



Liz
FYI

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

November 19, 1988

TO: Tom

FROM: Liz

Greetings, Tom, and congratulations on your stunning achievement. I am deeply saddened not to be among those celebrating you and Jean tonight. I had hoped to work it out but a speech commitment made long since, and not flexible, makes it impossible.

You have been and continue to be a first at Bennington. You and Jean were among the first faculty, you taught the first students, you were the first acting president (succeeding yourself twice thereafter being, therefore, not only first but second and third) the first faculty Dean. You taught history first, you were the first to perform Martha Graham's "Lamentations" without help from her. You wrote the College's first history. As I said to you and Jean at dinner the other night, when the mantel falls it surely does FALL!

How did you get to Bennington to undertake all these responsibilities? You had been to Reed as an undergraduate, became a Rhodes Scholar and, as you put it, thereafter, "wandered around St. John's, Dartmouth and Yale" before John McCullough, then a student at Yale, spotted you as a tennis player and "spoke to his mother" (for all intents and purposes the moving force behind the founding of Bennington College). And now, 54 years later, we celebrate you, Tom, with full heart and in full voice, our beloved and first nonagenerian.

You have been a constant source of energy, wisdom and humor to this institution, always providing the needed counsel to keep us in balance when we might have stumbled. The letters from alumnae and friends which will be read tonight testify to the impact and inspiration you had on your students and counselees, and their gratitude as adults for your continuing friendship.

And we here have gratitude, too, for your presence among us. If you will just go for the second 90 now, we will shout out from the mountain tops, "Go, Tom, go!"

HAPPY BIRTHDAY. CONGRATULATIONS!