

## OPINIONS & EXPRESSIONS

### Broadening CDE's Reach

The public good that Williams provides through the positive effects that our alumni have on society is particularly evident with those of our Center for Development Economics (CDE).

Approaching its 50th anniversary, CDE has educated more than 1,000 economists from more than 100 developing nations. Virtually all of them have returned home, where they've used their new analytical skills to advance social well-being through a variety of roles that include head of state, minister of finance, central bank governor, and ambassador.

Former CDE Chair Steve Lewis '60 tells how the most senior minister in Botswana is fond of saying, "We like to think of Williams as our college." CDE alumni have held leadership posts in most of the key government ministries in that country, which has become one of sub-Saharan's most successful economies. Similar stories can be told elsewhere.

In response to recent world events, CDE has recruited more students from Islamic countries in the Middle East and Central Asia, including several from Afghanistan and, last year, an Iraqi woman. This is consistent with the CDE mission to focus on countries in which training opportunities are scarce.

The benefits flow both ways. In the last 20 years, almost 400 of our undergraduates have taken CDE courses, learning from professors who in large part the

center helped draw to campus and alongside students who bring vastly differing perspectives to classroom debate and outside discussion. Undergraduates also participate in CDE social events.

Center graduates love to take part in the wonderful Williams alumni network. When Martha Rogers '07 moved to the Philippines to work in microfinance, she says, "I joined the CDE Philippines list server, and within hours a center alumnus had invited me to the Ministry of Finance to discuss the country's microfinance situation."

Of all the liberal arts colleges in the country, Williams is unique in having this invaluable resource.

Since I proudly taught there during the 1980s, the center has faced new challenges. We've long lamented that candidates with the most potential often could not land funding from their home countries or from third parties. The end of the Cold War, several currency devaluations, and the effects of 9/11 all made funding even scarcer.

For this reason we are hoping to endow CDE operations completely and are in the process of raising the funds needed to do so. We particularly hope to become able to admit to the center the most promising future leaders without regard to their ability to pay, in the same way we admit undergraduates.



Kevin Kennedick

This comes at a time when the College is planning how best to respond to the so-called flattening of the world and realizing what a powerful resource the center represents for bringing the world to Williams and Williams to the world.

We'll be taking steps to integrate CDE fellows more fully into campus life, a move eased by the greater internationalization of our undergraduates, and to enlist center alumni more in our efforts to recruit to the College the most talented students abroad. To raise CDE's visibility on campus and internationally, the center plans to host occasional major conferences, beginning this spring with one on the effects of climate change on developing economies.

We benefit continually at Williams from wise and creative decisions made by earlier College leaders, of which the launching of CDE in 1960 is a great example. Our goal now is to adapt and support the center so that it can have an even greater impact on the world and on the College in the century ahead. ■

—Morty Schapiro



**A** Case for Being There" (January 2008) ranks among the best stories I have ever read in the *Alumni Review*. It brought contemporary affairs to life through a Williams connection. Powerful.

—Field Horne '73, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

**B**ridging two wars and service in both, I'm struck how the *Alumni Review* now will favorably review alumni activities that in an earlier time may have been demeaned merely by an association with a liberally unpopular cause ("A Case For Being There"). The idea that even publishing a view counter to a political pose that may "perpetuate a dangerous confusion" so distorts the freedom of expression espoused by a Williams education to

being there

me and was and still is a great Eph paradox.

The elite attitude inculcated within a Williams experience remains both our greatest strength and biggest albatross. God bless Dr. Danielson '88 and all alums with all service given truly to others.

—William F. Holmes '63, Fairmont, Maine

I read "A Case for Being There" with admiration for Dr. Paul Danielson '88 and his colleagues. His commitment to medicine and our country is an inspiration. But his byline at the end refers to his being "mobilized twice for the Global War on Terrorism." I have heard the term used frequently and suggest that it is a dangerous and simplistic reference to a complex problem fueled by economic

disparities, educational lapses, religious intolerance, and human aggression. Many reasonable scholars have argued that the Iraq War was promulgated on false premises alleging threats to our country and has, indeed, emboldened the very terrorists that we so fear.

—John W. Eley P' 10, Decatur, Ga.

**A**s a former member of the Executive Committee of the Society of Alumni and good friend of Wendy Hopkins '72, I thought she deserved such a good article ("All in the Family"). It was most interesting to learn about the Center for Development Economics graduates and their involvement in a very desperate part of the world ("The International Civil Servant"). As a former U.S. Marine infantry officer in WWII, I was moved indeed by Lt. Col. Paul Danielson's '88 "A Case for Being There." Great edition!

—Malcolm MacGruer '43, Madison, Conn.

## LETTERS

**T**he excellent article on Professor J.W. Miller by Joseph Fell '53 in the January

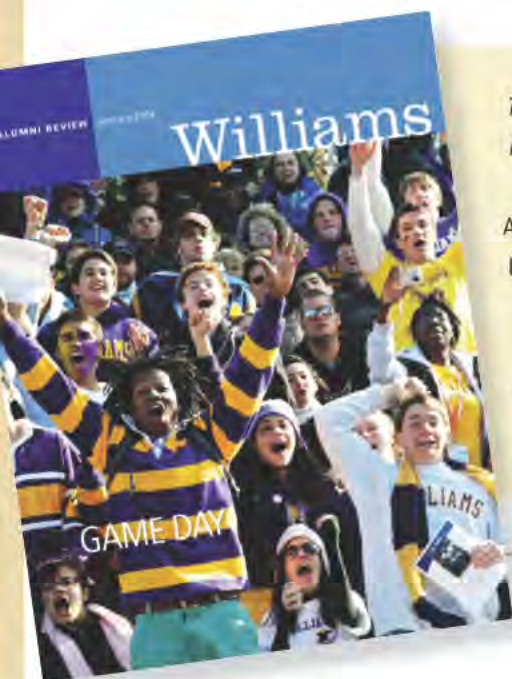
*Alumni Review* brought with it a wave of memories. Miller's words, even when I did not fully understand them, had a way of sticking with me. His concept of the "midworld," the space between the perceiving self and the perceived object or idea, was the place where action was called for that would define or

memories of miller

redefine both sides of that ontological equation. His definition of immorality, "treating a human being like an object," embodied that concept. It has been a rock-solid definition for me in every culture I have dealt with and was the foundation for actions taken against torture when encountered in both Vietnam and Korea.

Miller's humor and warmth matched his erudition. I can see him now, standing arms akimbo in front of a big class and stating with a smile, "My favorite animal is the walrus; it is so fantastic." The class howled, as Miller, himself tall and bulky with a mustache, had a bit of the walrus about him. I think he knew it and knew that we knew it, but of course it was never mentioned.

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*The Alumni Review welcomes letters related to topics in the magazine. Send letters to: Alumni Review, P.O. Box 676, Williamstown, Mass., 01267-0676; fax: 413.597.4158; e-mail [alumni.review@williams.edu](mailto:alumni.review@williams.edu). Letters may be edited for clarity and space.*



## OPINIONS & EXPRESSIONS

### A Viscerally Modest Man

by Peter Murphy

**H**ank Payne was really, viscerally modest. He had said in the past that he wanted no eulogies at all at his funeral when it came. For those of us gathered in Atlanta Jan. 9, this was clearly an impossible request. The compromise was that there was only one eulogy, and, listening to it, a large crowd—more than 300 people of all sorts, from schoolchildren to Atlanta civic leaders—stood at Hank's graveside and wept along with his family.

The reason for this large crowd and all the tears was that Hank Payne was a great and good man.

The list of Hank's virtues is a long one and not hard to fill out. He was a devoted husband—he and his wife, Deborah, met when they were kids in Worcester, Mass.—and an intensely proud father. He was endlessly energetic and creative, fizzing over with ideas. He had an easy sense of humor and a deep, humane perspective on the struggles of the world. He took learning about everything that was happening—in education, in politics, in the arts, in everyday life—as



Kevin Bubrick

*Continued from page 3*

I last saw Miller about 1975, when I took my son to meet the man who had so influenced me. Miller immediately focused on John, giving him milk and cookies and asking him wonderful questions. John

(Williams '85) called me to be sure that I had seen the article. He, too, had felt the impact of Miller and his enthusiasm for life.

It is a great tribute to the quality of Miller's thought and the impact of his teaching that his works are being spread by his students through books and essays. I hope one day there can be a course taught at Williams devoted entirely to his ideas.

