

Unabomber angers class of '62

Harvard Reunion

Rene Lynch
Los Angeles Times

May 23, 2012

LOS ANGELES — As the Harvard Class of 1962 prepared to gather this week, many alumni updated their profiles — no doubt proud to share their accomplishments of the past 50 years.

Theodore Kaczynski did so as well. But many believe he had a different motive: They say the man dubbed the Unabomber was mocking his former Harvard University classmates, as well as those he injured or killed and their survivors.

The Harvard Alumni Association said it regretted allowing Kaczynski to use its so-called Red Book to update his profile. There, Kaczynski listed his occupation as “prisoner” and included among his awards: “Eight life sentences, issued by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California, 1998.” He gave his address as the federal prison in Florence, Colo.

Some classmates were offended. “I thought, ‘Have you no shame?’ ” Bob Bennett, now a Northwestern University law professor, told The Boston Herald.

The alumni association’s apology did little for one of those injured by Kaczynski: Yale computer science professor David Gelernter, who lost his right hand and right eye to one of Kaczynski’s homemade bombs and refuses to allow himself to be called a victim.

“It’s very chilling,” Gelernter told the Herald. “He’s an unrepentant terrorist murderer who cut people and slashed people to death in their kitchens, leaving them to bleed, while he hid in a shack somewhere in the West. So for some institution to lend authority to him, well, I can’t believe such things happen in the United States.”

Gelernter added: “The new criminals here are the publishers of this Red Book, for their passive collusion with this murderer.”

In a statement, the alumni association offered no explanation but said: “All class members are invited to submit entries for inclusion in the class reunion report. ... We regret publishing Kaczynski’s references to his convictions and apologize for any distress that it may have caused others.”

Harvard officials, who were in the midst of commencement ceremonies, did not respond to a request for details.

Kaczynski entered Harvard when he was 16. He later moved to a remote cabin in Montana that lacked running water and electricity. From this hideaway, he began terrorizing the nation with more than a dozen mail bombs that killed three people and injured 23 from 1978 to 1995.

It wasn’t long before Kaczynski was dubbed the Unabomber. For years, he was one of the most wanted men in America, with law enforcement failing again and again to nab him.

After the Washington Post and New York Times published the Unabomber’s “manifesto,” Kaczynski’s brother and sister-in-law thought he might be the source and contacted the FBI. Kaczynski was arrested in 1996.

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