



Keith Wideman

Within a couple of weeks of high school graduation, I was already attending OSU. Starting summer quarter and spreading my freshman year over four quarters, my parents wisely reasoned, would give me a better chance to not flunk out.

That worked, despite the fact that I played lacrosse and spent more time at the gym than studying. Then hippies happened. I quit the lacrosse team and switched my major from architecture to fine arts, where going to class stoned was a plus.

I dropped out in my senior year, joined a Jesus People group, and “went into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature.” Once there, I remembered how hard it had been at the last minute to pull off a C in second year French. Anything to circumvent the foreign language requirement at OSU. (Thank you, Ms Hale!)

On the mission field I found that much administrative work could be performed in English, almost anywhere. And few others wanted to do it.

I circled the globe from west to east in twenty-three years, two months, and eleven days. I lived in a dozen countries on three continents, visited a couple of dozen more, and bore and raised six children along the way. The larger our family grew, the harder and more costly it got to move. My last two were born in the same country.

Those six and our fourteen grandchildren are now scattered from LA to Reading, England to Phuket, Thailand. Our oldest granddaughter is at King’s College in London, and the youngest will bring all of her promise and wonder to our world mid-September, in California. Thank God for FaceTime and Facebook.

For fourteen years, while abroad and after I returned to the US, I edited and wrote for an international missionary magazine that was translated, in whole or part, into twenty or so of those languages I never learned beyond the very basics.

My wife Caryn and I now live in San Antonio, where we have found our second wind. Caryn is in graduate school, studying literature, writing, and social justice. I work at Haven for Hope, San Antonio’s transformational campus for individuals and families without permanent shelter (aka “the homeless” or “Those People”). Daily we serve around 1400 of the most interesting and gifted people you could ever hope to meet, brought together by traumatic circumstance of one form or another.

Nowhere in my world travels did I find such immense potential, just waiting to be awakened. And nowhere did I find a group that was more responsive or appreciative, where a little love and encouragement went so far. Hoda Kotb is right: "One person can change your life. If just one person believes in you, the army of people who don't are inconsequential." Imagine getting to be that person, day after day. I've never been more excited to be alive.

Sorry this got so long. Thanks for reading. And sorry for not making it to our 50th. Huge thanks to all who worked so hard to make that possible! Caryn is my Facebook link to the world beyond my work, so please ask to friend Caryn Wideman if you'd like to get back in touch.

Peace and every good,

Keith