

Meeting of the Board of Directors
Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.
1760 Third Avenue - 18th Floor
New York, NY 10029

MINUTES

DATE: October 15, 1995
TIME: 10:10 AM
PLACE: Florence Nightingale Nursing Home

Attending:

Henry Shereff (Presiding), Abraham C. Bein, Norman Bernstein, Jerry Chazen, Norman Cohen, Lester Friesner (Secretary Pro-tem), Irving Gerber, Julius Graber, Karen Greenberger, Jerry Halpern, Rosemary Heggars (PTA), Krissy Ionta, Marvin Leiner, Sam Malkin, Burton Milenbach, Tanya Odom, Ted Peck, Malcolm Rossman, Charles Sigety, Craig Slutzkin, Thomas Sweetin,

Meeting began at 10:10 a.m. chaired by Henry Shereff subbing for ailing President Saul Grossman.

First order of business was the Treasurer's report by Julie Graber. After noting all the important figures on the reports, Julie pointed out that this year's dues receipts were lower than those of previous years because of necrology and the withholding of dues by the South Florida chapter.

Mal Rossman next discussed the current situation at the school. Because of the budget cuts five fewer courses are being offered and the enrichment program has been eliminated. The student body is now the largest ever at 1020. Higher quality students are applying and being accepted.

Jerry Chazen asked Rossman "What does Townsend Harris do that other schools do not do?" Rossman noted closer interaction between faculty and students. The new grads present at the meeting said that they were better prepared for college than students from other schools. Marvin Leiner read a letter from recent graduate, Set Cohen, in which he corroborated this view.

Mal Rossman asked for contributions of books and other memorabilia by and/or about Townsend Harris grads, teachers, etc. to be set up as a permanent collection and displayed at the school.

Mal's last request was for grants to make up for an estimated 60% loss in after-school funds.

Abe Bein moved to give \$2,500 for publication of school newspapers, etc. Motion was seconded by Charlie Sigety. Adopted unanimously.

Due to a prior commitment, Henry Shereff left after Rossman's report. The meeting was then chaired by Tanya Odom. This is an occasion which must be recorded for posterity. Tanya is the first "new" Townsend Harris graduate to preside at an alumni Board meeting.

The new graduate report was covered by discussion on the updating of the membership list. Mr. Rossman opined that the printing could be done at the school. Norm Cohen concurred. He and Irv Gerber will work on presentation for next meeting.

Tanya then read letters from a number of post '42 alumni re their careers. Jerry Halpern moved to send inquiries to grads for updates on personal histories. Seconded by Norm Cohen, passed. Charlie Sigety and Mal Rossman agreed to work together on a counseling program for post '42.

Marvin Lerner, Class of '44, and now the liaison between the school and the college then discussed, among other things, the effect that the budget cuts are having on the senior program. Mobilization by parents and an assist by Saul Cohen and others enabled the humanities courses to be salvaged. He noted that a survey is being proposed to determine how many Townsend Harris graduates attend Queens college. This is aimed at providing an answer to the Queens College administrators who want to do away with the tuition waiver for the "bridge" year. (The agreement that allows Townsend Harris seniors to take college courses tuition-free.)

Irv Gerber raised the matter of Townsend Harris becoming a test school. He pointed out that the incoming Schools Chancellor has indicated support for a group which has publicly taken a position opposed to elite or special schools. Irv suggested that this long-term objective be pursued with a sense of urgency. Jerry Halpern noted we have been holding off any political action for now on the advice of Claire Schulman. It was the general consensus that this issue be visited again with new vigor in view of Irv Gerber's report.

Jerry Halpern proposed two new members to the Board. Sam Malkin '42 and Craig Slutzkin '91. Both were accepted unanimously.

Mrs. Rosemary Hegggers, PTA liaison, was present and addressed the Board. Under discussion was the joint use of the PTA/Alumni office at the school. In the absence of association President Saul Grossman, it was agreed that Charlie Sigety and Mal Rossman would coordinate efforts with the PTA.

Ted Peck reported on fund raising activities. Ted notified the anonymous sponsor of the \$100,000 challenge grant (for the teaching of Hebrew at Townsend Harris) that we were unlikely to reach his goal. Ted suggested to him that if he would donate \$15,000 a year, that, together with other gifts allocated for the teaching of Hebrew, would allow us to offer Hebrew next year and test its appeal for a period of five years. The donor accepted this arrangement and the first \$15,000 has been received. Ted also suggested that future efforts to raise funds concentrate on specific programs for which THETA would be listed for annual giving by Funds and Foundations. He had already received a \$3,000 check from the Price Foundation (\$2,000 to teach Hebrew and \$1,000 for Japanese) and was told that this would probably be an annual gift. Another major gift was \$24,000 from Joe Flem for the purchase of a new van for the school.

Ted also reported that he is starting a campaign to establish scholarships for Harris graduates at a number of colleges and universities. There is ongoing communication with the President of Bard College, and several other approaches will soon be initiated.

With Grant Distribution Committee Chairman Jerry Chazen present, committee member Jerry Halpern reported on requests from Principal Malcolm Largmann which have been acted upon. The request for \$2,000 to compensate the Japanese instructor for teaching a second class (budget cuts eliminated city funds for this course) was met with \$1,000 from THETA and \$1,000 from the Price Foundation. The request for \$1,200 to compensate a French teacher so that a class with 50 students could be split into two classes of 25 five each was approved by THETA. Similarly, a request for \$1,200 to compensate a Latin teacher who has been teaching an extra class without pay has been approved by the Committee.

The Chairman of the Investment Committee, Leon Levy, was not present. Ted Peck reported that the first \$150,000 of THETA Funds had been invested on the basis of Leon's advice. Another \$50,000 will be available (from maturing CD's and other financial instruments) and Leon has been asked where it should be invested.

Charles Sigety, Development Committee Chairman, reported that an approach to Ambassador Annenberg for a \$1,000,000 matching grant had been rejected. But Charlie has been in touch with other potential donors -- particularly Queens College graduate Mr. Wang of Computer Associates -- and will meet with Ted Peck to determine how we might best approach people like Mr. Wang, Michael Milken and others to gain support for the THETA Fund.

Ted Peck suggested that it was time again for a Hall of Fame Dinner. Although Hall of Fame Chairman Maury Paprin was not present, the Board agreed to have an affair in May of 1996. Treasurer, Julie Graber, expressed the hope that no firm plans would be made as to location and costs until further discussion could be had. Ted agreed that such discussion could take place at the next Board meeting at which it is expected

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that Maury Paprin might be present.

Under the heading of new business, the following was discussed:

1. Jerry Halpern outlined the problems and possible liability involved if the new van is owned by the alumni association. Although the school and the alumni association would like to have Queens College own the van and cover it under its insurance policy, Queens College has refused to take the van unless it is always driven by employees of Queens College. Jerry suggested that we investigate the possibility of having the van drivers listed as adjunct faculty of Queens College.

2. The withholding of collected dues by the Florida chapter was discussed in some detail. Julie Graber again vehemently pointed out that this was not an optional situation. If the dues is not used for the purposes under which the Alumni Association received its tax exemption, we risk losing that exemption.

3. Irv Gerber the read the alumni correspondence, including a letter from Leon Baker that he had just donated \$2,000,000 to Harvard Law School. His letter was turned over to the Executive Director of the THETA Fund for special attention.

4. The date for the next Board meeting was set for December 3rd.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 PM.

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