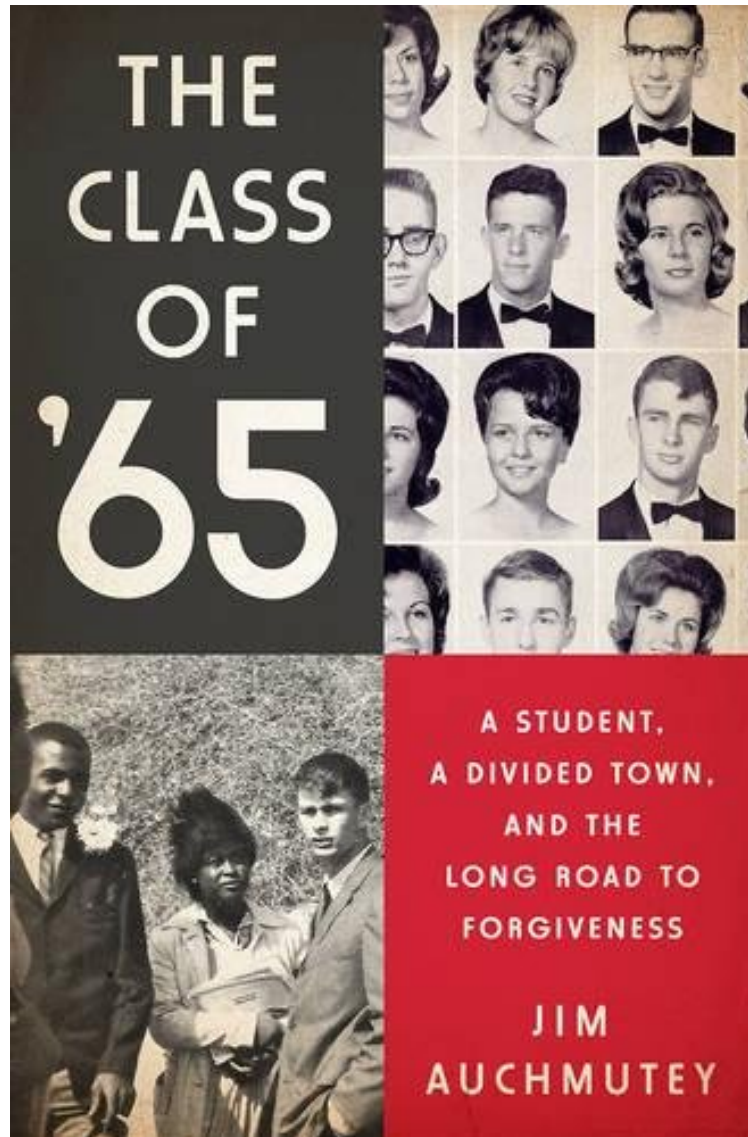


# The Class of '65: A Student, a Divided Town, and the Long Road to Forgiveness

*Jim Auchmutey*

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**Jim Auchmutey : The Class of '65: A Student, a Divided Town, and the Long Road to Forgiveness** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Class of '65: A Student, a Divided Town, and the Long Road to Forgiveness:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. OutstandingBy Trey ShippThis book reads with a suspenseful

intensity that makes it impossible to put down. It begins with the founding of a pacifist, Christian commune in southwest Georgia named Koinonia (Greek for fellowship). But as their views of racial equality become known, local racists dynamite their market, try to kill their founder and shoot at their children playing outside. The story escalates into the heart of the civil rights struggle; a story that is not as well known as Selma, though it should be. King, Abernathy, John Lewis and SNCC are all there. But the power of this story is that we feel it personally through a boy living out nonviolence in the high school crucible. And then in the story of his classmates who had the courage to seek forgiveness. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed this book By Leta K. McCormick I enjoyed this book. I was able to see history from the eyes of an average young man who was an extraordinarily man. I would most definitely recommend this book to anyone any age. It tells of the civil rights movements from a average man perspective, but this average man was already an outcast of the normal because of his faith or his parents faith and living style. The time may be set in the 1960's and before but the life lessons can still be taught today. even though the social society has changed we still have a long way to go. I would recommend this book be read as a learning tool in the classroom today, where "bullying" is still a concern to many. Also teaches that life will continue after high school and what you do in high school can be reflected back on years later. Thumbs up to the author for a great job on telling Greg's story. Thumbs up to Greg for teaching us how we should treat one another. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Jim is a very good story teller By John L. Cromartie Jr. This is a very important book- important for those of us who lived through the events and times described in the book but also important for anyone who lives in a time when discrimination, marginalization of "the other", and verbal hostility widely exist in a culture (and this is our time and any time!). Jim is a very good story teller, so it is an easy book to read. But what a powerful experience it is to remember the stories of the civil rights movement, the larger than life figure of Clarence Jordan and the lives and people caught up in those changing times. He tells of the "cost of discipleship" for those who dare to live with integrity in the midst of difficult times but also the cost to family, friends, structures of meaning and points to the lessons for us as we move forward and face new challenges of facing the truth and doing the difficult work of healing and reconciliation. I'll read the book again and will share it with others. Thanks Jim, Greg and Clarence for sharing this amazing story.

In the midst of racial strife, one young man showed courage and empathy. It took forty years for the others to join him Being a student at Americus High School was the worst experience of Greg Wittkamper's life. Greg came from a nearby Christian commune, Koinonia, whose members devoutly and publicly supported racial equality. When he refused to insult and attack his school's first black students in 1964, Greg was mistreated as badly as they were: harassed and bullied and beaten. In the summer after his senior year, as racial strife in Americus and the nation reached its peak, Greg left Georgia. Forty-one years later, a dozen former classmates wrote letters to Greg, asking his forgiveness and inviting him to return for a class reunion. Their words opened a vein of painful memory and unresolved emotion, and set him on a journey that would prove healing and saddening. The Class of '65 is more than a heartbreaking story from the segregated South. It is also about four of Greg's classmates David Morgan, Joseph Logan, Deanie Dudley, and Celia Harvey who came to reconsider the attitudes they grew up with. How did they change? Why, half a lifetime later, did reaching out to the most despised boy in school matter to them? This noble book reminds us that while ordinary people may acquiesce to oppression, we all have the capacity to alter our outlook and redeem ourselves.

It's a great story, ably reported by former Atlanta Journal-Constitution journalist Auchmutey, and told with humor and grace Heroism is like beauty in the eye of the beholder. We rarely behold bravery as singular as Wittkamper's. Class of '65 encourages us to see the courage in an act as simple as asking forgiveness in a long-overdue letter. The Washington Post Author Jim Auchmutey, a journalist who worked for nearly three decades at The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, expertly tells the story of that student, the Americus community, the larger civil rights struggle and an unexpected reconciliation decades later The reconciliation that follows in Auchmutey's compelling narrative is at times tentative and halting, but also filled with emotional power. And it appears to be still in progress. At the time of the reunion, it included only Wittkamper and his white classmates. The closing section of Auchmutey's book suggests another chapter yet to be written, as blacks and whites together make peace with the past. The Associated Press A well-researched, popular history with a powerful emotional coda. The Atlanta Journal Constitution