



# The Grinnell Magazine

Spring 2015

A Diversity of Divinities

# Alternative Economic Privilege

*Learning to recognize both privileges and disadvantages*

Underlying any class-conscious conversations I have with my friends at Grinnell is our economic unity: we are all attending an elite liberal arts college. Because of this common factor, our conversations rarely acknowledge the fact that many people do not have the ability to attend school at all.

Luckily, Grinnell is a little different from most institutions of higher education in the United States. Not only does it accept students from some of the most economically diverse backgrounds, but it also awards students generous scholarships that allow many of us to leave here with far less debt than our peers. Though I am fundamentally opposed to the price tags on a modern undergraduate education, I am truly grateful to attend a college that does not exploit its students for every penny of debt that it can squeeze out of them.

One of the reasons I love Grinnell is that it cultivates a community where students are insatiably curious and eager to share what we observe. Our tight-knit community encourages students to recognize the privileges and disadvantages at work in our own lives so that we can more readily recognize and celebrate the diversity of others.

Grinnellians are good at reminding me to consider my own background before making assumptions about others'. I sometimes feel embarrassed that I have the immense privilege to attend college in the first place, let alone a college with such a stellar commitment to scholarship as Grinnell. Other times, I fail to recognize that some students have the ability to fully pay for school, or are expected to do so. Examining my own opportunities for mobility has led me to ask a question that I cannot easily answer: Do I have economic privilege?

My parents both went to college; I am not a first-generation or even a second-generation student. However, neither of my parents chose to fully enter the traditional job market, instead creating niches for themselves in the arts community they discovered in Lawrence, Kan. My family's diversion from the traditional path of American economic mobility developed further as we began to grow all of our own vegetables and grains, planting and storing them locally. Our way of life became less and less like my peers' when my parents designed and built a wood-stove-heated,

highly energy-efficient home in a rural area just north of Lawrence, where we collect rainwater and raise our own livestock for food.

Despite the fact that I was raised on almost fully homegrown meals, there were a few times when my family was unsure if we could pay for gas that week or buy something I needed at school. My brother and I knew there was a possibility that we would not be getting a check in the mail for the jewelry my mother made, or for the intermittent woodcarving, home design, or letterpress work my dad found. But despite our occasional financial challenges, my parents have sent both of us to college. Privilege is more complex than the relationship between a paycheck, food on the table, and school fees, it seems.

Furthermore, my parents did not send me to school with the ultimatum to find a job after graduation. In the modern jobs discourse, parents spend their time thinking about how to best raise and position their children so they will be attractive to the person or entity that will pay them for work, rather than cultivating interests and skills that may be useful in simple living, such as growing food and fixing things. This is my economic quandary: My parents raised me with more emphasis on skills for simple living and the cultivation of creative interests; and yet here I am getting a degree in political science at an elite school, already distant from the life most people on this planet lead.

Among my peers at Grinnell, I constantly struggle to assert how alternative my home life is, while questioning just how alternative I can be when coming from an educationally privileged background. Luckily, I have become part of a community of creative and inquisitive students who regularly use newfound awareness to place our lives in concert with the shifting world around us. Grinnell's social justice perspective gives us the ability to go beyond the question of why things are the way they are — we demand why things haven't changed yet. Taking it a step further, Grinnell often challenges us to be the ones to change them.

Regardless of where I fit into the economic or social categories of my generation, I will always be thankful that my education at Grinnell gives me the power to first recognize those categories, and now develop the power to change them when they are unjust.



**Rosie O'Brien '16** is a political science and studio art double major who studies radical economics independently. Coming from a community of artists and sustainable farmers in Kansas, she tries to approach political debates from a perspective that challenges societal assumptions about production and consumption in the United States.



**Edward Hirsch '72** in his office at the Guggenheim Foundation in New York City.

Photo by Justin Hayworth

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# The Grinnell Magazine

## Spring 2015

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#### Mission Statement

*The Grinnell Magazine* is published quarterly for alumni, students, parents, faculty, and friends of the College by the Office of Communications. The contents of this magazine are selected to stimulate thought and discussion, to demonstrate the range of opinions and activities on the campus and in its broader community, and to provide news about the College and its alumni. Views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official policy of Grinnell College.

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## THE CASE FOR GRINNELL

### *Our Endowment*

Our endowment is what allows so many students to experience a Grinnell College education. We could not be who we are today without it. We are fortunate to have this resource.

Since 1980, Grinnell has received a total of \$69 million in gifts to support our endowment. During the same time period, our endowment has distributed \$935 million in support of students, faculty, programs, and facilities. The endowment

provides for about half of our operations. A significant amount is applied toward financial aid.

Today, many of our peers' endowments are growing at a rapid pace. Some have surpassed us, due in large part to philanthropy. One might speculate as to why schools with endowments much larger than ours receive higher levels of support. In part, it is due to the wealth of the communities involved. But even more critical is the donor-by-donor belief in the mission of the school, the desire to advance that mission, and the knowledge that every gift is a means to a better future.

We hear occasionally that our endowment stands in the way of giving. The fact is, we consistently – and rather quietly – leverage our generous asset for a mission-driven purpose. We combine it with other revenue, including philanthropy, to provide access and outcomes in ways that most institutions with similar-sized endowments choose not to pursue. Because of this commitment, donors to Grinnell enjoy the ability to partner with our endowment to make a genuine difference.

We celebrate the impact that you, as Grinnellians, make in your respective communities. We recognize that you support many causes with your time, talents, and treasures. Above all, we are thankful for your recognition that support of Grinnell and other philanthropic priorities is not an “either/or” proposition.

To support Grinnell is to engage in a uniquely supportive partnership that allows us to keep pace with our aspirations, specifically because as donors you are neither solely responsible for an organization's survival, nor simply filling gaps in service. Your gift, paired with the endowment, powerfully and directly affords 1,600 students the opportunity to achieve the essence of what Grinnell is all about. If we allow our endowment to stand in the way of our collective philanthropic capacity, we risk succumbing to mediocrity and failing to meet our full potential.

Our resources, combined with philanthropic vitality, position us to achieve our mission of access, education, and service for the common good – an investment in which we all deeply believe. Whether you support the endowment directly or support people or programs on campus, we thank you for helping to sustain the strength and distinctiveness of Grinnell College.

To see it thrive is the reward we share.

– Yours for Grinnell,  
Shane Jacobson  
Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations



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*I found Grinnell  
to be a place where  
I could cross the  
boundaries of disciplines ...*

– Tamar Nyman Lasky '76

## LETTERS

### Too much tolerance

I was sad to discover recently that back in 2011 Grinnell dropped Grinnell College Christian Fellowship (GCCF) as an officially recognized student group. This group meant so much to me in my Grinnell days. The reason it was dropped you might guess: GCCF does not allow practicing homosexuals to be leaders because it goes against its biblical values. It is guilty of “discrimination.” A more newly formed “Grinnellians Seeking Christ” group is listed on Grinnell’s website. This group affirms homosexual behavior for Christians.

It is tragic to me that a college that claims to be diverse and tolerant can be anything but. This is what some have referred to as “the intolerance of tolerance.”

–Tom Brock '75,  
Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church  
Minneapolis

**Editor’s note:** *In 2011, a dispute arose within GCCF when several homosexual members wanted to become leaders in the group. GCCF policy was that homosexual students pursuing same-sex relationships were not allowed in leadership positions. The Student Government Association, citing the College’s nondiscrimination policy, shortly thereafter revoked GCCF’s student status.*

### Public health careers

I was pleased to see *The Grinnell Magazine* highlighting alumni working in public health and learning about Grinnell’s [cooperative] master’s program in public health. I have always found a liberal arts education, and specifically, my education at Grinnell, to be a perfect background for my career in public health.

When I co-wrote my book, *Investigating Disease Patterns: The Science of Epidemiology* (1995, Scientific American), I asked my former history professor, **Philip Kintner**, to review our chapter on the history of epidemiology. To my surprise, I was able to locate his letter with his comments on the published book. The letter is true to scholarly form, exactly like the comments he wrote on my history papers when I was his student in 1974–76. His letter after reading

the published book includes comments on punctuation and grammar, historical comparisons, and references, and encouragement to do more.

We acknowledged his help in the preface to our book: “It was a special pleasure to have the comments of Philip Kintner, Grinnell College professor of history, on Chapter 2.” But there were many other debts, as well. I found Grinnell to be a place where I could cross the boundaries of disciplines, and where my science professors embraced a full vision of the role of science in human endeavors and problems, the strongest of foundations for public health. Let’s not forget **Kenneth Christiansen** ending the semester of Introductory Biology by bringing in recordings of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez!

– Tamar Nyman Lasky '76  
Wakefield, R.I.

To be viable  
for the long haul,  
Grinnell needs to  
wake up and attack  
the real problem ...

– John Pittman '68

## Argentine poet

Upon reading the article by Professor **Susan Ferguson**, “Discovering a Grinnell Connection through an Argentine Poet,” I thought of a beautiful song performed by Argentine singer Mercedes Sosa. After reading the article, I realized that the heartbreakingly beautiful song I had loved for so many years but did not fully understand, called “Alfonsina y el Mar,” was about the suicide of Argentine poet Alfonsina Storni. Upon further research, I found out that the song was written by Ariel Ramirez and Felix Luna in memory of her:

*“You are leaving, Alfonsina, with  
your loneliness,  
What new poems did you go looking  
for?  
An ancient voice of wind and salt  
Breaks your soul and carries it away  
And you float away as in dreams”*

Thank you, Professor Ferguson and Grinnell, for continuing to educate me.

– Cathy Sullivan '84  
San Francisco

## Peace and the military

We are all for peace, especially the soldiers who served in the military. We are all aware of our foreign policy blunders, but I would not use our failures to indict the need for national defense or take away from the soldiers who served this country in the military. If you enjoy your freedom, and we all should, thank our military.

Charles Province wrote, “It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.”

David Skinner '69 (Letters to the Editor, Winter 2014 issue) reminds me of U.S. Sen. William Borah, who famously said, “Lord, if I could only have talked to Hitler, all this might have been avoided.”

– Glen Peiffer '72  
Santa Clarita, Calif.

## Missed the point — Grinnell's out of touch

I believe that you missed the real point of **John Nalezny '87's** comments [Letters to the Editor, Winter 2014 issue].

I have been concerned that Grinnell and other top-tier colleges are out of touch with the middle-class challenges in dealing with college cost and tax challenges.

Just a few years ago I received a letter from Loyola of Maryland, where my son was to be a senior. They were “only” raising tuition 4.6 percent, the lowest increase in recent history, and they were proud of it. With all expenses, my son's college cost us about \$220,000 — a lot of after-tax dollars. Unfortunately my son was not fast enough, smart enough, or disadvantaged enough to get any aid beyond a few small college loans.

Under the cover of raising costs to ensure a top-quality education, Grinnell and other great schools operate in an alternate world when it comes to taking a hard look at the future. If it can't remain relevant to the middle class, which is caught between making

too little and too much money and carrying an increasing tax burden for earned income, Grinnell will end up as a school for the economically disadvantaged, who get financial aid, and the wealthy, who can afford to absorb your unmanaged increases in tuition and related costs.

To be viable for the long haul, Grinnell needs to wake up and attack the real problem, which is the inertia of the organization that does not appear to be capable of seeing a different path forward that would dramatically change the cost structure of a quality education.

When you do, if you ever can, you will be able to respond to Nalezny's question, which has nothing to do with how financial aid and demonstrated need are calculated. Rather it has to do with the financial train wreck that is around the corner for Grinnell and the impact that it is having on his family as they struggle to make a Grinnell education available for their child.

– John Pittman '68  
Basking Ridge, N.J.

*I thought for sure  
the radio station had  
used the train tracks  
to broadcast.*

– Duncan Smith '81

## Grinnell legends questions and answers

In 1959–60 I was program manager for KGRW and had a program that broadcast big band and jazz. The fun part was that I followed **Herbie Hancock '60**, who would play jazz and also perform live on a piano at the station. We often worried that there were no listeners, and I remember one evening promising to give away an album to anyone who simply called in and tried to identify the song I was playing. Herbie would offer to play on the piano whatever was called in. Whoops. Nothing. Things had seemed to deteriorate in terms of reception, and we had an engineer who would go into the residence halls on North Campus and get into the attics where the little transmitters were located to check them out. Winter was the worst

time because of static. And I think squirrels ate a line or two.

I distinctly remember a couple of characters, can't remember their names, who decided to hot-wire the railroad tracks to see if that would help reach students who lived off campus.

I'm not sure how long the hookup lasted – maybe one night – and I did hear that someone called in from Marshalltown. There were all kinds of rumors that we reached Minneapolis, but who knows? I also remember the station being closed down. Whether it was because of the tracks incident or the fact that the signal would sometimes bleed into the town, exposing locals to some of the political and sometimes free form speech that townies might not appreciate, I can't remember. But I do think it was the latter.

– Ron Goodenow '63  
Northborough, Mass.

Very interesting article [“Campus Myth Busters,” Winter 2014]. I thought for sure the radio station had used the train tracks to broadcast. I guess since I'm a microwave electrical engineer I should have thought more about the feasibility.

I heard a rumor that in the '60s chemistry students got in trouble for making LSD in the chemistry labs. Any truth to that? My sophomore desk shelf had a chemical compound formula written on it in magic marker. It took a month or two to figure out it was the chemical formula for LSD.

– Duncan Smith '81  
El Dorado Hills, Calif.

When I attended Grinnell, a story emerged about the great Herbie Hancock. When he was a student at Grinnell, Duke Ellington and his band came to campus to perform. The story goes that

after the show, Herbie connected with some of the musicians and they ended up having an all-night jam session in one of the student lounges. Any truth to this?

– Andrew Ettenhofer '00  
Chicago

I was pleased, if deflated, to read the “Campus Myth Busters” article.

I fear that I might have passed on a few of those legends during my term as an admissions tour guide in the early '80s.

Two other tidbits that I know I mentioned were these:

At the time, the Campus Pub was the third largest seller of Budweiser in the state of Iowa, in part because it was also the source of kegs for dorm parties and relays.

Barber Plaza, between Burling and the Fine Arts Center, was originally intended as a skating rink, but a contractor misread the blueprints and buried the cooling coils under 6 feet of concrete, not 6 inches.

– Steven Boyd '85  
Fayetteville, Ark.

## \$6.1 Million Bequest for Scholarships from Alumna

The fund will help Iowa's most promising high school graduates.

The late **Marilyn Walsh '50**, a native of Woodbine, Iowa, made a \$6.1 million bequest establishing a scholarship fund for Iowa residents admitted to Grinnell College who have lived in Iowa for five or more years immediately prior to receiving the scholarship grant.

The gift came as a surprise to **Eliza Willis**, professor of political science, who was related to Walsh — Walsh and Willis's father were first cousins. After Willis' grandmother — Walsh's aunt — died in 1983, the family lost track of Walsh, whose life was centered in New York. Willis had assumed Walsh died years ago.

"I think it's fabulous that she left that gift," says Willis, who's been on the Grinnell faculty since 1991. "But I regret that we never got to talk about our experiences of Grinnell.

"Marilyn's story loomed large in our family," Willis adds. "My sisters and I found her to be an inspiration."

After graduating from Grinnell with a major in history, Walsh moved to New York City. While working full time, she took night

classes at New York University, earning her LL.B. in 1957, her LL.M. in taxation law in 1958, and her M.B.A. in 1963.

In 1964 Walsh interviewed for a position as a tax attorney with CBS. After the interview, she wrote to her interviewer: "You questioned whether I would be accepted because I am a woman. The real answer to this question is that I have been completely accepted by the partners and clients of one of the oldest Wall Street law firms. Their acceptance of me has been brought about by the fact that I have been able to answer their tax questions and in many instances have been able to show them how they could save taxes by rearranging their transactions."

She got the job. Several years later Walsh became the first female vice president for CBS.

Among Walsh's papers was a handwritten reflection, dated Nov. 24, 1995, on her professional accomplishments: "My main purpose in life — i.e., to pursue a career in tax/finance law in a creative manner to

## CAMPUS NOTES

### War and Peace Project

Two alumnae bring collage exhibition to campus.

**Laura "Lola" Baltzell '83** and **Christiane Carney Johnson '83** returned to Grinnell's campus in the fall, bringing their exhibition of collages with them. The *War and Peace Project*, started by Baltzell, consists of 747 collages made from the pages of a

Soviet-era copy of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Both Baltzell and Johnson took the Tolstoy course from the late **John Mohan**, professor of Russian. He inspired their love of Tolstoy and *War and*

*Peace*. Johnson described Mohan as "one of those professors that change your life."

Baltzell began making collages as a personal project. "I started the project in winter of 2009 following a serious health crisis," Baltzell says. "I wanted to do a long-term project that would encourage me to keep going — a project that engaged me and was fun." After a friend received an equally serious diagnosis, Baltzell invited her to join the project, and it kept growing from there. In addition to Baltzell and Johnson, four Grinnell alumni contributed collages: **Otto Mayr '82**, **Lucy Zahner Montgomery '83**, **Beth Jorgenson Sherman '83**, and **Lynn Waskelis '83**.

