I will miss being able to sleep in until one minute before my morning class starts and calling in from the comforts of my bed.

I’m a first-year Ph.D. student. One of the most memorable parts of this year of virtual learning was getting together on Zoom every Monday evening with my reading group for one of our required courses. We were supposed to be discussing our readings and sharing notes, which we did, but only after checking in personally, sharing updates about baby panda Xiao Qi Ji at the National Zoo, and posting funny memes for about an hour. Having this unstructured time to laugh and connect during this strange year was one of the highlights of the fall for me. (Shout out to my reading group: Caroline, Julian, Lily, and Kemy!)

What inspires us? More often than not, it’s the people around us. At the end of last year, the school’s centennial, more than a dozen alumni and faculty gathered in pairs and trios on Zoom to talk about the important friendships they developed with one another over the years, friendships that offered mentoring and opportunities for the exchange of intergenerational knowledge. The Zoom series, called CrossGen, was taped and can be accessed online. Conversations included:

- GEOFFREY CANADA, ED.M.’75 and CLINT SMITH, PH.D.’20, (shown above) talked about educational equity, the impact of COVID-19, and what inspired them to become teachers.
- PROFESSOR SUSAN MOORE JOHNSON, ED.D.’81, MATTHEW KRAFT, ED.D.’13, and HEATHER PESKE, ED.D.’05, shared how they connected through the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers and the way research and policy support teaching.
- SENIOR LECTURER JAMES HONAN, ED.D.’89, and RICHARD REDDICK, ED.D.’07, talked about their collaboration on the Institute for Educational Management and how the Ed School has fostered generations of relationships.
- SENIOR LECTURER KATHRYN BOUDETT, PROFESSOR ELIZABETH CITY, ED.D.’07, and Professor Richard Murnane, the founders of the Ed School’s Data Wise Project, reminisced about the project’s growth over the last 20 years.
- EVE EWING, ED.M.’13, ED.D.’16, and PROFESSOR SARA LAWRENCE-LIGHTFOOT, ED.D.’72, talked about role models, their mutual admiration for one another, and the inheritances that have shaped their lives and life’s work.
- DENNIS HOLTSCHEIDNER, ED.D.’97, and SENIOR LECTURER JUDITH BLOCK MCLAUGHLIN, M.A.T.’71, ED.D.’83, exchanged observations about their careers, working with college presidents, and the life-long support they have received from their Ed School colleagues and one another.

Watch the conversations here: hgse.me/3v3d3DZ