



November 16, 2021

SUBJECT: Chairman's 2021 Annual Report

Fellow Members of the Long Gray Line,

The global pandemic has continued to make 2021 a particularly challenging year for all organizations, including your Association of Graduates. Throughout these uniquely trying times I have remained extremely proud of the way our graduate body and management organizations have responded.

We were able to host some in person events at West Point in 2021; however, due to the Delta variant, COVID restrictions were once again tightened, and many events were either cancelled or live streamed. We thank our graduates for your patience during this time. USMA follows DOD and CDC guidance, and the number one priority is the safety of the Corps of Cadets. The mission of the Academy is **to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets** so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army.

We also continued to advance alumni support initiatives begun prior to COVID. These include an enhanced Career Services Program and the Sallyport app. The former now offers a comprehensive menu of services and programs and has helped hundreds of grads making the transition to a post-military career or between civilian positions, while the latter enables West Point Societies to leverage technology to manage memberships, communications, and events to increase graduate engagement and facilitate networking. Sallyport now includes Grad Link, which connects graduates to one another around the world.

Commitment to support the cadet experience and enhance the Academy's competitiveness for attracting our Nation's best and brightest cadets and faculty remain steadfast goals. Recent WPAOG gift-funded construction and renovation projects include the Anderson Athletic Center, the new home for the West Point Sprint Football, Volleyball and Softball teams, and the General Crosbie E. Saint Equestrian Center, an indoor riding area and stables built to support the Cadet Equestrian Team and the community. Thanks to your philanthropic spirit and the superb efforts of our Development, Finance, and Investment committees, over the past four years we have doubled our funds under management to an all-time high of well over \$500M. During the same period the alumni participation rate has increased from 31 to 38 percent, which puts us ahead of most Ivy League institutions and far ahead of our sister service academies. To maintain momentum in support of West Point, we recently launched the next comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Under the leadership of President & CEO Todd Browne, our professional staff at West Point continues to do remarkable things in advancing our mission to serve West Point and the Long Gray Line.

We continue to follow the WPAOG 2030 Strategic Plan. The plan has three major goals: Serve the Long Gray Line, Serve West Point, and Provide for WPAOG's Future. The full plan can be found on our website.

Several of our Association's notable accomplishments for 2021 are highlighted below. Each reflects the teamwork and generosity of our volunteer leaders, individual graduates, and professional staff, as well as our teammates at the U.S. Military Academy.

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### **Alumni Support**

*Career Services:* 2021 yielded varied demand from graduates for WPAOG Career Services, partly on account of COVID and the Delta variant-related impacts on the U.S. economy. While many companies took a hiring pause due to uncertainty about the future, and many workers withdrew due to health concerns, those challenges did not disrupt Career Services' efforts and strategy to engage and connect our alumni with our employer partners. In fact, Career Services is on pace to enroll over 350 alumni in our program and place over 200 alumni in new careers in 2021.

As opposed to canceling all Service Academy Career Conferences (SACC), due to COVID, the service academies held virtual career conferences. The conferences yielded a 10 percent growth in employer participation, averaging 72 companies at the events. In addition to the SACC events, Career Services successfully hosted its first USMA-exclusive technology job fair in July, which yielded career placements for multiple USMA alumni. Career Services also provided its first Advanced Education Fair and Webinar Series, in which 236 alumni and 22 schools participated. Career Services aims to continue to add additional events throughout the year to provide ample world-class career opportunities for its world-class grads.

The Career Services team continued to leverage its industry connections, employer partners, and subject matter experts from among the Long Gray Line, enabling grads to successfully network and create connections that yielded successful job placements and provided both personal and professional growth. Through our social media presence on LinkedIn (West Point Association of Graduates Career Services Network), Facebook (USMA Careers and Networking), Handshake, Korn Ferry, and Sallyport, we have seen a consistent increase in grads connecting with grads, career opportunities, and job placements. Since its inception, over 1,000 graduates have signed up to receive services, and 550 graduates have been hired through the program. We are currently working with 460 graduates, in various stages of career transition, and over 5,000 company relationships. Career Services' success comes from an amazing staff dedicated to serving the Long Gray Line, our support from our employer partners, the West Point Societies, and the Shared Interest Groups such as the West Point Women and Do More Together organization. Together, our goal is to equip all graduates with the confidence to successfully navigate each phase of their career throughout their lifetime, which demonstrate a commitment to our vision to be the most highly connected alumni career services in the world.

