

**SECTION I-C**  
**THE CLASS SECRETARY**

## **The Class Secretary -- An Overview**

The Class Secretary is perhaps the most visible class officer. The leadership of a dedicated, articulate Secretary is essential to a class' success. Ideally, the Secretary should serve with a flair for organizing and maintaining class records, communicating with classmates and writing class notes. These qualities keep a Princeton class together and connected, give it an identity and provide it with a spokesperson when necessary. Often, class secretaries find that serving more than one term is advantageous, as it helps them establish continuity in their relationships with their classmates.

The Class Secretary's major responsibilities are to:

- Prepare the class notes for the *Princeton Alumni Weekly (PAW)*
- Answer inquiries and letters from classmates
- Notify Alumni Records of address changes and deaths
- Keep a file or record on classmates and on class committees
- Lead the effort to locate missing classmates
- Send notices of class meetings and prepare and maintain minutes and files

Other duties that a Class Secretary may perform include handling the administrative details of class officer elections, preparing class newsletters, directories and other publications and being alert to members of the class in need.

## Writing Class Notes

The Secretary prepares the class notes for the *PAW* column. It goes without saying that the Secretary should be sure never to miss an issue! The *PAW* is published seventeen times during the year on a somewhat biweekly schedule.

Copy for the Secretary's column is due thirty-three days before the cover date of the intended issue. Each summer, the Class Notes Editor of the *PAW* sends a schedule of deadlines and helpful hints to each Secretary. There is a substantial time lag between writing the column and when it will be read. Therefore, the Secretary must take that into consideration when writing about upcoming events, also allowing enough lead time for classmates to put the event on their calendars and to R.S.V.P.

Class notes columns can be used for announcing class dinners and reunions, class scholarship recipients and letters, and new and/or returning Princeton sons and daughters. The Secretary should work closely with the Class Reunions Chair to give Reunions (particularly major Reunions) lots of coverage. Many secretaries list the names of classmates who have signed up to attend Reunions to encourage even more people to come. Pictures should be used as much as possible, because they liven up the page and draw attention to the column, not only by classmates, but by members of other classes. However, a balance is important, as photographs reduce the space available for copy (currently 300 words/issue).

Copy should be sent to the *PAW* in accordance with its published deadlines. Late copy will not be published. The Class Notes Editor of the *PAW* has a very difficult job -- it is important to work with him/her so that you are both successful. Material not used in the issue for which it was intended is called "overset." All overset remaining in the *PAW* file is sent to each Secretary periodically. The Secretary should then decide whether to add it to a new column or let it run by itself, and tell the Class Notes Editor of his/her decision.

The class notes column is especially important because the *PAW* itself is a constant reminder of Princeton for every alumnus/a. Many classes also send the *PAW* at class expense to all honorary class members. Some send it free of charge to all widows/widowers, but many are reducing that to only dues-paying widows/widowers, because of the prohibitive cost, especially as a class grows older.

In summary, the class notes column is the most frequently read part of the *PAW*. It offers the Secretary a chance to describe the spirit, humor and warmth that binds each class, as well as the achievements of the class and of individual classmates. The attitudes that many alumni have toward their classes and toward the University are heavily influenced by what they read in class notes.

## Class Files

One important part of being Class Secretary is keeping a file on every member of the class. Many classes use electronic media or manila file folders, allotting one folder per person. The Secretary can use these folders to squirrel away tidbits of information about classmates, including:

- Name and nickname
- Date of birth
- Date of leaving Princeton and degrees awarded (Princeton and other)
- Family data, including marriage date, spouse's name and nickname, and children's names and dates of birth
- All correspondence with that member or about that member
- All newspaper and magazine clippings
- Change of address notifications
- Any other relevant material

It is helpful to maintain a list of the dates on which the classmate was mentioned in the *PAW* Class Notes column, along with an easy-to-understand reference that would indicate why the person was mentioned in the column. Some class secretaries also maintain data on classmate inclusion in class newsletters. This makes it easier to have a balance of people mentioned.

Addresses of classmates can be maintained in a number of ways. Some Class Secretaries prefer to maintain their classmate data in an index card file. Others prefer to maintain these records on listings provided by the Alumni Council. Still others maintain electronic databases, in which address information is periodically refreshed via diskette from the Alumni Council.

The general class files should include all class letters, notices of events, *PAW* columns, committee meetings, subcommittee meetings and so on. These files should be passed on from Secretary to Secretary, so that the history of the class is maintained. It is much easier to start on a project by reviewing the records from last time.

Careful recordkeeping will minimize the number of missing classmates -- people who, because of address changes or different dates of graduation from the rest of the class, get lost in the shuffle over the years. A Class Secretary should comb the files periodically to determine the names of classmates about whom no recent information has been received and should be constantly on the search for missing persons. For instance, an annual mention of missing classmates in the class notes column, with a list of who is missing and a request for help in finding them, can often result in locating missing people. Alumni Records files of past addresses can also be helpful in tracking people down.

Material that the Class Secretary decides not to keep in the classmates' files may be sent to the University Archivist, who will judge whether such items should be maintained by the University. Classmate and class files should be considered University files and should be kept in such a condition that, when the time comes, they can be passed on to the University to become part of its permanent history. As classmates die, after the PAW memorials appear, the secretary can send their complete files to Alumni Records.

