

## Marshal's Dinner 4/24/12

### Introduction

Good evening! I'm Charles Plohn, Jr. '66, Grand Marshal of the one-and-only Princeton University P-rade, and I welcome all of you here tonight to our annual Marshal's working dinner.

This year there will be approximately 75 to 80 alumni Marshals, including 17 "rookies," plus about 40 to 45 Princeton University staff members from various departments serving along the route during the P-rade. Over 60% of the alumni Marshals and about half of that combined Marshal/staff group are signed up to be here tonight. And just in case you were wondering about the size of the group putting on the P-rade, there is a total of almost 100 University staff members plus over 300 undergraduates who play a role in various capacities including the decorating and driving of golf carts, distributing and carrying banners and signs, greeting and assisting the Old Guard, working concession stands and distributing water to the Marshals during the event, working the critical dispersing area on Poe Field and providing public safety and clean up.

We have some special guests here this evening, including:

- my classmate Henry Von Kohorn of the Great Class of 1966 in his capacity as President of the Alumni Association of Princeton University and Chair of the Alumni Council;
- Michael Coccaro of the Great Class of 1973, a P-rade Marshal over the past couple of years who is here tonight in his capacity as Chair of the Alumni Council's Committee on Reunions;
- Henry and Mike will each be making presentations tonight, confirming there is no such thing as a free meal;

- Gregg Lange of the Great Class of 1970, who for many years has been the very entertaining Master of Ceremonies and Narrator of the P-rade from the Reviewing Stand – we will save Gregg’s voice for the P-rade;
- Jean Gorman, widow of the long-time Grand Marshal Frank T. Gorman, Jr. of the Great Class of 1941; and
- we are also joined by Lisa Yankwitz, Joseph McMahan and Sterling Chou, all members of the Great Class of 2013 and respectively the President, Drum Major and Student Conductor of the Princeton University Band, the best damned “scramble band” in the land!

While everyone will get a chance to introduce themselves a little later, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce and thank Mibs Mara h66 (among other classes) the Associate Director for Reunions in the Office of the Alumni Association, and Kimberly Collins, Administrator for Reunions. Kim unfortunately could not be here due to a family emergency. As you are all well aware, Mibs and Kim along with their colleagues in Maclean House, several of whom are also here tonight, are the ones who actually make everything happen at Reunions and in the P-rade.

As I very often like to quote, according to a great booklet entitled “Going Back: The Uniqueness of Reunions and P-rades at Princeton University” by the late William Selden ’34 and illustrated by Henry Martin ’48:

“Princeton P-rades are unforgettable events: animated, boisterous, congenial, friendly, joyous, noisy, and spirited. One alumnus described Reunions and P-rades as ‘bedlam and brotherhood,’ and

another, ‘Some things in life justify themselves emotionally, without necessity for analytic reasoning.’”

That is the exact historical spirit that I would like to maintain in this year’s event.

Last year’s P-rade from the 2:00 start with the ringing of the bells atop Nassau Hall and Stuart Duncan opening FitzRandolph Gate to the vanguard Marshals, the Princeton University Band and the banner and some of the leadership of the 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion Class, the Great Class of 1986, thru the singing of *Old Nassau* in front of the Reviewing Stand on Poe Field by the graduating Class of 2011 and the remaining alumni lasted 3 hours and 20 minutes – achieving our goal of approximately the same time as in 2010 and half an hour faster than the two previous years. At least in my view, this is about the right time currently for the only event over the 4 days of Reunions which is attended by almost all of the approximately 25,000 returning alums, their families and friends. Mike Coccaro and his Committee on Reunions team are working on longer term plans for Reunions and the P-rade as attendance is forecasted to approach 30,000 over the coming years.

## **2012 Goals**

Before turning to this year’s goals, it is important to realize that there is a huge difference between an almost 3 and ½-hour P-rade filled with classes marching crisply with continuous entertainment (such as the fantastic 65<sup>th</sup> Reunion of the Great Class of 1944 with its World War II theme three years ago) and an almost 3 and ½-hour event with large gaps among the marchers and the sense of people just out for a

leisurely Saturday afternoon stroll. One of our goals as Marshals is to prevent the latter from happening.