—Donald Gregg '51, Armonk, N.Y.

It was a pleasure to read Joe Fell's '53 handsome tribute to "The Philosopher of Elm Street." It emphasizes Miller's technical contribution to philosophy of the "artifactual mid-world." But what I remember most vividly about him as his

student and for two years his colleague is his remarkable ability to philosophize about anything I happened to bring up: a book, a movie, an election, a painting, a theologian, or even a painless visit to the dentist. He was, in Emerson's phrase, Man Thinking; and for him, as he used to say, "philosophy has no office hours."

I used to be surprised that his office (when he was not in his study at home) was in the basement of Hopkins Hall, along with the janitor's and the heating facilities. To honor the janitor, Miller put up a plaque on the wall.

Miller seldom traveled far from Williamstown, and his courses looked out not on the philosophy club but on the wide world of human experience: The Philosophy of the State and The Philosophy of History. I wonder if current students can find such courses at Williams today.

—Cushing Strout '45, Ithaca, N.Y.

## LETTERS

a basic civic responsibility. Talking with him was a good way to learn and often made you feel like maybe you needed to waste less time. Hank was startlingly intelligent, seamlessly quick on the uptake, and he had wonderful, considered judgment about people. An easy way for us to understand his basic intellectual wattage is to remember that when he graduated from Yale he received a master's degree along with his bachelor's degree, *and* he was valedictorian of his class.

I could go on—I haven't mentioned his work ethic, for instance—but I will stop, because what was most important in Hank, what I admired most in him, what I valued most in our friendship and what I will remember most, is that he was a noticeably kind man. I don't know how else to put it. It was a simple thing. He constantly thought about other people, and he wanted their lives to be better in small and large ways. In his working life, Hank quite literally spent all his time trying to make things around him better. He never, simply never, pursued personal agendas. His priorities were the priorities and needs of his friends, his students, the institutions he presided over, and the communities he lived in. As a result, he made a difference in people's lives every day.

Hank spent his life as a public figure. As Hank would readily and often admit, one of the ironies of this life was that he was at heart a quiet, library-loving history nerd. Just to read and learn and know were for him intense pleasures. Wherever he went he kept doing history in and amidst his other complex work. When he went to Atlanta to preside over Woodward Academy, the country's largest private school system, he immediately began doing Atlanta history as a way to do what he loved and learn about his new world at the same time. In our last conversation, a week before he died, Hank could hardly contain his glee at his latest idea: an Atlanta history Wiki, which would be constructed out of small history projects created by Woodward students. He was doing the groundwork himself.

Hank asked me to do a hard job—dean of the College—and he taught me how to do it. He tolerated my endless errors and took simple pleasure in our successes, always assigning me the credit for his own ideas. He answered my e-mail within the hour—often within minutes. In the midst of his own troubles he would think only about mine.

Once, when I asked his advice about a really difficult problem, a typical dean's problem involving the chaotic, infinitely complex swirl of daily life, Hank smiled his winsome, quiet smile and

Harry C. Payne, who served as president of Williams from 1994-99, took his own life on Jan. 7 in Atlanta. He was 60.

Payne grew up in Worcester, Mass., and went to Yale for his undergraduate and graduate work, receiving a doctorate in history in 1973. He began teaching at Colgate University and later moved to Haverford College, where he was provost and served as acting president for a year. In 1988, he became president of Hamilton College and six years later was named president of Williams.

"We benefit here at Williams every day from initiatives carried out or begun during the presidency of this wonderfully decent and caring man who dedicated his professional career to expanding the intellectual lives of students," says current Williams President Morty Schapiro. "His influence lingers even in the construction of our North and South Academic Buildings, designed to achieve for the humanities and social sciences what, under his stewardship, The Science Center was able to do for the natural sciences."

For the last eight years, Payne served as president of Woodward Academy, a private K-12 school enrolling 2,885 students throughout the metro Atlanta area.

Payne is survived by his wife, Deborah, two sons, Jonathan '97 and Samuel, and a brother.

offered me wisdom he attributed to his grandmother. He was a Jewish kid from Worcester, and he delivered this wisdom in an imitation of a grandmotherly Yiddish accent: "Just because there is a problem doesn't mean there is a solution."

In my heartsore reflection on the end of Hank's life, I have been meditating on this wisdom. It is funny, in its own way, but is also a hard truth we encounter every day, whether we admit it or no. Knowing it, as Hank did, might be a relief; but it might also be a burden.

Just because there is a problem doesn't mean there is a solution. ■

*Peter Murphy, professor and chair of Williams' English Department, served as dean of the College from 1995 to 2000. His essay appeared in the Jan. 16, 2008, Williams Record.*



## SCENE AND HERD

### CAMPUS RALLIES AGAINST INTOLERANCE

An estimated 600 students, faculty, and staff packed the Paresky Center on Feb. 13 to protest bias-motivated incidents on campus. During the rally and march, participants shared their own experiences and discussed specific steps that could be taken to curb intolerance.

The event was organized in response to a racial slur and drawings of male genitalia scrawled across several common-room doors and walls in Williams Hall at the start of the spring semester. In response, more than 120 students came together to form Stand With Us, whose mission is "beginning to change the culture of apathy and foster the real respect that we know is possible" at Williams. In addition to organizing the rally, the group created an online "pact against indifference and hate" and is working on concrete action plans.

"It would have been disrespectful of us as leaders of the campus if we did not acknowledge how much this violently prejudicial



Juan Baena '07

Members of the Williams community share their experiences and discuss steps to curb bias-motivated incidents on campus.

act affects the community," said Kim Dacres '08, who led the rally with fellow outgoing College Council president Morgan Goodwin '08, in an interview with the *Williams Record*. "When people don't react, silence can be read as acceptance."

In a series of communications to the Williams community, President Morty Schapiro denounced what he called "corrosive patterns of behavior" in society, to which the College is not immune. "They're hurtful, damaging, and offensive," Schapiro stated in an all-campus e-mail message on Feb. 8. "They're unacceptable. They must stop."

For more information on any of these stories, visit [www.williams.edu](http://www.williams.edu) and enter the topic into the search field.

## They Said:

A collection of opinions and ideas expressed at Williams, on its Web sites, and in *The Williams Record*, which can be found at [www.williamsrecord.com](http://www.williamsrecord.com)

"I don't think we get there just by ... dealing with this as if it's another pollution control problem. ... We get there by rethinking the energy system and having a vision of a different kind of economy, maybe even a different kind of society, that would be healthier in many ways ... than the one we have today." —*Worldwatch Institute president Chris Flavin '77, on stemming the tide of climate change, during his keynote address at Williams' Focus the Nation. 2.5.08*

"The site was just my way of getting things off my chest. I never imagined it would be anything bigger than my little soapbox." —*Markos Moulitsas, author of The Daily Kos, a blog that attracts more than 1 million visitors each month and is credited with changing political discourse in America, during a lecture at the '62 Center for Theatre and Dance MainStage. 1.16.08*

"If I had come straight to Williams after high school ... I would not have been as excited as I was, which means I wouldn't be as involved as I am right now. I think it takes being out of high school for a while to figure out what you want to do." —*Alex Kopynec '09, who spent the year after graduating from high school renovating buildings before coming to Williams. Record, 1.16.08*

"What makes extra dimensions interesting is that we know we're going to interact with them, at least via gravity." —*Harvard physics professor Lisa Randall, speaking about new results in theoretical physics to a packed Brooks-Rogers Recital Hall during Williams' annual Richmond Lecture, sponsored by the Oakley Center for the Humanities and Social Sciences. 1.8.08*



## Climb far.

THE WILLIAMS CAMPAIGN

### '57 SCHOLARS 25 YEARS STRONG

Since its inception in 1983, the '57 Scholars Program has provided some 140 Williams students, among them Bicentennial Medalist Regina Kelly '86, with financial aid. The Class of 1957 established the program with its 25th reunion gift and then increased the scholarship endowment last summer in honor of its 50th. (The class also created the 1957 Summer Research Program, which enables students to gain professional-level experience in the humanities and social sciences in close collaboration with their professors.)

25th and 50th reunion giving play essential parts in The Williams Campaign. To learn more, visit: [www.williams.edu/alumni/campaign/ways2give/](http://www.williams.edu/alumni/campaign/ways2give/).



Bob Driesen '57

Each fall, members of the Class of '57 dine on campus with the latest crop of scholars.

