

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
S.J. QUINNEY
COLLEGE OF LAW
CLASS REUNION GUIDE

1. *Purpose*

This Guide has been prepared to assist class reunion committees in organizing successful class reunions. Class reunions can provide an opportunity to strengthen friendships and to reacquaint class members, as well as provide ongoing support and goodwill for the law school. The information contained in the Guide has been generated from the collective experience of various reunion committees and is by no means exhaustive. It is hoped that these materials will save future class reunion committees some time and provide help in organizing reunions that will be memorable and worthwhile for the school's alumni.

The Alumni Board of Trustees of the law school has a Reunion Committee, whose purpose is to assist the reunion year classes in planning their reunions. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Alumni Relations Director, Karen McLeese, at the law school, 801-581-6666. In addition, if you have any helpful observations to include in the Guide, feel free to pass them along to the Committee.

2. *Reunion Committee*

A. *Selection of Committee Members*

The success of any reunion will rest, in large measure, with the committee that organizes the reunion. In the past, class officers or student body officers have often shouldered the responsibility to head reunion efforts; however, in other cases the effort has been spearheaded by other interested members of the class

It is important to select committee members who reflect all of the diverse types of personalities who made up your law school class. A committee with that kind of diversity will be better able to make meaningful, personal contacts with the class as a whole, which will contribute in large measure to the success of the reunion. Involving a diverse group of people will also provide a cross section of ideas and assure that the reunion will appeal to all, rather than just a few.

Selection of committee members needs to be made well in advance of any proposed reunion -- seven to eight months in advance of the date is a good target. As a practical matter, committee members will usually need to be located along the Wasatch Front.

B. *Meetings*

Usually a number of meetings will be needed in order to organize the reunion. The initial meetings are typically devoted to gathering the collective thinking of the committee in

selecting the venue and format for the reunion, and making initial assignments to committee members. Later meetings will be necessary to follow up on assignments and monitor the committee's progress. Some committees have found that once the initial plans have been made, much of the later committee work and communication can be accomplished by group e-mails.

C. *Assignments*

Committee assignments may include, but are not limited to, facilities reservations, caterer orders, beverage procurement, reunion invitations, various aspects of the reunion program and activities, and reunion finances.

3. ***Reunion Date and Venue***

A. *Making the Reservation*

The threshold decision for any class reunion is the date and location. The date may have a major impact on class member attendance. An attractive location for the reunion should increase attendance and appeal to class members. It is advisable to reserve the reunion location well in advance.

B. *Considerations*

Selecting a venue requires the Committee to make a number of judgments – many of which involve considering the “personality” of the class.

In most instances a readily accessible reunion site will win over a more remote site. Locations requiring long drives will discourage attendance; however, some classes may value the exotic over the convenient.

While it will be difficult to estimate the number of classmates who will attend, the Committee should attempt that estimate before selecting a venue. The number of attendees will affect your venue choice both in terms of the size and cost of the facility you select. The committee needs to make a judgment as to whether the venue is large enough, or is too large, for the number of attendees and whether there will be enough attendees to cover the fixed costs associated with a particular venue. In estimating probable attendance, the Committee should consider both the size and personality of the class. You may find it helpful to review the class list in this process.

Once a venue has been selected, you must have a clear understanding of what the venue will provide and what the committee must arrange for separately. For example, does the facility provide its own caterer, soft drinks, liquor, ice, bar tender, servers, and sound system? The Committee must consider whether its plans accord with Utah liquor laws and whether there are any liability issues associated with your plans for providing liquor.

The cost of the venue requires the Committee to consider how cost conscious the class might be. The competing considerations are: offering a nice event that people will want to attend and not excluding people by making the event too expensive.

Venues to consider:

- Ski Resorts (off-season)
- Country Clubs
- Private Homes (for smaller classes)
- Downtown Hotels
- Reception Halls

Check with Wynne Smith, Development Director at 801-581-4640 or Karen McLeese, Director of Alumni Relations at 801-581-6666 at the law school for specific recommendations on specific venues that have been successful in the past.

Selecting a venue usually will involve identifying several possible venues with each of the possibilities assigned to a committee member for further investigation, so that the committee can compare the costs and services provided by each venue.

