

Ollie Lecompte's Fiftieth Reunion Rebirth

In 1981 Mary, myself, and our three daughters moved to Colorado to open a western office for our family construction firm. At that time the Army was upgrading Fort Carson located in Colorado Springs. The work generally involved large quantities of sand, rock, and ready mix. The major supplier of those products in that market was Transit Mix whose president and general manager was Ollie Lecompte. Somehow I became aware that Ollie had graduated from Yale. Yale men were relatively few and far between in Colorado and, thinking that I had a good icebreaker, I made an appointment with him at his office to begin my relationship building with this very important potential supplier.

I arrived at the appointed time, was escorted into his office and proceeded to tell him a bit about our business and our interest in buying product from him. The conversation was going well and I thought it was time to mention our common Yale connection. His reaction took me totally by surprise. He was actually angry. He had no interest in Yale. He had had nothing to do with Yale since graduation. He attended Yale his final two years only because the military program he was in assigned him there. I left, badly dented but physically intact, vowing never to mention Yale to him again.

We subsequently did a lot of business together and had quite a good relationship never mentioning Yale.

Some years later, 94 or 95 I believe, Mary and I were invited to join some business associates in their box for a Denver Bronco game. Some weeks before, my Yale alumni representative had stopped by for a visit, and I had taken advantage of the opportunity to express my disappointment with the poor condition of the physical plant at Yale. I probably overdid it a bit but I wanted to make sure that he took the message back to New Haven. Anyway, we entered the box, greeted our hosts, and discovered that Ollie was a guest as well. Ollie indicated that he wanted to speak with me. Thinking it was probably some business matter, I stepped aside to join him. To my surprise I found myself on the receiving end of a through dressing down. I, apparently, had no appreciation for my Yale education. I had mistreated my alumni representative. This whole wonderful experience had been lost on me, miserable dog that I was. Where did this come from, from this fellow who hated Yale and his Yale experience. I was the guy who always paid his class dues, belonged to several alumni groups, went to reunions, and even contributed a little money now and then. He, to my knowledge, had done nothing. **Then it came out. He had somehow been coaxed into attending his fiftieth reunion. He had met a lot of his old pals, returned to his old haunts, and relived those wonderful years. He had gotten the Yale religion. He was a new man. He always seemed a happier and more gentle soul after that.**