### NEW PROFESSORSHIP HONORS MARKGRAF

Hodge Markgraf '52 did it all at Williams as a standout student, a revered teacher, and then an admired administrator. How could that wide range ever be honored? By an endowed chair that recognizes exactly that scope.

The new J. Hodge Markgraf '52 Professorship will be awarded to a faculty member in any field who has displayed the "strikingly balanced skills of scholarly excellence and high citizenship that Hodge Markgraf did for almost 60 years," as the chair's description reads.



Rick Babe

Hodge Markgraf

The chair was endowed by trustee and Williams Campaign co-chair Paul Neely '68, who worked with Markgraf on alumni relations programs and on the 1999 Presidential Search Committee, which Markgraf served as secretary, the capstone of a long, distinguished career.

"There is no question that Hodge set the most brilliant combined example of scholarship, teaching, and citizenship within the memory of anyone alive at Williams today," says Neely. "That is what will be honored by this chair."

"Hodge Markgraf set a standard of commitment to his students, his research, and his college that all Williams professors who knew and loved him seek to emulate," says Williams President Morty Schapiro. "I'm delighted that Hodge's example is now perpetuated by the generosity of Paul Neely, who has set a similarly high standard of alumni commitment to Williams."

### GIFT PAYS TRIBUTE TO HANK FLYNT

Former Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent '60, who attended Williams with scholarship support, has made a nearly \$7 million gift commitment for undergraduate financial aid and to create a new graduate fellowship named for longtime financial aid administrator Hank Flynt '44.



William H. Tagge

Hank Flynt

"Hank Flynt made us proud to be among his group and gave us support in many ways, not just financially," says Vincent, a Williams trustee emeritus. "Now I am able to pay this long overdue tribute. I honor him because he was honorable to all of us."

In addition to undergraduate scholarships, the gift will create the competitively-awarded Henry N. Flynt Jr.



# SCENE AND HERD

1944 Graduate Fellowships, to cover up to three years of graduate or professional school expenses for Williams seniors or recent graduates. The College has several fellowship funds that help graduates pursue advanced degrees abroad, but this new one expands those opportunities to include U.S. schools and allows for law, medicine and business degrees in addition to Doctors of Philosophy.

"Fay Vincent's remarkable gift will help some of our best students achieve their educational dreams beyond graduation, extending their ability to change the world in profoundly positive ways," says President Morty Schapiro. "It's fitting that this gift also supports undergraduate financial aid, especially as we redouble our efforts to make sure that we are truly affordable to all of our potential students regardless of family circumstances. I can think of no better way to recognize Hank Flynt's 38-year Williams career."

## BRUCE RECOGNIZED FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Ice hockey forward William Bruce '08 has received the Coach Wooden Cup for his extensive volunteer service at Williams.

A history and economics major, Bruce is co-president of the Lehman Council for Community Engagement and student chair of the Honor System Committee.

He has created and/or been directly involved in 17 service projects at Williams. Among them, he founded and



Kris Dufour

William Bruce

taught a financial education class for low-income North Adams residents. He

also created Read for Fun, in which youth hockey players serve as stick boys or girls at Williams men's ice hockey games after writing reports about books they've read.

The Wooden Cup is presented by Athletes for a Better World to the two most outstanding role models in collegiate and professional athletics. It's named in honor of John Wooden, one of the most successful coaches in college basketball history.

"We get great kids who like to work hard and love to swim for all the right reasons. Most have a strong connection to the College and the team, and it shows in the results. A tradition of excellence certainly helps. People join expecting to swim fast and perform well as individuals and as a team."

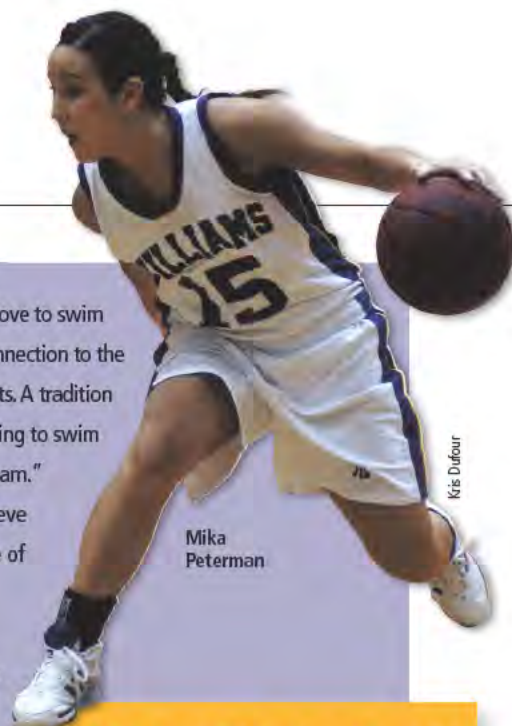
—Men's and women's swimming coach Steve Kuster, in a profile in the December 2007 issue of *Swimming World* magazine.

"What I love about this team is they just keep playing; they don't panic. It's almost like we're getting used to coming from behind."

—Women's basketball coach Pat Manning, after the Ephs rallied from a 13-point first-half deficit on Jan. 26 to hand arch rival Amherst its first defeat of the season.

"Working ... on the Williams ski team has ... given me a chance to share the things I learned during my own career while allowing me to make a more direct connection with my classmates as I finish up my degree here. It's been really exciting to watch everyone try to push their limits in order to challenge the other powerful ski programs in the East."

—Olympic Alpine skier Howard A. "Chip" Knight, 33, who, having spent 14 years as a Williams student, is expected to graduate in June.



Kris Dufour

Mika Peterman

## SPORTS WRAP

## VENNELL RECEIVES NATIONAL HONORS

Jeff Vennell, men's soccer coach and assistant athletic director at Williams from 1971-78, has received the Honor Award from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA).

Vennell spent a year on the coaching staff at Columbia University and then, in 1971, he became head coach at Williams, where his teams won ECAC and NCAA regional championships. He was named New England Coach of the Year in 1978.

He is currently the athletics director for Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hills,



Mich. He also is director of education for the area's youth soccer associations.

A member of the NSCAA's National Coaching Staff since 1987, Vennell received the Mike Berticelli Excellence in Coaching Education Award in 2007. He has written articles on all aspects of the game and is a member of the association's DVD Council, which oversees production of NSCAA's educational videos. He was NSCAA's president in 1993.

## the list

### WIT AND WISDOM

Each summer, a dozen student interns join forces with Williams Instructional Technology (WIT) staff to help faculty develop high quality Web, video and multimedia projects to support what goes on in the classroom. Over the years WIT interns have designed:

**The Art Mecho Museum in Second Life:** A digital museum imagined by Japanese and comparative literature professor Christopher Bolton to explore the ways in which people experience art.

**The Baja Atlas Project:** Aerial movie tours of portions of the Baja peninsula and islands in the region, created for geosciences professor Markes Johnson and lecturer David Backus.

**A Gallery of Planetary Nebula Spectra:** A searchable Web site of spectra, atlas data, and image links for more than 120 galactic planetary nebulae, based on the research of Karen Kwitter, the Ebenezer Fitch Professor of Astronomy.

**A Digital Archive of Costumes:** A collection of costume designer Deborah Brothers' work from past theater department performances, including sketches and rotating, three-dimensional views of costumes.

**Renaissance Music and Saint Donatian:** The annotated score of a 15th-century composition by Jacob Obrecht allows listeners to read the English translation and various notations, prepared for music professor Jennifer Bloxam.

To see all of the projects undertaken by WIT interns, visit [oit.williams.edu/wit/archive/](http://oit.williams.edu/wit/archive/)



## IN MEMORIAM

The College marked the passings of Charles D. Compton, the Ebenezer Fitch Professor of Chemistry, emeritus, in January; and Fred Copeland '35, Dean of Admission, emeritus, in February.

Compton came to Williams in 1946 and spent 31 years as a member of the chemistry faculty, serving as an adviser to generations of students, many of whom went on to become doctors. Working in the field of chemical spectroscopy, he also wrote two introductory chemistry books and was known for his ability to make vague chemistry concepts accessible to students with academic interests outside of the sciences.

Compton graduated from Princeton and served as a research assistant to Sir Hugh Taylor on the World War II Manhattan Project, which developed the atomic bomb.

Copeland joined the Williams biology department and became the College's sole admissions officer in 1946. He took on admissions full-time in 1960 and became the first dean of admissions in 1973. A fundamental player in the College's transition to coeducation, Copeland was widely known as one of the foremost admissions officers in the country and was pivotal in securing Williams' place as one of the most selective American institutions of higher education.

