

UPFRONT

BILL BURKHART



Wesleyan's Taiko Drumming Ensemble performed at commencement.

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—PRESIDENT MICHAEL S. ROTH '78

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PRESIDENT’S LETTER

by Michael S. Roth ’78



My first year as president of Wesleyan has been fascinating, exhilarating, and challenging. Coming back to Connecticut after more than 20 years in California has been delightful, and I’ve often had the paradoxical feeling of discovering the environment of my past for the first time. Living on campus has given me the opportunity to get to know students, staff, and faculty in a well-rounded way. Attending concerts, athletic events, lectures, parties, and just being here for the daily rhythms of the Wesleyan culture has become part of our family’s life.

When I greeted new arrivals in the fall, I stressed that our students are intense, creative, and engaged. Many come to Wesleyan with strong ideals, dreams that we encourage them to bring to fruition. Our model of liberal arts education emphasizes freedom and experimentation as tools for students to discover what they love to do, and then to get better at it. We believe that when students are passionately engaged with their education, they will be better able to develop meaningful ways of working after graduation. Wesleyan students become innovators and productive risk-takers, and this is exactly the right time for our graduates to have a role in shaping our economy and culture. Wesleyan students, long known for idealism, are also figuring out how to translate ideals into effective, productive work in the world.

At the end of my first semester I noted on my blog three main areas on which I’d been concentrating:

Access: Wesleyan announced a significant enhancement to our financial aid packages, to begin in the fall of 2008. We want to ensure that students who are admitted will have the financial assistance they need to thrive here. Many families tell us, though, that we are not doing enough, and they can point to wealthier institutions that are doing more for families in higher income brackets than those to whom Wesleyan offers aid. These families are not poor enough to qualify for the highest support, nor are they rich enough to send students to schools like ours without significant financial sacrifice. I am very aware of this dilemma, and for that reason I have put fundraising for financial aid among our highest priorities.

Access to Wesleyan, though, isn’t only about financial aid. It is also

important that we reach out to new constituencies of students—both in the United States and internationally. We will be a forceful advocate for quality liberal arts education.

Communities: I visit each week with the various communities that make up the Wesleyan world—from swim meets to COL lectures; from Para la Familia to football games. The multiplicity of groups is exciting, but it also creates challenges for bringing people together in shared purpose, study, or celebration. There are conflicts among our diverse groups over a wide range of issues. But we should always remember what we have in common: a devotion to the freedom (and affection) in which education can thrive.

Achievement: I hope to improve access to Wesleyan as I work to strengthen our various communities and their common ties. Why? Because I believe that a Wesleyan education can help students envision a meaningful future and give them the skills to translate that vision into reality. I’ve seen this throughout my first year, as I watch students accomplish more than they ever thought possible. It is tremendously exciting to see our students shine as performers and scholars, as artists and athletes. Wesleyan students demand a great deal from their education because they give so much to it. They learn to use their ideals to be more effective in the world.

Wesleyan prides itself on being different: more creative, more independent, more experimental, and more progressive than many of our peers. For generations of students, Wesleyan University has stood for the opportunity to connect serious intellectual and aesthetic work with making a difference in the world. Wesleyan continues to attract talented people who can celebrate difference, who learn with exuberance, and who use their freedom to develop the capacity for innovation in a rigorous, highly demanding context.

Returning 30 years after my graduation, I can see that the university has changed. As president, I hope to foster further changes, but in ways that make us more distinctive, more “*Wesleyanish*.” What hasn’t changed on campus is our affectionate, open-minded community that fosters an educational experience that is both challenging and joyful. As Wesleyan alumni, we continue to find joy in learning, while having a positive impact on the world around us and on alma mater. **UPFRONT**

BY THE NUMBERS

WESLEYAN’S MOST POPULAR MAJORS (junior and senior majors)

ENGLISH	175
PSYCHOLOGY	157
GOVERNMENT	142
ECONOMICS	132
AMERICAN STUDIES	99
SOCIOLOGY	96
HISTORY	92
BIOLOGY	81
CSS	77
FILM STUDIES	61

THE PORTALS OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW

A Church Inspires New Music

St. Bartholomew’s Church in New York City was the site and inspiration for the world premiere on May 14 of *The Portals of Saint Bartholomew*, an innovative new spatial composition by Professor of Music Neely Bruce. The author of more than 700 works, Bruce also conducted the 40-minute piece, which is scored for three choruses (children, women, and men), six vocal soloists, two flutes, clarinet, two trumpets, three trombones, two tubas, six timpani (one player), and a splendid 12,422-pipe Aeolian-Skinner organ, the largest such instrument in New York and widely regarded as one of the finest organs in the world.

