

# Celebrating 50 years: Milestone reunion offers opportunity for camaraderie and reflection

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Fifty years ago, bell-bottoms were the height of fashion, *Blazing Saddles* was the hottest movie of the year, *Jaws* and *All the President's Men* were on everyone's reading lists and "Band on the Run" by Paul McCartney and Wings dominated the music charts. The streaking fad was making its mark on college campuses, including at Tulane, and the Green Wave football team beat LSU 14-0 before the biggest crowd at Tulane Stadium ever — 86,598 fans.

Also 50 years ago, the Class of 1974 celebrated its graduation from Tulane

University and Newcomb College. Later this week, they will reunite to mark the fiftieth anniversary of that milestone.

This landmark reunion event has a robust schedule of events, starting on Thursday with tours of the uptown campus and ending on Saturday with the Unified Commencement in Yulman Stadium.

With two class luncheons planned, plus a cocktail party and dinner at Audubon Tea Room and educational sessions at New Orleans Museum of Art, friends will have many opportunities to revisit memories and spark new ones.

Two of the Class of 1974's most well-known alumni, Carol Lavin Bernick (NC '74) and Doug Hertz (A&S '74, B \*76), are helming this milestone reunion.

It's not an overstatement to say that Bernick and Hertz have helped shape Tulane's destiny through their leadership on the Board of Tulane — the university's main governing body — and their generosity to some of the university's most visionary and ambitious projects. Hertz served as board chair from 2017-2020; Bernick took over the role afterward and is currently chair.

Now, their tremendous commitment to their alma mater is on display again as they co-chair their 50th reunion.

Bernick and Hertz emphasize that the reunion offers the chance for classmates to reconnect with friends.

Bernick notes that she still sees her college friends regularly, some of whom have been integral to her life events, such as her roommate who became her matron of honor. "These are my closest buddies, and it was just by fate drawing us together in Butler dorm," she says.



College friends (from left to right): Suzy Fife, Pege Sternberger, Carol Lavin

Hertz appreciates the close connections and the diversity of experiences and perspectives he encountered at Tulane, which have enhanced his life significantly. “Today, I still cherish the friends I made and the exposure to people from different backgrounds, finding common ground on so many different things,” Hertz reflects. “And so many of those folks are still my friends today, after 50 years.”

Both met friends who felt like family at the university. In Hertz’s case, friends even became family — namely, his wife, Lila Loewenthal Hertz (NC '76).

The upcoming reunion also serves as an opportunity to honor the mentors and faculty who guided students through Tulane and Newcomb and helped shape their future paths. Hertz recalls his invaluable experience working as a graduate assistant

for business professor Richard Hayes, a foundation that served him well. “Tulane helped me grow up, mature and explore the possibilities in life. When I arrived at Tulane, I really had no clue about any of those things,” he shares. Now based in Atlanta, Hertz is the chairman and chief executive officer of United Distributors Inc., a privately held beverage distribution business that he expanded into one of the top private companies in Atlanta.

Bernick fondly recalls Dean Jean Danielson as a significant mentor. In addition, the degree Bernick received in sociology meant that she excelled in understanding consumer behavior, significantly advancing her career in her family’s company, Alberto Culver, a global beauty and personal care manufacturer headquartered near Chicago. There, Bernick held various leadership roles, including president of Alberto-Culver Consumer Products Worldwide, and she played a key role in the company’s growth. Today, Bernick is the CEO of Polished Nickel Capital Management.

Hertz and Bernick share that watching Tulane’s remarkable achievements over the years has been truly inspiring, highlighting the



Friends from college (from left to right): Ricky Kanfer and Doug Hertz

university's advancements in research, the transformative capital projects that have reshaped the campus and the bolstered focus on entrepreneurship. Both are excited for the future as well, noting the emergence of the Tulane Innovation Institute and the visionary plans for the downtown campus as pointing toward a new era of growth for the university.

Says Bernick, "The respect for this university has just skyrocketed. Tulane is flourishing today. I love seeing cranes all over the campus, and the downtown campus will change New Orleans."

Bernick encourages people considering returning for the reunion to make the trip. "It's the same, but it's very different, and you will feel great pride being a part of all of this. It's life-changing to go back."

Hertz is proud of the strides the university has made and believes his classmates will be, too. He says, "We can all take pride in how well-regarded the university is across

the country, not just for its academic prowess but also for its plans to help the city of New Orleans. You have to see it to believe it. It's not your grandparents' Tulane anymore — it's better, without losing any of the charm it's always had."