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2012  
2013

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Brie DeLa Rocca  
*Writer/Editor*

Kate Godin  
*Writer*

Carol June Jessop  
*Design*

Susan P. Huggins  
*Production Designer*

Marisa Crumb  
*Copyeditor/Proofreader*

Nancy Mitton  
*In Memoriam Writer*

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Direct correspondence to:  
*Bennington* magazine  
Office of Communications  
Bennington College  
One College Drive  
Bennington, VT 05201-6003

Phone: 802-440-4743  
alumnirelations@bennington.edu  
www.bennington.edu

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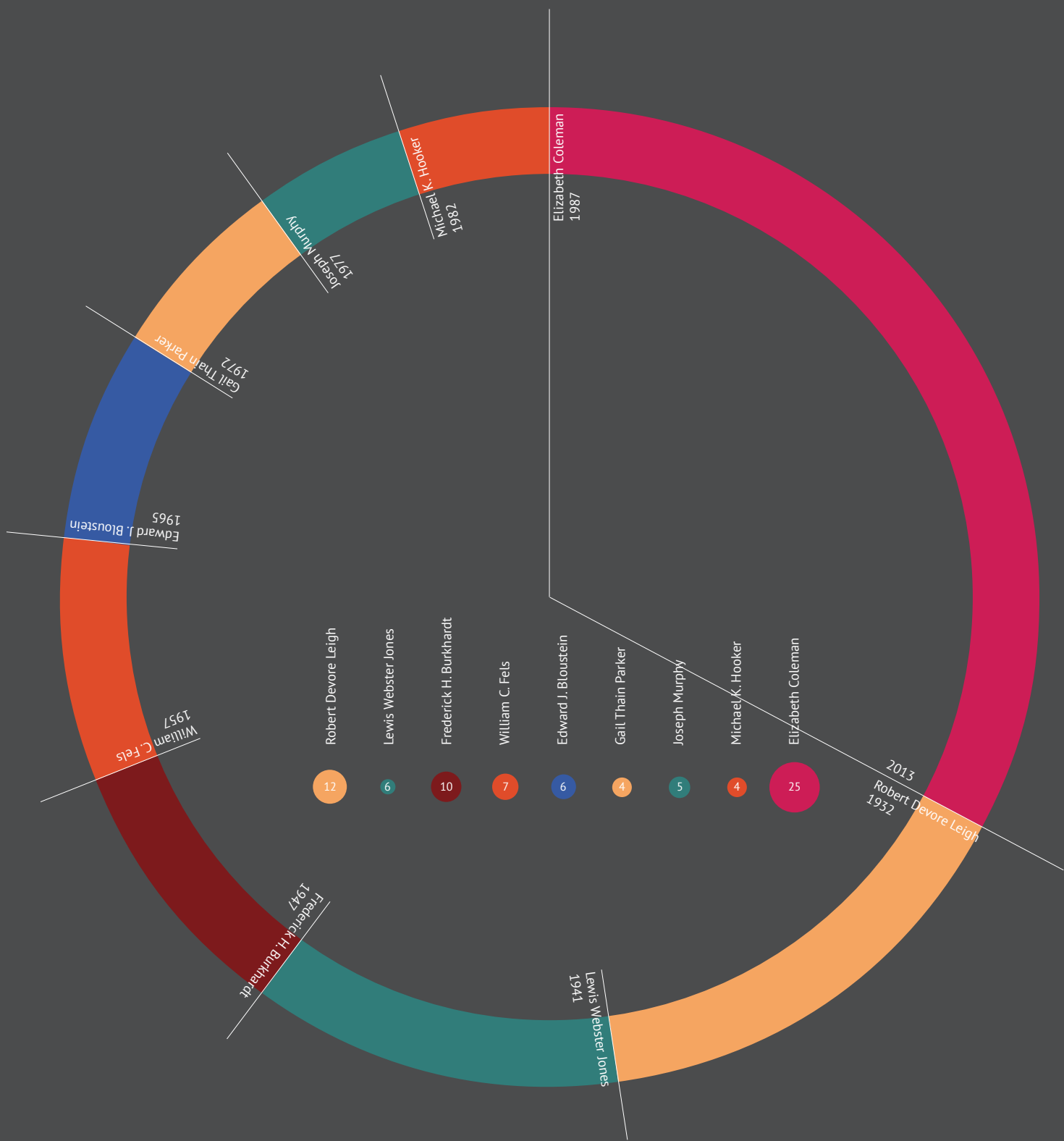




“One’s senior year is, in other words, a process of understanding more and more fully what was actually going on in one’s freshman year.”

—Elizabeth Coleman

# YFEA



# a marriage of two geniuses

In this special issue of *Bennington* we look at all that has been accomplished at Bennington College during Elizabeth Coleman's presidency. And we look at the multiple dimensions of Liz's leadership that has made her a match for Bennington from the start: the teacher, the torchbearer, the trailblazer.

After 25 years, Liz's and Bennington's histories are inextricably bound. Both dedicated to the belief that the power of education is in the possibilities it unleashes, theirs has been a love affair of ideas—a marriage of two geniuses, one of my colleagues once called it.

I am struck by the way in which Liz's internal compass aligns with the founders' vision and the lived potential of Bennington's students, faculty, and alumni over these many decades. As Liz wrote in her retirement announcement (page 4), "Bennington's maturity as an institution was achieved, in short, not by abandoning or softening its most radical principles, but by embracing and revitalizing them."

It is this insight perhaps more than any other that characterizes for me Bennington's true north: an appetite for the future whetted by the ambition and imagination of those who have come before. "It has been a remarkable 25 years in which to be a part of Bennington's story," Liz reflected in her announcement, "but then the next 25 promise to be even more remarkable." Indeed.

Warmly,



Janet Lape Marsden  
Director of Communications  
and Acting Dean of Admissions

# RS

# more than i had dared to dream

Dear members of the Bennington College community,

I write to inform you of my decision to retire from the presidency of Bennington College at the conclusion of this academic year. Not surprisingly, I do so with deeply mixed emotions. It has been a remarkable 25 years in which to be a part of Bennington's story—but then the next 25 promise to be even more remarkable.

When I became president in 1987 I said, "I accept and greet this charge with something resembling the alacrity and high expectations with which, to butcher Shakespeare, the young bridegroom 'leaps to his death.' Those of you unfamiliar with the wondrous meanings of Elizabethan English are cordially invited to come to Bennington College to discover them."

This suggested an excess of confidence, an ebullience, a soaring order of expectation that verged on madness. But it turned out I was right. Presiding over Bennington has been more than I had dared to dream—exhilarating, tumultuous, challenging, heady—and always, always about things that mattered, things that mattered a lot, and about people of immense dignity, grace, intelligence, and courage.

Amongst the rich array of experiences that have defined this time, for me the most vivid and most treasured was participating in the reanimation of Bennington's most powerful originating ideas—the teacher as practitioner; the student as shaper no less than as recipient of an education; and the ever-increasing commitment to assuring a rich and complex dynamic between the College and the world. Bennington's maturity as an institution was achieved, in short, not by abandoning or softening its most radical principles, but by embracing and revitalizing them.

The Board of Trustees has already embarked on initiating the search for a new president and will contact you in the near future to assure your participation in that process. At the request of the Board of Trustees, as part of the transition I will serve as the first director of the Center for the Advancement of Public Action for two years upon the completion of this academic year.

I look forward to the many occasions over the coming months we will have to celebrate this college, to talk, to remember, and to imagine its future.

With all good wishes,



Elizabeth Coleman  
President



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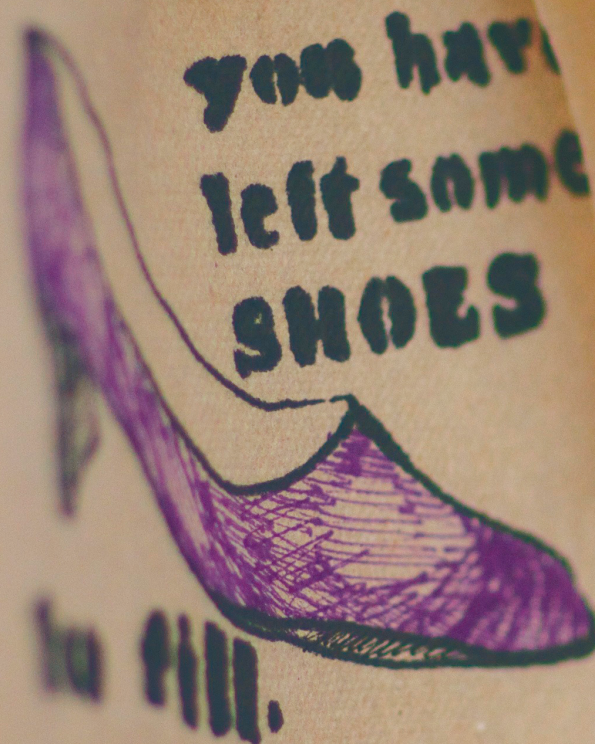
79 **IN MEMORIAM**



B

(A selection of alumni, students, staff, faculty, and friends' responses to Liz's announcement.)

- You have left some shoes to fill!
- You have become part of my history and world...thank you from the very bottom of my heart for all you have done.
- My hat is off to you.
- Say it ain't so!!!!!!
- AGHHHH! I'M GOING TO STAB MYSELF IN THE NECK NOW.
- I cry.
- It's been an honor, Liz.
- Bravo! A truly remarkable job.
- I have never forgotten that you gave me \$600 from your President's Fund to send me to a summer dance program at Harvard. Thank you.
- You made a place for people to do their best work. Thank you.
- Just two thoughts: Thank you for saving the College. Thank you for giving me the most interesting and satisfying job I have ever had.
- Twenty-five years is truly an amazing run. But more than the length of time, it is the wealth of ideas and commitment that you have brought to the tasks at Bennington that will leave an enduring footprint—something I have personally experienced—and something that revived my faith in humankind.
- What a ride it has been! All of us who love and respect Bennington are in your debt.





**A three-minute glimpse into the Facebook feed of one student after the announcement:**

Like • Comment



Next president of Bennington College: Hillary Clinton, anyone?



Over the years I have had mixed feelings about her presidency, but I am truly thankful that I finished my four years and graduated with Liz Coleman still at the helm. Wouldn't have wanted anyone else to hug me and hand me my diploma.



Adios, Liz! P.S. If you're done with those blue leather pants now that your fashion show appearances are over, dibs.



I love how a really big event can inspire lots of people you haven't spoken to in forever to email you. Apparently Liz semi-retiring is enough to get old friends together again.



Liz Coleman leaves and water mains immediately start breaking.



liz you can't divorce me without my consent



The end of an era.



Long Live the Queen



(a stunning photo of Liz wearing face paint)



Guys, Liz Coleman is not leaving you forever. Calm down.



Liz (& hearts)



Liz Coleman Retires? What? Someone must have made a mistake.



Lizzyc4eva



The Coleman Leaveth.

write a comment...



THE WILLIAM AND FLORA  
**HEWLETT**  
FOUNDATION

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation help to establish a President's Discretionary Fund



Bennington selected as one of 21 national New Media Center sites by a consortium led by Apple Computers, Kodak, and other technology companies

**70%**

Applications for admissions jump 70% from previous year

Liz appointed president

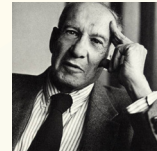


BENNINGTON COLLEGE ARCHIVES

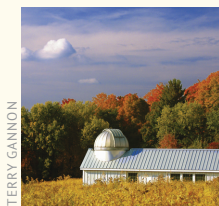
**MFA**

MFA in Writing established, growing out of the legendary Bennington Writing Seminars

Peter Drucker Fund for Excellence and Innovation established with a grant from the LLWW Foundation



1987 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1998 1999



TERRY GANNON

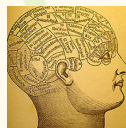


BRIEE DELLA ROCCA

Stickney Observatory and Meyer Recreation Barn built

**B**

Symposium process initiated by Board of Trustees to reanimate the College's mission and to reaffirm its deepest principles



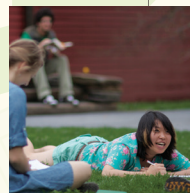
Mind, Brain, and Behavior project piloted



Presidential Leadership grant awarded by the Knight Foundation

**Q**

Quantum Leap created to help at-risk elementary, middle, and high school students in the community through individualized educational plans modeled after the ones Bennington students use



BRIEE DELLA ROCCA

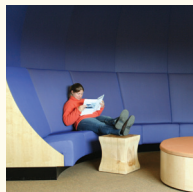
Isabelle Kaplan Center for Languages and Cultures created





Presidential Leadership grant awarded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Student Center opens



SKY CHAPMAN

Three new student houses—Perkins, Merck, and Paris-Borden—built



CYNTHIA LOCKLIN

Bennington celebrates 75th anniversary with \$20 million gift for a new facility to house the College's emerging public advancement initiative

75

Bennington awarded Campus Heritage grant from The Getty Foundation



Campus building and landscape master plan developed and implemented



Campus-wide renovations completed including Cricket Hill (2002) and Cricket Hill Barn, the East Academic Center, Davis Alumni House (2004), and more.



Liz delivers keynote address at the 63rd annual Conference on World Affairs following in the footsteps of previous keynote speakers Arthur Miller, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Henry Kissinger



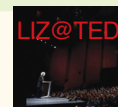
BRIE DELLA ROCCA

Center for the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA) opens



Liz signs the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030

Liz closes the 25th annual TED conference with a speech on higher education reform



2009 TED/ASA MATHAT

New curricular formats—design labs and modules—piloted

2000 2003 2004 2005 2007 2008 2009 2011 2012

Democracy Project launched to focus on critical questions such as *What kind of a world are we making? What kind of a world should we be making? What kind of a world can we be making?*



The College receives an anonymous \$1 million grant to establish the Elizabeth Coleman President's Discretionary Fund. The gift letter says, "Thank you, Liz, for all you have tried and accomplished in your desire to assist the development of young people."



