

## President's Farewell Speech

Class Dinner, Boathouse, May 28, 2010

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Class of 1975! 35<sup>th</sup> Reunion! Isn't this a fabulous time!!!

I would like to start out by quoting something which Curtis Hayden, a very wise member of our class, said earlier this evening: "The hardest thing about Princeton is getting in; the best part is coming back!"

Before I begin my "Speech," I'd like to present a surprise for you: a four minute video of our undergraduate days, courtesy of those of you who submitted jpeg photos, but most especially, to George Gati, S '75, who put all of this together. Those of you who are seated far away from the screen, would you please come forward to watch the following?

**And, here we roll:** [The video, a link to which appears on this same site, is shown.]

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So, finally, after all those Class letters and emails, it's time for me to speak! Kindly indulge me for the next several minutes...

Background: 35<sup>th</sup> Reunion speech. I'm a Woodrow Wilson School major. Calling upon my policy conference experience, I realized that there are **so** many ways to approach this assignment. But which way is best?

1, **Salutatorian Address:** In the extremely **UNLIKELY** event that no one finds some of my comments funny, I considered supplying written copies of my address to a few members of our class with cues for laughter and applause.

**VERDICT: NO** – too easy and it's been done before.

2. **CLASS SURVEY:** One-third of our class answered it. Do you remember the question about frequency of sex, “positioned’ in between questions about frequency of email usage and the amount of weight gained since graduating from Princeton?

The top multiple choice answer to that question was two or more times per week. Only 15.4% of you chose that top option...

So: You know how we have given an award to the classmate who traveled the greatest distance to attend a Major Reunion? Well, this time: I could present an award to the classmate or classmates who have sex the most frequently.

**PROBLEM: It was an anonymous survey.**

3. **More ideas:** An additional Class Seminar, the video, and a CD of music from the 70’s - I personally liked that one! But finally, Bill and Gail told me: “No more new ideas! It’s too late! We’ve got to finish what we started. They were right.

None the less, the possibilities of topics are endless.

But, in the interest of brevity, here are the subjects about which I’d really like to talk tonight --- **the occasion of our 35<sup>th</sup> Reunion:**

1. Princeton education and experience. My opinion is that this **STARTED** while we were undergraduates but that it has increased **thirty-five fold** since that time.

In the ten years since our 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion, particularly in the past five years while I have served as Class President, I have experienced:

Friendships – Renewed and cemented.

New friendships have developed and are flourishing

Working together with the officers, volunteers and mini-reunion chairs ---

All of those have been, and will continue to be, unforgettable experiences.

Now, I am fully aware that I am President of the entire Class and I hope that I have carried out that function. That being said, the pinnacle of my class presidency was the Women's Reunion. It was a first. It was truly extraordinary and bonding --- a transformation took place. It was "magical." We don't exactly know why this happened, but it did!!!

In my opinion, this kind of reunion doesn't have to be exclusively for women. Looking to the future, I envision reunions of this type for the **entire** class. The Women's Reunion can serve as a prototype. But this will be up to Julie and Maureen, my fabulous successors.

**I would like to discuss briefly the nature of Reunions.** Reunions are not about the long-ago past; they aren't about what happened 35-39 years ago. Rather, they are about the **near past, the present and the future.**

**In the past ten years since our 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion, we have experienced many events, some good, some terrible.** The following are *some* of the defining moments which have taken place during the past ten years:

1. 9/11/2001
2. Iraq War
3. Hanging Chads
4. No matter what your political persuasion, the election of the first African-American President of the United States.

**Here are some key moments relating to our Class and Princeton:**

1. Shirley Tilghman became President of the University;
2. Appointment of two Princetonians to the Supreme Court, with one on the way;
3. Dave Offensend '75 was elected Trustee of the University;
4. Judge Denny Chin '75 sentenced Bernie Madoff to a term of a zillion life sentences. (Hey, I'm from Palm Beach!);
5. Janet Clarke'75 completed **FOURTEEN** years of service as Trustee of the University.

**Finally, I would like to thank my fellow class officers, without whom this spectacular evening would not have been possible:**

Jay Finkelstein, Treasurer, who kept us on the straight and narrow;

Steve Greenberg, Vice President, who pitched in as needed, which was especially appreciated during the past two weeks;

Lissa Kiser – who has **NEVER** missed a column;

Bill Kuncik and Cheryl LaFleur, Class Agents, from whom you'll be hearing shortly;

Anne Brenner, Technology Chair, who set up and has maintained both our Class & Reunion websites, and who also served as Yearbook Co-Chair with Sally Sears.

Last but **NOT** least, **Bill & Gail Baumbach**, the Co-Chairs of our 30<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Reunions:

They are tremendously **creative**

They have **vision**

They attended to **every** detail

I could go on and on, but we need to move on with tonight's program. Therefore, I will now turn the microphone to our immediate Past President Di Weeks, who will present a brief report on our Class' Summer Community Service internship program....

