



A Record-Breaking

GW Law celebrates its most successful reunion ever. This year's festivities to take place June 1 and 2.

BY MARY A. DEMPSEY

Law School officials may be marveling at the 2011 reunion turnout—the best ever—but the organizing committees say the explanation is simple. It was all about people reaching out to other people, with a little technology thrown in for good measure.

More than 600 people took part in the 2011 reunion. They accepted awards at an elegant dinner at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery. They congregated for an ice cream social. They even showed up for a “class without finals” focused on morality law.

And they fueled good-natured competition as they battled to see which graduation year could put together the most generous class gift, a rivalry that raised more than \$1.3 million in donations and pledges.

Remarkably, these are the same classes that, at their reunion five years ago, posted attendance of 117 and raised \$514,000.

“What it comes down to is that people really want to connect with the people they enjoyed while in law school,” says Rich Collins, associate vice president of law development. “For the 2011 reunion, the organizing committees were much larger than in the past. And social networking helped, too.”



Reunion

“People brought pictures from those days—before digital cameras—and everyone walked away with this incredibly warm feeling. There was a terrific esprit de corps about the night.”

—JONATHAN GREENBLATT, JD '80



(Left) The Stockton Guard Luncheon and Induction Ceremony, for GW Law alumni who graduated at least 40 years ago, was a highlight of the weekend. (Above) This year's Jerome Barron Cup—awarded to the graduating class section with the highest class gift participation—went to Section 12, represented by Class of 2011 members (left to right) Jonathan Gaffney, Alisa Yasin, Brittany Bisnott (holding the trophy with Rich Collins), and Alison Shurtleff (next to Dean Paul Schiff Berman).

University officials said that one-on-one contact by alumni accounted for the bulk of the success, complemented by updated alumni databases.

Organizing committees also handed credit to Mr. Collins and the rest of the Law School development team.

“Without them we just could not have succeeded,” said Steven Tasher, JD '73. “They provided us with access to individuals, with resources, with meeting spaces, with ideas. They gave us the infrastructure and the expertise needed ... so we could do a full-court press to alert people about the reunion.”

Mr. Tasher, managing director and CEO of Wyatt Partners LLC in New Jersey, helped set the stage for the high-energy fundraising efforts that marked the latest reunion, although he is quick to say that it couldn't have happened without the work of many people. He says inspiration came from the GW Law graduating class of his daughter, Lindsay Tasher, JD '05, who launched the tradition of a class gift.

“When my wife and I attended Lindsay's graduation, it was announced that the Class of 2005 was putting together a class gift. I was on the [Law School Board of Advisors] the whole time she was in law school and I attended the Law Revue shows, where I'd hear students talking about how deeply in debt they were,” Mr. Tasher explains.

“But these students, deeply in debt, thought enough about the school to present a class gift,” he continues. “If they could do it, why couldn't we all do it?”

Mr. Tasher's class formed a committee to organize a class gift for its 35th reunion in 2008, with the idea of making a tradition out of reunion-linked class gifts. Each of the nearly dozen people on the Class of '73 committee reached out to 10 or 12 alumni, asking each of them, in turn, to contact another 10 or 12.

A parallel committee for the Class of '68, led by Ira “Ike” Sorkin, who recently joined New Jersey-based firm Lowenstein Sandler, jumped on the bandwagon and a friendly competition ensued to see which class could raise the largest gift. Mr. Sorkin, who was the lead defense attorney on the Bernie Madoff financial fraud case, is a member of GW Law's Board of Advisors.

“It was a tremendous collaborative effort,” Mr. Tasher says. “I was then asked to come back to various reunion committees and provide them with a template of how to do it.”

In response, the 2011 reunion spotlighted fundraising and attendance awards and every committee set goals. The Jerome Barron Cup, for example, named for former Law School Dean and Professor Barron, feted the graduating class sections with the greatest participation in their class gift.

(Clockwise from top left) Alumni catch up with past Professor Monroe Freedman (center) at the Stockton Guard Cocktail Party at the Ritz-Carlton Georgetown. Dean Berman speaks at the 1976, 1981, and 1986 Cocktail Party at Elizabeth's on L. Sy Herman, LL.M. '66, fixes a plate at the Stockton Guard Luncheon. Dean Berman presents Larry O'Rourke, JD '71, chair of the GW Law IP Advisory Board, with The Jacob Burns Award for Extraordinary Service. GW Law Professor Emeritus Teresa Schwartz, JD '71, served as convener of the Stockton Guard. Dean Berman with attendees of the Black Law Alumni Association lunch and meeting.



“When I was dean, I noticed that many alumni don’t start thinking about the Law School and how it shaped them until mid or late career,” Mr. Barron says. “So a class gift by students in their last year of law school is a very new idea. The competition among the sections that the cup represents shows a level of loyalty and commitment to the Law School that should be valued by all of us who teach here. I also should add that I was touched that the cup has my name on it.”

But fundraising is only part of the reunions. The record turnout in 2011 can be traced to best practices put in place a year earlier, when the Class of 1980 rallied its members.

“A bunch of us from the class got together, whether they’d been involved before or not, and we formed a committee to contact as many of our friends from law school as we could,” says Jonathan Greenblatt, partner at Shearman & Sterling in D.C. and a member of the Dean’s Advisory Committee. “We asked the school to help us track down contact information. And we started reaching out.

“Each time someone got an email, they’d say ‘I know someone who isn’t on the list,’” he continues. “The list got bigger and bigger. And enthusiasm grew.”


Mr. Greenblatt hosted a cocktail gathering at his house for about 65 classmates, some of whom hadn’t seen one another since graduation 30 years ago, and their spouses. “People brought pictures from those days—before digital cameras—and everyone walked away with this incredibly warm feeling,” he says. “There was a terrific esprit de corps about the night.”

