

AlumniNews

Reflections on Dean Feagans

In the process of moving to a new house this past fall, Stuart Segelnick, '92, came across a carefully stacked pile of memorabilia from his SDM days. It had been placed in the basement of the apartment Segelnick and his wife had moved into some 15 years prior to their recent relocation.

In that pile of stuff, Segelnick found something interesting. Here's his story, in his own words, of the old folded yellow piece of paper...



SEGELNICK

I spotted an old folded yellow paper with Dean William Feagans' autograph. I can remember fondly now (not back then!), when I was a sophomore, worrying about finishing all of my lab work on time. The lab used to be open for students to work on Saturdays. However, because of my religious beliefs, I was always unable to utilize this extra time. One day, there was an endodontic assignment that I didn't believe I could finish in time and I didn't know what to do. So I mustered up some courage and decided to go to Dean Feagans' office. He always seemed to be such a down-to-earth guy.

time I should call his house Sunday morning just to confirm, and he'd meet me at 9 a.m.

I remember shaking in my shoes when I called his house at 8:30 a.m. His wife answered. I recall her being very nice to me, and she put him right on the phone, even though they were eating breakfast. 'I'm sorry Dean Feagans, but I really need to come in. You know I wouldn't...' He cut me off and said it wasn't a problem. I think he talked about either breakfast or the Bills, and then said he'd be there.

So at 9 a.m. I parked in the parking lot adjacent to the school and went to the front door. The dean was already there, and he said we'd be using the side door. He walked me down the stairs and before we passed the student lounge, he said he needed to see something and I followed him into the lounge. At that point my heart almost pounded through my chest when I saw laying on the couch one of my classmates. He must have slept over since Saturday! With my face probably as white as a ghost, the dean turned to me and put his finger to his lips and said 'Shhh.'

He then unlocked the lab and when we went in there, two of my classmates were sitting down with their backs to us, working. They looked up and around and almost in unison jumped out of their seats with their faces as white as mine must have been. The dean just said, 'It's all right, you can go back to work.' He turned to me and said to make sure the door was closed when I left and that he would be around doing some work. Then he left.

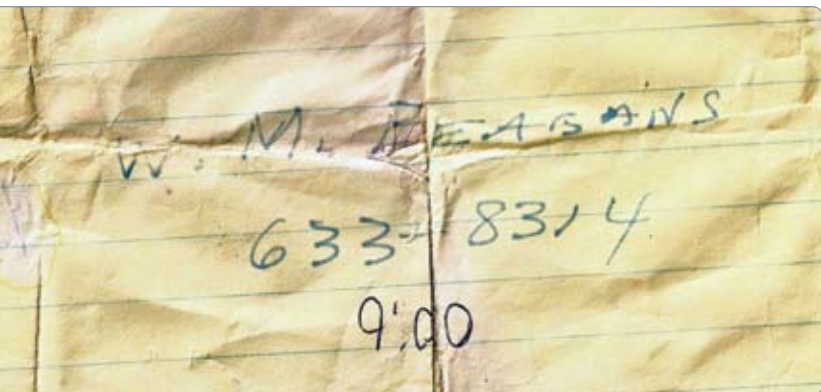
My classmates, when they finally found their voices, came over to me scared out of their minds, thinking of the trouble they were probably in, and wanting to know why I was there. After telling them the story we decided not to say anything to anyone and see what happened, and I would have to let them know before I ever came in on a Sunday again!

Nothing ever happened to my three classmates. It was as if they were never there. For the next three years of dental school, I only called the dean one other time. In the following years I never saw the dean again, but I'll always remember his kindness and concern, and will warmly remember him as a real mensch!"

Regards,

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He invited me in with a smile. I told him about the situation and asked if it would be possible to have the lab opened on Sundays, too. He told me it wasn't feasible, but said he would personally meet me that coming Sunday at the school and open the door for me so I could finish my work. I was shocked, though thankful when we agreed to meet at 9 a.m. He took a sheet of paper and wrote his name and phone number on it and told me that if I ever needed to come in, he would meet me on Sunday morning and open up the school for me.

I was so impressed with the dean that for the remainder of the week, I stayed up late nights in the lab and finished my assignment. I went back to his office and said I was fine and didn't need him to come in. He told me to call him any time if I ever needed his help.

Months went by before I found myself depressed that I would have to call the dean. I just didn't want to disturb him, but I absolutely needed to go into the lab. In his office, Feagans said that this