*Memorial Support.* WPAOG has been providing Memorial Support assistance since 2008. It was originally made possible by a generous donation from Mrs. Betty Dettre in memory of her husband—MG (R) Rexford H. Dettre Jr., USMA January 1943—their gift, along with additional continued support from the Long Gray Line and others, enable WPAOG to provide this service to families. In 2021 we were able to provide support to more than 158 families who came to have a service at West Point, the highest number ever. This vital program touched more than 2,500 members of the Long Gray Line, their families and friends who attended funerals in 2021.

*Rockbound Highland Home (RBHH).* Launched in March 2017, the RBHH program was designed to welcome graduates back to West Point and to support their connection with their "Rockbound Highland Home." There are three components: Grad Insider Tour, Grad Pass, and Grad Perks. As its name suggests, the Grad Insider Tour provides the insider experience, a tour for graduates and their guests of cadet areas not open to the public:

locations include Central and North areas, the Cadet Uniform Factory, Arvin Cadet Physical Development Center, the Mess Hall, Jefferson Hall, Grant Hall, and Taylor Hall. The Insider Tours were suspended in March 2020 due to COVID concerns and remain suspended at this time. In 2021, RBHH resources have been redirected to other emerging opportunities to support West Point personnel and families. The RBHH team has conducted 34 “windshield tours” for families who are at West Point to lay their loved one to rest in the West Point Cemetery. The team also provided eight tours for USMA/Garrison staff and faculty and one for a Distinguished Graduate family. We will be incorporating more tours for our new staff and faculty. The Grad Pass program is designed to ease the process of navigating post security procedures by first providing a secure online form for the required background check, then easing the pass pick-up process. Since visitor restrictions have been lifted, graduates have begun to take full advantage of the Grad Pass program in 2021. As of October 20, 2021, 1,326 Grad Passes have been processed. Grad Perks offers special access to Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) facilities and services to graduates with a Grad Pass. In 2018, WPAOG was honored to receive two Gold Awards for the Rockbound Highland Home Program from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE): one in Alumni Relations for excellence in “providing returning graduates a first-class experience at their Alma Mater” and the other in Alumni Relations Events and Affinity Programs for “creating a meaningful experience for returning graduates.”

*Initiatives.* Alumni Support added a new Director to the department in July 2021 and soon thereafter began to address a number of new initiatives. Examples include launching WPAOG Podcasts on subjects directly of interest to alumni, growing WPAOG Grads Helping Grads and Transition Navigator supporting alumni at critical transition points in their professional and personal lives, and exploring how WPAOG could offer suicide prevention support for victims and those around them. Most notable has been the Hudson Valley Project (HVP), a WPAOG initiative focused on assisting the continued commercial, economic, educational, and social development of neighbor communities around West Point. The project directly addresses the USMA Strategy by directly impacting recruiting for future cadets and West Point staff and faculty. The initial focus of the HVP is on enhancing the West Point bond with the Village of Highland Falls. Among the project lines of effort are the development of an Outside School Time program for the Highland Falls Intermediate School, assisting in assessing the capital development required to renovate the Highland Falls Elementary School, and establishing a grass-roots group of Highland Falls community leaders to help shape the HVP and communicate with local communities. Finally, the HVP is also rallying alumni to leverage their considerable networking power to pursue both for-profit and philanthropic economic development ventures in Highland Falls. Alumni with an interest in this effort should join the LinkedIn Group: *Hudson Valley Community Development*.

*Selected Activities with Cadet Classes.* In 2021, the Class Ring Memorial Program received 52 West Point rings. To date, 669 rings are now a part of this meaningful program. This year, the annual “Ring Melt Ceremony” was held in Crest Hall of Eisenhower Hall. For the first time ever, ring donors and family members were not able to attend due to COVID restrictions. However, members of the Ring and Crest Committee from every single cadet company were able to attend this special event. In addition to the class officers, these cadets were able to place the donor rings into the crucible on behalf of the families who were not able to be present. We also livestreamed this event for the first time so that family members would be able to witness the ceremony. Family members sent us short video clips that we played after their loved one’s ring was placed into the crucible.

