As I am typing this report, I find it hard to believe that I talk about Gallaudet's sesquicentennial events, especially the Reunion, in the past tense. The planning was a challenging experience for me. I was asked if I were to do it again, would I? My reply is yes, I definitely would.

I want to personally address alumni and friends in this (long) summary about the Reunion. Planning the Reunion was a truly rich experience and my loyalty to the university was cemented even further seeing the love that alumni, friends and family along with Gallaudet administrators, faculty, staff and students put together to celebrate both Gallaudet and GUAA for four incredible days. I trust that those of you who came will agree with me readily that it was like coming back home and had loads of fun, as well as learning from others. You may have read in the Gallaudet Today magazine about the Reunion, but I want to make it even more personal by writing this to my fellow alumni.

First of all, I want to thank Sam Sonnenstrahl, '79 & G-'84, Executive Director of Alumni Relations and GUAA, from the bottom of my heart. He has had my back throughout the years and during the Reunion. I like to also believe that I had his back, too. Throughout the planning stages, Sam kept me sane and I learned a lot about myself and my values related to Gallaudet. I also appreciate his loyalty to the university and our alumni. The Reunion would not have been the smashing success it was without his continuing patience, support, and hard work. We all owe Sam a huge "Thank You".

Secondly, it is with deep gratitude to Julie Greenfield, '95, for coordinating and designing Field House and finding us Spectrum, the company, who did our videos and tech work. Julie worked tirelessly to make sure everything went as smoothly as possible. Also, I personally thank Roberta Gage, '93, our event planner because she spent countless hours on the planning in making sure the whole reunion was a success.

I would also like to recognize Jean Bergey for her support. Jean served as vice chair, and came aboard after completing her duties with other 150th anniversary events such as Charter Day in April and the Symposium. She worked tirelessly to make sure we were within budget among other tasks as needed.
Keith Doane, ’14, who served as an assistant to everyone, should also be commended for his efforts. Keith always made himself available whenever he was needed, even with a moment’s notice, completing various tasks, from typing up notes to finding people.

Also, I cannot thank my committee enough. They worked hard and behind the scenes. People came to me and said, “thanks and congrats for a successful reunion”; each time they complimented me, I wished the Reunion planning committee could hear these comments too because much of the credit goes to them. I believe the committee, seeing happy and content faces during the Reunion, knew their work is very much appreciated. Kudos to each of them. Not only that, Celia May Baldwin, ’70, (currently living in California) attended meetings via VP every other week and William “Newby” Ely, ’78, made every effort to drive from Philadelphia, PA, to attend the meetings. For the full list of names of those that served on the committee, please go to the Gallaudet web and look for the Reunion Program book in this link, http://www.gallaudet.edu/150.html.

Linda Bove, ’68 and Ed Waterstreet ’68, who performed during the opening ceremony, are to be commended for a beautiful start to the program. They set the tone with their experience at Gallaudet and how their Gallaudet experiences have contributed to their success. In the opening program, we had various people come and speak to the audience. One of the highlights of the opening ceremony was the presentation of the Sesquicentennial Distinguished Alumni Award to Gerald “Bummy” Burstein, ’50.

There were also two small “programs” within the program: first was the Good Vibrations led by Cynthia (Saltzman) Roberson, ’72 and was performed by herself along with Rita Corey, ’78, Barbara (Goettsch) Mathis, ’78, Pauline Spanbauer, ’74, and Ogden Whitehead, ’78. These alumni were pioneer alumni doing song signing back in the 1970’s. It was fun watching them. The other one was the beloved Bison song which was done by Margo Cienik, ’81, and Mike Yance, ’81. Both Margo and Mike were so excited to have the honor of doing the Bison Song that they made sure their clothes coordinated (Gallaudet top and khaki pants). Margo and Mike absolutely did not disappoint and the crowd went wild during the performance, showing that strong Gallaudet spirit. We closed the program with buff and blue balloons floating down from the ceiling. That night really set the mood for the week.

Every morning we had plenary sessions which were conducted panel-style with specific topics. Thursday morning’s theme featured “Looking Back” with Ann Tenis, a Normal (now known as graduate) student, G-’43, Al Couthen, ’66, and Deborah Meranski Blumenson, ’58 (we all know her as Debbie Sonnenstrahl, the animated Art History teacher many of us had). Lance Fischer, ’71, moderated the panel. It was fascinating watching them reflect on their early days at the university. The panelists shared with us the old rules they had to follow.
Friday’s topic was "Changes Over The Years" with diversity, gender, and orientation being the main focus. Bregitt Jimenez, ’10 & G-’14, Kaori Takeuchi, G-’12, April Jackson-Woodward, ’12, and Alex Jackson Nelson, G-’13 served as panelists, sharing personal stories such as going through personal journeys and exploring who they were as individuals – as an international student, Latina, African-American or as a transsexual alumni. Delia Lozano-Martinez, ’10, led the panel. This panel showed the audience how much Gallaudet has evolved over the years.

