



2 May 2023

Oh Classmates, my Classmates –

I hope you and your loved ones are happy, healthy, and enjoying the belated arrival of Spring weather (is it raining locusts yet?). I am reaching out to the Class to **ask for your participation** in the Naval Academy Foundation's Great Class Challenge.

The idea is simple – '**87 WINS**' this year's Challenge, which starts on Monday, 8 May and runs through Friday, 12 May. Placing in the Top 5 or 10 would be great and wonderful (last year, we rallied up to 15th place with 150 donors), but I believe that we can win this thing (and better still, best our Firsties!)

OK, so what does this mean to you? There are actually five things going on here (and we've included an addendum for with all the details):

1. We want to win this thing (did I already mention that)? Our target is 450 donors. Oh..., and this donation does count towards our 40th Reunion Class Gift Project effort!
2. This is a **participation** fundraiser – meaning it's not how much you donate but the fact that you are participating and supporting USNA. We're thinking \$19.87 is a nice round, reasonable number for everyone but you can "check the box" for as little as \$10.
3. We will use the data of where our Classmates choose to give during the Challenge to inform the Class Project Executive Steering Committee (ESC) of likely foci for the Class Gift Project (which culminates during our 40th reunion). This is a classic example of voting with your wallet!
4. Of course, the Academy benefits from your philanthropy (for whichever initiative you select – and there are 11 broad categories to choose from – see the addendum or visit [the Challenge website](#)).
5. We want to win this thing, and especially trounce the Class of 1984, who have taken the top spot for the number of donors three years in a row and the Class of 1965, who have led in participation rate for nine years!

That's it – a short & sweet rallying cry to action. Company Wranglers may reach out to contact you and facilitate participation. Remember, the focus isn't pledging big bucks (or diluting our major Class gift efforts later), it's a discrete, in-the-moment participation campaign. Use this as an excuse to call a Classmate or contact a company mate you haven't spoken to in a while.

There is more information on the next page addendum or on the website:

<https://navalacademychallenge.com/pages/usna-home>

Go Navy!

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The Great Class Challenge

Evolved from the “All Academy Challenge”, which pitted Navy against the other service academies. The Whoops and Zoomies couldn’t hack it and dropped out last year. The Naval Academy Foundation converted the event to an internal Naval Academy competition among all USNA classes. Last year’s Challenge was the most successful since the competition started and raised over two million dollars for USNA from 6,300 alumni donors.

Why Should I Participate?

Alumni contributions are critical to sustaining the Margin of Excellence of Naval Academy programs. I can attest from my “day job” at Fleet Forces Command N8/N9 that government funding for USNA programs is far from assured, and significant requirements have been “unfunded issues” in this year’s ongoing Navy POM. Additionally, Navy funding is focused on the basics and does not support the high achievement and continual improvement we expect from our alma mater.

If you are like me, you may be awed by some of the generous gifts given by some of our classmates, and you may wonder if your donation will make a difference. If you have asked that question, this effort is for you. The Great Class Challenge is a participation challenge in two categories – the highest percentage of alumni donating and the most Classmates donating. ‘87 has been on a sustained improving glideslope and nearly doubled the number of classmates donating in 2022 (from 86 to 150) to move into the top 20.

How do I support ‘87 and USNA?

The Great Class Challenge website, www.navalacademychallenge.com, will go live on 8 May. You can make your gift on the site. Classmates on the USNA Foundation mailing list may have already received a Navy pennant in the mail with more details. On the site, there is a drop-down menu listing specific USNA program categories you can choose to support, including:

- [Naval Academy Fund \(Superintendent’s Unrestricted Fund\)](#)
- [Center for Academic Excellence](#)
- [Midshipman Activities Fund](#)
- [Admissions Excellence](#)
- [Center for Cyber Security Studies](#)
- [Project-Based Learning](#)
- [USNA AA&F Center](#)
- [Center for Experiential Leadership Development](#)
- [STEM Center for Education & Outreach](#)
- [International Programs](#)
- [Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership](#)

Regardless of the program you select, ‘87 will get credit for your gift. The class will also get credit for any gifts you may have submitted by other means (mail, phone, or online).

If you have any questions, you can reach out to the class leadership team (contact info at the end), or direct questions to the Naval Academy Foundation class giving coordinator, Sara Brown (sara.brown@usna.com, 410-295-4130).

Thank you for your continued support in keeping USNA the top educational and leadership institution in the country. I'll be reaching out again with a short reminder once the Great Class Challenge gets underway. Until then, GO NAVY! (and BEAT the other USNA classes).

Regards,

/s/

Steve Rowe

Comm O, USNA Class of 1987

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YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM: Reach out to any of us with your recommendations or concerns at:

- Scott Herbener, 410.703.3519, president@usna87.net
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