

(First sent on March 17, 2023 with about 148 signatories, and the co-signer list keeps growing)

LETTER TO THE HAA FROM MEMBERS OF THE HR70 CLASS

We, the undersigned members of the Harvard College and Radcliffe College Class of 1970, ask that the Harvard Alumni Association consider this request and recommend it to the Harvard Board of Overseers and the Harvard Corporation:

Harvard has already acknowledged that one-third of its donations before the Civil War came from individuals whose fortunes were tied to slavery. As a response to this fact, Harvard University has committed to contributing \$100 million toward addressing the consequences of slavery in America. Yet today, Harvard's endowment has grown to at least \$51 billion. Therefore, we ask that Harvard commit a more substantial share of its endowment to make reparations and restitution for Harvard's involvement with slavery and its aftermath.

Specifically, we recommend that, consistent with Harvard's overarching mission of higher education and academic research, Harvard contribute a total of \$1.5 billion to this goal, and make appropriate arrangements to donate either all or a part of these reparation funds to the approximately 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States, all of whom would greatly benefit from additional financial resources to fulfill their own academic missions. By doing so, Harvard would establish a new paradigm of collaboration and cooperation with these institutions that already address slavery's aftermath in all their multifaceted academic endeavors.

SIGNED:

Janice Abarbanel	Paul Bloom	Alex Field
John Abramson	Steven Bloomstein	Leon Fink
Dean Ahmad	Joan Braderman	Jack Fisher
Charles Allen	Robert Brandhorst	Fred Fiske
Joel Altschul	Claire Broome	Joshua Freeman
Philip A. Anderson	James O. Brown Jr.	James I. Gadsden
Daniel Ardrey	Calvin Bruce	Barbara Gale
Bill Asher	Mike Bundy	Alice Galenson
John Avault	Kathryn Cade	Stephen H. Gardiner
Laura K. Bachrach	F.R. Champion	Jerry Gechter
Peter Bachrach	Brian Carpenter	Mark Gerzon
Judith Kauffman Baker	May Y. Chen	Isabel Gilman
Alice W. Ballard	Carla Childs	Ronald David Glass
Edward Barna	Lucia Cies	Sarah Glazer
Kenneth Barnes	Holland Cotter	Stephen Goheen
Michael J. Barrett	Lindsay Crouse	Dan Goldensohn
Alison Baxter	Charles H. Curl, Jr	Bruce Goodman
Kenneth Bechis	Leslie Davidson	Barry Gordon
Eric Behrens	Mac Dewart	Lili Gottfried
Karen Neva Bell	David E. Fernie	Jan Gough

Hank Greenspan
Leslie (Skip) Griffin
Ray Healey
Laurie Heineman
Jon Hiatt
Charlotte Hitchcock
Walter Horak
Orest Hurko
Sal Imam
Sarah Jaeger
Eric Louis Jones
Julia Jones
Jason Kanter
Michael Kazin
De Kirkpatrick
Steven Kelman
Andrew G. Klein
Andrew R. Klein
Steve Klein
Richard Kornbluth
Marian Gram Laughlin
Sylvia Lester
Donna Lieberman
Deborah Levine
Matthew D. Lincoln
Betty Hagopian Low
Myles Lynk
Kenneth R. Manning
Peter Mark
Bill McBride
Sandra McCandless

Barry Margolin
Jesse Miller
Josh Mitteldorf
Stephen Morgan
David H. Moulton
Carol Munroe
Judy Norsigian
Tom Paine
Richard Paisner
Jill H.B. Patel
Sabrina Peck
Robert Penn
David C. Perry
Carol Potter
Mike Prokosch
Eric Redman
Marcie Richardson
Chris Ripman
Martha Ritter
Karl Rohlich
Erik Roth
Joan Sarnat
Andrew Schlesinger
Martha Russell Schwope
Margaret Tobin Segall
Michael Sherraden
David Siktberg
Lee Shrewsbury
Charles W. Smith
Judith Smith
Marilyn Siegel Smith

Randy Smith
Karen Lee Sobol
Elisabeth Sopka
Robert ("Chris") Sorenson
Nathanial "Nate" Spiller
Janet Stott
Peter Sturges
Mary E. Summers
John Tatlock
Bob Telson
Jan Levine Thal
Eliza Thomas
Josh Tolkoff
Steven K. Tursky
Bruce C. Vladek
Carol Wagner
Meira (Maxine) Warshauer
Douglas Weinstock
Jessie Wenning
Harold (Hal) Whack
Jake Wheeler
Elizabeth Beverly-Whittemore
Benjamin Willis
Ernie Wilson
Beverly Woo
Leigh A. Woods
Janet Wright
Virginia Vogel Zanger

Following is a selection of comments from some of the 160 HR70 classmates who signed the letter proposing that Harvard set aside \$1.5 billion from its endowment for donations to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Eric Behrens, general counsel, University of California (retired)

... This is terrific! ... I dream of this idea becoming a movement ...

