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Class President's Message 2014

Hello Classmates!

Well, it is finally within sight! Our 50th Reunion, **The Big One**, as Linda, Bruce, and Joan refer to it, is just weeks away. We have had a busy and fun year working toward this goal. They have been to most of Cornell's 50th reunions since accepting their posts to glean all of the information needed to make every detail of our Reunion as good as it can be. Their weekends on campus have also informed the excellent schedule they have planned for our Reunion. Please join us!

I believe that it is nothing short of momentous that we are able to renew the connections we formed so strongly while coming of age together at Cornell a half-century ago. And it is a wonderful opportunity to meet or reacquaint ourselves with classmates we may not have known well or at all. As you know about yourself, Cornellians are interesting, vital, smart, warm, and fun-loving!

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as your class president. Every one of our officers, with the help of Class Council members, have been outstanding—a real Dream Team. They have made the past five years so enjoyable and fun, without a single worry for me.

The class leadership, as a group, has taken on very special and monumental projects including, to name just a few: Our 50th Reunion Yearbook which is amazing; our attractive and user friendly website (cornell1964.org) that is a model for other classes; conducted a survey of all the JFK Memorial Award winners who shared how our award inspired them that was compiled in a book you will receive at Reunion; and, as early as January of this year, our Reunion Campaign has been so successful that our gifts to the University have exceeded the annual amount that we have ever given before.

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JFK Award in 50th Year

With the selection of our 2013 winner (see *p 4 for story*), we arrived at the start of our 50th year. As this newsletter goes to press, competition is under way for the 2014 JFK award.

The JFK award is experiencing an important and potentially very healthy transition in its administration at Cornell. After ably shepherding the process for nearly fifty years, with the retirement of our angel in the Office of Financial Aid, the JFK Award portfolio has been handed off to the Office of Alumni Affairs and Development who helped us to transition from paper to an electronic application form and will see the process through for this application season. By next year, the award will find a permanent home at the Public Service Center. PSC is a natural home for our award, with links to a dozen campus-based organizations promoting leadership and volunteerism.

This change will strengthen the award's profile on campus. PSC has already made a valuable contribution by assuming the advertising costs to promote the award, with large weekly SUN ads. We are confident of Cornell's continuing partnership with the class through the University's considerable efforts at publicizing the award and its prudent stewardship of the funds that underwrite it.

Over the past year we located all but one of our 57 winners going back to 1965. 53 responded to a survey about their life and work, with a focus on the award's contribution to their lives in public service. The responses are as thoughtful and varied as are the careers that the JFK awardees have pursued. You will be proud of the Class's legacy when you read these contributions, which have been collected in a volume

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you will receive at reunion.



L to R – Bruce Wagner, Nan Butler, Susie Holden, Bill Sanders, & Bill Oliver at the Frozen Apple hockey game between Cornell and Boston University.

(President's Letter cont)

The Class Officers are supporting two other projects as well: 1) A class seating block at the Frozen Apple Hockey Game at Madison Square Garden the Saturday of Thanksgiving Weekend, and 2) the New Student Reading Project.

If you attended our last reunion, the book is selected by professors for new students to read before entering Cornell. This annual choice is always an excellent one, and often a book that you may not come across on your own. This year the book is *Clash of Civilizations Over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio* by Amara Lakhous, the winner of Italy's prestigious Flaiano prize. Webinars are offered for discussion, and we will organize regional discussion groups for classmates if there is interest.

We are working on our new slate of officers now, with Janet Spencer King as our Nominating Committee Chair. As much as we enjoy one another and have formed lasting friendships, we want to draw in other members of our class. If you think you would like to help lead us to our 55th, please read our Class of '64 Constitution on our website under the ABOUT tab. It maps out the duties of our officers, and will help you consider positions you may be suited for. Please let Janet or me know if there is a position that you feel matches your interests and abilities, or if there is someone you would like the committee to consider as it draws up its slate.

Hoping to hear from you, but, failing that, I look forward to seeing you on Thursday, June 5! This Reunion will be something very special, and we guarantee you will have a grand time! As our chairs said in the letter you received with your registration materials, "If not now...when?"

Until we meet at our 50th,

Susie Mair Holden



(JFK Award cont)

The JFK Award selection committee is composed of classmates Tim Davis, Judie Pink Gorra, Janet Spencer King, Class President Susan Holden and Award Chair Cindy Wolloch. We are also delighted to have two award alumni continuing on the committee: Dr. Joyce West, JFK '86, and Jared Genser, JFK '95.