Fall is the traditional time for reunions; however, some reunion committees have found that out-of-state attendees prefer to coordinate reunion attendance with summer vacations to visit family and friends in the Utah area. On the other hand, if many in the class like to ski, a winter reunion ought to be considered.

4. *Invitations*

Past experience suggests that this should involve an advance notice, a written invitation, phone calls, and e-mails from committee members to extend personal invitations. Substantial efforts made to extend sincere, personal invitations will do more to ensure the success of the reunion than any other single effort. Committee members have also found that making these personal contact, and catching up with old friends, is one of the most enjoyable aspect of their committee duties. These calls also help to connect even those alumni who do not attend the reunion with their alma mater and their classmates.

A. *Initial Class List and Updates*

The law school will make a class list available to the reunion committee. These can be obtained from either Wynne Smith or Karen McLeese at the law school. The school maintains class lists for each class and endeavors to update them from time to time. Notwithstanding those efforts, we have found that the lists contain a number of incorrect and outdated addresses. Accordingly, the invitation process should be designed to identify the problems with the lists. The committee should consider some or all of the following processes:

- An initial review by the members to identify old addresses
- Early mailing of a First Notice of the Reunion, which if the address is outdated will often result in a return of the notice, highlighting the need for additional follow-up to identify the correct address (be sure the notice has a return address);
- Checking the Martindale Hubbell directory, the Phone Book and the Utah State Bar Directory;
- Calls to friends of the classmate to obtain correct addresses;
- Internet address and phone number searches;
- Checking with the law school staff on further ideas on how to locate missing classmate.

Please provide any new address and telephone information obtained in this process to the law school so they can update their records for future reference.

B. *First Notice*

The initial reunion notice needs to be given far enough in advance that people can plan their schedules, vacations, travel, etc. in order to attend the reunion. As noted above, an early mailing may also help alert the Committee to outdated addresses and the need for additional efforts to contact some of their classmates. It is suggested that if a reunion is planned for August that a first notice be given in March or April of the reunion year. The first notice should announce the date and location of the reunion to allow planning.

C. *The Invitation*

The invitation should include an rsvp card and a return envelope. You may also consider including a contact telephone number where the class member can make additional inquiries regarding the reunion plans.

Consider listing the Reunion Committee members names on the invitation. This helps to personalize the event.

The law school will provide the funding and help with postage or mailing of the notices. Arrangements should be made directly with the Director of Alumni Relations.

D. *Personal Invitations*

In addition to written reunion notices, each class member should be contacted personally by a member of the committee. Personal contacting may help to overcome feelings of reluctance or indifference that some may have with regard to attending a reunion. A personal contact also provides an opportunity for committee members to make connections with class members and to express interest in them as classmates and fellow lawyers.

It is normally most effective for committee members doing the contacting to be friends or at least acquainted with the classmate who is being contacted. It is appropriate to call and/or write class members at home or at their business.

In the case of deceased classmates, the committee may wish to consider inviting the surviving spouse to the reunion.

E. *Class Faculty*

It is appropriate to invite the current Dean of the law school and Director of Alumni Relations to participate in the reunion. Most classes have also found it enjoyable to invite the members of the law school faculty who were teaching during their years in law school.

F. *Suggested Attire*

In order to avoid confusion and discomfort on the part of those attending the reunion, invitations should include a dress suggestion.

5. *Reunion Program*

Each reunion committee will have many ideas as to what the reunion program should be. The following are offered for your consideration as you plan your reunion program.

A. *Name Tags*

Name tags are a must.

B. *Dean's Remarks*

We believe it is appropriate and recommend that you invite the current Dean of the law school to offer remarks during your reunion program. It provides an opportunity for class members to become better acquainted with the current Dean and, in turn, allows the Dean to share greetings from the law school and to thank the class members for attending.

C. *No or Limited Program*

Alumni come to Reunions to catch up with old friends. Whatever program is planned should not interfere with that primary purpose. Make sure there is plenty of time for conversation. Many classes have found that the most enjoyable approach to a reunion is to think of it as simply a party among old friends.

D. *Speaker(s)*

Care should be taken in determining whether or not to have a speaker on the reunion program. Lengthy speeches may be counterproductive. On the other hand, a good

speaker (classmate or otherwise) may stimulate the group. The reunion committee should clearly communicate the parameters for the speech.