In 1967 Copeland was awarded the Rogerson Cup, the College's highest honor for alumni service. At the time of his retirement in 1978, he had personally admitted 70 percent of the College's living alumni and undergraduates.

An undergraduate scholarship and an award honoring the alumni volunteer that most effectively represents Williams to secondary schools and potential students both bear Copeland's name. He is survived by a sister, three children, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. His wife, Caroline Day, the first dean of women at Williams, died in 2003.



Charles D. Compton

William H. Tague



Fred Copeland

William H. Tague



# PAYING IT FORWARD

By Matthew Swanson '97

Photograph by Charles Eshelman





Thanks to Quest for College, the brainchild of Gina Coleman '90, the question for many underserved high schoolers is no longer *if* they will go to college but *where*.



In the late 1960s, two young women were born in the same South Bronx neighborhood, each full of spirit, passion, and the drive to make something of herself. One was named Jennifer Lopez, and the other was Gina Coleman '90. One went on to inspire young people, transform lives, and enjoy professional success beyond her wildest childhood dreams. The other became a movie star.

I met Gina in the summer of 1998, when both of us were starting work as assistant directors of admission for Williams. We've been friends ever since.

Gina is the kind of person who won't tolerate a problem, who gives generously of her energy and strength, who elevates the lives of those around her by insisting that immediate attention be paid to dreams that might otherwise be abandoned. If there is something that should be done, Gina will do it. It is my sense that she has always been this way.

Raised by her grandmother, Gina was taught to view education as an exit strategy. When an attentive sixth-grade teacher suggested that her willful pupil forgo the neighborhood junior high for one with links to the A Better Chance (ABC) program, Gina's grandmother didn't blink. Gina joined five other young women of less-fortunate means at a strong public high school in Wellesley, Mass., for her sophomore, junior, and senior years. Living together in a group home, the girls received resources and support and the expectation that they would go to college.

Steve and Michele Rogers, both Williams '79, were the house parents for ABC in Wellesley Gina's junior year. They took the girls on a tour of campuses in the northeast that summer and stopped in Berkshire

County. Gina remembers mixed sensations on the drive from Five Corners to Williams—astonishment at the beauty of the landscape and nausea at the winding road. Climbing out of the “way back” of the Rogers' wood-paneled station wagon, she saw Thompson Chapel and fell in love. Visions of the college in the valley became the carrot that led her through senior year.

At Williams Gina studied English and Spanish, her two native languages, and went out for softball. Her junior advisor, captain of the women's rugby team, repeatedly urged Gina to consider playing for the squad. Though interested, Gina sheepishly explained, “I can't afford it. I don't own a horse.” Once the subtle differences between polo and rugby were ironed out, she discovered a lifelong passion.

She spent her summers in Spanish Harlem with kids from backgrounds similar to her own, teaching everything from physical education and character development to English and math. Although the summer program had no formal college prep component, Gina noticed an intense curiosity about college among the students and found herself wishing that they had access to the kind of support she had through ABC.

In the years following Williams, Gina chose the Berkshires over any particular professional ambition. She sold \$1,500 vacuum cleaners door to door before finding a position as a youth counselor at a facility for physically and emotionally abused children. Then she spent five years exploring the world of thermoengineered plastics at GE in Pittsfield, paid off her college loans, and woke up one morning realizing that she was missing something.





A call from fellow rugby player Julia Norton '89 led to a one-year stint as coach of the Williams women's team. It didn't take Gina long to realize that the two hours she spent on the pitch every day provided more meaning than anything she did at GE. She looked for ways to return to Williams full time and eventually landed a position as assistant director of admission.

During her first few years recruiting, Gina made it a goal to visit every high school—private, public, and parochial—in the state of Massachusetts. As she did, a landscape of stark inequity began to emerge. "The kids from private schools knew everything about the college search and application process, whereas the kids from the majority of the publics knew almost nothing," she says. "It occurred to me that I could do something to level the playing field."

Many of the students Gina encountered in rural or disadvantaged urban classrooms were the products of households that either did not value college or didn't consider it a realistic possibility, often due to perceived cost barriers. Their guidance counselors were too preoccupied with day-to-day school issues to provide much assistance with preparing for college—or in securing the scholarships or financial aid to pay for it.

Gina was frustrated and a little angry. I was party to long lunches of animated tirade as she considered the problem and contemplated solutions. Her "Eureka!" moment was informed by an article she read about the effectiveness of fun in learning and motivation. A few days later she came to me with an idea that would define the next decade of her life.

Gina imagined a board game that would provide a forum for sharing information about college in a format that was engaging and interactive. She developed a series of questions and prompts meant to stimulate discussion and a simple board that traced the journey from the start of high school to college admission. The game would be played by a group of students divided into teams and moderated by people who could contribute stories from their own college experiences. The game was called Quest for College.

Gina took a prototype into two area high schools, where it was a hit. Students were engaged by the competitive format and took the game seriously. More important, they reacted positively to Gina's own stories, which made college into something more than books and tests. The mentoring aspects of the game turned out to be as important as the information it provided.

In January 2000, Gina and I taught a Winter Study course that sent Williams students into 9th- and 10th-grade classrooms to play Quest for College with Berkshire County students. (Gina has taught the course every year since.) The feedback from counselors was encouraging. The high school students were interested and energized. Conversation about college increased. There was a subtle but noticeable shift as students started looking forward and considering a new set of options.

One student changed by the experience was Shelley Williamson '10, who grew up in nearby Pittsfield. Even as a junior, she observed a disparity among her classmates.

"The separation between the non-college bound and the college-bound students was very apparent," she says, "not just in how they were viewed, but in how they viewed themselves."



These pages, clockwise from above: Gina Coleman (middle) with fourth-grade friends; in the studio with Misty Blues; with Williams rugby teammate and classmate Rebecca Mattson '90; with the Wellesley High School band; in her Williams senior picture.

Previous pages: (left) Gina revisits the South Bronx neighborhood where she grew up; (right) at age 5.





As a Williams student, Williamson became a Quest for College moderator. “Just by talking about the different resources available, a whole new world of possibilities opened up to the students,” she says. “By the time the bell rang, they were no longer talking about *if* they were going to go to college, but *where* they were going to go.”

Gina wanted to make the game available to other communities in need. She contemplated selling her idea to a major game distributor but worried that its fundamental mission of accessibility would be compromised. So in the summer of 2006, on the advice of fellow Williams alumni, she established the nonprofit Quest for College Inc. (QFC) to distribute the game and train others in its use.

In its first year, QFC expanded its reach to work with Amherst College, Berea College, Connecticut College, GE’s Greater Boston Volunteer Corps, and Luther Burbank High School in San Antonio. The nonprofit also joined forces with the Berkshire Compact, an alliance of area educators, businesspeople, and politicians working to expand access to education.

“The Quest for College game is a natural fit with the work that we are doing to help raise aspirations and demystify the college experience, so that college is something that all residents of the Berkshires can imagine as part of their future,” says Mary Grant, president of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) in North Adams and a major voice in the Berkshire Compact.

Gina is now hoping to develop a free, online version of the game. Another project in the works is Awareness Springfield, which would provide the tools and resources to build college awareness programs in the Springfield, Mass., school district.

“Whether the game is being moderated by college students in a high school classroom or played by a single student online,” she says, “the important thing is that the information gets out there, into the right hands, at the right time, so that kids have the chance to get the education they need to follow their dreams, to have higher hopes for themselves.”

As for her own dreams, last summer Gina was named a Williams dean, overseeing international students and those in the QuestBridge program, which links bright, motivated, low-income students across the country with educational and scholarship opportunities at colleges like Williams. Last spring, she completed a PhD in educational administration from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. And last fall she was asked to serve on MCLA’s board of trustees. She is president of a growing nonprofit, is in the midst of her 11th year as Williams’ head rugby coach, and sings lead vocals for blues band Misty Blues on the side.

Unlike her South Bronx neighbor J. Lo, Gina hasn’t been nominated for a Grammy or Golden Globe—yet. But Gina says her proudest accomplishment was moving her grandmother from the projects to the Berkshires, where she spent the last six years of her life.

