Mike Ott ’07

Mike Ott’s official record says that he majored in History and received two certificates, in American Studies and in Environmental studies. The unofficial record says he majored in working Reunions.

It started his freshman year, when an alum from the Class of ’99 connected him to working on the crew for its 5th Reunion. And that set the stage for working the 5th Reunion for the next two years as well, for ’00 as a sophomore and then as crew manager for ’01 as a junior in 2006. He remembers 2006: “It rained harder and longer than any other Reunion, but we bonded as a crew and helped 2001 win the Clancy Award.” Even as a senior, he was so committed to Reunions, and to the Class of ’72, ’07’s partner class, he volunteered two days to help ’72 set up for their 35th.

So when it came time after graduation to think about volunteering, he knew he wanted to focus on Reunions. “As a student, I loved seeing alumni come back and celebrate their life-long connections. That’s what I wanted to be a part of.” And he’s looking forward to having a terrific 10th. “I have two great co-chairs, Gaby Omenn and Serena Dayal. We have made a really good team over the past five years.”

“For people who like to throw a good party, Reunions volunteering is a great way to stay connected with classmates!”

Liz Johnson came to Princeton’s Department of Molecular Biology from Spelman College after meeting two of her science idols, David Botstein and Alison Gammie, who inspired her to come to Princeton to train with the next generation of scientists at the cutting edge of research. Through the years she discovered that there was even more to be excited about: the world of Princeton Reunions.

“I went to Reunions many times. It was wonderful how graduate students were welcomed at all the alumni activities. My favorite experience was the opportunity to work with other Reunion volunteers and the staff at Maclean House when I served on the decorating committee. I was hooked.”

Volunteering just came naturally after Liz got her degree, and she’s especially proud of how Reunions has been transformed for graduate alumni. “Graduate school was an intimate place with a great cohort of fascinating people bonding over triumphs and trials. Now grad alums know that Reunions is a great place to reconnect with friends and the University. We come together with the same bonds and close networks – to have fun!”

Liz has also acquired a love for wearing orange and black. “The more orange and black, the better,” she insists. This attitude goes well with this year’s APGA theme: “The more tiger spirit we can stuff into a DNA molecule the better!”

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