

# 1963 Shell Christening on their 50th Reunion

On October 23rd, alumni, midshipmen and coaches gathered to celebrate the Class of 1963's 50th reunion with a shell dedication.

It all started in 1960, when a young group of plebes took on the world of rowing. After an undefeated season, winning the EARC Sprints and IRA Championships, they competed in the 1960 Olympic Trials...as PLEBES! The Class of 1963 went on to make the grand final of the Olympic Trials and place fourth behind the Navy Varsity, California and Syracuse. If you talk to them today, they are still disappointed with that one blemish on their plebe record.

The Class of 1963 became the foundation of one of the greatest eras in Navy Crew history. With two Ten Eyck team points trophies during their tenure and many medals from the EARC and IRA Championships, their success went far beyond the heavyweight program. This class helped the lightweights (150's) win their first two EARC gold medals in the young program's history.

There is also no doubt the Class of 1963 helped forge the way for future Ten Eyck points trophies and even the development of crews which swept the 1965 IRA Championship, winning all three Eight events.

Decades later, the Class of 1963 oarsmen began rowing again. First, it was to stay in shape, then came the competitions and a challenge to get the legendary plebe boat back together. This eventually led to



the establishment of the Navy Masters Rowing Club, for which many Navy alumni still compete to this day. So, in many ways,



this class has given back to the school, the midshipmen, and all the Navy alumni who aspire to keep their rowing dreams alive.

The program recognized the Class of

1963 by naming a lightweight shell in their honor on their 50th USNA reunion. The Class of 1963 is one of our most supportive alumni groups. They helped to provide Navy's heavyweight, lightweight and women's crews with the best equipment available. Their collaborative effort is the basis of our Navy Crew Excellence Fund, from which the majority of our rowing shells are now bought. They have also started a 1963 shell endowment fund which will keep a "Class of 1963" shell in our boathouse forever.

Craig Thrasher '63 spoke on behalf of the 1963 oarsmen and read a poem he had created detailing his experience and growth as a person during his time on the Severn.

CAPT Spencer Johnson, USN ret., Class of 1963 president, was also on hand to speak of the '63 oarsmen's generosity to the program and remembered a time when every midshipmen had to learn how to row at the Academy.

## Class of 1963's Accomplishments

- 1960 EARC Plebe Eight Champion  
IRA Plebe Eight Champion  
IRA Ten Eyck Points Trophy Winner
- 1961 EARC Varsity Eight Champion  
EARC JV Eight Champion  
EARC JV 150 Eight Champion
- 1962 EARC Varsity 150 Eight Champion
- 1963 IRA JV Eight Champion  
IRA Ten Eyck Points Trophy Winner



1961 Varsity and JV Eastern Sprints Champions