Not bad for a girl who doesn’t own a horse. ■

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*Matthew Swanson '98 is author of the volumes published by Idiots'Books, a freelance writer, and director of special projects for the North Charles Street Design Organization in Baltimore, Md.*



# seven under SEVEN

My name is Sheff Otis, and I'm 31. Since graduating from Williams, I've worked as a location scout on a film set in Alaska, guest-starred on a Hollywood sitcom, managed a warehouse, and taught high school kids with behavioral and emotional disorders, among other jobs.

More important, I've been married for six years, and my wife, Deirdre, and I have seven children under 7. No multiples. No kidding.

BY SHEFF OTIS '98

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE WOIT



# W

With my 10-year Williams reunion approaching, I am aware that we'll turn some heads in June. Many of my classmates spent their 20s soul-searching and career building. Meanwhile, D and I dove right in, already mindful that our timing would never be right, we'd never have enough money, and we'd never be content enough in our jobs to be perfect parents. We just knew that we wanted a big, obstreperous family filled with surging love and chaos that—despite our happy childhoods—neither of us had as a kid.

I used to keep a bottle of booze in the mailbox to fortify myself for when the alumni magazine arrived with tales of the elephantine successes of my peers, shattering my sense of place in the world. But slowly I've begun to notice the bold titles and adventures of my Williams friends being replaced with quiet domestic murmurings. Finally, I can relate.

So here's *my* long-overdue Class Note—a slice of life from the trenches of parenthood, as seen through the eyes of a veteran seven times over.





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added Mark Chappell. Then we tried again, and baby Daisy Eleanor was born, tiny and wispy as a dandelion seed.

On this particular morning, six cereal bowls with mismatched cups are lined up on the kitchen counter. Five kids slurp sleepily and Daisy hangs out on D while big brother Satchel, 7, sits watching TV like a zombie in the other room.

Satch (or Sacha, short for Alexander in Russian), comes from the town of Ussurisk, 40 minutes inland from the Far East port city of Vladivostok, the terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The first time we met him, he was in a bright white sailor suit. He did not approach us but instead took us in with giant eyes that told us we would have to earn his trust, love and respect.

We had arrived there after researching 18 adoption agencies specializing in countries all over the world. We chose Russia in part because of the adoption agency and coordinator, a native Russian-Minnesotan whose rapid document translation contributed to the blazing speed of our first adoption (four months, end to end). D also has a stepsister and aunt who have lived in Russia, speak the language fluently and have taught Russian history, providing invaluable cultural liaisons for our kids.

A sunlight deficiency had given Satch rickets, which manifested in bowleggedness and trouble with balance. Although he was 2, he couldn't walk more than five steps without falling directly on his face. His orphanage was humane, his caregivers loving, but they couldn't meet every child's needs perfectly.

Satch showed a lot of spirit early on. The first word I can remember him saying is "Oy," as in "Oy, I'm going to push this playground gate open with all my might." His health progressed quickly once we got him home. His legs straightened in a couple of months as he went from walking to running to fading and deking.

Satch has been up since 4:30 this morning. I throw him a wave: "How's it going, buddy? Time to get dressed for school."

He appears to break from his TV trance. "I must ride the air-bison's back and master the four elements to destroy you." After a minute, I realize he's watching *Avatar*, an impossibly mystical and opaque cartoon in which rival martial artists talk endlessly at each other and rarely actually fight.

The morning crescendo builds to a mad dash out the front door. D has set up cubbies for each of the

D was an only child who at the age of 9 decided she wanted to run an orphanage or, at the very least, surround herself with a "large Italian family." She always sought work relating to kids—as a nanny and preschool teacher as well as a volunteer in women's shelters.

I grew up with a much younger brother, playing protector and Pied Piper to his friends. I was the boy on the block who made money baby-sitting rather than mowing lawns, and I've always loved kids.

When D and I met we were both living at home, recharging our batteries after stints in Brooklyn and Los Angeles respectively. Our moms had known each other when we were kids, and when my mom ran into D on the street one day the gears were set in motion. On our first date, D told me about her dream to have a mess of kids and adopt a mess more. I instantly thought she was the coolest person I'd ever met, and a bit of a loon. We were married within a year.

We never exactly agreed on a number. I wanted some; she wanted 38. Over a span of five years and two trips to Russia, we adopted two boys—James Satchel and John-Luke Yuri—and a girl, SailorAnn Claudia. On the heels of each trip, we had a "bio" baby, boys Michael McCarrell and Nathaniel Tyler. In a failed attempt to give Sailor a sister, we

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kids to hold coats, hats, and boots that inevitably find themselves strewn across the living room floor. I dig for pairs of mittens and seem only to come up with lefts.

The kids go to three different schools. Satch, who's in first grade, and kindergartners Johnny and Sailor go to the neighborhood public school. Mickey goes two days a week to a preschool in the next town. Nate goes two days a week to day care. And D stays home with Mark and Daisy, enjoying relative peace but not rest.

Today D carries 7-month-old Daisy in a sling as she throws about 10 pounds of ground turkey into a pot and starts sprinkling in "thises" and "thats." She cooks by feel, never using cookbooks, because most recipes don't serve 54. That is, six meat loaves, one for tonight and five to freeze, each feeding nine people at a sitting. She also freezes things like cheese, cold cuts and condiments—not just as a meal-planning strategy, but also because she is a compulsive freezer.

In a typical week, our family might consume eight gallons of milk, seven loaves of bread, a tub of peanut butter, two giant hams, and 20 pots of coffee. We also generate about 60 dirty diapers, 10

loads of laundry, 14 bags of trash, and eight bags of recycling.

Trying to conserve where we can, we don't eat too many over-packaged foods. D and I often under-eat at meals since we can finish the kids' leftovers. We keep the house as cold as a meat locker in the winter and as warm as a woodshed in the summer. At one point, in an effort to save water, I positioned little dry-erase boards next to the toilets so the kids could keep track of their flushes. D thought this a little excessive, and it upset the children, who found they could avoid the hassle by peeing in the tub. Though I ditched the boards, it goes without saying that if it's yellow, it doth mellow.

During one of my frigid morning showers, 5-year-old Sailor drifts in and perches on the toilet, looking consternated. She wipes the sleep out of her eyes and finally speaks: "Satchel called me an idiot."

"OK, what do you want me to do?" I ask.

She raises her fist with Stalinesque grimness, and her canary voice drops two octaves. "Crush him."

Sailor's draconian tendencies trace back to her Siberian roots. We found her and Johnny, both 15 months old at the time, in an orphanage in the windswept town of Magadan, an austere place with a tragic past. To this day, it is not uncommon

On our first date, D told me about her dream to have a mess of kids and adopt a mess more. ...We never exactly agreed on a number. I wanted some; she wanted 38.



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to discover human remains and relics of Gulag life in the woods surrounding the town.

Little Sailor stood, or rather crawled feebly as a monument of neglect. The conditions of her orphanage were far from Dickensian, but her myriad health issues were more than her caregivers could track. A heart problem caused weakened immunity and chronic ear infections that created permanent perforations in her eardrums and irregular sleep patterns.

Two years after her arrival in our family, she underwent open-heart surgery to correct a major atrial septal defect and a tangling of veins connected to her heart. Within nine months after that, she progressed from walking unsteadily to running with purpose. She grew six inches, and her hair thickened into a beautiful mane. Last year, she had skin-graft repair surgery for both eardrums, which brought her hearing from a paltry 20 percent to 95 percent.

Johnny, meanwhile, was the poster child for good health. He walked at 9 months, and when we met him he was running and lunging and quite the show-off. He learned to ride a two-wheeler at 3, and he remembers lyrics to a song after hearing it once.

Yet for all his gifts, Johnny's emotions have never kept pace with his mind or his body. Consequently, he has always been overwhelmed by the slightest flair-up in his environment, as well as by the expectations of those who fall into the trap of treating him as older than he is (guilty as charged). When

left alone, Johnny often displays laser-beam focus on a task and finds comfort in repetitive behaviors whose level of challenge he can manipulate. I once saw him shoot 100 consecutive basketballs without the slightest flutter in attention.

He also showed signs of difficulty with attachment early on, and who knows how much of his independence and competence now reflects his survival instincts as an infant. I no longer have any doubt about his attachment though, as he is the only one of my children to reassure me on a daily basis: "Dad, I will always be in your heart."

Attachment is the topic of the day at my Early Childhood and Family Education dads' class, where I often bring Mickey, Nate and Mark after work. This is my weekly parenting recharge—an opportunity to hang out with other dads of small children and discuss blood pressure spikes from the previous week.