WPAOG was able to host the annual First Class Social for the Class of 2021 with roughly 130 people in attendance this spring. This event is sponsored by the Class of 1996, with the purpose of providing an opportunity for First Class cadets to socialize in a relaxed environment, meet the WPAOG team, and learn about WPAOG’s mission to serve West Point and the Long Gray Line.

*50-Year Class Affiliation Program.* This ever-popular program returned to a semi-normal state this year, starting off with the Class Crest unveiling for the Class of 2024. One of the members of its affiliate class, the Class of 1974, is on faculty at West Point and, because he was “inside the West Point bubble” was able to attend and represent the Class of 1974 at this special event.

Four distinguished members of the Class of 1971 were able to be present at the graduation ceremony for the Class of 2021 to hand out the traditional second lieutenant bars after the graduates received their diplomas.

Members of the Class of 1975 were able to be present for R-Day and to meet the families of the cadet candidates (CCs) after they dropped off their sons and daughters at the gate. Because family members were not permitted to be on post for R-Day, the Class of 1975 elected to host WPAOG's traditional Ice Cream Social. The Parent Welcome Center and Ice Cream Social were both held outdoors in the parking lot of the West Point Visitor Center. The CCs were dropped off on three separate days, and members of the affiliate class were there to support their families for each of those days. The Class also joined 2025 for their March Back from Lake Frederick leading in to their Acceptance Day activities.

After showing proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test, one member of each affiliate class was able to attend the Oath Ceremony held on the Plain following the final day of R-Day.

The Class of 1974 was able to finally support their affiliate class in person at the graduation ceremony for Cadet Field Training, during which they were able to present the yearling class with its class flag.

The Class of 1973 was able to support the Class of 2023 in a unique way this year. Following the Affirmation Ceremony for the Class of 2023, the 50-year affiliate class hosted a special reception for their affiliates. This was the first time that a reception was held for the cadet class following this event. The Class of 1973 also hosted a dinner for their classmates, the Class of 2023 class officers, and a few select others prior to the ceremony. During the dinner, Class History Panels were unveiled in the Class 1963 Lounge in Ike Hall. On these panels, were written history synopses about the 50-, 100-, 150, and 200-year affiliate classes.

Several ring donors and members of the Class of 1972 were able to attend Ring Weekend for the Class of 2022.

*Alumni Events Supported.* The Alumni Events team provided support for seven class reunions this fall at West Point and four class reunions in Arlington, Texas, totaling over 3,000 graduates and guests. In addition, the team supported three virtual class reunions in the spring, four new virtual event initiatives designed to engage alumni and parents—such as Paint Night, Wine Tasting, and “Updates from Inside the Gates”—and three Entrepreneur Speaker series events in conjunction with the Entrepreneur Shared Interest Group committee. These speaker series kept the momentum for the in-person 2021 Entrepreneur Summit held off-site in Austin, TX, with 175 in attendance.

*WPAOG Awards.* The Distinguished Graduate Award was delayed until the fall due to COVID. This year we honored both the 2020 and 2021 recipients. The 2020 honored recipients are: Mr. Richard A. Nowak '64, Mr. William H. Roedy Jr. '70, LTC (R) Andrew F. Krepinevich '72, LTG (R) Kenneth W. Hunzeker '75, and GEN (R) Curtis M. Scaparrotti '78. The 2021 honored recipients are HON Michael W. Wynne '66, Mr. Randall M. Pais '67, Mr. Thomas C. Shull '73, GEN (R) Stanley A. McChrystal '76, GEN (R) David M. Rodriguez '76, and LTG (R) Herbert Raymond (H.R.) McMaster Jr. '84. In October, Mae C. Jemison, M.D. received the 64th annual Sylvanus Thayer Award. Also in October, LTC James R. Enos '00 received the 16th annual Nininger Award for Valor at Arms.

*WPAOG Leaders Conference* (sponsored by the Class of 1967). This year's conference took place virtually with representatives from 76 classes, 105 West Point Societies, and 40 Parents Clubs. Sixty Distinguished Society Awards and 16 Distinguished Parents Club Awards were recognized. This one-day virtual conference included updates from the USMA and WPAOG Leader Teams and Class, Society, and Parents Club networking sessions.

