



ON THE VINE

THE IVY CLUB NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018

Ivy for All Seasons: An Interview with Truman Semans '48



[above] Truman Semans '48 in 1944 as a U.S. Navy seaman



[above] Truman at age 91

In June, 1946, after having served two years in the Navy, 20-year-old Truman Semans was discharged and returned home to Baltimore. That fall, he reapplied to Princeton, where he'd been accepted prior to the war, and headed off to his freshman year. Semans has kindly agreed to share his memories of Ivy.

The Vine: We're so grateful you agreed to talk with us. Can you tell us what it was like being an Ivy member directly after serving in the war?

TS: Extraordinarily different. I'd been an enlisted man in the Navy. To sit down for meals at the Ivy Club, with Prosper as the Club Steward and with unbelievably good food, candle light and linens, wasn't something I'd been used to. But more important, I think, was getting to know the people, many of whom had been in the war. These men had been overseas and very much in harm's way. It was an extraordinarily fine and able group of men, many of whom were only there because of the G.I. Bill of Rights.

The Vine: What was going through your mind being at the Club with so many men who shared your experiences of the war?

TS: What was going through my mind was how fortunate I was to be there. Many men had had more dangerous experiences in the war than I, so I don't think we shared so much our experiences of the war; we were so delighted to be in a different milieu and to be able to relax with one another and not be in a military setting, particularly a war setting. We all thought about how lucky we were

to be there and how wonderful it was in every way, particularly in terms of the people. They were truly men for all seasons.

The Vine: Do you have a favorite room or favorite painting at Ivy?

TS: My favorite room at that time was the dining room. The food was exceptional, and the service was something I wasn't used to. I've joked with my wife that since we've been married my living standard has gone down every year as a result of being in the Ivy Club. It was quite something, particularly after WWII. The management of the Club was marvelous, the food and ambiance were great.

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A Message from Graduate President Dominic Moross '90



It is a beautiful spring day. The academic year is beginning to wind down. Seniors are breathing an air of relief, satisfaction and, perhaps, disbelief, having handed in their theses, completing one of the most challenging tasks of their lives to date. As I write, House Parties are about to begin,

marking the end of a busy year, when our members can finally let their hair down and simply enjoy friendships which have been cemented over the past couple of years within the majestic surroundings of our 19th century house.

Our club remains enormously popular with a record 215 students bickering this spring, of which 71 were accepted. Our male/female ratio is evenly split with members hailing from nearly every Continent. We are proud to have Rachel Yee '19 elected Undergraduate Student Government President this year and we continue to boast many high-level athletes in Crew, Track, Soccer, Rugby, Tennis, Fencing and Football. Additionally, the Ivy 1879 Foundation continued its tradition, providing scholarship grants to 18 students from the sections of 2018 and 2019.

Club activities have been abundant since our last Newsletter. In February the Leadership Committee hosted Robert Kraft, acclaimed song writer, film composer, record producer and former President of Fox Music. Bob's engaging personality captured the attention of his audience, whom he regaled with stories of his successful career in an industry which is undergoing seismic changes. In addition, we hosted a wine tasting dinner with Bianca Bosker '08, author of *Cork Dork: A Wine-Fueled Adventure Among the Obsessive Sommeliers, Big Bottle Hunters, and Rogue Scientists Who Taught Me to Live for Taste*. It was a fun-filled evening, especially during the blind tasting!

We were very pleased to have Ben Pyne '81 and Tom Murphy '82 for small dinners to speak about their respective careers as head of Global Distribution at Walt Disney and co-founder of Crestview Partners. Both alums were well received. In April, the Alumni Relations Committee and Julia Wilson, Director

of Member Services, organized our second annual Career Night, a casual evening for undergraduates to talk with graduate members about their career paths. Ten alumni attended, representing a variety of professions including the law, academia, politics, publishing, finance, real estate and technology. Of particular interest was Governor Anthony Taylor '00's keynote interview of Ro Gupta '00, Founder and CEO of CARMERA, a start-up which creates real time 3D maps and navigation critical data for autonomous vehicles.

Our Annual Dinner at the University Club in New York on April 27th was a great success with members from sections of 1961 to 2019. The lion's share of members who attended graduated within the last 30 years. I was pleased to see so many of our current students make it in from campus. Their perspectives always spark thoughtful discussion. The evening began with a viewing of our recently produced video, *Ivy Today*, featuring reflections on the late Jim Griffin's life and his 33-year Presidency of our club. The video will soon be made available on our website. After a few speeches and the singing of the Ivy Song, Josh Rafner '77 took the initiative to lead us in a rendition of *Old Nassau*. Thank you, Josh!