SEAN MCGRATH

College changes to biomass, converting from an oil-based to a predominately wood-chip system, creating long-term financial and environmental benefits to the College



\$75 million capital campaign concludes with \$93 million raised



Liz joins former President Bill Clinton at a press conference to inaugurate the Clinton Global Initiative-University (CGI-U), in which Bennington is highlighted



Architectural Digest ranks Bennington among 10 colleges with the best architecture



Applications to Bennington reach an all-time high

International student population is as large as it has ever been



Bennington's largest entering class ever matriculates



CYNTHIA LOCKLIN

Commons restoration project launched





"Everyone is doing art of one kind or another, no matter what they are studying. They are learning to see artistically, so art is an element of philosophy, for example, or mathematics, as much as it is of a dance piece. Art for us is a means of conveying ideas. We see the art behind everything and the science behind the art." —Lucas Westcott '03







DAVID SCRIBER



IAN STACK



GREGORY CHERIN



CHRISTIAN FLINT '96



BENNINGTON COLLEGE ARCHIVES

From top to bottom, left to right: President Coleman serves Sally Johnson '89 at Midnight Breakfast 1989. President Coleman signing the steel girder to open new student houses—Perkins, Merck, and Paris-Borden. President Coleman and Penny Wilson '47. Ron Cohen, Pat Adams, Reinhold van der Linde, Susan Sgorbati, Sidney Tillim, President Coleman, and Rush Welter in 1996. Carol Channing '42 and President Coleman. Campaign for Bennington kickoff party with Susan Paris Borden '69. President Coleman with Carolyn Crossett Rowland '37, Rebecca Stickney '43, and John Barr, Chair of the Board of Trustees, 1988–2000.



BENNINGTON COLLEGE ARCHIVES



CYNTHIA LOCKLIN



CYNTHIA LOCKLIN





*(Excerpted remarks from President-elect  
Liz Coleman's address at the Cooper-Hewitt,  
National Design Museum, May 1987)*

# what it is to discover bennington

# MY

associations with Bennington College are of a much more recent vintage—only slightly more than a year in duration, yet so vivid, so full, it is almost impossible for me to imagine what my life could have been like without Bennington in it. This evening I would like to share with you something of what it has been like for me to discover Bennington College.

**M**y first encounter was with its alumni—a number of whom I met during the search process, a much larger number in the subsequent months. I soon came to expect the lively intelligence, high energy, generosity of spirit, the passion with which they take on life, but I am continually stunned by the extent to which Bennington

marks those it touches—the depth, the penetration of its impact. No filling in the blanks here, not even simply the profound intellectual transformations one often encounters in graduates from a handful of particularly excellent undergraduate colleges—but rather it is as if the student's very soul is touched, comes alive, takes shape. It is really quite astonishing to see, to hear this experience recounted over and over.

Then came the growing awareness of just how splendid the history is of this tiny institution tucked away in southern Vermont. Our cultural institutions are honeycombed with Bennington alumni. In the wings waiting their turn are the current Bennington students who every year

during the months of January and February descend on the cultural and intellectual institutions of our cities seeking jobs and finding them.

Then came my encounter with the College itself nestled in its bucolic setting, looking deceptively innocent, serene, laid back—mellow as my son would say. My very first visit to Bennington was as part of the search process for its new president. At this point in the process I was still reasonably detached, determined to stay cool, to remain capable of seeing clearly, of making reliable appraisals, dispassionate judgments.

The most striking aspect of the College is easy enough to describe—it is its palpable educational vitality

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The most striking aspect of the College is easy enough to describe—it is its palpable educational vitality and excitement. That vitality is, in a word, *electrifying*, almost physical in its intensity.

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and excitement. That vitality is, in a word, *electrifying*, almost physical in its intensity. I had never seen—more accurately, felt—anything quite like it and I had spent a lifetime, starting from my own undergraduate education at the University of Chicago in the midst of, or in the pursuit of, that intensity. I knew then that the single most important thing to me was in place. I knew that this was an institution that cares about what matters and cares deeply, that the center of the life of this institution, the jewel in the crown, the prime item on the agenda was what happens to its students. I knew that if fortunate enough to be offered the presidency there was no way I could turn away despite the range of its challenges, formidable difficulties, impossibilities, and they, I can assure you, were equally clear. These challenges seemed so overwhelmingly worth meeting, so deserving of winning. So much for my cool.

But finally Bennington, like any institution, is about the stories that surround and inform it and, most of all, that reveal it. I would like to tell you two. The first happened to me on my initial visit to the campus in the fall as a finalist in the presidential search process.

**I**t was at the end of a long, exhilarating, but nonetheless grueling day. Bennington had, in its inimitable way, managed to throw every imaginable combination of students, faculty, and staff at me. Now I was going to a concert and the anticipation of being off center stage, watching others perform was, as you might imagine, particularly pleasant. I walked into a large gymnasium-like space with

bleachers set up at one end and sat down. Insofar as I was still capable of registering anything I did notice that there were a large number of homemade instruments lying around on the floor—most of them string instruments, roughly cello-size and looking like drawings of Braque or Picasso. Just as the muscles in the back of my shoulders were beginning to relax, a man in a denim jeans

It is time, one is tempted to say high time, that the world heard something else about Bennington College other than the price of admission, like, for instance, why it is worth it.

---

outfit came over, introduced himself as Gunnar, and asked me if I would participate in the concert. The next thing I knew I was picking up one of those instruments. Thank God it only had one string.

By the time the concert actually started most of the audience had suffered the same fate—there were virtually no spectators. Periodically I

and others would join in by using our instruments as directed by Gunnar. The sing-song melodies were eventually replaced by the sounds of a lute-like, many-stringed instrument played by a Chinese woman. Its music was of an exquisite delicacy and beauty, ravishing is more like it, and unlike anything I had ever heard before. Then quite suddenly and as if out of nowhere a brass ensemble, a gigantic banjo, and an upright piano started knocking out American ragtime. It was dynamite. All of my life I have wanted to like art associated with a more experimental or counterculture, but somehow I always seemed to end up wishing I was at the Met. But this was different—this was counterculture with class.

**T**he second story is one of literally dozens that I have heard in the past months. Like the others it contains motifs that recur again and again and like each it is absolutely unique, utterly inimitable, completely its own. It was told to me by the husband of a Bennington alumna (a fate, by the way, which I am just beginning to appreciate has its own stories) and it is, naturally, about his wife.

She had come to Bennington intent on becoming a writer, had worked at it with some great passion and determination. At some point in her junior year, Bernard Malamud invites her to dinner to discuss the outcome of her efforts. He tells her that she, alas, is not a writer, that she does not have a writer's commitment to a subject. In the course of her senior year following this verdict she happens across Plato's *Symposium*, and decides that an understanding of this book is to be worthy of a major commitment. Upon

graduation she heads for the home of the chair of the Classics Department at Harvard to pursue that quest. She knocks on his door and informs him of her intent to study with him. He discovers that she has absolutely no background in classics. His initial reaction is incredulity. By the end of the conversation she has agreed to spend a year at Tufts learning the rudiments of a classics education and he has agreed to accept her as a graduate student. She fulfills her promise, he, his, and now with a Harvard PhD in classics she teaches at a university, undoubtedly the *Symposium*.

Why do I especially love this story and why is it so representative? First of all the insistence that the valuing, the celebrating of creative vocations in no way diminishes the necessity for, the relevance of applying their particular criteria of excellence, however painful, even unjust at the moment of application; then her courage, her passion, her determination, the range and abandon of the resulting search and the extraordinary focus of its outcome, the elegant taste—if you're going to pick a book, what a book—the fabulous and famous Bennington initiative and, most of all, the outrageous presumption that institutions made by human efforts are meant to reveal and serve what is most worthy in human needs, and not the reverse, combined with a blend of splendid idealism and the most matter-of-fact pragmatism that enables one to act effectively on that presumption. It is a story about an idea of education and what an idea. It embodies an ideal for education that Bennington has sustained with astonishing consistency from its origins in 1932 through the swings and surges that have swept, sometimes convulsed, higher education.

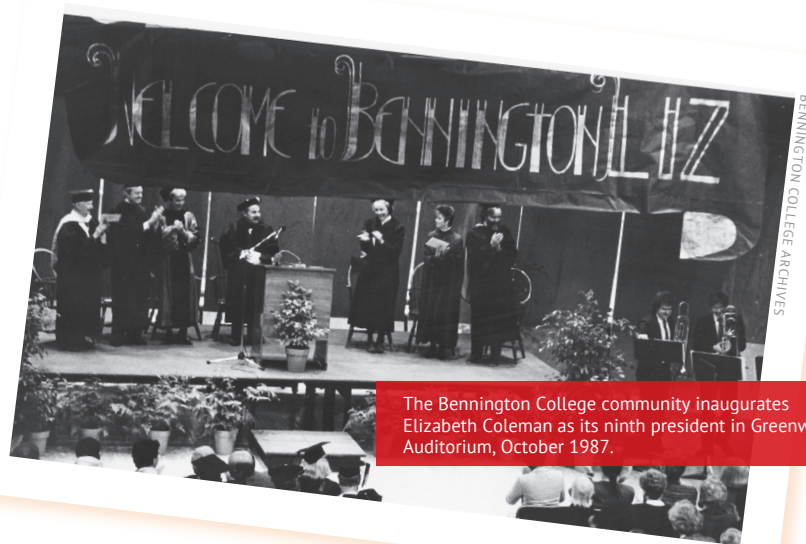
I suspect it is clear from what I have said that I do not think that Bennington is an institution in search of a mission. The central task of its leadership is then to nurture, support, and give voice to its mission.

There are a few other tasks. While it may not be necessary to return the thunder to Bennington, it would be nice if a few more people heard it. It is time, one is tempted to say high time, that the world heard something else about Bennington College other than the price of admission, like, for instance, why it is worth it.

It is also time that Bennington achieved financial stability and maturity that such a venture deserves and increasingly that such a venture demands. At one time it was possible for tuition to carry the full freight of the cost of a serious undergraduate education. It is simply not possible any longer, not even close. I appreciate that this would involve some departure from the past. So be it. As much as we all like a little excitement in our lives there are some kinds we can all do without, and

let me assure you there are no charms to a mentality of survival. It is narrow, illiberal, desperate, finally poisonous, and that is as true on the campus of Bennington as it is anywhere else. Obviously its president must be as profoundly committed to meeting this challenge as any other.

Not an easy agenda, not possible even to imagine accomplishing alone, which brings me back to an invitation to you—old friends of the College and new ones, the affected and the disaffected, the pioneers and those just out—an invitation to play as much a part in the future unfolding of this remarkable institution as you, at least most of you, have played in shaping and defining its past. I can promise you that with your support the next decade at Bennington will be a great and triumphant adventure. **B**



The Bennington College community inaugurates Elizabeth Coleman as its ninth president in Greenwall Auditorium, October 1987.

All of my life I have wanted to like art associated with a more experimental or counterculture, but somehow I always seemed to end up wishing I was at the Met. But this was different—this was counterculture with class.









*An excerpt of President Liz Coleman's  
inaugural remarks, October 1987*

# IF

you doubt the intensity of human curiosity, look again at the fixed gaze of that infant with eyes that seem large enough to fill a room and bright enough to light it. If you would gauge the content and character of insights to be achieved, the lessons to be learned, imagine what is involved in the discovery that when things, or people, disappear from sight, they are not necessarily gone forever, although they might be. Or the determination and concentration, the sheer genius it takes to grasp the difference between those things that are alive and those that are not, the difference between those things that move by themselves and those that must be pushed.

Often these discoveries are accomplished one on one—the child and the world, but not always. Remember when you were energetically pulling a cord across the floor, at the other end of which is a favored object, when suddenly that object seems intent on staying right next to the leg of a table. Regardless of how hard you pull and, even more startling, how loudly you scream, it refuses to budge. If anything, it clings even closer to its newfound friend until someone, usually a larger person than yourself, with almost no effort and in utter silence, pulls back ever so slightly in the other direction (of all things) and places what you are pulling in a different relationship to the leg of that table. Miraculously, all is right with the world. If the person who intervenes invites you to watch closely, if she overcomes

If the person who intervenes invites you to watch closely, if she overcomes your great impatience, particularly after this unconscionable delay, and with infinite patience somehow persuades you to get into this mess again, incredibly, in order to try your hand at making things right, and if she kneels down instead of bending over and works with you eye to eye in this great enterprise, he or she is a teacher—more precisely, an extraordinary teacher.

your great impatience, particularly after this unconscionable delay, and with infinite patience somehow persuades you to get into this mess again, incredibly, in order to try your hand at making things right, and if she kneels down instead of bending over and works with you eye to eye in this great enterprise, he or she is a teacher—more precisely, an extraordinary teacher. At the moment you stop screaming and tugging and start looking, listening, then imitating, finally understanding so that you will no longer need outside intervention, you are a student. If the space this occurs in is set up in such a way to encourage such events, it is a classroom. And if the subject—here no less than intimations of cause and effect—is of such magnitude that huge as our teachers may seem at the outset they fade into the background as the fascination of what is being revealed takes over, then we are confronting an unadulterated instance of education.

( A selection of courses taught by  
President Liz Coleman )

## SPRING 1992 TRAGEDY

In this course we examine several instances of tragedy selected primarily from Greek and Elizabethan drama. In addition to providing examples of the order of accomplishment achieved in this genre, the movement over time and place enables us to see something of theatre history, something of different theatrical conventions. Throughout, our efforts are focused on discerning the nature of the dramatic and imaginative power of this art, the sources of that power, and the extent to which those sources are the same and the extent to which they are different as we move from play to play. To assist and provoke in this exploration, we tread Aristotle's anatomy of the art of tragedy in his *Poetics*. Plays read include Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*; Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*; Euripides, *Hippolytus*; Shakespeare, *Richard II*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*; and Racine, *Phedre*.