Every Friday for two-and-a-half years, Baltzell and several of the other artists would meet in Baltzell's Boston, Mass., studio and complete as many as 10 collages. "You'd feel emotions that would help you choose the ink, paper, and color," says Johnson. There were only a couple of rules

the artists were asked to follow: Each collage had to use at least one word of the original and there would be no touch-ups or redos. Each artist was free to respond to the storyline or not.

An exhibition of all 747 collages was held at Yasnaya Polyana, the Tolstoy family estate, in 2012. Among the bits of ephemera that made their way into the collages were pressed flowers from Yasnaya Polyana, other books, sheet music, and a label from a champagne bottle that Baltzell had kept from her study-abroad trip to Russia in 1981. The artists made a conscious effort not to buy supplies. Once their work gained notice, through their blog, people started donating supplies to the project.

While Baltzell and Johnson were on campus, they gave a talk about their project, visited and talked with Associate Professor of Russian **Kelly Herold's** *War and Peace* tutorial, and led a collage-making workshop.

— Luke Saunders '12





demonstrate that a woman could advance to a high level at a time when few women were doing that – has been accomplished.

“My parents were a major factor in creating the conditions for that success. They brought me up with the idea of having a professional career and to know that I was equal to anyone – man or woman.”

Grinnell College recognized Walsh’s accomplishments with an Alumni Award in 1970 and an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1979. In her honorary degree speech, Walsh told the graduating seniors: “Somehow our brains become magnetized with the dominating thoughts which we have in our minds and attract to us the forces, the people, the circumstances which enable us to achieve the goals which we hold as our dominating thoughts. If your thoughts are negative, you will fail. But if your dominating thoughts are positive and you put your energies behind your selected goal, you will succeed at whatever it is you want to accomplish.”

Walsh, who died Sept. 2, 2013, made her bequest in memory of her mother in appreciation for her advice, encouragement, and love.

– Lisa Lacher and Michele Regenold '89



Marilyn Walsh '50, stands with her mother, Dorrit Walsh, in whose memory she established the Dorrit Walsh Endowed Scholarship Fund.

### Gift larger than previously announced

In the original announcement of the Marilyn Walsh gift, the estate released \$4 million to Grinnell College. However, after final accounting and distribution was complete, the total gift to support scholarships eclipsed \$6.1 million.

## Inaugural Grinnell Lecture

Roberts makes a case for the critical study of religion.



Tyler Roberts, professor of religious studies, gave the inaugural Grinnell Lecture about different types of critical thinking in humanistic scholarship and liberal arts teaching at Grinnell. The new lecture series recognizes a distinguished body of scholarly work, including artistic production and performance, that makes a significant contribution or has a broad impact on the scholarly community. The faculty

member selected receives a \$1,000 honorarium to deliver a lecture to their colleagues.

Roberts’ lecture in December expanded on topics he grappled with after writing the book *Encountering Religion: Responsibility and Criticism after Secularism*. His book covered debates in the field about the right way to study religion “critically,” he says.

“In the lecture I explained why it is important for scholars in my field, and the humanities and some of the social sciences, to think about this question,” Roberts says. “I argued for the value of distinguishing between different kinds of critical thinking.”

The distinction can help faculty members gain a clearer sense of their research and reflect on what it means to teach critical thinking at Grinnell, Roberts says.

The Dean’s office and Center for the Humanities organized the event, which was followed by a dinner.

– Dana Boone

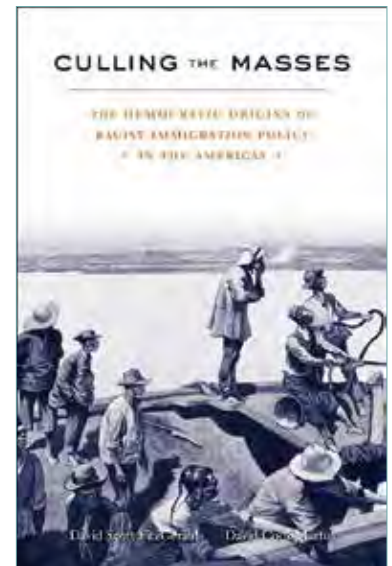
## Book Challenges Conventional Wisdom

On immigration policy in the Americas.

David Cook-Martín, associate professor of sociology, challenges readers to rethink what they know about immigration policy in *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*, co-authored with David FitzGerald, co-director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at University of California, San Diego. Harvard University Press published the book last spring.

Immigration reform continues to make national headlines, and the book is an in-depth look at a complex and often controversial issue.

Cook-Martín and FitzGerald collected and analyzed laws between 1790-2010 from 22 countries. Cook-Martín says he wanted readers to consider who is allowed to enter “our” country and live among “us” in different kinds of political systems. The book challenges the conventional wisdom that democracy and racism are incompatible. The



authors found the United States and liberal democratic countries used exclusionary laws earlier and much longer than undemocratic countries.

“Democracy, as we’ve seen time and time again but especially recently, is no guarantee against racism,” Cook-Martín says.

– Dana Boone



Francisco Goya, *Los Desastres de la Guerra (The Disasters of War)*, 1810-1820, 6th edition, Plate 79 "Murió la Verdad (The Truth has Died)," Etching, 172 x 220 mm. Gift of Helena Percas de Ponseti and Ignacio V. Ponseti.

At the FAULCONER GALLERY



## Against Reason: Anti/Enlightenment Prints by Callot, Hogarth, Piranesi, and Goya

April 3–Aug. 2, 2015

This exhibition of art from the College's permanent collection explores the darker side of the Enlightenment by asking, among other things, what are the dangers of secularism, nationalism, and a scientific method that dismisses rather than exalts the qualities that make us both human and humane? This pan-European exhibition includes works by Jacques Callot, William Hogarth, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, and Francisco Goya. The exhibition was curated by students **Timothy McCall '15**, **Maria Shevelkina '15**, **Dana Sly '15**, **Emma Vale '15**, **Elizabeth Allen '16**, **Mai Pham '16**, and **Hannah Storch '16**, who wrote the catalog during the fall 2014 exhibition seminar under the direction of **J. Vanessa Lyon**, assistant professor of art history.

## Financial Future Update

*This article is part of our ongoing series about Grinnell College's finances. In fall 2015, the Grinnell College Board of Trustees will vote on whether to continue the College's need-blind admission policy. The endowment, student revenue, and philanthropy are the College's main sources of revenue.*

### Grinnell's Endowment: The Past, Present, and Future

During his many years on the College board, from 1941 until his death in 2000, **Joe Rosenfield '25** helped the College turn an \$11 million endowment into \$1 billion. In addition to making his own significant gifts, he also advised the College on strategic investments that paid handsomely.

In 1968, the College invested in a startup company – Intel, founded by **Robert Noyce '49**. The College sold its stake in Intel in 1980 for \$14 million, a profit of 4,583 percent. Another significant investment was the purchase in 1976 of WTDN, a television station in Ohio, which the College sold five years later for \$49 million, making a 281 percent profit.

From 1980 through 2014, the endowment grew from \$400 million to \$1.8 billion. During that time, investments earned \$2.6 billion, spending distributions totaled \$935 million, and gifts to the endowment totaled \$69 million.

The College investment staff researches investment opportunities and makes recommendations to the board's investment committee. The goal of asset allocation is reasonable, but not excessive, diversification that targets a globally diversified portfolio across all asset classes.

While the primary social responsibility of investments is the financial support of the College's mission, the College's investment policy states, "the Investment Committee recognizes the importance of socially-responsible decisions to the long-term financial performance of business enterprises."

The College currently has investments in these environmentally sustainable funds:

Global Environment Fund (GEF) is an environmentally-focused fund that invests in energy and natural resources sectors.

Intellectual Ventures has as one of its key themes clean technology inventions that are related to energy harvesting, recycling, biofuels, energy storage, and sustainable materials.

The College also has endowment funds invested in fossil fuels. As of December 2014, those investments represent 7 percent of the endowment.

The College spends 4 percent of the endowment's market value based on the trailing 12-quarter moving average; this value is determined annually immediately prior to the beginning of the fiscal year in July, based on the 12 quarters ending the previous Dec. 31. Averaging the value over 12 quarters helps smooth out peaks and

## Bachelor of Arts Exhibition (BAX)

April 10–May 3, 2015

*Bachelor of Arts Exhibition (BAX)* features work by third- and fourth-year art students, both majors and students in other majors who work intensively in studio. Students coordinate the exhibition with support from the Faulconer staff – from the submission of proposals, to the selection of a juror, to the installation and awarding of prizes.

## Open to Interpretation

May 15–Aug. 2, 2015

Curated by **Tilly Woodward**, curator of academic and community outreach, and **Lesley Wright**, director of the Faulconer Gallery

The Faulconer Gallery collection is filled with intriguing and curious works of art, which can be enjoyed or interpreted in many different ways. This summer exhibition brings together a range of works and asks visitors to provide comments and captions; selections of comments will be shared for others to enjoy and ponder.



Sir Martin Archer Shee,  
*Miss Kelly*,  
c.1830,  
Oil on canvas,  
30 x 25 in.  
Gift of Mary '49  
and Robert W.  
Norvet '50.

valleys in the market. The fiscal year 2015 distribution was calculated on the March 2011 quarter through the December 2013 quarter, for a value of \$59.2 million.

By policy, the endowment distribution cannot be used to support *only* the College's operating budget. Part of the annual distribution is used to fund the strategic reserve. This split balances existing commitments with future opportunities and responsibilities.

In addition to the strategic reserve for new initiatives, the College also maintains two other reserves: an operating reserve to mitigate downside operating risk and a building, maintenance, and equipment reserve for routine capital projects of less than \$1 million. Larger-scale capital projects are handled through different funding mechanisms.

Plans for creating a more sustainable financial future for the College include proposals for two new reserve funds: one for community infrastructure, to continue building the College's partnership with the city of Grinnell; and one for institutional infrastructure, to fund larger building maintenance projects. Creating these new reserves will require a shift toward a more balanced revenue profile, depending less on the endowment for operating expenses.

The current revenue profile relies heavily on the endowment: 55 percent from the endowment distribution, 39 percent from net student revenue – tuition, room, and board – and 6 percent from gifts and other miscellaneous sources. The long-term target revenue profile is 45 percent from the endowment distribution, 45 percent from net student revenue, and 10 percent from gifts and other sources.



The College is working hard to achieve the targeted revenue profile to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of its business model. However, this is a major shift from the current state, and it will take several years and significant change to achieve.

### Investment Policy at a Glance

- Ensure long-term growth versus maximizing annual income or short-term returns.
- Recognize the impacts of volatility and liquidity on the responsibility to provide predictable/stable financial support.
- Expect total returns to meet or exceed endowment spending plus inflation.
- Preserve or enhance real purchasing power of the endowment into perpetuity.

## Grinnell-in-London Celebrates 40 Years

### Grinnell's first study-abroad program evolves to meet students' needs.

During the fall semester of 1974, 17 Grinnell students went to London with program organizers **Vic Verrette**, then professor of French, and **Doug Caulkins**, then associate professor of anthropology. Nearly 1,400 students have participated in the Grinnell-in-London program since.

To mark the 40th anniversary, the program hosted an event in London on Nov. 21, 2014, at which longtime resident director **Donna Vinter**, adjunct professor of English literature, was recognized for her many years of service. She began teaching in the program in 1980 and became resident director in 1982. During her tenure, she has skillfully managed changes in the program that have come, in part, from the ever-shifting field of off-campus study.

There is significantly more competition now in study-abroad programs in the United Kingdom, Europe, and around the world. Also, students look closely at how the program aligns with their academic and career goals. Standards continue to rise for managing potential risks and crises. In response, the College has experimented with and made several modifications to the Grinnell-in-London program's structure.

When the program began, for example, the focus was on courses. In the early 1990s, the program began placing a few students in parliamentary internships — one of Vinter's initiatives. One student interned in 1992 with then-Member of Parliament Tony Blair. After a few years of experimenting with a wider array of internships in a separate spring program during the early 2000s, the College decided in 2005 to fold internships into the fall program, a feature that continues to this day.

For fall 2014, the College initiated another three-year experiment. Before 2014, Grinnell-in-London has been an "island" program. Grinnell students took courses only from within the College's own curriculum.

This year marks a significant departure from the island approach. With support from IES Abroad, which helps with internship placements and supports student services, Grinnell is partnering with Queen Mary University of London so that some students may take a course at a British university.

"This innovation widens the pool of topics that students can study in London," Vinter says.



## From the *Scarlet & Black's* digital archive

### Reprint of an article from the March 20, 1965, issue

#### *Selma Sparks Campus Civil Rights Fervor*

Four of us, Henry Wilhelm ['68], [the late] John Phillips ['67], Harold Fuson ['67], and I, decided Tuesday afternoon of last week that we had to go to Selma. We left that night.

It was a 20-hour ride in Wilhelm's well-traveled, near-legendary VW. We stopped in Montgomery Wednesday night. At that time demonstrators were still standing on the capitol lawn.

The next morning we drove to Selma, a wealthy [Alabama] town of some 28,000. It's an old town with old customs. The customs are hard to change and that, perhaps as much as anything, is why it was chosen for this drive.

The news releases from Selma give a fairly accurate description of what has happened here. That's not the whole story.

One drives into Selma and enters a never-never land. It's kind of an Alfred Hitchcock version of *Alice in Wonderland*.

The area where the Negroes live and the area where the demonstrations take place — a three-block by three-block federal housing project encompassing Brown's Chapel AME Church and a Baptist church — is a world unto itself, separated from the city by a line of city, county, and state police. People here can't help referring to that line of police as the "perimeter," a military term which, unfortunately, is all too accurate.

Outside that "perimeter" is a town full of people who are having 200-year customs changed in two months. They have been subjected to every kind of torment possible and their patience has been stretched razor thin. It's not a point of justification for anything they've done or will do. It's simply a point one has to remember in dealing with them and trying to understand them.

It goes without saying that these people hate Negroes. Even more they hate the press, which exposes them to the world. But

A hallmark of Grinnell-in-London has been the creative use of the city as a place of study by the Grinnell faculty as well as the London-based adjunct faculty. Some of these courses have included:

- Jerry Lalonde's Classical Archaeology and Art in British Museums.
- Charles Cunningham's Bridges, Towers, and Skyscrapers.
- Elizabeth Prevost's Experiencing Postcolonial London: Locating the World City in Social, Political, and Cultural Performances.
- Donna Vinter's The London Stage.

"I hope and trust that the program will continue to be guided by its original vision: To find creative ways to marry the best of the small-campus, academically rigorous, liberal arts Grinnell ethos with the wide-open, three-dimensional encyclopedia of human culture, politics, and history that is London — in other words, Grinnell-in-London," Vinter says.

— Michele Regenold '89



Donna Vinter has been the resident director of Grinnell-in-London since 1982.

even more, they hate the northern college student. The four of us are an unfortunate combination — northern college student pressmen.

Inside the "perimeter" it is a different world. Everyone but white townspeople are free to come and go as they want so long as they don't march and so long as they don't try to go through the "Selma Wall," the police barricade that you see in newspapers.

Inside there is a chaos and an order. Leaders, tireless men, bring order through an unseen system of communications.

A party-like atmosphere prevails most of the time and, as time passes, this atmosphere increases. It is difficult to imagine that this is the same group of demonstrators who were beaten a week ago and had one of their own killed.

The best example of this came Sunday morning when a group of ministers tried to march to church.

They were, as you know, stopped.

As they stood at the "Wall," stomach to stomach, eyeball to eyeball, with the troopers, one expected anything. Anything, that is, but what happened. When everyone realized that the ministers weren't going anywhere, they started laughing and joking, exchanging cigarettes and matches. I was standing next to Wilson Baker, public safety director, when he confronted the marchers. There was no hate. He told them they couldn't go. They didn't. He said he was sorry. He was.

The four of us are working as newsmen. Fuson and I have ABC press cards which I managed to get through means which would make a redneck indignant and probably make Sheriff Clark

furious. Phillips and Wilhelm have no press identification but with their cameras they go everywhere with everyone assuming they are pressmen.

We did not come to Selma to demonstrate, and we have not demonstrated. We came because we wanted to see, and we wanted to tell others.

In the few words I have here I cannot begin to describe the Selma demonstration. It is a situation that will require millions of words and hundreds of pictures. We have lived with demonstrators, police and townspeople, yet I'm not sure any of us could begin to draw a clear picture of it all.

You have to come to Selma to know Selma.

— Bob Hodieme '68

## Amazon Smile

### Shop online and donate

Shop at Amazon and support Grinnell College at the same time through its AmazonSmile program. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price to the eligible charitable organization of your choice.

