

June 8, 2023



Reunion 2023 — The Big 4-0

Hello Class of '83

I greet you as the newly-elected President for the Class of 1983! This message provides an update on the Alumnae Association Meeting, our Class Meeting, and introduces our new Class Officers.

Especially this year, it was great to travel back to campus, taking inventory of the changes that have transformed South Hadley Center and the MHC campus over the years, as well as revisiting all that has stayed the same, just as we left it in May 1983. It was so good to see so many of our classmates in person, making new connections and rekindling old friendships; there were even 5 classmates for whom this was their first reunion and return to campus! It was fantastic seeing our class come together as we welcomed each other back to Mount Holyoke, but we certainly missed those who were unable to join us on campus this year.

Before addressing any other class business, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to our Reunion Chairs, Pam Smith and Lisa Fagan Walts, for recruiting an enthusiastic and hardworking reunion committee, and putting together another excellent reunion.

There were some important messages that came out of the Alumnae Association meeting on Saturday, presided over by Alumnae Association President Ellen Hyde Pace '81. Interim President Beverly Daniel Tatum addressed the alumnae, and had the opportunity to introduce our new Mount Holyoke College President, Danielle Holley, who was visiting for Graduation Weekend. Interim-President Tatum went on to make some important observations regarding the financial health and future of the College. When she previously served as interim President 20 years ago, well over 60% of Mount Holyoke Alumnae gave to the College. Though Mount Holyoke still leads in alumnae giving among the other Seven Sisters colleges (we are number 1!), the percentage has dropped dramatically among all colleges, and for Mount Holyoke it has halved to 30%. She observed that at this rate, despite our relatively healthy endowment and the sentiment in our Alma Mater, Mount Holyoke forever may NOT be. Rankings and

ratings of colleges are based in part on the PERCENT of alums who give (as well as dollar amounts), so she stressed the importance of regular and consistent giving, even in small amounts, from as many alums as possible, annually/year to year and not just at reunion. On a happier note, Class Histories were read; link [here for ours](#). I am thrilled to report that our own Rochelle Calhoun was elected as President-Elect of the Alumnae Association, and Classmate Peri Caylor received an Alumnae Association Loyalty Award.

Our Class Meeting link to the minutes is [available here](#). Our apologies again to those who tried to link virtually, technical issues thwarted our efforts to connect. Highlights included the Memorial Service led by our own Rev. Charlotte Lehman, ([link here](#) for the listing of those we have lost and whose memory we honored). Our outgoing class officers were thanked for their service, with special recognition to retiring officers Jerri Barrett, President; Kathy Hughes, Vice-President; Maureen (Mo) Tracy, Lisa Oca, and Marianne McDermott, Head Class Agents; Lisa Fagan Walts and Pam Smith, Reunion Chairs.

Class leadership elections were held, and the following slate was voted in:

President: Kathryn (Kathy) Hughes

Vice-President: Lisa Fagan Walts

Secretary: Mindy Setzler Kolodziej

Treasurer: Irene Gimán

Scribes: Charlotte Lehman, Lisa Hawley Hiley

Head Class Agents: Mindy Setzler Kolodziej, Maureen Tracy, Beth Spong, Rochelle Calhoun (we got Mo back!)

Reunion Chairs: No nominations from the floor, see update below

Webmaster: Lisa Fagan Walts

Our reunion chairs, as part of their report to the class, noted that there were excess funds remaining from our class costume (yellow umbrellas this year), and in keeping with the class wishes from the reunion survey, the excess \$1000 was matched by an anonymous classmate, so that a \$2000 donation from the Class of 1983 was made to The [Care Center of Holyoke](#), which supports high school student mothers so that they may complete their education and attend college; the program has sent students to Mount Holyoke and Smith.

We again recognized and congratulated Rochelle Calhoun on becoming President Elect of the Alumnae Association, and Peri Caylor (in absentia) on her Alumnae Association

Loyalty Award. We also honored Lan Cao on her Honorary Doctorate and address to the Class of 2023 at Graduation.

At the class meeting, the treasurer report noted a significant balance in the class account. Our treasurer had asked that the class vote to approve a \$10,000 donation to the college (assuming an adequate balance remaining after reunion expenses reconcile) for a Class of 1983 plaque on campus. The class voted this down, preferring to maintain the balance in anticipation of our 50 year reunion. The class then unanimously voted to utilize this money, augmented by future donations, to provide financial assistance to classmates who cannot otherwise afford to attend reunion, with a goal of having as many classmates as possible attend our 50 year reunion. The Alumnae Association anonymously administers these funds to alums who have a need, and our donations funded 4 classmates for this 40 year reunion. Finally, the class expressed their thanks to our reunion chairs Lisa Fagan Walts and Pam Smith, and the reunion committee, with a round of applause/ovation for a job well done for our 40 year reunion!

After the class meeting, during the evening events and the following morning, FIVE classmates came forward expressing interest in reunion chair/co-chair positions. Two of our classmates were especially motivated by the opportunity to engage and include more classmates who may not have come in the past. This inspired us to create a new initiative and class officer role, forming a group focusing on outreach, engagement, and inclusion. The group will work between reunions on outreach and engagement, and will be a presence at reunion to help all returning alums feel welcomed and included. I am happy to report that Bonnie Bowes and Gratia McLane have agreed to be the inaugural co-chairs of the Outreach/Engagement/Inclusion group. Classmates at reunion were already excited and volunteered to be part of this project; please stay tuned for more details, and opportunities to volunteer and participate.

Lastly, I am equally happy to report that we have a trio of Reunion Co-Chairs— Andrea Malon, Pam Riley Miklavcic, and Sue Montgomery. Pam Smith and Lisa Fagan Walts have also agreed to be available as ex officio members to advise as needed. There will be lots of opportunities for many volunteers for reunion prep both before and during our next reunion, keep that in mind—all are welcome to help!

Our 40 Year Reunion was a great time, despite the rainy Saturday and the dorm beds... the joy of reuniting with this amazing group of women is still palpable weeks later, outweighing the memory of the rainy weather and the hard beds. The weekend flew by; I couldn't help but recall Carol Burnett's closing song from her old TV show, the words

captured my mood perfectly as I departed South Hadley to return home:

I'm so glad we had this time together,  
Just to have a laugh or sing a song--  
Seems we just get started, and before you know it,  
Comes the time we have to say, "So Long!"

Thank you to all who made the journey to Reunion; and to those who couldn't come, know you were missed. And to all, let's keep our connections going— whether on [our website](#), the Mount Holyoke Class of 1983 [Facebook Group](#), or by Zoom and other virtual and real-time events. We have an enthusiastic and engaged group of class officers and class volunteers to help us maintain our connections, revive old connections, and build new ones. All ideas for outreach and platforms to engage are welcome!

Until next time, take care

Kathy Hughes  
President, Class of '83