



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

BY MICHAEL ROTH '78

Recently I wrote to the Wesleyan community about our focus on building the endowment over the next decade. I indicated that our goal now is to direct no more than 25 percent of gift income toward operating expenses. This is a significant change—past practice was more or less 25% endowment and 75% operations. Our new goal aligns us much more closely with our peers. It's clear that if we expect to remain competitive with the nation's premier institutions over the long run, we must do a better job of strengthening our economic foundations, and we have begun to do so.

Sound fiscal management has been essential for reducing the draw on the endowment. We now operate in the 4.5%-5.5% range approved by the Board, and we are hiring new leadership for our investment efforts. We have reduced staff positions by about 10% (primarily through attrition and a voluntary separation program), and we are implementing many other changes that will reduce our base budget by \$25 million without detracting from our core educational mission. We will not add to Wesleyan's debt, but we are taking steps to fix the rates we pay. We are committed to maintaining fiscal discipline and limiting our endowment draw.

Endowment is the means by which investors in Wesleyan have a lasting impact on the success of the institution. Through gifts to the endowment, fiscal discipline, and prudent management, we will ensure that Wesleyan continues to offer a liberal arts education second to none.

But what should a liberal arts education look like a decade from now? How should a leading educational institution shape the meaning of liberal learning for the future? As I've thought about these questions, I've considered the possibility of developing a

liberal arts approach to engineering and wondered how design thinking generally could have a more prominent role in our curriculum. Integrating our arts programs more fully into our academic programs (as with our new efforts in creative writing) remains an important priority for many of us at Wes. We have long had a commitment to interdisciplinary programs, but we grant tenure almost exclusively in departments. How should we balance the importance of disciplinary integrity with the importance of creating interdisciplinary innovation?

How should a leading educational institution shape the meaning of liberal learning for the future?

Conversations at the Trustee meeting touched on three main areas for curricular growth: (1) public policy domestically and internationally, (2) engineering and design, and (3) the study of the impact of technology on culture and society. It was interesting to talk about new possibilities, but we didn't have the harder discussion about areas of the curriculum to which we should devote fewer resources. Given the financial realities of the next few years, we will not be able to make significant additions to our academic programs without cutting some others.

Dean Don Moon reminded us that while it might be good to have these general conversations at the Board level, each year the Wesleyan faculty develops dozens of new courses. Here are just a few examples:

- Biol 173: Global Change and Infectious Disease—Fred Cohan is currently teaching this new Gen Ed course, which comes out of his research interests in the evolution of bacterial species (and involves a significant dance component!).
- Chem 378: Materials Chemistry and Nanoscience—Brian Northrop's research is directed at understanding molecular interactions and self-assembly processes that might be used in nano-scale devices—e.g. molecular sensors or motors.
- Psyc 392: Behavioral Methods in Affective Neuroscience—Charles Sanislow is currently teaching this course linked to his research in post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression and other affective disorders.

Assistant Professor Laura Stark, Science in Society Program, has proposed a course called Reading Medical Ethnography (a study of different ways of approaching the study of health and illness); Professor Ann duCille has proposed an African-American Studies class called Love in the Time of Slavery (drawing on songs, poetry, fiction, etc.) that examines representations of love, intimacy, and marriage in early African American literature); Assistant Professor Michael Nelson has proposed Government, Global Environmental Politics (which covers a variety of environmental issues, along with the design and use of international institutions for managing cooperation and conflict on these issues).

I myself have developed a lecture course for the fall called The Modern and the Postmodern. We'll read literature, philosophy and critical theory to try to better understand how the idea of the modern came to inform our sense of ourselves and our history in the West.

The curriculum has been evolving and will continue to do so. We can thank our scholar-teacher model for that! This model must be supported by strong economic foundations that ensure small classes and research support. It's through their scholarship and creative practice that our professors develop new ideas that energize the classroom—ensuring that a Wesleyan education remains vibrant and relevant long into the future. **UPFRONT**

WESeminar

OLIVIA BARTLETT



MATLACK '86 FINDS SOME GOOD MEN

Tom Matlack '86, a former rower on a Wesleyan championship team who looks the part with a tall and muscular build, came to campus in the fall on a publicity tour for a project that poses the question: What does it mean to be a good man?

Wesleyan, where Matlack presented a WESeminar during Homecoming & Family Weekend, was the second stop on a tour that nabbed a slew of press coverage ranging from the *Boston Globe* to *Huffington Post* to *Fox & Friends*. The first stop was Boston, where the premiere of the documentary film that is part of the project drew 500 people, a turnout that suggests he may be onto something.

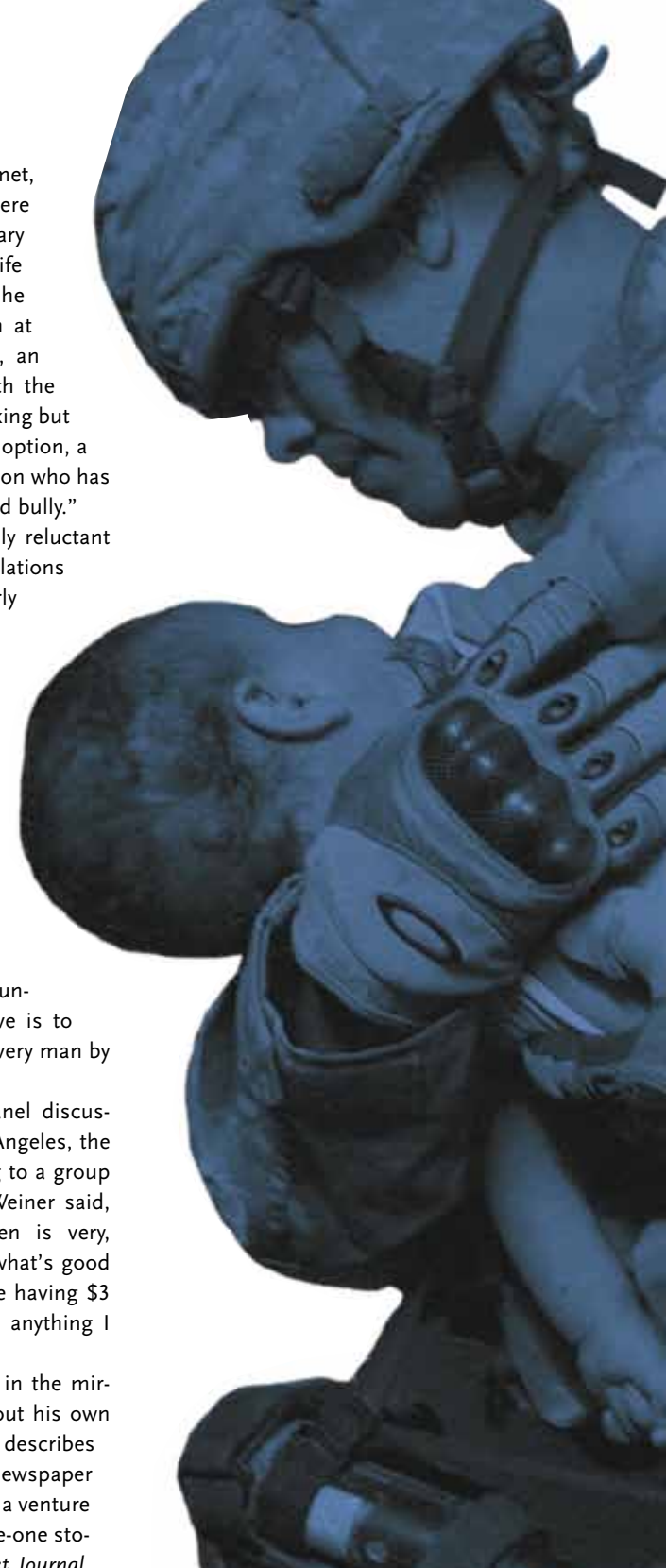
In addition to a film, The Good Men Project consists of a book of essays, a website and blog, and a series of presentations—all devoted to men discussing those points in their lives when the question about how to be a good man came into critical focus. With two wars underway and an economy that has cost millions of men their jobs, issues surrounding men in their roles as husbands and fathers have become particularly charged, Matlack contends.

