Welcome Back: Thousands Return for Alumni Weekend

Zinn Lecture: Bill Moyers speaks of nation’s “plutocracy”

By Cynthia K. Buccini and John O’Rourke

A record number of alumni returned to campus for Alumni Weekend, October 29–31. More than 4,000 alums and their families came back to catch up with classmates, attend open houses and classes led by star faculty, take campus tours, and enjoy parties, luncheons, and receptions.

In one of the weekend’s marquee events, veteran journalist Bill Moyers delivered the Howard Zinn Memorial Lecture. It was the first lecture in the annual series following the death in January of Zinn, the political activist and author who taught for 24 years in the College of Arts & Sciences political science department.

Moyers spoke movingly of Zinn, noting that he had interviewed the activist for his PBS show, Bill Moyers’ Journal, just a month before his death. “For Howard,” Moyers said, “democracy was one great public fight, and everyone could get in on it.”

Moyers focused on the challenges facing democracy and spoke of “the two Americas” that define the country. He decried what he says has been a 30-year trend toward plutocracy, where the rich get richer at the expense of the average citizen, where a “buoyant Wall Street” exists alongside a “doleful Main Street,” and where government has been “bought off” by industries and corporate titans who “have ensured that government does their bidding.”

Despite the serious subject of the lecture, the Emmy- and Peabody Award-winning broadcaster punctuated many of his points with humor. Toward the end of the evening, returning to his old friend Zinn, Moyers said, “I can hear Howard asking us, ‘What are we going to do? Organize!’”

The weekend also featured the presentation of Alumni Awards (see page 68); the President’s Panel, hosted by President Robert A. Brown, titled Challenges of Healthcare—Perspectives on Our Future; as well as Alumni College classes, open houses, campus tours, and a party for affinity groups, such as BU Bands, ROTC, the Community Service Center, resident assistants, and black, Latino, and LGBT alumni.

Elena Quattrone (SAR’08, SPH’09) attended Alumni Weekend to see old friends. As a BU student, she worked in the Student Activities Office, was a member of the Student Union executive board, and served as a resident assistant and cochair of the Senior Class Gift Campaign. “It’s a good opportunity to reconnect with a lot of people,” Quattrone said. “I love BU.”

Nikki Pollard (SSW’04) (left) and Requina Barnes (SSW’04) at the reunion of affinity groups.

Veteran journalist Bill Moyers delivers the Howard Zinn Memorial Lecture, one of the highlights of Alumni Weekend.
WEB EXTRAS

• Watch Bill Moyers deliver the Howard Zinn Memorial Lecture at bu.edu/bostonia.
• Watch a slideshow about Alumni Weekend 2010 at bu.edu/bostonia.

» Enjoying an Alumni College class on what’s hot in children’s literature.
» Alums cheer on the men’s ice hockey Terriers, who beat UMass Lowell 5–1.
» The President’s Panel: Challenges of Healthcare—Perspectives on Our Future featured (from left) BU trustee Cleve Killingsworth, Jr., retired president of Massachusetts Blue Cross Blue Shield; Kate Walsh, president and CEO of Boston Medical Center; and Thomas Lee, CEO of Partners Community Healthcare. Also participating on the panel was George Annas, a BU William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor and chair of the School of Public Health’s department of health law, bioethics & human rights. Karen Antman, School of Medicine dean and Medical Campus provost, moderated.

» Ruth Shapiro (PAL’40) at the Golden Terrier Reception and Luncheon.
» Rebecca Gregoire (SAR’00), her husband, Jesse, and their children, Kathryn and Jack, join Rhett at the Oktoberfest Terrier Tailgate party at the Fitness & Recreation Center.