



Greetings Tiger!

Thank you for your years of support – financial or psychic – for the **Save the WILD Life Fund ("SWLF")** in its decades-long efforts to enhance experiences when we gather in Princeton as members of the Class of 1971, "**The WILD Life Class.**"™

From its start, SWLF's central mission was to increase attendance at Reunions and other on-Campus events that are open to all Classmates by reducing fees through financial support for "*nice to have extras.*" Along the way, 1971 also became known as "*A Big Act Class,*" as SWLF funds brought "*Bands of our College Times*" to Reunions stages.

Trust me, I was just the quarterback with All-Pro teammates! None of this could have happened without the inspiration of the late *Class President Steve Powers*, the support of so many Classmates, and the sage advice of the SWLF Board: *Jack Hittson* whose recent loss is irreplaceable to me and to our Class, *Podie Lynch*, *Henry Barkhorn* and *Scott Rogers*. I can't thank them enough for their good counsel over the years. Please thank them yourself when you see them, or when remembering them in the years ahead.

Please know that:

- For our 55th Reunion alone, SWLF spent more than \$70,000, mostly in live entertainment expenses.
 - Thus, SWLF "saved" each Classmate who attended over \$350 in registration fees.
- Since our 45th Reunion, SWLF supported 1971's 2021 *virtual 50th Reunion*, our "*2021 Fall Retreat,*" and our "*50th Reunion...Continued*" (aka our 51st Reunion).
 - The Alumni Council called this trio "*an unprecedented hat trick!*"
 - Our 50th Reunion secured 1971 another "*The Clancy Award,*" the top Alumni Association prize awarded for each year for "*The Best Planned and Run Major Reunion.*"
 - The Fall Retreat earned 1971 two more Alumni Council Awards, the *Class of 1898 Trophy* and the *Class of 1928 Trophy*, respectively for the *largest number* and *highest percentage registered* of any Class to attend any gathering during the year between Reunions. A total of 124 Classmates registered, as SWLF recognized many of us really needed "*to gather*" after pandemic traumas.
 - The Alumni Council recognized our award-worthy 51st Reunion as "*undoubtedly the largest 51st Reunion in history.*" A total of 118 Classmates registered.
 - SWLF invested another \$20,000 in in the Fall Retreat and 51st Reunion.
- Since our 45th Reunion, when SWLF produced both *The Beach Boys* and *Credence Clearwater* at Holder Courtyard, SWLF invested about one hundred thousand dollars in 1971 gatherings.
- SWLF financial records show that *at least* 473 Classmates and friends gave to SWLF, many of them multiple times! There are eight 5-figure donors and twenty-one 4-figure donors. Wow!
- SWLF gifts – from \$5 to 5-figures – added up, enhanced 1971's Reunions experience, and lowered registration fees which increased attendance, class identity and cohesion.
 - SWLF raised over \$455,000 over the years, all of which was spent to reduce Reunions fees!
- No other Princeton Class has brought 5 *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame* performers to Reunions, thanks to SWLF and its supporters. Second-place is 3. Three rock legends were elected "*honorary Class members:*" *Smokey Robinson h71*, *Darlene Love h71* and *Mike Love h71*, the leader of *The Beach Boys*.
 - The cost to present these "*Bands of our College Times*" have *never* been part of Reunion fees.

- As a result of the Alumni Council's "Open Reunions Policy" -- championed by 1971 beginning at our 25th -- we exposed new generations of Tigers to music that was part of our lives in college.
- With SWLF support, registration fees for our 25th, 35th, 40th, 45th Reunions, Fall Retreat, 50th Reunion...Continued, and 55th Reunion were *\$100 to \$400 less per Classmate*.
- **Without that financial support, those Reunions experiences would have been far less memorable, and achieving '71's record-setting attendance figures would have been less likely.**

The SWLF Board originally planned to retire the Fund with our 50th Reunion. For Reunions '21, Jack and I committed to spend all remaining funds to hire our 6th R&R HoF band, this time *Jimmy Buffet and the Coral Reefer Band*. That was not to be due to Covid, and then Jimmy's untimely passing in 2023.

With this unexpected surplus, the SWLF Board announced in 2021 that it would sunset after the curtain comes down on our 55th Reunion, while underwriting some Class gathering costs in the interim. Remaining SWLF funds, if any, will transfer to 1971's Reunions account to help Classmates attend future Reunions on Campus.

During 2026, *The Great Class of 1971* again registered record-setting numbers, with more than 191 Classmates returning. We may even win "*The Class of 1912 Trophy*" awarded to the class with the highest percentage of members registered after its 50th Reunion. It would be fitting, as this award highlights the unique, long-lasting connection Princetonians maintain with their college, decades after they leave our historic Campus. Win or lose, this should be the 8th time in our Class history that 1971 sets a Major Reunion Attendance Record. Well done! I've revealed a few of the rich memories over these years in our 25th and 50th Yearbooks and in the e-supplement to our 55th Yearbook on how "*The WILD Life Class*" brand and logo evolved since graduation (view it [here](#)). There are many more stories still to be untapped! Ask me some time over a Mount Gay and tonic and we'll see where the conversation goes.

With its funds dwindling, the SWLF Board will disable the website's "DONATE" button this June before the end of the SWLF and Class's fiscal year. Thank you for your support, both financial and psychological over these past thirty-five SWLF years.

Save the WILD Life Fund efforts have been a real high point in my life. I am eternally grateful to SWLF supporters, encouraging Classmates, our partners and vendors, multitude of friends and sponsors, and so many University personnel who helped us to realize what we imagined so long ago. Go Tiger!!

**One final time,
Roaringly,**



Stu Rickerson '71 P21 Founding Chair, SWLF, P. O. Box 510, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067-0510

CLASS OF 1971 Hall of Fame



Mentoring – The Link Between Classes



225th

275th

Anniversaries of Princeton's Founding