

From: Constantine Cacos [<mailto:cacos@verizon.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 04, 2013 05:20 PM Eastern Standard Time
Subject: Re: We Had a Wonderful 50th Reunion

Dear Guy,

Although I had a brief interchange with you during our reunion to acknowledge and thank you for the work you did in putting together our reunion, I feel the need to convey to you in some more tangible way just how beautiful and memorable the four days were for me, and how deeply grateful I am to you, and to those who assisted you- you did a truly herculean job in helping to create a fantastic event.

Below is a copy of an email to my brother (Yale '69) I put together upon my return Sunday evening. It was out of a combination of wishing to convey to him how much I enjoyed the reunion while still continuing to hang out in the space of it, that I went into a somewhat lengthy account of the weekend. I hope that by forwarding it to you, it will begin to convey to you in a more detailed and concrete way how powerfully your efforts affected me.

With sincere gratitude for what you did,

Constantine

Date: June 3, 2013 1:37:43 AM EDT

Hi Jim,

Having returned but a few hours ago from a three and a half day stint in New Haven for my 50th Yale reunion, I want to share a bit of my experience and impressions of the event that is a mere six years away for you. This may wind up sounding like a pitch from a future member of your reunion committee encouraging you to go to your 50th, but I feel more eager talking about 50th year reunions, Yale man to Yale man than brother to brother, because it will allow me to hang out in the extremely positive space of my reunion that much longer.

I was somewhat anxious for the couple of weeks lead-up to this weekend with admittedly trivial worries: what clothes to bring, what time to arrive and therefore leave Natick, the logistics upon arrival, who would I know besides the Silliman Room 1830 gang that I could talk to, how would I come across in the class documentary film, was Susan going to be adequately entertained by the affair,

Engaging in the age old wisdom of handling one worry at a time instead of being at the affect of the whole bagful, I first started by laying out my wardrobe (mostly khaki-casual); making a list of new pants needed and buying them at Macys; finally deciding to do the whole event- from Thursday 1 PM through Sunday 12 noon and paying the full freight instead of doing part of it; leaving home at 11 AM and arriving comfortably at the Sage-Pierson Garage at 1PM; being transported by a small shuttle bus to Davenport College- our class reunion headquarters; signing in and getting our room assignment- a five room suite on the 4th floor with only 2 of the rooms being filled. So far so good;

I started to relax and began letting things in.....

The first relatively superficial impression- which we continued to notice throughout the event- was that the support staff was extremely congenial and welcoming; from young Yalies (male & female) at the gate entrance and sign-in desks, to food and beverage servers, to custodial staff. They all beautifully contributed to an overall sense of a carefully planned event that had a softness and kindness to it; that exuded caring and warmth.

The first event was the showing of the class documentary film: Yale '63 at Fifty- In Our Own Words- Half a Century in the Making. Whereas I assumed it was simply going to be a string of 90 to 100 individual interviews of about one minute each, it was instead a masterfully edited series of short interwoven comments by class members on various life issues that we as men have lived and dealt with over the past 50 years. As a testimonial of how good it was: Susan said it so deeply touched her, that it set the stage for her to have a wholly different experience of the weekend than she was expecting. Similar emotional inducing events that followed throughout the weekend: a memorial service honoring the 40 members of the class that died since the 45th reunion with individual brief obit-like readings that had me awed by their accomplishments; a musical performance put on by all the every-fifth-year Wiffenpoof groups in attendance, culminating with all of them joining together to sing their signature song that so filled the space of Woolsley Hall that I could not hold back my tears; an event to honor those teachers that we as a class voted as the ones who had most impacted us, the best speech being the one honoring Vincent Scully- again with the tears.

Meeting up with Bruce (& Judy) and Phil (& Rebecca) happened at pre-dinner on Thursday, with Carl (minus Georgie) joining us for the Saturday evening class dinner served in the Commons. Our Silliman Room 1830 reunion within the reunion had the obvious easy, comfortable closeness and caring that we continue to have for each other, even after all these years. Ancillary Yale friend connections also happened throughout the weekend- Craig Cooper, Steve Bradley, Tom Russling, etc., with Tony Mendoza thrown in for good measure. The very pleasant surprise for Susan and me were the abundant spontaneous interactions that we had with those whose face or name I may have vaguely remembered, but had had no prior real connection back then- there was a sincere exchange of warmth and interest in conversations over a refreshment, or meal, or simply briefly hanging out. The sense of all of us being members of this incredible collection- the Yale family- had an almost magical effect of melting away the usual discomfit one usually feels among people we don't actually know.

Susan and I took in several lectures and discussions Thursday, Friday and Saturday, partly to fill in some spare time, but mostly because there were an array of quite interesting topics covered. Although it was a treat once again sitting in a Yale classroom, without having to worry about having to write a paper or take an exam on the subject, the most surprising and amazing thing for me was the following: back then the bright and insightful material was being presented by professors older than us, so there was an of-courseness about it all; this time the professors standing up there delivering this super smart-sounding stuff were these young 30-40 olds, half of them being attractive babes. As a result, I was all the more wowed by this unexpected inverse juxtaposition of the lecturer-lecturee relationship.

So, the accommodations, the food, the people interactions, the events were all beautifully played out

and experienced, but the most powerful (and I guess not surprising) experience for me was the following: walking about the campus- either to get to events, strolling about to walk off some of the big meals that we ate, or showing Susan some of the buildings that were important to me back then- I came to remember once again how much power the physical embodiment of Yale, the campus and its buildings, had for me in more easily exemplifying Yale, the institution. I would often walk the campus at night back then, looking up the various Gothic towers and proudly say: "wow, I'm at Yale", throwing my shoulders back a bit, taking in a big breath, and beginning the long process of shedding the "little Greek boy from Somerville" self image that was so much a part of me back then. This time, the campus and the buildings once again had me get very powerfully (and tearfully) in touch with how immensely grateful I am to Yale, the institution, for taking me in back then, and contributing so much to the quality of my life.

Needless to say, I was impacted by my 50th, and grateful for how it reconnected me to my love and appreciation of our dear Yale.

Constantine