

# UPFRONT

NICK LACY



President Roth Announces Aid Initiative at Inaugural

The pageantry of President Michael Roth’s inauguration was the backdrop for his announcement Nov. 2 that Wesleyan will lower loan levels beginning with next year’s entering class and eliminate loans for most students with family incomes up to \$40,000. A standing-room only crowd of more

than 1,500 people witnessed the inauguration in the Silloway Gymnasium, festively decorated for the occasion. The ceremony included greetings from Beverly Daniel Tatum ’75, president of Spelman College, and remarks from Carl Schorske P’81, an emeritus professor of both Wesleyan and Princeton who supervised Roth’s dissertation work at Princeton. Schorske had taught former president Douglas J. Bennet ’59 and spoke at his inauguration in 1995. Greetings from the Wesleyan community came from Gary Yohe P’02, chair of the faculty and Woodhouse/Sysco Professor of Economics; Matthew Ball ’08, president of the Wesleyan Student Assembly; and Nancy

Stack ’74, chair of the Alumni Association. After receiving his charge from Jim Dresser ’63, chair of the Board of Trustees, Roth spoke about teaching, scholarship, and institution-building. [See next page for the text of Roth’s address.] His announcement about loan levels drew enthusiastic applause. “In the last two months we have prepared a plan to reduce dramatically the amount of money we ask students to borrow to attend our school,” Roth said. “Starting with the frosh class entering in 2008, we will significantly decrease student indebtedness and entirely eliminate required borrowing for our neediest students by substituting grants for loans. “Since developing this plan, I have been

greatly encouraged by the support already offered by our alumni and parents. From West Coast to East, we have received several generous gifts to the endowment that will support this initiative. In the last several weeks we have received more than \$10 million in gifts to support student aid. “The Wesleyan family is engaged, supportive, and generous because we, ourselves, have experienced the gift of the education offered here.” In addition to eliminating loans for the neediest students, the initiative will reduce the four-year total loan indebtedness for all other students receiving aid by an average of 35 percent. Aid packages will include a single student loan, the federally subsidized Stafford Loan, which offers interest rates among the lowest available.

Wesleyan will raise endowment sufficient to fund the \$3.2-million annual cost of this initiative. Forty percent of Wesleyan’s 2,900 students currently receive grant aid averaging \$27,151 per student. The university budgets \$35.4 million of its own resources annually for grant aid, which is supplemented by an additional \$2.7 million from federal and state sources. Wesleyan’s announcement coincided with news that Williams College is eliminating the use of loans in financial aid packages. Last spring Davidson College announced a similar move. Bowdoin College is considering a change in loan policy, according to a report in *Inside Higher Education*, and Colby College announced in November that it would eliminate loans for Maine residents. **UPFRONT**

Back row listeners during the inaugural included three former presidents of Wesleyan: Douglas J. Bennet ’59, William M. Chace, and Colin G. Campbell.

MICHAEL S. ROTH ’78  
WESLEYAN’S 16TH PRESIDENT

The Inaugural Address

I am grateful for the introduction by my friend and my teacher, Carl Schorske. Carl has always exemplified what is best about Wesleyan’s commitment to engaged teaching and learning. He has inspired generations of students with his love of the arts and his desire to understand how other times and places can best guide us in the face of contemporary challenges. He thinks with history, and we think better with him.

Carl has focused on three elements of my career thus far: teaching, scholarship, and institution building, and I would like to use these categories to organize my remarks today. The first thing that struck me when I visited the Wesleyan campus 33 years ago was the exuberance of learning that went on here. I had never seen anything like it. The amazing Wesleyan students I met that day (a few of whom are here this afternoon) were not like anyone I had encountered in Massapequa Park. They had a joyful intensity as they went about their writing, performance, and experimentation. The faculty I met that day and later studied with had more than time for students; they had affection and respect for those who had chosen to study here. And boy, were they demanding! The faculty asked us to read more, to think harder, to write better, than we’d ever thought possible. This is just as true of Wesleyan professors and students today. Our faculty expect that students bring “their best selves” to class, but they are also wise enough to know that this won’t always happen. That’s where great teaching comes in. Our professors understand that there will be times when students don’t know how to access their capacity to be rigorous, passion-