As this group knows, the only gap in the P-rade that is authorized is the one between the members of the Old Guard riding in golf carts and the first member of the Old Guard walking, since that gap culminates with one of the emotional highlights of the P-rade for the classes and spectators along the route.

We recognize a) the difficult logistics of coordinating an estimated 1,500 people marching with the Great 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion Class of 1987, b) the challenges of the stroller brigade classes of the 5<sup>th</sup> thru the 15<sup>th</sup>, c) the unprecedented recent large turnouts of the youngest returning classes, and d) the other expected and unexpected challenges that always seem to crop up. With this in mind, however, the 2 major goals for this year's P-rade are to provide:

- 1) a great event that is continuously enjoyable and entertaining for the marchers, the classes staged along the route, the spectators, and the dignitaries on the Reviewing Stand
  - this is primarily the responsibility of each class; and
- 2) a P-rade that lasts no longer than last year's 3 hours and 20 minutes
  - this is the joint responsibility of each class and the Marshals.

## **2012 Major Focus**

There were no major issues in the 2011 P-rade and therefore there will be no fundamental changes in this year's P-rade – just some fine tuning of a couple of major changes that were implemented in 2009 and 2010 and some adjustments that were introduced in 2011. The

route will be exactly the same as last year, the staging of the classes will be approximately the same, and as of now Malcolm Warnock of the Great Class of 1925 will once again be the oldest returning alumnus. [especially for the new Marshals here tonight 1860-2011]

In response to the increasing amount of time for the 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion class to march the route, in 2009 for the first time in the history of the P-rade the 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion class was staged on front campus, with only the class banner and some of the class leadership marching thru FitzRandolph Gate along with the vanguard P-rade Marshals and the Princeton University Band. This staging experiment was successfully repeated the last two years, with some modest changes in 2011 in the entry point on front campus of the 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion class into the P-rade in order to facilitate the flow of the marchers. The new entry point near FitzRandolph Gate also permitted the 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion class to march past every other class, including the assembled Old Guard, which in 2011 was staged for the first time in golf carts on the western side of front campus in 5 rows facing the center path. This year there will be more space between the rows of carts and between the carts in each row in order to facilitate getting the members of the Old Guard into the golf carts.

These changes to the staging of the 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion class are important since the marching formation and pace of the 25<sup>th</sup> class sets the tone for the entire P-rade.

In 2009 as we focused on the then new staging area of the 25<sup>th</sup> class, the major issue of the P-rade was the near chaos in the staging area from the 10<sup>th</sup> Reunion class down thru the Seniors on Elm Drive, as record turnouts and unbounded enthusiasm spilled out onto the P-rade route itself. This resulted at times in a passage area of about single file

entering Bloomberg Arch and delays that backed up classes marching as far away as Dillon Gym, especially later in the afternoon as the confluence of enthusiasm, possibly beer and an already long P-rade started to take effect.

In response, in 2010 for the first time in the history of the P-rade some physical barriers (specifically waist-high, plastic, lightweight sawhorse-style barricades) were placed along the route on Elm Drive from the south side of Patton Hall down to Bloomberg Arch, with sufficient gaps to facilitate the entry of the classes into the P-rade at the appropriate time. Also, additional Marshals and Alumni Association personnel were assigned to the area and for the first time several Public Safety personnel were deployed prior to the start of the event.

By all accounts, the barricades and the deployment of Public Safety personnel for the duration of the P-rade in that staging area were deemed a successful experiment. Last year the barricades were extended from Bloomberg Arch up to Dillon Gym to help address the continuing issue of groups spilling onto the route around the gym and that will be the same this year.

It is important to understand, however, that at least in my view, none of these changes is designed to dampen the wonderful enthusiasm of the younger classes. We just want that enthusiasm to be displayed alongside the P-rade route, not on it, as other classes are trying to march by.