Most of the men he met, Matlack says in his blog, “were regular guys with more ordinary problems: a husband whose wife has terminal cancer and all he wants for her is decent death at home with their five children, an Indian architect struggling with the fact that his marriage isn't working but in his culture divorce is not an option, a father who tries to protect his son who has been beat up by a neighborhood bully.”

Men, of course, are famously reluctant to engage in Oprah-style revelations of their feelings, particularly when those feelings emanate from their most intimate relationships. Matlack says he started thinking about this inhibition while he was writing a profile of Matt Weiner '87, creator of *Mad Men*, just after the first season of the show. The show's character, Don Draper, has lived a life of deceit and, as a result, is most telling by what he is unable to say. Matlack's objective is to overcome the Don Draper in every man by fomenting honest discussion.

Weiner participated in a panel discussion about the project in Los Angeles, the final stop of the tour. Speaking to a group who had just seen the film, Weiner said, “Communication between men is very, very structured. I don't know what's good or bad about it, but it took me having \$3 million an episode to express anything I feel about my father.”

Honesty begins with a look in the mirror, and Matlack is candid about his own troubled past. In the book he describes his high-octane career as a newspaper company executive and then as a venture capitalist, punctuated by a page-one story about him in the *Wall Street Journal*. Meanwhile, his personal life, fueled by alcohol, was headed straight downhill. His descent included a close brush with death on the Mass Pike, upside down in his girlfriend's baby blue Ford Escort after he had fallen asleep at the wheel. Later, he experienced a remorseful epiphany about his absence in the lives of his two baby children, who were living with his ex-wife. As it



**THE
GOOD
MEN
PROJECT**

turned out, he'd had his last drink, but the path to becoming a good father was more difficult than the one to sobriety—a fact he can only see clearly now that more than a decade has passed, he is happily remarried and has devoted himself to his three kids who are now 15,13, and 4.

The Good Men Project is not prescriptive. Generalities are meaningless, says Matlack. It's up to each and every man to discover what it means to be a good man. As a participant in one of the project's discussions observed, a large part of being a good man is simply asking the question: What does it mean to be a good man?

"Men remain the hardest audience to reach because many cling to the idea that no matter how bad the dilemma, silence is the right response," Matlack says. "But the most common reaction is men saying that they are thrilled to know they are not alone."

Matlack recently took his project to a place that would seem to be an unlikely hunting ground for good men—Sing Sing prison in New York. He was motivated by Julio Medina, whose story appears in the book. Medina is a former drug lord turned leader in helping inmates survive on the outside and stay out of prison.

"If anyone has proven that men who have done awful, criminal things can redeem themselves," says Matlack, "Julio has proven that. I also wanted to make clear that no one is excluded from the conversation about manhood—black, white, gay, straight, rich, poor, not even inmates. What I found so moving about the men I met in Sing Sing was their determination to face their faults directly and think deeply about how to improve themselves despite the limitations of incarceration. How do you become a good father or good husband when you are locked up? That's what they were talking about."

Matlack wants men to know that they are not as alone as they might think. The good men stories are intended to tell men that others struggle with the same issues that weigh them down, especially since so many men are facing joblessness, the hardships of war, or simply the demands of family life.

"The way out of the box isn't silence," he insists. "Don Draper is a cautionary tale to all of us. The answer is to speak the truth of our experience, not shy away from it. Our book and film are an attempt to break the ice." **UPFRONT**

TV HIT *HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER*, CREATED BY BAYS '97 AND THOMAS '97, REACHES ITS 100TH EPISODE



The *How I Met Your Mother* cast sing and dance on the show's 100th episode.

CLIFF LIPSON/CBS

The successful CBS sitcom, *How I Met Your Mother*, had its milestone 100th episode on January 11, 2009. The show was created by Carter Bays '97 and Craig Thomas '97, who serve as executive producers and writers for the program. The series deals humorously with the lives of a group of friends living in New York.

How I Met Your Mother gets its title from a framing device: the main character, Ted Mosby (played by Josh Radnor, with narration by Bob Saget) in the year 2030 recounts to his son and daughter the events that led to his meeting their mother. The show then proceeds to tell the comic misadventures of Ted and his friends when they are younger. One of the running jokes of the sitcom is that the identity "mother" of the title has yet to be revealed. The exuberant cast also includes Jason Segel (*I Love You, Man*), Cobie Smulders, Alyson Hannigan (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon '87), and Neil Patrick Harris (*Doogie Howser M.D.*, *Harold & Kumar* films, and *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*, directed by Joss Whedon).

For the 100th episode titled "Girls vs. Suits," Bays and Thomas decided to celebrate the occasion with a big musical number with Neil Patrick Harris as the lead singer, backed by 65 dancers and a 50-piece orchestra. The two producers wrote a song, "Nothing Suits Me Like a Suit," which Harris sings when he has to choose between a woman bartender and his love for formal wear.

How I Met Your Mother was not an immediate hit during its early run and sometimes faced cancellation, but it had its faithful fans early on. The now popular program was recently nominated for an Emmy Award for best comedy and has become one of the mainstays on CBS's Monday evening. The show employs playful and sometimes zany storylines and often uses flashbacks. Episodes incorporate new media that is featured on the show and online, including videos and blogs. Scripts also have included references to Wesleyan over the years. **UPFRONT**

BERGMAN'S '76 BAS-RELIEF ADORNS MASSACHUSETTS STATE HOUSE

The Massachusetts State House now hosts a bronze bas-relief sculpture by Meredith Gang Bergmann '76 that honors slain labor leader Edward Cohen and the Massachusetts labor movement. The plaque, unveiled late in 2009, hangs just outside the governor's office where Cohen was shot in 1907.

Bergmann drew stylistic inspiration both from the compositional ingenuity and energy of WPA murals and protest art from the elegant narratives of Renaissance bas-reliefs to organize this complex history. The helix of marchers includes 31 different events of organization and protest from 1834 to the present, and the sculpture includes more than 100 figures.

Labor leader Cohen is honored on a kind of plaque-within-the-plaque, as the events of his life and death are printed on a newspaper held up to view in the lower right corner. **UPFRONT**



WESLEYAN HOSTS FIRST WSJ/UNIGO WEBCAST

Wesleyan hosted the first Wall Street Journal/Unigo webcast on Dec. 2 in the Usdan University Center. This event, an interactive panel on admissions, featured the chief admissions officers from Wesleyan, Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, Williams, Bryn Mawr, Marquette University, Grinnell, and the University of Vermont.

The webcast was the first in a series of informational presentations that will be produced by "WSJ On Campus," a new partnership between Unigo and the *Wall Street Journal*. According to WSJ on Campus, the partnership is an online resource that brings together the "trusted insight and advice from the *Wall Street Journal*" with Unigo's renowned "on-campus student perspectives."

Unigo was created by Jordan Goldman '04, who also is the company's CEO. The WSJ On Campus partnership with the *Wall Street Journal* was finalized earlier this fall. Goldman says that the site provides a multi-layered, diverse resource and information center for college-bound students and their parents. **UPFRONT**

SHAPIRO RECEIVES TRANSLATION AWARD

The American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) has presented the 2009 National Translation Award to Norman Shapiro, professor of romance languages and literatures, for *French Women Poets of Nine Centuries: The Distaff and the Pen* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

The prize was announced on Nov. 12 at the organization's annual conference in Pasadena, Calif. Shapiro has been one of the foremost translators of French literature for almost four decades. Also a writer-in-residence at Adams House, Harvard University, he has translated numerous works of fiction, theater, and poetry, including *Four Farces* by Georges Feydeau, which was nominated for the National Book Award for Translation, and *One Hundred and One Poems by Paul Verlaine*, which won the Scaglione Translation Prize from the Modern Language Association.

Shapiro noted that "translation is a perfect compromise between total freedom and total responsibility: with none of the angst of the blank page [when one writes creatively], and yet with an almost limitless choice within the givens of the text."

French Women Poets of Nine Centuries is the first anthology of its kind, containing more than 600 poems by almost 60 poets. Ranging from the late 12th to the late 20th century, the voices and styles of these poems convey the changing as well

as constant features of French women's poetry over the last eight hundred years. Introductions to the historical eras, brief biographies of each poet, and a bilingual format add even more depth to this monumental compilation.