ate learners. And our professors know how to help students find that capacity and use it. Over the last months I have traveled around the country meeting with alumni from the 1940s through 2007. The most consistent things they value about their Wesleyan experience are the relationships they established with their teachers. Wesleyan faculty change the lives of their students, opening up worlds of experience and learning. I have felt the power of that pedagogy, and the main reason I have returned to campus is to work with my colleagues to enhance it for future generations of students. One last thing about teaching and learning at Wesleyan: It is very hard work. Our professors set an example through their own continual education, their endless efforts to pursue scholarship and research practices in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences. We must demand the best from our students to prepare them for productive lives after graduation, but we can only do that successfully if we demand the best from ourselves. The Wesleyan faculty do that every day. If I may be permitted a more personal remark: I count myself so very lucky to have worked with extraordinary teachers. Teachers like Henry Abelove, who took me under his wing and stewarded my work in history and psychoanalysis and guided me as I finished my first book; teachers like Victor Gourevitch, with whom I studied political

philosophy, and to whom I turned when, after graduation, I discovered in a Parisian suburb the correspondence between Leo Strauss and Alexandre Kojève. The last time we were together in Middletown we sat by a fire and worked through our translation of those letters for publication. As your president, I aspire to also be an effective teacher, and next semester I will have my first shot at that in a class cross-listed in film studies, philosophy, and history. As president, I pledge to work with the faculty and students to develop a curriculum that emphasizes the radical freedom to explore new ideas, to cross boundaries, and to combine aesthetic or scientific practices. I pledge to foster a teaching culture that encourages students to discover what they love to do by demanding that they work hard at things that matter to them. Wesleyan attracts some of the most gifted students at any school; by teaching them how to draw on their gifts, their passions, we enable them to work with enthusiasm and creativity. Wesleyan offers its students an environment of learning as intense and intimate as the best small liberal arts colleges. But we are a proud university with a strong focus on the professional practices of all who work here. As teachers, we are often stimulated to turn back to our research in new ways because of the insights we gain in the classroom. It is no accident that our students co-author so

many papers with their teachers. There is a virtuous circle of learning from classroom to scholarly and artistic productivity. And there is the same positive feedback loop from the campus to the world beyond. The scholarship we produce here should find a place in broader cultural arenas in which it can have an impact. Our learning should help shape the public culture that we will enter after graduation. The alternative—all too visible in our country today—is that our culture will be shaped without the benefit of any learning at all. Wesleyan will remain dedicated to advancing all of the fields in which we teach. Our curriculum must reflect the best practices of research in every area, and we must have the highest expectation for those who work here. Unlike many of the larger research universities, we remain open to stimulation from students, and from the unexpected combination of fields of study. We mean to shape liberal learning through our work outside the classroom, too. Wesleyan must defy conventional departmental boundaries as well as interdisciplinary fads. We must pursue research to solve problems and seek out opportunities using whatever tools are appropriate for the issue at hand. The research done at our university should be one of the defining characteristics of the Wesleyan experience. As a university dedicated to undergraduate learning and advancing the professional fields in which we work, we should require that every student have the experience of producing original research. Whether one majors in biology or music, film or philosophy, as a Wesleyan student you will become a participant in and not just a spectator of the professional practices in your area of study. We have a glorious tradition of active learning at this university, and we must ensure that every student who receives a diploma has a firsthand experience of it. I feel so very fortunate to be working at an

institution that sponsors scholarship that is innovative and path-breaking. There are countless examples, but let me just cite Andy Szegedy-Maszak’s work on photography and archaeology; Jeanine Basinger’s work on the Hollywood “system”; Gary Yohe’s work on the importance of measures of adaptive capacity and relative vulnerability to climate change; Laura Grabel’s on developing neural stem cells from embryonic stem cells. Research practice takes many forms at Wesleyan, and I am honored—thrilled—to be part of a ceremony that benefits from the great music composed by Jay Hoggard.