As Policy Research Director, American Psychiatric Institute for Research & Education, Joyce directs mental health research for the American Psychiatric Association. Jared is founder of Freedom Now, a renowned organization that works to give voice to, and to free prisoners of conscience worldwide. Joyce and Jared's contributions to the committee's work have been invaluable in bringing fresh perspectives and in helping to institutionalize the award well past our 50th. As more than half of the survey respondents indicated an interest in serving on the committee in the future, we have every expectation for a good future.

Our class has made an award, several times two awards, to exceptional seniors in every year except one since 1965. From the early years' initial stipends of \$350 to \$400, the endowment is now yielding sufficient payout to allow us to offer \$12,000 in 2014. The Reunion Forum will highlight the award, featuring three earlier winners discussing the work that we helped to make possible. We hope to introduce our 2014 winner at the same time. Be there!

Treasurer's Report

We had an increase in our dues payers in 2013, with a total of 472. Thanks to all those who want to continue to stay connected to Cornell and the class of 1964.

Please continue to pay your dues and to send in news for our class column in the Cornell Alumni magazine. News can be emailed to:

Bev Lamont at blamont64@comcast.net.

If you have an address change, send it to Linda Meltzer at lcm12@cornell.edu so that we can keep you updated with all the latest information on class activities.

We are a few months away from our 50th reunion. What a wonderful time to return to Cornell and celebrate. The reunion chairs have been planning some great events for us. I can't wait!

See you in June!

Barbara Lutz Brim

Treasurer

barbarabrim@comcast.net

Tradition Fellowship

Dear Class of 1964,

Thank you so much for your sponsorship through the Cornell Tradition Fellowship. My name is Taylor Meadows and I am currently a sophomore in the Hotel School. I am originally from Atlanta, Georgia so the biggest adjustment was definitely the weather! While my mother is a successful accountant, my father is unemployed so my wonderful

experience at Cornell would not have happened without people like you.

I always knew that I wanted to go into business, but I fell in love with hospitality when I was 10 years old. I walked into a hotel with my mother where I was greeted by the bellman by name. I felt so special and have made it my goal to make other people feel that way as well.

My concentration at Cornell is hotel operations. I would like to start at the property-level and then eventually make the switch to corporate operations. I love the problem solving and care that goes into working in operations, both with guests and employees.

When I am not in class, there is a good chance you can still find me in The Statler. I currently work front desk as part of the Hotel Leadership Development Program. I am also a Cornell University Ambassador and Hotel School Ambassador, with the hope of convincing as many people as possible to come to Cornell!

I am also Assistant Director of Guest Experience for the 89th Hotel Ezra Cornell, and am looking forward to getting more involved this year. In my spare time, I enjoy hanging out with friends and volunteering in the Ithaca community at various events. As a Cornell Tradition Fellow, I complete over 150 hours of community service per year through these various outlets.

This past summer I went back to Atlanta and interned at The Sheraton Suites. It was a lot of hard work, but I gained an incredible amount of experience.

Again, thank you so much for your support. You have opened up so many opportunities for me. Attending Cornell has been the best decision I have ever made and I can't wait to see what the future brings!

Sincerely,

Taylor Meadows



Class members (L to R) Susan Holden, Joan Melville, Bruce Wagner, Adadot Hayes & Linda Meltzer receive a group Big Red Bear hug at Reunion Kick-off Weekend last September.

Our BIG 50th Reunion – June 5-8

You've received registration materials, you know who's coming, what events are planned, and what to bring for the weekend. If you need a refresher, go to our class website (Cornell1964.org) and check it out: it's all there.

When you register, **please** do so online. That will make everything easier for everyone, including you. If there is a problem with registration, call Barbara Brim at 770.917.1309. Barb is officially in charge of registration and housing.

When you arrive at our class headquarters, you will receive a copy of the Reunion Yearbook featuring profiles of over 400 classmates plus compelling essays.

There will be plenty going on at reunion, including lectures, tasty meals, lively rock 'n' roll parties, and quiet moments of remembrance and celebration. You'll have time to catch up with classmates, shop for Cornell gear, wander around campus checking out the many new buildings and old hangouts. The gorges are still the same.

Keep checking the reunion links on our website (Cornell1964.org), where we'll offer tips on everything from details about parking, dorm rooms and facilities, food, activities, weather, and what to wear. In short, we'll tell you everything you ever wanted to know about reunion -- and answer any questions you have. Write us at: reunion@Cornell1964.org.

