



2002

# The Bodger Dialogues

Richard P. Richter  
*Ursinus College*

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**THE BODGER DIALOGUES**

***Reshaping a college--and its president***

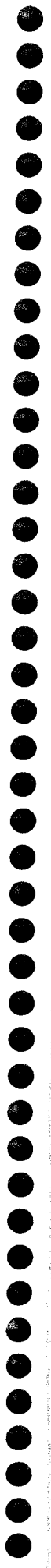
Richard P. Richter

Collegeville, Pennsylvania

2002

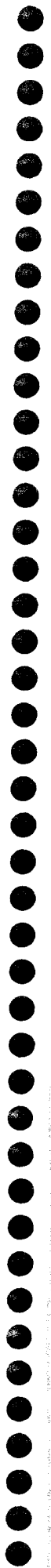
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To  
irreplaceable Margot,  
with love and gratitude



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## INTRODUCTION

It was in my nature to write something about my experience after leaving the presidency of Ursinus College in January 1995. I was pecking at a draft at a leisurely pace when some signals from doctors reminded me I did not have forever. I brought the draft to a somewhat hasty finish in 2002.

Whatever else it is, this is a personal memoir. It deals with influences on me as I grew up and went to Ursinus as an undergraduate. It identifies experiences in my early working years that shaped my ways of thinking and behaving when I moved into a career in higher education. Mainly, it tracks my personal development as a president by reporting on the major events of my administration, seen from my viewpoint.

I was president of Ursinus from November 1976 to January 1995, a period of eighteen years. The college developed significantly in that lengthy period, just as (I think) I personally developed as the leader of the college. This text weaves together those two threads, institutional and personal. The result is supposed to be a whole fabric, designed to show the interlacing of institutional imperatives with the peculiarities of my preparation for leadership.

A single theme ties together the years under my leadership at Ursinus. It is transition--or, as the title has it, "reshaping." From 1976 to 1995, the parochial and local character of the college yielded to a profile that more closely resembled those of better-known national liberal arts colleges. This transition was largely the result of deliberate actions over the years, not the product of drift. Yet, the clarity of the college's commitment to broad undergraduate liberal education throughout its history made such actions possible.

The reshaping of my personal views through my years of preparing for and then of serving as head of the institution was necessary, I believe, to make the institutional transition possible. I too was in transition. I hope that the fabric of this text, woven of those institutional and personal threads, and all of it tied together by transitional dynamics, displays with some accuracy what was essentially happening at Ursinus in those years.

This weaving together of institutional and personal threads admittedly makes a peculiar work. Some of my friends expected me to follow the model of objective narrative history set forth by Calvin D. Yost in his account of the first hundred years of Ursinus. Given my place in the story, I simply could not bring myself to write that way. I decided that if this was to be a contribution to institutional memory--and perhaps even in a small way to the larger narrative of American liberal education in the last third of the century--it should give what no one else, not even the best objective historian, could give. It should display the main threads of development from the unabashed point of view of the person who was leading the way.

This decision led me to another. To allow for informality and flexibility, I decided to cast the text in the form of imaginary dialogues. Readers will find five completely fictional



characters—Michael, Margaret, Matthew, M.S., and Martin. Each has a chapter (M.S. has two). They engage in imaginary dialogues with a person named Bodger. A sixth imaginary character appears in the last chapter as a Mirage, with whom Bodger has a final conversation of sorts.

Bodger is my fictional counterpart. Why, then, did I not just call him by my right name? I found that I could not proceed without some narrative distance between the person I think I am and the persona on the page. A fictional name allowed the "I" in the text to hold forth comfortably with the fictional interlocutors. The name "Bodger"—which came out of the blue—seemed to establish the whimsical distance I wanted without (I hope) pinning a completely foolish label on me.

Perhaps the fictional name also lulled me into the comfortable feeling that readers would be unable to find the complete person of the writer fully exposed in these pages—that I still could safely lurk somewhere beyond text, out of reach of the most searching light.

The fictional characters roughly mirror my age and stage of personal and professional development when they are having their talks with Bodger. For example, Michael, a senior about to graduate, talks with Bodger about Bodger's experiences when he too was in his formative years. Martin, a contemporary of Bodger's and a former college president, talks with him about Bodger's senior years in office and his getting out. And so on. It is not essential for a reader to dwell on these parallels. But they were important tools for me as I sought to organize and dramatize the material. The status in life of the interlocutors determined what it was about Bodger's presidency that they wanted to talk about.

These fictional conversationalists talk with Bodger about the real world of the college, except occasionally and briefly when the form of the dialogues and their fictional situations call for obviously made-up stage business. I feel that the device of the imaginary conversations gave me the freedom of form that I needed to present the fabric of institutional and personal life that I had in mind. I hope that their imaginary nature will not prevent readers from seeing the real-world significance in what they convey. My best hope is that in fact the conversational form will assist readers to see things more sharply.

Another peculiarity of the text is that the name of Ursinus College never appears. This in my mind reinforced the imaginary nature of the dialogues without hiding what I was really dealing with. The omission in the text should not obscure the appreciation and affection that I feel for Ursinus College. Those feelings were the driving force behind my writing of this text.

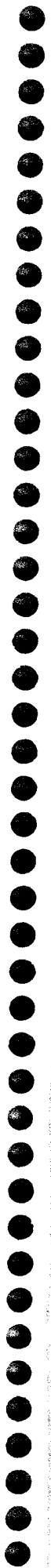
The names of many colleagues appear here. I felt that it was important to name names when I could to reinforce a sense of the up-close reality of what was going on in the reshaping of our college. I tried wherever possible to show the positive contributions made by these colleagues to the process, even when at times the text is not wholly a

bouquet. I failed, I'm sure, to name all the significant names. Named or not in the text, all the men and women with whom I worked at Ursinus have a valued place in my memory.

