

**Bonds of Gold Ceremony  
Memorial Hall  
26 April 2021**

**Remarks by Dudley Outcalt, 28<sup>th</sup> Company**

**In July 1969, I started a journey that changed my life. I came to the Naval Academy. I thought that attending USNA would help me “fix” what I knew were personal weaknesses. I was a little bit over weight and I later would learn were weaknesses in leadership.**

**Well, plebe summer took off the extra pounds and my roommate helped me with some of the leadership items. He would years later become the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) from September 29, 2007 to September 22, 2011.**

**Somehow I made it to September and plebe summer was over.**

**For me this was the easy part – Academics – I took to them like a duck took to water. During my youngster year I got straight “A’s” for one semester. I never again got such high marks, but academics still came easy to me.**

**In June 1972 I got my class ring. It was beautiful and I wore it proudly. But I didn’t really see it for what it meant until much later in my career, as a naval reservist and a civilian (no I didn’t make the Navy a career, I got out in 5 years).**

**Slowly I forgot about my class ring and stopped wearing it. I was consumed by life as a civilian seeking steps up the ladder of success. I still managed to achieve the rank of Captain in the Naval Reserve. Something was missing.**

**Then about 5 years ago I received a call from another of my roommates. Not the same CNO roommate mentioned earlier. He told me about a trip he was taking with his 57' boat. He knew that I lived in Portsmouth New Hampshire, and he and his wife would be stopping their trip at Portsmouth for a couple days.**

**He learned that I had Parkinson's Disease, and Congestive Heart Failure and was in poor health. I am still kicking around and managing these two diseases as well as I can, but my traveling range has been reduced to a couple hundred miles. I was and still am not recommended to travel to our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion.**

**After discussion with Captain Mike Zimet '73, he suggested a mini-reunion in Portsmouth. We thought that this was such a good idea that we planned and executed the mini-reunion later that year.**

**Five of my 28<sup>th</sup> company-mates attended, including Captain Mike Zimet '73 and your narrator Captain Joe Stewart '73. You get together with a few old classmates and the sea stories just get exaggerated, more and more. There even was some truth to some of them.**

**That is why I want to donate my class ring to the "Bonds of Gold" Program. It's for you and your classmates, who you will remember for the next 50 years. Start making your mark on that career.**