Located on Park Avenue in midtown Manhattan, the Romanesque St. Bartholomew’s Church with its striking Byzantine dome played a major role in the work, as the many voices and instruments performing the music were placed throughout the church’s lofts, choir stalls, and balconies.

The texts for the composition were taken from inscriptions in the church, not only in the portals but also on the walls, in hidden locations, signs around and about, and from sources suggested by the iconography. Three complete psalms (100, 148, and 150), familiar Bible verses (such as “Behold I stand at the door and knock” and “I am the resurrection and the life”), and snatches of traditional prayers and canticles were part of the texts.

Bruce describes his new work as a giant polytonal collage. “I have fashioned 23 pieces of choral music and three virtuoso compositions for solo voices, to be combined with each other and instrumental music,” he says. “But most of these works may also be sung as brief anthems, introits, responses. The result

is, on the one hand, a big spatial piece of music for a sacred concert, properly entitled *The Portals of Saint Bartholomew*, and on the other, service music for a typical Sunday morning, each piece with its individual title.”

Bruce’s composition was commissioned and underwritten as a gift to the people of New York by two of St. Bartholomew’s parishioners, Sarah Kendall Bayles ’77 and Richard Bayles. She has studied and performed with Bruce. The new work is dedicated to the late composer and Pulitzer Prize winner Henry Brant and to the memory of philanthropist Robert H. Brimberg.

Retiring Faculty

- VERA K. B. GRANT (1970–2008)
Adjunct Professor of German Studies
- GAYLE PEMBERTON (1999–2008)
Professor of English and African American Studies
- RICHARD S. SLOTKIN (1966–2008)
Olin Professor of English, Professor of American Studies
- JASON WOLFE (1969–2008)
Professor of Biology

ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME

C. EVERETT BACON '13

Helping to usher in the use of the forward pass in football, C. Everett Bacon '13 (1890–1989) was twice named an All-American in the sport (1910 and 1912). He was one of only two players not from an Ivy League institution on the 1912 squad, joining Jim Thorpe of Carlisle College.

Along with his gridiron prowess that had him described as “a slick and dazzling back who became one of the pioneers of the forward pass, making it a lethal weapon in an era when most collegiate teams shied from its use,” Bacon also was a star at Wesleyan in baseball as a pitcher while hitting over .400, and in tennis as he won a New England doubles title in 1910. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1966. Each year since 1936, Wesleyan has presented the C. Everett Bacon Award to its most valuable player in football, and the university’s 70,000-square-foot field house is known as the Bacon Field House in his honor.

After graduation, Bacon served on the Wesleyan Board of Trustees (1933–60) and made a name for himself on Wall Street as an investment banker. During World War I, he was a member of the 312th Infantry and the 48th Field Artillery. He received Wesleyan’s Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1965.

Wesleyan unveiled its new Athletics Hall of Fame in Freeman Athletic Center over Reunion and Commencement Weekend. Future issues of Wesleyan magazine will profile other inductees.

Do you have an opinion about our UPFRONT section? Please write us at letters@wesleyan.edu.

176th COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

A Commencement Like No Other

President Michael S. Roth electrified an audience of trustees, faculty, students, and senior administrators less than 72 hours before Commencement with the news that Senator Barack Obama would substitute as speaker for the ailing Senator Edward Kennedy.

His announcement set off not only “A Spike in Screams Before Graduation,” as a *New York Times* headline noted in assessing the response of undergraduates, but also a mad scramble by staff to plan for an event that suddenly had been lifted into a different sphere of complexity. Public Safety immediately began coordinating with the Secret Service as well as local and state police. Wesleyan’s media relations office was inundated with 157 requests for press credentials, an order of magnitude greater than normal.

“As news spread across the campus Thursday via instant messaging, blog posts, texting, cellphone, and Facebook,” reported the *Los Angeles Times*, “people began selling their commencement tickets on Craigslist for hundreds of dollars.”