You can sign up with your regular [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) account info and select Trustees of Grinnell College as the beneficiary. As you shop, watch for products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation."

Although there is no tax deduction, there's also no cost to the purchaser or to the College to participate in the program.

### S&B Archive

Access the digitized archive at [usiagrc.arcasearch.com/Research.aspx](http://usiagrc.arcasearch.com/Research.aspx).



In her research and teaching, **Danielle Lussier**, assistant professor of political science, focuses on democratization, political behavior, and religion and politics, with regional emphases on postcommunist Eurasia and Indonesia. Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Democracy*, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, and *Slavic Review*. Her book *Constraining Elites in Russia and Indonesia: Political Participation and Regime Survival* is under contract with Cambridge University Press.

# Value of a Sabbatical

*Studying Democratization and the Intersection Between Religion and Politics*

As the fourth-most populated country in the world, and the largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia plays a crucial role on the global stage, especially in the emerging region of Southeast Asia. Curiously, though, it remains largely unknown to most Americans, including most Grinnellians. My scholarly work for Grinnell's 2014–15 Harris Faculty Fellowship seeks to address some of these gaps in our knowledge.

My areas of research expertise include democratization and the intersection between religion and politics, topics that have brought me in recent years to Indonesia. The country experienced a transition from authoritarianism in the late 1990s and has since evolved into one of the developing world's most robust democracies. My previous research reveals that religion has influenced this process, as Indonesians who are active in religious life participate in politics at higher rates.

While there is much academic research linking religious service attendance to more regular political participation in the United States, we know very little about whether such a relationship exists among Muslims or in new democracies. I am exploring these questions in a new research project made possible by the Harris Fellowship and spending six months of my leave in Indonesia to carry out fieldwork. Research fellowships like the Harris allow Grinnell faculty members to stay at the cutting edge of their disciplines, ensuring that they bring the latest methods, approaches, and findings in their fields to students in the classroom.

My current research involves participant observation at several Muslim, Protestant, and Catholic communities in the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta. Located in the center of Indonesia's most populous island of Java, Yogyakarta stands at the crossroads of different religious traditions. It has substantial numbers of modernist and traditionalist Muslims, as well as sizeable Catholic and Protestant communities, and is known for its long history of tolerance among religious groups.

I spend my days attending worship services, social activities, and administrative meetings at four mosques and four churches across the city, as well as interviewing active members of these communities. My aim is to understand how the communities are organized, what opportunities members have for developing civic skills, how members are exposed to political information at worship and

nonworship gatherings, and how the relationships developed in houses of worship transfer to other segments of members' lives.

This ethnographic research, together with information I will gather through surveys of worshippers, is designed to serve as the basis for an academic book on the relationship between religious practice and democratic participation. Three 2014 Grinnell graduates – **Lily Jamaludin**, **Carmen Nelsen**, and **Brent Soloway** – all contributed to the preliminary research for this project in a group Mentored Advanced Project on “Religious Practice and Political Participation” we completed last spring. I anticipate finding additional ways to collaborate with students on this study in future semesters, allowing those students an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with original social scientific research.

I am also using my time in Indonesia to expand my teaching capacities by immersing myself more fully into the country's culture and history. My experiences here following a recent presidential election and growing concerns about Islamic radicalism are exposing me to a richer set of discussions and materials than are available in the United States, helping me reinvigorate my Democratization and Islam and Politics courses at Grinnell. When I return in fall 2015, I plan to offer a new, interdisciplinary First-Year Tutorial on the Politics of Art in Indonesia. In this class, first-year students will explore Indonesia's rich artistic traditions in music, puppetry, and dance as a window onto the country's political and social history, including clashing religious kingdoms, colonialism, and post-independence dictatorship.

By integrating myself into the religious and scholarly communities of Yogyakarta, I intend to strengthen Grinnell's connections in a part of the world where the College is less well-known. I have been fortunate enough to give presentations and guest lectures at two local universities and have become acquainted with many Indonesian professors. I seek to build on these relationships to create opportunities for my students to interact with Indonesian students through discussion forums or Web-conferencing formats. Additionally, I have the goal of incorporating student travel to Indonesia for my Islam and Politics seminar, so that more Grinnellians can have the opportunity to study Islam from the perspective of the world's largest Muslim-majority country. ■

# Paying for a Grinnell Education

## *Focus on Access and Achievement*

Financial aid and college affordability invariably dominate the conversations we have with families considering Grinnell. First, many are worried about paying for college and wonder if Grinnell's sticker price will exclude them. Second, they want to better understand the financial aid process and how their specific financial circumstances will be viewed in the financial aid process.

These concerns make sense. Colleges around the country, Grinnell included, are struggling to balance the question of cost versus quality. Educating students at Grinnell requires considerable individualized attention, both inside and outside the classroom. This tailoring of the Grinnell experience is what makes it unique, but it also comes with a high price tag. If we couldn't offer major financial aid resources, we'd run the risk of pricing ourselves out of consideration for many students.

Last year my office disbursed nearly \$46 million in institutional grant and scholarship aid to students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. While we are the fortunate beneficiaries of a robust endowment, supplemented by gifts from friends and alumni, we can no longer rely on our endowment to underwrite such a large share of the College's operating costs.

At its core, our financial aid program is designed to make a Grinnell education possible for every admitted student. The financing of that education remains a three-way partnership between the parents, student, and College. To this end, the College recently began to use the CSS Profile application to determine the financial capacity of parents and their student.

It is easy to assume Grinnell employed the CSS Profile to extract larger contributions from students and families. While the Profile does calculate a higher contribution in some cases, that is not the rule. Nationally, 40 percent of Profile filers in 2014-15 were determined to have lower contributions than the contribution calculated through the methodology used with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Our move to the CSS Profile was motivated by our belief that it provides a more in-depth representation of a family's ability to pay for college. This allows Grinnell to more equitably distribute our institutional resources. The Profile tries to compare families from diverse economic backgrounds on a level playing field. The financial obligations associated with living in Manhattan, N.Y., for example, are different than those in Manhattan, Kan.

The Profile is nimble enough to recognize these differences in a way FAFSA cannot. The needs-analysis formula used by the Profile is constantly monitored, improved, and debated by those who use it. It is reviewed and updated annually by economists and financial aid professionals and is sensitive to current economic indicators. It gives us the most equitable indicator of each family's ability to contribute to the cost of college. Sometimes this results in a higher expected family contribution than we would have used before we started using the Profile; other times it does not.

Grinnell's financial aid program is unique among its peers in that it focuses on access and achievement. Our endowment not only allows Grinnell to provide robust aid packages to students with significant financial need, it also focuses resources on recognizing achievement in high school in the form of merit aid. In combination, these two programs aim to ensure we enroll a diverse class of students.

Grinnell has recently received accolades in the press for leading the nation in enrollment of Pell Grant-eligible students. This is an important accomplishment that should be celebrated. Less heralded, but equally important, is our continued ability to enroll students from all economic backgrounds. We continue to meet our goals of enrolling an economically balanced class, with an even distribution of students from low-, middle-, and high-income families. Our new policies have successfully kept Grinnell's doors open to students that represent our nation as a whole. Maintaining this accessibility will continue to be a priority of the College even as we contend with rising costs.

Differences between the CSS Profile's need calculation and what a family feels they need are not uncommon. Even after grant aid is awarded, loans may be the only way a student can cover the remaining costs of attending Grinnell. For several families, the value of such a highly individualized education is worth loan financing.

I like to think of Grinnell's financial aid program as an investment in every Grinnellian's future. It's why we continue to place significant resources in our need- and merit-based financial aid programs.

There are no easy answers to the questions surrounding rising college costs. At Grinnell, I am fortunate to have a group of smart, dedicated, and financially prudent colleagues tackling these issues. We remain committed to a financial aid program that, at its core, endeavors to allow a student to choose Grinnell. ■



# A Diversity of Divinities

*Grinnellians' leadership roles in different faith traditions.*

by Claire Sykes

Think about Grinnell College, and religion may be the last thing that comes to mind. Regarded as a secular campus — the “second-most godless” one in the country, some have said — it attracts a multicultural and progressive student mix that, from a distance, hardly reflects an obvious spiritual devotion.

But go into the Joe Rosenfield '25 Center on Friday nights and you'll find Jewish students gathered around a dinner table for Shabbat. Stand outside Herrick Chapel and spirituals spill from the Young, Gifted, and Black Gospel Choir. Every Sunday morning before Mass downtown, student Bibles open to dedicated study. Add to this Christian Scientists and Christian Athletes, the Muslim Prayer Group and mindfulness meditation, the Quaker Friends Silent Meeting and the Queer and Christian group, Hindus and secular humanists, and a rich array of religions and philosophies abound here — right in there with atheists, agnostics, and skeptics.

“Grinnell is a welcoming and comfortable place for students who are practicing or exploring religions and other spiritual interests. Religious diversity here is as accepted as cultural diversity. It's an amazing time to have such a safe, respectful environment in which to ask questions, learn from each other, and build community. Because from here, students all go out to live their lives in global communities,” says the Rev. Deanna Shorb, chaplain and dean of religious life and founder/director of the Center for Religion, Spirituality, and Social Justice (CRSSJ) at Grinnell.

That clerical title of hers reaches beyond Christian to the multireligious, within a department that serves students of all religions and spiritualities. Whether it's assistance finding a place on or off campus to worship, or providing transportation for the College's Korean Baptists to Iowa City or Muslims to Cedar Rapids, the CRSSJ is for all Grinnellians.

Photo from iStock.com, by /cruise.





Photo by Justin Hayworth

**Rachel Weiss '98, associate rabbi at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, New York City.**

It hasn't always been this way at Grinnell, founded as it was by Congregationalists in 1846, complete with mandatory chapel. By the 1970s the College Board of Trustees voted to sever ties with the United Church of Christ, and in 1996 Shorb arrived as the College's first female and full-time chaplain.

In fall 2001, the CRSSJ received a \$1.47 million Lilly Foundation endowment grant, spread over five years. One of only 88 colleges and universities in the country (most of them with religious affiliations) to receive the grant, Grinnell has spent this generous fiscal gift on curricula and convocation speakers, internships and scholarships, student international travel and language education, and seminary and graduate school. "The foundation was interested in getting more of the nation's best and brightest in the pulpit," Shorb says.

Here are five of those best and brightest. Though not all of these Grinnellians received a Lilly grant, their experiences at Grinnell helped shape their faiths in ways that only strengthened their own relationships to the spiritual. They carried this into further education or straight to work in their communities. As innovative thinkers and social changers, boundary-breakers and impact-makers, they're leading the way, enriching and altering the lives of others.

### **Building Extensive, Unexpected Relationships**

Rabbi **Rachel Weiss '98** has always loved ritual and tradition. "For me, as a rabbi, it's about finding the place where we can preserve Jewish traditions that connect us to one another and weave us together – emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, and fundamentally within the daily aspects of our lives," she says. "One of the most important things we can do for one another is to show up, be present, and be witnesses to major milestones and

celebrations, and at points along the way. One of my primary goals is to enrich the Jewish lens through which we see the world and create a space where all people can come to one place and be welcomed."

That place is New York City's Congregation Beit Simchat Torah. Here, where Weiss joined as assistant rabbi in 2010 and now serves as associate rabbi, Jews who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and straight gather in the world's largest LGBTQ synagogue. "The blessing of our congregation is that we've got many different demographics," says Weiss, who lives in Brooklyn with her wife, **Julia Tauber '95**, and their two daughters. But she admits that such a variety is also a challenge: "How do we create opportunities for everyone to come together and work on issues that aren't necessarily in our individual self-interests, but sometimes differ among us and compete, and yet still meet our communal needs and maintain a strong voice of one community? By building extensive and unexpected relationships with each other."

It's something Weiss did a lot of at Grinnell. "Many of us came from different places and were on the margins for different reasons. I experienced Grinnell as deeply religious because of the plurality of voices, social justice, and awareness of what it takes to transform community and society. Its core value of progressive education as a mode to change the world is deeply connected to many of us who come from faith traditions." At Grinnell, Weiss won a Lilly Endowment fellowship for two years of tuition and expenses at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Upon graduation from there, she worked as a social worker with Mexican immigrants outside Chicago. She also knew she always wanted to be a rabbi.

Her Jewish family wasn't particularly religious, and the Sunday school she attended at age 8 only made her want to learn more, so she asked to go to Hebrew school. That was 1984, and the family joined a Reconstructionist



**Chad Herring '97, minister at John Knox Kirk Presbyterian Church, Kansas City, Mo.**

synagogue, “which really became an anchor in my life,” she says. It was a time when the liberal Jewish world had moved toward egalitarianism and was slowly beginning to include gays and lesbians. There were only a small number of “out” rabbis when Weiss came out as a lesbian at Grinnell. “There, I was learning social values and progressive thoughts that were in line with the religious and family values I grew up with. I consider myself privileged to stand on the shoulders of those who worked so hard before me,” she says.

Weiss’s Judaism grounded her at Grinnell, where the challah dough she braided for weekly campus Shabbat dinners led to meeting Tauber, who wondered who the fabulous bread baker was. “Grinnell teaches you to think critically and act with passion,” says Weiss. “That’s what Judaism is to me. Our religious identity should enhance and promote our social consciousness. We have the remarkable capacity as human beings to experience different things that are deeply beautiful and traumatic at the same time, and be in the presence of community with each other to receive and give support for both. I get to do that in the Jewish and queer community, and for that I’m incredibly grateful.”

## Encouraging Christian, Political Reflection

Growing up a Presbyterian “preacher’s kid” in rural Iowa and suburban St. Louis, from an early age the Rev. **Chad Herring '97** was nurtured within loving religious communities that valued the thoughtful exploration of faith – with all its questions and doubts – and the active engagement of working toward a just society. “This enabled me, as a kid, to explore really profound ideas in a safe and comfortable space. Everybody has his or her ‘JFK moment.’ For me that was the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster and how to make sense of a world where such tragedies could take place. These thoughts led me to conversations at the academic level. Coming from a forgiving and understanding church environment, I went into college thinking there was a very real possibility of doing further work in religion, and maybe even a ministry.” Herring followed in his father’s footsteps and, since 2005, has been a minister, serving for the past two years at the John Knox Kirk Presbyterian Church in Kansas City, Mo.

Grinnell’s religious studies program, with help from a merit-based scholarship, gave Herring the foundation to go on to divinity school “by providing me with a very solid academic and historic background in all the world religions. **Harold Kasimow** [professor emeritus] taught me what gracious and smart Jewish scholarship was all about. **Howard Burkle** [the late professor emeritus], who taught existentialism, helped me understand how philosophy and literature provide a theoretical and sometimes unspoken narrative that people live through. The two showed how warmhearted Jewish and Christian scholars can work together.

“People of different faith traditions need to understand each other so they can live well with each other. In this increasingly fragmented time, the human impulse to understand the Divine leads us to work together across our differences, rather than fighting each other. This is what I took from Grinnell, and it’s stayed with me since.”

Today in his ministry, gay and lesbian equal rights, and racial reconciliation after the police shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., particularly interest Herring. So do the immigrant kids in his community, many who come from Cameroon, El Salvador, and Korea. His church is working with the local schools, exploring tutoring opportunities and offering food-bank support to families.

“We need to ask, ‘What in our community causes God’s heart to ache?’ John Knox Kirk is a religious community that is socially aware and ultimately reflects that in the work that we do. I believe that Jesus was political; the root of that word is *polis* [city]. He was concerned about the plight of people in the public sphere – the poor, the hungry, the outcast, the imprisoned – and he was teaching others to love and open their hearts to



**Jikyo Bonnie Hazel Shoultz '63, Buddhist chaplain at Syracuse University.**

them. What I'm trying to do as pastor is encourage this Christian, political reflection so that people are moved to address the issues that Jesus was concerned about."

Herring will tell you it's about relationships and forming bonds of love and friendship. He's convinced his church community will continue to thrive — and not just because families will come to worship. "But also, there are people living in our area who are looking to impact people's lives and will join us."

It's something that humbles Herring, who says he feels honored to be pastor. "It's important work. And what a great calling, this intersection of the intellectual, community organizing, and compassion building. It's a wonderful confluence of possibilities. I get to think about important things and talk about them every week to people who want to listen."

### **A Calling to Zen Buddhism**

Look at the Rev. **Jikyo Bonnie Hazel Shoultz '63** now and it's hard to believe she suffered a brief nervous breakdown while she was a Grinnell student. But that was decades ago. Her time here, from 1959–61, changed her life for the better.

For starters, she loved the comparative religion course she took. "The two I studied the most were Hinduism and Buddhism. But life then didn't turn out that I would practice either of them. Instead, my interest went dormant," says Shoultz. At the same time, she got involved with the most politically radical students on campus, picketing the ROTC Military Ball and marching in the streets of Des Moines, Iowa, protesting nuclear armament.

