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# ClassACT

**Achieving Change Together**

Season's Greetings from ClassACT HR73



As we close out what for many has been the most difficult year of our lifetimes, we look forward to brighter days. We wish you and yours happy holidays. Please be safe and well. See you—on Zoom and post-vaccine, in person—in '21!

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## **THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!**

The worst times often bring out the best in people, and for ClassACTHR73 the past year has been no exception. We—you!—have persevered through COVID-19, through justified cries for greater social justice, and through an election like none we have ever seen. In 2020 ClassACT continued to foster positive social change through an innovative and visionary model for classmate engagement, collaboration, and mutual education.

Before this year, we could say that no alum initiative had done what

ClassACT HR73 does. Now our work together has been shared with ten other Harvard College classes that are pursuing greater classmate engagement and has become the catalyst for several to several to create their own ClassACT-like organizations. ClassACT has provided the leadership to nurture and expand our concepts and has had the support of the Harvard Alumni Association. A multi-class group is sharing ideas.

**Among our many proud accomplishments in 2020:**

- We created the [#ClassACTForum](#) Zoom Series, which so far has produced nine Forums that engaged hundreds of classmates, members of the Harvard community, and other interested parties. The Forums provided education and engagement related to several critical impacts of COVID -19, in alignment with our Healthcare work group's concerns about health disparities and mental health. Two Forums were related to our Justice and Civic Engagement Initiative's strategies and concerns about voting and social justice.
- We continued to support the work of [JusticeAID](#) and developed the [Justice and Civic Engagement Initiative](#), which is working to create a primer on gerrymandering and strategies for addressing issues related to the future of the electoral college.
- We welcomed a new board member, classmate [Vivian Lewis, M.D.](#), professor emerita of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the University of Rochester's School of Medicine and Dentistry, who is a leader in promoting a more diverse and inclusive faculty and future healthcare workforce.



*New Board member Vivian Lewis, M.D.*

- We initiated new Bridge relationships with the United Nations Association of Greater Boston (classmate sponsor, **Rich Golob**) and Understanding our Differences, an organization promoting disability awareness (classmate sponsor, **Jeff Herrmann** and his wife, Marcia Herrmann '74).
- We hosted our third [Benazir Bhutto Leadership Program](#) Fellow, Nadia Rehman, who completed her MPA at the Harvard Kennedy School in May.
- We continued to send out monthly “ClassACTions” Bulletins and quarterly ClassACT Newsletters.



*Marion Dry and George Putnam at our February 2020 Board Retreat*

**Here's what you can look forward to in 2021:**

- Further development of our strategy to concentrate on four predominant areas of classmate interest: Justice and Civic Engagement, Education, Health, and the Environment.
- Starting in January with a Zoom Forum on COVID-19 and the Performing Arts (see below), holding Forums every two months, including developing at least one Forum with another Harvard class.
- Continuing engagement of classmates through Bridges and opportunities to work on various ClassACT sub-groups, as well as with

our ongoing partners.

- Further developing our Justice and Civic Engagement Initiative, not only addressing gerrymandering and the electoral college system but also the need to improve civic education.
- Continuing our conversations with other classes that are pursuing ClassACT-like strategies and pursuing at least one multi-class initiative.

Wherever your personal and professional paths have taken you, and with whatever time, energy and skills you can offer, we invite you to join your HR73 classmates to address important local, national, and international challenges. Please visit our website [www.Classacthr73.org](http://www.Classacthr73.org), where you can find additional information on our progress and about how you can participate. Then email us at [classacthr73@gmail.com](mailto:classacthr73@gmail.com) and we will help you get started.

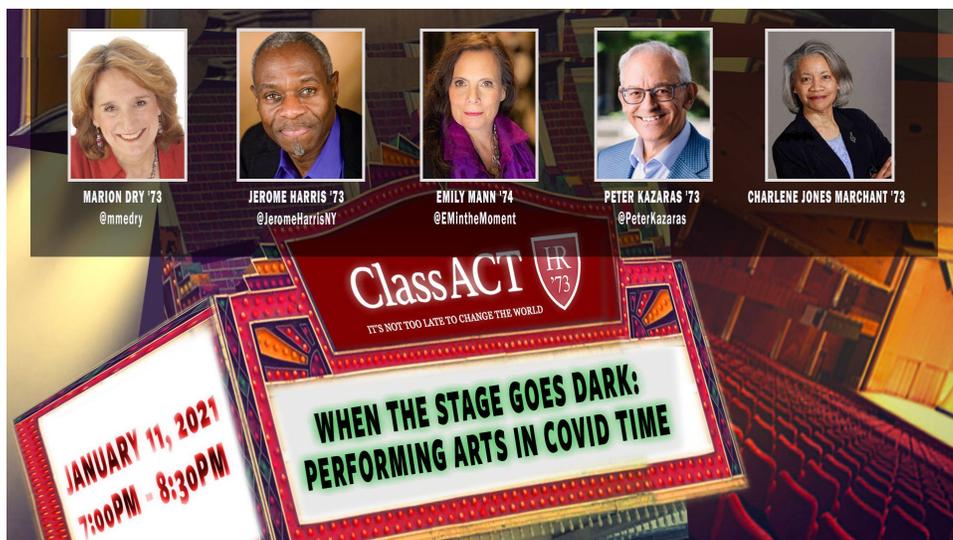
You will renew relationships with classmates and perhaps begin new and equally rewarding ones. You will also have fun! Please join us!