As president I pledge to create new opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research practices that advance their fields. This will mean bringing new resources to the university, and it will also mean finding ways to connect our researchers with one another and with colleagues around the globe. It is not enough that we encourage, even demand, the very best from our students. We must set an example through the work we do in whatever field we choose to apply ourselves. This takes time, money, energy, and a joint commitment to support innovative excellence wherever we find it in our community. As president, I will dedicate myself to this endeavor.

We must build an institution that will be sustainable—a responsible caretaker of tradition, a nimble innovator, and an example of how liberal education can make a positive difference locally, nationally, and internationally.

Last year Wesleyan celebrated its 175th anniversary. We have much to be proud of. Over the last many years our school has been at the forefront of some of the most vital and progressive currents in American higher education. From interdisciplinary study to affirmative action, from integrating the arts into the curriculum and athletics into campus life, we have achieved much—perhaps so much that we now take these achievements for granted. In the last three decades, as the official cul-

ture and media in this country have grown ever more reactionary, some have mocked the values that have been the foundation for Wesleyan’s excellence. Respect for difference, a concern for the disadvantaged, an activism that searches for justice, an experimental culture that produces aesthetic and scientific innovation...these are the enduring qualities of the Wesleyan education and the Wesleyan community. As other institutions focus on maintaining the status quo and avoiding risk, we can be proud of the qualities of mind and heart that are enhanced by the education we offer. And we should be proud of a community that mixes experimentation with kindness, that combines edgy critical thinking with affection and tolerance.

We must sustain and cultivate these qualities. We must do so not just by what we teach on campus, but by how we behave as an in-

“NATIONALLY, WESLEYAN MUST AGAIN FIND ITS VOICE AS A CHAMPION OF LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR PUBLIC CULTURE.”

stitution. Wesleyan should not pretend to be able to cure the ills of the world, but we must be a responsible institutional citizen—locally, globally, and nationally. Let me give brief examples in each area. Locally, we must be engaged citizens in our Middletown community. By being a great university, we will also be able to work with our neighbors to attract intellectual and financial investment in our city’s schools, businesses, and cultural organizations. Globally, we must work to attract students here from around the world, building on the extraordinary success of the Freeman Scholars program, which I hope will become a permanent part of our university. And we must do our part and join with other institutions to confront one of the most pressing problems facing us today: global

climate change. This month I will sign the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, and I ask you to join me in making Wesleyan a more thoughtful steward of our environmental legacy.

Nationally, Wesleyan must again find its voice as a champion of liberal arts education as an essential part of our public culture. Our education system at the K–12 level is in disarray, and our best colleges and universities have a responsibility to bring new ideas to this broken system. Education in America has become a vehicle for preserving privilege, and it should be a vehicle for social advancement. Education at all levels should produce a spirit of freedom and advance the possibilities for meaningful equality. At Wesleyan we are fortunate to experience this spirit and the community to which it gives rise. But we must not let the experience become a luxury