Fast-forward to 1996. Shoultz was 55, working at Syracuse University as associate director for research and training in the Center on Human Policy, which advocates nationally for people with disabilities. That's when she decided to learn how to meditate. At the Zen Center of Syracuse, she only wanted to further her practice. "I realized fairly soon that people could actually be transformed in really positive ways, and that attracted me a lot," says Shoultz, who found that meditation helped her give up her video-game habit. "Also, there was no doctrine or dogma required." Three years later, she moved into the Zen Center. Before retiring from Syracuse in 2005, she became an ordained Zen Buddhist priest; she has served as head monastic since 2006 and in 2014 was named a dharma teacher.

Of her Zen Buddhist life, Shoultz, who was raised Christian, says, "It feels like not a choice, but a calling or a



**Cynthia Barnes Johnson '64,**  
retired Unitarian Universalist minister.

requirement that I must do this. Certainly, I've had many times where I've had doubts and resistance, and each time I just resolve it and keep going."

Meanwhile, she helps others. She volunteers as Buddhist chaplain at Syracuse, teaching (non-Buddhist) mindfulness-based stress-reduction meditation to students and faculty, through a donor-funded wellness initiative. Shoultz also manages this philanthropic gift that pays for library materials, speakers, faculty training, and research — on meditation, yoga, tai chi, and other contemplative arts — and is working on the sustainability of the initiative. She's also an adviser to the Syracuse University Student Buddhist Association, recruiting meditation teachers and leading one of six weekly sittings herself. As chaplain since 2005 for the Onondaga County Justice Center in Syracuse, N.Y., she organizes and teaches mindfulness meditation twice a week to inmates there.

"I see myself as a connector and a servant. I'm 73 now and I need to wind down. It wouldn't make sense for me to have an ambition to be a more prominent leader. The best way I can provide service is by building things that can last after I'm not very involved in them anymore. I don't know how long that might be."

While Shoultz continues to give, she receives something she never had when she was younger — equanimity. "I used to be much more at the mercy of my passions, of getting swept up into one side of a polarized situation. Through my practice, I've been able to distinguish between reactivity and responsiveness. When you throw yourself into a social movement so

that it replaces self-reflective work, you're less effective. Equanimity doesn't mean don't act, but to calmly take action that is meant to make things right or call attention to things in a different way."

For Shoultz, it's no longer about marching in the streets and trying to change the system. It's about the people in that oppressed system — about building personal relationships with them. When that happens, it betters everyone's lives.

## **Strengthening Cross-cultural and Interfaith Connections**

The Rev. **Cynthia Barnes Johnson '64** knows she doesn't have to travel halfway around the world to arrive at the deeply spiritual. But that's exactly what this retired Unitarian Universalist minister will be doing in October 2015 when she steps off the plane in the Yunnan Province of China. In a place with 25 different ethnic groups (the greatest number for any province in the country), for 13 days she'll lead "The Spirit of Travel" cultural tour exploring the spiritual traditions of Yunnan in its Buddhist grottos, Taoist shrines, ancient mosques, and sacred mountains. Sponsored by the owners of Linden Gallery in Door County, Wis., where Johnson and her husband Al live, the tour rightly embodies her own philosophy of how to live in our contemporary world, she says.

"We live within multiple stories of ethnicity, religion, class, and race. People's individual perceptions are pieces of the truth, often within a specific religious community of believers. But being committed only to your own ideas, thinking you're right and everybody else is wrong, is a very unuseful and disassociative way to live. Strengthening cross-cultural and interfaith connections will help us understand each other better and can open us to a more life-affirming sense of other people with other perspectives. I'm interested in what binds us together, how all our stories fit within a larger story," Johnson says.

Concern for the world is something this Grinnellian has experienced since the age of 9, when her mother first took the family to the Unitarian church in Rockford, Ill. "She wanted to be in a congregation that emphasized social justice," Johnson says. She came to Grinnell after being turned down by several East Coast women's colleges, not because of her political or social interests. "But I ended up in a place that was just right."

At Grinnell, she was struck by the fact that the world was big and complicated, and that she knew very little; so she set out to learn as much as she could. While most students focused on their academic work, Johnson attended every College-sponsored lecture, panel discussion, theatrical production, and concert. Meanwhile, she read almost one book a week on her own. Within the 1960s era of social change, she marched and fasted against nuclear testing and especially appreciated **Ed Gilmore's** Program

in Practical Political Education. “I was a mediocre student, but I was becoming educated about the world.”

After graduating, Johnson taught fifth and sixth grades until motherhood took over. There in Appleton, Wis., she twice served as president of the League of Women Voters. Her family moved to Dallas in 1985 and six years later she earned her master’s of divinity from the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. For 11 years, she chose the Unitarian Universalist minister’s life, retiring in 2000. In Bailey’s Harbor, Wis., Johnson continues to preach, teach, and volunteer. She’s one of 10 local clergy who contribute to the “Faith Perspectives” column in the *Door County Advocate*; she serves on a committee of northern Door County ministers who work together on community issues.

“What binds us together is a belief that the work of the world is worth doing and that we can be enriched by doing it together,” she says.

### Embodying His Sufi Name

When a Sufi sheik gives a Sufi name to an initiate, it’s the latter’s responsibility to do all he or she can to embody that name. For Imam **Tarell “Ahmed” Rodgers ’93**, the name of Ahmed he received in 2006 meant living up to something he had been trying for all his life — “one who is worthy of praise.”

But for many years he thought he was unworthy, as he drank and partied heavily at Grinnell. “There were so many different cultures, politically and religiously, which totally challenged my belief systems. I was faced with ‘Who am I?’ But I hid behind a façade of bravado,” he says. The inner turmoil he felt eroded his social life and grades. “People at school and in my family were trying to help me, but I didn’t know how to reach out or, in some cases, receive the help. So I began a pattern of running from life.”

Now his life is one of service — as an imam since 2010 in the Shadduli Sufi Order in New York City — extending a hand to those devoted to, or just curious about, Sufism. Rodgers leads prayer and healing circles and two-day mindfulness-based stress-reduction retreats around Brooklyn and Manhattan (also for prisoners and former inmates living in halfway houses). He also gives talks at universities and interfaith organizations in the area. With a master’s in education from Aurora University, he writes job-skills curricula directed toward former inmates and drug addicts wanting to work in retail or as home-health aides and customer-service interns.

“Doing this allows me to express my inner light, by teaching others that you can leave your past behind and let your light shine on all the beauty that’s within you. Everyone has something of value to contribute, whether they’re homeless or have broken the law, and regardless of their creed or belief system. I believe the Divine God lives through all beings; we all are a reflection of God and there is no separation. Let’s celebrate the Divine together.”



**Tarell “Ahmed” Rodgers ’93**, imam in the Shadduli Sufi Order, New York City.

Rodgers first embraced the teachings of Islam in 1990 at the Nation of Islam’s Mosque No. 7 in Harlem, while visiting Queens, N.Y., where he grew up, during a summer off from Grinnell. “I was seeking an answer and latched onto its message of black empowerment and self-development.”

After that summer, Rodgers called himself Tarell X and adopted a fresh attitude toward his studies and his life. “I felt a sense of self-love and worth; however, I still isolated myself from many.” He sees now how being at Grinnell led to his Sufism. “Grinnell is a place of unity that’s inclusive of everything. There’s not just one way. There’s a diversity of people and the freedom to express that diversity. In such a small community, I deeply connected with students of all types and the differences fell away.”

In 1999 Rodgers went on The Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, and met people from all over the world who embraced him. He also saw poverty and the Saudi government refusing to allow tribal Africans to participate in hajj rites. Instead of experiencing an epiphany and deepening of faith, as he initially thought he would, he felt disillusioned — and found himself still seeking. When he returned to the States, he sought out books about healing and self-love from a Sufi perspective.

It’s still not always an easy road for Rodgers. “In order for me to maintain my inner light and self-love, I have to give it away. Every time I’m helping someone who’s suffering or marginalized, and every time they are empowered, that keeps my own light shining.” ■



# A Poet, a Scholar, a Believer in the Liberal Arts

## A Q&A with Edward Hirsch.

by Cindy Deppe

Football player. Poet. Baccalaureate speaker. Watson Fellow. Academic All-American. **Edward Hirsch '72** played many roles as a student on the Grinnell campus, where he found his passion and vocation. At his commencement, he spoke philosophically to peers and parents about the challenges facing liberal arts graduates — words prophetic for today's Grinnellians, too.

Throughout the interceding 40 years, Hirsch earned a doctorate in folklore, taught creative writing and literature classes on college and university campuses, published nine collections of poetry and five books of prose, and won numerous prestigious awards and fellowships, including the Rome Prize (he was nominated by poet laureate Robert Penn Warren) and a MacArthur Fellowship.

Today, as president of the renowned John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Hirsch is an advocate for the arts and humanities, an acclaimed working poet, and a self-described “public intellectual.” During fall semester 2015, he will return to campus for **Writers@Grinnell** to read from and talk about his 2014 collection,

*Gabriel*, a book-length elegy for his son. In this interview, Hirsch reflects on his writing career, his advocacy for poetry, and his views on the value of liberal arts education.

**Your first publication in *The Grinnell Magazine* was in 1972, when you wrote “The Abandonment of the College Senior,” in which you reflected on the cultural struggles and economic conditions facing liberal arts graduates. What would you tell the class of 2015?**

Peering over the ledge into adulthood, I felt ill-prepared for the practical world we were suddenly about to face. I was worried. I knew we had a solid educational grounding; I knew we had been well nurtured, but I wasn't sure how we



Photo by Justin Hayworth

would make our way in the world. I'm sure many students feel the same way. The worries have only increased.

Nonetheless, my focus would be quite different today. Looking back, with perfect hindsight, I don't think I'd be so consumed by worry. The most crucial thing that you can do in college is to explore your interests and find your passion. You're lucky if you can discover your vocation. That's what happened to me. I didn't know the hurdles I would face; of course, I had no idea how tough it could be, but I had started on my path. That's what I'd recommend: Imagine a life for yourself, then try to live it.

**Early in your career, you described yourself as a “poet-athlete;” later you were described as an “urban poet;” and more recently, as an “accessible poet.” How would you describe yourself today?**

I'm a poet, a critic, a teacher, and the president of a foundation. I started out as a poet and a jock (I wish I could still call myself a “poet-athlete” but that would be a stretch), a city kid who wrote poetry. Over time, I've tried to write more and more clearly, to reach readers. I am a poet first of all, but I've also tried to be an advocate for poetry itself, for the kind of experience that poetry delivers. It connects us more deeply to ourselves while linking us to others through language. That also led me to try to make the case for the liberal arts, which are so crucial to our humanity.

**Several of your works were set during periods of insomnia, which you've credited with being “good writing and thinking time.”**

I've struggled with sleep throughout my life. I think it's healthier to sleep well, but I've tried to make something out of my insomnia. It's during those long nights that I've done most of the serious reading in my life, for example. I also like the situation that insomnia sets up inside a poem — I like the solitary feeling it creates.

**What would you recommend to the young, aspiring writer?**

You need discipline and courage to face the blank page every day. You're looking into the abyss of yourself. Some work better by day, others by night; some prefer a regular schedule, others love irregularity. The key thing is to work, to read, to learn your craft. You can't rely totally on inspiration. *Poesis* means making, and you need to learn how to make something.

**Was there creative writing at Grinnell in your day?**

Grinnell didn't have much in the way of creative writing when I was a student. Each year, the Selden L. Whitcomb Prize brought in one poet. I think my own path would have been much less lonely if there had been creative writing courses in poetry. Nonetheless, I had great encouragement from my teachers, both inside and outside of the classroom. I'm thinking of **Carol Miller Parssinen '63**,

Ed Moore, Mike Lieberman, and Jim Kissane '52. Many of my teachers outside the English department also liked the idea of a football-playing poet – the McKibbens [Bill and Betty], Al Jones '50, Chuck Cleaver, Terry Parssinen '63, Neil Milner, Greg Guroff, and Joe Wall '41, among others. Even my coaches, John Pfitsch and Edd Bowers '43, were on board. One of the benefits of being at a small liberal arts college is that your teachers come to know you. They help you expand your horizons. I owe a lot of my life as a writer to the encouragement and support I got at Grinnell.

**In *How to Read a Poem*, you posit that “reading poetry is endangered because reading itself is endangered in our culture.” How does the digital age impact your craft? What remedies do you see?**

I wouldn't say that the digital age has altered my writing or changed my craft, but it has certainly affected the reading of poetry, both in positive and negative ways.

On the positive side, people are using websites such as the Academy of American Poets ([poets.org](http://poets.org)) with great frequency. People have universal access to information. They can get to poems more easily than ever. On the

### **On *Gabriel: A Poem***

Not since his second book, *Wild Gratitude* (1986), received the National Book Critics Circle Award has Hirsch's work drawn as much attention as his 2014 publishing of *Gabriel: A Poem*, a book-length elegy for his son, who died in 2011. The collection was a finalist for the National Book Award, and interviews and reviews have appeared in major media:

- *NPR, Morning Edition*: “A Poet on Losing His Son: ‘Before You Heal, You Have to Mourn,’” Sept. 5, 2014.
- *The New Yorker*: “Finding the Words,” Aug. 4, 2014.
- *The Washington Post, Style Blog*: “Edward Hirsch's ‘Gabriel’ and the poetry of lamentations,” Aug. 25, 2014. Hirsch wrote a weekly column on poetry for *The Post's Book World* from 2002–2005, which resulted in his book *Poet's Choice* (2006).
- *The Guardian*: “*Gabriel* resists sentimentality at every line break, though it is the most heartfelt poem I have read,” Sept. 14, 2014.

Also in 2014, Hirsch, the former chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, published *A Poet's Glossary*, a complete compendium of poetic terms. His companion *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry* (1999) continues to be the “go-to” text in many creative writing programs throughout the country.

negative side, our whole culture has attention deficit disorder. It's difficult to do any sustained reading on the Internet. There's something lost in poetry without sustained attention. The advantage, for instance, of an online poetry class is that it makes poetry available to people all over the place; the disadvantage is that there is no live presence or intimacy, no easy give and take.

**You have said repeatedly that “poems are endlessly interpretable,” yet secondary education seems to force the expectation of finding *the* symbolism, *the* meaning in poems. How do you change that trend and invite followers?**

Public education in this country is in dire condition, and poetry is one of the scandals of public education. The emphasis on testing, for example, works against the study of poetry. There are no “right answers” in poetry. In other cultures, students sometimes get a feeling for poetry from their families. In our culture, we have a limited view of poetry and don't impart its value. Schools need to do the work that families neglect. This is where we have failed. Teachers, too, are often unprepared and uncomfortable with poetry. I'd start by encouraging and retraining teachers. I'd also send young poets into the classroom. I'd make poems (and books) more available.

**Poetry has historically tackled subjects of death and loss. Your 2015 campus appearance will include a reading of your new book about your son's life, death, and memory. What do you expect to impart to Grinnell students about the arts and tragedy?**

Art has always dealt with trauma. There is something scandalous about our mortality. It's extremely difficult to accept that people we love actually die. I will talk about my poem as a work of mourning. I'll also talk about the ways that art and poetry address tragedy. The program will be part conversation, part interview, part reading.

