John Lavelle warms to the task when asked to remember his student days at Princeton. “The atmosphere was so intellectually stimulating. The students and professors were incredibly engaged and passionate. I took Latin to satisfy the language requirement and ended up majoring in Classics. Princeton enabled me to study in Athens the summer between junior and senior years. I met wonderful, close friends, who are still my close friends today.” It was a place where, in their suite overflowing with gerbils and fruit flies from the Biology Department, he could regale his roommates with tales of his hometown in Pennsylvania coal country.

From a family of lawyers, John went on to Harvard for law school, then clerked for a U.S. federal judge before joining a Philadelphia law firm in 1990. The Princeton Club of Philadelphia offered the opportunity to meet people in his new town. And that is where his long career of service to Princeton began.

By the early 1990’s John was actively engaged in Annual Giving campaigns for the Philadelphia region and was the area’s go-to man for organizing phonathons. In 2001, John’s first year as a co-chair of a regional Annual Giving committee, Philadelphia won the Jerry Horton Award for outstanding regional committee and John became a member of the National Annual Giving Committee.

By this same time, John was also volunteering for his class. In 2006 he was asked to be class agent. He admits he was nervous. “I didn’t want to fail,” he remembers. But he says that he needn’t have worried. “Princeton provides so many resources that I really couldn’t fail. I was working with amazing volunteers who were absolutely committed to success.”

John’s volunteer work has also gone beyond his club and Annual Giving. In addition to Alumni Schools Committee interviewing, he has been a Young Alumni member of the Alumni Council and a member of the Alumni Council’s Committee on Community Service as well as the Philadelphia Aspire Committee. In 2011, he began a three-year term on the Committee to Nominate Alumni Trustees, which he chaired this year. “Through our research and interviewing of potential candidates, I have met extraordinarily accomplished Princetonians and have learned how deeply, and in how many different ways, the Princeton experience has affected them. And I have had the great pleasure of getting to know and work with a new circle of Princeton friends – my fellow committee members – which is one of the special benefits of volunteering for Princeton.”