The title of this particular discussion is "How to Part with Comfort Items" (blankets, Nuks, etc.). One chimes in: "I hear that in some cultures, children throw their pacifiers to the apes."

A professorial type says his son "internalized" his blanket, adding, "He ate it. ... It took a number of months, years even, but eventually my son consumed his entire blanket, tags and all."

I explain that my 2-year-old, Mark, carries a rubber duck, a Mighty Morphin' Power Ranger, and a book about bulldozers wherever he goes. Without one of these holy talismans, he loses his superpowers, not to mention his composure, and becomes a real pain in the ass. A wizened house painter across the table grumbles, "I hear that one, buddy."

Mark won't sleep in his own bed and has effectively displaced me in mine. He falls asleep on my pillow, baby jowls fluttering, snoring like a truck driver. I escape by reading 10 minutes of an easily digested crime novel before drifting off.

I also write songs in my very spare time, though I don't know anything about music. Topics range from the joys of vasectomy to how a child's emesis has become my mortal nemesis.

Watching preposterous amounts of TV allows me to zone out yet be productive by cleaning during commercials. Occasionally I'll take four kids for a run in the "quad" jogging stroller. From the front we look unassuming, a single small child in a posh pram with impossibly elaborate suspension. But when I hang a turn we look like Dolly Parton at a great blue heron convention.

"Are they all yours?" a passerby will ask. I want to quip, "Why do you think I'm running, dear sir?"





I just kidnapped these children and I'm trying to get them to the state line in the most heart-healthy way possible."

At church, everyone knows us. But they also notice when we are absent just as much as when we're present. People offer smiles and handshakes as we struggle to find a pew with adequate acreage. Things go smoothly for the first 10 minutes. Then little bodies start to jiggle and twerp. "Ouch!" Johnny cries. A few heads turn. "Mine!" hisses Mickey, grabbing a coloring book out of Johnny's hand, tearing the book in half. Mark is conspicuously silent. Then he grins and opens his mouth to spew out four crayons that he's chewed to paste.

As baby Daisy begins to cry, the minister sweeps her out of D's hands and tucks her under his arm without breaking from his sermon. Six voices cry out at once, "Hey, that's my sister!" The congregation erupts in laughter. I can't help but think of the ring of fire that will cook the nerves of my daughter's future suitors.

The real "work week" for me is on the weekends. I wake up and grab a kid or two to take them to get donuts. The curse of seven is that there aren't enough hours in the day to give each of them one-on-one time, so individual bonding has to take place during errands and doctor visits.

The phone rings. I follow its trail into the bathroom linen closet where someone has stuffed it into a new toilet paper roll and replaced the roll in the bag. It's the baby-sitter calling to say she can only stay one hour instead of three tonight. D's and my date has shrunk from a movie to an abbreviated coffee shop chat, but it will be nice to have a check-in without the chaos.

D has taken 3-year-old Nate (and the rest of the kids) to dance class. He's the only boy in the class, but his enthusiasm and intensity make for a huge presence. D and I are so proud of his dancing that we practically levitate. He's our Billy Elliot, every bit as fierce and independent.

Nate has a Puckish and celebratory disposition, and a fluid range of expressions that impregnate every one of his squeaky sentences with the threat of delight and laughter.

Then there's Mick, 4, who's the most comfort-driven of my kids. I rarely see him without double-fisting blankies and an entourage of fixation objects. And yet he can take a flu shot stoically, eyeing the nurse as if to say, "Is that all you got?"

D pictures Mick growing up to be a laid-back surfer poet, perhaps taking up where I left off in California. But I picture him more as the Crocodile Hunter, or even the hard-looking biker from the

Many of my classmates spent their 20s soul-searching and career building. Meanwhile, D and I dove right in, already mindful that our timing would never be right, we'd never have enough money, and we'd never be content enough in our jobs to be perfect parents.

mint commercial who compliments an elderly woman on her magnificent breath.

One night after work, I pull into the driveway. The door opens, and Johnny, Sailor, and Mark poke their heads out in succession and scream "Hi, Dad!" Then Mickey pops out, beside himself. "Hey Dad, I got new slippers!" he bellows. He wheels around and accidentally plows into a gigantic pile of boxes, maybe 96 of them.

"What the heck is that?" I ask. D enters, handing me a cup of coffee and looking supernaturally fresh. "I got a great deal online for paper towels and hypoallergenic detergent," she cheerfully explains.

D does this. She hunts down deals online for detergent, paper towels, diapers, underwear, taco shells, light bulbs, and any number of other unglamorous things that she finds delightful. She's always thinking of the big picture of how to make our family run.

We settle in for Friday movie night. The kids have chosen *Barbie and the Nutcracker*, which is strangely riveting. At Williams, I went to virtually every dance performance, though I haven't seen much since.

The magical TV box transports me to Never-Never Land, but as two little heads settle on my chest and start to drool through my shirt, I can't help but enjoy being in two places at once.

D, who has two droolers of her own, gets caught up in the moment. "Maybe one more," she whispers to me.

I choke on my popcorn. ■

*Sheff Otis '98 lives with his family in St. Paul, Minn., and is a carpenter and job developer for a "green" building contractor. He, Deirdre and the kids are hoping to bum a ride from Albany Airport to Williamstown for Reunion Weekend in June. (Only two of them get car sick.)*







WILLIAMS COLLEGE LIBRARIES



BOB HANDELMAN



# AFTER THE MONKEY CARRELS

A LOOK AT HOW AND WHERE STUDENTS  
MIGHT STUDY IN THE NEW SAWYER LIBRARY



BOB HANDELMAN





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WILLIAMS COLLEGE LIBRARIES

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**The New Sawyer Library**, slated to open in 2011, will be a “learning commons,” with space for individual as well as collaborative scholarly pursuits. Who better to determine how best to set up and furnish that space than the people who will be using it every day? Students and others are now experimenting with all kinds of configurations at test sites in the existing library, and their feedback will help planners choose everything from lighting to furniture to the height of the (potentially movable) walls.

*For more information, visit <http://library.williams.edu/newlibrary/>*



WILLIAMS COLLEGE LIBRARIES





# A KING'S DREAM



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## Eric Widmer '61 helps to blend New England prep school tradition and Middle Eastern culture as headmaster of a new boarding school in Jordan.

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It's not easy saying no to a King. Just ask Eric Widmer '61. Shortly after he announced plans to retire in 2006 as headmaster of Deerfield Academy in Western Massachusetts, a messenger from King Abdullah II of Jordan arrived bearing a request: Would Widmer consider becoming the founding headmaster of King's Academy, a boarding school scheduled to open outside of Amman that fall?

Widmer sent word that he was immensely honored by the offer. But he could not possibly take on the new position, as he would not have enough time between jobs.

The King's response was as brief as it was swift: "OK, 2007."

And so it was that, after presiding over his 12th Deerfield commencement, Widmer traded green hills and dappled maples for desert land and olive trees, chapel bells for the sounds of muezzins calling people to prayer, and roaming deer for camels. His charge: To bring to life in the Middle East a new version of the 200-year-old quintessential New England boarding school he had just left behind.

King's Academy, now well into its first year, was inspired by King Abdullah's own experiences at Deerfield, which he attended from 1977 to 1980. (Back then, his friends called him "Ab.") He loved everything about the school, from its "emphasis on critical thinking, camaraderie, tolerance, and sacrifice," as he said in a 2006 *New Yorker* article, to its family style meals in the dining hall, where students took turns being waiters.

"There was a big adjustment at first, that he had to wait tables," says Jeff Louis '85, who graduated from Deerfield a year after King Abdullah and is now chairman of Deerfield's Board of Trustees. "But he realized that it created this camaraderie and allowed him to have friendships. He was a Deerfield boy like everybody else."

When "Ab" returned to Deerfield in 2000 for his 20th reunion, he began to discuss his idea for a school that blended American-style education with Middle Eastern history, tradition, languages, and cultural values. He wanted to develop leaders—in the classroom, on the athletic fields, and in the community. And he wanted to "provide an opportunity for an educational experience unlike any available in the Middle East."

As the King envisioned it, his new school would be "utterly progressive, utterly optimistic, and utterly necessary."



Eric Widmer '61 (left) and his wife, Meera Viswanathan, with King Abdullah II at Deerfield's 2006 Commencement. At left: Parents Weekend at King's Academy.