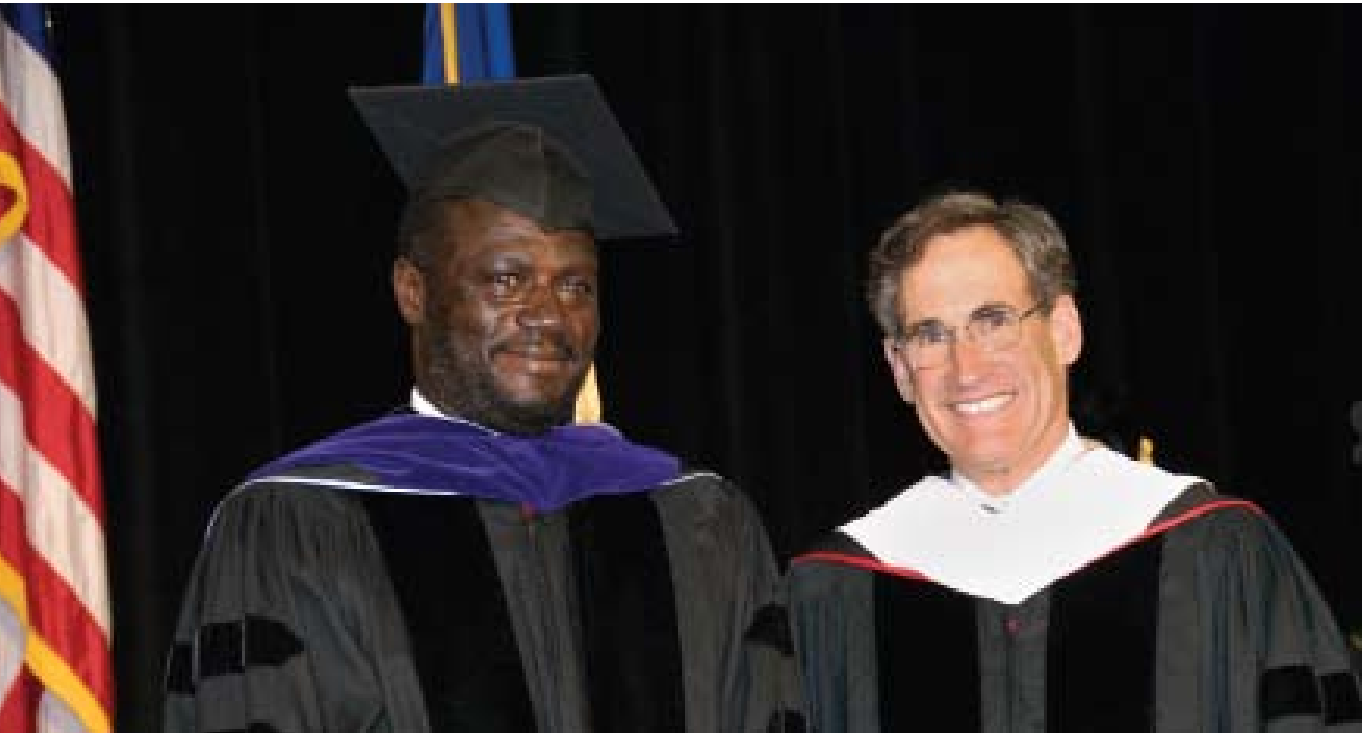
available only to the wealthy. We must protect need-blind admissions and enhance it.

In my first two months on campus we have prepared a plan to reduce dramatically the amount of money we ask students to borrow to attend our school. Starting with the frosh class entering in 2008, we will significantly decrease student indebtedness and entirely eliminate required borrowing for our neediest students by substituting grants for loans. All first-year students entering in the fall will have loan levels significantly reduced, and most students whose household income is under \$40,000 will have Wesleyan grants instead of debt. Frankly, I wish we could do even more, but we cannot afford to do anything less. Wesleyan must not only preach, we must act. And so we will.

Since developing this plan, I have been greatly encouraged by the support already offered by our alumni and parents. From West Coast to East, we have received several generous gifts to the endowment that will support this initiative. In the last several weeks we have received more than \$10 million in gifts to support student aid. Led by its thoughtful and resourceful Board of Trustees, the Wesleyan family is engaged, supportive, and generous because we, ourselves, have experienced the gift of the education offered here.

It is one of the great joys of my life to be here with my family, colleagues, teachers, and friends to accept the charge to be Wesleyan University’s 16th president. I believe that my alma mater stands for the best in progressive liberal arts education, teaching our community to think with purpose and passion, and then to connect that thinking to the world beyond our campus in ways that are fulfilling and effective. This is “a high and lofty goal,” to repeat the words that Victor Butterfield used when he was inaugurated as Wesleyan’s 11th president in 1943. In the middle of horrific global war, President Butterfield had the courage and faith to remind our community of the importance of liberal learning. During a time of crisis and a call to arms, he underscored the ideal of “perpetual learning” and “the humble restless search for truth in all experience.” When faced with profound and violent challenges, President Butterfield urged the Wesleyan community to preserve its ideals, and to “sail by the stars.”