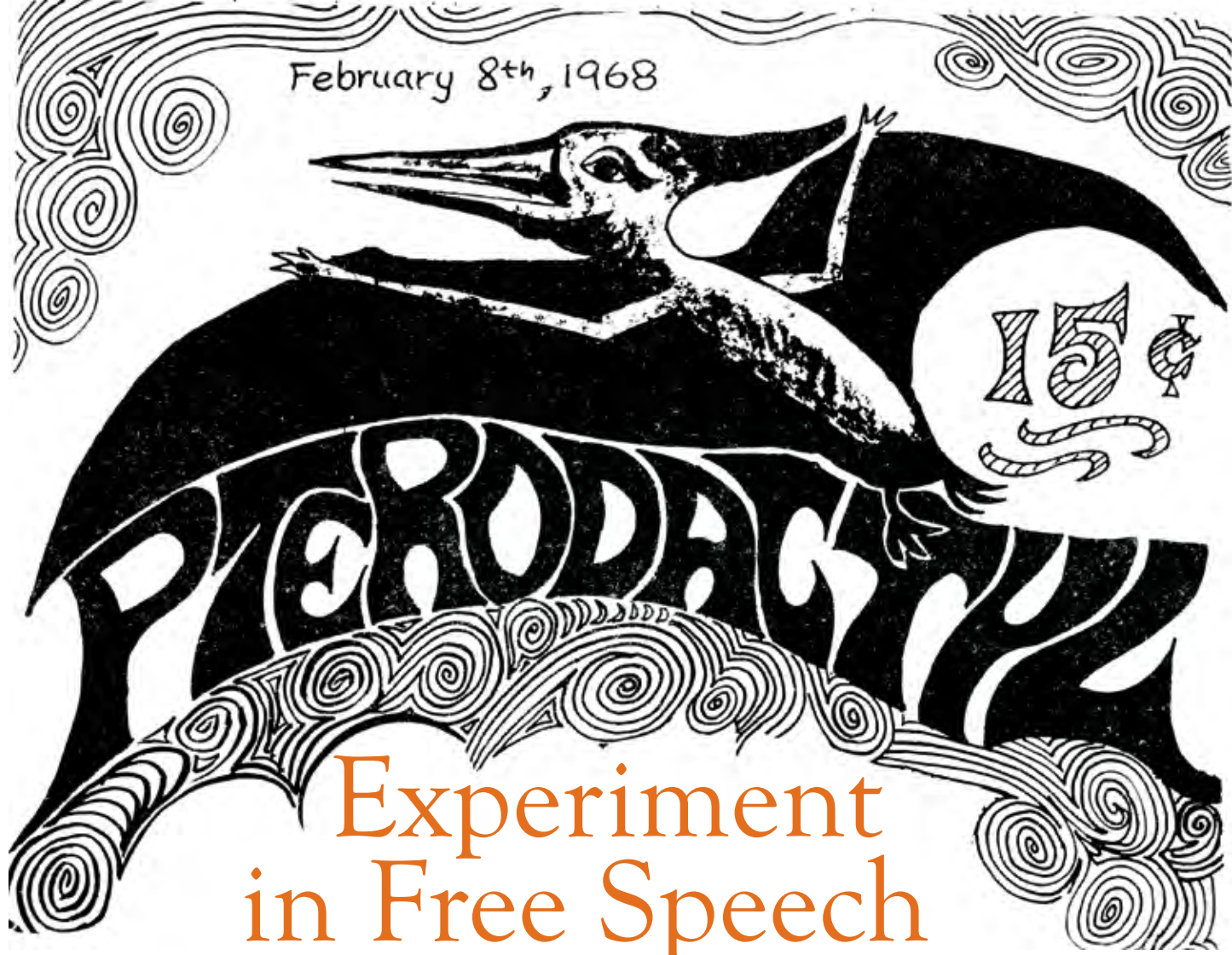
**Your position at the Guggenheim Foundation has allowed you to be a champion and public voice for poetry. Have you accomplished what you set out to do 10–12 years ago? What's the next step/stage/work for you?**

I have been making the case for poetry and the humanities, but it's still very much a work in progress. It's an uphill fight in a celebrity-driven, media-saturated, extremely materialistic society. We need to encourage the interior life, to make the case for the arts, to help make the humanities available to everyone throughout our culture. The need is there, the challenges are great, and the work is far from complete. ■

### **Writers@Grinnell**

Hirsch will visit campus on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2015, as part of the Writers@Grinnell series.





# Experiment in Free Speech

*The brief life of a Grinnell underground newspaper.*

by Luke Saunders '12

On Feb. 8, 1968, an experiment in free expression started selling on Grinnell's campus for 15 cents an issue. In the two years that followed, the underground newspaper *Pterodactyl* would face reluctant printers, allegations of obscenity, and ultimately extinction.

**Warning:**  
This story  
contains graphic  
language.

## *Why Pterodactyl?*

A brief article in the inaugural issue outlined both the rationale of the name *Pterodactyl* and the staff's hopes for the paper: "According to Archie Carr in *The Reptiles*, 'Aerial locomotion, sustained flight, was evolved first by the pterosaurs or pterodactyls. They took to the air on leathery wings stretched by their finger bones.' They ate fish. We eat fish. They flew. We fly. They died out – we may someday. But all flying creatures were evolved from them.

Hopefully, we will be the prototype for equally bold future experiments."

*Pterodactyl* aspired to uncompromising free speech. Henry Wilhelm '68, a *Ptero* staff member and photographer, later said that the editorial system for the paper was one of "complete freedom of expression." Any staffer could have something printed in *Ptero*, even if every other staff member disagreed with it. There was no majority rule. That accounts

for the lack of a coherent political perspective, which Wilhelm admitted in a 1978 interview with *Scarlet & Black*. “We were the organ of the political and cultural movement at Grinnell, which in turn reflected broader developments in the country,” says **Richard Schneirov ’70**, *Ptero* founder. “*Ptero* was a record of young people grappling with new ways of thinking and living their lives.”

From the start, *Ptero*’s editors had difficulty securing a printer. The first issue was late because a printer “copped out,” claiming they had a new policy that wouldn’t allow them to print the paper. This was well before the real controversy.

## Year One

Early issues of *Ptero* focused on the draft, the war in Vietnam, and resistance at Grinnell. The paper also published a number of articles critical of the Air Force Reserve Officers’ Training Corps on campus. Schneirov was both *Ptero* founder and one of the three founders and several leaders of Grinnell’s chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, a liberal organization of U.S. college students formed in the 1960s. The paper covered the protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, printed the Black Panther Platform, and advocated the release of Huey Newton, minister of defense for the Black Panther Party.

In addition to its focus on activism, the paper also printed cartoons, poetry, and the occasional review of a concert or play. *Ptero* also included stories from other underground publications such as *Rat* and from the Liberation News Service. The paper covered everything from starvation in Biafra to Schneirov’s challenge to the College’s dorm visitation policy.

The paper’s first printer, the *Cedar Valley Times*, refused to publish the Nov. 18, 1968, issue. On several previous occasions, according to *Ptero*, the printer had been hesitant but allowed the issues to go to print. *Ptero* cited “filth” as the reason for the printer’s refusal, likely the full page devoted to the poem “I Say to Masturbate is Human, to F-- Divine” by Tuli Kupferberg. By the fall and winter of 1968, articles on sex, contraception, and women’s liberation began to feature more prominently.

## “Playboy F--ed Up”

Beneath photos of nude protesters, a *Ptero* article attributed to Sherlock Holmes described the Playboy protest in early 1969: “On February 5, a representative from *Playboy* Magazine (exploiter of the female flesh for f--ed up men that is) was on the Grinnell College campus to deliver a series of talks on the Playboy philosophy. Bruce Draper (that’s his name) was scheduled to deliver three talks at different locations on campus. This was part of the college’s SEX EDUCATION SERIES...

*“... after a ‘rehearsal’ was held to get up the nerve, the group [of protesters] went en masse to the second of the three talks (they sent a spy to the first meeting to see how the meeting would run.)*

*“Shortly after Draper entered the room and began speaking the 10 protestors (six girls and four boys) took all of their clothes off. An 11th male protestor took almost all of his clothes off (little known fact).*

*“One of the male protestors brought his guitar and played ‘I’ll Walk This Lonesome Valley,’ and then, a few minutes later they put their clothes back on. Supporters of the demonstrators brought signs along and passed out a statement from the group explaining the protest. Most Grinnell males had previously thought very little about what Playboy was actually about, so this was a real eye opener for them. Those present at the protest seemed to take what was going on in front of them without getting visibly disturbed.*

*“The story received wide coverage the next day in the Iowa and national press ... Iowa colleges had been having some ‘trouble’ with obscenity being uttered and ‘nudity’ piled on top of obscenity was just too much for Iowa to take ... So, the state attorney general, Richard Turner decided that it would be a good thing to ‘crack down.’”*

## Assumed Obscenity

Photos from the nude-in depicting frontal male and female nudity were published in the next issue of *Pterodactyl*, which was delivered to the printer in March but wasn’t printed until May 19, 1969. Iowa’s attorney general had received a complaint from a county attorney regarding an earlier issue of *Ptero*; and after examining several copies, which he considered obscene, Turner made an arrangement with the printer to have the next issue delivered to his agents.

Wilhelm and Lawrence Frank '70, aided by the Iowa chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, filed an injunction to compel the return of the paper and other materials they alleged Turner had seized illegally. Turner testified, "Each issue of the paper was getting progressively worse and I figured the next issue would be the bell ringer of them all. And it was!" The judge in the case ruled that because Turner and his agents had not determined that the material was obscene prior to seizing it, the seizure was unlawful. A number of Iowa newspapers, including *The Des Moines Register*, supported *Ptero* and condemned Turner's actions. The attention generated by the illegal seizure, subsequent lawsuit, and Turner's appeals — all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court — only increased *Ptero's* profile and readership. Wilhelm later said, "It wouldn't have been so big if it wasn't for Turner."

Over the next six months, the paper continued to evolve. In September 1969, *Ptero's* new printer nearly refused to print the paper, according to *Scarlet & Black*. An employee of the printer said that the company's photographer refused to prepare *Ptero's* photos. Frank was quoted as saying "The pictures were so 'clean' this time it's ridiculous."

Near the end of its run, *Ptero* devoted more column inches to drugs. One issue contained a highly informative "drug data sheet" accompanied by Boschian drawings and listings of dosages, effects, and legitimate medical uses for each substance. Another included a "market report" that informed readers of what drugs were available on campus and in town. It would be more alleged obscenity rather than columns on drugs that would attract the attention of police.

### "Four *Ptero* Vendors Busted"

The final issue of *Ptero*, published Nov. 11, 1969, was met with more accusations of obscenity. *S&B* reported on the arrest of four people selling the paper in Cedar Falls. One of the vendors was a Grinnell student and two were alumni.

*"According to Cedar Falls police, the four were arrested ... near the University of Northern Iowa campus after police received a complaint that they were selling obscene material ..."*

*"They were charged under a state obscenity statute which provides for a maximum penalty of one year's imprisonment or a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars."*

*"The allegedly obscene issue included a full-page photograph depicting a male youth masturbating<sup>1</sup> in front of several Playboy magazine centerfolds and a short story by Pristine Pureheart vividly describing a couple screwing."*

*"Police reported Wednesday that they did not seek prior adjudication that the material was obscene before they made the arrests. 'It was obscene because it showed a naked man<sup>2</sup>,' Sgt. Peterson of the Cedar Falls police told S&B ..."*

*"David Danforth, a clerk at the Varsity Newsstand in Grinnell, said that he stopped selling *Ptero* 'because of what happened in Cedar Falls.' Danforth also said that he was visited by law enforcement officials Thursday morning regarding *Ptero*, but would make no further comment."*

### Extinction

After the second round of obscenity charges, *Pterodactyl* was unsustainable. Without off-campus sellers willing to distribute the paper, there wasn't enough money to produce further issues. The following year it was replaced by another underground publication. Once "quite alive and flapping," all that remains of *Pterodactyl* are the dozen or so old issues in the College's library and half a reel of microfilm.

*Ptero* was succeeded by a string of underground papers, from *High and Mighty*, which was staffed in part by former *Ptero* writers in the early '70s, to the current *B&S* and *Grinnell Underground Magazine*. Like *Ptero*, these more recent publications address issues on campus and around the world. They mock the administration and show disdain for what they perceive as outdated laws and institutions. But they seem more focused, less interested in shocking their readers. And none has had the same combination of deliberate recklessness and editorial carte blanche as *Pterodactyl*. ■

<sup>1</sup> The printer censored the Nov. 21, 1969 issue of *Scarlet & Black* that contained this story, removing the words "masturbating" and "screwing."

<sup>2</sup> Sgt. Peterson and Richard Turner were at odds with each other regarding nudity and obscenity. In his testimony in the first obscenity case, Turner said, "Naked bodies of themselves certainly are not obscene, but photographs and positions calculated to arouse the prurient interest are."



**Time**, Talent, Treasure, Ties

# Faces of Philanthropy

*First of a Four-Part Series:  
Celebrating the many contributions  
that enhance the Grinnell experience.*



**Julie Edwards '07**, regional network co-coordinator,  
Puget Sound.

by Denton Ketels

Every day, Grinnellians volunteer their time to foster professional networks and personal connections in communities across the country and around the globe. We'd like you to meet some of them, perhaps for the first time.

**Julie Edwards '07** knows that even a small community of Grinnellians can make a huge difference. "When I attended medical school in Oklahoma, I was lucky enough to connect with about five Grinnellians," Edwards says. "It was a nice little sense of home in a state that wasn't home to me."

When Edwards moved to Seattle, she missed that tiny group she'd helped create. "I knew there were many more Grinnellians in Seattle but I hadn't had the opportunity to connect with them," Edwards says. "**Molly Campe '96** came out from Grinnell last summer and invited us to create an alumni network. Suddenly I was sitting at a table with 20 other Grinnellians who were all really interested in creating a community here."



**Steve MacFarlane '82**, regional network co-coordinator, Puget Sound.

Edwards and **Steve MacFarlane '82** took on roles as regional network co-coordinators, and the Seattle planning committee organized a summer picnic and, later, a pub night. “We had alums several years younger than me and 40 years older, yet we all had this *connection*,” Edwards says. “To me, that’s the joy of Grinnell and Grinnellians — that we’re in a sort of kinship.”

MacFarlane says building a vibrant alumni network involves reaching out to all Grinnellians in the region. “We’ve renamed ourselves Grinnell in Puget Sound (GPS) to be more inclusive and a little less Seattle-centric,” MacFarlane says. “There is a lot of interest in reconnecting and seeing what other Grinnellians are up to, whether it be just for social reasons or wanting to reconnect with the College.”

In January, Grinnell in Puget Sound alumni got together to help restore a heron habitat. A career day with leaders in technology, health care, and education is in the planning stage. The GPS planning committee intends to keep gatherings fun and purposeful, if somewhat less formally organized than College-sponsored events.

“We all want to go hear what the president has to say when he visits here,” MacFarlane says, “but additionally I think of our regional group as sort of an organic groundswell that appeals to alums in different ways. It’s another way to reaffirm that Grinnell connection.”

With more than 700 Grinnell alumni in the area, manageable growth is important, too. “This is a very new thing, and my goal is for us to be sustainable,” Edwards says.



**Sam Perlman '90**, class agent and 25th Reunion volunteer.

**Sam Perlman '90** is an economic development professional in a popular Upper Midwest tourist destination — Door County, Wis.

“I’ve always been a relatively outgoing person, and Grinnell was an amazing opportunity for me,” Perlman says. “I’ve wanted to be connected to the College and stay connected to the people. I like hanging out with Grinnellians. I like hearing what other Grinnellians are up to.”

No surprise, then, that Perlman has served as Alumni Council president, a class agent for 20 years, a reunion volunteer, and in 2015, a 25th Reunion volunteer. He says he looks forward to helping coordinate everything from musical performances to the major programming that distinguish 25th Reunions.

“We also want to preserve a fair amount of time for people to just hang out and connect, because that’s ultimately what a reunion is about — the opportunity to return to campus, see old friends, and reconnect with the College itself,” Perlman says.

“Grinnell is incredibly important to me. My wife [**Mariah Goode '90**] is a Grinnellian, many of my friends are Grinnellians, and many of the people that I consider to be interesting people in my life are Grinnellians.

“As I meet alums from the '50s through the present, I find that Grinnell has a unique ability to attract intelligent and engaged people who do exciting things beyond their college years. They’re fun people. I love to be able to foster those kinds of relationships.”

Photo by Shane Van Bortel, used with permission from Insight Publications.



**Sherman Willis '01, Alumni Council member.**

Long before he established a successful business in Omaha, Neb., **Sherman Willis '01** had very personal reasons for wanting to give back.

"I came from humble beginnings in Houston, and there was no way my family could afford the ticket price of Grinnell without assistance," Willis recalls. "Part of the reason I was able to go to Grinnell was because I received a few scholarships from generous alums through endowments or scholarship programs, and I never forgot that.

"Every day is a blessing because I was not sure as a child that I could escape that cycle of poverty," Willis says. "To me, it's all about service and giving back to the institution that helped me get this far."

One expression of Willis' commitment is his service on the Alumni Council. He served part of his six-year term on the communications committee, chairing it for one year. Throughout, he championed initiatives for improving alumni communications. He now devotes his committee time to matters of stewardship.

"We are, I believe, privileged to have a voice in how the College does things," Willis says. "I take it seriously, and I know that the other members of the council do as well.

"The way I put it, we're like the party activists. We are the most engaged of all the 20-plus thousand of us, and so it is incumbent on us to deepen the relationship between the College and the alums. That's why we're here."

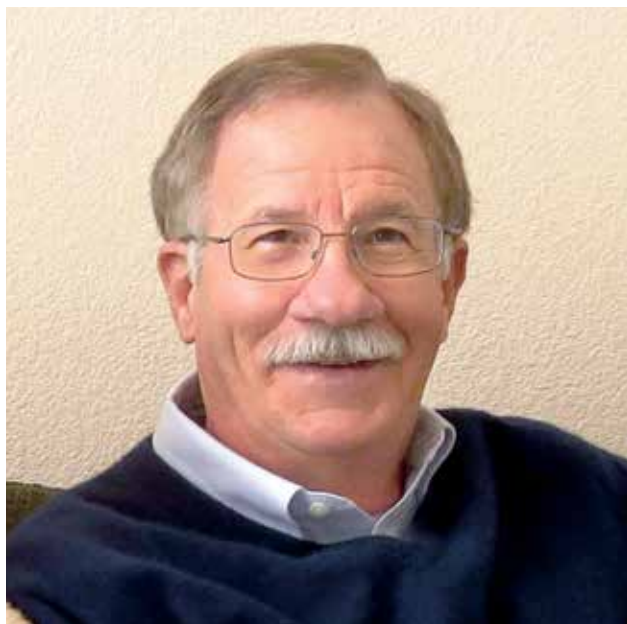
"It's very organic," **Amanda Keledjian '08** says of the alumni group she coordinates with **JC Labowitz '71** in Washington, D.C. "Whoever has the capacity to take leadership roles, does. I did it for a few events and finally someone said, 'You know, we should just call you The Coordinator.' In Grinnell fashion, we play off each other's strengths."