## FALL 1995 VALUES IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

This course examines those underlying (and typically unexamined) convictions that shape and constrain our intellectual and imaginative life. The course proceeds through a series of close encounters with works that provide a range of intellectual and imaginative excellence and accomplishment, and demand much of their audience. What occurs in the effort to meet those demands is the work of the course. That is likely to include engaging such matters as: What kind of knowledge is possible? What kind is worth having? What is the relationship between knowledge and

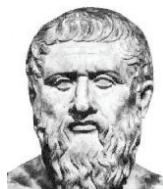


information, information and evidence, fact and value? What are our assumptions about rigor—what is it made of, where is it to be found, what benefits, if any, does it have? What are our governing notions about the imagination? What kinds of intellectual seriousness are possible for the non-expert?

Works include *Genesis*; Herodotus, *The Persian Wars* (sels.); Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (sels.); Darwin, *Voyage of the Beagle*; Freud, "Clark University Lectures" I and II. Shakespeare, *King Lear*; Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*; Renoir (collections at Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute); Verdi, *La Traviata*; *Camille* (the film); *Clueless* (the film); and Austen, *Emma*.

## FALL 1998 READING THE REPUBLIC

In his quest to understand the meaning of justice, Plato takes us into places that profoundly unsettle and stunningly illuminate the experience of being human, in its mix of the individual, personal, private, and the public, political, social. In so doing, he is alternately luminous, shocking, incomprehensible (at least to me), dazzlingly clear, ceaselessly fascinating, and almost always engaging things that matter, things that matter terribly. What does it take really to understand something, how is that different from the appearance of doing so? What does it take to think and what are the multiple ways of avoiding doing so? What does it mean to begin to take in the significance of the fact that we are not alone in the world, that there are others? What are the consequences—personal and political—of ignorance, of intellectual dishonesty, of the absence of self-knowledge, of misplaced certainties, of unexamined convictions? What is the place of art in all this? What accounts



for its extraordinary power, what are its limitations? In this course we read and think our way into *The Republic*, using our collective efforts to see it as fully and resonantly as we can manage.

SPRING 2000  
(with Bill Reichblum  
and Steven Bach)



## THE ILLUMINATING WORD: SEEING, FEELING AND THINKING IN LITERATURE

An invitation to join us in reading intently, thinking a great deal, and talking together and carefully about a series of works of outsize ambition that promise a vast return for our efforts. In addition to reading continually, students will be expected to write continually. The single criterion used in selecting the readings was the enormity of their impact and the scale of their ambitions—in short what might be called their greatness. In addition to the simple encounter with works of this magnitude, our goal is to discover ways to enrich our experience of such works and to use the power and intensity of disciplined conversation provided by the classroom as our primary strategy. We will use other strategies, such as viewing films when available and useful, and assigning different kinds of writing. Readings are likely to include *Genesis*; Aeschylus, *The Oresteis*; Rabelais: *Gargantua and Pantagruel*; Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*; Balzac, *Pere Goriot*; Tolstoy, *The Kreuzer Sonata*; George Bernard Shaw, *Caesar and Cleopatra*; Freud, "The Clark University Lectures" I and II; and Rebecca West, selections from her works. There may well be some adjustments in the reading list as we continue to think about it, but these are certainly exemplary of the kinds of works we have in mind.

I WOULD SUGGEST  
THAT WHENEVER YOU  
FEEL THE URGE TO BE  
WHAT IS FREQUENTLY  
CALLED PRACTICAL ABOUT  
YOUR EDUCATION, PICK UP

A GOOD BOOK UNTIL  
IT GOES AWAY.

( A selection of courses taught  
by President Liz Coleman )

FALL 2000

## SHAKESPEARE: THE PLAYS

This course explores two clusters of

Shakespeare plays: one is *Richard II*, *Henry IV Part One*, and *Hamlet*; the other cluster is *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Within both clusters each play is a world unto itself and at the same time it is connected to the other/s in a number of intriguing ways. Throughout, we will address the similarities and differences that one encounters in watching this master at work as we attempt to discern the distinctive power in each of these works.

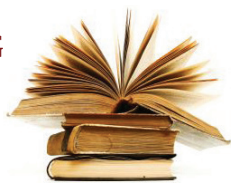


FALL 2007

## RETHINKING EDUCATION

(with  
Ken Himmelman)

Over the last 20 years, the United States has dropped in the global education rankings in comparison with many other developed nations. While many of the problems with the U.S. educational system seem obvious, the causes and solutions to those problems are less so. Few areas have been more examined or better examined, yet little changes for the better. Many students find school to be narrow and stultifying, a simple means to an end rather than a window to real learning. Why is this? Students in this design lab will work over the course of the academic year, incorporating Field Work Term, to understand issues such as educational philosophy, systems design, youth development, and effective social policy. The goal of this design lab is to deepen understanding and enhance students' skills to enable them to take effective action to improve education in America in some way.



Fall 2011 & Spring 2012

## FUNDAMENTALS OF ADVANCING PUBLIC ACTION

The world is facing challenges of unprecedented scale and urgency. Health, environmental sustainability, poverty, war, and the uses of force, education, and governance are vital issues of universal human concern and yet, so often, we sit back and wait for others—politicians and other so-called experts—to set the course. But, as citizens, what are our responsibilities? What does it mean to be a citizen? What obligation and power do we have to inform ourselves and others and to create change? What knowledge and skills do we need to act effectively? By examining the critical variables that shape some of the most complex and pressing challenges facing the world today, students in Fundamentals of Advancing Public Action will explore the meaning, power, and obligation of citizenship and begin to develop the capacities and skills necessary to create positive, effective, and sustainable change. This is a full-year course open to all students.



Fall 2012  
(with Susie Ibarra)

## HUMAN RIGHTS: WOMEN AND GIRLS

As long as discrimination and inequities remain so commonplace everywhere in the world, as long as girls and women are valued less, fed less, fed last, overworked, underpaid, not schooled, and subjected to violence in and outside their homes,



the potential of the human family to create a peaceful, prosperous world will not be realized. Hillary Clinton has said, "The extension of human rights to women and girls has an unparalleled and demonstrable capacity to transform possibilities—from education, economic equity, and health to governance, the environment, and uses of force." Nonetheless, despite its huge and pragmatic benefits for the entirety of the human community, its evident ethical value, and the vast array of resources that have been directed at achieving the goal of extending full human rights to women and girls, progress in this area is painstaking at best. To address this issue adequately will demand the very best strategic thinking, a breadth of human capacities from rhetoric to design, empathy to quantitative reasoning. The range, complexity, and depth of the force field it engages invites the participation of the full gamut of the arts and sciences and a range of perspectives from outside the academy, including business, journalism, law, medicine, and politics. The workshop will proceed by first analyzing and evaluating the current efforts to address the persistence and varieties of inequity; second, on the basis of this analysis selecting the challenge/s to focus on that will enable us to use our resources in optimally effective ways; and finally, addressing the challenge carved out by the workshop and laying the groundwork for next steps. Students are invited to participate in this workshop provided they have an interest in working in the arena of public action whatever the particular area of interest. The choice of focus for this workshop—the full extension of human rights to women and girls—is precisely its capacity to benefit from and integrate a vast range of orientations. **B**

you want  
to be this  
close to  
chaos  
without  
actually  
being *in*





*Excerpted reports from the Commission on  
Institutions of Higher Education (1983-2003)*

It is our considered opinion that this time the wolf is indeed at the door, and that Bennington College is facing nothing less than a crisis requiring the attention as well as the involvement of all constituencies: trustees, administration, faculty, and students.

—The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, December 1983

Excerpted Report by the Evaluation Team Representing The Commission on  
Institutions of Higher Education of The New England Association of  
Schools and Colleges  
December 1983

One might conclude that Bennington College is managing quite well in spite of what both the 1977 and the 1983 team perceive as weaknesses, and that there is no real need for change. Indeed this is the prevalent attitude among the faculty, who feel that they and the institution have weathered many storms, and that many well-intended visitors--as well as presidents--have come and gone while Bennington has survived with little change. The cry of wolf has been heard too often to be taken seriously.

Unfortunately, it is our considered opinion that this time the wolf is indeed at the door, and that Bennington College is facing nothing less than a crisis requiring the attention as well as the involvement of all constituencies: trustees, administration, faculty, and students. The situation now differs from past circumstances because of two concurrent and interrelated factors:

substantial budget deficits, which can be eliminated only by a combination of developing a substantial endowments and, at the same time, maintaining adequate enrollment;

a sharp drop in the applicant pool and a resulting decrease in enrollment, which further aggravates the financial situation.

As a result of both of these conditions, Bennington College finds itself in a much more serious situation than in the past. The institution cannot continue to rely only on an intensification of recruitment and fundraising by the president and his staff, with all other components of the Bennington community continuing business as usual. The situation demands drastic attitudinal changes.



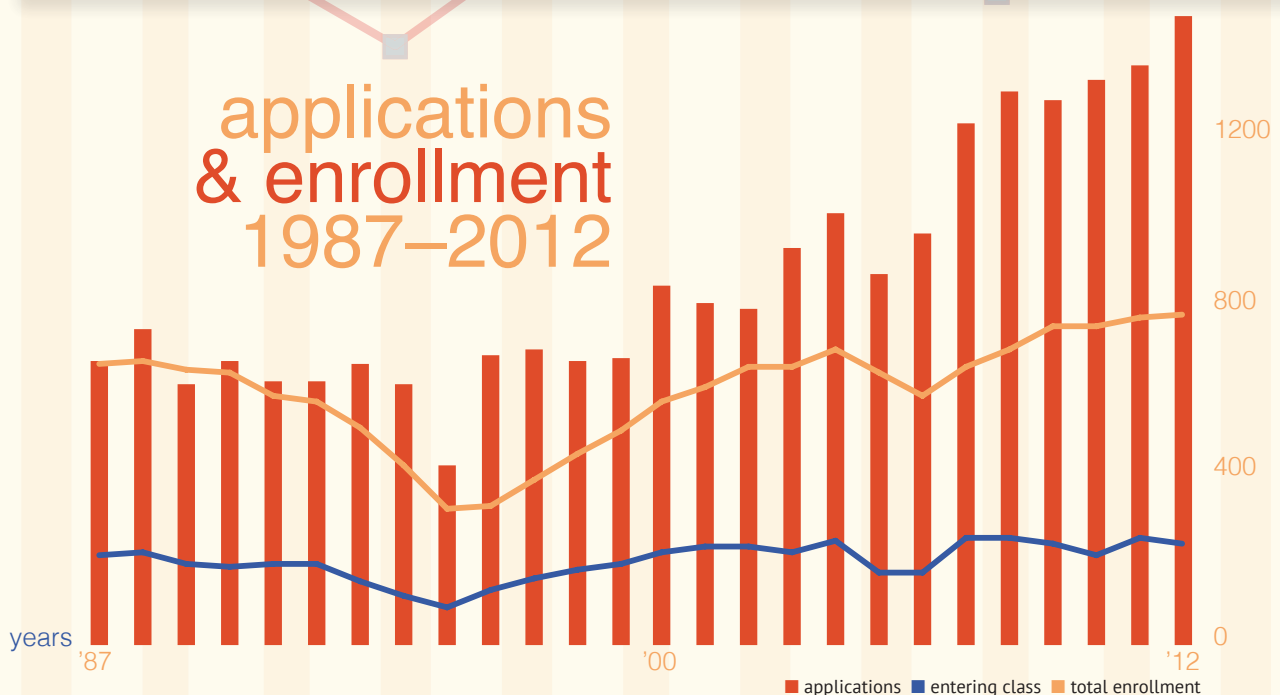
Excerpted Report by the Evaluation Committee of The Commission on Institutions  
of Higher Education of The New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
April 1994

The many components of the standard set for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges rest upon two fundamental elements: the clear articulation of institutional purpose appropriate to education and the adequate organization of resources necessary to meet that purpose both now and in the future. Of these, Bennington College historically has excelled in the expression of a pedagogy and style of learning that was once unique in American liberal arts education and that is still highly distinctive. Bennington is recognized throughout the nation for exactly what it aims to provide: participatory education in which the teacher-practitioner and the student collaborate in the projects that both create and instruct.

In its marshaling of resources to provide this sort of experience, Bennington has struggled over the past decade and more. Declining student population coupled with increased need for financial aid have, since 1992, precipitated a financial crisis at the College. It was within the structures of this crisis that the visiting team was required to make its evaluation.

At this moment in Bennington's history great pressure is being brought to bear upon the Board of Trustees and the president to plan for a transformation of the College, which will rectify a deep-seated crisis that is both financial and educational. The decline in student numbers attributable both to admission and retention coupled with a sudden increase in financial aid requirements in 1992-1993 brought an abrupt reversal of the fiscal progress made at the end of the 1980s. The College will have an actual shortfall of \$2,000,000 in its operating budget this year and at least an equal deficit in 1994-1995, no matter what actions are undertaken. With an endowment of no more than \$7,900,000, no cash reserves, and a line of credit of only \$1,000,000, there is a sharp imperative to plan for a change of course.

## applications & enrollment 1987-2012





Excerpted Report by the Evaluation Team Representing The Commission on  
Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of  
Schools and Colleges  
April 1996

Bennington today, a member of the team commented, feels, in fact, more like a newly founded institution, with the enthusiasm and financial vulnerabilities that attend such places, than a college that has been around for 65 years. It is that shortness of practical history that poses the principal problem for our team. We wish to give maximum opportunity to an institution that has courageously seized its destiny, but we must also represent fairly that vital material elements of the evidence of turn-around--enrollment and financial support--are only beginning to appear.

As the following sections indicate, much of what has taken place in the past 18 months is extraordinary. It is our judgment that, although fragile, the institution is healthy and clear-eyed, and it is clear that a fiercely loyal and passionately determined president and Board are totally committed to rejuvenating Bennington's spirit and securing it financially.

Excerpted Report by the Evaluation Team Representing The Commission on Institutions  
of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
November 1999

At Bennington College, events are measured from the date of the Symposium Report of the Bennington Trustees, issued in June 1994. That report represented a dramatic and courageous attempt on the part of the president and the Trustees to acknowledge the serious financial and educational crisis that the College faced, to rediscover the College's core values, and to take the bold and difficult steps that they believed to be necessary to set the College on course again.