From the seats arrayed on Andrus Field, the day seemed to unfold with the precision of the Taiko Drumming Ensemble that rhythmically pounded drums under the watchful eyes of police snipers crouched on roofs as the red-robed students made their way to the front. A crowd of at least 15,000 people heard remarks by President Roth and Senator Obama, among them Ted Kennedy Jr. ’83 and Senator Kennedy’s stepdaughter, Caroline Raclin ’08, as well as other members of the Kennedy family. Another 5,500 worldwide watched the Wesleyan webcast from as far away as Pakistan and Sri Lanka. [Roth’s and Obama’s remarks, as well as the rest of the ceremony, may be viewed online at www.wesleyan.edu/magazine.]

As President Roth noted in his blog, it was surely “A Great Day for Wesleyan.” The aftermath was equally impressive, with a torrent of publicity unmatched by any Commencement in recent Wesleyan history. Every major news network reported the event, and CNN carried a substantial portion of Senator Obama’s remarks. Wesleyan received well over 1,200 media hits, which spun off into numerous blog commentaries. As the *Times* said, “Wesleyan’s getting Mr. Obama as a last-minute graduation speaker, even if under trying circumstances, was a little like Notre Dame getting the pope.”

Looking for an unusual angle on the story, writers for Bloomberg.com interviewed NFL head coaches Bill Belichick ’75 and Eric Mangini ’94 for comments about Wesleyan. Bloomberg also tapped famed marathoner Bill Rodgers ’70, perhaps coincidentally selecting two individuals (Belichick and Rodgers) inducted into Wesleyan’s new Athletics Hall of Fame over Reunion and Commencement weekend.

Among the commentators on Senator Obama’s text was James Fallows of the *Atlantic Monthly*. On his TheAtlantic.com blog, he cited Senator Obama’s call to service: “That is all I ask of you on this joyous day of new beginnings: that is what Senator Kennedy asks of you as well, and that is how we will keep so much needed work going, and the cause of justice everlasting, and the dream alive for generations to come.” A reader had pointed out that the language was a very subtle acknowledgement of words Kennedy himself had used 28 years ago at the 1980 Democratic convention in New York.

“Even if the intended audience for this close was strictly the Kennedy family,” Fallows wrote, “it is an impressive bit of craftsmanship.” UPFRONT

Chair of the Board of Trustees James Van B. Dresser ’63 and President Roth join in the ceremony honoring Senator Obama with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.



COMMENCEMENT PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL BURKHART AND NICK LACY

Senator Obama’s Call to Service

[Excerpts from his Commencement address. The full text is available at www.wesleyan.edu/magazine.]

Through service, I found a community that embraced me, citizenship that was meaningful, the direction that I’d been seeking. Through service, I discovered how my own improbable story fit in to the larger story of America.

Now, each of you will have the chance to make your own discovery in the years to come. And I say “chance” because, as President Roth indicated, you won’t have to take it. There’s no

community service requirement in the outside world; no one’s forcing you to care...You can choose to narrow your concerns and live life in a way that tries to keep your story separate from America’s.

But I hope you don’t. Not because you have an obligation to those who are less fortunate, although I believe you do have that obligation. Not because you have a debt to all those who helped you get to where you are today, although I do believe you have that debt to pay.

It’s because you have an obligation to yourself. Because our individual salvation depends on collective salvation. Because thinking only about yourself, fulfilling your immediate wants and needs, betrays a poverty of ambition. Because it’s only when you hitch your wagon

to something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential and discover the role that you’ll play in writing the next great chapter in the American story.

It is rare in this country of ours that a person exists who has touched the lives of nearly every single American without many of us even realizing it. And yet, because of Ted Kennedy, millions of children can see a doctor when they get sick. Mothers and fathers can leave work to spend time with their newborns. Working Americans are paid higher wages and compensated for overtime and can keep their health insurance when they change jobs. They are protected from discrimination in the workplace, and those who are born with disabilities can still get an education and health care and fair treatment on the

job. Our schools are stronger, and our colleges are filled with more Americans who can afford it. And I have a feeling that Ted Kennedy is not done just yet.