After a dozen Jordanians and an Egyptian architect showed up at Deerfield to get a sense of the campus, King's Academy took shape quickly on its 144-acre site just off King's Highway in Manja, 20 miles south of Amman. Among its 23 buildings, the classrooms are at the crest of a hill and sports facilities at its base. In between are a dining hall, a 700-seat theater nearly identical to Deerfield's, a library, a student center, a health center, nine single-sex dormitories, the headmaster's house, and administrative buildings. It's a huge spread by Middle

Eastern standards. The architect, Khalid Azzam, describes the style as "Levantine," featuring stone, stucco, and wood.

"It's like a little oasis that's grown out of the King's dream," Louis says. "It's like someone took a sprinkling can and poured some water on the ground, and out sprang this institution."

That little oasis is surrounded by security walls topped with video cameras aimed outward to prevent intruders, a necessary reality. In addition, King's Academy has 25 full-time public safety officers. There is a gateway entry point at which every entering car is searched, Widmer's included.

Inside, King's Academy is a blend of New England prep school tradition and Middle Eastern culture. The school's 112 students (about 40 percent of them girls) come from 11 nations in the Middle East. There is one boy from the West Bank, but as yet no students are from Israel.

The students wear blue blazers with the school escutcheon, khaki pants or skirts, and King's Academy neckties or pocket squares.

The curriculum, spread over eight recitation periods per day, is "rather ambitious," Widmer says. In addition to the types of courses a college like Williams would expect, students are required to take classes in Islam and Islamic civilization, Arabic language, and the history of the Middle East. Critical thinking and discussion are emphasized over the rote memorization more common to the region.

"All along the way we have tried to have it both ways, founding a school with an American high school diploma program that is also fully accountable to the Jordanian Ministry of

by Kate Stone Lombardi '78



Education and reflective of our place in the Middle East,” Widmer says.

As was the case at Deerfield, athletics are emphasized in the afternoon, a tradition with which many Middle Eastern boys, let alone girls, are unfamiliar.



Above: An American teacher (right) chats with a Jordanian student and his father. At right: Just like their counterparts at Deerfield, students take turns waiting tables during meals.

(Some girls joined the swim team just to learn how to swim.) Rules governing the relations between boys and girls are far stricter than they are at Deerfield—no holding hands, no kissing, and no visiting each other’s dorms.

Other Deerfield traditions were “plagiarized freely,” according to Widmer, including the dining experience, where students eat family style and take turns waiting tables. It’s another adjustment for some of the students—children of royalty, prominent politicians and businessmen—who aren’t used to New England

egalitarianism. One girl, when told she would be expected to clean up her room, asked if she could have her maid from home come and do it. For other students, homework was a novelty.

“The tough, even-handed lifestyle at King’s is a harsh awakening for many of them,” says Margot Robinson, who is spending the year between her Deerfield graduation and her first semester at Williams leading math tutorials for King’s Academy students, working with the theater group, and serving as a dorm proctor. “Realizing that these reactions come from the values that they have grown up with, we have had to slowly teach them what we at King’s

value the most—hard work, cooperation, and respect for others.”

King Abdullah insisted on transplanting another aspect of Deerfield to his school—financial aid. With tuition at \$28,000 U.S. for full boarders, \$25,000 for weekday boarders and \$16,500 for day students, the academy is “committed to have at least a third of our students also receiving need-based assistance,” Widmer says.

The King already has visited several times and is terribly proud of the school, Widmer says. Next year, it is likely that

## From Deerfield to the Desert

**Eric Widmer ’61** is no a stranger to the Middle East. He was born in Beirut, where his father taught at International College and his mother was a dean at American University of Beirut. He graduated from Deerfield in 1957 and studied French, German, and Russian at Williams, followed by Chinese, Japanese, Mongolian, and Manchu at Harvard. (He’s now learning Arabic alongside his students at King’s Academy.)

Before becoming Deerfield’s headmaster in 1994, Widmer spent 25 years on the faculty of Brown University—15 of them as a dean—where he met his wife, Meera Viswanathan, an associate professor of comparative literature and East Asian studies. Viswanathan was instrumental in designing the curriculum at King’s Academy and currently is serving as an English teacher and dean of the faculty while she’s on leave from Brown.



his son, Crown Prince Hussein, will be enrolled.

As for Widmer, he is making the transition from starting a school—with all the requisite traveling and recruiting—to again running one. But this time around, there’s a student newspaper to start and name. A yearbook needs to be launched. A school rival needs to be found.

“We may appropriate the history of Deerfield and pretend it is our own,” Widmer says. “But we know it really isn’t. On the other hand, there is a certain freedom—a release—from the inertia of history when one is founding a school.” ■

## Abu Dhabi via the Big Apple

**Another Eph making her mark** in education in the Middle East—albeit from Washington Square in Manhattan—is Mariët Westermann ’84, who was recently named vice chancellor of the new NYU Abu Dhabi. Westermann has been the Judy & Michael Steinhardt Director and Professor of Art History at NYU’s Institute of Fine Arts since 2002. She is a scholar of painting, particularly in the Netherlands, her native country, and is the author of several books on Dutch art.

In her role as vice chancellor, which brings her to Abu Dhabi frequently, Westermann says she is “especially thrilled to be working alongside such world-class institutions as the Louvre and the Guggenheim.”

The campus is to open in fall 2010, with 2,000 students from the Middle East, South and Central Asia, and Europe expected to enroll.

**Kate Stone Lombardi ’78** is a freelance writer based in Chappaqua, N.Y., and a frequent New York Times contributor.



## ON THE ROAD

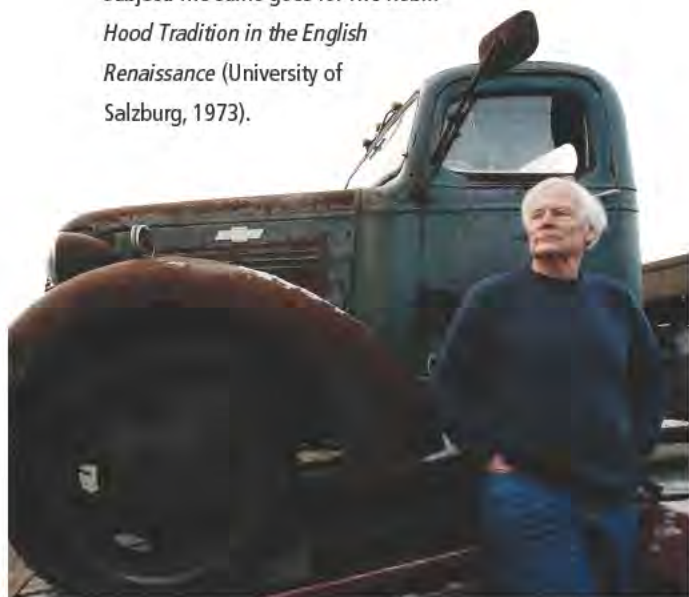
by Denise DiFulco

When you think of America's great interstates, Route 20 isn't usually one of the first to come to mind. But like the country's more recognizable routes, the east-west highway has a story to tell.

The historical events that occurred along the approximately 3,300-mile stretch from Boston to Newport, Ore., so fascinated Malcolm "Mac" Nelson '55 that he filled an entire book with them. *Twenty West: The Great Road Across America* is slated to be published this spring by SUNY Press.

"I hadn't thought about doing a book on the road until I realized there were so many interesting things along this highway," says the 51-year teaching veteran, who worked at Miami University in Ohio and Grinnell College in Iowa before settling into the English department at the State University of New York's Fredonia campus. A past recipient of the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, Nelson currently holds the title of Distinguished Teaching Professor.

Nelson has a knack for relatively obscure subject matter. He co-wrote *Epitaph and Icon: A Field Guide to the Old Burying Grounds of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket* (Parnassus Imprints, 1983) when he became interested in the region's historic graveyards but couldn't find a book on the subject. The same goes for *The Robin Hood Tradition in the English Renaissance* (University of Salzburg, 1973).



Charles Lewis

A former Glee Club member who started his first "catch club" at Williams, Nelson also wrote an introduction to *A Collection of Catches, Canons and Gleees, 1763-1974* (Irish University Press, 1970). He says of his choices, "They all are things I felt were underserved."

Route 20 has figured prominently in Nelson's life. He once lived near the portion that passes through Chicago and currently resides along Route 20 in Brocton, N.Y. He recalls taking the road to Pittsfield and riding it through New York state long before the Thruway was built.