ALTA's National Translation Award honors each year the translator whose work, by virtue of both its quality and significance, has made the most valuable contribution to literary translation. **UPFRONT**

PERKINS '09 AWARDED RHODES SCHOLARSHIP

Russell Perkins '09, a high honors graduate from Evanston, Ill., and COL major, has been awarded a 2010 Rhodes Scholarship.

Perkins co-founded Wesleyan's Center for Prison Education, which offers Wesleyan courses at Connecticut's Cheshire Correctional Institution. In addition to offering education for selected inmates, the program provides research and volunteer opportunities for Wesleyan students and faculty.

"Oxford has one of the most exciting philosophy departments in the world and I was eager for the potential opportunity to take part in that," he says.

"The whole interview process was pretty surreal," he said. "There was a dinner party with the finalists and judges the night before and I felt like I couldn't get a coherent sentence out. That was tough."

A classical pianist and avid cyclist, he

VIGGIANI: REMEMBERED AS “UN JUSTE”

Carl Viggiani, professor of Romance languages and literatures, emeritus, died Jan. 16, 2010. He was 87 years old. He joined the Wesleyan faculty in 1954, teaching French language and literature. Active in the Center for the Humanities in its early years, he also offered numerous colloquia for the College of Letters; founded the Wesleyan Program in Paris, which he directed or served as resident director in Paris over seven and a half years; and frequently served as chair of the Romance Languages and Literatures Department.

Viggiani earned his bachelor's degree from Columbia College, his master's degree from Harvard University, and his PhD, in French literature of the 19th century, from Columbia University. He was awarded numerous honors, including Fulbright and Guggenheim fellowships. He served as managing editor of *Romanic Review* for 10 years, translated works by Camus and Maupassant, co-edited the book, *Witnessing André Malraux: Visions and Revisions*, and he wrote or presented more than 30 academic papers, articles, and reviews.

“Carl Viggiani was a gentle, humane, and extremely knowledgeable man. He was constantly in dialogue with ancient and new ideas,” says former colleague Joyce Lowrie, professor of Romance languages and literatures, emerita. “He had a marvelous sense of language and of humor that served his colleagues, his students and the university in the highest degree possible.”

Catherine Poisson, associate professor and chair of the Romance Languages and Literatures Department, told her departmental colleagues, “I know that, with me, you will remember Carl as an immensely generous person. ‘*Un juste*’, as Camus would have said.”

Jeff Rider, professor of Romance languages and literatures, concurred, adding: “Since Carl was a friend of Camus and a Camus scholar, I think he would have liked that epitaph.”

Viggiani taught at Wesleyan for 37 years before retiring in 1991. He is survived by his daughter, Frances; his son, Carl; and a granddaughter. He was predeceased by his wife, Jane Viggiani, and a daughter. A memorial service on campus was held in late February at Russell House.

taught a small discussion workshop in philosophy at the Cheshire prison as an undergraduate. Russell plans to do the B.Phil. at Oxford University. And then...?

“I’m taking this one step at a time. I’ve been so fortunate at Wesleyan to have opportunities to learn from such inspiring professors and pursue initiatives like the Prison Program. I intend to continue to work towards democratizing access to educational opportunity—but what form that will take, I don’t know yet.” **UPFRONT**

APPLICATIONS HIT ANOTHER RECORD

This year, not only did applications for admission hit a record 10,656, but Wesleyan saw also a record-setting selectivity of 20 percent, compared to 27 percent just two years ago.

“Last year we reached an all-time high for applications, up by 22 percent, and this year is 6 percent over that,” says Greg Pyke, senior

associate dean of admission.

Nancy Hargrave Meislahn, dean of admission and financial aid, is encouraged by the increase in “markets that Wesleyan has identified as high potential and priority for recruitment initiatives.” These include African-American applicants; students from the South, Midwest, (and in particular, increases from Texas, Virginia, and Illinois); and international applicants (with marked increases from India and China). Applications from Texas have tripled in the past three years.

So, why are so many more people applying to Wesleyan? According to a Jan. 29 blog on “Admission and Recognition” by President Roth, it isn’t easy to point to any specific factors with confidence.

“Clearly, we have benefited from positive press thanks to the great work of our faculty, students, staff, and alumni. Our admission and communications departments have been in high gear making sure that we get the word out about what makes Wesleyan an extraordinary institution,” Roth wrote.

“The campus looks great, and investments in our physical plant have had compelling results. We have been emphasizing some of the distinctive aspects of a Wesleyan education, and above all, students and their families have been talking to others about their own experiences.” **UPFRONT**

WHALEN ‘83 NAMED HEAD COACH OF WESLEYAN FOOTBALL



OLIVIA BARTLETT

Mike Whalen ‘83 has been named assistant athletic director and head coach of Wesleyan University’s football team. He assumed this post on April 1.

Whalen, the 2006 NESCAC Coach of the year, comes to Wesleyan from Williams College, where he had been the head coach since 2004. During that time, Whalen’s teams posted a 38-10 record.

“It is an honor and a true pleasure to welcome Coach Whalen back to Wesleyan,” says John Biddiscombe, director of athletics and chair, physical education. “He left as a standout college player and returns as one of the finest college football coaches in the nation.”

President Roth says: “We are excited about the levels of excellence that he expects on and off the field from the scholar-athletes he coaches and recruits. We are confident that he can ensure the success we expect both in the classroom and in athletic competition here at Wesleyan, and his success and experience will be an asset to the overall athletic program.”

In his first two seasons as football coach at Williams, Whalen guided the Ephs to consecutive 6-2 seasons, highlighted by winning the final six games of the 2005 season and defeating arch rival Amherst to win the Little Three title. In 2006, Whalen extended the Eph win streak to 14 as he compiled just the sixth perfect season in Williams football history, leading the team to an 8-0 record. **UPFRONT**

FIVE QUESTIONS

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF
PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE & BEHAVIOR
BARBARA JUHASZ

Q1: What drove you to explore reading and eye tracking?

BARBARA JUHASZ: At Binghamton University I had the opportunity to participate in a project examining eye movements and reading, conducted in the laboratory of Albrecht Inhoff. I had always been interested in literature and languages and was excited that my love of both psychology and reading could be combined. I was also fascinated by the eye-tracker. It is still amazing to me that by recording where a person looks on a computer screen, we can infer so much about what is happening in his or her mind. It is an accurate, non-invasive way to examine cognitive processing. I continued this research under the supervision of Keith Rayner in graduate school at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Q2: You have found interesting differences between decisive and indecisive people, right?

BJ: Yes. You are referring to a study we conducted with Andrea Patalano, associate professor of psychology, and Joanna Dicke ‘10. By asking students to make course selections based on a variety of information presented about each, we found through use of the eye tracker that decisive people quickly narrow down their decisions to a particular attribute, while indecisive people take in all the information. Interestingly, indecisive people spent more time overall looking at nothing, that is, the blank cells in the grid. This may allow them to ruminate or reframe their choices before making a decision.

Q3: What do eye movements reveal about how people read?

BJ: Readers alternate between brief pauses, called fixations, and rapid eye movements, called saccades. Fixations last between 200-250 milliseconds (on average) and these are where information is gathered during reading. Our visual system shuts down during saccades, so although we have the impression that our eyes glide smoothly across the

page, reading is more like a slideshow.

Fixation durations are very sensitive to the difficulty of the reading material. We look longer at harder words and phrases. Individuals with disabilities have longer fixations as well.

Q4: How have eye-tracking machines and their software evolved in the past 10 years?

BJ: Eye-tracking machines used to be terribly complex. The first eye-tracker I learned how to use took at least one month to learn and had tons of knobs and mechanical parts which broke quite frequently—usually when you needed data for some important event! Luckily, there are now several companies that make much more user-friendly eye-tracking equipment. I can now train an undergraduate research assistant to use the eye-tracker in less than a day.

The trick with conducting eye movement research is not in learning the equipment, but in learning how to design a good experiment and how to interpret your results. Eye-tracking experiments can take a long time to run, and you do not want to be left with data that is not interpretable.