Reunion participants were struck by a new vibrancy at their alma mater: beautiful high-tech facilities, busy study areas throughout the Law School, and high-profile faculty deeply engaged with their students. They also enjoyed a number of events that the school predicts will become signature elements of the gatherings going forward. They include:

- A meet-and-greet reception with Dean Paul Schiff Berman featuring a rundown of Law School enrollment details, faculty news, academic updates, and future plans.
- The Stockton Guard Luncheon and Induction Ceremony for those who graduated at least 40 years ago.
- Class cocktail parties throughout the city.
- An all-class dinner and awards ceremony.
- Student- and self-guided Law School tours.

JOIN US FOR REUNION 2012

The Law School is planning for an even greater turnout for the 2012 reunion, celebrating the classes of 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007. From this year forward, reunions will be held in the spring to better accommodate participants’ schedules—a decision made based on feedback from past reunion organizing committees. Mark your calendars for June 1 and 2; this year’s reunion promises to be bigger and better than ever.

For more information or to get involved in your class reunion organizing committee, please contact Corley Hopkins, director of development and alumni relations, at 202-994-6117 or chopkins@law.gwu.edu. 

2012 Class Committee Members



CLASS OF 2007

Dipo Akin-Deko
Tiffany Archer
Aaron Binstock
Marc Bohn
Ken Bork
Laura Bourgeois
McClain Bryant
Andres Castrillon
Neil Chilson
Jackie Chan
Andrea DiBitetto
Jennifer Feldhaus
Karen Greenwood
Sam Jammal
Megan Jeschke
Jamie Long
Adam Marlowe
Jered Matthyse
Magin Puig Monsen
Katie Raimondo
Michelle Rosenthal
Sarah Schwartz
Gina Ciraldo Stabile

CLASS OF 2002

Bridgette Ahn
Kathryn "Katie" Balmford
Supreet "Preeti" Chinnan
Jacob DeLeon
Ed Hornstein
Dmitri Lukovsky

Jonathan Neerman
Sergio Oehninger
Tanya Parikh
Chimed Saikhanbileg
John "J.P." Sherry
Jeffrey Sun
Barbara Viniegna
Akil Vohra
Eric Wexler
Meghan Murphy Wilcox

CLASS OF 1997

Niza Motola
Jonathan Robbins
Stefan Willemsen
Gladys Xiques

CLASS OF 1992

The Hon. Michelle
Armstrong
A. Paul Bieri
Cathy Abrams Demeroto
Chris Langello
Stacie Lissette
Amy Osborn
Kenneth "Ken"
Schwartz

CLASS OF 1987

Steven Becker
James "Jim" Bertrand
M. Joel Bolstein
Mark Egert

Robert "Bob"
Muilenburg
Dan Lowenthal
Drew Murphy
Darryl Nirenberg
Karen Schaufeld
David Sweet
Stephen Ungar
Mark Egert

CLASS OF 1982

Garry Grossman
Heidi Lewis Coleman
Al Krachman
Evan Krame
Jodi Mintzer Krame
Laurence "Larry"
E. Platt
Lawrence "Larry" Shire
Grace Speights
Roger Stavis
Karen Ostrow Stempel
Scott Stempel
Neal Sweeney

CLASS OF 1977

William "Bill" Barr
Ira Jaffe
Joseph West
Patricia Wittie
David Yaffe

CLASS OF 1972

Richard Heideman
Charles Rogers Jones
Steven Lerman
Alexia Morrison
Donald "Don" Stout
Keith Uhl
The Hon. James
"Jim" Ziglar

CLASS OF 1967

Gary Alexander
Joseph Berl
George Bruno
Brian Brunsvold
Richard "Dick" Blackburn
Sara-Ann "Sally"
Determan
A. Dale Ledbetter
Barry Maloney
Stephen "Steve"
Oggel
James "Jim" Penrod
Howard Rensin
Kenneth Sparks
David "Dave" Wilson

CLASS OF 1962

Penn Chabrow
John "Jack" Stafford

** List is current as of
Dec. 15, 2011*

And the Winners Are...

Alumni at the 2011 reunion went head to head for prizes in a philanthropy face-off. The following groups emerged victorious:

- > **Dean's Cup** for the highest overall participation rate in the class gift campaign, awarded to the Class of 1961.
- > **Lawrence Cup**, honoring former Dean Frederick M. Lawrence, for the top attendance rate. The graduates of 2001 became the first class to win this new prize.
- > **Stockton Bowl** for the Stockton Guard class (graduating from GW Law at least 40 years ago) that raises the most money in its reunion year. The award, making its debut and named for former Law School Dean and GW President Charles Herbert Stockton, went to the Class of 1971, which raised more than \$421,000 by the time of the reunion dinner.
- > **Friedenthal Bowl** for the non-Stockton Guard class that raises the most money in its reunion year. The Class of 1986 took home the prize honoring former Dean Jack H. Friedenthal; by the time of the class dinner, it had raised \$314,000.
- > **Jerome Barron Cup** goes to the sections in the graduating class with the highest giving participation and highest five-year pledge. The winners? Section 12 for participation rate and the LLM section for highest five-year pledge.



(Above) Class of 1971 Reunion Committee members Dan Clements, Doug Davidson, Judy Dobkin, and Larry O'Rourke present Dean Berman with their class gift check. Their class won the Stockton Bowl for raising the most money for the reunion classes. (Left) Class of 1960 Reunion Committee members Judge James Cacheris and Judge Bruce Mencher stand in recognition for winning the Dean's Cup, feting the reunion class with the highest participation rate in the class gift campaign, as Dean Berman looks on.