Our building continues to look spectacular, somewhat to the envy of our fellow clubs on the Street! Following the complete restoration of our pool table this spring, we hosted Tony Robles, a pool professional known as "The Silent Assassin." Not your run-of-the-mill precept by any means!

I am pleased to welcome Kevin McGowan '95 as a new Governor. Kevin brings a font of knowledge from his background in management consulting, financial services, and politics. Kevin is founder of McGowan Corporate Real Estate Advisors based in Haverford, PA.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome our new officers, led by Mimi Asom. I wish you all a very happy summer and hope that as many of you as possible will be able to visit the Club either for Reunions or whenever you are in town. If you would like to participate in any alumni functions to meet the undergraduate members or have suggestions or thoughts about how we might better engage our members, please do not hesitate to be in touch with Julia Wilson (julia.wilson@theivyclub.net).

Interview with Truman Semans '48

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[above] Walter Phelps “Buzzer” Hall (1884-1962)

The Vine: What can you tell us about Prosper?

TS: Ivy had lots of things that were endearing, not least of all Prosper who was the Steward but, more than that, a friend of all of the members. He provided first class service but also really cared for each of the members. I thought he was an unusual fellow in every respect and did a great job there. I’ve been involved in a fair number of clubs, and I’ve never seen a club run better than the Ivy Club under Prosper’s management. And he did it with grace and such humility. He was an exceptional human being.

The Vine: What do you remember about Princeton sports, in particular the football games?

TS: The games were great fun. There were many good athletes in the Ivy Club, particularly folks who had come from New England schools. Half the hockey team at Princeton was made up of Ivy Club members, and other members were very involved in tennis and racquet sports, but we had a couple of very good football players. Princeton teams in those days were nationally competitive; Charlie Caldwell was a great coach, and we had several people on the Princeton team who were All-Americans. I remember Princeton won a great victory against the University of Pennsylvania, which was supposed to be the best team in the country, and I think it was Red Smith (Pulitzer Prize-

winning sports columnist for the New York Times) who wrote in a column that “the implausible brats from Princeton” had beat the best football team in the country. And I remember they tore down the wooden goal post after the game, and the Philadelphia police were mounted and came after the Princeton students. It made national radio and newspapers.

The Vine: How did Ivy shape you as a student?

TS: I was a different person having been in the Ivy Club as a student because, even though socially it was great fun, we would, from time to time, have professors come for dinner. I had a history professor I was particularly fond of named “Buzzer” Hall who would come for dinner sometimes. The Ivy Club had a lot of people who were scholastically bright; it was intellectually stimulating.

Note from The Vine: Walter Phelps Hall—known as “Buzzer” due to his noisy, early-vintage hearing aid—taught at Princeton from 1913 to 1952 and was one of the most popular professors of all time. His final lecture was in Alexander Hall to accommodate the crowd of 700, which was led by a six-piece band in singing “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.”

The Vine: How did being a member of Ivy affect you after graduation?

TS: Besides the life-long friendships I sustained with my own section mates, I found that the older members of the Ivy Club were very helpful to me, especially after I’d graduated from law school in 1950 and was looking for a job. Whether or not I ended up working at their institutions, they always made an effort to be helpful and to give me advice and counsel. It was particularly helpful to me because my father had died when he was quite young, so to have older men who had been successful—not just economically but in life—take an interest in you was unusual, I think, but

News from the 1879 Foundation

Hello From Ivy's New Leadership Committee



[above] Undergraduate members pose with Bianca Bosker '08

Since coming to Princeton, I have been in awe of how easy it is to hear from, and even have meals with, prominent writers, artists, policymakers, and intellectuals. Speaking with individuals who are making a difference across fields has connected my academic experience to the real world and provided insights into the possibilities beyond graduation. I joined the Ivy Leadership Committee to bring these kinds of invaluable, and enjoyable, experiences to Ivy. I want to diversify the fields that we represent in round tables and discussions; Princeton can feel like a fast-track into particular industries, and ILC is one way to broaden that net. I'm looking forward to inviting leaders in the arts, sciences, business, politics, and more.