Q5: What is the interesting link between Wesleyan and eye-tracking that you’d like to share?

BJ: When I arrived at Wesleyan, I explored the psychology department’s history. I discovered that Raymond Dodge helped to run the first psychology laboratory at Wesleyan in 1898, when it was housed in the Philosophy Department. This was exciting to me as an eye movement researcher, as Raymond Dodge is considered to be a pioneer of eye movement recording. He developed his own eye-tracking devices to record eye movements during reading and during rotational movements. Thus, much of the early work examining eye movements experimentally was actually conducted at Wesleyan.

Adapted from the online Wesleyan Connection.



Board of Trustees Chair Joshua Boger '73 greets David Beveridge, first holder of the Joshua Boger University Professorship of the Sciences and Mathematics.

TRUSTEE FAMILIES DONATE \$22 MILLION

Two Board of Trustees' families have given Wesleyan \$22 million, including a \$12 million gift by the family of Board Chairman Joshua Boger '73, P'06, P'09.

The gifts will benefit financial aid and Wesleyan's endowment.

The gift from Boger, and his wife Amy Boger, M.D., P'06, P'09, will establish the Boger Scholarship Program and the Joshua Boger University Professorship of the Sciences and Mathematics. The first recipient of the chair appointment is David L. Beveridge, professor of chemistry.

"This gift shows tremendous leadership and generosity on the part of the Boger family," says President Roth. "The endowed professorship in particular reinforces Wesleyan's strong tradition in the sciences and mathematics. We thank the Bogers for their support of Wesleyan and their commitment to making it accessible to worthy students."

Joshua Boger is the founder of Vertex Pharmaceuticals and retired as the CEO in May 2009. Prior to founding Vertex in 1989, he worked for more than a decade in pharmaceutical research at Merck, where he developed an international reputation as a leader in the application of computer modeling to the chemistry of drug design and was a pioneer in the use of structure-based rational drug design as the basis for drug discovery programs.

Boger holds a bachelor of arts in chemistry and philosophy from Wesleyan and

master's and doctoral degrees in chemistry from Harvard University. He is the author of more than 50 scientific publications, holds 31 issued U.S. patents in pharmaceutical discovery and development, and has lectured widely in the United States, Europe, and Asia on various aspects of drug discovery, development, and commercialization.

Boger is chairman of the New England Healthcare Institute, a non-profit, health-care-policy research organization based in Cambridge, Mass.; vice-chair of the Board of Fellows of the Harvard Medical School; co-chairman of the Progressive Business Leaders Network, a non-profit, non-partisan business organization; and chair of the Board of the Celebrity Series, which is Boston's premier performing arts series.

Amy Boger is a professional ceramic artist, concentrating in conceptual art that inhabits the border between sculptural and functional ceramics, with a particular attraction to humor. She is a retired pediatrician and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Boger holds a bachelor of arts in American history and literature from Harvard University and an M.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

The \$10M anonymous gift from another trustee family will go exclusively to financial aid endowment.

"All the donors hope that making their gifts to financial aid will inspire others to follow suit," says Barbara-Jan Wilson, vice president for University Relations. "Especially in this economy, providing financial aid to those who could benefit so much from a Wesleyan education has immediate and lasting impact." **UPFRONT**

NEW ON DVD

JULIE & JULIA
(SONY PICTURES)
LAURENCE MARK '71, PRODUCER

Meryl Streep plays famed chef Julia Child and Amy Adams is cast as writer Julie Powell, who decides to cook all the recipes in Child's best-selling cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, within a year. This delightful tribute to fine food and marriage, directed and written by Nora Ephron, features another award-winning performance by Streep and a lovely re-creation of Child's life in France.



ZOMBIELAND
(SONY PICTURES)
DIRECTED BY RUBEN FLEISCHER '97

Woody Harrelson, Jesse Eisenberg, Emma Stone, and Abigail Breslin star as four quirky characters who join forces to battle flesh eaters as they head for Southern California, a supposedly zombie-free zone. This well-reviewed, often funny film marked Fleischer's directorial debut and was number one at the box office when it opened nationwide last October.



OTHER NEW RELEASES

Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant (Universal), directed and co-written (with Brian Helgeland) by Paul Weitz '88, music by Stephen Trask '89.

Gentlemen Broncos (20th Century Fox), directed by Jared Hess and starring Mike White '92, Halley Feiffer '07, Michael Angarano, Jennifer Coolidge, and Jermaine Clement.

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (Paramount), directed by Michael Bay '86, written by Alex Kurtzman '97, Roberto Orci, and Ehren Kruger.

Valentino: The Last Emperor (Phase 4 Films), directed and produced by Matt Tyrnauer '91; Adam Leff '90, co-producer; Carter Burden '89, executive producer.

LETTER HOME

JESSICA POSNER '09 AND KENNEDY ODEDE '12

Last summer Jessica Posner '09, with Kenyan born Kennedy Odede '12, co-founded the Kibera School for Girls in Kenya, the first free school in the region, as well as the nonprofit *Shining Hope for Communities*. Their next project will be a clinic focusing on women's health, to open in the fall of 2010. It will be called the Johanna Justin-Jinich Memorial Clinic of Kibera to honor the memory of the slain Wesleyan student who had hoped to work in the field of global women's health. Leah Lucid '10 (Justin-Jinich's best friend), Arielle Tolman '10, and Inslee Coddington '10, are also involved in this project. For more information please go to www.hopetoshine.org.



COURTESY OF JESSICA POSNER '09

felt shivers go down my back.

I thought about Cathy Majuma and how her story forever changed my life. Cathy wanted to learn about the world, and through hard work she got a sponsor to help her pay school fees. However, her mother burned Cathy's belongings, angry that she was not doing enough housework. Cathy then moved in with her father, but he abused and impregnated her. She became a prostitute and was almost killed by a man who beat her because she asked him to wear a condom. Soon after, Cathy found a lump in her breast. When Cathy told me her story, I tried to convince her not to submit to a man who wanted to forcefully marry her. Although I found a doctor willing to give Cathy medical care without charge, I never her saw again, and I learned one of Kibera's harsh lessons: there is such a thing as too late.

This lesson inspired me to build the Kibera School for Girls, and as I looked at our students on the day of the dedication, I hoped that their fates would be different than Cathy's. However, a nagging part of me knew that without health care, without proper nutrition, our students were still at tremendous risk.

Countless women in Kibera, like Cathy, die from easily treatable illnesses or during childbirth. Kibera has taught me about the fragility of living, the reality that life is for now, but not forever. Our own Wesleyan community has also recently been faced with

this difficult reality, as Johanna Justin-Jinich '10 was tragically slain last spring.

Since the school opened we have dreamed of starting a health center focused on women's health to make the future of our students and the Kibera community brighter. After conversations with Johanna's friends and family, we will name the clinic in her honor, as she planned to dedicate her life to a career in women's public health in places like Kibera.

Working in Kibera and Johanna's tragic death have shown me that while the world is a dark place filled with random acts of

Yet even here there are moments where time holds still long enough for everyone to acknowledge a miracle.

horror and inequality, sprigs of hope can bloom even from the depths of sadness. As Johanna's mother, Ingrid Justin, writes, "To see a health clinic in Kibera that devotes itself to healing the bodies and souls of women and girls, so that they, in turn, can more fully care for their own families and contribute to their own communities...what a wonderful expression of Johanna's aspirations."

Back at our dedication ceremony, two students play a game of tag on the sidelines. As one falls and then gets up again, the other breaks out into peals of laughter, and I smile to see their incredible resilience. **UPFRONT**

Message from the Chair

FIELDS OF DREAMS

Last spring I went to my first game at the new Yankee Stadium. I went with my 6-year-old son, Harry, who like me, is more a partisan of the crosstown Mets. We had already made a pilgrimage to the new Citifield, which Harry has called “Silly Field”—not quite appreciating the irony. Now it was time to see the new stadium in the Bronx.

As we were driving to the game, Harry turned to me and asked, “Dad, are the Pirates in Pittsburgh?” I told him they were and then he quizzed me about other teams and their home towns. Red Sox: Boston. Giants:

San Francisco. And so it went as we headed north.