Affinity Groups

Thanks to all those who've connected with their friends from 50+ years ago about attending Reunion! We've had 66 classmates contacting "affinity groups" (publications, sports teams, dorms, Greek houses, and other activities). If your group hasn't been covered, **you can still get involved by sending e-postcards to people you'll want to see at Reunion.**

Let me know and I'll help you get started.

Nancy Taylor Butler, Affinity Chair

nanbutler@aol.com

JFK Award

2013 Winner – Karim Abuelnaga

The 2013 winner of the Class of 1964 John F. Kennedy Memorial Award is Karim Abuelnaga, a Hotel School graduate from Astoria, N.Y. The JFK review committee is rarely as united as it was when it selected Karim.

Karim is an extraordinary Cornellian who grew up juggling the demands of helping in a small family business with his instinctive understanding that education is the way out of poverty. As he wrote in his JFK application, “Like many children from immigrant families, I struggled to succeed in an educational system with which my parents were not familiar. While I could not articulate this problem until college, it is one I know intimately, as it plagued my childhood, hobbled the life prospects of my closest childhood friends, and indelibly impacted my community.”

Karim's response has been to create opportunities for other young people in similar circumstances by mobilizing Cornell friends to found a not for profit organization, Practice Makes Perfect - <http://practicemakesperfect.org/>. Practice Makes Perfect brings together students at several educational levels for four years of intensive summer study aimed at narrowing the achievement gap and stimulating the students' dreams and aspirations. With help from Cornell, Ernst and Young, the Clinton Global Initiative, the Andrew and Anne Tisch Foundation, the Heckscher Foundation and numerous private donors, Practice Makes Perfect has served some 300 young people in New York City at this writing, with a near-term goal of tripling the number within the year. The JFK award was directly invested in Practice Makes Perfect to grow the numbers. Karim writes, “In a PMP Program, \$10,000 changes the life prospects for 50 students by employing 15 high-achieving high school students, providing mentorship for 30 academically struggling middle school students, generating hundreds of dollars of positive value for the community through service projects, and creating enriching summer internship opportunities for five aspiring teachers.” PMP was named one of the top sixteen most dynamic projects at the [Clinton 2012 Global University Initiative Conference](#). The organization received a \$10,000 seed investment from the [Points of Light Civic Accelerator](#), as well as an \$80,000 [Echoing Green](#) fellowship and a private \$100,000 donation.



Karim sees his mission as redefining summer school. PMP grew out of a commitment Karim and several of his friends made early in their Cornell careers to make it possible for all children – regardless of race or socioeconomic status – to reach their potential to compete intellectually in our society. PMP's model is a comprehensive summer education program with a “near-peer” model supporting students from grade one through college matriculation. PMP pairs academically struggling elementary and middle school students with older, higher achieving mentor peers from the same inner-city neighborhoods, all under the supervision of trained college interns for a six-week, full-day academic experience. Working out of space donated by Teach for America, the program provides skills development for younger students along with leadership development, career training, and college prep for older students. Karim's aim is to expand PMP's reach to thousands of students nationwide.

On campus, Karim devoted himself to [Ithakids](#), [Black Students United](#) and a mentorship program aimed at increasing the graduation rate of Cornell's black male students. He traveled the country on behalf of the [LIFE Foundation](#), speaking to members of the insurance industry about his life and work. A [Cornell Presidential Research Scholar](#), Karim held internships with BlackRock and Goldman Sachs, and volunteered on political campaigns. He is a licensed New York State Realtor, a [Newman Civic Fellow](#), a [Pearson Prize National Fellow](#), and Presidential Fellow through the [Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress](#). In his spare time, he enjoys competing in triathlons, where he raises funds for his projects, and volunteering. One of his professors describes an incident in class where a student, hoping to encourage another, told him to “Try to Karim it up more.”

One of Karim's referees wrote, “The way Karim commits his efforts to representing those who are historically underserved and underrepresented speaks volumes about him and what he stands for. His efforts on campus earned him Cornell's Distinguished Leadership Award....” Another of his professors “cites him at the top of his list of people who will impact our society and challenge the current way we treat our fellow man.”

Karim thanks the Class of 1964 for believing in him and his work. Once again, Cornell has produced an outstanding public servant and JFK award winner.



June 5-8, 2014
Come to our 50th reunion
Let's make this the best one ever