Saturday morning, Sheri Youens-Un, ’98, and Earl Parks, ’99, led a presentation on “Looking Forward,” which focused on technology with demonstration of the technological advances Gallaudet has seen and adopted. This was done to show how Gallaudet is keeping up with today’s current trends that help serve our students. Being ahead of the game helps maintain retention rates for students. During this presentation, alumni were fascinated by what they did not have and what our students (and faculty and staff) now have.

There were 18 different workshops which Celia May Baldwin coordinated with interesting topics which made it difficult to decide which ones to attend since they took place in two different segments. Each workshop was videotaped and we are currently working to make them public via YouTube. Once this project has been completed, you will be notified so that you can view them online.

Thursday afternoon brought us a poster session arranged by Mary Lynn Lally, ’66, who represented the GUAA Board as Board Member – Home Region by handling this event where we got to “meet” our visionary leaders, either by the person her/himself, her/his family members, or narrators who did extensive research on leaders that have departed. Alumni obviously enjoyed themselves during this session because this was an interactive program and they felt they learned a lot. Standing by the doorway, I watched alumni comment on the things they learned about the leaders which was fun, seeing their reactions. For more information on our visionary leaders, go to this link http://www.gallaudet.edu/150.html, and click on “Visionary Leaders.”

The Class Bowl, led by Bob Weinstock, ’77 & G-’83, was a fun and spirited event where classes competed against each other. Alumni from the classes of 1943 to 1969, of who competed in one of the four clusters, won. Andy Lange, ’83, did a great job facilitating the competition.

After the class reunion group photo which took place Friday morning, that afternoon saw alumni celebrating Gallaudet University Alumni Association (GUAA)’s 125-year anniversary. The program began with a skit performed by alumni looking back to how GUAA was founded with a gift to the university – the statue of Thomas Gallaudet and Alice Cogswell. The program also included stories, recognition and praise for these who have contributed to the GUAA, bringing it to where it is today: as strong and vibrant as ever. GUAA President Alyce Slater Reynolds, ’76 & G-’78, and the GUAA Board Members led the program.
Gallaudet Club was held at Field House during the Reunion, from eight p.m. until midnight, with different themes for each evening. Thursday night Manny Hernandez, '01, as the Mister of Ceremony, led ASL night. ASL stories, poems, and an epic were shared by our alumni. It was fun watching the beauty of ASL and we thank Gallaudet for the opportunity to allow the language to flourish over the years. Friday was a “music” night led by Rosa Lee Gallimore-Timm, E-'97, and Russell Harvard, '08. The dance floor light up to which alumni, particularly the younger ones, loved, giving Field House that disco/night club feel. Participants clearly had fun and jumped on the dance floor and danced along with Rosa Lee and Russell. Good Vibrations also performed and did a fantastic number. Rita Corey did Cabaret again, the one she developed during the younger days to demonstrate through ASL. My friend and I looked at each other and remarked, “Oh wow, she still has it.” The fun beat of the entire program got the audience into the dancing spirit, including myself which was a lot of fun!

Greek organizations held private conclaves that included dinner for each organization on Thursday evening. Friday saw classes from 1945 to 2013 gather for their class reunions which included dinner and were held in various locations, both on and off campus. H Street was a particularly popular choice among the younger classes and several alumni have remarked it was like Gallaudet took over H Street that evening! I attended several of them and it was inspiring to see so many still loyal to their classes and still have plenty of energy to “party”. These reunions were coordinated by Abigail Drake, '97 and G-'99, Assistant Director of Alumni and Outreach Programs with the Office of Alumni Relations.

The Gallaudet University Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, coordinated by the President’s Office, followed by the Alumni Emeriti Club Induction ceremony, which was planned by the Office of Alumni Relations, took place Saturday morning and was a monumental event. Congratulations to our Hall of Fame inductees and to the Class of 1964, whom celebrated their 50th class reunion during the Gallaudet Reunion, for reaching this milestone. Once both programs ended, we had “Lunch with Presidents and Provosts” coordinated by William “Newby” Ely. He put in lots of energy and used his technology expertise in developing a video, shown in a loop, our presidents and provosts over the past 150 years. Newby also found clips of them signing which were fascinating, seeing how signing styles have changed over time. Never before did I realize our second President signed well.

In the afternoon, we had our department/program reunions coordinated by the alumni house staff, the first of its kind and these were well attended. Several departments celebrated anniversary milestones with the Department of Psychology celebrating 60 years, Counseling its 40 and ASL/Deaf Studies its 20 years. I attended the English department reunion where I studied as a student at Gallaudet, and it was fun talking with two former classmates. We reminisced about our former teachers and what fun (or tears) we had. I passed by Mathematics (now known as Science,
Technology, Economics, and Mathematics - STEM) and witnessed alumni and faculty (present and past) enjoying themselves. Reminiscing about the good old days.