The visiting team arrived on campus just over five years after the publication of the Symposium Report. Our visit comes three years after the last (focused) visit to the College by a NEASC team, which occurred in April 1996. That team described its visit as similar to "arriving in a town a couple of years after a major earthquake. Recollection of the shock, and of the aftershocks, has begun to fade, but the features of the landscape bear little resemblance to those described by previous visitors."

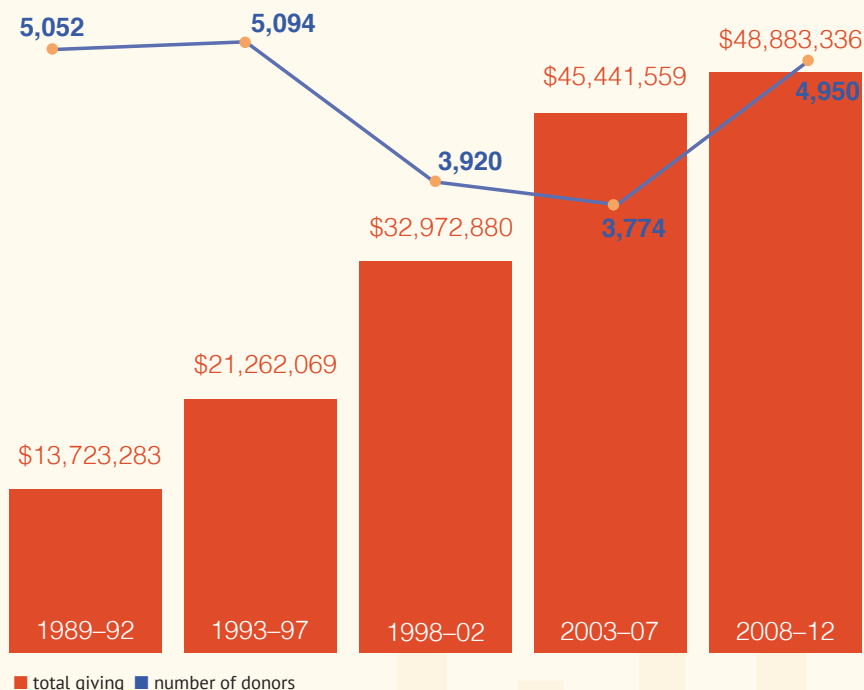
Our team finds a Bennington that has been pulled back from the brink. The events surrounding the Symposium Report, although still referred to almost continually, have assumed a new position as historical marker rather than descriptor of an ominous, hovering cloud. Everywhere in the College we find a new vigor, a new confidence, and an eagerness to look to the future. Enrollments are climbing. Students and faculty members are participating with enthusiasm and commitment in a new process that will structure the student's educational experiences. Fundraising has been markedly successful. New administrative structures are in place designed to move the College into the future in efficient and effective ways. In very real ways the bold steps called for in the Symposium Report have paid off; the College can and should feel immense pride and sense of accomplishment in the progress it has made in the last five years.



# giving to bennington 1987–2012

Each generation must have the same opportunity to experience, to savor, to build upon, and to change the College that is so much a product of the efforts of those who have gone before.

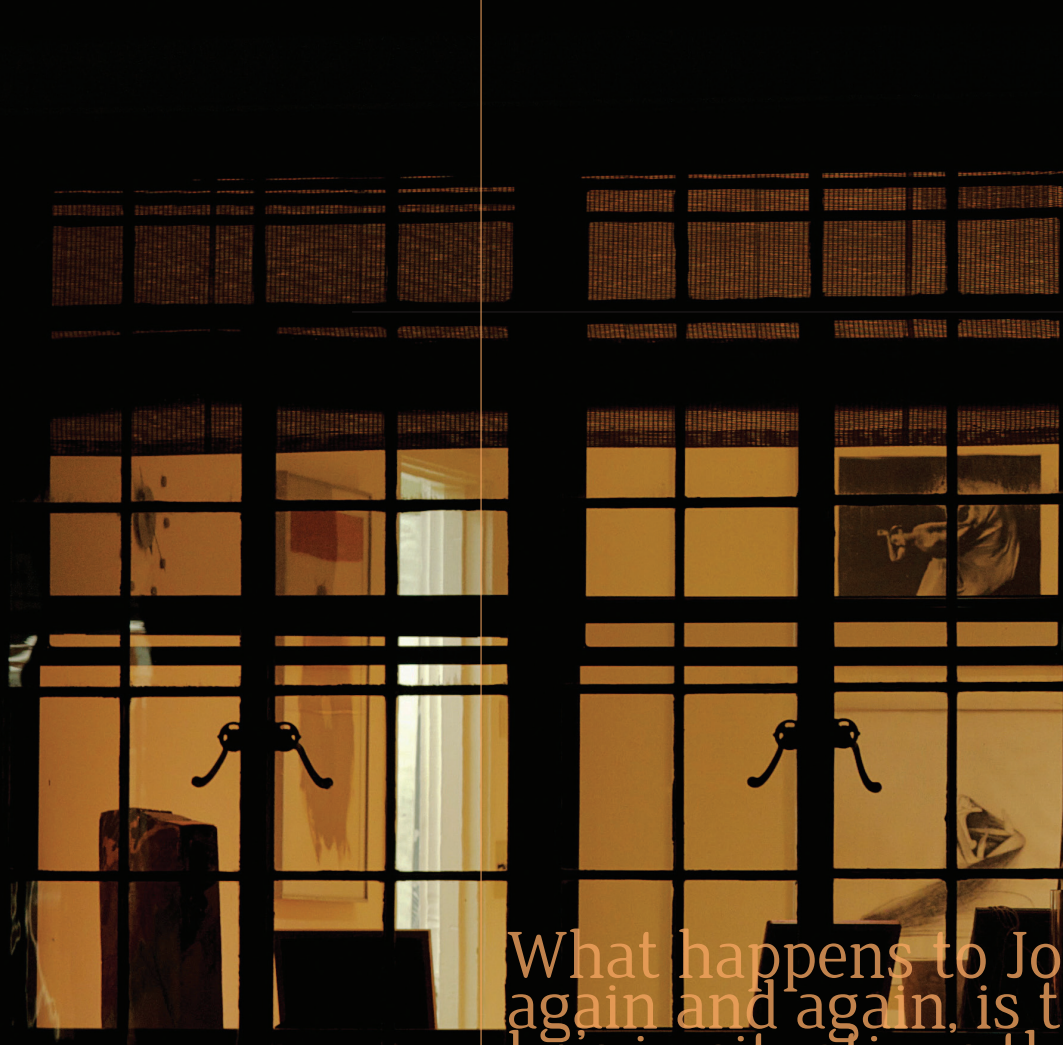
—The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, March 2003



## Excerpted Report by the Evaluation Team Representing The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges March 2003

We take our leave with a renewed respect for the vision and culture of Bennington College; with enthusiasm for their many accomplishments, with excitement for their future, and with confidence that they can and will meet the challenges ahead. We believe that the College is gaining--regaining--its place as an innovative, vibrant, and visionary institution of liberal learning; that it has a real and deserved optimism for the future; and that this optimism is grounded in the reality of the present.

Although not within our charge, we have made the following observation and offer it as such. In the midst of change that must be a part of any institutions of learning, there is at Bennington College a deserved and growing sense of stability. At the same time, we know that inevitable change lies ahead. As the College continues to meet its immediate needs, increasingly people will be able to allow themselves to dream and to set new sights and new goals. Within this change will come important questions about how to ensure that those things that have defined and shaped Bennington College remain strong and central to their work. In all the ways that truly matter, the team is confident that the fundamentals will not be lost in this community that values its traditions, understands itself, and prizes the principles on which it was founded. Yet, we acknowledge that each generation in its turn must have the same opportunity to experience, to savor, to build upon, and to change the College that is so much a product of the efforts of those who have gone before.



What happens to Joseph, again and again, is that he's in situations that are beyond endurance. His fate, his field is going in the wrong direction; all the alignment of forces say he's in deep trouble. And again and again his dreams save him. He shoots for the stars and makes it.





*A Liz Coleman  
Story by Brie  
Della Rocca*

# dreaming Joseph



# LIZ

Coleman once wrote, "Whenever I mention Bennington, something is bound to happen." It's true, and the same can be said about Liz. Take, for instance, the fact that most people have an opinion of her, and usually a strong one. Or that everyone seems to think they know her, or know someone who knows her. Reaction to Liz is usually almost always extreme—responses, in other words, that are typically reserved for politicians and celebrities.

Seven years into her tenure at Bennington, when most college presidents would be looking to move on, Liz Coleman became a household name as the leading figure in a major restructuring undertaken by the College, a year-long process known as the Symposium. The attention was astounding, maybe even historic. "No one could have imagined anything like it," she says. "When it was clear that Bennington was contemplating changes that might be quite radical, I had no illusions. I knew it would be a rough course. But at the same time it was impossible to anticipate the firestorm, or that it would be focused laser-like on me."



DAVID SCRIBNER

John Barr, chairman of the Board of Trustees, 1988–2000, and President Coleman lead the 1990 Commencement procession.

President Coleman addressing the Class of 2016 during Convocation.

Laura Kesselman Skoler '57, Sandra Kesselman Slotnik '62, and President Coleman at a reception in New York City in 1987.



GRACE DELLA VOGLIA



BENNINGTON COLLEGE ARCHIVES

The story of the Symposium at Bennington has been told so many times—more than 250 times in fact—that most people think they know it. It goes like this: Bennington College was in financial trouble so the College abolished tenure, dismantled the academic department structure, and fired a third of its faculty. It is in this sensationalized narrative, played out in every major media outlet that Liz Coleman the caricature was born.

But what the media missed in its maelstrom was the more consequential story about the conditions necessary to bring about real institutional change, and why it matters that a tiny college in Vermont was putting them to the test. The Symposium, according to those instrumental to the process, was not only about saving Bennington College but also about reimagining institutional structures—sacred cows, many of them—as flexible tools that could put ideas front and center, that could respond to the emerging, contingent, and interconnecting nature of those ideas, and that could be a source for ongoing renewal. If Bennington succeeded, it would be a

model for colleges everywhere facing similar constraints on their capacity to make choices and changes.

For blazing this trail the trustees found their match in Liz: “She was

Whatever your take on Liz, most agree about her courage. It is usually the very first thing that people mention when they describe her and, for that matter, describe what they most

Rebecca Stickney '43, a member of the search committee was asked what she thought of Liz. “I think we ought to give her the whole joint.”

beginning a second five-year term, so she had been at the College long enough to understand and believe in its promise but not so long as to lose faith in the possibility of change,” they said to *Trusteeship* magazine in 1995. “Most importantly, she had personal qualities of courage, wisdom, principle, and stamina that would enable her to match the board’s resolve when the going got tough.”

desire in the next president. When asked about courage, Liz refers to insights provided by Aristotle and Plato. “For Aristotle, courage in a crisis situation becomes the most important virtue because every other virtue is dependent on it. And Plato has a wonderful way of getting at what it is. Essentially, he says, courage is saying the same thing all the time.”

In a speech at Harvard’s School of



Education, Liz talked about the Symposium process in just these terms. "At Bennington the leadership story is about a collection of trustees, who, in the face of excruciating political pressure to end the uncertainty, chose to engage in an institutional symposium for a year and a half and then, in the face of daunting economic pressures, issued a report that takes on the great questions of liberal education—those that have been asked forever, those just beginning to emerge, those as yet unheard. They did so with passion, without apology, and with an astonishing

When you read the reports, you might wonder why Liz stayed. She will tell you that in addition to the vitriol there were amazing things that happened during that time. Amazing kindness, generosity, and concern not only from colleagues, students, and alumni, from total strangers. She sits up and leans forward when she finally comes to the heart of it. "What really kept me going was that this was all about something really important. It wasn't just about making sure Bennington survived; it was a chance to realize Bennington's stunning potential. That

and anyone who had anything to do with Bennington. As a finalist, Liz got to experience Bennington. And what happened to her is suggestive of what happens to most people who visit Bennington. "The moment I got here I could feel Bennington's intensity. It was palpable, electrifying. Something was actually happening to people here. I saw firsthand that the focus was what people were thinking about, their ideas. It is intense, and it is an intensity that makes Bennington a very precious place."

The people and their work were not

## When Liz talks about the classroom, it is as if she's describing a sacred space.

faith in the value of that education."

Looking purely at the facts, there is no mistaking the intelligence of the decisions. But there is an emotional dimension to the story that suffocates logic and dispassion. It was traumatic. In spite of the community-wide meetings that took place for more than a year and the Board's attempt to reveal the stakes, the warnings that change was coming, when it came—when it was time to carry out the changes and make the difficult decisions—it would come as a shock. And the shock would be personal and public.

"I was portrayed as heartless, brutal, sadistic, a horror of a person—and that's the tip of the iceberg. How does it feel? Terrible. People would say, 'Liz, you have to be thick skinned,' which is hard to do when you feel like your skin has been stretched to the breaking point. In addition, as the president, I had an obligation to speak for the College. That, to me, included speaking for people who had lost their faculty; people who thought that there wasn't a need for the Symposium."

made it worth putting one foot in front of the other no matter what was happening."

It is difficult to discern, so many years later, what of Bennington Liz molds and what of Bennington was waiting here (Liz will tell you it was all waiting here). Before Liz came to Bennington she was writing a lot about the absurdity of sequential learning; the limits and rigidity of the academic departmental structure, and the important role work must play within the curriculum. It was all very Bennington, unmistakably Bennington. But Liz, at the time, didn't know all that much about Bennington. "I knew about Bennington the way everybody knew about Bennington, by reading the papers, from friends who had more direct experience, its general reputation. It was all from a distance." That is until she was suggested to Bennington's Presidential Search Committee by two different alumni in academia.

The committee put her on the shortlist and in front of everyone

BENNINGTON COLLEGE ARCHIVES



BENNINGTON COLLEGE ARCHIVES

President Coleman, 1989.  
President Coleman talks with a student.