*Retail Operations.* The Retail Operation remains successful, even amid the pandemic. While many special events, including reunions, were canceled in 2021, the new year provided the opportunity to continue to build on the previous successes. Retail Operations provided memorabilia support to 13 reunions, as well as special events, including Grad March Back. Planning for the 2022 reunion and special event season is in progress. At the close of Q3, the retail operation had surpassed the total 2020 YE sales by 4.7 percent. Both the webstore and brick

and mortar remain fully staffed and operational for normal business, including all home football games. The WPAOG Gift Shop continues to be the premier shopping destination, providing a unique and focused experience for West Point grads, cadets, parents, and friends.

*Societies and Shared Interest Groups (SIGs).* Our 133 Societies serve as a vital connection to the local communities and represent WPAOG all over the world, and our four SIGs support graduates in specific interest areas with new requests being considered monthly. Feedback from our leaders has helped to expand the resources available to our leaders, especially our Regional Advisors. The Sallyport platform was rolled out to assist our Societies with administration of their membership, donations, communications, and events. All Societies and SIGs have been onboarded and trained well ahead of the 2022 schedule. Twenty-seven percent of the graduate population is now active in the platform, a 23 percent increase over last year. Societies and SIGs have also been very active utilizing technological features provided by WPAOG to help stay connected with their constituents. Despite the pandemic, Societies still managed to successfully engage and support their constituents and 60 Societies were recognized as being “Distinguished” in 2021.

*Founders Day.* In anticipation of pandemic challenges in 2021, Alumni Services planned a virtual Founders Day with over 1,350 attendees. The event contained traditional aspects of a Founders Day with some additional new items that are being carried over for the future. The event was a great success with a world-class net promoter score.

*Gripping Hands Program.* This profound program offers alumni a way to connect during catastrophic natural or economic emergencies. Prior to, or immediately following an event, alumni chapter volunteers, known as “Society Leaders,” work with WPAOG’s Alumni Services to assess local graduate needs for emergency housing, supplies (clothing, food, water, toiletries), pet care (pets are not able to travel to shelters), transportation, help with insurance forms, check-ins with family, emotional support, and/or career support. This program offers a personal touch during difficult times. Alumni Services fielded dozens of requests to assist graduates and their immediate family members during the pandemic. Societies were instrumental in the success of the program and stepped up to assist locally. A new Gripping Hands Endowment was introduced in 2021 to assist individual graduates.

*Spirit Events.* The pandemic restricted what could be offered for football open houses at Herbert Hall, but thousands of attendees still came to the Hall each game for refreshments, the restroom, and shopping at the WPAOG Gift Shop. The Cadet Band and Rabble Rousers came by to perform and take photos with the fans. Societies continued to lead official tailgates at four different universities and the Army-Air Force Game.

*Great Hall Program.* The Great Hall was also subject to restrictions because of the pandemic. There were over 100 events booked in 2021, up from 63 in 2020. New military promotions and retirements for free during normal business hours have also been introduced.

*Travel Program.* The Travel Program was impacted due to the pandemic. Tours that had been moved from 2020 to 2021 were again postponed or canceled. We are now working offering local travel options for parents who come to West Point to visit their cadets, along with providing virtual tour experiences.

*Brick and Paver Program.* The brick and paver online mapping program was updated to include a new story feature in 2020, and stories continued to be added in 2021. This feature allows graduates, friends, and family to add stories and photographs to the online mapping of the bricks and pavers. It provides a more complete story of the recipients. An expansion project is being planned to make room for future classes in the front of the building, but delays with contractors have caused it to be postponed.

## Communications & Marketing

Despite still working primarily in a remote fashion, Communications & Marketing (C&M) continues to produce excellent digital and print products to engage and inform constituents across several target market segments: graduates, cadet parents/families, widowed spouses, USMA faculty and staff, admissions prospects, and the general public. Our audience continues to engage and grow with WPAOG through all channels. A change in departmental leadership occurred after Elizabeth Barrett departed in January. Kim McDermott '87 served as Acting VP until Jaye Donaldson arrived in September.