We had a wonderful time tasting wine and talking with Bianca Bosker '08 last month. Bianca is an award-winning journalist and author of the NYT Bestseller *Cork Dork*. Bianca led us through the steps of wine-tasting and talked about her path from Princeton student to editor at The Huffington Post and, finally, to sommelier. The event was both productive and enjoyable -- Matt's and my goal as we take over as the ILC chairs.

Amanda Morrison '19
Matthew Merrigan '20

Career Night at Ivy

This year's Career Night was a great success. There were 10 graduate members from 7 different career sectors in attendance, as well as over 40 undergraduate members. The night began with a mixer between the graduates and undergraduates that allowed for introductions and conversation in an informal setting. This was a particularly good time for the graduate and undergraduate members to develop relationships, and many undergraduates are still in contact with graduate members they met that night.

The mixer was followed by a keynote interview with Ivy alum Ro Gupta '00. Ro is the CEO and Founder of CARMERA, which provides real-time 3D maps and navigation data for autonomous vehicles and 3D scene data for professionals in other segments. Before CARMERA, he created data products and helped grow web commenting network Disqus to 2 billion users. Antony Taylor '00 played the part of interviewer, and both graduate members were able to share cogent insights on success in the workforce.



[above] Ashley Gregory '94, Kathryn Beaumont Murphy '96, and Margaret Crotty '94 return for Career Night



[above] Asst. Professor of Philosophy Harvey Lederman '08 chats with members during Career Night.

After the interview concluded, dinner was served, once again allowing for more personal conversation between graduate and undergraduate members. Additionally, each graduate member stood up and delivered one important piece of career advice to the undergrads. This portion of the night was very well received, and the undergraduates appreciated the sincerity with which graduate members engaged with us. Dessert was served buffet-style at the end of the night, and undergraduates were able to speak with any graduate members they may have missed up until that point.

All in all, the evening was extremely successful. The undergraduates are already looking forward to next year's event.

Lydia Weintraub '18
Alexander Robinson '18
Tobi Aboaba '18



[above] Antony Taylor '00 interviews Ro Gupta '00

In Memoriam

Crocker Nevin '46

“Those fortunate enough to have known him will always remember his commanding, unique spirit and wonderful sense of humor.”

C. Allen Ellis '52

“Allen could always be counted on to do the right thing. He preached moderation while living a full life, loved traveling and road trips, respected all cultures, was a voracious reader and intellectually curious until the end of his days.”

AJ Donelson Morrow '60

“Don was a fun-loving athlete, adventure-seeking outdoorsman and scholar, known as ‘Tiger’ on the tennis court and captain of the Rugby team at Princeton.”

B. Frank DeFord III '61

“In addition to being an immense talent, he was a consummate gentleman and a dear friend. Frank was a giant in the world of sports. His loss is immeasurable.”

MacGregor Robinson '86

“Well-read, voraciously curious, and possessed with a biting wit, MacGregor was a man of many passions. His calling led him to assess and embrace differing cultures while honing the professional art of mentoring students.”

David M. Downing '88

“Away from work, Mr. Downing relished time with wife, Karen, and their four sons. He was also a passionate golfer and played recreational hockey. He had the unique ability to keep things in perspective, keep things positive and keep things moving forward, even when his own life was challenged.”

Greetings from Ivy's New President



[above] Mimi Asom '19

Dear Graduate Members,

My name is Mimi Asom. I was elected Undergraduate President in February and am astonished at what a wonderful experience it has been to lead the Club thus far. I could not be more excited for the next year. I am a junior from Dallas, Texas in the Woodrow Wilson School.

Outside of Ivy, I am a captain of the Women's Soccer Team. I am so grateful to be afforded the experience to head two groups on campus that I am so passionate about.

As this year ends, I continue to lean on Folasade and the rest of the outgoing officer corps in order to ensure the continued smooth guidance of the Club. It will undoubtedly be quite different without them next year, but I am lucky to work with, and soon live with, four other spectacular individuals with vibrant personalities, unparalleled work ethic, and wonderful passion for the club. They are: Jack Henderson (VP), Christian Bischoff (Social Chair), Helen Zhang (House Manager/Bicker Chair), and Moyin Opeyemi (Treasurer).

Ivy remains the center of every member's college experience. Peek into the clubhouse at any moment and you will find the new pool table being put to good use, members relaxing in hammocks in the yard and sunbathing on the patio, video games being played in the TV room, and, what is most special, the infectious laughter and comradery that is exclusive to a place where every member knows that he or she is part of a family.