When it was my chance, I turned the question around. “OK, where are the Cardinals from?” Without a pause, his certain response was “Wesleyan.”

Expecting St. Louis, I was about to correct him. Then, I realized that Harry’s response deserved more than partial credit. He was right, of course, Cardinals do play at Wesleyan.

Harry’s reminder also prompts me to share some very good news about Wesleyan Baseball. Like the Mets and the Yankees, this spring the Wesleyan Cardinals will also have a new home field.

The Board of Trustees voted last May to name the baseball diamond at the foot of Foss Hill Dresser Field in honor of

Chair Emeritus of the Board of Trustees, James B. Van Dresser and the many generations of his family who attended Wesleyan.

Anyone with a glancing familiarity with Wesleyan inside-baseball knows that Jim comes from a long line of WesAlums and that his contributions to the university over decades have been record-breaking. Most recently, he brilliantly led the university as Board chair during the presidential transition. His understated leadership and stewardship during that critical period were indispensable.

It is often said that baseball is a metaphor for life. In the case of the high honor bestowed on Jim Dresser, Wesleyan recognizes a team player who has done everything but play right field for the university. He has been both a

utility player and an all-star for his beloved Cardinals, accepting all the requests for his talents with equal equanimity. During his many years of service, Jim has been both coach and friend to all his many teammates. By naming that patch of green Dresser Field, the university pays tribute to a clutch player who has made sure that Wesleyan always remains a field of dreams. May the Cardinals have a winning season on their new home turf!

— Dr. Joseph J. Fins ’82



DIANA DIAMOND '70 WANTS YOUR MEMORIES



COURTESY D. DIAMOND, C. 1969

Specifically, she wants your memories of Wesleyan in the late '60s, early '70s.

A clinical psychologist and professor of psychology, Diamond has undertaken a project both professionally and personally meaningful: to interview alumni and faculty who were on campus for the beginning of Wesleyan’s second era of coeducation.

Inspired by a presentation by University Archivist Suzy Taraba '77 and assistant archivist Valerie Gillispie that included the study of coeducation at Wesleyan by Louise (Lucy) Knight '72, Diamond hopes her study will, through numerous individual accounts, recreate the texture of those heady, sometimes confusing times. She’s eager to explore the influence that coeducation has had on their later lives.

“There is so much curiosity about that era and so many feelings that get generated, but we don’t have a lot of documentation,” says Diamond, who, with her husband, John Alschuler '70, will not only be chairing the 40th Reunion for 1970, but also will be hosting a WESeminar, a dialogue about co-education, that will launch this project. Diamond plans to distribute a questionnaire online and follow up with personal interviews. Those interested may contact her at Reunion or at ddiamonda@gmail.com.

“The women who spearheaded the movement to coeducation in men’s colleges were part of a silent revolution, in that there was not much fanfare about the transition at that time. In fact the shift to coeducation was part of the wave of social change that was sweeping the country,” she says. “We didn’t think of ourselves as pioneers but we were.”

Alschuler has a different take on Diamond in that era: “Actually, I think you did think of yourself as a pioneer, but you seemed to take it in stride. You weren’t by any means nonchalant; I think you thought that it was the natural thing to be doing.” **UPFRONT**

Travel WITH WESLEYAN

The Galápagos Islands on the 175th Anniversary of Charles Darwin’s Visit with Professor Emeritus Jelle de Boer June 11–20, 2010

This year marks the 175th anniversary of Charles Darwin’s visit to the Galápagos Islands. While traveling as the naturalist aboard the *H.M.S. Beagle* in 1835, Darwin closely observed its volcanism and its diverse ecology, which would later confirm his theory of evolution. Join Professor of Earth Science Emeritus Jelle de Boer as he retraces Darwin’s route, exploring the islands’ terrain—desert landscapes, lush highland forests, nutrient-rich waters, and volcanic soils. You’ll visit both Fernandina and Isabela islands, the Galápagos’ most volcanically active islands, and get up close to giant tortoises, comical blue-footed boobies, sea lions, penguins, and iguanas. There will be plenty of time throughout the tour to snorkel alongside sea lions, or relax in the clear waters of the Pacific. The 32-guest *Evolution* is the ideal ship for touring to the Galápagos Islands, and will be a comfortable home-away-from-home with its spacious cabins, terrific amenities, and great food. **\$4,798 per person plus airfare | A Machu Picchu pre-trip and an Otavalo Market post-trip are available.**

JELLE ZEILINGA DE BOER



Professor de Boer is the Harold T. Stearns Professor of Earth Science, Emeritus, and a 2005 recipient of the Binswanger Prize for Excellence in Teaching. He has worked for many years on the geology of southern Central America and adjacent seafloors, both on the Caribbean and Pacific sides. His research concentrated on the volcanism and deformation of plate tectonic collision zones and the role volcanism played in human history. Professor de Boer has been on previous Wesleyan alumni trips and considers the Galápagos Islands the most fascinating because of the close interplay between geology and ecology on the islands and their profound influence on Darwin’s theories.

Crossroads of the Classical Mediterranean

October 24–November 1, 2010

Cruise the waters of the ancient Mediterranean from Venice to Nice along sea lanes once plied by Greek mariners, Crusader navies, and Venetian merchant ships. We’ll sail for seven nights aboard the state-of-the-art *M.S. Le Boreal*, a vessel launched in 2010 that promises to redefine the luxury small-ship cruise experience. We’ll explore the Roman legacy of Split and the ambiance of Old Dubrovnik, plus the Greco-Roman architecture and riches of Magna Graecia in Taormina. Additional ports of call include Naples, (with an optional excursion to Pompeii), and Bonifacio, Corsica. **\$2,895 plus airfare** *A pre-trip Venice and post-trip Nice option are available.*



For more information about Wesleyan’s educational travel programs, go to wesleyan.edu/alumni/travel or contact Gail Briggs, associate director of alumni and parent programs, at 860/685-3979 or gbriggs@wesleyan.edu.

OLIVIA BARTLETT

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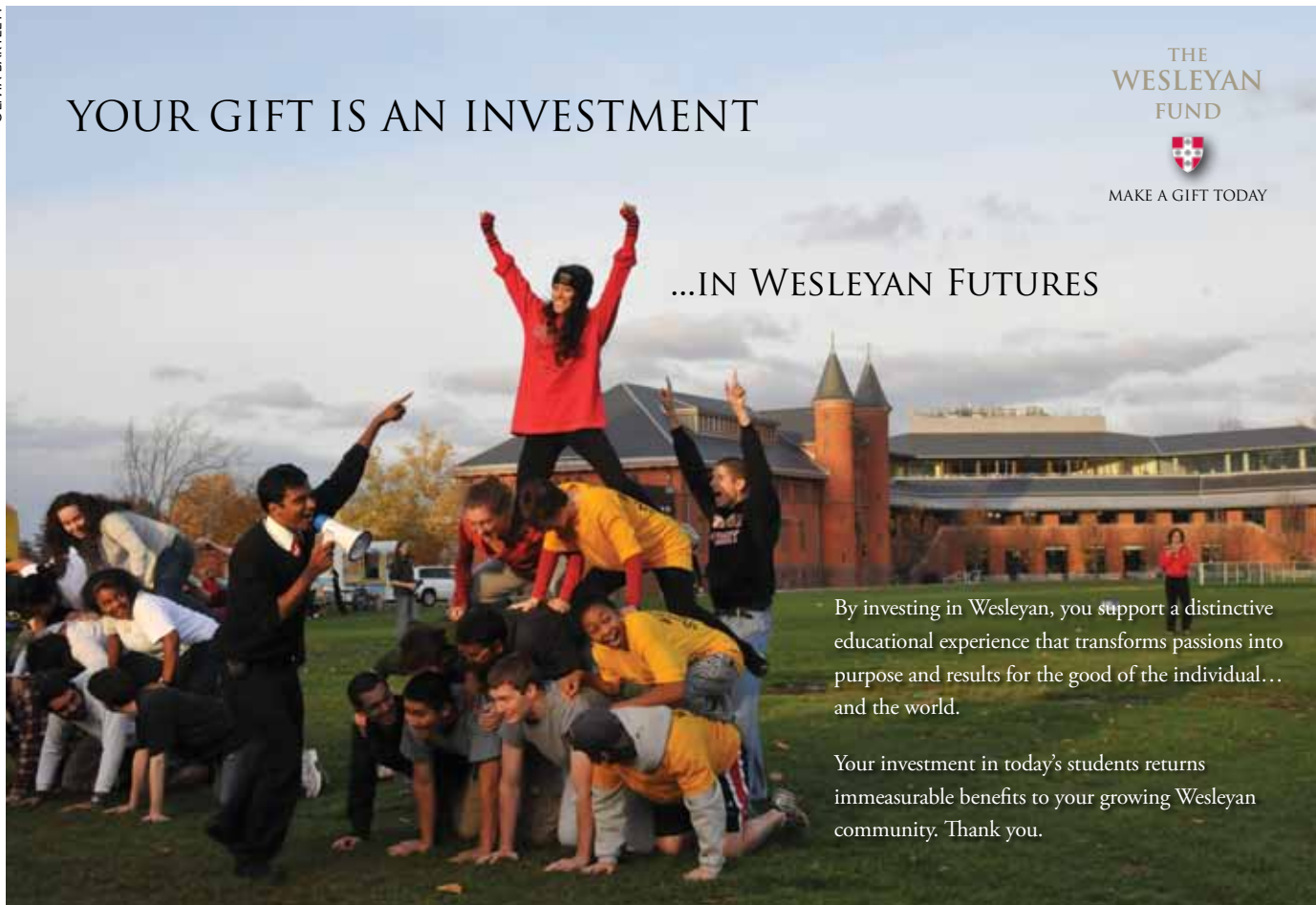