### *WPAOG Publications*

*West Point* magazine is now in its 11th year. All graduates continue to receive complimentary copies of the magazine four times each year, as do all cadet parents and widowed spouses of graduates. This broad distribution supports WPAOG's overall goal of enhanced engagement of graduates, parents, and widows/widowers. USMA Admissions also frequently purchases copies to use during their admissions process. The 2021 *West Point* cover stories highlighted academics during severe COVID-19 restrictions, the combat experience of the Global War on Terror generation, valor and service within the Long Gray Line, and the landscape of USMA Strategic Partnerships. As it has done in the past, *West Point* magazine also published articles related to a specific theme for each issue in 2021. The Winter issue celebrated the magazine's first decade of telling the West Point story and strengthening the grip of the Long Gray Line with articles commemorating the 10th anniversary of the publication. This issue won a "Gold" Stevie Award from the American Business Awards Program. The Spring issue examined "connections" at West Point, with articles on the USMA Sponsorship Program, the 50-Year Affiliation Program, West Point Parents Clubs and more. The Summer issue profiled the programs and initiatives within the USMA Department of Law, which marked its bicentennial in 2021. Finally, the Fall issue featured articles detailing USMA's five Strategic Partnerships: the U.S. Army, academia, ally nations, alumni, and the American people. *West Point's* print circulation reached a record 236,552 copies in 2021, with the Summer and Fall editions topping 59,000 issues. Each issue of *West Point* magazine is also available online. As of October 30, 2021, *West Point* magazine's 2021 online version totaled 2,856 visits with 58,158 pageviews.

*TAPS*. WPAOG's annual memorial magazine continues the unprecedented tradition begun in the first years of our Association. The 2021 edition continued the high level of engagement seen in previous years, publishing 334 Memorial Articles written by classmates and family members. Graduate memorialization is a core responsibility of WPAOG, and a great deal of time and care is spent with each deceased graduate's family and/or classmates to create personalized memorial articles. Once memorial articles are finalized with next of kin, WPAOG also provides keepsake parchment printouts of the articles for families, classmates, and friends. The articles are also posted to "Be Thou at Peace," the memorial section of the WPAOG website. This section is perennially one of the top three sections visited, with nearly 150,000 visits as of October 30, 2021.

*Register of Graduates*. The 2020 Edition of *The West Point Register of Graduates & Former Cadets* published in June 2021, as a single volume, weighs seven pounds. There is no longer the possibility that a single volume could include the entire Long Gray Line. Now in its 76th Edition, the *Register* is our most historic publication, dating back to 1850, when the first *Register* was compiled by George W. Cullum, Class of 1833. The *Register* is based on a proprietary database detailing the military career of every West Point graduate since 1802, a database no other institution of learning can claim.

### *WPAOG Digital/Multimedia Communication:*

*Email, Social Media, Newsfeeds, Video, Death Notification Service*

*Email.* Each year, WPAOG's largest communication audience is effectively reached through email. We send more than 40 unique targeted messages via broadcast email per year, which enables graduates to stay connected to the Academy, WPAOG events, classmates, and fellow Society members. Our emails continue to achieve outstanding open rates, averaging over 41 percent in 2021. WPAOG's twice-monthly *First Call* e-newsletter (sent to graduates), with a 42 percent open rate, and the monthly *Parent Review* (sent to cadet parents), with a 54 percent open rate, are the two most important regular emails we distribute. Daily birthday emails are sent to every graduate celebrating a birthday that day, and we began sending birthday emails to every cadet in March 2021, achieving a 51 percent average open rate. Email communications are sent through our primary broadcast email system, Blackbaud Internet Solutions. Special class communications are sent through LYRIS from department liaisons and class leaders. We also use automated third-party solutions to permit constituent requests for calendar updates and news features. Trumba is used for calendar updates and Feedblitz is used for the Grad and Cadet news feeds.

*Social Media.* WPAOG's social media audience is significant and rapidly growing. We work in partnership with USMA and its directorates to magnify social media communications. Growing WPAOG's social media presence is part of our long-term strategy (started in 2015) to expand our brand outreach to younger and more diverse audiences, and our social media audiences are different and broader than our email, print and website audiences. WPAOG currently maintains a presence on Facebook (52K followers), LinkedIn (16,700 group members/8.9K page followers), Twitter (16.9K followers), Instagram (13.6K followers), Vimeo, YouTube, Flickr, and Pinterest. Our combined social media audience is currently over 108,000 followers, and the reach of any individual post may be much greater. Every WPAOG social media channel audience (and their engagement rates) has grown in 2021.

