



Smith College Class of 1961



A MESSAGE FROM THE CLASS PRESIDENT

Hope very much you all are doing well in these very difficult times!

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a revised Smith calendar. Smith's 2021 graduation has been moved to May 30, and our reunion date will probably be sometime in June. All is uncertain, including whether reunion will be virtual or in-person. We will let you know as soon as we know! I feel sorry for the folks at Smith in this difficult time, trying to determine what's best when no one knows where the virus is heading or when a well-tested vaccine will be available.

A virtual reunion does have one advantage—people participate who are unable do so otherwise. In 2020, the class of 1940 (age 100!) had 23 participants and the class of 1945 (age 95) had 73, according to President McCartney. Of course, we would strongly prefer an in-person reunion, as long as it is very safe!

Smith College continues to thrive. Courses are all online. Financial and equipment support for those in need has been provided. New data systems have been developed. Amazingly, 400 courses were launched online by March 31st this year. There are now over 1,000. Here's a link to Smith's impressive response to the virus: [COVID-19 Response Plan](#).

Applications to Smith for the Class of 2024 numbered 5,249. The acceptance rate was 31 out of 100 which is very good. Smith remains in the top 10 colleges for Fulbright Scholarships.

The William Allan Neilson Library construction was halted for a few weeks earlier in the year, but now is in full swing with safety measures in place. Books should arrive in the reimagined Library by the end of this year, and the grand opening will be in the Spring. So very exciting!

Did you see on the PBS NewsHour that Smith students and faculty from the Engineering Department developed a prototype for a mechanical ventilator, winning a competition with more than 200 entries? Here's the link: [Team Effort: Smithies Win Design Challenge](#). An example of Smith excellence.

Although we do not know yet what our 60th reunion will look like, the class officers want to create a directory for you of our current contact information. We know that many of you have moved, acquired a new phone number, and/or made other changes in recent years. This new directory likely would be sent to you electronically, so you could print it out if you wish. (The college's [online directory](#), which requires a password, is always available as well.)

To make both directories as useful as possible, please be sure the college has your current USPS and email addresses, phone numbers, etc. Smith's database will be the source of what we include in our new edition. It's simple to update: Go to www.smith.edu, click on Alumnae at the very top of that page, and then click on Update Contact Info. Alternatively, if you prefer email, send your updated information to: smithirecords@smith.edu. For those of you receiving only snail mail from Smith, you can opt on the website or by this email to receive only certain types of communications by email. These are the choices: Notes From Paradise; Travel Program information; Career-oriented messages; Requests for donations; Class of 1961 communications; Club communications; Pledge reminders; Tax receipts; No email contact at all. We would love it if you chose to receive class communications by email!

Please stay well and safe!

Betsy Carter

REUNION UPDATE

Your reunion chairs are soldiering on as though there were no doubt that we will all be together in Northampton for a festive celebration of our 60th reunion next June. And how we would all look forward to that! A tour of the new Neilson Library designed by Maya Lin was on our reunion program, also the Botanical Garden (glorious in late spring!), and a special class tour of collections of the Smith College Museum of Art. As we worked with the college, other programs—lectures and an exciting symposium—were coming together to bring us all up to the minute with the college, and the quality of the Smith experience 60 years later.

In spirit, these plans are still in place. We do know that the Zoom alternative premiered for the 60th reunion for the class of '60 was amazingly effective in bringing about 125 people together from all over the country, and that the structure of the programming connected classmates with each other and with exciting new developments at the college. Rest assured that your reunion chairs are staying closely in touch with the reunion administrators in Northampton and will keep you in touch as plans settle into place. Meanwhile, we are working on the roster of house reps who will be tasked with contacting classmates to encourage participation in our reunion. An innovation this year will be mini Zoom reunions house by house, replacing the area based live reunions of the past. These will begin in early winter. If you would like to volunteer to represent your house, please contact Mary Wheeler, Reunion Co-Chair. In other reunion

news, Sally Schroeder has stepped up to the plate to organize the panel discussion for our Saturday night class dinner, and Deborah Heller has created a fascinating questionnaire which will be sent to all classmates this winter. Please get this back to her promptly so that she can collate the responses into our reunion programming.

