

*The years teach
much which the
days never knew.*

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

REAFFIRMING LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAM ROE

Linda Klein, a 1974 graduate, thought about her classmates each time she passed through Columbia on business for her Kansas City-based company or for pleasure.

Due to the School's size and the hands-on education, the relationships formed were very deep.

"We spent almost every minute together during those years. We knew everything there was to know about one another. The reunion let us catch up on everything that's happened in the last 30 years," Klein laughs. "There just wasn't enough time."





Since 2004, the director of alumni relations and the Nursing Alumni Organization's board members have made it a personal goal to reconnect classmates through an annual reunion.

"Those personal connections we had as classmates were strong ones and although the ties might fade through time, I don't want them to become permanently broken," says Donna Otto, BSN '72, MS '81.

Otto is the perfect individual for the job of alumni director. Working up the chain of command, she became University Hospital's chief nurse, and during this process she either worked with nurses who graduated before her, mentored those who graduated after her, or more recently, taught and/or mentored those in the undergraduate programs.

Even though it wasn't Klein's "featured" year to spark interest in getting together as a class, somehow she knew the timing was right.

"When Karen [Ehlmann], Anne [Devine] and I walked in the hospital lobby for the reunion, we found ourselves surrounded by a wonderful community of highly successful individuals.

"No matter if we talked to new graduates or someone

who graduated 60 years ago, we all shared a commonality of knowing we had a wonderful base of education that helped us to be successful in life," Klein explains.

As it is for many of us, after graduation life gets busy — career, family, going back to school, moving. Otto realizes the many realities of life and why classmates lose touch; however, she also sees and feels what it means to those who choose to come back.

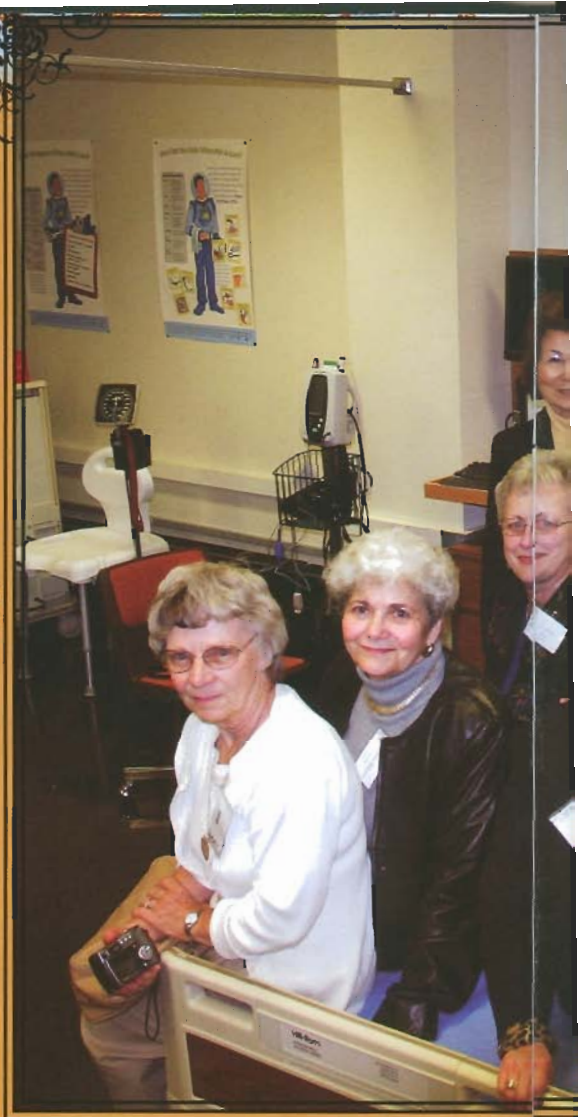
"I have seen laughter, tears and many memories brought back to life during the four years I've been involved in the reunion," Otto says. "But no matter the size of the group that comes back to Mizzou, they all say it was worth it."

1978 grad Sally Alberty Richardson of Plano, Texas, agrees with Otto.

"I was a little apprehensive in getting my classmates back together because I had been out of the nursing profession for a while," she says. "But I tell everyone within listening distance to consider coming back. Nursing was and still is a part of who I am, what my life was about and that makes it important to me."

Klein also found herself outside the nursing profession.

"Our nursing education gave us a great foundation regardless of what we did in life," Klein states. "We learned to problem solve and were taught to be leaders. Those skills have taken us so far in our lives."



Whether you graduated recently, or not, everything is changing at the School. If you graduated more than 30 years ago, we have a physical building; however, even if you graduated since then that might be changing as well. Talk of a new interdisciplinary building is on the horizon. Notwithstanding, inside the current walls things have been changing as well.

There is a revamped auditorium, computer-programmed mannequins, wireless classrooms — made possible by alumni and friends who have given back to the School.

"Everything has changed since I was in school," Klein remarks. "There is great emphasis on technology, which is critically important today."

Class of '58 graduate, Margaret Hart says that the School has always been on the cutting edge, even back in her years at MU.



Far left: Suzanne (Burton) Cram, BSN '69 (center), reconnected with two former colleagues, Judy Slaughter and Danny Meives, during the hospital tour. Cram had been honored the night before at the School's banquet and awards ceremony as the Alumnus of the Year.

Left: The class of 1958 gathered on a hospital bed in the School's Skills Lab during the 2008 Alumni Reunion. However, this was only accomplished after assurances that they could straighten the linens back to "Betty Crim standards" when the photo was completed.



After the 100-year celebration in 2004, Hart and classmate Mary Ann Clark started searching for their classmates. Hart recalls that the class of '58 was the first class to spend all four years on the Mizzou campus including summers, except for their psych rotation. They were also the ones who helped move patients from Parker Memorial Hospital to the newly built Medical Center (now University Hospital).

Another sentiment Otto hears often during the reunion is that time together is much too short and there wasn't enough time to visit in-depth with everyone.

"It was fantastic to see my classmates," Hart says. "And what was more amazing was that once they got here and we started visiting it was like we went back 50 years — just like when we were student nurses. We had so many stories and photos that took us back to the '50s that it made the time go by way too fast."



Above right: Anne Devine, Karen Ehlmann and Linda Klein (from left) sit in the seats they bought during the School's Take-A-Seat campaign last year. The trio was inseparable during nursing school and they have kept in touch regularly.

Cover page: Devine, Ehlmann and Klein as they looked on their class composite.

Above: Class of '58 members (from left) Margaret Wesner, Katie Ponder, and Rose Kendall examine a doll designed by classmate DeeDee (Kennedy) Bauer along side current nursing student Molly Weber.