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CONVERSATIONS

AMERICAN WRITERS AND THE PRESIDENCY

BY DAVID LOW '76

In his latest book, *A Pinnacle of Feeling: American Literature and Presidential Government* (Princeton University Press), Professor of English and American Studies **Sean McCann** examines 20th-century American literature's fascination with the modern presidency and with the relationship between state power and democracy that underwrote the rise of presidential authority.

DAVID LOW: What are some of the main themes in your book?

SEAN MCCANN: The book is a study of the way literary writers have often imagined themselves in a kind of competition with the presidency. These artists were attracted to the idea that presidential leadership could be used to reestablish the sovereignty of the American people over a government that seemed otherwise insufficiently responsive to their wishes. Typically, the writers I study suggested that literature should do what the ideal president would—as if great writers were democratic leaders like great presidents, only better.

One of the interesting things about this literature is that it articulates an underlying theory of presidential legitimacy that runs through much of modern American political culture—basically the idea that presidential power is justified so long as it acts toward the realization of a more democratic society. In other words, in this progressive view of the presidency, legitimacy doesn't come mainly from the Constitution or from law; it comes from the president's service in the cause of the nation.

DL: How have American writers' views and attitudes of the presidency changed over the years?

SM: Most of the writers I look at were people who were attracted by the idea that expanding the power of the presidency could restore democratic control over government. That view of the presidency originally came to prominence in the late 19th century—

famously a period of great congressional power. It has an arc that runs up through the Vietnam War and Watergate, which at the time appeared to ring the death knell for the progressive presidency.

Of course, there were ups and downs in this history. The high water marks occurred during the Progressive era, amid the presidencies of Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, and then, especially, during the New Deal and World War II. The 1920s and the 1950s—years during which the Republican Party controlled the executive branch—were periods when there was much less enthusiasm for presidential power. That political history was fairly closely matched by literary history. During the '20s and the '50s, for example, many literary writers became concerned about abuses of presidential power and the dangers of executive tyranny.

DL: How have writers treated Lincoln?

SM: Lincoln is the foundational figure in this whole history—symbolically as well as politically. One point I emphasize is that attitudes toward Lincoln have always been divided by a profound ambivalence. He was often viewed as a conqueror and a budding tyrant and, of course, still more frequently viewed as a democratic martyr. Quite often, the same people held both views. That pattern begins with Walt Whitman, who saw himself and Lincoln as twin souls, but it runs all through 20th-century American culture. My view is that these two attitudes reflect an underlying ideology of presidential leadership in which great presidents are understood to exercise awesome power, but to be justified in their use of force so long as they submit their own wishes to the demands of their people. That's one reason writers and other artists have been so consistently fascinated with stories of presidential assassination. The murdered president can be the perfect symbol of the leader who gives up his life to the cause of democracy and whose own exercise of power is symbolically legitimized by his vulnerability.

DL: What do you think about Norman Mailer and his take on the presidency?

SM: Norman Mailer is the purest example of the writer who says—well, I couldn't be the president but I don't have to be; I'm already playing the role of the democratic leader in my role as great American writer.

Of course, Mailer was a vivid political commentator. He wrote very well, for example, about the allure and disappointment of JFK and about the craziness of the presidential conventions in 1968. But for my purposes he's still more important as an imaginative writer who used the presidency to feed his self-conception. He's all about boldness and will and imagination. Again and again, he returns to a story about how people fail to live up to their potential because of timidity. In keeping with that preoccupation, he consistently says the presidency could do more than it does—that it's undermined because small men inhabit the office. Interestingly, although he thought of himself as a fierce critic of ideological ortho-

“Even more important in my view is the way that Obama's campaign rhetoric re-articulated a progressive vision of the presidency.”

MINOU ROUFALL 2008



doxy, his views of the presidency were not terribly distant from those of a more mainstream liberal like Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

DL: How does Philip Roth deal with the presidency?

SM: Unlike Mailer, Roth is not a writer who you'd intuitively think of as a political novelist. Yet time and again, he comes back to the image of the president in a way that suggests that for him, as for Mailer, the presidency condenses central preoccupations. By contrast to Mailer, though, Roth is usually less worried about timidity than ideological overreach. The story he tells quite consistently—especially in the great novels he created in the 1990s—is the tale of some poor sucker's benighted investment in a pastoral vision of American democracy, which then falls tragically to pieces. Quite often Roth connects this delusion to a misguided romance with the presidency. So, for example, in *American Pastoral*, the tragic hero Swede Levov is labeled “our Kennedy.”

DL: What nonfiction works were helpful in writing your book?

SM: A book I found very helpful was Jeffrey Tulis's renowned study of *The Rhetorical Presidency*. Tulis, who is a political scientist, makes the case that the 20th century saw the creation of a new model of presidential power—one that emphasized the presi-

dent's ability to speak to and for the American people and in doing so to appear to surpass the limits of other political institutions.

But I was also influenced by Arthur Schlesinger's famous attack on *The Imperial Presidency*, in which Schlesinger reconsidered his own earlier celebration of heroic leadership and warned of the dangers of executive tyranny. Tulis and Schlesinger each look at the history of the modern presidency, and they both see a growth in executive power that they believe is harmful to democracy. But they focus on quite different problems. What concerns Tulis is the way presidents can become more important than Congress and the parties in developing policies and encouraging public deliberation. It's the president

as holder of the bully pulpit that bothers him. Schlesinger, on the other hand, is especially concerned with the power of presidents to wage war without the effective oversight of Congress or the knowledge of the American public. He's concerned about the president as commander-in-chief. One of the arguments of my book is that these two images of the president are closely related.

DL: Can you comment on Richard Slotkin's novel *Abe: A Novel of the Young Lincoln*?

SM: Slotkin does a beautiful job of articulating the mythology of presidential leadership for which Lincoln is the founding example. In fact, Slotkin very deftly shows why writers frequently associate the president's rhetorical power with his role as commander-in-chief.

In Slotkin's story, the young Abe must first be a warrior so that he can then become an orator whose democratic eloquence will surpass the rule of force. Although Slotkin tells of Lincoln's boyhood, the novel is mainly the tale of how the young Abe discovers his destiny as a democratic leader. A central part of that story concerns how the young Lincoln comes to discover the evils of slavery, but in Slotkin's telling it equally involves Abe's growth beyond the world of his bullying father and the brute ugliness of frontier Indian killing. All of this

is shown to hinge on Abe's realization that true leadership depends on the ability of democratic eloquence to transcend what Abe calls “the gifts of the man of war.” Among other things, Slotkin thereby shows how, in one potent ideology of democratic leadership, our concerns about the dangers of the imperial presidency can seem to be answered by the gifts of the rhetorical presidency. The president's role as voice of the people is imagined to transcend and to justify the sheer power he exercises as commander-in-chief.

