

It's good to be here for the second Class of 1970 Lecture in Philosophy.

If we get any more people coming to this event we'll need to ask Coach Schiano if we can borrow Rutgers Stadium.

Why does the Class of 1970 want to help fund programs like this? There are three reasons:

I am going to read from a script so that I can stay short but also be precise.

(1) When we were students at Rutgers, going back 40 years, events such as this were non-existent. I recall taking a bus up to Princeton to hear the Oxford philosopher Gilbert Ryle read a paper. I

recall other bus rides to Princeton. I don't remember there being any philosophers who stopped here to talk.

Of course things are much better now at Rutgers –

which leads us to point #2:

(2) Our connection as members of the Rutgers community was as undergraduates. As Rutgers has gotten bigger – and, in philosophy, so much better -- program emphasis has shifted significant attention to graduate students. That is wonderful. But we in the Class of 1970 wanted to find unique ways to enrich the undergraduate experience.

So as we approached our 35th reunion in 2005, we began to think about things that weren't being done for undergrads.

Which brings me to the third reason:

(3) In a talk with Peter Klein, who then was the department chair, Peter asked a question: why do so many classes fund a bench?

I know part of the reason. A bench is a wonderful, tangible thing and – if sturdy enough – it will outlast all of us. A bench also can have a medal stuck on it, “Donated by the Class of 1970” or whatever.

But when a present day undergraduate

sits on that bench, has he or she learned anything?

Benches are nice – and, please, don't construe what I am saying as a put down of any class's gifts to Rutgers. At this economically perilous time in the university's history, all gifts, I'm sure, are very welcome.

But what if we in the Class of 1970 could bring a unique educational experience to undergraduates?

Between them, Peter Klein and undergraduate vice chair Frankie Egan turned over their undergraduates for a great experiment: Could these students identify a notable speaker and get him or

her to come to Rutgers?

What a cool thing: calling up a Douglas Hofstadter and asking, hey are you busy next Thursday?

I over-simplify – but that too is a key point. The Class of 1970 has never tried to micro-manage these events. We have put up some funding but we have wanted no real involvement and we haven't had any because groups of philosophy majors have done such a terrific job working on their own.

All that said, let me turn this over to Greg McKelvey, one of the students on the committee, who will tell us how the students chose Mr Hofstadter.