Some secretaries hire clerical assistance to help maintain the class and classmate files in excellent order and to help with correspondence. Many use computers to prepare and file class notes and to send and receive communication electronically.

## **Other Duties**

### *Meeting Notices and Records*

The Class Secretary is responsible for sending notices of all meetings and for keeping minutes, although some classes have a separate recording secretary for minutes. The Class Secretary can help the President prepare an agenda. All minutes should be kept on file and periodically reviewed by the class leadership to ensure that the matters mentioned in them are acted upon.

### *Election of Class Officers*

The Secretary may be asked to handle the administrative details of electing class officers. It is a good idea to have the Secretary as a consultant or as member of the Nominating Committee, because the Secretary is likely to be the most familiar with the activities of the potential nominees.

### *Publications*

The Class Secretary may be assigned the duty of preparing newsletters, directories and other publications. In addition to normal mailings, many classes publish a class directory annually. Alumni Services, a part of the Class and Regional Affairs Team of the Alumni Council Staff in Maclean House, will print a list of current addresses for each classmate upon request. This list can be arranged geographically and by occupation.

The preparation of a five-year class yearbook is the job of the designee of the President and the Reunions Chair, using material accumulated by the Secretary and, commonly, the results of a class questionnaire.

## Class Memorials

If the class does not have a Class Memorialist, the Secretary is responsible for discharging these duties. (See the “Other Class Officers” section of this handbook for further description of Class Memorial Agent duties.) These duties include:

- Sending condolences of the Class to the family of the deceased classmate
- Writing a memorial for the *PAW*
- Taking care of any other duties immediately associated with the death of a Classmate, such as informing Alumni Records

The memorial for the *PAW* **must** be limited to 200 words. Alumni Records keeps a file on each alumnus/a. (To access this information, the Secretary can contact Alumni Records by calling the number listed in the “Useful Contacts” section of the Appendix.) If possible, the family of the deceased should approve the memorial and be given the opportunity to correct or change anything. The issue of the *PAW* containing the memorial should be sent to the next of kin at the Class’ expense.

Although the President is responsible for assigning a class representative for the Service of Remembrance, the Secretary should check to be sure that the names of deceased classmates and their next of kin are returned in time to be included in the Service. **These need to be sent to the Alumni Council by January 31 of each year for verification.**

If possible, the Secretary should ask classmates in the area to represent the Class at a classmate’s funeral or memorial service.

To check whether missing classmates are deceased, you can check the Social Security Death Index on the Internet via the following address: <<http://www.ancestry.com/ssdi/advanced.htm>>.

## **Classmates in Need**

The Secretary should try to help classmates in need. Ideally, the Secretary should be sufficiently close to the class to notice the needs of distressed classmates, and to try to organize the resources of the Class to help them. An encouraging letter in a time of crisis, a thoughtful gesture when fortunes are at a low ebb, or some remembrance supplied when things have gone badly all demonstrate that unique spirit which characterizes Princeton alumni. Many classes have set up foundations for this purpose; you can call or write the Alumni Council for details on setting one up. The use of Class funds for these purposes requires an inquiry into the tax exemption of certain class funds. Contributions to foundations meant to help needy classmates are not generally tax-deductible and must be kept completely separate from normal class funds. See Section II -- The Tax-Exempt Organization for more information.

## **Regulations for Classification of Alumni**

The Class Secretary should know the rules with respect to classification of alumni and missing persons:

- Any person who matriculated as a candidate for a degree at Princeton University, whether or not work toward the degree was completed, is an alumnus/a of Princeton and a member of a Princeton class.
- An alumnus who received a degree from Princeton University cannot be removed from the official alumni and class rolls for any reason except death.
- An alumnus is a member of a class until the person requests that his name be removed from the roll by approved procedures. The authority to determine whether or not the name may be removed is vested in the Alumni Council, acting under established regulations.
- No alumnus may be a member of any class with which he or she was not at one time affiliated as a candidate for a degree (except on an honorary basis) and no alumnus may concurrently be a member of more than one class (except on an honorary basis).

Alumni Records has a copy of the regulations governing changes to a classmate's status and the procedures necessary for making changes. Many alumni wishing to change their class years contact the Alumni Council directly. Class Presidents and Secretaries are notified when such changes are requested or made.

Classmates may request that they receive no mail from the University. Only the Director of the Alumni Council may authorize such a change. The classmate must send a letter directly to the Director. He/she will receive a confirmation letter back and must double-confirm that indeed he/she wishes to receive no mail. Only then will that person's name be removed from the mailing list. Although such people are never removed from the class rolls, they are not included in totals for percentage purposes.

## **Definition of Class Rolls**

The *Princeton University Alumni Directory* includes the names of all living alumni/ae, listed under the classes with which they are affiliated.

The Registrar of the University furnishes Alumni Records with an official list of the graduates of each class upon its graduation. Alumni Records maintains the class rolls and furnishes the Secretary with up-to-date listings. Six listings are available from Alumni Records:

- Living members of the class with addresses
- Living members of the class without addresses
- Inactive members of the class
- Living members of the class receiving no mail
- Deceased members of the class and widows
- Honorary class members

All Alumni Council awards based upon class enrollment percentages are based upon the first of the six types of class lists mentioned above. People receiving no mail do not fall into that category.