In addition to College President **Raynard S. Kington's** annual visit and two seasonal picnics, D.C. alumni events have included gatherings at the National Archives, ice skating rinks, baseball games, the National Zoo, and much more. "Sometimes our planning goals are ambitious, but without fail we get a great turnout and have



Photo by Justin Hayworth

**Amanda Keledjian '08, regional network co-coordinator, Washington, D.C.**



**David May '65, class fund director.**

a really good time,” Keledjian says. “At least 50 people came to last night’s happy hour and it was fabulous.”

Keledjian says she is looking to strengthen the network and build momentum by adding continuing education opportunities to the 2015 calendar.

“It’s very satisfying to know that the Grinnell community expands beyond the campus. You get to actually engage with people who you know share the same academic aspirations and intellectual presence,” Keledjian says. “It’s wonderful that the College can help foster that capacity in alumni communities.”

While it’s not unusual for people to come together around a common experience, in the case of Grinnellians, Keledjian says, “I think it’s even stronger than that. We seek it out actively. I get a lot of satisfaction and happiness from bringing Grinnellians together.”

In 1976, **David May '65** received a letter asking if he would be a class fund director. “One of the reasons I accepted was that I considered it an honor to do that for the class,” he says.

May has served as class fund director ever since. He has enjoyed success in fundraising, and he values the personal contact with class members.

“I used to write sort of a personal essay twice a year, and that was gratifying,” May says. “As I progressed through my career and we had children, I could talk about those kinds of things. It was important that I got to be creative and could talk directly to my classmates.”

This year is an important one for the class of 1965, and May has taken on the added role as 50th Reunion fundraising co-director. It means more phone and committee time, but the former corporate attorney embraces his volunteer opportunities.

“I’ve found that you don’t realize you’re getting some things from going to work at least five days a week until you don’t have them,” May says. Contact with individuals, a sense of identity and accomplishment — those are additional attractions once you’re retired.

“I’m gratified to be a class fund director,” May adds. “My goal is to keep doing it as long as I possibly can.”

**Dick Metzler '65** is sharing 50th Reunion fundraising duties with May. The former Asa Turner chairperson says that when he was asked to participate on the committee, he just had to step up.

“Both my wife [**Dorothy Dosse Metzler '66**] and I are Grinnell graduates, and we believe strongly in the value of a liberal arts education,” Metzler says. “My particular interest in this drive and other ongoing appeals has been focused on leaving a legacy for the College. I want to promote the idea of estate planning.”

The Metzlers have “been pretty consistent” in attending reunions, and he says the value of alumni connections goes deeper than providing a comfort level for discussing the benefits of planned giving.

“The connections that come as a consequence of being a supporter of the College are something of which I am proud, something that makes me feel like I’m part of a group,” Metzler says.

“Everyone, I think, needs to have a feeling of belonging beyond their immediate family and close friends, whether it comes through donating money, attending reunions, or being part of an alumni chapter,” Metzler says. “It gives you a feeling of fellowship, sort of like being on a team.

“It’s a group of like-minded people that you can feel comfortable with. You can enjoy each other’s company because you have a common background.” ■



**Dick Metzler '65, 50th Reunion fund co-director.**

# Picture-Book Author Q&A

*Writing for people who will change the world.*



Author **Molly Beth Obsatz Griffin '05** writes for children and young adults and teaches writing at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis. Her first picture book, *Loon Baby*, was published in 2011 by Houghton Mifflin. She has also published a young adult novel, *Silhouette of a Sparrow* (Milkweed Press, 2012).

Picture books that beg to be reread dozens of times are a unique and challenging art form.

**Molly Beth Obsatz Griffin '05** has published two picture books so far, has a dozen manuscripts in various stages of preparation, and has another dozen or two that no one will ever see. Recently we talked with her about her work.

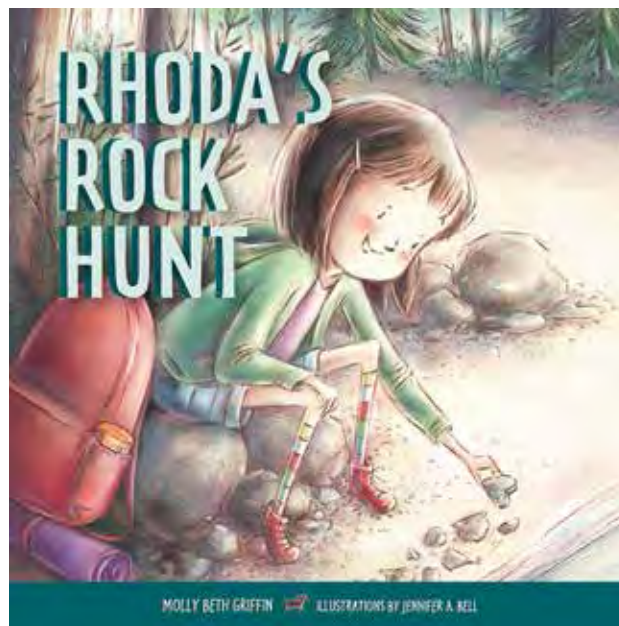
## **How did you find your way to writing picture books?**

I think I came to picture-book writing through poetry, specifically spoken-word poetry. I did a little bit of poetry slam as a teenager, and I think it influenced me deeply. Since picture books are meant to be read aloud, they blend written and oral traditions, and they have a lot in common with performance poetry. Rhythm matters and breath matters and the sounds of words matter, as we try to create a meaningful reading/listening experience.

I started writing picture books while I was live-in-nannying in Juneau, Alaska, one summer during college. The kids were in bed but the light would linger 'til midnight. After Grinnell, I started taking classes in writing for kids at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis and submitting picture book manuscripts to publishers. When one of my stories won the Loft's Shabo Award, I decided to take picture-book writing seriously and enroll in Hamline University's M.F.A. program in writing for children and young adults.

## **How did the story of *Rhoda's Rock Hunt* come about?**

I have always been a compulsive rock picker-upper, and I've been trying to write a rock-hunting book for years. The first version underwent several revisions and got rejected a bunch of times. The second version went into a drawer and never came out. This third version was inspired by a camping trip my partner and I took with our son when he was 2½ and obsessed with throwing rocks into Lake Superior. My kids are always picking up more rocks/sticks/pinecones than they can carry! That common dilemma became the central conflict of the story.



## **There is no dog mentioned in your text. What did you think of the illustrator's addition of that character?**

I don't think the book would be complete without the dog. One thing that I love about the picture-book process is collaboration. I give up control of the visuals, letting the illustrator have her artistic process, and in return I am blown away by her interpretation of the story. Jennifer [A. Bell, illustrator] said, "Of course they would bring a dog," and she created another whole character who adds movement and energy and levity to each spread. I did not know Jennifer before this project – the publishing house almost always picks the illustrator, and we have little or no contact during the process – but this book in its final form really belongs to both of us.

## **How has your Grinnell experience influenced your writing?**

I was in the education program at Grinnell, and those classes ignited a passion for nurturing literacy in children, which has guided my entire career. As an English major, I learned to read critically and write articulately, and I use



both of those skills every day even though I didn't get to do any writing specifically for kids or teens in my Grinnell English classes. I do think that my undergrad experience paved the way for my M.F.A. and prepared me especially well for the critical component of my master's.

**What do you say to people who ask when you're going to write a "real" book, i.e., for adults?**

I see my books as real books, I see kids as real readers, I see children's literature as an art form that is just as valid as any other art form – though possibly *more* able to

transform, enlighten, enchant. So in my head, I reframe their question into "Why do you choose to write for kids?"

I think that there is an energy inherent in stories for children, an energy that is tied to the way that kids and teens are always changing. Adults tend to stay the same, or transform very gradually in small ways over the course of years. Young people, though, are constantly outgrowing their old selves and trying on new ones, and that fascinates me.

I love exploring the ways in which young people interact with their environments – how they let a place change them and how they in turn transform their world. ■

– Michele Regenold '89



The next day, they crossed a rushing stream with whispering water all around and dragonflies whizzing past. Rhoda found lots of smooth, round rocks in that stream and one with a curve that fit into her palm just right. *Oool*

Illustration reprinted with permission from *Rhoda's Rock Hunt* by Molly Beth Griffin, illustrated by Jennifer A. Bell, published by Minnesota Historical Society Press, [mnhspress.org](http://mnhspress.org). 2014.

## Submit your Classnotes to:

Classnotes  
Office of Development and Alumni Relations  
Grinnell College  
Grinnell, IA 50112

866-850-1846

Email:  
[classnotes@grinnell.edu](mailto:classnotes@grinnell.edu)

Website:  
<http://bit.ly/1i26zrB>

### Deadlines:

Summer 2015 Issue:  
March 15, 2015

Fall 2015 Issue:  
Aug. 15, 2015

# CLASSNOTES

## 1945 70th Cluster Reunion

**Rene Grinnell Wilson** was co-winner of the Arnold Goodman Lifetime Achievement Award from the United Nations Association during a reception at the United Nations Foundation offices in Washington, D.C., June 2014. The award recognizes her many years of volunteer work for the organization at local, regional, and national levels.

## 1956 60th Cluster Reunion

**Bill Park** writes, “The Senior Olympics were good to me this year as I qualified for Nationals in 2015 in three events at the Iowa Senior Games by winning gold in the javelin, running long jump, and the high jump.” Additionally, last June the Quad Cities Senior Olympics (Iowa) inducted Park into its Hall of Fame.

## 1958

**Sam Harris** received the 2014 Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which recognizes contributions immigrants have made to America and the legacy they left behind in the successes of their children and grandchildren. Harris continues to be a part of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, which he founded, in Skokie, Ill. His documentary *Sammy The Journey*, about Sam’s experience as a child Holocaust survivor is available on DVD ([SammyTheJourney.com](http://SammyTheJourney.com)).

## 1961

**Don Janes** was elected president of the Audubon Center of the North Woods, an environmental learning center for school children in northern Minnesota, January 2015.

## 1963

**Julia Chatterton Knutson** says about her November: “I was honored by the [J.J. Seabrook, Seabrook, Texas] Neighborhood Association as Volunteer of the Year – for quietly showing up with face paints at community events over the years.”

## 1964

**Lynne Simcox** was happily retired from the ministry in Southern California when she “got a call in late June [2014] from the president and general minister of the UCC (United Church of Christ) asking if she would be willing to step into a short-term acting conference minister position while a conference minister was on a leave of absence.”

## 1960

“For the past several years I’ve been quite active on the board of the American Museum of Ceramic Art,” writes **Kent Tool**. The 50,000-square-foot museum, in Pomona, Calif., is the largest in the United States devoted exclusively to the collection of ceramics, with more than 7,500 pieces. The museum “has part of the collection on view, hosts major specialized shows and also contains a very active pottery studio,” Tool says. “Now I’m vice chair of the board and find myself involved in the hiring of a new executive director, major fundraising efforts, offering opinions on the acquisition process of donated ceramics, and helping prepare for our 10th anniversary gala next March.”

## Philip Bennet '51

In late 2014, the Library of Congress acquired for its permanent print collection Bennet’s “Requiem,” an oil-based ink monotype. The library’s fine arts curator said, “Your print will help strengthen the library’s relatively sparse monotype holdings of abstract prints with the addition of your compelling contemporary example.” Grinnell’s Faulconer Gallery collection includes a monotype and pastel on beeswax by Bennet.



## Classnotes Editor Retires

### She oversaw the most popular section of the magazine.

Bonnie Primley, editor of “Classnotes” since 2005 and College employee since 1994, retired Jan. 2, 2015. Before she left, she shared a bit about her work on *The Grinnell Magazine* for the past 10 years.

“I love it,” she says. “The fun part is getting to know alumni remotely.” Primley often corresponded with alumni to flesh out their information or simply to verify it.

In the early days of her work on the magazine, when her other duties were lighter, Primley did some “gleaning,” combing the Web and email lists for mentions of Grinnell College that would then lead her to news about alumni.

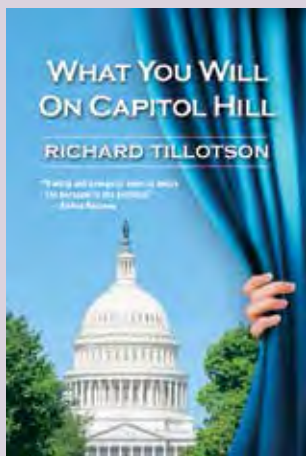
“Classnotes were less self-submitted then,” she says. “After people are in the magazine once they’re more apt to submit again.”

The most memorable classnote she recalls receiving turned out to be a prank. An alumna reported that she and a friend were having a baby. “I verified all the info except births,” she says. “You expect them to be true.”



She’s happy to see the “Classnotes” topics expanding – including news about alumni travel and grandchildren, for example.

Primley encourages alumni to submit all kinds of news – “whether you think it’s important or not. Even the littlest thing might give encouragement to someone else.”



### Richard Tillotson '66

Tillotson is publishing his second novel, *What You Will On Capitol Hill* (Arlington Avenue Books, 2015). Tillotson and his wife, Valerie Wayne, a Shakespeare scholar, have spent much time in Washington, D.C., the novel’s setting. On May 2 this year, Tillotson will read from his new novel at the Hawaii Book and Music Festival, where he will be one of the featured authors.

### 1967

Meg Bluhm Carey writes, “After graduation, I spent a year in Greece on a Travel-Service Scholarship for the Fifth Year Abroad. Following this exceptional experience, I returned to New York City to attend Bank Street College of Education for a master’s degree. I loved Bank Street with its progressive ‘hands-on’ approach to education and knew I wanted to teach in elementary school. I had also been deeply influenced by the educators I met during my years as a counselor at Camp Treetops in the beautiful high peaks region of the Adirondacks.”

### 1970 45th Cluster Reunion

Tom and Carol Martinson Cech write, “It’s been so long since we’ve written, it’s hard to know where to start. Flashing back to 1999, Carol was VP at a Boulder [Colo.] biotech company and Tom [was] professing at U. Colorado. Then an offer came that ... [TC] couldn’t refuse. He inherited the Howard Hughes fortune (a large chunk of it, anyway), with the proviso that we move to the Washington, D.C., area to oversee dispersal of the \$ to worthy biomedical researchers and science educators. The mantra was ‘people, not projects,’ with the corollary that great people given long-term funding will do great things.”

### 1977

Sherman Boone is senior policy adviser in the Division of Economic and Risk Analysis of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Neal Fleming provides cleft lip and palate care for children around the world through Rotaplast International.

Tracy Huling has launched a new Web-based clearinghouse of information that examines U.S. prison closure and reuse called “Yes, In My Backyard” ([yesinmybackyard.org](http://yesinmybackyard.org)). She is also founder and director of the Prison Public Memory Project, which uses history, art, dialogue, and new technology to help communities



### Meredith Haley Whiteley '70

When Whiteley had to research a constitutional issue relevant to her home area for Joseph Wall '41's Constitutional History class, she didn't think she'd find anything to write about Arizona. Her mother, a newspaper woman, set her straight: “Write what you know. Write the river.” That project in Wall's class was just the beginning of a lifelong interest in the Colorado River and other water issues in the Southwest.

In *Miracle on the Salt River: Water, Family & Farming in the American Desert* (The History Press, 2014), Whiteley traces the relationship of water and farmers in the drought-starved Salt River Valley before the inception of Roosevelt Dam through the booms and busts of cotton to post-World War II urban development.

## Read Hall Round Robin

### Alumnae stay in touch for more than 60 years.

In the spring of 1954, near the end of their sophomore year at Grinnell, 14 women gathered in Read Hall and talked about the upcoming changes in their lives. A few of the “girls” – “that’s what we called ourselves then,” says **Carol Replogle Nielsen ’56** – were leaving school at the end of the year to get married or transfer to another school. They wanted to keep in touch.

“So we decided to start a round-robin letter,” Nielsen says.

The women had become close after two years of living together.

“Plus they locked the women in at 10:15 each night,” Nielsen says with a smile. “I wonder now why we put up with it.”

The round-robin letter has been circulating twice a year since then. The way it works: One of the “robins” writes a letter and mails it to the first person on the list – letters are sent in a particular geographic order. The next robin then writes a letter and adds hers to the one she received, tucking them both into a larger envelope. Person three gets two letters, adds her own, and so on, around and around it goes.