CYNTHIA LOCKLIN

President Coleman hoods MFA student James Harrison at Commencement 1995.





all that moved Liz. She recognized that there was something moving about Bennington itself. "There are very few institutions in the field of education that are interesting institutions, precious few. They may have very interesting students, they may have interesting faculty, but Bennington is actually an interesting institution."

After that visit, Rebecca Stickney '43, a member of the search committee, was asked what she thought of Liz. "I think we ought to give her the whole joint."

And they did.

guity." Indeed it is ambiguous, so ambiguous that if you ask anyone familiar with the story to interpret it, their interpretation tends to say more about them than the story itself. A lot like Bennington and, for that matter, Liz.

"Anyway, what happens to Joseph, again and again, is that he's in situations that are beyond endurance. His fate, his field is going in the wrong direction; all the alignment of forces say he's in deep trouble. And again and again his dreams save him. He shoots for the stars and makes it."

ideas actually matter, where they are at the very center of an education."

Liz is particularly drawn to big ideas, seemingly impossible ideas, or to be most precise, ideas with impact. It is what she saw in Bennington when she came and what she looks for still. It was what fueled the Symposium and the College's ongoing curricular initiatives. Throughout Liz's tenure she has made a conscious effort to create an environment that protects the free flow of ideas. Take, for example, what happened in 2009 when the stock market crashed. Almost every college president in the country was frantically churning out statements reacting to the financial crisis. If you read one, it was likely that you got the gist of them all. They were assurances of the health of the institution, followed by forecasts of budget cuts, halting building projects, salary freezes, and layoffs. But Liz waited.

"Part of me was convinced that we shouldn't respond. Inevitably those statements, while meant to be reassuring, were also playing to a mood of crisis, and the necessity for retreat—often from business as usual and almost always from more ambitious projects. To me that impulse seemed like a mistake. But as more and more institutions made statements, it became clear that our silence would be an issue. And so gradually we decided to respond," she stops. "And, I say 'we' because one doesn't make these decisions alone."

So she began to write. "As it is with so many situations, it's not enough to reassure people. Nor is one's audience just the Bennington College community. What do you say, in short, as the head of one of the great colleges in this country, at a time of apparent crisis? What of all the things that could be said from this position are most in need of saying?"

In March 2009, after most college presidents issued their first statement—many of them well into their second or third letters—Liz wrote with Bennington's response. In it she wrote:

Liz is particularly drawn to big ideas, seemingly impossible ideas, or to be most precise, ideas with impact. It's what she saw in Bennington when she came and what she looks for still. It was what fueled the Symposium and the College's ongoing curricular initiatives. Throughout Liz's tenure she has made a conscious effort to create an environment that protects the free flow of ideas.

In her inaugural remarks Liz Coleman recalled Howard Nemerov describing Bennington as "a dreaming Joseph." Twenty-five years later, I asked her what she thought Nemerov meant. "Oh yes," she smiles. "Dreaming Joseph. What do I think that's about? Well, I think it has to do with overreaching or extending into territories that are daring, with grandiosity and imagination. I think it's about ambiguity; I love the ambi-

Dreams come up a lot at Bennington. They come up a lot in conversations with Liz, but dreams, when talking with Liz, are more often than not called ideas. "Ideas are rare," she explains. "No one ever has enough money. Bennington pointedly didn't have enough money, but no one ever does have enough. But what you often don't have at all are ideas. That's not the case at Bennington. This is a place that's alive to ideas. It's a place where

"We are fully aware of the magnitude of the crisis and appreciate that the current situation can change significantly and that it is more than likely going to get worse before it gets better. In such an atmosphere of concern and uncertainty, freezes, across-the-board cuts, and a backing off of new projects are especially tempting. The problem is that they are formulaic ways of dealing with an evolving situation and necessarily sideline the role of flexibility, imagination, intelligence, and judgment. Those are Bennington's stock in trade and we are particularly loath to abandon them, most especially in times like these. It is worth remembering that Bennington began in 1932 during the Great Depression and prevailed against unspeakable odds. Given that history we are unlikely to abandon at this moment the remarkable faith of the founders in the power of ideas and the human resourcefulness such ideas unleash."

Presidents, especially college presidents, like to play it safe. They are a self-conscious group, wary of risk and outside-the-box responses. Most do what they are expected to do, and say what they are expected to say. Not Liz, and that makes her very rare.

**B**ennington itself was a risk, not only because of when it opened, but also because of what it opened. It was the first college to put visual and performing arts on the same academic footing as the social and hard sciences. Bennington pushed interdisciplinary work as essential. It maintained that faculty members should be both good teachers and active practitioners. And from the very beginning, it required that all students spend an entire term, every year, in the field.

The risks that once put Bennington on the map as one of the most radical institutions of higher learning in

the country are no longer risks but givens. You'd be hard pressed, for instance, to find any college without a visual and performing arts building or major. More colleges and universities are attempting to infuse some flexibility into rigidly defined major structures. A greater number of institutions are compelled by the value of interdisciplinary learning and its importance in an uncertain world. Many colleges now build in internship requirements, although few, if any, require a full work term every year. And less than 20 years after the Symposium, many liberal arts colleges are beginning to adopt its core elements by eliminating presumptive tenure systems in favor of contracts, creating budgets for innovation in programming, and constructing avenues around the academic department structure.

try so much but rarely produce," Michael McPherson, former president of Macalester College and president of The Spencer Foundation says. "A college doesn't achieve such outcomes without itself taking genuine risks. Other colleges and universities depend on Bennington to do things differently, to take new directions; that's fundamental to its role as a leader."

Bennington's ability to reclaim its position as a leader in higher education was in no small part because of Liz's own advocacy for a reimagined, reinvigorated role for the liberal arts in America. Widely recognized as a thought leader in higher education, Liz has spoken nationally and internationally about the need to reform the fixed nature of higher education, one that pushes students toward increasingly narrow areas of study. "From

All too often what we  
take in when reading is  
what we already believe  
or care about. Allowing  
the world someone else  
has made to become  
yours is a very difficult  
thing to do, but once  
you do it, you are never  
the same.

But even as more and more colleges adopt Bennington's structures and principles of education, it remains distinctive and important. "Bennington is a leader and produces graduates with the capacity for leadership. They have a well-grounded self-confidence, a willingness to put themselves out there to achieve something worthwhile, and the ability to mobilize others in pursuing those ends. These are essential characteristics of leadership that we talk about in this coun-

what I have been able to discern the only real and ubiquitous source of curricular hierarchy in higher education is the presumption that a progressive shrinking of subject matter is somehow equivalent to intellectual advancement," Liz has said. But really, she explains, "the most important distinction in collegiate education is not between general and special, but rather between serious and trivial, responsible and irresponsible, better or worse."

It is in this context that the Cen-





President Coleman and Irene Borger '71 at Commencement 1995.

Kathleen Harriman Mortimer '40 (back to camera), Helen Frankenthaler '49, President Coleman, and Merrell Hopkins Hambleton '43.



ter for the Advancement of Public Action was born, and it is where Liz will spend the next leg of her tenure at Bennington, leading the initiative as CAPA's inaugural director. It's a hybrid role that marries Liz's trail-blazing leadership and what she sees as her most authentic craft: teaching.

"If you were to ask me 'do you have a craft?' I'd say it's teaching, certainly not being a college president." Most of her writing is about the curriculum and the possibilities the classroom offers. It does not matter with whom she is talking—faculty, students, staff, parents, the media, or donors—when she talks about the classroom; it is as if she's describing a sacred space.

"Words cannot adequately capture what Liz has done for Bennington—her vision, imagination, and courage are immeasurable," Deborah Wadsworth, trustee and former Board chair, said. "But it is her understanding of the power of liberal education as the very heart and soul of a civil society that is unparalleled. And that at the heart of liberal education lies the

awesome responsibility of the teacher. And what a teacher she is—whether in the classroom, boardroom, or colloquy with fellow faculty, teaching is for Liz an ethical and aesthetic activity in pursuit of a more realized life."

To see most clearly what Wadsworth described, you need to watch Liz teach. Last term she co-taught a course, Workshop on Human Rights: Women and Girls, with music faculty member Susie Ibarra. Liz and Susie are sitting among the students at the table, neither at the head. The class is discussing their last reading assignment, the 2004 United National Development Program Report on "Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World." The discussion starts slow, with moments of elongated silence—the kind of silence that is tempting for a teacher to interrupt. But neither does. They wait for the students to continue. It picks up. Students begin to gain new insights by analyzing the text; they build on each other's insights, feed them, tease them, argue, and defend their positions. They're discussing human rights.

And soon they're digging deeper, getting more and more focused about what they mean, what they see, what they don't see. The discussion begins to take a turn toward the abstract. In the course of conversation, one student poses this: "If you give women rights in some cultures, isn't that taking away what some men in those cultures consider to be their rights?"

Before any other student jumps in, Liz leans over, looks at the student, and asks, "What is a right?"

The student begins to sense, based on the question, that she has gone down an ill-fated path. She tries to explain what she meant when she asked the question. Liz stops her: "OK, let me put it another way. Do I have the right not to inhale smoke and the toxins that includes?" The student nods. "But what about the smoker? Does he have a right to smoke around me?" The class pauses from its moments-earlier fast pace. They are just about to say "Yes, of course," when Liz answers her own question. "I would say, no, smoking is not a right."

The students are stumped. They can't believe the president just said that people don't have the right to smoke. In fact one student verifies. "Wait, so



Above: Ruth Dewing Ewing '37 and President Coleman in 1987.

Left to right: President Coleman with trustees Susan Paris Borden '69, John Barr, Bobby Deane '57, and Marianne Miller '58 in 1990.

are you saying that people don't have the right to smoke?" Liz doesn't dwell on the example. Instead, she comes back to the point. "So the question is, what *exactly* is a right? And how does the way you are using it expand or diminish the possibilities for insight?"

This is the kind of thing Liz does a lot in the classroom, and in her work outside of the classroom. I ask her about this. She begins to talk about the role of presuppositions, of preconceptions in shaping what we see and what we think. She elaborates by talking about drawing as a way of seeing—her discovery that the only way to accurately draw something is to rid yourself of all of your associations of what it looks like. "No easy task," she says. "Once you realize that prior knowledge can actually get in the way of seeing—the great challenge becomes how you use what you already know or think you know in a way that does not get in the way of seeing what you don't yet know. This is also the essence and challenge of reading—the craft of taking things in: in effect letting the text write you, allowing it to determine what you are registering and when—who you actually are for that moment. It's the opposite of picking and choosing. All too often what we take in when reading is what we already believe or care about. Allowing the world someone else has

All too often what we take in when reading is what we already believe or care about. Allowing the world someone else has made to become yours is a very difficult thing to do, but once you do it, you are never the same.

made to become yours is a very difficult thing to do, but once you do it, you are never the same."

Liz Coleman is complicated text, and like most complicated texts, she is easily misunderstood. To know her is to understand what it is to exist in abundant nuance and context. You must know Liz for a long time, in time's many moments, in order to most clearly see what she has done at Bennington and what she has contributed to higher education—and what she had to go through to get there.

But it is much easier, much more sensational to take Liz Coleman out of context, to bound her to a moment in time, to project assumptions about her motivations, to pick and choose, to condemn her or make her a hero. It's a tempting impulse; one might even say a human impulse. But it is an impulse that doesn't get you very far. Indeed if there is any real truth, it is that Liz Coleman is a lover—of people, of ideas, of human possibilities—in short she is as Bennington as it gets. **B**





WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

September 28, 2011

Congratulations to everyone gathered to celebrate the formal opening of Bennington College's Center for the Advancement of Public Action.

Three years ago, in the midst of the first Clinton Global Initiative University meeting, I shared a stage with President Coleman to highlight Bennington's outstanding Commitment to Action. In such a short time, I am delighted by the immense progress they've made.

CAPA's interdisciplinary curriculum ushers in an exciting new approach to learning that will enrich the entire Bennington community. Through a combination of coursework and fieldwork, CAPA's students will learn about our world's most pressing issues firsthand, and be inspired to solve them. These young people are tomorrow's leaders and visionaries; for many of them, their time at CAPA will be remembered as the turning point in their commitment to public service.

President Coleman has done more than envision the future; she's laid the groundwork needed to get there. CAPA's launch signifies her commitment to the future of this school, the success of our country, and the power of our common humanity.

Best wishes to all students and faculty of Bennington College as you embark on this incredible journey together.





on a scale  
that makes a  
difference

LIZ@TED



**B** ( Excerpted remarks from President Coleman's closing speech at the 25th annual TED Conference, February 2009 )

# the story begins

in the late '90s. I was invited to meet with leading academics from the newly free Eastern Europe and Russia. They were trying to figure out how to rebuild their universities. Given this rare opportunity to start fresh, they chose liberal arts education as the most compelling model because of its historic commitment to developing a student's broadest intellectual and deepest ethical potential. They came to the United States, home of liberal arts education, and spoke with an urgency, a passion, an intellectual conviction that was for me a forgotten dream, a tone of voice I had not heard in decades.

**T**he truth is: genuine liberal arts education no longer exists in this country. We have professionalized liberal arts to the point where they no longer provide the breadth of application and heightened capacity for civic engagement that is their signature.

Over the past century the expert has dethroned the educated generalist to become the sole model of intellectual accomplishment. While expertise has had its moments, the price of its dominance is enormous. Subject matters of study are broken up into smaller and smaller pieces, with increasing emphasis on the technical and the obscure.

The progression of today's college student is to jettison every interest except one and within that one to continually narrow the focus—learning more and more about less and less. This, despite the evidence all around us of the interconnectedness of things.

As one moves up the ladder, values other than technical competence are viewed with increasing suspicion. Questions such as: *What kind of a world are we making? What kind should we be making? and What kind can we be making?* move off the table. Incredibly, neutrality about such concerns is seen as a condition of academic integrity.

In so doing, the guardians of secular democracy in effect cede the connection between education and

values to fundamentalists, who you can be sure have no compunctions about using education to further their values—the absolutes of a theocracy. Meanwhile the values and voices of democracy—the very opposite of such certainties—are silent.