*Videos:* Creating original video content to support WPAOG's mission to connect with the Long Gray Line has continued in 2021. We have had over 200,000 video views from January 2021 through October 2021. Video content is produced and used to engage West Point graduates through our top three social media platforms, which are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Social media video examples include the Ring Melt video and the Ring Weekend video, which gave the opportunity for ring donors and grads to virtually be a part of the Ring Melt Ceremony for the Class of 2022. Video content is also used to reach out to grads and let them know about opportunities to give back to their alma mater. A two-part series of videos was created with grads and for grads to raise the awareness of volunteering for WPAOG's Board of Directors and Advisory Council. Original video content has also become part of the *West Point* magazine, bringing a multimedia layer to the publication that resides on our website. For the 10th anniversary issue of the magazine, video stories accompanied articles and were embedded in the magazine with QR codes. Both the Thayer Award story and the Branch Night story in the 2021 issue had video components.

*Death Notification System.* WPAOG provides a highly valued service for classmates and families of graduates, verifying and communicating daily graduate death notifications (500-plus per year). WPAOG also posts notifications on Twitter and prepares and sends condolence letters to all next of kin.

### **Construction**

*Anderson Athletic Center (Building 673).* The ribbon cutting ceremony was conducted in October. The newly renovated building is being actively used by Sprint Football, Women's Volleyball and Women's Softball.

*GEN Crosbie E. Saint Equestrian Center.* This state-of-the-art indoor equestrian center was dedicated in October.

*Michie Stadium Restoration Project.* Design continues to advance while the sale of new seating is underway. This tremendous upgrade to Michie Stadium will provide state of the art fan experiences, complete with new cadet seating, as well as club, suite, loge and ledge seating.

*West Point Humanities Center (Building 148).* Archeological testing is almost complete. The 50 percent Design Development has been completed for this magnificent addition to Trophy Point, and fundraising is underway.

*Egner Hall Music Building Renovation (Building 685):* Originally built in 1933, the Music Building design has begun that will provide major upgrades to the Glee Club, Band Rooms, and major building infrastructure systems.

## Development

*Development Overview.* Our team continues to work effectively in a hybrid manner, both in person and remotely. The Major Giving and Leadership teams have begun to travel to their regions to meet with their donors again as COVID travel regulations loosen. We are tracking well against our annual \$50M cash and 38.5 percent alumni participation goals, and we have already surpassed our \$50M pledge goal for the year. We continue to allocate our resources efficiently, with a cost to raise a dollar of 20 cents. Finally, we were able to drop the Gift Allocation Percentage (GAP) from 12% to 10% for all gifts, reflecting our commitment to maximizing the amount of funding that reaches a given program, facility, or activity.

*Campaign.* 2021 marked the start of the nucleus fund phase of a new \$600.5M fundraising campaign for West Point and the West Point Association of Graduates—\$550.5M for the Academy and \$50M for WPAOG. The Superintendent has approved a list of 40 needs, and WPAOG will be seeking funding for 10 needs. Our staff is finalizing marketing materials to share with prospects. As of October 26, more than \$172M has been raised for the campaign, or 29 percent of our goal. The campaign is slated to run for seven years, until 2027.

*All Academy Challenge.* The eighth-annual All Academy Challenge in May yielded a 22.52 percent alumni participation rate (2nd to Merchant Marine), our highest alumni participation rate since the inception of the competition. With 11,614 graduate donors, WPAOG brought in gifts totaling \$2.57M. The competition between classes was robust, with class representatives submitting spirit videos and posting matching challenges. The Class of 1972 secured the highest level of participation, and the Class of 1994 achieved the greatest number of donors. This year we introduced exciting giveaways from Old Grad-owned companies to celebrate participation during the Challenge.

