

Classmates,

Seasons greetings. Heartfelt thanks to all who participated in the gift selection process – and all that contributed time and treasures to the Class in 2019. This letter formally announces that '72 has committed a \$3M donation to the Academy at our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion in May 2022.

On our last note we identified a committee to survey the Class to get feedback on the collective wishes for our gift to be presented at the 50<sup>th</sup>. Chuck Coleman led the effort and was supported by Roggow, Albright, Crawford, Curran, Adamczyk, Brockman, Dessert, Hickey, Lamb, McDannell, McDaniel, Muchow, Pavlick, Saunders, Schrader, Speer, Thomas, and Grant Smith. Chuck's team surveyed the Class and the majority desired a gift based on the following criteria: highly visible; supporting one of the Supe's "Top Ten" priorities – the Cyber & Engineering Academic Center (CEAC) which is # 2 (Michie Stadium is #1); brick and mortar with name recognition; touch most Cadets; and support the Army (current and future). In return we have naming rights to the North Redoubt of the CEAC (like the Class of '72 named the North & South boxing rings) and will also establish named endowments, one in Cyber Research Center and the other in the Army Cyber Institute.

I think it's helpful to see how our donation impacts the Academy. Grant Smith, F-1, Chief of Staff at USMA 1998 to 2002 explains: The basic arrangement between West Point and the Army is that the Army needs to maintain West Point as a competitive institution. The Army builds the barracks and academic and athletic facilities needed to train and educate Cadets so that West Point remains an accredited institution that can attract and retain a solid cadet corps, i.e., the basics. West Point AOG raises money to make the institution more than competitive - making it truly excellent. AOG has always called this maintaining the "Margin of Excellence." Great facilities appeal to great candidates. But this is always a tough line to draw. If AOG starts funding basic things, the Army will find other uses for its money. Here are some examples of the right balance. The Army built and renovated Arvin gym. AOG raised funds to make it excellent. The Rock Climbing Wall was a class gift. Outfitting the work out room with state-of-the-art equipment was a class gift. The Army built a new library. AOG and gift funds made it possible to outfit a Haig room. This included getting premier building materials - an example for you engineers is installing terrazzo floors instead of linoleum. In other words, our gift adds upgrades of excellence to a building that is otherwise, simple and functional. The Army builds a physics lab. AOG raises funds to outfit that lab with a world class, state of the art laser so Cadets are not just learning what a laser is but can actually conduct research. We believe that the bulk of funds we give for the CEAC beyond those needed for the physical naming construction would go to enhancing the building with add-ons that cannot be funded or justified in the Army's approved military construction project.

So with this information, we are now kicking off the 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Fund Raising Campaign. The mission is to raise \$2M – we already have a little more than \$1M in our account because some of you have continued to diligently contribute to the Class Fund. We have four tax seasons to use. We must present the money to AOG not later than 1 May 2022.

We have about 744 living graduates. Here's some insight into historically how we have given to the Class Fund since graduation. In the 47 years since graduation:

- 70 have never given
- 73 have given less than \$100 (ave. = \$47.93)
- 144 have given less than \$1000 (avg. = \$446.50)
- 181 have given less than \$5000 (avg. = \$2,540.60)

- 92 < or equal to \$10,000 (avg. = \$7,366.78)
- 98 < or equal to \$25,000 (avg. = \$16,171.58)
- 73 < or equal to \$100,000 (avg. = \$50,486.08)
- 13 > than \$100,000 (avg. = \$211,248.00)

We want to recognize your generosity as much as possible. Our intent is to maintain two rosters of donors. The first roster will be what an individual has contributed to the Class since the 40<sup>th</sup>. There are five levels of recognition. We will begin to report these levels next summer. The other roster will represent where a Classmate Stands with respect to lifetime giving to AOG. These are AOG recognition levels and are annually reported and distributed.

<u>Class since 40th</u>		<u>Lifetime to AOG</u>	
Black	\$5,000	Pershing	\$25,000
Gray	\$10,000	Arnold	\$100,000
Gold	\$25,000	Davis	\$250,000
Platinum	\$50,000	Bradley	\$500,000
Diamond	\$100,000	Grant	\$1,000,000

We'll inform our major donors of any benchmark numbers within reach. By example, someone giving to the Class for the 50<sup>th</sup> at the diamond level might want to give a little bit more to get their lifetime giving to AOG to the Davis level. Again, the AOG levels are lifetime giving published and recognized annually. We won't publish your name without your permission.

A few quick points to remember. Donations are tax deductible. If you are 70 ½ years old and have a qualified retirement account (typically a traditional IRA), you've reached the time when you will be issued a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) – often about 4% of the fund. This is taxable income. So, if you intend to donate – donate from this source. The key is the donation must go directly from your fund custodian or financial manager to AOG. If it goes through you – you'll get taxed on it. If it goes directly from your IRA to AOG, you get the full tax benefit without having to pay any taxes on an otherwise taxable distribution. For most folks that means you can give a \$5000 donation essentially for only \$3700. Plus, remember the note Curran sent out earlier. Make sure the fund tells AOG where the money is to go (the Class of 72 Fund). Tell me or Curran when this is happening so he can look out for the deposit. Lastly, it is to our advantage, and especially Bob Curran's that you establish a pledge through him. That way we can see how we are doing. Bob's job is my co-conspirator in tracking our status. As always, I recommend you consult your tax advisor as the above may change.

Including 2019, there are four tax years before our gift. It's not too late to give and traditionally the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter is the largest fundraising quarter of the calendar year. The fundraising committee will continue to stress that we appreciate whatever you can do. No gift is too large, no gift is too small, and all gifts are greatly, greatly, appreciated. Please consider getting started this year – today !! "Class of 72 Fund".

<https://www.westpointaog.org/giveonline>

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and have an exceptional Holiday Season to include a very Merry Christmas. Happy New Year to all. May your joys be much much greater than your burdens and please pray for our Troops and their loved ones.

John

P&T '72