

BY JAYNE M. IAFRATE

The visible president

Once upon a time, way back in my undergraduate days, I recall being a fairly active student: editor of the college's daily paper, marching band geek (I'm sorry you Wheaton grads haven't had that experience.), member of political and cultural organizations. And I attended classes regularly enough to round out the portfolio and earn a degree. I lived off campus, but I spent about 18 hours every day on campus.

My point is this: I was pretty active in the life of Cal State Long Beach—more involved than the majority of the 33,000 students there at the time—and I met the university president exactly zero times. I never gave that oddity a second thought until I arrived at Wheaton.

Dale Rogers Marshall is the visible president. We see her chatting with faculty in the Dimple, lunching in the Balfour-Hood Café with staff, cheering at sporting events and applauding at arts offerings. She leads the staff opening of the college each fall, and turns out the lights on Reunion Weekend every spring. Her office has always been open to students. There's never any doubt that Dale is present in the life of Wheaton College.

Today, I can't imagine any student not having a deep collaborative relationship with the president of the college. The pages of this magazine are a testament to that connection. That openness to nurturing the full life of the institution is, in my mind, Dale's greatest gift to Wheaton. It is the foundation on which we all move forward.

▶ LETTERS



Bacteria as art

As a painter at least subconsciously on the lookout for interesting subjects, I know one when I see one. The cover of the fall *Quarterly* is drop-dead gorgeous! Upon examination of this cover photograph, I found that it contains a number of the elements that conspire to create respectable art. Rather than being appropriately intimidated, I was captivated and moved to do something about it [see photo]. Now the thought of doing a series of bacteria paintings captures my imagination.

—Carol Large Calhoun '59

Israel and Palestine

We commend Mary Lou Leiser Smith's activities in helping Palestinian refugees, but are astounded by her assertions in the fall issue of the *Wheaton Quarterly*. Although neither side is blameless, condemning Israel's "occupation" of the West Bank and Gaza ignores key recent history and the pervasive hate-indoctrination of its people by the Palestinian Authority.

Under Oslo, the "occupation" had largely ended. By 2000 Palestinians

had gained control of nearly 40 percent of the West Bank and most of Gaza and nearly 100 percent of the population lived under Palestinian governance. Three years ago at the Camp David/Taba talks, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered to cede almost all the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinian Authority and to divide Jerusalem. Tragically, Yasir Arafat rejected the unprecedented opportunity to establish a Palestinian state and end the Israeli presence there. Without so much as a counteroffer, the Palestinians launched a war of terror against the men, women and children of Israel. It is most unfair to fault Israel for self-defense measures instituted to protect against waves of suicide bombers and disregard the onslaught of terrorism and the Israeli offer to end the occupation completely.

Likewise, Leiser Smith refers to the "root causes of violence" but omits comment on the pervasive hate-indoctrination of its people by the Palestinian Authority. For small Palestinian children in schools, adults attending mosques and families watching official PA television, the message is the same: Israel is illegitimate and diabolical and Palestinians are honor-bound to destroy the Jewish state. Most troubling is the brainwashing of children to seek death and killing as suicide bombers. Recent congressional testimony focused on this problem.

We appreciate the *Quarterly* providing a forum for both sides of this complex and weighty controversy.

—Bobbi Iervolino Kovner '67,
Arlene Cherwin '67
and Helen Chen '67

Corrections

The list of new faculty published in the winter 2004 issue of the *Quarterly* omitted Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies Domingo Ledezma, who taught in the department as an adjunct faculty member before joining the full-time faculty this fall. Ledezma earned a bachelor's degree from the Universidad Central de Venezuela, and a master's and Ph.D. from Brown University.

The winter issue of the *Wheaton Quarterly* listed an incorrect phone number for information regarding Williams Club membership. The correct number is 800-557-6962, ext. 204. Membership information also is available via the Web at www.williamsclub.org.

Calling all alumnae/i: If you're involved in the 2004 Presidential Election (as a delegate to the Democratic or Republican convention, as a campaign worker or as an election official, for example), the *Wheaton Quarterly* would like to talk with you. Please call us at 508-286-8235 or address your e-mail to quarterly@wheatoncollege.edu.