DL: What about Barack Obama? Will he have an influence on American literature?

SM: He's going to be an enduring source of fascination. He's resuscitated the vision of presidential leadership that on the Democratic side of the political spectrum had been more or less dormant since the Johnson years. Interestingly, he drew parallels between himself and Lincoln from the moment he announced his candidacy, and all through the campaign, he and his speechwriters drew very subtly on Lincoln's and JFK's words to bolster his own speeches.

Even more important in my view is the way that Obama's campaign rhetoric rearticulated a progressive vision of the presidency. His standard stump speech, for example, cast his candidacy as one in a series of founding moments in American history. The chronicle began with the American Revolution and with the way “a band of patriots brought an empire to its knees.” Then Obama would go on to touch on the Civil War, the New Deal, and the Civil Rights Movement, with this series of historical events arranged to culminate in his own candidacy. Each of these moments was described by Obama as an occasion when the American nation was reformed and the sovereign power of the people reestablished. In effect, Obama was saying: my presidency will amount to a refounding of America and a reestablishment of the authority of the American people over a government that has ceased to reflect their wishes.

It would be difficult to imagine a more direct or eloquent resuscitation of the heroic view of the presidency. Of course, only time will tell whether Obama will appear successful enough to make that view compelling again. **UPFRONT**

CENTER FOR HUMANITIES CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

At a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Center for the Humanities this fall, Professor of English and American Studies Sean McCann told a story about a dinner in 1967 honoring Paul Horgan, who was stepping down as the director of Wesleyan's Center for Advanced Studies. Horgan had helped to gain national prestige for the Center—predecessor of the Center for the Humanities—but even at this zenith of accomplishment, undercurrents of discontent were building that would end in a wholesale reshaping of its structure and mission.

The evening featured guests in black tie at Olin Library gathered to celebrate the role of the Center in accomplishments ranging from Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* to Daniel Patrick Moynihan's *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. The menu, McCann relates, featured côte de boeuf rôti accompanied by Beaujolais Saint Louis 1962, followed by champagne and *Horgan surpris*. A string ensemble from the Hartt School of Music serenaded the guests.

Victor Butterfield, who had been president of Wesleyan since 1943, hosted the dinner. Butterfield created the Center in 1959, modeling it after the Princeton Center for Advanced Studies. Profits from *My Weekly Reader* enabled him to generously fund the Center with an annual budget of \$231,000—equivalent to \$1.35 million in 2009 dollars.

Built in a modernist style behind Russell House, the Center was intended to expose Wesleyan's academic culture to the thinking of outside luminaries. Its founding was part of the same transformative impulse that drove Butterfield to establish the College of Letters and the College of Social Studies. These institutions advanced his desire to disrupt the entrenched academic departmental structure and curriculum. In a 1959 memo to faculty announcing the Center, Butterfield bemoaned "the cultural gap between the 'intellectual' and the 'man of affairs.' We feel that each of these types has much to learn from the other...and that the liberal institution should support the study of and writing of our ablest journalists, justices, ministers,



Professor of Psychology Jill Morawski directs the Center and has reached out to public intellectuals to enrich weekly discussions.

BILL BURKHART

industrialists, and the like."

The Center succeeded magnificently in its goal of bringing distinguished men (mostly) and women to campus. With the aid of its first director, the late Professor of the Social Sciences Sigmund Neumann, followed by Pulitzer-Prize-winner writer Paul Horgan, the Center hosted 84 fellows in the decade of

its existence. The roster included John Cage, C. P. Snow, Edmund Wilson, Carl Schorske, William Manchester, and Hannah Arendt, as well as "men of affairs" such as Alvin Hansen (often called the American Keynes), Paul Gray Hoffman (former president of the Ford Foundation), Leslie Munro (retired president of the UN General Assembly), and

Herbert Matthews (a prominent *New York Times* editor).

The fellows were productive and generated a considerable amount of national press attention for Wesleyan through their accomplishments. For some, the opportunity to write and reflect without the constant pressures of normal life was welcome. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, for instance, came to the Center from a demanding position in the Johnson administration and a humiliating defeat in a New York political campaign. "What I needed was freedom and disengagement, and the Center provided both to such an extent that I came to feel I had not known what either was until I arrived here," he said.

Butterfield had established the Center as an antidote to insularity, but ironically, the campus community came to see the Center itself as insular and disengaged from university life. Although some fellows plunged themselves into the life of the university, many did not; nor were they required to mingle. The Center was a closed community walled off by invitation-only events. As early as 1964, an article in the *Argus* complained that the campus was receiving little benefit from luminaries holed up in their offices.

Horgan acknowledged as much in a memo to Butterfield: "...fellows are brought here to pursue their own works, offering informally whatever contribution they can make to the university to the extent that these do not impede their own projects. Secondly, it is an appendage rather than an integral part of the university, and its relations with faculty and students have been distant."

John Cage poked fun at the Center's culture. "The Center of the Center for Advanced Studies," he said, "lies somewhere in the air-conditioning system. The air-conditioning system is essentially dehydrating. To avoid drying up, the fellows are obliged to drink a good deal."

In 1967, the same year that Paul Horgan was feted, the junior faculty called for the abolition of the Center, as did a Study of Educational Policies and Programs. As McCann noted, the dinner for Horgan, in retrospect, "looks like a valedictory to an institution that, without realizing it, had just hit its high-water mark." Within a year, plans would emerge to replace it with the Center for the Humanities.

This time around, with Edwin Etherington as president of Wesleyan, the faculty had a

decisive hand in shaping the program. An ad hoc group of senior faculty covering all humanities departments vetted a proposal, which roundly rejected any hint that outside scholars might continue to provide the core intellectual community.

Instead, the Center for the Humanities was designed as an interdisciplinary venture primarily for Wesleyan faculty and selected students in the humanities and social sciences. All were expected to contribute to an annual theme. Benefits would accrue to the whole community through new courses that faculty might develop during their fellowship, as well as Monday evening seminars open to anyone with the desire, temerity, or curiosity to see wits matched at a high intellectual level.

As a rationale for the Center, a Humanities Advisory Subcommittee convened at the time noted that the humanities in general were suffering from increased specialization that did not contribute to "a common structure of knowledge." The group observed that, "Discourse among humanists, even within the same field, tends to be thin as specialists speak to each other in smaller and smaller groups, through more and more journals and conferences....And the relationship of the humanities to the general culture, so alive in the minds of the students, is ill represented in the structure of our professional apparatus and our curricula."

The Center for the Humanities would surely produce research and discovery, but it would also act as "a corrective to our narrower professionalism and our cultural dispersion," said the advisory group. One of the first publications associated with the new venture was the proceedings of a conference at the end of the decade titled *Humanities in Revolution*, edited by Ihab Hassan, professor of English and director of the Center during its inaugural year, 1969–70.

Hassan says that Butterfield, though retired, kept an office at the Center, "watching its development, tactfully unobtrusive."

"The new Center for the Humanities took a slightly different turn," he says. "It increased the participation of fellows, faculty, and students in its activities by offering more lectures, colloquia, seminars, and tutorials. Moreover, the fellows invited that first year appeared to have a more direct impact on their cultural moment than some

earlier visitors. The new fellows included Buckminster Fuller, John Cage, Norman O. Brown, Hayden White, Frank Kermode, Harold Rosenberg, Richard Poirier, David Daiches, and Leslie Fiedler. Would it be immodest to state that it was an exciting place and year?"

Four decades later, it seems safe to assert that the Center established an enduring model that has significantly enriched the intellectual life of the university. A recent article in *Critical Inquiry* credited the Center with being a "genuine pioneer" that became the prototype for hundreds of such centers across the country.