In February, the Club admitted 71 diverse, passionate, and thoughtful members. Each individual contributes a unique personality and array of interests which are the very definition of the Ivy Club.

I encourage you to come back to 43 Prospect Avenue and see what today's Ivy has to offer. We all love to reminisce and hear stories about the glory days! I hope to meet many of y'all at Reunions or sometime in the near future!

Sincerely,
Mimi Asom

Interview with Truman Semans '48

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not unusual for the Ivy Club. I think once you're in the Ivy Club, you don't tend to forget that you've been there, and you try to help younger members.

The Vine: What would your experience at Princeton have been without Ivy?

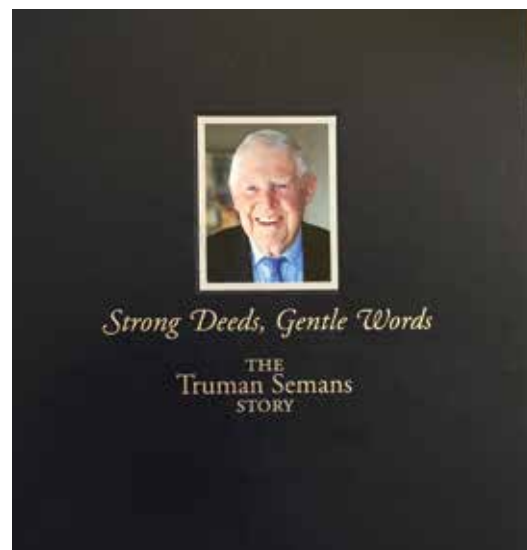
I would've gotten a wonderful education; I was a history major and loved it. However, I regret to this day not taking advantage of all of the wonderful professors there, who were very accessible. I think I probably relaxed too much after the war; we used to joke that we were "getting it out of our system." Princeton without Ivy would still have been a great educational institution but not the experience I had, which was a wonderful social experience. Other than being with my wife, it was the greatest experience I've ever had.

The Vine: Do you take Ivy with you?

TS: Yes, I do. I was always taught to live up to your ancestors, and I feel that way about the Ivy Club. If I could live up to the standards of the Ivy Club, I'd consider my life quite successful.

The Vine: Thank you, Mr. Semans. We're honored to count you as part of the Ivy family.

For his 90th birthday, Truman's friends published a book. It is a fitting tribute to this legendary Ivy member, and a copy is in the Club's library.



[above] *Strong Deeds, Gentle Words: The Truman Semans Story*



Ivy Club 2018 Reunion Schedule

Friday, June 1, 2018—The Club will be open until midnight for members and accompanied guests. There will be no food service, but beer and soft drinks will be available.

A cocktail reception for the women of Ivy will be held in the Lower Library from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 2, 2018—Brunch for members and their guests will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The cost is \$15 per person; there is no charge for children under 10.

Following the P-rade, food and beverages will be available from approximately 4 to 6 p.m. Beer and soft drinks will be available throughout the evening. The Club closes at midnight.

Sunday, June 3, 2018—No events are scheduled at the Club on this day.

If you have not paid your annual dues, please do so promptly. Dues can be paid online at theivyclub.net/dues or by calling the Steward at (609) 924-2236. **It is expected that graduate members attending Club events will be in good standing.**

Parking at the Club is restricted to Ivy members in good standing only.

2017-2018 OFFICERS

Undergraduate President – Folasade Runcie
Vice President/UG Governor – Tobi Aboaba
House Manager/Bicker Chair – Jack Jundunian
Treasurer – Ben Lawton
Social Chair – Camila Novo-Viaño

2018-2019 OFFICERS

Undergraduate President – Mimi Asom
Vice President/UG Governor – Jack Henderson
House Manager/Bicker Chair – Helen Zhang
Treasurer – Moyin Opeyemi
Social Chair – Christian Bischoff



Save the Date
Ivy Parents Weekend

October 6-7th

The Ivy Club
43 Prospect Ave.
Princeton, NJ 08540

Formal invitation to follow



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The Ivy 1879 Foundation supports the preservation of Ivy's historic Clubhouse, educational initiatives including Leadership and Roundtable programs, and financial aid to help Ivy students maintain their membership in the Club.

Tax-deductible donations to the Foundation can be made by check, online, or by phone. **Thank you!**

