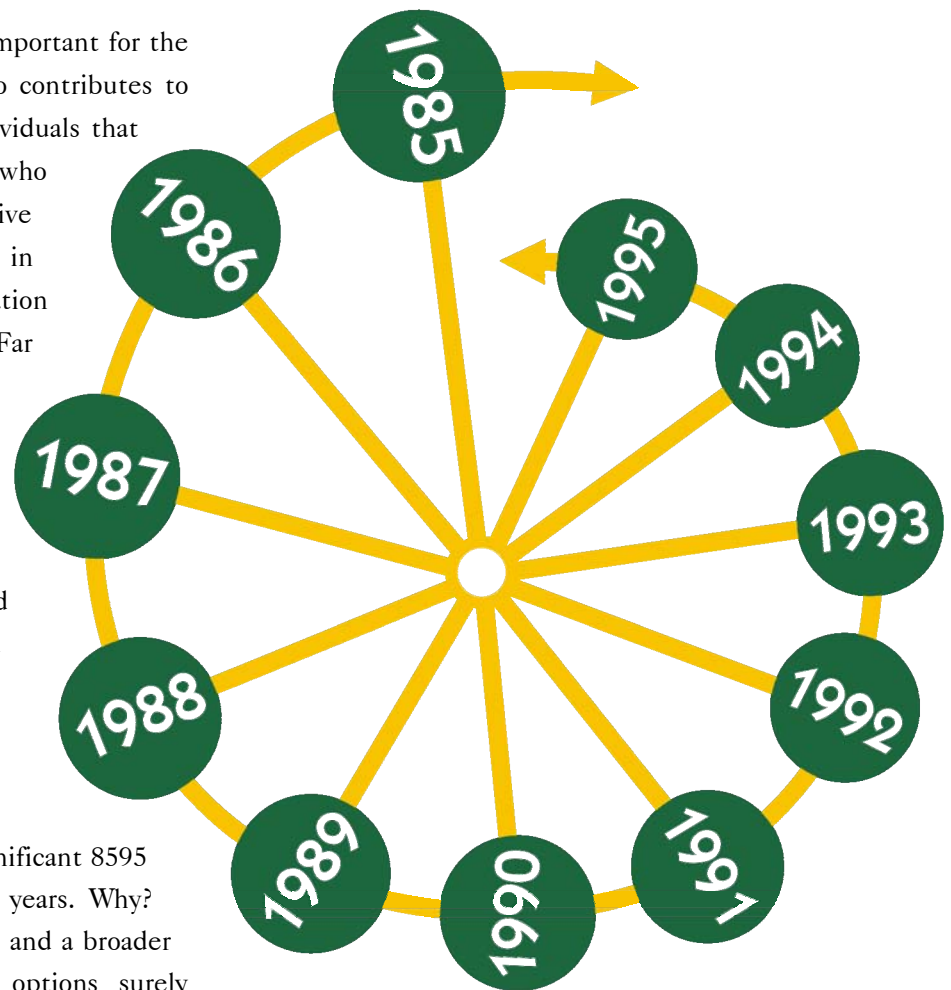


8·5·9·5

THOSE WHO GRADUATED FROM 1985 TO 1995 are central participants in a unique period in the history of the College. Like no other group, these alumni link the way it *was* with the way it *is*. Comprising roughly a quarter of the total W & M alumni population at this time, the 1985-1995 segment is at the vanguard of demographic trends pulling the alumni world into the future—forces that are rewriting generational definitions and blurring the lines between the established phases of life in the process. The “8595” bloc is a key focus point within a larger social network of intersecting lines and spiraling rings, and its importance will only grow.