His book tells the story of America as it follows the route from east to west. Beginning in Massachusetts, he recounts the highway's importance in the lives of Henry David Thoreau, Emily Dickinson, and Sylvia Plath. The next stop is New York, where Route 20 bore witness to the births of several 19th-century religious movements as well as the women's suffrage, abolition, and educational reform movements. Further west, the highway becomes entwined with events of political and environmental importance. All told, Nelson's book (and Route 20 itself) spans 12 states and every chapter of American history.

One of Nelson's favorite spots along the way is Yellowstone National Park, where the road ended until 1940 and which he has visited about 30 times over the years.

"THE SADDEST SPOT ON ROUTE 20  
... IS FORT ROBINSON IN NEBRASKA,  
WHERE CRAZY HORSE WAS  
ASSASSINATED. IT'S SOMETHING THAT  
DEEPLY MOVES ME."

Though he says it is doubtful that the book ever will become a bestseller, at least it has allowed him to indulge his interest in the American West, particularly Yellowstone, where he vacations and does research every summer. "I get to take it off of my taxes," he says with a laugh. ■





"BOB AND I HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING SHAKESPEARE FOR SO LONG WE OFTEN CAN'T DECIDE WHICH IDEA WAS WHOSE."

Bob Handelman

## AS THEY BOTH LIKE IT

by Rob White

Ever since they met in college, English professors Ilona and Bob Bell have served as each other's peer review committee of one, sharing scholarly drafts, lecture notes, and teaching strategies.

"Nothing goes out of the house without the other person's review," says Bob.

In fact, the only professorial commitment they hadn't shared was a classroom—until last fall, when they teamed up to teach English 201, "Shakespeare's Major Plays." Each has taught the playwright for years. Ilona also brought to the table expertise in Renaissance poetry, early modern women authors, and John

Donne, while Bob brought his on James Joyce, John Milton, and 18th century literature.

Squeezing together their respective styles and perspectives was energizing—and exhausting. "I've never worked so hard since I was a first-year teacher," says Ilona.

For one thing, it meant writing a joint teaching plan from scratch—a task accomplished over a hectic summer and throughout the semester in late-night sessions between classes. "We have different angles of approach," says Bob, who is the

Frederick Latimer Wells Professor of English, "and that made it harder than ever to get in what we each wanted to say."

"Our death struggles in the family room weren't over interpretation," adds Ilona, "but over who got to teach the 'good' scenes."

The course's structure granted equal time to them both. At the beginning of the semester, each had a full Monday or Wednesday class period to introduce a new play or scene with a lecture. As the semester unfolded, they started presenting different perspectives within each class. On Fridays they divided the class into two discussion groups.

Among the many benefits of co-teaching, perhaps the most powerful and enjoyable for the Bells was dramatizing competing perspectives about Shakespeare's often interpretation-defying work. Bob began one November class with the proclamation: "King Lear may be a dark play, but it's not a nihilistic one. Even Lear's abasement is as liberating as it is humiliating. And regardless of what happens, Cordelia stands as an absolute force of good."



"Lear is bleaker than Bob acknowledges," retorted Ilona. "Yes, it's true that Lear discovers his humanity—but at a point where he is powerless to do anything about it. And Cordelia's not all that good. She nails her sisters in comments all the way through the play, and in some senses she's the cause of the whole tragedy."

Throughout the rest of the class, the couple dramatized—with Falstaffian smirks, shrugs, and eye rolls—an essential point: Shakespeare remains an open book about which learned scholars may fairly disagree. Though Ilona is quick to add, "Bob and I actually agree on much more about Shakespeare than not."

There's an added benefit to co-teaching English 201: in what other venue is it perfectly acceptable for one professor to challenge another—her husband, no less—wielding a toilet brush as a jester's sword? ■



Williams professors and others weigh in on the issues of the day. For a complete listing of media appearances, visit [www.williams.edu/admin/news/inthenews/php](http://www.williams.edu/admin/news/inthenews/php)

Anxiety over hot-button issues can push voters to find out more about candidates, including their personal qualities, and thus change voting patterns—helping to explain why opinion polls have been less reliable during the 2008 presidential campaign, says political science professor [George Marcus](#) in a Feb. 11 [Newsweek](#) article about the [power of emotion in elections](#).

## IN THE NEWS

While Kenya long appeared a prosperous and peaceful country, violence following hotly contested presidential elections in December highlighted the fact that "there were a lot of poor people who were ignored by the ... government and the leaders," says [Kenda Mutongi](#), history professor and chair of Africana studies, on the Jan. 31 edition of the WBUR radio show [On Point](#).

In a Feb. 5 [CNNMoney.com](#) article about retirement planning, economics professor [David Love](#) says that most [baby boomers 51 and older will have enough to retire comfortably](#) if they include the value of home equity in their savings.

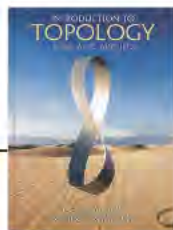
## SPEAK TO ME

On certain days the dining halls on campus sound more like the international-arrivals terminal at JFK airport than lunchrooms at a New England college. That's because each week students, faculty, and others in the Williams community gather over meals at "foreign language tables" to hone their skills or speak with others in their native tongue. Hosted by teaching assistants and language fellows, the discussions take place during lunch and dinner and span the globe linguistically. Recent tables have included Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish.





# LIFE OF THE MIND



## FROM THE BOOKSHELF

### Introduction to Topology: Pure and Applied.

By Colin Adams, Thomas T. Read Professor of Mathematics, et al. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008. An introduction to topology concepts and their applications to DNA, heart stimulation, population modeling, cosmology, and computer graphics.

### Psychodrama: Advances in Theory and Practice.

Edited by Clark Baim '85 et al. Routledge, 2007. An overview of developments in the theory and practice of psychodrama integrates different schools of thought.

**Javatrekker: Dispatches from the World of Fair Trade Coffee.** By Dean Cycon '75. Chelsea Green, 2007. Tales from Africa, the Americas, and Asia explore the hardships of growing and selling the world's second most valuable commodity.

**Practical Ruby Projects: Ideas for the Eclectic Programmer.** By Topher Cyll '04. Apress, 2007. A guidebook for programmers looking to learn advanced Ruby techniques.

**Over a Barrel.** By John S. Duffield '80. Stanford University Press, 2008. An analysis of the economic and policy-related costs of U.S. foreign oil dependence and how they might be reduced.

**Let's Make Faces.** By Gerard Langelier '36. Future Horizons Inc., 2008. A dry-erase book helps autistic children identify facial expressions by tracing and drawing facial features.

**A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign.** By Edward J. Larson '74. Free Press, 2007. A re-creation of the 1800 race between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, which stamped American democracy with its distinctive partisan character.

**Once Upon a Fastball.** By Bob Mitchell '66. Kensington Publishing, 2008. A novel intertwines baseball with history, poetry, philosophy, and music.

**The Speculation Economy: How Finance Triumphed Over Industry.** By Larry Mitchell '78. Berrett-Koehler, 2007. How the birth of the giant modern corporation spurred the rise of the stock market, which became by the 1920s the reason for the creation of business itself.

**Leadership the Outward Bound Way.** Six chapters by John Reynolds '51. The Mountaineers Books, 2007. Introduces the fundamentals of good leadership and how they can be applied in all facets of life.

**Purgatory Chasm.** By Susan Edwards Richmond '82. Adastra Press, 2007. Poems inspired by the geologic and human history of Purgatory Chasm State Reservation.

**Bringing Human Rights Home, Vols. 1-3.** Edited by Cynthia Soohoo '88. Praeger Publishers, 2008. Chronicles the history of human rights in the U.S. from the perspective of domestic social justice activism as well as current domestic human rights work.

**Record of Wrongs.** By Andy Straka '80. Five Star, 2008. A thriller in which Quentin Price is freed by new DNA evidence and then given the chance to help solve the crime that put him behind bars.

**Forgive Me.** By Amanda Eyre Ward '94. Random House, 2007. A novel about a journalist who sets out on her own to cover a Cape Cod couple's trip to Cape Town for the Truth and Reconciliation hearings.

**Seven Trees Against the Dying Light, A Bilingual Edition.** By Steven F. White '77 et al. Northwestern University Press, 2007. A book of translations of the Nicaraguan poet Pablo Antonio Cuadra (1912-2002).

**Culture and Customs of Nicaragua.** By Steven F. White '77 et al. Greenwood Press, 2008. A look at one of Latin America's most disillusioned countries and the passionate culture that defines and sustains its people.

