@heights.edu - 301.365.0227 x254
heights.edu/mystory

- **Any other specific experiences you'd like to share, positive and/or negative?**

Thank you!

Optional: Would you be open to a follow-up conversation?

Please email completed form to James Kolakowski '03 (jkolakowski@heights.edu)