A June Tradition Begins

The Law School's first springtime reunion welcomes...
Alumni chatted with former Dean Paul Schiff Berman about his vision for the Law School at a meet-and-greet with the dean held Saturday afternoon. (left) Karen Goff JD ’07, Nicole Herter JD ’07, Chris Herter JD ’07, Dan Stabile JD ’08, and Gina Stabile, JD ’07, pose at the Class of 2002 and 2007 welcome-back cocktail party.

Alumni including Brian Brunsvold, JD ’67, Elliot Zisser, JD ’71, Carolyn Zisser, JD ’72, Lara Nezami, JD ’97, and Nick McConnell, JD ’72, participate in the weekend’s continuing legal education class taught by Professor Alan Sibarium on legal ethics and emerging technologies.

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HUNDREDS OF ALUMNI BACK TO WASHINGTON. BY KELLEY STOKES
found just 10 classmates, but this time around the alumni had 40 or more classmates return for Reunion Weekend,” says Rich Collins, associate vice president of law development. “We’re thrilled by the response and have every reason to believe that this program will continue to grow by leaps and bounds,” says Mr. Collins.

The festivities kicked off Friday night with class cocktail parties in some of Washington’s most coveted venues. The classes of 1972 and 1977 gathered at the National Press Club while the classes of 1987, 1992, and 1997 mingled with their class committee members and faculty at the historic Old Ebbitt Grill. Other classes gathered across the District at the Microsoft Innovation and Policy Center, the St. Regis Hotel, and the Hamilton.

“It was just wonderful to see people,” says Roger Stavis, JD ’82, a partner at Gallet Dreyer and Berkey in New York City and member of the Class of 1982 reunion committee.

More than 700 alumni traveled to Washington, D.C., June 1-2 for the Law School’s first-ever springtime reunion. Previously held in the fall, Reunion Weekend 2012 ushered in a new era in GW Law’s reunion tradition, a change precipitated by alumni feedback that springtime reunions would facilitate larger attendance by better accommodating their schedules.

The strategy worked—GW Law’s 2012 reunion drew hundreds of attendees from around the globe and raised more than $800,000 through the annual class gift campaign. The festivities, celebrating the classes of 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007, attracted more than 700 guests in total, the largest number of attendees in the tradition’s history.

“Attendance has increased sixfold over the last five years, so many alumni would have come back five years ago and...
“It’s like no time has passed when you see people you spent so much time with.”

At the cocktail parties, alumni pored over class directories as they reunited with former classmates. Old friends Dewey Schade, JD ’67, and Chuck Walsh, JD ’67, reconnected at their class’s celebration and plan to hike the Grand Canyon together this summer when Mr. Walsh visits Mr. Schade at his home in Arizona. Attendees also included international alumni like Ivo Nesovinal, LLM ‘92, and Peter Lakatos, LLM ‘92, who traveled from Eastern Europe to attend the weekend.

“We didn’t want to leave,” says Mr. Stavis of his classmates from the Class of 1982. After their cocktail party’s slated end, attendees went to dinner together to extend the evening. “We kept our party going,” he says, laughing.

In addition to reconnecting with fellow classmates, alumni caught up with faculty members who shaped their GW Law experience. Professor Emeritus Monroe Freedman, a favorite of alumni from the 1970s, traveled from New York, where he now teaches at Hofstra University, to attend Reunion Weekend for the second year in a row. Professor Gregory Maggs, who has twice served as interim dean of the Law School, also attended several events, to the delight of many younger alumni.

On Saturday, alumni had the opportunity to return to the classroom for a complimentary continuing legal education course exploring legal ethics in the age of social media and mobile technology. The lecture was given by Professor Alan Sibarium, a legal adviser and frequent lecturer for the U.S. Department of Justice. It was followed by a panel discussion on political law and the 2012 election, moderated by Professor Spencer Overton.

In the afternoon, alumni enjoyed luncheons with their classmates and took part in a special meet-and-greet with former Dean Paul Schiff Berman.
The weekend culminated with an elegant all-class dinner and awards presentation at the historic Willard Intercontinental Hotel, where the winners of the class giving competition were revealed. During the months preceding the weekend, members of the reunion committees reached out to their former classmates to encourage their attendance at Reunion Weekend and to garner their support of each class’s fund. Together, the classes raised $879,387 during the reunion celebrations.

“I want people like me to be able to attend GW, and the fact of the matter is that without scholarships and assistance, they can’t do that any longer,” says Mr. Stavis, who also serves on the GW Law Alumni Association Board of Directors. “Something needs to be done. We need to step up.”

Young alumni had an especially strong showing at the celebrations, with more than 170 attendees from the classes of 2002 and 2007 registered for the weekend’s events.

Sam Jammal, JD ’07, a member of his class’s reunion committee, says the highlight of the weekend was seeing classmates with whom he had lost touch in the years since graduation. “I have been lucky that most of my friends have stayed in the area, but given all of our busy lives, it was great to have a weekend where we could all get together and welcome back those who moved away.”


To get involved in your class’s reunion organizing committee or for more information on Reunion Weekend 2013, please contact Nicole Frattianne, associate director of development and reunion giving, at 202-994-5302 or reunions@law.gwu.edu.
This year’s All-Class Dinner and Alumni Awards Presentation honored two of the Law School's alumni with prestigious awards for their dedication to serving both the public and GW Law.

THE J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD was awarded to the Hon. Catherine Eagles, JD ‘82. The award, named for Sen. William J. Fulbright, JD ’34, honors an alumnus or alumna who has performed outstanding public service throughout his or her career.

THE LAW SCHOOL DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD, established this winter by the GW Law Alumni Association, was given to Jacob De Leon, JD ’02. The award honors young alumni with extraordinary careers who display a strong commitment to the betterment of the Law School.

This year’s class gift campaign combined alumni generosity with good-natured philanthropic competition to great effect. Awards for the top-performing classes were presented at the all-class dinner and awards presentation that culminated the weekend.

THE DEAN’S CUP for the highest overall participation rate in the class gift campaign was awarded to the Class of 1967. Thanks to the committee’s outreach efforts, 23 percent of the class donated to the Law School this fiscal year.

THE LAWRENCE CUP for the top attendance rate, honoring former dean Frederick M. Lawrence, was awarded to the Class of 2007. Nearly 30 percent of the class registered to attend an event during reunion weekend.

THE JEROME BARRON CUP, honoring the section in the graduating class with the highest giving participation and highest five-year pledge, was awarded to Section 13 of the Class of 2012. The section leaders worked diligently to ensure that 75 percent of their classmates donated to GW Law this year.

THE FRIEDENTHAL BOWL for the non-Stockton Guard class (graduating fewer than 40 years ago) that raised the most funds in its reunion year was awarded to the Class of 1977, which raised $132,537.

THE STOCKTON BOWL, named for former Law School Dean and GW President Charles Herbert Stockton, is awarded to the Stockton Guard class (graduating more than 40 years ago from GW Law) that raised the most funds in its reunion year. This year’s award went to the Class of 1967, which raised $362,140.