But surely, surely, if one man can achieve so much and make such a difference in the lives of so many people, then each of us can do our part. Surely, if his service and his story can forever shape America’s story, then our collective service can shape the destiny of this generation. At the very least, his living example calls us to try. That is all I ask of you on this joyous day of new beginnings; that is what Senator Kennedy asks of you as well, and that is how we will keep so much needed work going, and the cause of justice everlasting, and the dream alive for generations to come. UPFRONT



Honorary Degrees

At the 176th Commencement ceremony, Wesleyan awarded honorary degrees to:

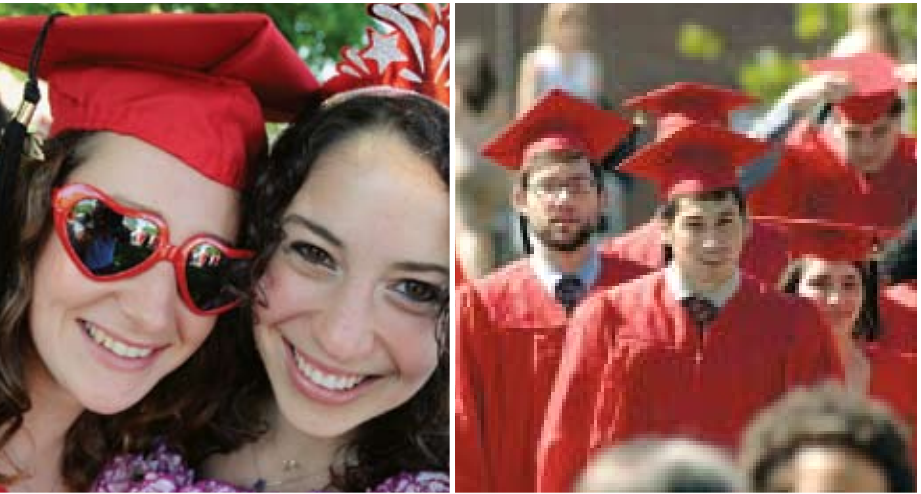
Jamaica Kincaid, recognized by critics as the most important West Indian writer working today. Her work is characterized by a rhythmic, lyrical style and explores themes of cultural identity, colonialism, and feminism. She received a National Book Award nomination for *My Brother*. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2004, and cur-

rently is a visiting lecturer at Harvard.

Barack Obama, the first African-American president of the *Harvard Law Review*. Elected to the Illinois State Senate, where he served for eight years, he championed legislation for working families, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit. Additionally, he advocated the successful expansion of early childhood education. In 2004, Senator Obama became the third African American since Reconstruction to be elected to the U.S. Senate, where he has served as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Morton Owen Schapiro, president of Williams College since 2000. In his first year, he launched a strategic planning process that resulted in a tripling of the number of courses offered in the college's signature tutorial program and the creation of a new housing program. He is a former dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern California, and he is among the nation's premier authorities on the economics of higher education, with particular expertise in college financing and affordability.

Philip Trager '56, P '81, GP '11, one of the foremost photographers of architecture and dance of our time. His books, such as *Changing Paris* and *Dancers*, have received exceptional critical acclaim. Four have been chosen for the annual holiday book issue of the *New York Times*. The Davison Art Center will hold a complete collection of his published and unpublished work, and the Library of Congress is acquiring his entire photographic oeuvre. His work is included in numerous museums and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Binswanger Teaching Prizes



Winners of this year's Binswanger Prize for Excellence in Teaching are Howard Needler, professor of letters; Elizabeth McAlister, associate professor of religion; and Renee Romano, associate professor of history and African American studies.

SCHOLAR ATHLETE

Speedy Swing

Grayson Connors '08 set the pace in the NESCAC this year by leading in goals and total points, along the way earning Nike/Inside Lacrosse Player of the Week. Named a first-team all-NESCAC choice and an honorable mention All-American, he also played in the annual North-South Senior All-Star game of the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association. His hard work in the classroom led to his being named a Scholar All-American at the end of the season. A chemistry major who recently published research, he plans to attend medical school, but this summer will be running a children's lacrosse camp with a Wesleyan friend.



BILL BURKHART

THEATER OUTREACH

Shakespeare as a Common Language

“No glass,” the youth services officer at the front entrance of the Connecticut Juvenile Training School campus reminds one student, who surrenders his bottle of iced tea, placing it on the tray with the collection of coins and other small objects that would set off the metal detector.

The dozen Wesleyan students are members of Professor of Theater Ron Jenkins’ Activism and Outreach Through Theater class. The course is offered in conjunction with Wesleyan’s Service-Learning Center. “Building reciprocal relationships—that’s our working philosophy,” says Cathy Lechowicz, director of community service and volunteerism.

Jenkins and his students are bringing Shakespeare to the young men of the Walter

G. Cady School, part of the juvenile detention system of Connecticut.

“I look at theater as a way to solve problems and make connections. In this project the students from Cady and Wesleyan are all learning to make connections between their own lives and the problems faced by Shakespeare’s characters,” he explains.