*Class Fundraising.* The Class of 1971 reached its \$2.2M goal for its 50th Reunion Gift early and continued to strive to achieve record class campaign participation of 93 percent. The Class of 1972 continued with its \$5.2M campaign, while the classes of 1974 and 1975 each settled on \$2M campaigns. Of note are three active campaigns from the '80s, with goals of \$4M (Class of 1984), \$4.082M (Class of 1982) and \$4.5M (Class of 1983). This year also saw the Firsties in the Class of 2021 reach a class participation rate of 32 percent, for which their 50-Year Affiliate Class, Class of 1971, gifted a match of \$32,000 to the Class of 2021's Gift Fund.

*Stewardship & Events.* This fall saw a return to a busy football season complete with in-person donor and engagement events, including Family Weekend, SUPT's Circle Weekend, Distinguished Graduates Award (inducting two years of DGAs), and two Margin of Excellence facility ribbon-cutting ceremonies (Saint Equestrian Center and Anderson Athletic Center). Throughout the fall, the team also juggled ever-changing COVID protocol requirements, ensuring guests were informed and prepared to meet USMA restrictions.

## Finance

*Financial Status.* In 2020, WPAOG received contribution revenue of \$43.9 million, while also granting \$23.2 million to the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) and the Army West Point Athletic Association (AWPAA). In a challenging 2020, WPAOG's net assets increased by \$53.9 million, primarily due to an increase in the market value of long-term investments during the year and prudent cost management. On December 31, 2020, our investments had a value of \$478.3 million, an increase of 11.0 percent over the value on December 31, 2019. In 2021, our independent auditors issued an unmodified opinion on our 2020 financial statements. These statements, along with our tax return (Form 990), can be found on the Association's website, [WestPointAOG.org](http://WestPointAOG.org). WPAOG is currently managing and reporting on more than 700 endowments, class gift accounts and other gift accounts for USMA and AWPAA, in addition to class administrative accounts.

WPAOG's financial strength stemming from the success of our Development efforts and from the Association's investments still strain to meet the Academy's needs as identified by the Superintendent and thus must not cloud the fact that we will continue to depend on the generosity of the Long Gray Line going forward.

### **Information Technology**

In 2021 we made several improvements to our cybersecurity posture in response to a worsening threat environment.

- We replaced our network firewall with a new, more sophisticated appliance that provides additional protections and integrated Virtual Private Network capability.
- We implemented multifactor authentication for network and email access.
- We created a cybersecurity incident response plan and have retained a cybersecurity incident response vendor. They are on call for assistance should we have an incident and will conduct a tabletop exercise with WPAOG leadership to test and refine the incident response plan.

We continue to be defended by the Darktrace security appliance, which uses machine learning to identify suspicious network activity and isolate any devices that may be infected with malware or ransomware. It also screens all inbound emails for phishing attempts and malicious links or payloads.

In addition to the new network firewall, other physical IT infrastructure improvements included the replacement of our core network switches and upgrading the internet connection for our Wifi network to a one gigabit fiber optic circuit. We plan to upgrade the Wifi network with additional access points in Q4 2021.

We completed the first phase of our integration between Blackbaud CRM and Sallyport. This allows constituent data updated on one system to be automatically synchronized with the other platform. We also automated the task of bringing constituent interaction records from the system Army Athletics uses into Blackbaud CRM. An online IT helpdesk ticketing system was implemented to better track support requests and work orders.

### **Personnel Transitions**

Kim McDermott '87 was Acting Vice President of Communications and Marketing until Jaye Donaldson was hired as Vice President of Communications and Marketing. Additionally, we hired:

Pam Diskul-Vrable as Class Giving Officer  
Mick Hauser '84, Director of Alumni Support Initiatives  
Ahmond Hill '02, Director of Career Services  
Dierdre (Dede) Smith, Director of Business Systems  
Bethany Smith, PT Annual Giving Officer  
Laura Cruz, Planned Giving Officer

Also, there were several job changes/promotions within the organization:

Dawn Georgalas, Director of Development Events  
Meg Barge, Assistant Director of Career Services  
Courtney Schacht, Assistant Director of Development Communications

## Scholarships/Grants

*West Point AOG Preparatory Scholarship Program (WPPSP):* Twenty-eight aspiring West Point cadets (24 scholar-leaders and four athletes) received a scholarship through the WPAOG Preparatory Program. Recipients of WPPSP consistently graduate West Point at higher rates than all other admits, adding value to the Academy as well as the individual recipients.