Especially for the “rookies” here tonight, the specific duties of the Marshals during the P-rade are outlined in the handout entitled *P-rade Marshals’ Marching Order*, which was originally written by the late

Bob Rodgers of the Great Class of 1956. We will go into some detail of the duties at our mandatory meeting at 10:00 a.m. on the morning of the P-rade.

In general, however, as spelled out in the *Marching Orders*, “our primary objective as Marshals is to provide structure within the greater mission of joy and celebration for P-raders and spectators. Therefore, our approach should be cheerful, requesting and explanatory as to the safety, order, pace and enjoyment of the P-rade. However, when necessary, do not hesitate to be firm and direct.”

### **Assignments**

One of the questions that always comes up at this dinner relates to Marshal assignments. And at the moment the answer is that the assignments have not yet been finalized but will be emailed to you over the next couple of weeks, well before the P-rade.

So far, however,

- Jean Telljohann '81 and Dan Lopresti \*83 \*87 will be the Flanking Marshals
- Bruce McBarnette '80 will again be the Point Marshal
- Stuart Duncan '50 will once again be the gatekeeper at FitzRandolph Gate
- Charlie Rose '50 will again have primary responsibility on front campus
- Eric Kutner '95 will again be the Area Captain for the 10<sup>th</sup> Reunion Class down thru the Seniors on Elm Drive – no easy assignment

- Beth Rose '77 will again be the Area Captain on Poe Field, including the responsibility of holding back the graduating Class of 2012 for a nanosecond and then getting out of the way before it storms the field. We are trying to insure with Lloyds of London Beth's index finger, which she holds up to hold back the class, and her legs, which are her escape vehicle.
- [For the members of the Band who are here this evening, you might be happy to know that in an upcoming email to the entire Senior Class, we will stress that in rushing onto Poe Field they should not trample either Beth or the Band.]

In general, Marshals from the classes of the '2's and '7's celebrating major Reunions will be stationed with or near their class and Graduate School alums will be stationed with the APGA. In addition, a number of Marshals will have double assignments, initially stationed somewhere along the route and then doing double duty with the younger classes on Elm Drive, or on Poe Field between Bloomberg Arch and the end of the bleachers or in the dispersing area on Poe Field. A few of the double duty combinations will be Marshals initially assigned with or near where their own class, then marching the route with their class past the Reviewing Stand, and then doubling back to serve on the route alongside their own son or daughter near their offspring's class. We are looking for double duty volunteers before the P-rade, so please let me know your willingness as soon as possible.

Before finalizing the assignments, if anyone has a particular request as to where they would like to be assigned or not assigned, please let me know and we will try to accommodate you. Remember, however, that not everyone can be assigned to the front campus!



## **10-Year Certificates**

Per tradition, we have several presentations to make this evening. The first is the Princeton University Alumni Association certificates to individuals in recognition of their status as a P-rade Marshal for at least 10 years. This year there are 4 new members of this distinguished club:

- Dan Lopresti \*83 \*87
- Owen Garrick '90 and
- John Weaver '90, none of whom are here tonight, apparently in protest that despite its \$16 billion plus endowment the University can only afford to award a certificate rather than the daVinci hat as in days of old - we will mail them their certificates;
- undaunted by that, Richard Purkiss of the Great Class of 1964 is here with us tonight.

## **Special Trophy**

We also have a special trophy for Heather Butts '94 in recognition of her pushing a broken down golf cart past the Reviewing Stand in each of the past two P-rades. Heather, we could not find a miniature golf cart but we did locate a miniature tow truck! I hope that you do not need to use it this year!

## **Society of the Claw**

I would now like to turn the floor over to Mike Coccoaro for some very special presentations.

[Mike Coccoaro]

- Herb Hobler '44
- Warren Eginton '45 (both members of the very exclusive club of a P-rade Marshal as well as a member of the Old Guard)
- Charlie Rose '50
- Stuart Duncan '50

Thank you Mike, and congratulations to the newest members of the Society of the Claw.

