Who Are we Now?
Smith ‘69 50\textsuperscript{th} Reunion
Some commonalities

- We mostly are or have been married (94%)
- We’re on Facebook (70%)
- . . . But we still exercise and read (our top two non-work weekly activities)!
- We pursued education after Smith (virtually all of us)
- Most say that the religious or spiritual dimension of life is important – though we typically don’t attend religious services regularly
- We are generally affluent, with 76% reporting family income of $100,000 or more
The women’s movement

- In 1994 (25th reunion survey), almost 60% had “gotten involved with gender issues or acted as an advocate for women;” 76% believed Anita Hill.
- In 2019, we think these changes produced by the women’s movement have had the most impact:
  - Broader educational and career choices (72%)
  - Increased economic opportunity & earning power (60%)
  - But NOT “greater voice” (22%)
- And nearly two-thirds of us (63%) have experienced sexual harassment/misconduct/assault
Public policy

• Almost all agree that these are “very serious problems” in the United States:
  • Global climate change (89%)
  • Economic inequality (80%)
  • Racism (72%)

We hold varied opinions on immigration policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal immigration to U.S. should be</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kept at present level</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Politics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In politics, do you consider yourself a (an)</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And not surprisingly, in 2016 we voted overwhelmingly for Hillary Clinton (86%) rather than Donald Trump (6%) or other candidates (3%)
Political ideology

We lean strongly Democratic, with some variation in the ways we describe our political views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most closely describes your political views</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative/very conservative</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately conservative</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle of the road</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod. liberal/progressive</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal or progressive</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very liberal/progressive</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Political participation

- 88% of us have voted in all presidential elections
- 12 classmates hold elective or appointive office
- 68% have taken 2 or more of 5 actions

![Political actions chart]

- Held office
- Campaign volunteer
- Contributed $"'
- Contacted
- Protested
How are we living our lives now?
Work and retirement

- 86% of us worked for at least 20 years post-college (and 62% worked for 35 years or more)
- A third of us are still working full- or part-time.
- Of those now retired (65%), the average retirement age was 62.
- But of those still working, the expected average retirement age is 79!
Our working lives

And also . . .

- Farming & winemaking
- City planning
- Leading hikes
- Lobbyist
- Native American advocate
- Diplomat in U.S. Foreign Service
- Operating a ski resort
Here’s how we spend our time

• **In a typical week, our four most frequent activities are:**
  • Exercising (62%)
  • Reading (62%)
  • Spending time with family (54%)
  • Doing volunteer or community work (46%)

• **We do a wide range of volunteer work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The top categories of volunteer work:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture/arts</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Social justice/advocacy</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to profession</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Social services</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We seem fairly satisfied with our lives now...

Most satisfied with:
• Relationships with our children and grandchildren
• Standard of living

Least satisfied with:
• Health & physical condition
• Physical appearance
• Sex life
But we might have changed some things in the past . . .

• We asked: Would you do things the same way or would you do things differently?
• A majority of us are happy with our choices—56% to 76% for the 7 choices

• But there are certainly significant numbers who think they should have:
  • made different educational choices after Smith (24% probably, 16% not sure)
  • chosen a different career (17% probably, 18% not sure)
We’re facing a range of challenges

• More than 50 of us (16.3%) are currently taking responsibility for the well-being of parents, in-laws, or other aging relatives or friends (and many others have done so in the past).

• Over a third provide significant ongoing financial support to children, and all of us with grandchildren do the same.

• Apart from setting aside resources for the future (bequests/trusts/savings accounts) for grandkids, 54% of us provide significant childcare for them now.
We’ve already experienced loss and difficult illness

• Forty-five of us (13%) have experienced the death of a spouse of partner

• Twenty-three (7%) have experienced the death of a child or grandchild

• And a quarter of us have had a prolonged or life-threatening illness
Looking toward the future...
We are figuring out where to live the rest of our lives . . .

- We’ve mostly lived in the same place for a long time!
  - 49%: same house for more than 20 years
  - 57%: same city for more than 20 years
  - Only 10% changed cities in last 5 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expect to move/downsize as you age?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Already have</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We feel good about our health now

Physical health
- Excellent: 40%
- Good: 50%
- Fair/Poor: 10%

Cognitive health
- Excellent: 50%
- Good: 40%
- Fair/Poor: 10%

Mental health
- Excellent: 50%
- Good: 40%
- Fair/Poor: 10%
But more generally, aging does worry us . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Very concerned</th>
<th>Somewhat concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being lonely &amp; isolated</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No help if you need assistance</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having sufficient finances</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a burden to others</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing physical capacity</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing cognitive capacity</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>48%</td>
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</table>
Our relationship to Smith
Choosing Smith, then and now

• 60% of us think we made a very good decision, and another 30% think selecting Smith was a somewhat good decision

• But if we could make that decision over, 22% now say they would make a different choice

• And 30 of our classmates reported experiencing sexual harassment, misconduct, or assault while at Smith.

• Even so, among our current closest friends—the people we really care about outside our families—62% count someone we met here.
How did Smith shape us?

• “If your time at Smith was significant in shaping your sexual identity, was it positive or negative?”

• Thoughts about sexual identity and homophobia
  • “Combination of personal respect and respect for sexuality.”
  • “Offered my first opportunities to identify/ respect gay women.”
  • “I was kept in the dark about my (and others’) lesbianism.”
  • “Smith was very homophobic when I was there....” [more]
More on how Smith shaped us

- Thoughts about women’s lives & capabilities
  - “Being around brilliant women raised my level of confidence and inspired me to pursue difficult goals.”
  - “I loved the fact that all leadership roles & activities were done by women.”
  - “Girls could be both smart & sexual.”
  - “It did not help me have positive, equal relationships with men.”
  - “I was taught I was a human being. When I graduated, I was appalled that some workplaces (with men) treated me as a lower class of human being.”
“It just made me realize how powerful women were and how much better the world would be if women played a bigger role.”
Sharing concerns & challenges

- “I sometimes felt very out of it, with a lot of subtle put downs and even discrimination. I had no Peck & Peck cables, and I didn't play bridge or read the NYT or fit in the private school cliques.”
- “I received an excellent education at Smith that prepared me for graduate work, but I always felt that my Midwestern roots & more conservative views did not jibe with eastern liberal dogma.”
- “It was not a good fit. I had one great mentor & one great roommate who remains a friend. Otherwise I would have been happier at a different college. Students consistently confused me with other Asians: we all looked alike to the mostly white student body.”
Celebrating the positives

• “The best parts of my Smith education did not always come from the classroom; I think the interaction between students of all the classes, backgrounds, & philosophies as well as the opportunity to interact informally with professors broadened my understanding of what a real education means.”

• “As a black woman, my experiences at Smith richly prepared me for my life after graduation.”

• “A huge value of Smith was excellent woman role models.”

• “Smith taught me how to be a life-long learner. This has enriched my life enormously.”
Thoughts about life & the future

• “Life is what it is. Getting older sucks.”
• “I wish I could have more sex.”
• “Increasingly sad/preoccupied with fears about dying”
• “Joys=books, food, travel, clothes, grandchildren, dogs, theater. Concerns = arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis . . . friends moving away.”
More thoughts about life & the future

• “Life has gone far too fast. I find myself staggered to realize that I am 72 . . . Where did it all go? Does that mean I wasn’t paying attention?”

• “In the lead-up to our reunion, I have thought about the many turning points in my life. Knowing that a different decision could have changed my subsequent life leaves me feeling very melancholy—neither happy or sad—but wishing I could speak to my younger self.”