

1952 Class Notes for March-April

The end of 2009 produced some noteworthy '52 news, here and abroad.

Tom Fenton, living in semi-retirement in London after his distinguished career as a CBS European correspondent, has published a short new book, "Junk News: The Failure of the Media in the 21st Century", (available at Amazon.com), in which he recounts the shift, especially on network and cable news, from hard news content to scandal, human interest, and celebrity- driven trivia, and suggests that the public's resulting lack of factual knowledge about truly significant developments has enabled many of our country's recent misadventures. He offers several thought-provoking ideas on how this situation might be remedied. The book is a follow-up to Tom's 2005 work, "Bad News: The Decline of Reporting, The Business of News, and the Danger to Us All" (also available in paperback at Amazon.com), in which he reported on how the end of the cold war, together with media conglomerates' overriding concern for the bottom line, brought about drastic cutbacks in overseas reporting by the television networks, creating in Tom's view a critical gap in America's awareness of the growth of terrorism.

In October, **Drew Waitley** received the Award of Honor granted annually by the Chicago Building Congress, a trade association whose members represent all facets of the construction industry in the Windy City. His citation celebrated his nearly 50 years as a bank and surety company executive, in which he developed innovative financing methods for local building contractors and architects, enabling their participation, not only in iconic Chicago buildings like the Hancock Building and Sears Tower, but in other major projects worldwide. In a conversation Drew expressed especial gratification at being remembered by his colleagues nine years after his

retirement, and told me that he remains active in many of the charitable endeavors mentioned in his award citation, noting particularly CASA (an acronym for Court=Appointed Special Advocates), a group which on a volunteer basis investigates and advises the courts on the disposition of cases involving abused and troubled children.