This aversion to social values may seem at odds with the explosion of community-service programs. But despite the attention paid to service, these efforts remain emphatically extracurricular and have had virtually no impact on the curriculum itself. In effect, civic-mindedness is seen as residing outside the realm of what purports to be serious thinking and adult purposes.

This brew—oversimplification of civic engagement, idealization of the expert, fragmentation of knowledge, emphasis on technical mastery, neutrality as a condition of academic

integrity—is toxic when it comes to pursuing the vital connections between the public good and education, between intellectual integrity and human freedom, which were the heart of the challenge posed to and by my European colleagues just as they are the soul of a liberal education.

While the astronomical distance between the realities of the academy and the visionary intensity of this challenge was more than enough to give one pause before plunging in, what was happening outside of higher education made backing off unthinkable.

The corrupting of our political life had become a living nightmare. Nothing was exempt: the separation of powers, civil liberties, the rule of law, the relationship of church and state, accompanied by a squandering of the nation's material wealth that defied credulity.

The progression of today's college student is to jettison every interest except one and within that one to continually narrow the focus—learning more and more about less and less. This, despite the evidence all around us of the interconnectedness of things.

When the design emerged it was surprisingly simple and straightforward. The idea is to make the political/social challenges themselves—from health and education to the uses of force—the organizers of the curriculum.

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A harrowing predilection for the uses of force had become commonplace with an equal distaste for alternative forms of influence. At the same time all of our fire power was impotent when it came to halting, or even stemming, the slaughter in Rwanda, Darfur, Myanmar.

Our public education—once a model to the world—has become most noteworthy for its failures. Despite having a research establishment that is the envy of the world, more than half of the American public don't believe in evolution (and don't press your luck about how much those who do believe in it actually understand it).

Incredibly, this nation, with all its material, intellectual, spiritual resources, seems utterly helpless to reverse the free fall in any of these areas. It only accelerates.

Equally startling from my point of view was the fact that no one draws any connections between what is happening to the body politic and what is happening inside our leading educational institutions. We may be at the top of the list in the public's mind when it comes to influencing access to personal wealth; we aren't even on the list when it comes to responsibility for the health of this democracy.

We are playing with fire. You can be sure Jefferson knew what he was talking about when he said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." On a more personal note, this betrayal of our principles, our decency, our hope

made it impossible for me to avoid the question: What will I be able to say years from now when asked, where were you?

As president of a leading liberal arts college famous for its innovative history, there were no excuses. So the conversation began at Bennington, knowing that if we were serious about regaining the integrity of liberal education, basic assumptions needed to be radically rethought, starting with our priorities.

When the design emerged it was surprisingly simple and straightforward. The idea is to make the political/social challenges themselves—from health and education to the uses of force—the organizers of the curriculum. They would assume the commanding role of traditional disciplines with structures that connect rather than divide; expand horizons rather than limit them. Mutually dependent circles instead of isolating triangles.

And the point is not to treat these as topics of study but as frameworks of action—the challenge: to figure out what it will take to actually do something that makes a significant and sustainable difference. Throughout a central objective is to make thought and action reciprocal—thought driven by action; action informed by thought.

In this dramatically expanded ideal of a liberal arts education, knowledge honed outside the academy becomes essential to what is happening inside the classroom. Social activists, business leaders, journalists,

politicians, professionals will join the regular faculty as active and ongoing participants in this wedding of liberal education to the advancement of the public good. Students in turn continuously move outside the classroom to engage the world directly.

The most important discovery we made in our focus on public action was to appreciate that the hard choices are not between good and evil but between competing goods. This discovery is transforming; it undercuts self-righteousness, radically alters the tone and character of controversy, and enriches dramatically the possibilities for finding common ground. Ideology, zealotry, unsubstantiated opinion simply won't do. This is a political education for sure, but it is a politics of principle not of partisanship.

People will continue and should continue to learn everything there is to know about something or other; we actually do it all the time. And there will be and should be those who spend a lifetime pursuing a very highly defined area of inquiry, but this single-mindedness will not yield the flexibilities of mind, the human resourcefulness and ingenuity, the multiplicities of perspectives, the capacities for collaboration and innovation this country needs.

If the question of where to start feels overwhelming, you are at the beginning not the end of this adventure. Being overwhelmed is the first step if you are serious about trying to get at things that really matter on a scale that makes a difference. **B**

This is a political education for sure, but it is a politics of principle not of partisanship.





What it is to  
work with Liz

## “i so clearly remember

the first time I set foot on campus—a cold, wet day—May 2, 2002. My first interview had been re-scheduled at the last moment to be with you. Feeling quite like a cat caught in the rain, I was ushered in to your office where, after a lovely welcome, you patted the pages of my c.v. and said, “You really don’t like institutions, do you?” A fact I thought I’d successfully hidden in my résumé. To say I was impressed would be an understatement: I was at once unsettled, intrigued.

I have been grateful ever since for these years of teaching at Bennington have been a continual revelation. I cherish my students, my colleagues, the College itself, which truly has a soul.”

—Marguerite Feitlowitz,  
faculty member in literature

## “You have been more than a college president, you have been the creative director.”

—Mansour Farhang, international relations faculty member

## “the very first day

I was to begin teaching at Bennington College was September 11, 2001. I was cramming for the class I was about to teach, foolishly thinking I needed to know all the answers instead of most of the questions. The background noise intruded sporadically, something about airplanes and the World Trade Center. It wasn’t until the second plane hit that I was pulled from my study to actually listen. With consternation and bewilderment and without explanation, I wandered from my apartment on campus toward where people were gathering under the orientation tent on the lawn. And there was the president, calmly addressing a multitude of anxieties. International students could call home free of charge from this location, students with parents who work in Manhattan could call free of charge from that location, Psych Services was seeing people at such and such a place, people who wanted to follow the events on television could assemble here, people who needed to avoid the television coverage could avoid going there. The voice was confident, concerned, never dismissive, calm yet authoritative and, above all, reassuring when the world offered little in the way of reassurance. In that moment, I remember thinking, *Wow, that’s why she is the president*. Over the years, I have been afforded many re-visitations of that epiphany.”

—Kirk Jackson, faculty member in drama

## “You make a place for people to do their best work.”

—Billie Tsien, architect





# 40s

**BEATRICE O'CONNELL LUSHINGTON '47** reports that stamps of 10 American poets were issued by the U.S. Postal Service on April 2011 in Los Angeles; one of the poets is her late husband, Theodore Roethke, who died in 1963.

**MARGOT STARR KERNAN '48** writes: "I am now writing one-act plays about life in a retirement community—performed on site."

# 50s

**SONDRA PARKOFF HENRY '50** shares, "I am sending you a modest donation in memory of my husband, Dr. Ed Henry, who died in December 2011. We were married for 61 years. Ed loved coming to Bennington, and in fact, was mainly the reason I enrolled in Bennington College. Ed was a pre-med student at Syracuse University and told me if I went to Smith College, where I had been accepted, it was too far and he would never be able to visit me. When I visited Bennington, a city girl from New York, I fell in love with the Vermont vistas, the stone walls, the white farmhouse dorms, Commons, the red barns. I lived in Woolley House from 1947 until I graduated three years later. I was getting married and also started Columbia Law School in 1950. Bennington was a center for the most avant-garde in the arts: books by Djuna Barnes and Gertrude Stein in the bookstore, performances of *House of Bernarda Alba*, films by Cocteau and others, and innumerable dance performances with Martha Graham and Martha Hill choreography. I was overwhelmed by the artists I saw emerging at Bennington. When I went to Columbia Law School, I had to learn to take exams all over again. Years later, when I began to do research and write biographies of Jewish women, Levi Strauss, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, and others, I had to learn really rigorous research methods. But my years at Bennington gave me, and Ed, an exposure to contemporary art forms and a

permanent interest in exploring what was new and unfamiliar. For that I am grateful."

**MARILYN BERNSTEIN SEIDE '52** writes: "Finally decided it was time to move back to NYC (after 19 years in LA), say *au revoir* to my long career in mental health, and return to my original love—acting! Having a ball!"

**CAROLINE WOLFERTH AMIDON '53** says, "I continue to grow, lecture on, and write about my collection of more than 100 different pelargoniums."

**LOUISE GANTER TAYLOR '53** shares, "In 1968, I cofounded the Folk Dancing Club at the University of Victoria, BC. In 1983, I introduced Sacred Circle Dancing (Findhorn, where it all began) to Victoria." This past summer she brought mediation of the dance with guest teacher Friedel Kloke (Germany) to Victoria as part of Victoria's celebration of the Culture of Peace.

**CAROL FRIEDMAN KARDON '56** of Wynnewood, PA has been awarded the Atlantic Papers Award at the 39th annual open Juried Exhibition of the Pastel Society of America in New York City. As a result of this award, Kardon has been recognized as a "Master Pastellist." This title is awarded to an artist who has won three prizes in three different shows with the Pastel Society of America. All future work is automatically accepted into juried exhibitions. She teaches painting at the Main Line Art Center Haverford, PA and the Wayne Arts Center in Wayne, PA. She is currently a member of the Philadelphia Sketch Club. Her work may be seen at the Great Frame-Up in Wayne and at Carspecken-Scott Gallery in Wilmington, DE.

**KAY CRAWFORD MURRAY '56** was one of 10 recipients of the Columbia Alumni Medal at the Columbia University commencement on May 16, 2012, (a graduate of the Law School in 1976). Murray is also a member of the Law School's Board of Visitors and an advisor to the Law Alumni Association, of which she was president. She was awarded the Law School's Lawrence A. Wien Prize for Social Responsibility, served on class reunion committees, and received the Barnard College Medal of Distinction. A Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and the New York Bar Foundation, she has been honored

by the Black Law Students Association of both Columbia and Fordham universities. Alumni Medalists are alumni of Columbia University selected to receive this high honor for their distinguished service of 10 years or more to the University, including its schools, alumni associations, regional Columbia Clubs, and University-wide initiatives. In 2002, she retired as General Counsel to the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice, the position she had held since the establishment of the agency in 1979.

**STEPHANIE BROWN REININGER '57** writes: "Love painting and teaching watercolor in our adult education program, which is the Institute for Lifelong Education at Dartmouth."

**SARAH SOUTHERN PEASE '59** says, "It seems retirement is the busiest time of life! Fishing trips with Doug and as many children and grandchildren as possible tempt us off our hill regularly. Youngest daughter Heather is announcing for NBC at the London Olympics. So will be there this summer with the youngest grandsons. London Zoo here I come."

**SUSAN TROTT '59** reports, "My 16th novel *Flamingo Thief* will be a movie starring Will Ferrell, produced by Ben Stiller."

# 60s

**STANLEY BERKE '60** shares, "Each year is affirmation. Artistic director, choreographer, teacher with my three sons create a natural ensemble. Interaction is expressive allegiance. Aaron, a filmmaker and insightful journalist; Jake, music production and guitar player; Sam, unraveling learning as personal consciousness. This engagement is the passion and living in the now!"

**JUDITH SCHNEIDER BOND '61** retired as professor and chair of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Penn State University College of Medicine on December 31, 2011. She writes: "I am now an emeritus professor still doing editorial work and writing scientific papers. In July 2012, I will become President of the Federation of American Society for Experimental Biology."



# FIFTIES SIXTIES SEVENTIES

**NANCY COMSTOCK ANDREWS '63** was recognized in *The Ridgefield Press*: "Ridgefield Arts Council honors behind-the-scene volunteer Nancy Comstock Andrews, who chaired the arts council for 11 years, was recognized 'not only for her tireless contributions to the council but more importantly for her devotion and passion she has given as teacher and mentor within the Ridgefield arts community. Her advocacy for Ridgefield literally put the town on the map with the Connecticut Commission on Cultural & Tourism.' In tribute to Ms. Andrews's works and contributions, an award will be given annually by the Arts Council to recognize others who advocate and instill the passion for the arts, as teachers and mentors."

**PRISCILLA MADER WIGGINS '63** shares, "Still camping and painting my surroundings: the desert of Big Bend, TX this winter (and beaches of St. John, USVI) and now since early May, aspen groves here in southwest Colorado. Heading out tomorrow into the Weminucite Wilderness for a 10-day solo sojourn at 12,000 feet. This past October, spent two weeks in Bhutan."

**SUSAN MERRILL '64** is a painter and writer in Stockbridge, MA. She has had a solo show of paintings of farm animals for the past five years at the Hancock Shaker Village in the Shakers' Poultry House, as part of the month-long baby animals event that kicks off the summer season. Last year, she published a novel, *Warm Morning*, about a child growing up in a magic house on a farm in rural Maryland. She and her husband, set and production designer Carl Sprague, adopted two children from Russia and Ukraine; Ruslan, 21, is a ballet dancer with Ballet West in Utah and Elena is a student in her junior year in high school. Merrill's 43-year-old daughter, Daisy Rockwell, from her previous marriage to Jarvis Rockwell, has a PhD in Hindi literature but is now also a painter. She has just moved to North Bennington, steps away from the gate to the College! Her husband is a psychiatrist who works at the Bennington V.A. Hospital. Their 3-year-old daughter, Serafina, will be attending Bennington Early Childhood Development Center.

**ALICE RUBY GERMOND '65** says, "As Secretary of the Democratic National Committee and Convention, I look forward to

calling the roll to re-nominate Barack Obama for President this fall—and helping elect him in November."

**LONNY JOSEPH GORDON '67** retired May 31, 2012 from a position at World Outreach Program Fine Arts dean emeritus. His latest solo concerts were a GORDONDANCE performance (California International Theatre Festival, Linda Purl, artistic director) at Calabasas Civic Center, Calabasas, CA and Contemporary Dance/Fort Worth (Kerry Kreiman, artistic director) at Fort Worth Museum of Modern Art, Fort Worth, TX.

**PATRICIA WOODBRIDGE DUNN '68** is the author of *Designer Drafting and Visualizing for the Entertainment World*, Second Edition and the art director for *Zero House*, a new ABC television series, as well as *Great Hope Springs* with Meryl Streep, Tommy Lee Jones, and Steve Carell.