President Michael Roth '78 was a student fellow at the Center and later founded the Scripps College Humanities Institute, which he modeled after his CHUM experience. "I often tell people that I found an intellectual home here at the Center for Humanities, and I've heard that same expression from dozens of scholars over the years," he said at the conference.

Throughout the years, the Center has

The Center for the Humanities would surely produce research and discovery, but it would also act as "a corrective to our narrower professionalism and our cultural dispersion..."

adapted to the varied intellectual life of the campus, according to Richard Vann, professor of history and letters emeritus and a former director of the Center. Vann brought well-known speakers to campus, and he says he was pleased that Monday night lectures at Russell House were regularly packed.

“Some of the undergraduate fellows were rather over-awed by the Center, but the very brightest and most self-confident learned a good deal and taught others as well.”

Jill Morawski, professor of psychology, is the current director of the Center. In her introduction to the 50th-anniversary conference, she noted that the Center has provided a temporary home to more than 100 postdoctoral fellows and visiting researchers, has given more than 200 faculty members the opportunity to study and develop new courses, has provided research experiences for hundreds of students, and continues to provide an intellectual forum open to the public.

The Center has lived through the culture wars, the science wars, the deconstruction of deconstruction, the rise and apparent fall of cultural studies, and six Wesleyan presidents, including acting presidents,” she said.

The conference was intended not only to celebrate the success of the Center for the Humanities, she noted, but also to provide for critical reflection on how the humanities have changed and what opportunities might guide the future. She characterized the humanities as having undergone “more than a decade of siege” and as having shriveled in comparison to the prestige and funding of the sciences. From within, the tension between specialization and interdisciplinary breadth remains, while a rethinking of what it means to be human, the emergence of animal studies, and upheaval from the digital revolution challenge ideas and methodology in the disciplines. The Center’s Monday night discussions are not about to run out of good material.

Early participants in the Center for Advanced Study might or might not recognize the Center for the Humanities as its evolutionary descendant, but Morawski suggests that they would undoubtedly feel at home with the “liberal, self-critical and experimental mood” that inspired the Center’s founding. **UPFRONT**

WAR

On Monday evenings the Center for the Humanities hosts a public lecture in Russell House, and while the themes for these lectures are sometimes abstruse, this year’s topic could not be more down to earth—“War.”

“War is an undeniably important—and perennial—part of the study of the human condition,” says Jill Morawski, director of the Center and professor of psychology. Humanist scholars have a long tradition of writing about war and war theory. Writers, artists, and musicians have made and continue to make war a subject of their creative work. In our time, new questions have arisen, such as: What constitutes war in an era when conventional clashes between large state actors are not the norm? When do wars end? What do the metaphors of war mean, such as “War on Terror” and “War on Drugs”? What are the representations of war in history and political theory?

The theme also has enabled her to reach out to public intellectuals, including some who might not ordinarily speak on campus. For instance, in April Isaiah Wilson III, Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army and a faculty member at West Point, will discuss “Thinking Beyond War.” As a veteran, professor at a military academy, and scholar of the strategies of war, Lt. Col. Wilson will provide a perspective on war studies not typically explored in liberal arts institutions.

The spring series opened in January with Peter W. Singer, director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative and a senior fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institute. Recently named one of the Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2009 by *Foreign Policy* magazine, he spoke about robots and war.

Meghan O’Sullivan, professor of international affairs at Harvard’s Kennedy School,

will be examining U.S. foreign policy during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Among several other speakers, Judith Herman, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and an authority on post-traumatic stress disorder, will contribute an entirely different perspective by looking at “Justice from the Victim’s Perspective.”

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s John E. Sawyer Seminars Program is supporting the year-long “War” program with a grant funding a postdoctoral fellow, 20 seminars, and short stays of 10 distinguished visiting scholars. Wesleyan’s new Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life is collaborating in this effort.

Although the mission of the Center for the Humanities remains fairly constant from year to year, individual directors put their own stamp on the program. Morawski, for instance, has focused on how to use the methods, theories, and skills of the humanities to probe contemporary or perennial human problems such as war or what it means to be human. This inclination reflects her study, as a psychologist, of the sophisticated tools that humanists use to understand problems in new and different ways.

The Center also functions as a space for people in different disciplines to share trade secrets, theoretical approaches, and methodological understandings unique to their disciplines. Humanistic problems, Morawski points out, cannot be understood through a single discipline. By bringing speakers from outside academia, including individuals with intellectual stature in government and the military, she harkens back to Victor Butterfield’s original desire that the Center mix the academic with more worldly affairs.

[To learn more about the Center and its lecture schedule, see www.wesleyan.edu/chum.]

LETTERS CONTINUED

HARD WORK IN THE BIG EASY



As a retired teacher (36 years in New Haven) who still misses “her kids” every single day, I was very interested in Eve Abrams’ article, “Hard Work in the Big Easy” in the most recent Wes magazine.

It raises many issues that elicit intense debate among practicing teachers, but for the purposes of this letter I just want to climb onto one soapbox. It still makes me sad, and somewhat angry, that dedicated, talented teachers such as the ones described in this article cannot get the very best teacher training through a master of arts in teaching program from their own university. I was among the lucky ones who was able to get an MAT degree from none other than Wesleyan University. In those days (late ’60s, early ’70s) many of the best universities in the country understood the need to produce teachers who were “the brightest and the best” and the sense of doing so in a graduate school setting—among them Yale, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Brown, and Wesleyan.

We came to Wesleyan from highly reputed colleges across the country for a variety of programs that led to an MAT. I was in the Urban Program, designed to

place highly qualified teachers in urban settings. During our time at Wesleyan we worked in several school systems, tutored in Upward Bound, and some of us were even lucky enough to participate in a full 26-day Outward Bound course in North Carolina with our Upward Bound tutees. After a year and a summer on campus we interned in schools in Hartford and New Haven, where some of us continued to teach until retirement. I know as a certainty that in New Haven the cadre of talented, dedicated Wesleyan students made, I am proud to say, a significant impact on the lives of many of New Haven’s young people.

In retirement I am now supervising student teachers of Spanish at the MAT program at Quinnipiac University, a program that looks reassuringly like the one at Wesleyan all those years ago. I’m sure the decision to drop the MAT program was well considered by the powers that were, but what a loss to the future teaching community and to all those students who would have benefited from the continuation of that absolutely exemplary teacher preparation program.

PATRICIA A. NIECE, MAT ’70
Wallingford, Conn.

Katharine Needham ’05, Kira Orange Jones’ ’00, and the many other Teach for America teachers in New Orleans deserve praise for their success in raising the achievement levels of some of America’s neediest students. Their story serves as a reminder to all teachers of what can be accomplished when we as educators dedicate our energy and enthusiasm to being there for children.

At the same time, the article raised concerns for me, a relatively new teacher of seven years, about a profession that fails to retain some of our most young, talented practitioners. I agree with Jones that we also need lawyers and business people who will work alongside teachers to address the systemic causes of inequality. But if teaching is sim-

ply a stepping stone to other careers, who will fill in for the teachers that move on? To say that we can simply replace our seasoned teachers with new recruits every three years does not do justice to all that teachers like Ms. Needham have accomplished.

Until we address the reasons why dedicated, passionate, young teachers are choosing not to remain in the classroom, then Teach for America, and other teacher recruitment programs like it, will simply be a temporary fix. The teaching profession needs to build on the youthful optimism of new teachers, harness their energy, and make teaching a career that can evolve to meet the needs of its most promising teachers.

PATRICK KEEGAN ’99
Alstead, N.H.

FOLLOW UP

Jessica Sanders ’99 directed, wrote and produced *After Innocence*, which won the Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Prize in 2005, was short-listed for an Academy Award, and was in theaters and on Showtime. The film has been used by state legislators to introduce fair compensation legislation for the wrongfully convicted. The film also helped Florida exonerate Wilton Dedge, featured in the film, win \$2 million after spending 22 years in prison for a rape he didn’t commit. The film continues to have a life in theaters, home video, universities and law schools. Jessica recently completed her next feature documentary *March of the Living* about the last generation of Holocaust survivors returning to the sites of the Holocaust in Poland with teenagers from Brazil, Germany and the U.S. It will be released in 2010. Jessica’s work can be found at www.jessicasandersfilm.com.