Lastly, your Reunion Co-Chairs, Anne Gagnebin Coffin and Mary Tison Wheeler, ask that you send us your nominees for great Smith women graduates of the past. Come to Reunion to find out why!



Getting to the Heart of COVID-19

Since the beginning of the pandemic, virologist **Angela Rasmussen '00** has been one of the media's go-to experts on the subject of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. New York Times columnist Carl Zimmer named Rasmussen one of the scientists to follow on Twitter. Find out why she is so intrigued with viruses in general, and what makes this one particularly unique, including the social-cultural ramifications.

[Read more here.](#)

SUBMIT YOUR CLASS NOTES

We love reading your news! Send your class notes for the SAQ to our class secretary [Louise Merrill Dudley](#). You can also use the new [online submission form](#). Online submissions go directly to class secretaries.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE & APPEAL

How fortunate each of us is to be alive! We are managing our lives through a global pandemic, further complicated by unsettled weather conditions causing devastating forest fires and a multitude of destructive hurricanes, protests in the streets in response to police actions, uncharted waters surrounding our national politics, economic turmoil, a bizarre national election during a pandemic, etc., etc., etc.

Let's make the most of our elder years, be part of the action and make a difference for as long as we can. One way to make a difference is to make a gift to Smith College. When you do, keep in mind our 60th will be our biggest reunion for the rest of our lives. So your gift this year should be your biggest gift ever.

Thanks, in advance, for picking up the baton and running with it. Smith '61 gave generously in 2016, our 55th reunion year, but not so much in the four years since, especially 2020. Let's make up for it this year. Here's a link to giving: [Give to Smith](#).

Alice Schaffer Smith, Marion Scattergood Ballard and Sally Ross Schroeder

[Give to Smith](#)

PLANNED GIVING UPDATE

If you make or document a Planned Gift to Smith, The Grècourt Match is a fund that will increase your gift by adding 10% to it. Every \$10 of your planned gift will be matched by \$1 from this pool, up to a limit of \$10,000 per match. The Match will continue until the whole \$1 million has been released to the college for financial aid.

The college is hearing from Smith alumnae and friends who are taking this time of forced isolation to pause and reflect. After reflecting on their values, their personal and financial situations, their legacies, some have taken this moment to add a gift to Smith to their estate plans. How timely that your planned gift will be matched by a current contribution to Smith's scholarship endowment. A generous member of the class of 1964 has committed \$1 million for financial aid. This gift will serve as a pool of matching funds.

What a great incentive to join Smith's legacy society! We will get through this time. Smith will persevere. With the help of your planned gift and The Grècourt Match, Smith students will thrive now and in the future. And by the way, the amount of your planned gift will be added to our 60th Reunion Class Gift total!

Contact Smith College's Office of Gift Planning at (800) 241-2056, option 5 or [email](#).

Nancy Silverman Skurnik

Here are a few ways to keep in touch and stay informed:

- [Alumnae Directory](#) (password protected) - find alumnae and update your profile.
- [Update your address](#)
- Follow Smith on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)
- Access every issue of the [Smith Alumnae Quarterly](#), going back to 1909, on the SAQ digital archive
- View past issues of [Notes from Paradise](#)
- [Calendar of Smith events](#)
- [Be A Friend](#) (of the Libraries, Botanic Garden, Athletics, or Museum of Art)
- [Volunteer for Admissions](#)
- Join a [Smith Club](#) in your area

CLASS VOLUNTEERS

President: [Betsy Carter](#)

VP/Reunion Chair: [Anne Gagnebin Coffin](#)

VP/Reunion Chair: [Mary Tison Wheeler](#)

Secretary: [Louise Merrill Dudley](#)

Treasurer: [Mary Kiley Newman](#)

Fund Team Coordinator: [Marion Scattergood Ballard](#)

Fund Team Coordinator: [Sally Ross Schroeder](#)

Fund Team Coordinator: [Alice Schaffer Smith](#)

Memorial Chair: [Gill Wright Bentley](#)

Memorial Chair: [Helen Hutchins Reed](#)

Planned Giving Chair: [Nancy Silverman Skurnik](#)

Web Chair: [Irene Stiefel Starr](#) Web Site: www.smith61.org

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