E. *Class Member Comments*

A highlight of many reunion programs has been allowing class members the opportunity to stand and express themselves for two or three minutes each.

F. *Music and Other Entertainment*

Some reunion programs have featured a band or other form of musical entertainment. In some instances this has not worked well. A loud raucous band may reduce the opportunity for class members to interact and to visit with one another.

G. *Dinner*

One activity conducted in conjunction with class reunions is a dinner. In most instances the dinner is held in conjunction with the reunion program.

H. *Reception*

A very common activity planned for class reunions is a cocktail reception. This can be done in conjunction with a reunion dinner or as the reunion activity.

I. *Golf Tournament*

Some reunion committees have elected to hold a golf tournament in conjunction with the reunion. While not all lawyers are golfers, many are. A golf tournament is an ambitious endeavor. Now that the law school is conducting an annual tournament, perhaps the reunion committee may wish to sponsor other activities instead.

J. *Dance*

Dances have been held at some reunions with mixed results. The reunion committee should evaluate this carefully in determining what kind of a reunion they wish to achieve.

K. *Videos*

A reunion committee may wish to arrange for a committee member or other person to videotape some of the reception. Other ideas may include people who have videos of law school days to submit such material so that they can be shown in conjunction with the reunion program.

L. *Photographs*

Committee members and/or class members may have photographs from law school parties or events to contribute to a display. Arrangements can also be made with the law

school to have the class picture hanging in the law school available for the evening. Photographic displays have proven to be entertaining conversation starters and helpful in remembering who folks are.

M. *Questionnaires*

You may want to include a short questionnaire with the invitation, asking about careers, family and interests. The questionnaire can also ask each classmate to share memories from law school and thoughts about his or her career. The responses can then be photocopied and distributed at the reunion and even mailed to those who were unable to attend.

N. *In Memoriam*

You may wish to consider recognizing deceased members of the class by mentioning their name and observing a moment of silence in their memory during your reunion. Some class reunion committees have been able to obtain obituaries or other brief summaries concerning the deceased individual and have read them during the reunion program. Such a remembrance can be a special part of a reunion program.

O. *CLE*

Arrangements might be made by a reunion committee to hold a reunion in conjunction with CLE opportunities being offered by the law school or the bar.

6. *Finances*

At the present time there is no independent source of funds available to pay for class reunions. Accordingly, the cost of the reunion must be borne by the class members who attend. The following suggestions are offered and to ensure the financial viability of the reunion.

A. *Cost Per Person*

One advantage of determining the location of the reunion at the outset is that the reunion committee can obtain firm commitments as to rental costs, food costs, etc. Class members' financial situations vary, and simple economics need to be considered by the reunion committee in determining the location and extent of the reunion. Prices can vary substantially for food and venue rental costs. In determining where the reunion is to be held, the reunion committee must decide what the cost per person ought to be and plan accordingly.

B. *Collecting in Advance*

It will be to the benefit of the reunion committee, where possible, to collect in advance. Response card or sheets should include instructions on how to pay. Encourage attending class members to send payments early. Funds collected need to be accounted for and

held in trust pending the event. Under present guidelines, the law school is not able to collect and hold funds. This will be the responsibility of the reunion committee.

C. Deposits

In many cases, the reunion venue will require a deposit to be made. When selecting a venue, the committee member should clarify what, if any, deposits are required and seek to minimize deposit required in order to reserve the facility. Final counts for food normally do not have to be made until two or three days before the reunion.

D. Accounting

The reunion committee should maintain a written record of funds received, from whom, dates, amounts, etc. This will avoid confusion and keep the finances in order.

E. Contingencies

Notwithstanding the best plans of any reunion committee, there will probably be one or more matters that will pop up at the last minute that may require some funding. An unanticipated sales tax, problems with a check or a host of other possibilities. In such instances, the reunion committee might find itself short in paying the final tab. In such instances some reunion committee members have chipped in to take care of such contingencies. In other instances, a particularly prosperous class member has stepped forward to take care of the shortfall. The chairperson of the reunion committee may be in the best position to keep track of these matters and to ensure that no cost overruns are incurred.