### **Thomas Foster Huntington '42 P-rade Marshal Award**

Two years ago we established the Thomas Foster Huntington '42 Princeton University P-rade Marshal Award, which is presented annually at this dinner "To a current or former P-rade Marshal or staff member of the Alumni Association for outstanding long-term service to the one-and-only Princeton University P-rade." The first recipient in 2010 was Herb Hobler '44. Last year the co-winners were Charlie Rose '50 and the legendary Frank T. Gorman, Jr. '41, who was the Grand Marshal for an unbelievable 17 years prior to his passing away in 1979. Frank's widow Jean accepted the award on his behalf.

Tom Huntington, as many of you know, was an outstanding P-rade Marshal for more than 60 years. Tom passed away in December 2008, and his widow, Jean O'Neil Huntington, triggered the idea for this award when she called me and asked if the Marshals had an interest in Tom's daVinci hat. That was an easy question! Jean has attended this dinner the past two years but is out of town tonight.

The recipients of the award have their name inscribed on this perpetual plaque that resides at Maclean House and receive an individual plaque.

I am very pleased to announce that the 2012 winner of the Thomas Foster Huntington' 42 P-rade Marshal Award is Stuart Duncan of the Great Class of 1950. Stu is accompanied this evening by his wife Petie. Congratulations Stu!

As Mike Coccaro in part noted in his presentation, Stu:

- has been a P-rade Marshal since 1952, when he was recruited by Frank Gorman, a mere 60 years ago;
- has served in various capacities in the P-rade, including as a Flanking Marshal, the Grand Marshal from 1980 thru 1982, succeeding Frank Gorman, and for well more than the past decade as the Gatekeeper assigned to FitzRandolph Gate, where each year at precisely 2:00 p.m. he opens FitzRandolph Gate to the vanguard Marshals, the Princeton University Band and the 25<sup>th</sup> Reunuin class
- at this point I would like to be able to share with you the nearly sacred words that are exchanged each year between the Grand Marshal requesting permission for the gates to be opened and to enter onto front campus and Stuart Duncan granting that permission. However, if truth be told, each year we make up new words!

Stu, congratulations! I am sure you might have some very interesting war stories about the history of the P-rade that you would like to share with this group.

### **Announcement of the Next Grand Marshal**

Each year for the past 30 years the Grand Marshal of the one-and-only Princeton University P-rade has carried this ceremonial mace, which is

capped by a brass tiger's head mounted on original African hardwood, and whimsically shaped like a tiger's tail. The mace was created as a memorial, by sculptor Gar Waterman, in honor of the legendary Frank Gorman, who as stated earlier was the Grand Marshals for an unbelievable 17 years prior to his passing away in 1979.

His role in the history of the P-rade was best described by the late Hugh Wynne '39 at the dedication of **The Frank T. Gorman, Jr. '41 Reunion Mace** in 1982, when the mace was presented to the University Alumni Council. Hugh succinctly stated: "For seventeen years Frank brought order out of chaos, calm out of confusion, and with all a spirit of fun to the world's one and only P-rade." The mace is inscribed with the names of the Grand Marshals.

It has been my honor and privilege to carry this mace and June 2<sup>nd</sup> will represent my fifth and final year as Grand Marshal of the P-rade. I would now like to invite Henry Von Kohnorn '66 to announce the name of the next Grand Marshal, who will take over on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Henry did you bring the envelope?

[HVK]

Jean, congratulations! I am thrilled that you will be the next Grand Marshal.

### **Introductions, Suggestions, Questions**

Now I would like us to go around the room:

- if everyone could please stand and briefly introduce yourself;
- indicate how long you have been a Marshal;
- any comments or suggestions to improve the P-rade;

- any questions

Also as we go around the room, everyone please note the several father-son and father-daughter Marshal combinations as well as this year for the first time in the history of the P-rade a mother-daughter combination, which is part of a mother-father-daughter group. They will have a mini Marshal reunion every time they sit down to a meal!

### **Old Nassau**

I want to thank everyone for coming this evening and look forward to serving with each of you as a Marshal in an outstanding 2012 P-rade.

Would Adrienne Rubin now please lead us in a rousing rendition of *Old Nassau*.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at our morning meeting and then in the P-rade on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