Our living legacy

Many years ago one of my students asked me, after we had been talking about my father's cabinet jobs, "Don't you ever wish you had a real job?" I responded rather testily that teaching *is* a real job and a wonderful job because teachers touch the future through their students. Evidence of that impact comes every time I ask Wheaton alums about what professors changed their lives. You tell wonderful stories of specific professors challenging you to do better work and to delve deeper than you ever knew was possible, remembering the moments as vividly as if they were yesterday.

Being Wheaton's president for twelve years has been a tremendously satisfying culmination of my life as a teacher. Being president has really been like teaching a very big and very long class. It has all the frustrations, including people coming and going, forgetting what has already been done or their assignments or both, and misinterpreting the material. But it has all the joys of teaching, including lively discussions, new learning, and new possibilities as well as making meaningful connections with fascinating people on campus and off, from every part of the country and the world, from every walk of life, and across all generations. But above all, being president, like being a teacher, has meant being dedicated to something larger and more lasting than one's self.

Eliza Wheaton gave us a great gift when she convinced her father-in-law to establish this college rather than building a statue to honor his daughter. Since then thousands of professors,

students, alums and trustees have shared in Eliza's vision and expanded upon it.

With Eliza's gift comes a great responsibility. I have always felt it deeply, especially living in her house. But I have always known that success isn't the work of any one person, it is the work of all. All of us have played a role as stewards of the great trust that Wheaton represents, and all of us can rejoice in what we have done together.

We have heightened Wheaton's strength through:

Academic excellence in the new Wheaton curriculum that emphasizes innovation and individuality via connected courses while reaffirming the traditional values of the liberal arts;

Dynamic campus life, including the Filene Center, Center for Global Education, College Learning Center, Visiting Artists Program, Wheaton Distinguished Fellows Program and the Posse Program;

Student recruitment strategies that make the most of Wheaton's excellent programs and have doubled the number of high school students seeking admission to the college;

Facilities improvements that included the \$20 million arts renovation and expansion project, the lower campus revitalization effort, the construction of two new residence halls and the creation of Sidell Baseball Stadium;

Establishing financial equilibrium to create a stable foundation that allows the college the flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges while preserving its assets; and

The interest and efforts of Wheaton's dedicated faculty, staff, students, alumnae/i,



parents and friends, who have made possible the college's growth over the years.

It is our collective living legacy, one that adds great meaning to our lives because we know it will add meaning to the lives of those who come after us.

I know I can count on each of you to continue to move the college forward in the years ahead. Please know you can count on me to be helping in my new role as retired president. For me the connection to Wheaton is a life-long commitment that doesn't end when my husband and I move to California in July.

When people ask me how it feels to be in this transition, I respond that I am feeling very good. As a political scientist, I have been particularly aware of the importance of process and governance and deeply committed to building the capacity of all members of the community to shape the future of the college. As the daughter of a political appointee, I have always

known that leadership positions are temporary. You do the best you can and then you pass the baton to the next member of the relay team while cheering on the team wholeheartedly.

The improvements in governance at Wheaton give me real pleasure—connecting alums to the college, connecting the staff to college governance, and connecting the college community to the budget process and the board. The case statement also gives me real pleasure because it affirms that Wheaton is on the right path. Even though there is much I didn't get to do—expand and renovate the science center, build a new admission building, construct an outdoor track—I know it is time for new leadership with exciting new dynamism and new ideas. My successor has exciting opportunities to build on the remarkable successes we have realized to move Wheaton forward in wonderful ways.

Our aspirations are only

limited by resources. While *U.S. News & World Report* may overestimate its importance, the connection between institutional wealth and academic quality is real. The country's top-ranked private liberal arts colleges, many of which we compete with for students, draw on a much larger pool of resources. Part of the Wheaton ethos has always been to do more with less, an ethic from which I draw great satisfaction. Still, the college must also work to continually expand upon its resources and preserve the ability to advance as an institution.

Long ago someone asked me how I would describe myself in three words.

I chose mother, wife and teacher. I would still pick those three words, but I would hyphenate teacher to add president of Wheaton College. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve and for your support for me and our living legacy that is Wheaton College. 