

# Living large

My son Coltrane's latest fixation is to stand toe-to-toe in front of adults with his hand stretched out at the top of his head. He moves it back and forth from his head to the chest of whoever is towering over him, as if the person is a measuring stick. Then he asks: "Am I taller?"

His line of questioning continues for quite a while. "Am I taller than I was in second grade? Will I be taller when I'm in fourth grade? Do you remember how tall I was when I was a baby?" He doesn't realize that he is indeed big for a 9-year-old boy. Yet he is focused on being taller, bigger.

It starts early for many of us, that drive to be more than we are right now—first, it's taller, then smarter and better. I remember that I couldn't wait to be older. (What was I thinking?)

Things like height and age take care of themselves. The rest is left to us. We get to decide what our measuring sticks are in the lives we want. If we

choose to be more than just average, we must continually ask, as Coltrane does, Am I taller?

Wheaton draws and nurtures students and faculty who share this ongoing pursuit of growth. It is not enough for our students to come here, take in information, get a degree and go on their merry little ways. They want what they learn to matter, not just for themselves but also for the world at large. They want the transformative

education and experience that President Ronald A. Crutcher talks so much about. The same is true of the faculty, who are not only givers of knowledge but also partners in the discovery of it. Faculty members constantly go beyond teaching to give of themselves and build lasting relationships that students talk about long after they leave this campus.

I was reminded of all of this as



Illustration by Sandy Coleman

the *Quarterly* team worked on this issue of the magazine. All of the features highlight individuals who ask a great deal of themselves in order to offer the world as much as they can.


Mary Howard '85 wrote a profile of Winston Benjamin '04, a Posse Scholar alumnus, who works at a charter school in Chelsea, Mass., with students who have been written off by others because of their struggles. Benjamin, who makes himself

available to students 24 hours a day and even goes to their homes to bug them if they don't show up for school, is on a mission to make sure they succeed.

The cover story that Hannah Benoit wrote is about Associate Professor of Biology Robert Morris and how he partners with students like Blair Rossetti '09 on research projects both on and off campus. The professor values the input, and the students value the opportunity to collaborate on important scientific research in a way that doesn't happen at most undergraduate schools.

The feature story about Bavi Rivera '68 is the perfect illustration of what happens when an individual reaches for more. She is the first Hispanic woman bishop in the history of the Episcopal Church. When she was growing up, women weren't even allowed to

be ordained. Once they were allowed, she went for it. And eventually she decided she wanted to spread her work beyond just one congregation so she sought to be a bishop. At one point during the interview process, the modest Rivera said, "I'm still not sure why this story is being written. I'm really a pretty ordinary person."

Apparently, she doesn't realize how tall she is. And that makes her even bigger. 

## ▶ LETTERS

### Good news about herbarium

I was very interested to read "Rooting through Wheaton's herbarium" in the 2008 summer issue of the *Quarterly*. It is exciting to know that the herbarium has been preserved and has interested Alexandra ("Lexie") Sabella '08. I was a biology major in the Class of '51. I had the good fortune to receive from Wheaton a scholarship for the marine botany class at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory for the summer of 1950. Among the many things we did, we collected avidly, and I brought back to Wheaton my collection of marine and fresh water algae. I would be curious to know if there are still some of my specimens in the herbarium.

I look back with great fondness at that summer in Woods Hole, Mass. It's where I met my husband, a young medical student at the time.

Marine botany is a wonderful subject. I hope Wheaton students are interested in it, as the study of the ocean is so very important.

Carolyn Keyes Myers '51

## What's on your mind ?

The *Quarterly* welcomes letters to the editor on topics you've read in these pages or on other topics concerning the Wheaton community. Please address your letters to:

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