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## JANUARY FORUM: SAVE THE DATE

When the Stage Goes Dark: Performing Arts in COVID Time  
Monday, January 11, 2021 7:00 - 8:30pm ET

[Register Here](#)



[Click here for more information](#)

## Share our Facebook event

It feels like an eternity since any of us has walked into a theater or club and seen a live performance. We miss being part of the moments when that magic comes to life. Our performing artists in theater, dance and music miss the hours of creativity that lead to those moments when the lights go on. They have been deprived of their communities and their livelihoods. Our performing arts organizations are in peril. Their civic-minded boards are seeking ways to keep their artistic companies afloat, while embracing the critical role the arts have in advancing racial justice and parity in our society. Through all of this, the spark of creativity is kindling innovations, support and hope.

Please join us on Monday, January 11 at 7pm EST, for *When the Stage Goes Dark: Performing Arts in Covid Time*

Moderator **Marion Dry '73**, Co-Chair of ClassACT, opera singer and former Director of the Wellesley College Music Performance Program will moderate our panel: **Jerome Harris '73**, jazz bassist and recording artist; **Peter Kazaras '73**, leading opera director and Director of Opera UCLA and the Inaugural Susan G. and Michel D. Covell MD Chair at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music; **Emily Mann '74**, former artistic director and resident playwright of the McCarter Theatre Center, Princeton University; and **Charlene Jones Marchant '73**, faculty member at Music Academy of North Carolina and member of the board of the Greensboro Opera. Together they will explore the impact of the pandemic on the performing arts and its artists, describe creative solutions they have found for continuing their work and engaging audiences, and offer some innovations and hopes for the future.

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### BEHIND THOSE FABULOUS FORUMS...



*Panelists Dr. Vivian Lewis '73, Dr. Mary Bassett '74, Dr. Prentiss Taylor '73, and Al Franken '73 in our Health Disparities Forum*

When the world changed on March 13, 2020 and living in the COVID era became a reality, ClassACT responded with our first ClassACT Zoom Forum, the brainstorm of ClassACT co-chair **Marion Dry**. Marion invited classmates to learn from and question classmate **Dr. Jono Quick**, a global expert on infectious disease, about the pandemic. A format that started as a focus on the impact of COVID on our nation soon was applied to look into other timely issues confronting our society.

So far ClassACT has mounted nine ClassACT Forums, on subjects ranging from Voter Suppression to Racism and Social Justice in America, from the impact of COVID on sports to Inequities in Education. A host of classmates have lent their expertise and career perspectives, participating as panelists and moderators, and attendance occasionally has topped 200. In addition, the ClassACT Forums has attracted the participation of Rep. Karen Bass, journalist and author A'Leila Bundles '74, former Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr., journalist Soledad O'Brian, Myrna Perez of the Brennan Center for Justice, and others.



*Panelists Rick Melvoin '73, Angela Sims, John B. King Jr., Nick Melvoin '08, and Marion Dry '73 in our Education Forum in November*

Much of the Forums' success is due to the terrific team of classmates working behind the scenes. In addition to Marion, who acts as an executive producer, there is the hard-working production team of **Sara Greenberg, Andrea Kirsh** and **Sarah Ulerick**, who connect with the panelists, create the "Run of Show," and curate audience questions/keep track of time during the event. The Program Committee—**Donna Brown Guillaume, Leigh Hafrey, Vivian Lewis, Stan Mark, Rebecca Sykes, Therese Steiner** and **Rick Weil**—decides and develops Zoom Forum topics and puts together the panel of experts in each area. **Rick Brotman** serves on both committees, creates

elegant videos, editing forum discussions into shorter topic videos, all of which are posted on the ClassACT website and shared on social media. Diana Lobontiu—ClassACT’s indispensable administrator— handles outreach, day-of tech and serves as moderator for the chat.

Kudos to all!

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### **KIDS CARE EVERYWHERE DISCOVERS A BETTER WAY**



*Kids Care Everywhere Organization in Ghana*

Give them an A for Adjustment: Amid the travails of the past year, ClassACT Bridge partner [KidsCareEverywhere](#), whose proprietary software helps train medical professionals treating young patients in far-flung locales, may have stumbled upon a better working method.