We can do no less. As one of America’s great institutions of higher education, Wesleyan University has a responsibility to contribute to making our public culture more thoughtful and more humane, more creative and more just. As your president, I pledge to join with you in making that contribution, and I joyfully accept the charge given me today. UPFRONT



KOFI APPENTENG '81  
Baldwin Medal Awarded

Kofi Appenteng '81, P'07 (left), trustee emeritus and chair of the search committee that selected President Roth, received the Baldwin Medal during the inauguration ceremony. Alan Dachs '70 (right), chair emeritus of the Board of Trustees, made the presentation. Appenteng is a partner and member of the Corporate and Financial Institutions Practice Group of Thatcher Proffitt & Wood. The Baldwin Medal is the highest award of the Wesleyan Alumni Association and recognizes outstanding service to Wesleyan and to society.



Roth on the Keyboard

The inauguration concluded with an unusual and entertaining twist: President Roth stepped away from the podium and took his seat at the keyboard to play “I’m Old Fashioned” with the Wesleyan Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Jay Hoggard '76. Hoggard also composed an original piece for the inauguration, “Piety and Redemption.”

## Jenkins' Dragon Visits NYC Museum

For the past three years, Ron Jenkins has shared his office with a 10-foot-long Balinese barong, a mythical dragon. But recently, his fire-breathing friend has found a temporary home inside the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

The professor of theater, who uses the barong as a teaching tool for Balinese theater, lent his mythological model to the museum last May. It is part of an exhibit titled *Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns & Mermaids*, which closes Jan. 6.

"The barong is a mythical creature that embodies the positive protective spirits of the universe, according to the Balinese Hindu cosmology," Jenkins explains. An expert on Balinese performance traditions, Jenkins has been conducting research in Bali for 30 years. He acquired the barong from a village artisan in Singapadu, Bali.

Jenkins' creature is brought to life by having two dancers step inside the shaggy fur body. One controls the clacking of the red mask's movable jaws. The other works the tail, which is ornamented with bells and mirrors. The dancers' feet are visible under the body, an effect similar to watching a stage animal in a vaudeville routine, he explains.



COURTESY OF RON JENKINS

## A Share of the Nobel Peace Prize

Gary Yohe, the Woodhouse/Sysco Professor of Economics, is a senior member and coordinating lead author on the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is a co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, along with Al Gore.

The Nobel Committee cited the IPCC and Gore for "their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change."

"The IPCC has created an ever-broader informed consensus about the connection between human activities and global warming. In the last few years, the connections have become even clearer and the consequences still more apparent."

Yohe, who has been involved with IPCC for more than a decade, is one of the leading members of the panel. Currently, he serves as the Coordinating Lead Author in the Contribution of Working Group 2 of the Fourth Assessment Report and member of the Core Writing Team for the Synthesis Report of the Fourth Assessment. Gianna Palmer '10 worked with Yohe as a co-author and, he pointed out, is also entitled to a stake in the prize.

When contacted about the award, Yohe was elated.

"The authors who participate in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have always been secure in the knowledge that their assessments contribute to their respective climate research communities," he said. "It is now particularly rewarding to hear that the Nobel Committee thinks so highly of our work and recognizes its role in elevating the public discourse on climate change. We are, collectively, humbled and invigorated by this award."

Do you have an opinion about our **UPFRONT** section? Please write us at [letters@wesleyan.edu](mailto:letters@wesleyan.edu).

## Tishler Lecture Hall Dedicated

Generations of Wesleyan students have listened to lectures in the amphitheater-styled room 150 of Exley Science Center, but now the room bears a distinguished name: "Tishler Lecture Hall."

Members of the Wesleyan community gathered outside the classroom Sept. 6 to celebrate the work, mentorship, and memory of Max Tishler, the late university professor of the sciences and mathematics.

