

Sweet Homecoming for 50-Year Celebrants

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In 1966, when Neal Jones was captive in the “Hanoi Hilton” in Vietnam, with a badly broken left arm, a broken shoulder and six broken vertebrae, he wondered if he would be better off dead. But, as fate had it, Jones was among the thousands of Tulane alumni celebrating at homecoming this past weekend.



Neal Jones, left, celebrating his 50th class reunion at the home of Tulane President Scott Cowen, shows photos taken during his long imprisonment in Vietnam to senior student Lauren Aronson, who is taking a course on "The U.S. War in Vietnam." (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Jones, a 1960 graduate, was among those at an emeritus reception honoring alumni with 50 or more years since graduation. At the event, held on Thursday (Oct. 7) at No. 2 Audubon St., the home of Tulane President Scott Cowen, the [Tulane Alumni Association](#) presented lifetime achievement awards to Jones and Betty M. Field, who also graduated in 1960 and received graduate degrees in 1969 and 1973.

Jones was shot down and captured on his third combat tour in Vietnam in 1966, tortured for 10 days, and spent nearly seven years as a prisoner of war. He retired as a colonel after 21 years of service and many military decorations including a

silver star and a bronze star for valor. Later a businessman, Jones served as director of development for Tulane athletics from 1990â€”2000.

Looking back on the last 50 years, Jones says the one thing of which he is most proud is “I never gave up, I didn't lose my spirit or my faith in five things: God, my country, my family, my deep faith in my fellow prisoner and faith in myself.”

Families of current Tulane students and alumni from all years past returned to glorious weather in New Orleans on Friday through Sunday (Oct. 8â€”10) for Tulane [homecoming](#), Family Weekend and Wave '10, an all-alumni reunion party at the Lavin-Bernick Center on the uptown campus.

At the homecoming football game on Saturday, the Green Wave fell to the Army Black Knights, 41-23, in the Louisiana Superdome. Before the game, there was music, food and fun at the tailgating party in Homecoming Village atop on of the Superdome's garages.

Homecoming weekend's many other highlights included a huge pep rally and fireworks display on Friday (Oct. 8) on the LBC Quad with funky New Orleans sounds provided by Trombone Shorty and Orleans Avenue. The Helluva Hullabaloo Auction & Party, also on Friday evening, benefitted Tulane student-athletes. An online [auction](#) continues through Oct. 26.