Saturday afternoon after the department/program reunions, masses of alumni swarmed to the corner of 6th Street and Florida Ave, coordinated by Kati Morton, G-’11, to learn more from Fred Weiner, ’88, about the future of the university. I went there to watch and had to stand at the edge, as the small-tented area was filled to capacity. It is my understanding that Fred had to present more than once. This in itself tells you the love alumni have for their alma mater and really touched me when I saw how eager the crowd was to learn more about the growth of Gallaudet.

Unfortunately, like all reunions, good times have to end but the Reunion ended beautifully Saturday night with a multi-media program done by John Maucere, E-’87. It is not often that I roared in laughter throughout the program. Some of his skits included Gallaudet’s 150 year history. The Bison Song was performed by two recent graduates, Maria Klassen, ’13, and John (JT) Hathaway, ’13. Thank you, John, for making it a memorable closing ceremony. After the program, we all went to Chapel Hall where we stood outside and enjoyed the lovely light show showcasing both 150 and GUAA’s on the historical Tower Clock/Chapel Hall coordinated by Jean Bergey. I will repeat what I said in Gallaudet Today, “Nothing beats seeing people come and be so happy to see their Tower Clock shine.”

It will be remiss if I overlooked several things that the reunion attendees appreciated.

- When people first arrived, they had to go through registration, to which both and Tyese Wright, ’02, along with Roberta Gage handled. Registration for the most part was a smooth one, and those who had to wait in line, had a short wait which they used the time to chat with old friends, making the wait non-existent.
- iDeaf News staff, led by Seth Gerlis, E-’99, was everywhere everyday taking pictures and shooting videos of every event. He even had a drone with a camera hooked to it and took movies of events. It was fun watching everyone waving hello to the drone while we were posing for the class reunion group picture.
- Golf carts (coordinated by Harvey Grossinger, ’82 and Chuck Bowie, ’84). I must admit when we planned for the use of the golf carts, we agreed they would be used only for senior citizens and elderly alumni who need the service. It happened that the first night before the opening ceremony it rained buckets. We ended up opening the service to everyone and the service for all remained throughout the Reunion. Many student volunteers wanted to drive the golf carts, not because it was fun, but because they learned so much from our alumni.
- Interpreting and Support Service Providers (SSP) services (coordinated by Steven Collins, ’85 & G-’93, Nancy DeWitt, ’97 and Amanda Mueller) is to be commended. It was a goal to make sure as much of the Reunion was made
accessible as possible to alumni of all groups. During the reunion, we had to add international interpreting for some international registrants, who came as friends of Gallaudet. The coordinators and interpreters were flexible and did a wonderful job.

- **Campus tours**, coordinated by Evon Black, ’87 & G-'96, and Samantha Siedschlag, ’12, went very well
- During the Reunion, Kaitlin Luna worked hard to make sure the Gallaudet Reunion received recognition via social media.
- Felicia Williams, ’12, coordinated the class reunion group picture and she managed to have the picture taken of 1,000+ of us on a sunny Saturday morning in record time. Dick Moore, E-’73, was our photographer. I already framed and hung the picture in my office with a tremendous amount of pride.
- Housing went off without a hitch; actually out of all the alumni that stayed on campus that week, only one key was reported missing and every single person managed to check out by the mandatory time of noon. Kudos to our alumni! It was fun for alumni to take a stroll down memory lane by staying in the dorm, and they appreciated the on-campus services coordinated by Nikki Surber, ’98 & G-’01, and Susan Hanrahan, ’86. Only a funny thing happened: the alarm went off in Clerc Thursday morning and some alumni thought “not again”, referring to their college days. The alarm going off was due to an overload of air conditioning in the dormitory, not a prank by one of us.
- Volunteers, coordinated by Mary Keane, ’86 & PhD ’12, and Delia Lozano-Martinez, ’10, are to be applauded for their work. Alumni commented on how respectful and helpful they were. Most of the volunteers were students and it filled me with such pride and joy, seeing how well they treated our alumni as they are our future.
- I also thank employees at Gallaudet who helped to make the Gallaudet Reunion a success: Facilities Department, Department of Public Safety, and Auxiliary Services (the Bison Shop and Cafeteria) and many others.

The final count for the reunion was 1,193 from USA, Canada and other countries. 71 classes were represented, and the oldest alumnus is a member of the Class of 1943.

The few pictures below are screen shots from the video produced by Spectrum, Inc. and some are blurry because they were taken while in action. More pictures are in the fall 2014 issue of the *Gallaudet Today* magazine.
The Good Vibrations cast (from l to r: Ogden Whitehead, Barbara Goettsch Mathis, Cynthia Saltzman Roberson, Pauline Spanbauer and Rita Corey) during their college days and Ogden Whitehead in action at the opening ceremony.

Margo Cienik and Mike Yance doing the Bison Song. Pictures: “Our” and clearly they were enjoying themselves.

Rita Corey doing “Cabaret!” Friday night.

Vicki Hurwitz and John Maucere share a laugh.

Last but not least:
You can see how the golf carts are lined up to pick up attendees, and this one is driven by Harvey Grossinger.

And, in closing, I thank everyone involved and I repeat: “Be proud, be happy, be Gallaudet!”