“We love to get the letters, but we hate to write them,” Nielsen says. “It’s kind of a thrill to get a large, brown envelope in the mail.”

Early on, the handwritten letters were mostly about the writers’ families. Everyone married – about half the women married Grinnell College men – and each family grew, producing 42 children in all, half male and half female. One of the children and three of the grandchildren went to Grinnell: **Kathryn Railsback ’80**, **Carolyn Booth ’11**, **Alex Schmitt ’13**, and **Meg Schmitt ’15**.

During the family-raising years, the correspondents included photos and recipes too. Once their families were raised, many of the women joined the work force.

Although everyone uses email now, email is an addition to, not a substitute for, the hard-copy letters. Whether handwritten or computer-printed, the letters represent unwavering friendship.

“We can say things to each other that we can’t to our local friends,” Nielsen says.

Almost from the beginning, the friends got together every five years, but after they turned 70, they thought they should get together more frequently. “Ten of us met in Grinnell in September,” Nielsen says. “We rented Ricker House to hang out.”



### Margaret McMullan '82

**McMullan** is editor of *Every Father’s Daughter* (McPherson & Co., 2015), a collection of essays on the father-daughter dynamic. The collection presents 24 ways of “knowing” one’s father by accomplished, independent daughters, each with a folksy introduction to help situate the relationship in place and time. Contributors include Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro and Pulitzer Prize winner Jane Smiley, with an introduction by Phillip Lopate.

facing prison closure to document, interpret, honor, and share the memories of what took place inside prisons. Results of that project can be found at [prisonpublicmemory.org](http://prisonpublicmemory.org).

### 1987

**Shelley Aggeler Harper** started a new job at Colorado College’s Tutt Library, Colorado Springs, Colo., November 2014. “As a research librarian, I will help students, faculty, and staff find information sources. In addition, I will coordinate the library’s instruction program and lead library assessment,” she writes.

### 1988

**Jessica Thebus** is director of the M.F.A. directing program at Northwestern University. She is also directing plays this year at Goodman and Lookingglass Theatres, Chicago.

### 1990 25th Reunion

**Sasha Aslanian**, reporter at Minnesota Public Radio News in St. Paul, received an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award, the broadcast equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize. The award recognized her work as part of a team that investigated

how leaders of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis continued to cover up abuse of children by priests, despite decades of assurances that the Catholic Church was safe. It was the first time MPR News received the award.

**Ashley Frazer-Abel** was certified as a diplomate of the American Board of Medical Laboratory Immunology, November 2014. The board’s certification is the highest credential that a doctoral-level clinical immunologist can earn.

### 1991

**Erika Krouse** was one of 24 writers who received a literary fellowship in the Amtrak Residency Program, September 2014. Over the next year, the fellows will work on writing projects of their choice in the unique workspace of a long-distance train. Krouse is a novelist and short-story writer based in Boulder, Colo.

### 1994 20th Cluster Reunion

**Sean Solberg** was recently promoted to shareholder with the Davis Brown Law Firm, Des Moines, Iowa, January 2015.

### 1995 20th Cluster Reunion

**Scott Samuelson** presented an essay on philosophical responses to suffering, adapted from his book, *The Deepest Human Life: An Introduction to Philosophy for Everyone* (University of Chicago Press, 2014) at Rhodes College, Memphis, Tenn., January 2015.

### 1997

**Devin Drown** accepted a position as assistant professor of biological sciences at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks in the Institute of Arctic Biology, January 2015.

### 1998

**Andy Kropa** is a 2015 Creative Capital awardee in the categories of moving image and visual arts. His Hacking Alzheimer’s project ([www.hackingalzheimers.com](http://www.hackingalzheimers.com)) explores the ability of body-worn video cameras to act as assistive devices for individuals experiencing memory loss.

“Healthwise we’ve been very fortunate,” she says. Of the 14 members, just one has passed away. **Zana Willison Strickland** died of uterine cancer in 1995.

While they communicate frequently via email these days, the letters are still an essential part of their interaction.

“They’re really a diary,” Nielsen says. She knows that at least one Robin has kept copies of all the letters she sent over the years.

“The group is family to me, in a way,” Nielsen says. “They are my friends, not just people I used to know in the past.”

The round-robin group, all class of 1956, includes **Carol “Johnnie” Johnson Addington**, Birchwood, Wis.; **Anne Chandler Booth**, Fayetteville, Ark.; **Liz Short Counsell**, Bonita Springs, Fla.; **Marilynn Postma Hamar**, Chassell, Mich.; **Betty Oelke Holt**, Shelton, Wash.; **Kay Ingamells Kizer**, Commerce Township, Mich.; **Diane Doughty Madsen**, Elk River, Minn.; **Mary Holthues Miller**, Leawood, Kan.; **Nielsen**, Grinnell, Iowa; **Jane North Norris**, Marshalltown, Iowa; **Pat Sloan Railsback**, Lutz, Fla.; **Sue Johnsen Smith**, Chicago; and **Peggy Logue Wright**, Chester, Calif.

– Michele Regenold '89



Left to right, front: Kizer, Smith, Counsell; middle: Norris, Addington, Hamar, Holt, Miller; back: Madsen, Railsback, Wright, Booth, Nielsen.

## 1999

**April Dobbins** recently received a \$20,000 unrestricted artist award from the S. J. Weiler Fund. Recognizing individual artistic achievement and creativity as well as significant contributions to the arts community, the award supports and acknowledges the ongoing work of exemplary artists.

**Jeffrey Tyner**, assistant professor at Oregon Health and Science University, received an early-career award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The Martin and Rose Wachtel Cancer Research Award honors early-career investigators who have performed outstanding work in the field of cancer research.

## 2000

**Samuel Sellers**, aka Rabbi Darkside, DJ'd several 2014 fall shows in the New York area including the National Book Award Afterparty, Mission:Control Live in Brooklyn!, and the Fifth Annual Buffalo Turkey Jam.

**Jennifer Stob** accepted a position as assistant professor of art history in the School of Art and Design at Texas State University in San Marcos, August 2014.

## 2001

**David Rosenthal** is assistant director for academic year programming for Duke University's Talent Identification Program, a global leader in identification of, and programming for, academically gifted students.

## 2003

**Latrisha Chattin** has been named head of school for the Friends School of Minnesota, St. Paul, effective in July 2015.

## 2006

**Jennifer Beinart** was selected as a member of the Indiana State Bar Association's Leadership Development Academy. The academy is a statewide leadership program established to empower and develop lawyers to be informed, committed, and involved. Only 25 lawyers are selected to participate.

## 2007

**Alvin Irby** performed stand-up comedy at Dangerfield's Comedy, New York, N.Y., November 2014.

## 2009

**Mark Japinga** appeared five times in 2013 on the game show *Jeopardy!* before he lost on a sports question. The show brought him back to compete in its tournament of champions, which aired Nov. 14, 2014.

## 2013

**Claire Forrest** was appointed to the board of directors of the World Institute of Disability, Berkeley, Calif., January 2015. She joins current board member, **Mary Brooner '71**. The institute's mission is to eliminate barriers to full social integration and increase employment, economic security, and health care for persons with disabilities.

## Degrees

**Marilyn Musser '74**, master of social work, University of Iowa, May 2014, and licensed master of social work, June 2014. She is in practice at Orchard Place Child Guidance Center in Des Moines, Iowa, as an early childhood therapist working with young children and their parents. She was also named co-chair of the Ethics Committee of HCI Care Services/ Visiting Nurses Services of Iowa, January 2015.

**Sarah Smith '07**, master of public policy, focus on education policy, Peabody College of Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., May 9, 2014. In July 2014 she became coordinator of partnerships for wellness, safety, and achievement at West Chicago Elementary School District 33, West Chicago, Ill.

**Matthew Montemore '09**, Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, University of Colorado-Boulder, Aug. 2014. He is now a postdoctoral researcher in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Harvard University.

## Standing for Parliament

### Dual U.S./U.K. citizen is running for election to Britain's Parliament.

Win or lose, **Todd Foreman '95** will start a new chapter in his political life on May 7, 2015, election day in the United Kingdom. Foreman is the Labour Party candidate for North East Somerset, a constituency in southwest England. If elected, he'll serve in the House of Commons along with 649 other Members of Parliament.

"This was the right time in my life to stand for Parliament," Foreman says. "I don't like what the current government is doing to health care nor the widening gap between rich and poor," Foreman says.

"Politics is something I've been passionate about for as long as I can remember," says Foreman, a political science and French double major. He won a Watson Fellowship that set him firmly on the political path.

During his yearlong fellowship, he worked for the Labour parties in New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom. He examined the ways the party could advance equality for women, ethnic minorities, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. "My fellowship shaped my political values and political thinking," he says. "I knew that in the Labour Party I had found my political home."

Foreman earned a law degree at the University of Pennsylvania and in 2001 moved to London to practice law with an international law firm. He's currently taking a break from his job with Axiom, an alternative legal services provider, where he specializes in banking and financial services law.

Banking is one of the issues Foreman cares deeply about. He earned a master's in banking and finance law from King's College, London, and his experience in the banking field is one of the reasons the Labour Party selected him to stand for this election.

"During the financial crisis in 2008 where taxpayers had to bail out banks and are still paying for it, that issue really resonates with people in North East Somerset," Foreman says. "Bankers are not being held accountable. I think my experience as a lawyer will be valuable in Parliament."

If he wins his election, Foreman has promised to be a full-time MP and not take outside work. And if Labour wins enough seats, Foreman says the party will crack down on MPs being allowed to have second

## Marriages and Unions

**Randy Baidas '73** and William Reeves, in Chicago on June 21, 2014, "after a 30-year engagement," says Baidas. *Gabe Lehman '16* was a greeter.



### Kai Mayer '14

recently embarked on a year of full-time service with Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest, serving at Catholic Charities of Spokane – House of Charity in Spokane, Wash., November 2014.

**Robert Bates '89** and Juan Felipe Rincon, Oct. 12, 2014. Attending were *Walt Junker '89*, *Bob "Dodge" Rathbone '90*, *Heather Glenn Junker '91*, and *Lara Szent-Gyorgyi '89*.

**Jim Thaxton '96** and Pat Jurgatis, Aug. 31, 2014.

**Tom Soppe '97** and Michael Burdick, July 7, 2014.

**Jonathan Rathsam '03** and Marla Schuchman, Nov. 16, 2014.

**Louisa Warren '04** and Keil Jansen, Sept. 26, 2014. Attending were *Margaret Jaques-Leslie '04*, *Alice Anderson '04*, *Sara Gossett '04*, *Denny Marsh '04*, *Leighton Aycok Bowers '04*, and *Carter Adams '04*.

**Grant Woodard '06** and Andrea Jansa, Nov. 22, 2014. The wedding party included *Ben Jacobs*, *Chris Street-Razbadouski*, and *Julian West*, all class of 2006. Also attending were *Patrick '03* and *Erin Will '04* Midtbyng; *John Bacino '05*; *Andrew Behrendt*, *Rachel Braver*, *Rick Fenbert*, *Brian Fritsch*, *Nate Jones*, *Pete* and *Elizabeth Simon Leo*, *Graeme Miller*, *Meghan Redd*, and *Garth Spencer* from the class of 2006; and *Chris Hall '07*.

**Emily Jacobson '09** and Aaron Gember, July 12, 2014. *Courtney Smith '09* was a bridesmaid. Also attending were *Becky van den Honert '09*, *Isaac Dripps '09*, *Joanna DeMars '10*, and *Alex Littler '10*.

**Kramer McLuckie '12** and Anne Schauwecker, Dec. 31, 2014 in Columbia, Mo. Groomsmen included *Michael Schoelz*, *Kunal Bansal*, and *Chris Peconga*, all class of 2012. *Stephanie Smith '12* served as an usher. Also attending were *Sam Jones '05*, *Diana van Schilfgaarde Jones '06*, *Dylan* and *Derek Gumm '11*, *Hannah Shepherd '12*, and *Sylvie Warfield '14*.

## Births and Adoptions

**Laura Dillon McColl '96** and Michael McColl, Aug. 29, 2013, their third child, first son, William McFadden McColl. Maternal grandmother is *Margaret McKinley Dillon '65* and maternal aunt is *Elizabeth Dillon Croco '96*.

**Holli Hoerschelman Klein '00** and Nathan Klein, Oct. 14, 2013, their second child, first son, Beren Donald Klein.

**Jennifer Stob '00** and Martin Haettasch, Aug. 29, 2014, their first child, a son, Louis Thomas Haettasch.

**Michelle Durand '01** and **Davin Remington '01**, Sept. 8, 2014, their second child, first son, Arthur Durand Remington.

**Colin Bernard '04** and **Catherine Hall '05**, Oct. 18, 2014, their first child, a daughter, Eleanor Ruth Bernard. Maternal uncle is *Christopher Hall '07*.

**Paige Slaymaker Carlson '05** and Adam Carlson, Nov. 10, 2014, their second child, first daughter, Lola June Carlson.

**Samuel E. Jones '05** and **Diana van Schilfgaarde Jones '06**, July 11, 2014, their second child, first son, Robert Paul Jones.

**James M. Soliah '05** and **Rachel A. Scheckter '05**, Dec. 5, 2014, their first child, daughter Eleanor June Soliah. Maternal grandparents are *Jeffrey Scheckter '71* and *Elizabeth Noyce '73*; maternal aunt is *Abigail Scheckter '02*.

## Erratum

**Natasha Vasey-Ellis '97** and Timothy Ellis welcomed their third child, second son, Hugo Campbell Ellis, on Jan. 13, 2014. The year was incorrect in the Winter 2014 issue; our apologies for the error.

jobs. He notes that his opponent, Jacob Rees-Mogg, a Conservative elected in 2010, works for a hedge fund in addition to his MP duties.

“I’m standing against one of the most right-wing MPs sitting in Parliament now,” Foreman says. “I don’t think he’s serving the priorities of the vast majority of people living in North East Somerset.”

If Foreman wins, this will not be his first successful race. In May 2014, he completed a term as a councilor, an elected position at the city government level, in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London.

Foreman has since moved to the North East Somerset constituency with his spouse Mark Sutter. The two were married Dec. 22, 2014. “We are a partnership politically as well,” Foreman says. They’re both working full-time, on the campaign.

Election campaigns in Britain are “very focused on door-step campaigning, going out and knocking on doors and meeting people,” Foreman says. Approximately 70,000 voters live in the constituency near Bath.

Money is needed, of course, but much less than in U.S. campaigns, he says. Individual candidates aren’t allowed to do television or radio



Foreman is fourth from the left.

advertising. Money is raised for running the campaign headquarters, staff, leaflets, etc.

Originally from Kansas, Foreman became a British citizen in 2006. Learn more about his campaign: [www.todd4nesomerset.com](http://www.todd4nesomerset.com)

– Michele Regenold '89



### Dylan Fisher, Joe Engleman, and Clare Boerigter, all '14,

launched *First Class*, an online literary journal that features stories, essays, reviews, and experimental forms handwritten on postcards, in January 2015. Submissions are open year-round. Visit [www.firstclasslit.com](http://www.firstclasslit.com) for more information.



## Publications, Productions, and Exhibitions

Dick Fort '44 self-published *Dick Fort: Visual Art Retrospective*, 2014.

Publications by Foster Rinefort '56: “The Challenge of Occupational Safety and Health in Greece,” *Advances in Management and Applied Economics*, June 2014, Vol. 4, No. 3, Scienpress Ltd., London; “The Challenge of Workplace Health and Safety in Croatia,” *The Journal of International Management Studies*, April 2013, Vol. 8, No. 1, International Academy of Business and Economics; “The Challenge of Managing Safety in Africa,” *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, January 2012, Vol. 3, No. 1, Center for Promoting Ideas.

“Fall, as usual, has been a great time for me. Much going on,” writes Dennis Maulsby '64. He cited his poem “We” published in the Spring 2014 *Perfume River Review*; two poems winning honorable mention in the Mid-South poetry contest; a haiku published in the 2014 *Lyrical Iowa* anthology; and a contract he signed to allow the poem “Little Inca Sister” to be published in *Mainstreet Rags* '2015 anthology. A member of the Ames poetry society Third Stanza, Maulsby also won first place in the fiction category of the Great War to End All Wars literary competition. The contest commemorated the 100th anniversary of World War I but allowed entries depicting all wars and conflicts. Maulsby’s story, “Frozen Chosin,” described the experience of marines fighting against Chinese troops during the Korean War. The contest was sponsored by the Wanda Sue Parrott Literary Fund, Monterey, Calif.

*Chronicles of Old San Francisco: Exploring the Historic City by the Bay*, by Gael Chandler '73, Museyon Inc., Oct. 20, 2014. The book has 28 chapters, each describing one of San Francisco’s primary movers or shakers and has eight self-guided walking tours linked to Google maps.