Jenkins had once done work in the Massachusetts prison system, teaching literature as part of a rehabilitation project. When he found that the Cady School had sent a request to Wesleyan’s Service-Learning Center, he leapt at the opportunity.

The Cady teachers were initially skeptical of Jenkins’ plan, concerned that their students would have neither interest nor ability to study the work of a 16th-century playwright. The school’s curriculum supported teens who, in many cases, had not been able to pick up basic academic skills. One teacher agreed to give it a try and supported Jenkins’ efforts by following up the Wesleyan lessons with further study and by posting youth services officers in the classroom as a precautionary measure. That was in February, at the beginning of the semester.

This day in April, as the Wesleyan group navigates the entrance to the facility, they chat about upcoming projects. They will work in small groups with their Cady students to create a short skit, based on one of the themes in *The Tempest*, and then perform it for the class. The Cady students soon arrive, one at a time, with an escort who leaves after each student has joined his group.

Theater games—warm-up exercises that evoke laughter from both Wesleyan and Cady students—open the session.

“The students at the Cady School,” says

Jenkins, “are people who don’t take it for granted that Shakespeare is worth studying—and the Wesleyan kids are seeing that they are opening up their minds. Before, in February, we saw very closed-off students. Now, they are having conversations on an equal level.”

Absent from the room are youth services officers. After the first few weeks, everyone realized that they just weren’t needed.

At first the Cady students learned to translate Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* into modern English, and the scenes and themes into modern-day situations with which they felt familiar.

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dom, a story about the different ways people can find freedom—external freedom and freedom within themselves,” explains Jenkins. “Furthermore, the characters seem to be in situations with which the students can relate. Trinculo hears thunder and scary noises and hides under the cloak of Caliban. One of the students did that scene and said that the idea of looking for shelter from the storm reminded

him of how he was always looking for ways to be safe from the violence around him.”

Then Jenkins held a contest: Memorize a speech, present it to the class, and he would choose the winner. Surprisingly, a formerly silent student presented Prospero’s speech—and won. Why had he chosen this passage and what did it mean to him? Jenkins queried.

“It just fits,” the student had responded. “Prospero gets treated unfairly all the time and so do I.”

Additionally, his teacher reported to Jenkins that this student had developed a new free-time activity. He used to plot mischief, she said. Now he was at the computer, continuing his translation of the *Tempest* into a version his peers could understand.

That day in April, the Cady-Wesleyan student skits were clever and punctuated with laughter. At the end of class, one boy announced that the contest-winner was leaving the next day, going home.

“Can you still remember your speech?” Jenkins asked the teen.

“I can, I can...Just give me a second,” he replied and stood with his head in his hand in brief concentration. He began slowly, reciting it nearly perfectly and earning a round of applause. Individual chaperones appeared at the door, and students left, one by one, amidst general congratulations and talk about the next class meeting..

“The Wesleyan students who choose to take this course—a lot of them consider themselves activists,” says Jenkins. “They are always thinking of ways they can make a difference in their community through activism and outreach.”

Jaime Delanghe ’08 says, “Ron Jenkins’ class helped me to realize the direct link between acting on a stage and taking action in your life. The most valuable part of the class, for me, was presenting the students at the Cady School with a scene, watching them take hold of it, and then realizing that they had turned it into something very different and deeply personal.” UPFRONT



Students from Wesleyan and from the Cady School found a common language through Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. This image of *The Tempest* (courtesy of Wesleyan’s Special Collections and Archives, from a gift of George W. Davison, Class of 1892) offers an artistic interpretation of the Bard’s comedy, this one published in 1709.



Tribute to the late Louis Mink

When Thomas L. Kelly ’73, here in front of the Fayerweather building, returned to campus for the dedication of Mink Dining Hall in Usdan University Center during Reunion & Commencement Weekend 2008, he was greeted by sunny skies and the warmth of Wesleyan friendships. His generous gift in memory of Louis Mink (1921–1983), professor of philosophy and tutor in the College of Social Studies, made the renaming of the East Wing Dining Hall possible. Spirited recollections of Professor Mink’s contributions to Wesleyan life were shared by attendees including former Mink student President Roth; Professor Mink’s son, Terry; nephew, Jonathan Mink ’80; the extended Mink family; Joseph Bruno, vice president for academic affairs; and Brian Fay, professor of philosophy and dean of the social sciences and interdisciplinary programs.