**Dr. Ron Dieckmann '73**, founder and executive director of Berkeley, California-based KidsCare, says, “The pandemic has forced us to change fundamentally how we provide the software to our low-income colleagues. For the last 14 years, we have gone to public hospital sites in Africa, South America and Asia and taught the physicians directly how to use the medical software and helped them technically to download the knowledge system on their mobile phones. Receiving the software is always an otherworldly experience for them. When our colleagues, practicing in highly limited resource environments and often without even a current textbook, actually see what we are giving them, they often regard it as a religious experience.”

But the pandemic not only has curtailed travel, says Dieckmann, “it is overwhelming the medical systems in almost all our sites, and no one even

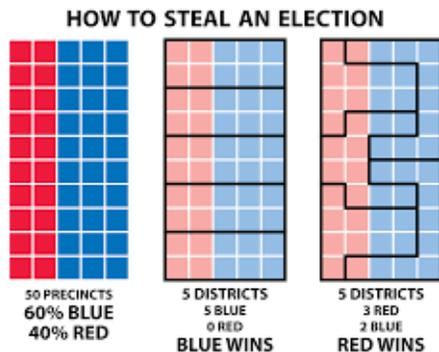
has time to gather groups for training. So we have developed a virtual, remote methodology to replicate ourselves! And, as we have discovered, physicians worldwide have mobile phones and know quite well how to download software on their own. So we have tried to view this crisis as an opportunity to re-engineer our global services, so that we are turning over the ownership of the training and software implementation to the leaders at the sites. We are continuing to assist them with video and technical support, but they are identifying their own instructors and disseminating the technology on their own. It is a much more cost-effective way of doing what we do. It is a better way going forward, and we believe it will enhance sustainability at the sites.”

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## POLITICS AS USUAL

Though the election is behind us, the [Justice & Civic Engagement Initiative](#) maintains three projects of focus:

### 1. Gerrymandering:



The committee is working on a primer on gerrymandering, including facts, resources and opportunities for volunteer action. **Sallie Gouverneur, Jim Harbison, Ryan O’Connell, Andrea Kirsh** and **Elena Cohen ’79**, are working on the primer, the first phase of which is scheduled to be completed early next year.

### 2. The Electoral College:

Classmate **Dan Hoffheimer** is leading an initial plenary discussion about the electoral college and its impact on our democracy.

### 3. JusticeAid:



[JusticeAid](#), a sustained collaboration founded by classmate **Steve Milliken**, has selected as its 2021 grantee partner [PACE](#), the Police Accountability and Community Empowerment initiative of the [Neighborhood Defenders Service](#). PACE has four areas of focus: Impact litigation, a holistic approach to criminal defense; disrupting the school- to-prison pipeline; closing the racial wealth gap, and driving policies that empower communities.

JusticeAid is in development on a late April/early May Public Forum in partnership with Riverside Church, a late spring virtual concert in support of PACE, a September film showcase centered on the four areas of focus of PACE, and a (hopefully) in-person concert October 21st in Washington, D.C. with the legendary Mavis Staples. Stay tuned!

We welcome classmates who are interested in working on any of these initiatives! Contact committee co-chairs: **Bahman Mossavar Rahmani** ([bahmanhr@aol.com](mailto:bahmanhr@aol.com)) and **Therese Steiner** ([tsteiner@therese Steiner.com](mailto:tsteiner@therese Steiner.com)).

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## BROTHER AND SISTER ACTS



Captivated by our example, ten other H-R classes have gotten into the ACT! The range spans 1963 through '90. Some initiatives are in the early stages while others already are quite substantial. For the Class of '79, for instance, activities have involved conducting outreach, creating a website, identifying

initial projects, sending an inaugural newsletter (with the assistance of ClassACTHR73's crackerjack administrator, Diana Lobontiu), investigating governance structure, and participating in multi-class ClassACT efforts.

Representatives of some of these classes came together by phone last June to exchange ideas, and a follow-up call will take place in January.

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### **IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO DONATE**



*Sue Press and kids at the New Orleans Parade*

Please consider making a year-end donation to ClassACTHR73. For details, go to <https://www.classacthr73.org/donate>.

ClassACTHR73 and especially board member **Rick Weil**, want to thank classmates who donated to help fund the annual children's coat giveaway conducted by our partner in New Orleans, the [Ole and Nu Style Fellas Social Aid and Pleasure Organization](#). At last count 50 coats have been contributed by members of HR'73. A full accounting will be presented in the January Bulletin.

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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL...AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!!**



*Board members Jonathan Sprague and Bahman Mossavar-Rahmani at last year's board retreat*

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### **Interested in helping ClassACT?**

ClassACT is built on classmate participation and we are interested in having every classmate as a member of our ClassACT community. If you are interested in learning more about ClassACT and how you can be involved, please visit our [website](#) or send us an [email](#).

While encouraging the sharing of time and willingness to work together, ClassACT also welcomes financial support. To support our work in this way you can donate below.

[\*\*Donate Here\*\*](#)

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[Class Achieving Change Together \(Class ACT\), Inc.](#)