**LINDLEY GREENOUGH THOMASSET '68** shares, "I have three grandchildren attending college this year. SUNY New Paltz, Ithaca College, and University of Delaware. They grow up fast—traveling to Oregon and Washington states and attending the International Pinot Noir Celebration—fun."

## 70s

**CONSTANCE RICHARDSON '71** writes: "My memoir *Swimming Upstream* was published and is available at Amazon and local bookstores. Lots about Bennington inside."

**LYNN COLBURN SHAPIRO '71** contributes regularly to *Dance Magazine*, teaches at Columbia College, Chicago, and has recently published short stories in *Midstream* magazine and the *Jewish Women's Literary Annual*.

**RANDALL DENKER '72** says, "I visited the campus in April for the first time in 40 years to give a talk at the water symposium organized by **SUSAN MYERS SGOBATTI '72** (like me). What a stroll down memory lane! It made me remember why 1968–72 were the most formative years of my life."

**ALEXANDRA O. HUGHES '73** shares, "Had a wonderful time in Paris on May 8 with alumni of all ages in France and professors Lum and Inoue and wonderful Tim Anglum."

**ABBY COHEN '74** reports, "I've been crisscrossing the country for the past decade and a half, living on both coasts. This past May, I received an MA and Rabbinic Ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York. I promptly picked up and moved West again. I currently work as a chaplain at the Alta Bates Summit Medical Center in Berkeley, CA. I spend much of my precious spare time knitting and spinning yarn, as well as co-hosting, with my son, the Knit Knit Cafe podcast and I've been a guest instructor on the subject of podcasting at the University of Western Ontario. I continue to make art and have participated in several group shows. The most recent was *Ex Libris* in New York City. I would love to hear from classmates."

**SUSAN RETHORST '74** writes: "Hello Bennington, thought to inform your office of the publication of my book *A Choreographic Mind: Autobiographical Writings*. It's so far available only online from Books on the Move and it has a Facebook page of the same title."

**SARAH JANE RODMAN '74** spearheaded efforts to install a New York State Historical Marker commemorating Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz. The marker was unveiled at Lake George, NY, in August 2012. Rodman is currently enrolled in a graduate program at Harvard University for Museum Studies.

**MARY L. RUEFLE '74** has received the Editors Prize for Feature Article for contributions to *Poetry* magazine for her essays, "On Fear" and "I Remember, I Remember," in the June 2012 and July/August 2012 issues. Ruefle's latest book of poetry is *Selected Poems*. Her collected lectures, *Madness, Rack and Honey*, were published in August 2012.

**DOR BEN-AMOTZ '76** has received the Murphy Award for his exceptional work as an undergraduate teacher at Purdue University. His groundbreaking textbook *Understanding Physical Chemistry* and his enthusiasm and energy in the classroom have been helping students grasp the difficult concepts of chemistry since his career at Purdue began



## EIGHTIESNINE

in 1989. Now, as the head of the chemistry department, Ben-Amotz is sharing his teaching practices through monitoring and mentoring junior faculty.

**LISA LILLARD CALDWELL '76** says, "Lucky I live in Santa Fe, NM, and I paint watercolors—still lifes and portraits. I have rheumatoid arthritis necessitating some surgeries. I sing with the symphony chorus when I can. Our two daughters are grown, one married and one about to marry. My husband is a fine arts photographer."

**MARY ELLEN WATKIN '77** received a Pollack-Krasner Fellowship and Illinois Arts Council grant for Visual Art in 2011–12.

**LINDA L. BOUCHARD '79** reports, "I had a show touring the West Coast in November. Some of the info is at [murderouslittleworld.com](http://murderouslittleworld.com)."

**LAURIE R. MOSS '79** writes: "Over the past year I have reunited with my Bingham roommate, **MARIAN JOHNSON '79**, a Bingham housemate, **POLLY HOPKINS '78**, and my college/post-college love, **THOM CATHCART '79**. Polly and I are interested in developing a stronger Northwest alumni presence. If you are out here in this region, let us know (Seattle, Washington)."

## 80s

**MICHAEL WESTBERG '83** and **CAROL GREENHOUSE '84, MFA-W '98** write: "Hi Bennington!" Last summer Westberg and Greenhouse met up in Ubud, Bali for a mini-reunion—Michael, who lives in Jakarta, was on Facebook when he discovered that Carol was staying in Ubud, Bali, where he was headed for the weekend. A few messages back and forth led to a happy reunion (it had been 30 years since they had seen each other on campus!).

**BROOKE D. ANDERSON '84** has been appointed as the executive director of U.S. Biennial, Inc. She was previously the deputy director of curatorial planning at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) from 2010 to 2012. She has curated exhibitions and lectured extensively around the world in addition to writing numerous art-related books, essays, and articles.

**MOLLY E. MAGAI '85** shares, "I'm delighted to be able to tell you that I have consigned a few pieces with Speck, a new gallery in Belltown in Seattle. Speck is a really terrific, tiny, new gallery with a rotating collection of smart art. It's worth seeing. If you go, check the website ([speckgallery.com](http://speckgallery.com)) as the hours can vary. Owner Alex Landes is also happy to open by appointment. And you can see all the art from the street, even at night. <https://www.facebook.com/555Bell>."

**TERESA BOOTH BROWN '85** had an exhibition, *A Unified (Edible) Scheme: Teresa Booth Brown* at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, CO, in March 2012. The food art installation featuring 400 gingerbread cookies frosted and covered with an edible image printed on edible paper with edible ink on a custom table can be seen at [teresaboothbrown.com](http://teresaboothbrown.com). Also in March, she was awarded a residency at the American Academy in Rome, Rome, Italy.

**CHIVAS SANDAGE '87** published her first book of poems, *Hidden Drive*, in August 2012. Poet David Wojahn writes, "Chivas Sandage's poetry has a lyric precision and terse musicality that any poet would envy, a grace with cadence and image that makes it all look easy. That capacity is all the more remarkable when we consider that the poems are often formed from the most difficult of reckonings..." Sandage has taught at Westfield State University and currently teaches creative writing workshops in Northampton, MA and Collinsville, CT, where she lives with her wife and daughter.

**BARNABAS ROSE '89** moved to Boulder, CO, in April 2012 and says, "Loving every inch of it. As usual, not really successful in any one thing, but enjoy life anyway. Playing with telescopes, teaching myself Japanese, starting up a literary/art zine, banging around on a keyboard, and hiking and biking the trails and roads of Boulder. Never growing up. Cheers. (Write me at [bocob2012@gmail.com](mailto:bocob2012@gmail.com) with your address and I will write you a snail mail letter!)"

## 90s

**JORDAN THOMAS '91** was named a Legal Rebel by the *American Bar Association Journal*, an award that recognizes the most innovative

practitioners in the legal world. He joined Labaton Sucharow in July 2011, following a long and distinguished career in federal law enforcement and now serves as a partner at the law firm.

**ERIC D. REYMOND '92** is Lector in Biblical Hebrew at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, CT. He received his PhD in Northwest Semitic Philology in 1999 at The University of Chicago. He is the author of *Innovations in Hebrew Poetry: Parallelism and the Poems of Sirach* published in 2004 and *New Idioms Within Old: Poetry and Parallelism in the Non-Masoretic Poems of 11Q5* published in 2011, both published by the Society of Biblical Literature. He lives in Hamden, CT with his wife, Robin, and children Lucy and Oliver.

**PAUL KYLE '95** has been appointed Film Directing Program faculty for the School of Film/Video at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). He has also been named the Hollywood Foreign Press Association Digital Labs manager for CalArts.

**RAMAA D. MOSLEY '95** writes: "Thought I'd connect and let you all know that I just finished directing my feature film *The Brass Teapot* starring Juno Temple and Michael Angarano based on the comic book of the same title. I've been busy directing commercials and music videos since graduating Bennington. I live in Venice, CA with my husband (artist Cameron Gray) and our two children Isobel, 9 and Brody, 7. Here's a long promo for my film: [vimeo.com/28476430](https://vimeo.com/28476430), password: [alice789](https://vimeo.com/28476430)."

**JESSICA D. PECK '96** received her master's in acupuncture from the New England School of Acupuncture in April 2011. She also completed a second master's at Tufts School of Medicine in Pain Research Education and Pallia in which she implemented a research study treating palliative care patients with acupuncture at Maine Medical Center in January 2011.

**OWEN HARVEY '96** and **HILLARY HOFFMAN HARVEY '99** have shared that they recently welcomed Ignatius Teague Hoffman Harvey to their family after their 12th year of marriage. Ignatius joins Owen and Hillary's other children, Zoë and Sabine. "We are thrilled to announce the birth of our third child... A Bennington romance can certainly have a lasting effect."



**NICHOLAS WROBLEWSKI '96** is a Midwest-based printmaker specializing in hand-cut woodblock prints. His artwork is featured on the band The Great Lake Swimmers' new album, *New Wild Everywhere*. They also incorporated the woodblock print into the design of their new website and merchandise. Check it out at [greatlakeswimmers.com/artwork/](http://greatlakeswimmers.com/artwork/).

## 00s

**LAURIE RUTH KORTECAST '00** shares, "2011 was a big year; I got married and had a son, Griffin, who is now 9 months old. We live in north central Massachusetts surrounded by state land."

**LORIN ALDER '01** says, "I am currently living near Rochester, NY trying my hand in a carpentry apprenticeship. It is a great learning experience."

**EMILY CARUSO PARNELL '01**, husband Jodie, and brother Ari welcomed daughter Mara in July 2011. Parnell also completed her MA in dance theories and practices at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro with the Bennington-inspired final project, "The Permission of Time: Changing practice" by putting the arts first in early learning and primary classrooms.

**NATE JASPER '01** continues to operate his computer training and design company, iTutor Computers, in Northampton, MA (more at [itutor.biz](http://itutor.biz) and [designnorthampton.com](http://designnorthampton.com)). For the past two years he's been the lead graphic/web designer vendor for the largest independently owned auto auction in the USA, Southern Auto Auction in East Windsor, CT ([saa.com](http://saa.com)).

**MARNI HORWITZ MAJORELLE '01** writes: "Hello friends and colleagues! Eric and I wanted to share with you our latest spring project; after 9 months of pregnancy and 28 hours of labor (ouch!), Natasha Majorelle was born on May 12—8 lbs., 2 oz. (big girl for this little lady). It's lots of hard work and not a lot of sleep, but she makes up for it by being cute and making funny gremlin sounds. Natasha looks forward to meeting you and collaborating in the future (obviously she's starting to work right away). Hope you all are well and enjoying your own projects this spring."

**NATASHA HEINES '02** says, "I have been accepted to the Indiana University Textile MFA program, which I will begin in the fall of '12. Most recently, I had been a costume craftsman at Indiana Repertory Theatre in Indianapolis for four seasons. If anyone has ended up in Bloomington, it would be great to hear from you!"

**GUVENÇ OZEL '02** has recently completed an architectural installation called *Cerebral Hut* at the Istanbul Design Biennial, exhibited in the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, which is a kinetic installation that works with an interface that measures brain frequencies and turns them into a reactive environment. A native of Izmir, Turkey, he studied architecture, sculpture, and philosophy at Bennington and holds a master's of architecture degree from Yale University.

**KJ SWANSON '02** writes: "I've just started my first year as a doctoral student at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Within the Divinity School's Institute for Theology, Imagination, and the Arts, I'm researching Charlotte Bronte as a proto-feminist theologian. This work began for me at Bennington, and I'm amazed to be continuing it a decade later overseas."

**CATHERINE BRUCE-SMITH '03** reports, "It's been a while since I connected with Bennington. My recent news is that I am celebrating my first year as a licensed acupuncturist. In the summer of 2011, I graduated with a diploma in acupuncture from Jung Tao School and completed the national boards. It was an arduous four years of study and discipline but well worth it. My practice is becoming established in a rural community just on the border of North Carolina and Tennessee. The mountains offer me plenty of freedom and wildness for my adventurous spirit. I race sailboats on a nearby lake and am creating an illustrated trail guide of a set of woods."

**JESSICA L. KUTCH '03** reports, "I recently left my awesome job as organizing director at Change.org to launch a start-up for workplace organizing. I'm currently a senior fellow at the New Organizing Institute in Washington, DC, where I'm working full time on the project—fundraising, building out the technology, and reaching out to partner groups. We aim to provide the 93 percent of private sector workers without union representation the ability to launch, wage,

and win their own workplace campaigns. Before joining Change.org last year, I worked for five years as a digital campaign manager for the labor union SEIU."

**MEGAN L. ADCOCK '05** says, "I am an alumna who founded a nonprofit organization in the Washington, DC area several years ago. We have recently had a major success providing a large grant to promote life skills and gender equity education in Togo, West Africa." Adcock, a founding board member of the UNITE Foundation, announced that the foundation has awarded Camp UNITE in Togo \$14,000 to support its 2012 summer camps. Grant funds were used to provide life skills lessons to West African summer campers, promoting health, gender equity, and youth leadership education. She currently serves as an all-purpose volunteer for UNITE, in addition to her duties as board secretary and her day job as a second-grade teacher. She served as a community health and AIDS prevention volunteer with the U.S. Peace Corps in Togo, West Africa from 2005–2007. The UNITE Foundation was established in 2007 by a group of returned U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers to serve as a source of support for Camp UNITE. On an annual basis, The UNITE Foundation raises funds from organizational and individual donors, and organizes fundraising events throughout the United States. To date, the \$14,000 grant is its largest ever to Camp UNITE. To learn more about Camp UNITE in Togo, West Africa and how you can get involved, please visit [unitefoundation.org](http://unitefoundation.org).

**BETH PRICE '05** and **ZUBIN SOLEIMANY '05**, **MAT '06** are ecstatic to announce their engagement. Beth writes, "Zubin and I met in John Kirk's traditional music class. Zubin is now in law school at Cardozo and drives a taxicab, as well as being in the taxi union. I'm a music teacher and musician, composing and still playing traditional music in a country band." Zubin proposed from a taxicab he was driving in Manhattan; they are getting married this summer.