Tishler was the president of Merck, Sharpe & Dohme Laboratories during the '50s and '60s before accepting a faculty position with Wesleyan's chemistry department. His stature in the scientific world was immense, and he used his standing to help Wesleyan faculty and students in countless ways. His widow, Elizabeth Verveer "Betty" Tishler, is a co-partner in her husband's legacy and a living Wesleyan legend in her own right.

The room was named through the generosity of Joshua '73 and Amy Boger P'06 and P'09. At Wesleyan, Tishler was Boger's mentor. Currently the chair of Wesleyan's Science Advisory Council and a member of Wesleyan's Board of Trustees, Boger is the founder and chief executive officer of Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

### SCHOLAR-ATHLETE

## Queen of Kills

Lisa Drennan '09 seems to float above the net in the instant before she drives the volleyball down with a ferocity that has made her the NESCAC leader in kills per game for the second year in a row. Ranked second nationally in Division III, she was named first-team all-NESCAC and first-team Division III by the New England Women's Volleyball Association. She was also selected to the New England region all-star squad by the American Volleyball Coaches Association and named an honorable mention All-American. When not at the net, this psychology major also takes American sign language and is planning on a spring semester in Madrid.



BILL BURKHART

IMPROVISATIONAL DANCE

Enduring Lessons

Cheryl Cutler stands in the middle of the polished dance floor, her tiny presence radiating energy. “Strrrrretch,” she instructs us, from so deep down in her center she’s almost growling.

I drop my hands to my toes, shake my neck, and am transported back 25 years to Intro to Dance with Professor Cutler, who started Wesleyan’s Dance Department. Rolling up vertebra by vertebra, I glance around the room and recognize Steve Budd ’83, who was actually in that class with me, and like Cutler, seems to have forgotten to age, conceding only a few gray hairs. Other former students of Cutler’s are here in Oakland, Calif., attending this improvisational dance workshop, “Creative Listening: Improvisation as Life Practice,” which she is co-teaching with Ran Huntsberry, former professor of comparative religion.

Cutler and Huntsberry, neither still at Wesleyan, now conduct dance seminars and corporate training with their company, Listening Unlimited. They take the practices they learned in their years working together as improvisational dancers, with their group Sonomama, and translate them into the realm of interpersonal communication. The essentials of improvisational dance, they found—quieting fears by listening to an inner voice, responding rather than reacting to others, generating inspiration and intuition—are applicable to any creative or even business venture. Their book, *Creative Listening: Overcoming Fear in Life and Work*, has just been published: [www.listeningunlimited.com](http://www.listeningunlimited.com).

I’m here for the opportunity to take another dance class with Cutler, and if I loosen up some creativity in the process—bust up a writer’s block, maybe—that would be a welcome bonus. Cutler not only recognized us all after so many years, greeting us with hugs, she recalled the name of the guy in our class who asked, at the end of the semester, whether leotards were washable.

But despite the warm welcome, I’m feeling a bit like I did the first day of dance class at Wesleyan: awkward and scared. Back then, Cutler broke the ice with a folk dance where she instructed the women to jump up on the men, wrapping their legs around while being twirled. I was mortified about being so heavy I’d flatten the guy, but there was no time to do anything but move. Somehow, we all ended up breathless and laughing, our awkwardness about our bodies, touching, and

uneasy sexuality evaporating like sweat while we simply danced.

More than that, it got us into our bodies, inhabiting them in a new way. My experience dancing at Wesleyan awakened an athlete inside me, one who would explore many realms of dance, yoga, and daily movement. It was the beginning of an understanding of physical intelligence, of alignment and flexibility, of expression and control. The class also helped me mold a new body image: when we watched a videotape of ourselves dancing, I wondered who that graceful woman was wearing the same color leotard I always wore. Intro to Dance was integral, and essential, to the process of liberal arts education for me. You can’t educate your mind and leave your body behind; they are, after all, one.