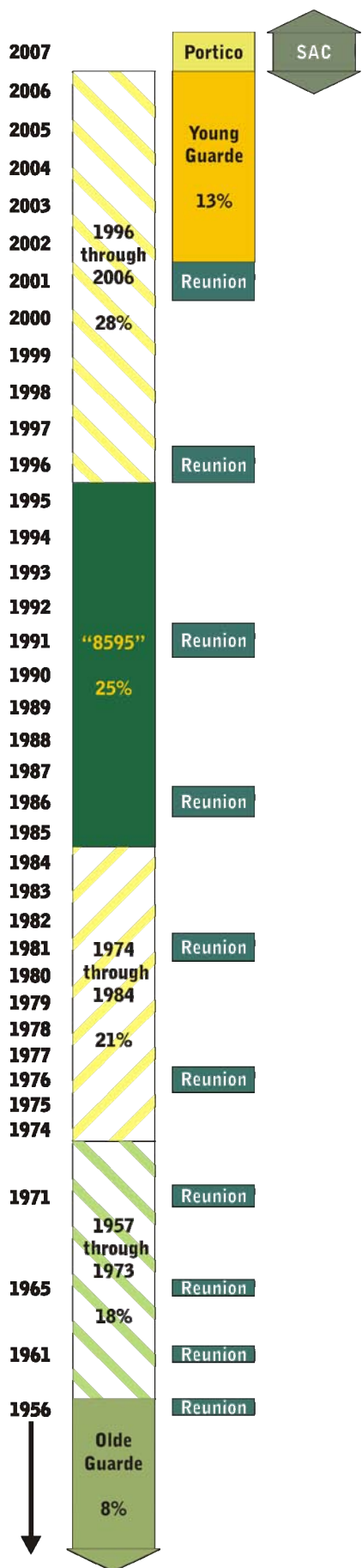
The cohesiveness of this group is not just important for the WMAA and the College community; it also contributes to the happiness and effectiveness of the individuals that participate. Keeping in touch with those who went through many of the same formative experiences is not merely an exercise in nostalgia, nor is it a backward-looking elevation of the past over the present or the future. Far from it. Instead, participating in the alumni community is a way to stay grounded—*connected* with one’s past—even while meeting people *new* to us and relating to past acquaintances in new ways. Properly configured, it is a *dynamic* and fruitful activity that utilizes a common framework and many shared values and loyalties. Linkage is both empowering and enjoyable, an activity where more *is* better.

Yet, the participation of the strategically significant 8595 group has tapered off in the past several years. Why? Distance, work priorities, family obligations, and a broader menu of entertainment and networking options surely account for some of this erosion. But this natural reduction is magnified because the traditional alumni system is optimized to harvest the low-hanging fruit of the alumni world: recent graduates, retirees, and empty-nesters. It is rare indeed for any alumni program to successfully run



outreach efforts even to just these three segments all at the same time. Resources are finite and, thus, the busy, but numerous, middle demographic is usually prioritized lower than what are perceived to be higher yield segments.

W & M Age-Based Focus Areas



Alumni in the 8595 group have both feet firmly set in a decades-wide representation trench: '95-ers will not qualify for Olde Guard membership until 2045, and '85-ers last qualified for any of the WMAA groups aimed at the youngest alumni in 1990. Of the more than a dozen specialized alumni groups in the W & M community, *none* are aimed at the 8595 constituency.

8595 will be a unique and ongoing mechanism that will change as we do and foster the involvement of our own.

Reunion attendance data suggest that some classes consistently outperform adjacent years, even when the skewing influence of the 1993 Tercentenary Homecoming is accounted for. 8595 contains two such ranges: 1987-1989, which typically attains 143% of the average attendance, and 1992-1994 (127%). 8595, thus, contains two particularly strong class year ranges. This span selection ensures that in four years out of every five year cycle two classes within 8595 will have a major pentannual reunion—and every five years *three* classes (1985, 1990, and 1995) will each have reunions.

The boundaries set for this new and experimental group are not intended to exclude anyone older or younger who might wish to attend its events. Alumni from 1984 and 1996, in particular, might wish to participate. And should groups similar to 8595 arise around new ranges of class years (e.g., "7484" or "9606"), partnering with them for special events or projects would be a logical way to better serve those alumni nearest the boundaries of each group.

8595 will not replace the efforts of individual classes within the target membership. Rather, it will support them and make the jobs of reunion planners easier. 8595 will boost the volunteer pool and add resources that will surely help stabilize attendance and the intercommunication of all eleven classes it will cover.



8595 events and publicity will boost the desire of its members to make the trip to Homecoming or to go to a local alumni event. 8595 will work to reduce the typical attendance erosion seen by the WMAA and other alumni organizations as each class ages.

Although 8595 is not officially organized under the WMAA umbrella or otherwise at this time, 8595 may some day assume a place amongst the many other officially-chartered special constituent groups that have been recognized by the WMAA recently and in decades past.

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