John Tatlock, retired

... Dividing the sum among Black colleges — can I sign my name to that? It seems to bypass so many other complications and issues, and goes straight to the issue of education, at the root of so much today, in my opinion....

Ernie Wilson, entrepreneur; professor of communications and political science, USC. (Served on Capitol Hill and in the White House.)

Thank you for your engagement in this critical issue. Let me call it more than engagement, it's true leadership, mobilizing people to act ethically. That's certainly what we need during these tough times around racial conflict.

Of course I will sign the letter. ... It addresses some tactical issues (like who gets the money), and it goes to the core mission of what Harvard does, education. Also, there are some direct ties between our grads & HBCUs. Du Bois taught in Atlanta HBCUs, for example. And as you saw in the Red Book, we have class members of '70 with ties to them. My grand dad was Harvard 1910, then was a prof at Howard for years. I'm the 4th Harvard grad...."

Ric Redman, CEO and co-founder, Thunderbolt Clean Energy (Seattle)

... John U. Monroe in the 1960s left his job as Dean of Harvard College to go to the Deep South and spend the rest of his life teaching (and raising money for) the HBCUs. And it was a long rest of his life. ... He's someone Harvard is very proud of.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_U._Monro

Ron Glass, professor of philosophy of education, UC Santa Cruz,

... Good luck with this effort to extend Harvard's response to its own history ... I believe that every bit that any of us do matters, and by each of us doing what we can in our particular spheres we can help bend that historical arc toward justice and we help the spiritual development of our own souls.

Alex Field, professor of economics, Santa Clara (CA) University

... This is a reckoning which is long overdue ...

Lee Shrewsbury, founder, Solar Insulation Inc. (retired)

I will gladly add my signature to the letter. ... "Sub-endowing" (I guess I made that term up lol) HBCUs is by far the most logical and appropriate thing to do. It strikes me as a perfect fit to the case you are making, touching thousands of similarly affected past, present, and future lives without the many unavoidable problems of trying to assess specific amounts of reparations owing to specific victims and their descendants. It would be an internationally breathtaking act of leadership on Harvard's part ...

Myles Lynk, lawyer, public servant, law professor (served on Carter White House staff)

... Please add my name to the list of signatories to the letter. I support it wholeheartedly.....

Orest Hurko, clinical consultant, adjunct associate professor, Tufts graduate school of biomedical science

I saw your note about the Harvard Slavery petition, increasing our contribution from 100 million to 1.5 billion. Excellent idea. Please sign me up.

Ken Barnes, semi-retired civil rights attorney (worked for Justice Department)

Thank you ... for inviting me to add my name to the campaign. I proudly accept.

This effort will bring our alma mater a little bit closer to repairing the damage done to the descendants of enslaved people by many of Harvard's slave-owning donors. Although the proposed \$1.5 billion fund sounds like a lot of money (it is, of course, in an absolute sense), it constitutes less than 3% of Harvard's \$51 billion endowment, which has snowballed over the years. At the same time, the descendants of enslaved human beings have been denied access to the rewards of capitalism even as their generational trauma has endured. Indeed, our proposal is a small price to pay for Harvard's complicity in America's original sin.

The financial disparities are only part of the story. We know that wealth begets more wealth. The privileged, the elite few, the well-credentialed enjoy many advantages beyond the dollar value of their education. The status, the connections, the door-opening that the Harvard name gives us makes it possible for us to enhance our lives in untold ways. Not to mention the advantages we pass on to our progeny before they do a lick of work to earn it....

Robert Penn, writer, producer

Please add my name to the list of signatories to the current HR70 letter to the President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Harvard Board of Overseers, the two governing bodies of Harvard University.

I hope the Corporation and Overseers consider our letter with favor.

Sincerely, Robert

I forgive the Harvard Cops who stopped me so often when I returned to the Yard. I forgive the Housemaster who complimented my "grasp of English," and then suggested that I get a nice white wife so people would know I'm a good Negro. I forgive the microaggressions that profs and teaching fellows hurled my way. Most of all, I forgive my classmates who abandoned me when I asked that equal treatment for Black students be included among our demands during the Harvard Hall occupation.

Lindsay Crouse, actor; teacher

I feel strongly that the mere knowledge of slavery has left a mark on all of us, not easily removed. Making reparations is not really the point. Being hugely generous to a group that will carry the pain of its history always cannot ever be a true reparation, but it brings into the light a Truth of slavery that we have tried to bury. The sheer enormity of the pain of slavery is beyond any individual to bear and yet many do bear it, still, like it or not. A large gift from Harvard cannot take that away. Any attempt at expiation is just bad magic. But a huge gift from Harvard would create openings that we cannot even imagine at this moment. And I am convinced that in that exchange, Harvard will be the greatest beneficiary.