*WPAOG Fallen Graduates Memorial Scholarship (FGMS) Program.* Three children of Fallen Graduates received scholarships this year. These recipients were very appreciative of the financial assistance provided to help fund their education.

*Gripping Hands Endowment.* The Gripping Hands Endowment was created in late 2020 by an anonymous donor who wanted to ensure that graduates were taken care of in a time of financial crisis. The endowment also helps fund the educational needs of spouses and children of graduates who died in the line of duty. This year the endowment distributed over \$20,000 to four graduates.

## Awards

The West Point Association of Graduates (WPAOG) earned two Gold Stevie Awards, one Silver Stevie Award, and one Bronze Stevie in the 19th Annual American Business Awards. WPAOG's Gold awards were for USMA 2020 Graduation Video and the 10th Anniversary Issue of *West Point* magazine. The Silver award was for Non-Profit of the Year, and the Bronze award was for the Virtual Entrepreneur Summit Speaker Series.

The Association was also the recipient of the following awards from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE): Communications Improvement: A Gateway to Engage: WPAOG's Sallyport Platform (GOLD): Special Events Single Day: 2020 United States Military Academy Graduation Production and Video (GOLD) Alumni Relations Targeted Constituency Engagement: Long Gray Line Outreach Initiative (SILVER). Video General Information: Metals of Honor: West Point Cadets Receive Their Class Rings. (SILVER)

## Governance

At year's end, I will conclude my term as Chair. I began my service on the Board in 2009 when I was elected as a Director and was then elected as Chair in 2018. Stan Shipley, Vice Chair will also be ending his time on the Board this year. Stan joined the Board as a Director in 2011 and was selected as Vice Chair in 2018. He held numerous chair positions and was a member of many committees. John Northrop, Kate Shattuck, and Pat Kane roll off the Board at the end of the year. John joined the Board in 2013 and currently serves as Chair of the Development Committee, Vice Chair of the Information Technology Committee, as a member of the Alumni Support Committee, and on the WP Athletics LLC Board of Managers. Kate joined the Board in 2019 and is the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Vice Chair of the Finance Committee, a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and is on the WP Athletics LLC Board of Managers. Pat Kane joined the Board in 2020 and is the Vice Chair of the Alumni Support Committee, Vice Chair of the Development Committee, and a member of the Governance and Board Affairs Committee, and the Compensation Committee.

The Advisory Council met virtually in April and will meet again in November at West Point. The Council continued to provide critical feedback to the Board and continues to be the eyes, ears, and conscience of the Board of Directors. At the April meeting, Dr. Jeffrey Peterson provided the Advisory Council with an overview of the Character Integration Advisory Group (CIAG), which was very informative. At the November meeting I will have the opportunity to thank and bid farewell to the 17 Council members whose terms expire on December 31, 2021. It is a pleasure to recognize each of them for their commitment and service to the Association.

## Conclusion

Serving as Chairman of our Association of Graduates for the past four years has been an inspirational and satisfying experience. I leave with a heightened sense of pride and admiration for our alma mater, WPAOG and you, our graduates. Those of us fortunate enough to have the opportunity to serve in WPAOG governance positions fully understand that the essence of our organization is our strong, vibrant alumni body. Your Board and Advisory Council, along with the dedicated professionals at Herbert Hall, exist to serve West Point and the entire Long Gray Line. In doing so we are ever mindful of our vision to be the most highly connected alumni body in the world. The past four years have demonstrated the resiliency and resourcefulness of your Association in the face of multiple challenges.

WPAOG remains committed to meet the changing needs of West Point and its graduates. We enjoy a continuous flow of volunteers who today populate our exceptionally talented, professional, and aware Board of Directors and Advisory Council, as well as a dedicated, selfless collection of Class, Society and Parents Club leaders. Our next Chair will lead the most diverse Board in our history and benefit from the continuity of a seasoned management staff under the leadership of our accomplished President & CEO, Todd Browne. I depart fully confident that WPAOG will continue to thrive and forever thankful for the opportunity to serve you and West Point.



Joseph E. DeFrancisco '65  
Lieutenant General (Retired)  
Chairman, WPAOG Board of Directors