“Meridian,” a poem by Mark Maire '78, *Talking River*, Issue 37, Fall/Winter 2014.



## A Hip-Hop Spin on Social Justice

### Addressing difficult topics through performance.

From Ferguson, Mo., to the south side of Chicago, **Damon Williams '14** explores economic inequalities through performing arts.

“In order to make a substantial change, whether it be social, political, or economic, there needs to be a shift in culture,” Williams says. “Rhyme, melody, humor, and drama serve as the sugar that makes bitter medicine go down with ease.”

Williams and his sister, poet Kristiana Colón, formed the hip-hop, poetic fusion group April Fools. They use rap, spoken word, poetry, and comedy to discuss difficult topics – racism, oppression, police violence, and other systemic inequalities making headlines across the United States.

When the controversy surrounding the police shooting in Ferguson, Mo., of unarmed black teen, Michael Brown, sparked a national movement, the duo traveled to Ferguson nine times and lived and worked with the protestors. Williams co-produced a documentary about the protestors he describes as “street-level enforcers of democracy.”

“This moment has been an awakening of consciousness that I’ve never seen – one that history has never seen – of black youth unifying,” he says.

**Tim Finn '79** reports his latest publication credits: “The Mad Abbot of Horror Monastery,” *Under the Bed Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 12, September 2014; “Candy Isn’t Always So Dandy,” *Fears Accomplice: Halloween!* anthology, Noodle Doodle Publications, U.K., October 2014; “A Winter’s Wisp,” *Alternate Hilarities 2: Vampires Suck* anthology, Strange Musings Press, October 2014.

**Lauren Cragg '80** was executive producer and co-producer of *Born to Lead: Jim Calhoun*, a documentary that looks at the unique life and career of the head coach for the University of Connecticut’s men’s basketball team. The film premiered at The Bushnell, Hartford, Conn., Oct. 2, 2014. ([www.borntoleaddoc.com](http://www.borntoleaddoc.com))

**Anne R. Richards '83** and husband Iraj Omidvar co-published the collection *Historic Engagements with Occidental Cultures, Religions, Powers*, Palgrave, October 2014.

**Victoria Rovine '86** writes, “I have a new book out ... The details: *African Fashion Global Style: Histories, Innovations, and Ideas You Can Wear* (Indiana University Press, 2015). It’s my second book.”

“Home Is a Medicine unto Itself” by **Sandra Stein '88**, *The Atlantic*, Jan. 6, 2015.

**Julie Stiles '90** has launched a podcast called *Autoimmune Adventures* ([aiadventures.com](http://aiadventures.com)). “The mission is to inspire, motivate, inform, and encourage people living with autoimmune disorders and create a community of support. I will be doing both short content episodes

and bringing on a wide variety of fabulous guests for conversations about living with an autoimmune disorder, being more in alignment with ourselves, and the healing process,” she writes.

**Sean Solberg '94**, Davis Brown Law Firm patent attorney, co-edited *The Technology Transfer Law Handbook* (2014) and contributed to the first chapter, “Changes to the Patent Laws,” and the second, “Managing Patent Prosecution.” **Emily Reagh Harris '98**, also with Davis Brown, wrote the third chapter, “Post-Grant Proceedings under AIA.”

“The Liberal Arts and the Fate of American Democracy” and “Why I Teach Plato to Plumbers: Liberal Arts and the Humanities Aren’t Just for the Elite,” by **Scott Samuelson '95**, *Rhodes Magazine*, 2014.

## 2016 Athletics Hall of Fame

Nominations being accepted through Aug. 15, 2015.



The Grinnell College Athletics Hall of Fame recognizes outstanding alumni athletes whose performance in their sport(s) was exceptional. The Hall of Fame also may honor those Grinnell coaches, staff, and others in the College community who have made extraordinary contributions to Grinnell athletics by means other than varsity competition.

New honorees are recognized every two years. To nominate someone for the 2016 Athletics Hall of Fame, visit [forum.grinnell.edu/grinnell-college-athletics-hall-fame](http://forum.grinnell.edu/grinnell-college-athletics-hall-fame).



Williams spearheaded a GoFundMe campaign in Ferguson that raised \$9,000 for gas masks, water, and food for the activists. He helped create pop-up galleries and posters activists sold to raise money for food and tents and co-produced the documentary *Lost Voices: A Ferguson Story*

“Art and performance can reach people in a way that public speeches or pamphlets cannot,” Williams says.

Williams hosted the Lost Voices group in Chicago, which interacted with 1,000 high schoolers who watched the documentary and participated in a march.

Since graduation, Williams performed in the one-act play, *Lack on Lack*, that his sister wrote about socioeconomic challenges against the backdrop of Chicago. The play premiered in July 2014 at the Victory Gardens Theatre in the Ignition Festival of New Plays.

“We assert that we all have everything we need to solve the issues of our times because we have an abundant capacity to love,” Williams says. “Love of self, family, and the world around us can catalyze unstoppable movements if properly harnessed.”

Williams and Colón are updating the play for March production;

the update will include their experiences working with Ferguson protestors and the aftermath of the movement spawned by Michael Brown’s death.

Williams also served as actor and executive director in *Gift Horse Grill*, a comedy his sister wrote about what happens when Santa distributes reparations to blacks for slavery.

“I actually find it funny that slavery, reparations, or American history are difficult issues to discuss,” Williams says. “We had fun on stage and were granted the opportunity to explore how difficult and complicated it would be for America to atone for its sins in a systemic manner.”

It is a feat that only Santa could accomplish, given the current social realities, he says.

Williams, who double-majored in economics and sociology, says he didn’t consider himself an artist when he began attending Grinnell, but knew he didn’t want to be just a “finance guy.”

“So my genesis as an artist was completely influenced by Grinnell’s liberal arts environment,” he says.

– Dana Boone

## In Memoriam

Some alumni and friends inquire about making a memorial gift. If you would like to do so, please call 866-850-1846 and ask for Meg Jones Bair.

**Loren D. Reid ’27**, Columbia, Mo., Dec. 25, 2014. Survivors include his daughter, *Ellen Reid Gold ’55*; sons, *Stephen Reid ’62*, and *Don A. (Tony) Reid ’67*; granddaughter, *Shelley Reid ’88*; and grandson, *Daniel Reid ’07*.

**Paul F. Biklen ’36**, Schenectady, N.Y., Nov. 2, 2014.

**Dorothy Launspach Keenan ’38**, Lafayette Hill, Pa., Dec. 6, 2014.

**Stanley R. Tolbert ’39**, Cincinnati, Ohio, Nov. 27, 2014.

**Dorothy Guenther Adams ’40**, Owosso, Mich., Nov. 29, 2014.

**Miriam Johnson Gruenwald ’43**, Bettendorf, Iowa, Dec. 16, 2014.

**Virginia Johnson Volz ’43**, Lake Forest, Calif., Oct. 4, 2014.

**Dorothy George Westphal ’44**, Lombard, Ill., Dec. 5, 2014. Survivors include her sister, *Winifred George Oetjen ’42*.

**Mary Jane George Johnson ’46**, St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 7, 2014. Survivors include her sister, *Winifred George Oetjen ’42*; and granddaughter, *Amelia Rudberg ’12*.

**Barbara Sue Wyatt Rock ’46**, Washington, D.C., Nov. 18, 2014.

**Margaret Kent Wilkinson ’46**, Pierre, S.D., Oct. 21, 2014.

**Ann Eicher Bain ’49**, St. Louis, Nov. 2, 2014.

**Irene Marley Leitner ’49**, Dundee, Ill., Nov. 24, 2014.

**Elizabeth Berry Leonard ’49**, Rochester, Minn., Dec. 11, 2014. Survivors include her husband, *David Leonard ’49*.

**Robert A. Kreider ’50**, Birmingham, Ala., May 24, 2014.

**Beatrice Miller Adams ’51**, Denver, May 12, 2014.

**H. Lee Christensen ’51**, St. Germain, Wis., April 27, 2014.

**Rose-Marie Manes Farrington ’51**, Groton, Conn., Oct. 18, 2014.

**Sarah Hoerner Fletcher ’51**, Chicago, April 26, 2014.

**Donald F. McQuilkin ’51**, Lakewood, Ohio, July 3, 2013.

**Jo Lee Reid Scarborough ’51**, West Des Moines, Iowa, Sept. 22, 2014.

**Sylvia Manville Warsaw ’52**, Cheyenne, Wyo., June 22, 2014.

**Jerry H. Wright ’52**, Sun City West, Ariz., April 28, 2014.

**Dewayne A. Peterson ’56**, Orlando, Fla., Sept. 2, 2014.

**Daniel J. Toft ’57**, Peterson, Iowa, Dec. 23, 2014. Survivors include his daughter, *Jessica Toft ’89*. See his obituary: [warnerfuneralhome.com/obitdisplay.asp?id=2085](http://warnerfuneralhome.com/obitdisplay.asp?id=2085)

**Peter B. Bradford ’58**, Oklahoma City, Dec. 6, 2014.

**Marcia Dow Gustin ’58**, Royal, Iowa, Jan. 8, 2015.

**Lois Langan Robertson ’58**, Mercer Island, Wash., Dec. 7, 2014.

**David Van Nostrand ’58**, Sartell, Minn., Nov. 27, 2014. Survivors include his wife, *Catharine Herr Van Nostrand ’59*; and daughter, *Maren Van Nostrand ’88*.

**Young W. Kihl ’59**, Laguna Woods, Calif., Dec. 14, 2014.

**Philip R. Yount ’59**, Tigard, Ore., Nov. 11, 2014.

## An Invitation: Grinnell's Inaugural Global Day of Service

In celebration of Founder's Day and what Grinnellians do best – serve the world – we, the Alumni Engagement Committee of the Grinnell College Alumni Council, in partnership with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, invite Grinnellians everywhere to participate in the first Global Day of Service on June 13, 2015.

We hope that Grinnellians will champion a local cause, make a difference for others, and strengthen and create bonds with fellow alumni and current students. The premise is lofty, but Grinnellians are certainly up to the task.

On June 13, alumni are invited to show up, pitch in as you can, and relax afterward with a social hour nearby. Regional planning committees in Boston, Chicago, Des Moines, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York, Pittsburgh, Richmond, Va., the San Francisco Bay area, Seattle's Puget Sound area, and

Washington, D.C., will suggest a volunteer site or sites and spread the word.

If you're somewhere *without* a committee, you can organize a mini-event for local Grinnellians or volunteer somewhere of your own choosing on or around June 13. Then plug into the global nature of the day by sharing your contribution through social media, using a **dedicated website** – [forum.grinnell.edu/global-day-service](http://forum.grinnell.edu/global-day-service) – and **#GCDayofService**. Our hope is that you will join in wherever you may be – whether you live in one of those sites or are traveling for the weekend.

For more information, please contact **Nino Parker '07**, assistant director of alumni relations, 641-269-4131 or [parkerni@grinnell.edu](mailto:parkerni@grinnell.edu).

–by the Alumni Engagement Committee

- Jerry C. McCullough '60, O'Neals, Calif., Nov. 29, 2014.  
Marcus F. Cooper, Jr. '61, Clayton, N.C., Jan. 4, 2015.  
Kathleen Kerger Greene '61, Longmont, Colo., Jan. 12, 2015.  
Stafford Hansen '61, Spring Valley, Minn., Nov. 25, 2014.  
Sandra Seeder Jamrog '62, New York, N.Y., May, 29, 2014.  
Samuel Schuman '64, Asheville, N.C., Nov. 11, 2014. Survivors include his wife, *Nancy Game Schuman '62*.  
Carol Boucher Greene '69, Louisville, Ky., March 31, 2013.  
Rima L. Miller '77, Santa Fe, N.M., Nov. 19, 2014.  
Rodney A. Laird '83, San Jose, Calif., Nov. 25, 2014. Survivors include his brother, *John Laird '80*; sister, *Christy Laird Staats '82*; and son, *N. Zachary Laird '17*.  
Rachael E. Moore '92, Linden, Ind., Nov. 17, 2014.  
Ann E. Musser '95, Holyoke, Mass., Sept. 29, 2014. Survivors include her husband, *Ozgur Ercan '97*.  
Rachel B. Rolfs '98, Topeka, Kan., Oct. 21, 2014.  
Clara L. Thelen '08, Seattle, Wash., Aug. 18, 2014. Survivors include her sister, *Anna Thelen '02*.

## Wall Alumni Award

### Applications due June 15.

The application period for the Joseph F. Wall '41 Sesquicentennial Service Award for 2015 is approaching. The award was established during the College's sesquicentennial celebration in 1996 to honor Grinnell's commitment to social responsibility and public service. It honors the late **Joseph F. Wall '41**, a professor of history at Grinnell who inspired an ideal of social responsibility in his students.

This year, the College will award two graduates with grants of up to \$25,000 to undertake projects that show creativity and commitment to positive social change. Any graduate of Grinnell College is eligible to apply, so long as they will act as a principal of the project. Since the inception of the Wall awards, nearly \$1 million has been distributed to the service projects of 40 Grinnellians. Applications are due by 5 p.m. CDT, Monday, June 15, 2015.

The Wall alumni service awards are open to all graduates of Grinnell College with a commitment to benefit others. Projects may be original or supplement existing programs, address issues specific to local communities or be of wider global concern, be carried out domestically or internationally. For more information, go to [grinnell.edu/forms/wallaward](http://grinnell.edu/forms/wallaward), or contact **Saunia Powell '02** at 641-269-4940 or [powell@grinnell.edu](mailto:powell@grinnell.edu). For information on past winners, go to [www.grinnell.edu/node/29829](http://www.grinnell.edu/node/29829)

# My Search for and Belief in God

*Driven by a question: What is the purpose of life?*

I loved attending Grinnell. I grew up in a predominantly Catholic neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. I attended 12 years of Catholic school and even thought about becoming a Catholic priest prior to attending Grinnell.

However, the Grinnell experience dramatically changed my beliefs about God. As I learned to think critically, I began to question whether God even existed. Ultimately, I abandoned my faith. Nevertheless, my study of science helped me see that scientific principles involve orderliness — which implies a universal intelligence.

Having lost my faith, I also lost my frame of reference for life. I began searching for Truth (with a capital “T”). I believe that my Grinnell education, in its own way, motivated me to begin this philosophic journey. At one point a well-meaning friend of mine told me that nobody could figure out the purpose of life, and to have another beer. I rejected this easy approach.

My initial quest for Truth lasted about 10 years. It led me to study the world’s philosophies and religions. I initially concluded that all of these teachings were flawed. However, before abandoning my quest for Truth, I thought I’d re-evaluate the religion of my youth. Yet I didn’t want to blindly use religion as a psychic crutch, or because I couldn’t figure things out for myself.

One night I decided to test my hypothesis that God exists by praying to Him. Shortly after praying, two missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) contacted me. They offered to teach me about their church. I thought their appearance may have simply been a coincidence. But as I began to study LDS doctrine, I had a personal, sacred, and life-changing experience. In short, my heart changed in an instant. I wanted to love others more fully and to abandon my natural tendency for selfishness. Thus began a second philosophic path for me.

LDS doctrine teaches that human beings, as children of God, enter mortality in a fallen state to learn truth

through the exercise of free will. By making choices, each of us can develop godlike attributes — or not.

LDS doctrine also helped me answer another question: If God exists and His plan for humanity is spiritual progression, why does He allow such barbaric suffering to occur? My hypothesis is that the gift of free will allows humanity to make choices and to progress in one’s thinking (or not).

In my case, I lost my mother when I was 13. I became a junior dad to my four siblings. That experience was excruciatingly painful. It led me to abuse alcohol while at Grinnell to anesthetize my pain. However, when I later became an attorney, I was a public defender — serving many clients who had abused controlled substances and/or alcohol, as a guardian ad litem to children who had suffered abuse and neglect, and as a divorce attorney for people who couldn’t sustain a successful marriage. I’ve been able to counsel many people who have also suffered. I believe that if I hadn’t suffered, I would not have been able to reach out and help assuage my clients’ pain; I believe my suffering, in a strange way, prepared me for my life’s work. I might have pursued a career that would have been more lucrative financially — but one that would have been far less rewarding and service-oriented.

Since renewing my faith in God several years ago, I’ve continued to pray and to serve others in many different ways. I’ve had additional spiritual experiences and have learned additional spiritual truths. These experiences have reinforced my belief that there is a purpose to life and that there is a divine intelligence which has designed life for humanity’s spiritual growth. The ultimate thing to learn in this life is to love one another as brothers and sisters, regardless of one’s culture, sexual orientation, politics, or individual characteristics.



**Ted Weckel '73**

is a judge pro tempore in Utah and a practicing attorney in the areas of family law, death penalty, criminal defense, and tax controversies.



GRINNELL COLLEGE

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## *Iowa View*



*A chilly January sunrise over a central Iowa farm was perfect for the formation of sun dogs. (Photo by Justin Hayworth)*