Record attendance at the Amsterdam reunion marks the end of Felix Dasser's three-year term as President of the HLSAE

Ascension weekend continues to be synonym of reunion for HLS alumni based in Europe (and abroad). On May 9, 2013, a numerous and diverse crowd of Cambridge classmates gathered at the beautiful canal house of Willem Stevens (LL.M. '63) for the welcome drinks which kicked off the 2013 HLSAE reunion held in Amsterdam. Willem, one of the founders of the HLSAE in 1965, had masterminded every detail of the event, starting from the tulip bulbs in the welcome package up to the menu of the farewell brunch. For Willem, this year's reunion was not only special because it was taking place in his home city. "My class is represented at this reunion with 10 alumni, all friends of mine. For us, this is a very special year, as it is our 50th reunion”, said Willem. The weather provided more evidence that this event would be an exceptional one, as the sun was shining over the Amsterdam canals! René Pfromm (LL.M. '08), a German alumnus who flew in from Beijing to take part in the reunion, beamed: "These reunions are a chance to meet old friends from Harvard … and to meet new friends from Harvard!"

The Friday morning program featured a number of cultural highlights. Participants faced an *embarras de richesse* as they had to choose between a stroll through the artistic jewels which were on display at the *ArtZuid* sculpture exhibition, a look over the shoulders of the conservators restoring the masterpieces of the *Rijksmuseum* or an exploration of the Costers Diamond factory, where the *Koh-i-noor* diamond had been cut in the 19th century.

HLSAE reunions traditionally offer a mixture of culture, academics and fun. The academic part of this year's program featured a visit of the Peace Palace, the seat of the International Court of Justice. Participants enjoyed the unique opportunity to meet Judge Kenneth Keith (LL.M. '65), who reminded them of the strong intellectual bond uniting Cambridge to The Hague. The traditional Academic Session on Saturday afternoon featured a brilliant *exposé* by Holger Spamann (LL.M. '01, S.J.D '09), Assistant Professor at HLS. Here again, the transatlantic connection was on display, as Holger discussed his research on the correlation between legal origin and punitiveness (in the US and in European countries) under the headline "Crime and Punishment" borrowed from Dostoyevsky. The second part of the Academic Session was devoted to a panel discussion on the challenges ahead for international tribunals. The panel was composed of Dean Elies van Sliedregt (Free University of Amsterdam), Prof. Holger Spamann, Prof. Göran Sluiter (University of Amsterdam), Oscar de Savornin Lohman (LL.M. '67, former member of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands), Patricia Vantsouri (LL.M. '09, senior researcher at the Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology, and Society) and Jasper Pauw (LL.M. '09, legal advisor for *Médecins Sans Frontières* in Myanmar). Panelists discussed, among others, the difficulties faced by the Khmer Rouge Tribunal in Cambodia, which both Göran and Jasper know from first-hand experience.
But this reunion was meant to provide more than just food for thought. On Friday night, participants received food to cook and were presented with a variation of the "you eat what you kill" fee sharing arrangement implemented within certain law firms. At De Kookfabriek (Dutch for "cooking factory"), the leitmotiv was "you eat what you cook". Divided into groups of 10, and assisted by a coach, HLSAE members prepared a four-course menu worthy of the Harkness Commons. The spirit of Cambridge vibrated throughout the entire evening, as confirmed by Bogdan Getzich (LL.M. '11): "You can meet people who have had the exact same experience as you. It's like getting back to Cambridge all over again!"

One of the hallmarks of Felix Dasser's (LL.M. '90) presidency has been the choice of spectacular venues for the gala dinner. To meet Felix for dinner, one has to descend underground into a Polish salt mine (in Wieliczka near Cracow), to enter the headquarters of the guild of innkeepers (Zunfthaus zur Meisen) in Zurich or to take a boat up to the impressive Scheepvaartmuseum in Amsterdam. The HLSAE dined and danced in a historic edifice erected in 1656, i.e., 20 years after the establishment of another world renowned institution... The restoration of the building in 2011 led to the installation of a spectacular roof inspired by the compass lines on an old sea map. This map was the perfect background to the speech of the dinner speaker Uri Rosenthal, former Dutch Minster of Foreign Affairs, who confronted the participants with the challenges and opportunities of the transatlantic relationship. As soon as the dinner was over, the sound of a live saxophone player triggered an invasion of the dance floor, which continued until well into the small hours of the night for the younger alumni (approximately a third of the participants in this reunion had graduated from HLS during the last 5 years!).
The HLSAE General Assembly was held on Saturday afternoon. The assembly started with an address by the recipient of the HLSAE grant in 2012, Barbara Sobowska (LL.M. '12) from Poland. The HLSAE does indeed donate the proceeds of its activities to help one or more European students defray their tuition fees at HLS. In aggregate, an amount of approximately USD 200,000 has been made available during the last 10 years. Thanks to a record attendance in Amsterdam (over 150 participants from 22 countries), the tradition of the HLSAE scholarship will continue in 2013. Felix Dasser addressed the General Assembly for the last time in his capacity as president and recalled the three goals he had set to himself, and to his team, at the outset of his presidency in 2010: (i) to keep up the time-honored traditions of the HLSAE, (ii) to strengthen the academic element which lies at the heart of the HLSAE and (iii) to broaden the membership base, in particular by reaching out to young alumni. Felix concluded: "I leave it up to the Assembly to judge whether these goals have been met." The Assembly answered with a resounding ovation, which was also a well-deserved thank you for the work performed by Felix and his team, composed of Henrik Rossing Lønberg (LL.M. '01, Treasurer) and Anne-Caroline Urbain (LL.M. '06, Secretary), during the last three years. Thankfully, all three of them will remain with the Association, as Felix has been elected as Governor, Henrik as President and Anne-Caroline as Vice-President. Henrik's team for the next term will comprise Michał Bobrzyński (LL.M. '09, Assistant Secretary), Philipp Fischer (LL.M. '09, Secretary), Elsbeth Kroeze (LL.M. '04, Assistant Secretary) and René A. Pfromm (LL.M. '08, Treasurer).

The reunion ended with the traditional farewell brunch and the – also traditional – questions as to the location of the 2014 reunion (to be announced soon). "We would definitely encourage people to come to the reunion. It's a fantastic opportunity to be together again and to meet other classes. Hope to see you next year!" said Gemma Mootoo Rajah and Daniela Ratajova (both LL.M. '12) before leaving Amsterdam.

Check out the photos and the movie of the Amsterdam reunion on www.hlsae.eu.
Information on the 2014 reunion will be published shortly on this website.