Josh Rafner ‘77 remembers visiting Princeton as a 14-year-old when his father returned to the Woodrow Wilson School as a mid-careerist, and Josh spent a year at Princeton High School. “I had the time of my life that year,” he remembers. “After living in the Washington, D.C. area, I enjoyed the smaller town of Princeton and the resources available at the University. It felt like home. When it was time to apply to college, I knew I wanted to attend Princeton.”

Josh describes his years at Princeton as a hotbed of activity. It was still the Vietnam War era with a lot of political activity on campus. He involved himself in student government and was named to the University’s Governance Committee, which also included him on the Trustee Committee on Honorary Degrees.

An accomplished pianist, Josh continued his studies both on campus and in New York City, performing when he could. While he eventually decided not to pursue a career in music, he continued to play for enjoyment. With a gift to the University, Josh dedicated a music teaching studio earlier this year to support aspiring musicians at Princeton. The Rafner Teaching Studio in the Lewis Arts complex was named in honor of his father, Robert Rafner ‘51 *70 P77, with whom he attends Reunions annually.

As an undergrad, one of Josh’s proudest accomplishments came his senior year, when he and a few friends published the Princeton Course Guide, which reviewed all courses and stayed in publication for 20 years.

“We sold it for $3 in front of Firestone Library.”

Josh eventually went on to major in the Woodrow Wilson School. He won the University’s most celebrated undergraduate award, the Pyne Prize, as well as a Fulbright Scholarship. After graduation, he went to Oxford and Stockholm University where he studied social welfare politics, before heading to Stanford Law where he was an editor of the Stanford Law Review.

After graduation, he clerked for a federal judge, and later joined a law firm in Washington, before returning to California. He eventually reconnected with some fellow Princetonians and joined an investment bank to work with high-growth technology firms. Ultimately, he started his own boutique advisory firm and has been the CEO ever since.

In California, he continued his volunteer work for the Schools Committee and Annual Giving, and served as president of the Princeton Club of Northern California. For the last seven years, he has organized a popular alumni retreat in the Sierras which attracts over 150 Princetonians. He is also a new member of the Alumni Council Executive Committee and serves as vice chair of the Committee on Academic Programs for Alumni.

Josh Rafner ‘77 serves as vice chair of the Committee on Academic Programs for Alumni. He is also a new member of the Alumni Council Executive Committee and an administrator annually to regions, who often talk on timely and timeless subjects. Contact Katherine Kennedy at ktkennedy@princeton.edu to learn more about hosting speakers in your region.

A tradition for more than 40 years, Alumni-Faculty Forums partner Princeton faculty with alumni to discuss interesting topics during Reunions. Last month, the AFFs took a different turn and hit the road. The Princeton Club of Northern California hosted the first-ever Alumni-Faculty Forum on the Road, which featured a panel of undergraduate and graduate alumni and a faculty moderator. Close to 350 alumni in the region attended the event.

Seven years ago, Josh Rafner ‘77 began a weekend program in the Sierras to bring Princeton families together to build a stronger Princeton community on the west coast. Set on secluded Fallen Leaf Lake near Lake Tahoe, the Princeton Sierra Camp features activities to enjoy the great outdoors with an additional academic component. A faculty member joins the group to share his or her scholarly work. “For Californians far from Nassau Hall, the camp is a way of bringing alumni and families together in a unique setting and sharing our common bond of Princetoners,” Rafner says. The next Sierra Camp is scheduled for October 5-8, 2018. To learn more, contact Rafner at joshrafner.com.

Since getting to campus is not always easy when overseas, the Princeton Association in the United Kingdom provides a robust roster of educational offerings to bring the intellectual life of Princeton closer to home. For the last two years, the regional association has invited University professors who teach online and/or hybrid courses, to provide three, one-hour live video conferences with alumni who also participate in the online course.

“These online courses are a great way of bringing Princeton intellectual life closer to us,” says Dean Menegas ’83 S82 P21, president of the regional association. “Distance doesn’t matter; time zones don’t matter. We can hold the events here in the evening and midday on campus, so it’s convenient for everyone.”

For alumni interested in traveling with an educational component, Princeton Journeys are not only vacations, but opportunities to engage in intellectual conversation with fellow alumni. About 15 trips are planned annually, and each features a study leader who is a University professor or a Princeton alum with expertise in a particular field. The travelers are not only enthusiastic teachers but also fun traveling companions who offer an interesting dimension to the trip. Visit the alumni website to read about upcoming Princeton Journeys.

Interested in organizing or sponsoring an educational event? Contact your regional association leadership.