

Fall 2014

**CLASS OF 1965
REUNION
COMMITTEE**

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Dear Classmates:

The reunion committee held its last meeting on campus in mid-October. It was like a mini-reunion, and those attending were pleased to be in Oberlin among friends. In this letter, I will briefly set the scene for our visit and then make a gentle ask for money. I know this might be a turnoff to some, but try to stay with me.

First the setting: typical gray, overcast Ohio weather, intermittent showers, some heavy; gathering at the Oberlin Inn, which is half demolished and that stretch along East College Street now nothing more than a huge hole in the ground (as an aside, Marcia Talley was seen overlooking the site trying to determine if there might be a body buried in the rubble that could serve as a plot line for her next mystery). Then there were meetings with President Krislov and with some students who were recipients of both our MLK Scholarships and Internships, discussions about a new reunion project (more below) and, most important of all, preliminary planning for our May gathering.

Here is my “soft” ask for money. Our committee set a reunion gift goal of \$8 million over the five-year accounting period from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2015. We have raised in cash, pledges, and deferred gifts over \$4.5 million. We are committed to meeting our goal, but we need your help.

I would like you to consider giving to Oberlin in honor of our 50th reunion. I make this request after spending a good deal of time over the past two years thinking and talking about what the college meant to me and to other members of the committee. Our time on campus was neither all good nor all bad, but in some ways it helped to determine who we are and what we did with our lives after we left. Committee members have spoken about a number of influences: for many it was a commitment to social justice; to others it was excellent preparation for further study in their chosen field; still others spoke of the exposure to new ideas, to art and music, and most important of all, to friends and acquaintances from different backgrounds and with different interests. We all believe we left Oberlin better educated, more worldly in so many ways, and better prepared to deal with an unknown future. A somewhat surprising realization was that almost all of us had difficult times at college and felt insecure in many ways, and yet we carried on and most of us made it through. In retrospect, especially as we thought back on those years in the 60's, we realized how our experiences had influenced and changed our lives.

If you are moved, as so many of the reunion committee have been, you will consider giving to Oberlin. The committee has chosen four reunion projects (in addition to the general fund) that had special meaning to us. For three we established current-use funds (which means all the money raised will be spent and not put into an endowment). The first is an MLK summer internship that pays a stipend to needy students who might otherwise not be able to take advantage of work experiences that help to build contacts in their fields of interest. Similarly we joined with others to support the renovation of

the Allen Memorial Art Museum ceiling because we recognized how that building and its collection had opened the eyes of so many to the power of art. And finally, at this last meeting we committed to a Video Project that will collect oral histories from classmates and give them as a gift to the college. We also re-affirmed our commitment to the MLK Scholarship Fund that was established at our 25th reunion. This fund, created in memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. who spoke at our commencement and appeared on campus on two other occasions, helped make Oberlin affordable to worthy students.

These projects have important distinctions from a gift-giving perspective. The current-use funds have been supported by smaller gifts (cash and pledges) that seem to come out of our yearly giving budgets and inspired us because there was some urgency to their need. The internship concept, for example, so moved committee members that they pledged much of the initial funding. The MLK Scholarship Fund and the general fund require longer-term commitments, and in thinking about how to support them we realized a different calculus is required, one that considers all of our assets and the long-term needs of family and friends. What I (and others) have decided to do is to name Oberlin in my estate as a residual beneficiary (meaning they get a percentage of whatever is left – not a fixed amount). This insures that whatever the uncertain future brings, my most pressing needs will be taken care of first.

There are many other ways to make contributions. The development office at the college has the expertise to help you work through the different options and to structure gifts that best suit the long-term needs that you might have. (See the enclosed pamphlet on gift giving.) Our contact in the development office is Jamie Jurado, and you should not hesitate to call her with any questions at 440-775-8550.

Let me say as strongly as I can that giving at any level is vitally important. Colleges hope alumni feel a connection to the institution, and giving is one way to show that. Also, alas, they need high participation rates to compete in these (ludicrous) ranking schemes – *US News & World Report* for one – so consider this when you think about Oberlin.

Finally, let me return to the additional project we designated at the meeting in mid-October. It is a video project in which members of the class will be interviewed about their reflections on their years at Oberlin in the early 60's and how this might have influenced lives in the five decades since. The Alumni Office and the archivist believe these videos would be a wonderful gift to the college. We are raising money to gather this raw material and also to hopefully prepare a short video that could draw from these reflections and help to explain how we responded to those interesting times. The decade of the 60's was very interesting. It was bifurcated: the first half, our half, was one of a good deal of turmoil, activism, engagement, and uncertainty; the second half, increasingly one of sex, drugs, and rock and roll. (Were we born too soon?)

So, I ask you, did those Oberlin years touch you in some way that would persuade you to give something back? If yes, please consider a contribution to Oberlin, either to our reunion projects or another project or need of the college.

The reunion is Memorial Day weekend, May 22-25, 2015. Please join us and think of the old friends you will most surely get to see again.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allan".

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