

# Fifty Years in the Making

Fifty years ago this fall, the 715 members of the Class of 1961 stood in line to meet then-Dartmouth President John Sloan Dickey one-by-one and get his John-Hancock-sized signature on their matriculation certificates.

Fifty years later, members of the Class of 2011 will go through a similar process with current Dartmouth President James Wright. Immediately afterwards, your class will be welcomed to the College — and to the alumni body — by members of the Class of 1961 in a tent outside Parkhurst Hall.

Yes, members of the Class of 2011 become alumni at matriculation, because Dartmouth counts as alumni not just graduates, but anybody who matriculated at the College. The welcome ceremony will be the first event in a new '61-'11 Connections program.

It is just one of what is expected to be a series of encounters between the Classes of 1961 and 2011 over the next four years.

For years, it has been Dartmouth's practice to have the members of the 50th reunion class join the current graduation class in the processional into the Commencement ceremony.

"This provides us a special connection, which we will develop over the next four years," Roger McArt, 1961 class president, said.

In recent years, rather than meeting for the first time during graduation week, some classes have scheduled periodic events with their paired un-

dergraduate class at other times during the four years. The '61-'11 Connections will continue and perhaps enhance that pattern.

"This is a great opportunity for the incoming '11s to meet and get to know people who share the Dartmouth experience, and might provide some useful information as they prepare for life after College," said Pete Bleyler '61, chairman of '61-'11 Connections and immediate past president of the class. "It's also an opportunity for our class to interact with undergraduates and gain an appreciation of who they are, what they're about, their aspirations."

Present and former officers of the Class of 1961 will be available as requested to work with the officers of the Class of 2011 when they are elected later in the Fall and to share experiences and suggestions.

Possible future activities include a matching/mentor program, a career panel, serving as holiday hosts for students not returning home at Thanksgiving and other receptions.

The members of the Class of 1961 are looking forward to doing something special at the start of sophomore summer in 2009.

The Class of 1961 supports special projects by one undergraduate each year in the arts, one in an academic discipline and one in athletics.

---

*Robert Conn '61 is a guest columnist.*