**SHIRA STERNBERG '05** writes: "I turned 30, ran a marathon from Bennington to Manchester, VT, and am trying to get an art business off the ground ([Goatpluslion.com](http://Goatpluslion.com)). And I bought a condo in the South End of Boston. Come visit!"

**CARA CHIARAMONTE '07** designed costumes for several Flat Earth Theatre



# TENSMFAS

shows this year and was recently made a full company member of the Watertown, MA-based theater company.

**CHARLOTTE X. SULLIVAN '07** recently worked as a Mars Patroller with **TOM SACHS' '89** Space Program: MARS at the Park Avenue Armory in New York, NY.

**ADAM C. FREED '08** completed his MS in psychodynamic developmental psychology from University College London. He also accepted a commission as Lieutenant in the United States Army and served in the 1-69th Infantry Regiment in New York City. After a long stint at the Infantry School at Fort Benning, GA, he began his PsyD in Boston in the fall.

**RACHEL HUNTER '08** is in her second year at Portland State University where she is completing an MA degree in French language and literature. In January 2013, she will attend the 11th annual International Conference on Arts and Humanities in Honolulu to present her recent research project in the field of foreign language pedagogy entitled "Content Based Instruction in the FL Classroom: Zine Making for Learners of French."

**JASON M. IRLA '08** says, "I don't write in often with news but this seemed fitting to send an update to the alumni office. I've been sitting on this news for a little while but before I announced it I wanted to make sure everything was solid. I have been hired, along with my fiancée Chloe Watson, to a full-time joint assistant professorship position at the University of Maine at Farmington. We will both work in the Department of Sound, Performance, and Visual Inquiry developing a curriculum in painting and digital media. This is a rare opportunity—a full-time joint position?!?!—and we are both extremely grateful for the chance to go and teach at such a great school in a place as beautiful as Maine. There's a bunch of other news as well, our upcoming wedding, a summer residency in Wassaucott, NY, and a few shows, but the position at the University of Maine seemed the most relevant. You can check out other news updates at my website [jasonirla.com/category/news/](http://jasonirla.com/category/news/)."

**AMANDA SULLIVAN '09** has recently completed her master's in child development at Tufts University. She is the recipient of two awards from Tufts, the Eliot-Pearson Research Practice Integration Award and the GSC Outstanding Contribution to Undergraduate Education Award. Her research article "Gender Differences Kindergartners' Robotics Achievement" is currently on press with the *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*. She is a newly accepted doctoral candidate in the child development department at Tufts University, where she researches the effect of new technologies on child development.

## 10s

**CAITLIN R. HUSSEY '10** is teaching science at Kents Hill School in Maine.

**SARA E. LEWIS '10** shares, "I am living in New York as a singer-songwriter and piano teacher. Recently I was a finalist in the Philadelphia songwriter's competition in June and released my first full-length album *Birds Without Cages* in April. It's available at [saralewis.bandcamp.com](http://saralewis.bandcamp.com). I perform regularly at venues in downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn, and I have more than 15 students I teach privately in the Upper East and West sides!"

**DANA C. WOLFSON '11** reports, "I will be starting a teaching fellowship in fall 2012. It is called the progressive education lab and is a new teaching training program being started by the Putney School, The Cambridge School of Weston, The Uganda School, and the Calhoun School. I would love to tell you more about this program!"

## mfas

**DAVID HOPPE MFA '86** published *Food for Thought: Indiana Harvest*, a book of interviews with farmers, agribusiness executives, artisan

producers, purveyors, and food preparers—from master chefs to grill cooks—who are playing parts in Indiana's food renaissance. The book was commissioned by the Indiana Humanities Council and is published by Indianapolis Business Journal Press.

**ODILI DONALD ODITA MFA '90** was recently featured in the *Wall Street Journal* for his elevator mural in the United States Mission to the United Nations building in New York City. Oditia was featured among artists such as Ron Gorchov, Brice Marden, Chuck Close, Carrie Mae Weems, Sol Lewitt, and Ellsworth Kelly, who were chosen by the organization Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies (FAPE) to display their art in consulates and embassies around the world to promote a positive global image of America.

**JAIME CLARKE MFA '97** co-edited *Boston Noir 2: The Classics* with Dennis Lehane and Mary Cotton.

**TAMI HAALAND MFA '00** says, "This year I won several awards. I received an Artist Innovation Award in literature from the Montana Arts Council (other winners in literature were Rick Bass and Mark Sundeen). Humanities Montana has given awards across the state for teaching and service to the humanities and I received one of these awards in June. The students at MSU Billings, where I'm a professor of creative writing, gave me an Outstanding Teacher Award this past spring. Next year Ted Kooser will feature two poems from this book in his American Life in Poetry series.

**REBECCA J.R. LACHMAN MFA '11** is offering free intergenerational poetry writing workshops for women as part of a book-and-arts tour to support my first collection of poetry, *The Apple Speaks*.

**SANDRA SHEA '03**, the editorial page editor for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, has been awarded the Eugene C. Pulliam Fellowship for Editorial Writing. She plans to research the state of poverty in the U.S. and facilitate coverage of impoverished communities by giving poor people technology and training to help them tell their stories. **B**





USED WITH PERMISSION BY STAN HOFFBERGER



### JUDITH (ROSENBERG) HOFFBERGER '54

Judith (Rosenberg) Hoffberger '54, devoted alumna and former trustee, died on September 26, 2012, at the age of 80. Mrs. Hoffberger graduated from Bennington with a concentration in music. She also studied political economy and following graduation volunteered in the research department of the National Democratic Committee in Washington, DC. Mrs. Hoffberger was active in supporting Bennington College throughout the decades, acting as secretary for the Alumnae Fund, publicity chairman for the Washington, DC alumni group, and later regional chairman. In 1984, she was elected to serve on the Board of Trustees and three years later was appointed to the Campaign Planning Committee. She worked as a tennis professional at clubs near her home in Maryland and was an owner/manager of two restaurants in Aspen, CO. Mrs. Hoffberger spent much of her time and energy raising awareness of and funding for causes important to her. She was a vice president of the Henry and Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Foundation, which supports education, the arts, Jewish welfare, and health. She also served on the boards of the Houston Symphony and Dance Aspen. She worked with Jazz Aspen/Snowmass, the Aspen Music Festival, the Maryland School for the Blind, the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, and was active in combating the abuse and neglect of animals. Her considerable generosity included many facets of Bennington's curricular program. She established the Judith Rosenberg Hoffberger Sound Studio and the Judith Rosenberg Hoffberger Music Library. The Hoffberger-Rosenberg Scholarship in Visual and Performing Arts has assisted 48 students since it was established in 1987. A major gift provided funding to further the College's science programs and ongoing collaborations with the Neuroscience Institute based in La Jolla, CA. Those who knew her considered her lively, intelligent, determined, and an excellent judge of character. She is survived by her husband Stanley, her sons Russell and Jeffrey, her brother Henry A. Rosenberg, Jr. of Baltimore, and her grandchildren Valerie Cote, David, Chrissy, James, Simon, and Jody Hoffberger.

The Bennington community extends its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the following alumni, former faculty members, and friends of the College who have recently died as of December 1, 2012.

Asho Ingersoll Craine '36  
 Alice Hutchins Clark '39  
 Constance Fox Ingles '39  
 Faith Reyher Jackson '39  
 Janet Fraser Jones '39  
 Joyce Abbot Noyes '39, P '67  
 Sara Carter Balogh '41  
 Elizabeth Troxell Rice '41  
 Elizabeth Lawrence Van Meter '41  
 Catherine Avery Grove '42  
 Virginia Cordes Stout '43  
 Elizabeth Sizer Allen '44, P '71  
 Suzanne Woodfin Hillman '44  
 Ann Cobb Thorne '44  
 Joy Schuyler Walker '44

Polly Ridlon Wilson '45  
 Elisabeth Evers Griffinger '47  
 Phyllis Bausher Petrak '47  
 Edith Bowes Rees '47  
 Clare Carruthers Pepler '48  
 Anita Palmer Wright '50  
 Elizabeth Winslow Gledhill '51  
 Elizabeth Corey Jeter '52  
 Elaine Allen Flug '53  
 Joseph Ablow '54  
 Loretta Lang Forbes '54  
 Richard Lee '56  
 Dorothy Franks Sellers '57  
 Carole Glover Lawder '58  
 Ella Dobkin Russell '63

Kirk Varnedoe '67  
 Cecilia Guiu Searle '68  
 David Leopold '72  
 Maureen L. Hoy '77  
 Daphne M. Groos '80  
 Patricia Levings '81, P '73  
 Murray Alan Self '81  
 Judith Mandt MFA-W '96  
 Heidi Ferguson '02  
 Irving Adler P '63, former faculty member  
 E. Mandell de Windt P '64  
 Ted Goodman P '73, '77  
 Theodore Kazanoff, former faculty member  
 Christopher Leland, former faculty member  
 James C. Jerome, friend

## B

## ENID "NIKKIE" (KLAUBER) DILLON '42

Enid "Nikkie" (Klauber) Dillon '42 died on July 10, 2012 just weeks before her 91st birthday. Mrs. Dillon graduated in 1942 with a concentration in art and continued her association with the arts and artists for the rest of her life. After graduation she moved to Greenwich Village, NY at the height of the 1940s Bohemian movement where she befriended artists and musicians while working first as a commercial artist and later as a writer of encyclopedia entries. She lived in Paris for a year and then relocated to Laurel Canyon, CA where she became part of the art scene via Ferus Gallery where she worked during the 1950s and 1960s. In addition to a family of acrobats living next door, Nikkie met and befriended such artistic luminaries as Maya Angelou and Ed Kienholz. Mrs. Dillon worked as a commercial artist for publishing houses and wrote architectural specifications for firms in Los Angeles. After relocating to San Francisco in the late 1970s, she applied herself seriously to playing the harpsichord, an instrument she learned to play while a student at Bennington College although she had no formal music training, and she often played with members of the San Francisco Early Music Society. Mrs. Dillon studied ethnic art at the M.H. de Young Museum in addition to ongoing training as an advanced docent. Her love of animals prompted her to support numerous animal-rights organizations. Her considerable energy drew her to support the Civil Rights movement and the cause of the disenfranchised. She continued to support Bennington College through her work with the Bennington Alumni Association.

## ELINOR GOTTLIEB MANNUCCI '48

Elinor Gottlieb Mannucci, a graduate of the Class of 1948, died on July 29, 2012; she was 85. Mrs. Mannucci studied social science while at Bennington and her life and career after college reflected her devotion to the good of others and to improving their lives. She earned a PhD in psychology from City University of New York—where she specialized in the study of the ethical aspects of psychological experimentation with human subjects—in the late 1970s and set up an independent practice. She joined Columbia University's School of Social Work's Development Council for the Center for the Study of Social Work Practices in 1997. Mrs. Mannucci worked as a research associate for a National Institute of Health-sponsored study on heart disease and stress and taught at Hunter College, Fordham University, and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Mrs. Mannucci was very involved with organizations that serve children—particularly those who struggled to overcome disadvantages. She served as a board member of Citizens' Committee for Children as the chair of the Juvenile Justice Committee, was affiliated with the Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. of New York, supported the Osborne Association, which offers opportunities for individuals to transform their lives through programs that reduce crime and its human and economic costs, and Prep for Prep, which focuses on the leadership potential of young people.

Mrs. Mannucci focused her generous attention widely. She supported the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Research at CUNY, Guttmacher Institute, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Graduate Center Foundation of CUNY, and International Institute of Rural Development. Bennington College's students also benefit from two scholarships associated with Mrs. Mannucci and her parents: the Leo and Tekla Gottlieb and the Elinor Gottlieb Mannucci Scholarship funds, both awarded to students studying any subject and who are in financial need. She remained interested in the quality of Bennington's faculty and had fond memories of studying with Peter Drucker when she was a student. Mrs. Mannucci is survived by her son Mark and daughter-in-law Stephanie, her son Anthony and daughter-in-law Katherine, and her five grandchildren, Libby, Matthew, Nico, Nam, and My.

## correction

## ETHEL WINTER HYMAN '45

Ethel Winter Hyman '45 bachelor and master's graduate, teacher, choreographer, director, and dance pioneer died on March 10, 2012, at the age of 87. She always knew that she wanted to dance. She studied various styles as a child and when her parents insisted on college, she chose Bennington. At Bennington the performing arts are placed on par with the liberal arts and students are required to participate fully in their education, both the formation and execution. This respect for performers and engagement by students would characterize her later teaching style for more than half a century. She studied under Martha Hill, the first chair of dance at the College, and Bill Bales who taught modern dance. In 1944, Ethel Winter joined the Martha Graham Dance Company, then resident at Bennington College, while still a student and continued as a member of that company until 1969, returning as a guest artist until 1973. She also performed with Anna Sokolow and Sophie Maslow and toured with her own company. In 1948, she became the first dancer to perform one of Martha Graham's own roles in a solo, *Salem Shore*. Her performance was described as charming, wistful, and romantic. Later roles as the wanton Helen in *Clytemnestra* and vengeful goddess in *Phaedra* demonstrated her range. Ethel Winter had a passion for teaching and is credited by her students with caring for and valuing each one as a unique individual. She is remembered for her positive energy, openness, and as the teacher who led them to essential knowledge about themselves. She taught at Bennington in the early 1950s and was a permanent faculty member of the Graham school from 1943–2006. She also taught for 50 years at Juilliard, retiring in 2003. Additionally, she cofounded the London School of Contemporary Dance in Britain and the Batsheva School in Israel. In 2008, Ethel Winter was honored with the Martha Hill Lifetime Achievement Award. She was predeceased by her husband, Charles Hyman. They met at Bennington College when she returned to pursue a master's degree. He taught stage design and lighting. She is survived by their son, David Hyman. **B**





One thing you can  
count on: there is  
no need to test the  
water if you are  
contemplating  
genuine innovation  
—you can be sure  
that it will be very  
hot.

—Elizabeth Coleman



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“The only thing  
that should make  
leaving college  
bearable is the  
hope against  
hope that you  
are taking the  
best part of it  
with you.”

—Elizabeth Coleman