Still, at the workshop, 25 years older and so much more comfortable in my own skin, I wasn’t prepared for a weekend of improvisational dance. When are you more vulnerable than when you’re making up a dance? What the heck possessed me to sign up? I had no dance vocabulary, no moves. I was afraid I was going to resort to miming flowers opening their petals to the spring.

We started by walking, and then running, and then gradually leaping and spinning, shedding our self-consciousness. By creating dances, we explored how our style of relating to each other in movement reflected how we interact with people in life; were our movements self-generated, other-generated, or capricious? We slowly learned to stop flitting around the room and tune in to others’ movements, shapes, and narratives. Sometimes we let go of all the metaphors and just danced.

On the second day we identified each other’s “koans,” the habitual patterns we use in movement. These postures are unconscious to us, but often obvious to the people around us. I couldn’t have told you that I have a habit of opening my arms wide and leaping around the periphery, but once pointed out, I could say that it probably reflects an approach to creativity and people that doesn’t like to sit still and work closely and patiently on the difficult stuff. Our movements and dances held small revelations, but the overall effect, after a weekend, was a big brain shake-up and an injection of energy into our creative lives.

The weekend was a joy, a pleasure to spend time dancing and in serious conversation with fearlessly creative people. Joy was really the cornerstone of Cutler’s teaching. “I have always felt that if a student is joyful while learning, he or she is likely to be more deeply receptive to the experience and its lessons than otherwise,” she told me. From that joy follow revelations—intuitive discoveries, spiritual connections, emotional healings, and all the reflection that sometimes, even in a university setting, only action can inspire.

—Laura Fraser ’82 UPFRONT

New Scholarships Recognize Military Service

Two Wesleyan alumni each have made substantial gifts to create need-based scholarships for former servicemen and servicewomen for four years of full-time baccalaureate study. These new gifts, reported in a page-one *USA Today* story, will fund as many as 10 scholarships at any given time.

One of the donors, Frank Sica ’73, described the reasoning behind his gift this way: “I want to enable young men and women who have performed a service for our country to attend a premier liberal arts university. The government-provided college aid and pay scales for enlisted personnel are such that, unless these people received substantial aid, they could not pay the expenses associated with attending a place such as Wesleyan.

“Secondly, the armed forces consist of people from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds who have been working and training together for the duration of their service. My hope is that Wesleyan, because of its diversity, will enable them to be more comfortable than at other small liberal arts institutions.”

Jonathan Soros ’92 said: “I want to help reduce the disconnect between policymakers and the military. For many at a liberal arts college, interacting with the men and women of the military is not part of their experience. I see a real educational opportunity in which veterans benefit from a liberal arts education, and the community benefits by learning from people of different backgrounds and confronting realities they wouldn’t otherwise directly encounter. Servicemen and -women demonstrate an admirable call to duty, and I think they can inspire all of us to public service.”



All in the Family

Legacy families—those with a current student and at least one parent holding a Wesleyan degree—gathered on Denison Terrace during Homecoming & Family weekend for a group portrait with President Michael Roth ’78 (center).

Wesleyan admits students without regard to their financial circumstances and then provides a financial aid package that meets each student’s full demonstrated need. Forty percent of its 2,900 students currently receive grant aid. The average grant is \$27,151. Wesleyan currently budgets \$35.4 million of its own resources annually for grant aid for undergraduates. Federal and state sources contribute an additional \$2.7 million.

“At Wesleyan, we help exceptionally smart, imaginative students find their capacities for leadership in the world beyond the campus,” said President Roth. “We are particularly grateful to Frank Sica and Jonathan Soros for hearing the potential resonance of this educational ideal for students who have experienced military service and for understanding how such students can help strengthen campus discourse. We are proud to be taking this initiative to support those who have served our country at the same time we are taking strides to make Wesleyan more affordable for students from all backgrounds.”



Laura Fraser ’82 reflected on the lasting lessons inspired by action after taking an improvisational dance class with her former Wesleyan teacher.

NICK LACY