

*Letter from Col Lance Betros, responding to a request from the Gift Committee to provide more detail on certain sub-projects within the Center for Oral History.*

Dear Fred:

It was a pleasure talking with you today. I'm delighted to hear that the Class of 1965 is considering a gift to the Center for Oral History. The COH will have a breakout year in 2011, with its website going live this month and a "grand opening" in October during which we will premiere our first full-length documentary film. The film producer, Ken Burns, will be our guest speaker at the grand opening banquet.

The gift now being contemplated by your class would allow the COH to have an enormously positive long-term influence on cadet education. The same is true of the COH's potential for advancing the Academy's goals for strategic outreach. Here are some thoughts about how the class gift might be applied.

1. COH director position (\$2 million)
  - Assuming another donor has not already committed to this gift opportunity, the class could endow the COH director position. Doing so would allow the entire gift to be applied to a single, vital objective.
  - Endowing the director position comes with naming rights. Since the director is the public face of the COH, the class would receive widespread recognition, both via the COH website and through the director's many travels around the country.
2. Vietnam oral history archive (\$1 million)
  - The class could endow (and name) the Vietnam War oral history archive. This is an obvious and appropriate gift opportunity, given the class's record of accomplishment individually and collectively in that conflict. The Vietnam War is undergoing a resurgence of scholarly and public interest, and I therefore expect this archive to be one of the most heavily visited venues on our new website.
  - Endowing the Vietnam War archive would give the COH considerable resources to expand our Vietnam holdings, including interviews with members of the Class of 1965. (We already have interviews with Bob Jones and Daniel Christman, among others, and there are many more from the class with important stories to tell.) As the archive grows, it will become an increasingly important resource for cadets, researchers, teachers, veterans, and others interested in the Vietnam War.
  - Endowing this archive would provide huge recognition opportunities. First, it would emblazon the archive with the class name and logo. Whenever anyone accesses the archive via the website, that person would see the class information displayed prominently. Second, the class would be encouraged to send in digital material that would enrich the oral history interviews that make up the bulk of the archive. For example, there could be a "Class of 1965 Vietnam photo album" to complement the audio-visual interviews. Such material, donated to the COH and copyright free, could add value to the COH as an archival source.
3. COH studio (\$1 million)
  - The COH is constantly in need of upgraded equipment and services (high-definition video cameras, lighting, high-end computers, "cloud" storage service,

website maintenance, transcription, etc.) to ensure the interviews conducted there are top quality. A substantial gift in this area would provide a funding stream to satisfy these needs long into the future. Just as a computer's operating system works in the background to allow the machine to function smoothly, a studio endowment would ensure the smooth functioning of the COH. From my perspective as the head of the Department of History, this is a critically important need.

- Endowing the studio would come with ample recognition opportunities. The studio, housed in Thayer Hall, would honor the class through appropriate signage, logos, photos, plaques, etc. These items would be on permanent display, and thus be visible to anyone visiting the COH for interviews or other business.

#### 4. Cold War archive (\$1 million)

- In lieu of endowing the COH studio, the class might consider endowing an additional archive. For example, it might wish to endow the Cold War archive, which would span the years from 1945 to 1989.
- I listed this possibility last because it seemed to me that endowing two separate archives would be less desirable (from the class's perspective) than endowing either the director's position or the Vietnam archive and the studio together. In terms of recognition, the Class would get more "bang for the buck" by pursuing the latter two alternatives.

In addition to the recognition opportunities listed above, the class would be honored on a donor webpage that includes all COH donors.

Fred, I want to say again that I greatly appreciate the consideration your class is giving to the Center for Oral History. The Class of 1965 gave us a \$25,000 gift a few years ago (in recognition of Bob Doughty upon his retirement), and it provided an important shot in the arm as we struggled to get our feet on the ground. The COH has come a long way since then, and we're now poised to make substantial contributions to cadet education and West Point's strategic outreach. The class's continued support would be extraordinarily helpful in allowing us to achieve these goals.

All the best,

Lance

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