September 9, 2022

Dear Friends and Classmates of the Yale Divinity School Class of 1971,

Last January we shared with you a first notice of the year that was about to unfold as our Class of ’71 launched a series of activities to celebrate its 50th reunion (a year late in these Covid-challenged times). In April over 20 class members held an inaugural get-together via Zoom, at which we began the exchange of updates on our doings over the past half-century. In the months since, a committee charged with putting together a reunion memory book has sought from you further personal reflections and reminiscences.

Now, as fall approaches, we are pleased to share with all of you the accompanying volume of responses to that appeal: *Memories from the Class of 1971*, containing wonderful contributions from over 40 of you, along with brief personal histories and photographs of 29 of our classmates who have ended their earthly journeys. We hope you find in this book something to treasure, a recollection of people, places and events that have helped to shape your lives in ways that you still value.

We also hope it will spark the interest of many of you in attending the capstone event of this “50th-+1” reunion year: *an in-person gathering in New Haven from Wednesday, October 12th through Saturday morning, October 15th*, which will include the following events:

On **Thursday morning, October 13th, between 10:30 – 11:15 am**, our classmate *Will Willimon*, last year’s YDS Beecher Lecturer, a distinguished Duke Divinity School professor, former Methodist bishop, and prolific and celebrated author, will preside over a session entitled “**The Future of Preaching and Worship.**” Will promises a wide-ranging conversation on the future of church, its communication of the Gospel through preaching and worship, and the role of schools like YDS in the years ahead.
On Thursday afternoon, between 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm in Marquand Chapel, the Class of 1971 Memorial Service will offer thanks and praise to God for classmates and for former YDS professors no longer with us.

On Thursday evening, from 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm, we will gather in the lovely Georgian New Haven Lawn Club (down Prospect Hill from YDS) for the Class of 1971 50th Reunion Dinner. This will be an informal occasion for food and warm conviviality – a chance to reconnect with classmates (and maybe to enjoy a song or two). At this dinner there will be a side table for display of any publications or art works (photographs, paintings, or drawings) you might like to bring along and share with your classmates.

On Friday afternoon, October 14th, from 1:30 pm- 2:15 pm, we will gather again for a special Class of ’71 event: “Memorable Moments in My YDS Experience: Classroom, Common Room & Community. “Classmates John Rollefson and David Wheeler will share some of their colorful memories and urge the rest of us to dredge up our own stories of classes, common room conversations, and life in community, or to lift up professors and others who made YDS memorable.

These reunion-specific activities will take place during the annual YDS Convocation, which this year will coincide with some other special celebrations, most notably the 200th anniversary (1822-2022) of YDS’s founding as a School within Yale University. Along with events marking these milestones, Convocation will feature both traditional highlights such as the Beecher, Ensign, and Kavanaugh Lectures, as well as a special reflection on YDS at 200 by Dean Gregory E. Sterling and a Saturday morning address by leading civil rights and social justice activist, the Reverend Dr. William Barber, II. Finally, since this year’s reunion will be held while regular YDS classes are in session, there will be opportunities for those interested to interact with the current generation of divinity students.

We warmly encourage all of you whose circumstances permit to consider joining us for this very special celebration, and if you are interested, to make your plans as soon as possible. You may peruse the full schedule and register now by going to:

https://divinity.yale.edu/convocation

YDS has reserved special blocks of hotel rooms for your accommodation; for information see https://tinyurl.com/YDS1971Hotels. (You should note that this year the reunion fee includes all activities, including the all-alumni meals at YDS. Our private class dinner is an additional activity.) The YDS Convocation website also includes pages for practical information, FAQs, and activities to do on your own.
As reunions are occasions to reflect on our debts to the past, they are also, of course, opportunities to ponder what we might owe to the future and to act accordingly. Under the diligent leadership of our Class Agent, Wes Poling, the Class of ’71 has already responded generously to YDS’s appeal for support of its mission for the next 200 years. The good news: our gifts to date have exceeded $84,000 -- well above the minimum amount needed to establish, in perpetuity, a named **Class of 1971 Scholarship** that will afford future YDS students the academic opportunities we enjoyed.

We also welcome gifts to the **Yale Divinity Annual Fund**, which likewise supports YDS students in their education at YDS, reducing the burden of financial debt.

If you have not yet contributed and would like to participate, you may do so by going to: [https://tinyurl.com/YDS1971Gift](https://tinyurl.com/YDS1971Gift) Every additional dollar will benefit aspiring seminarians for whom a year or two or three spent at YDS may become a blessing beyond measure.

In closing, our committee thanks **Debby Jagielow**, YDS’s Director of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving, and **Rod Lowe**, its Senior Associate Director of Major Gifts, for their skilled and tireless professional assistance in planning for this reunion. Whether or not you are able to come to New Haven next month, we hope that you will, at some point, find a way to express your own thanks to these two special members of the YDS community for their exceptional work on behalf of the institution we hold dear.

Hoping to see you in New Haven in October, and wishing you peace and joy,

*The YDS Class of 1971 Reunion Committee*

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<th>Committee Co-Chairs</th>
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