I am grateful to Ursinus College for enabling me to write this account. I am responsible for all errors and shortcomings.

Richard P. Richter  
President Emeritus, Ursinus College

November 2002



## CHAPTER ONE

### MICHAEL (*Returning to Origins*)

It was Sunday in the middle of May. For the first time in thirty years, Bodger was absent from commencement. For the first time in eighteen years, he would not occupy the prime place in the procession, designated by academic custom as the rear. He would not feel the reassuring weight of his academic hood on his shoulders. He would not be fiddling with the angle of his mortarboard as he emerged from the robing room. He would not feel the eyes of many on him. He would not see the security officers watching the route. He would not see family members of graduates with small children, wanting to be first to watch the colorful robes go by in a slow wave toward the gym. He would not check, and check again, in his red folder, fearful that the text of his speech would be missing from it. He would not experience again the panic at the lectern in front of three thousand people, when, despite all his checking, he momentarily would be certain that he was scriptless.

Nor would he have that feeling of lift as he spoke his last remarks to the graduates, when all details, all anxieties, would dissolve--when the reality of the day would fly on the sentence he spoke.

Four and half months before, he had walked out of the office of the president. He had locked the door and had said, "The last time." He had thought then that it would be appropriate to have a lump in the throat or a tear in the corner of his eye (ever the expert of occasion). Neither of them had materialized. He could have conjured up something fitting if there had been an audience. But it had been nearly midnight on New Year's Eve. The new man would be arriving in town the following day. The paramount demand had not been for theatrics but for the completion of cleaning and clearing out. He had gone home tired. After consuming most of a bottle of Zinfandel, he had dropped into bed, finished carrying Duty at last.

Since that year-end departure, Bodger had not felt even once a pull toward what used to be. Friends thought that he would miss the rush that they linked with the exercise of authority. They knew little of the jaded nerves that developed after one has had the rush a few times. He tried to tell them how ecstatic he felt in the days of January. He would arise as before, hurry through shower and shave, and then saunter, unobligated, to his new office up the street, on the edge of campus. That was the principal release: not to be obligated, not to feel the whole thing on his back in every waking second of the day.

Now, however, in the middle of May, with rain falling softly, Bodger again felt the pull of things happening. Sitting a few blocks away in his home, he involuntarily thought about the nearby campus, from which he had banned himself. For the first time he wondered whether the new president was feeling all right about the event. Surely the rain would be spoiling the procession and the picnic reception on the greensward afterward. He wondered whether someone had remembered to check the platform microphone at the last possible minute before the start of the music.

Someone wrote of Hitler that he came to believe in his insane goals in the very act of speaking to the *Volk*. He persuaded himself by persuading them. Bodger thought he understood that process. His commencement talks could do that to him.

He would write them usually near exhaustion toward the end of an academic year. Never would he speak off the cuff. Commencement scripts demanded special effort commensurate with the size of the audience involved. He would whip up a set of ideas, usually second-hand stuff from some unacknowledged source. Sometimes his speeches of years ago were the unacknowledged source. It was another chore he had to do. He would cast the talk in capital letters on the computer screen and print it in double spacing so that he could read it without glasses. Then he would put it aside and wait until the day before commencement to rehearse.

He would do that by speaking into a small tape recorder, closeted in his study so that his wife Margot or his son Kurt would not overhear. The vulnerability of rehearsal somehow required isolation, even for a performance that the whole college would hear in just twenty-four hours. He had that instinctive need for privacy because in those sessions he would be opening himself to the energy of his own words. He was in an act of building conviction at the center of himself, where indifference seemed to be the default position. The speaker the following day would be a man of conviction, for the length of the speech, anyway. That was all that would matter to Bodger at the time.

But not this May. It was over. He did not have to care. Yet, he wondered again whether the microphone would be turned on when the music stopped and the board chairman stepped up to open the ceremony.

His habit of running things was not quite gone.

### **An offer of a job that looked like a dead end**

Michael would start his final semester at the college in the fall. Like Bodger, he was a kid from Montgomery County, homegrown. His acne was a trace of former days. He was fleshy but supple with youth. When he bagged Bodger's groceries at the supermarket, he moved speedily but treated the cans and packages as if they mattered. He conferred his smile on Bodger frontally. That gave him a seeming maturity that he did not possess.

Michael told Bodger that he enjoyed Professor Akin's course in contemporary history. "He tells us what he remembers about things we're studying."

"Sometimes," Bodger replied, "what we think we experienced is not what they later say we experienced."

"That's our course in historiography!" Michael said. Discovery was happening at the check-out counter.

"Who owns the past?" said Bodger.

"Right!"

"You like being a history major."

"Love it."

"Grad school?"

"Absolutely--if I could ever afford it. Probably won't."

"What will you do if grad school is out?" Bodger asked.

"I don't care. I can bag and read. Something might turn up. Maybe not. The way it goes."

So spake Generation X. Bodger thought favorably about Michael when he got home with his bags.

The next time he went to the supermarket, Michael asked, "Do you really believe that what you think you experienced is not what you really experienced?"

"Depends, I guess," Bodger said.

"I got to thinking the other day. About you. What led to your becoming president?"

"I'd have to think about that," Bodger said. "You have bags to fill."

"Later?"

Why not, Bodger thought. "Why not?"

They met at the donut shop when Michael finished his shift. To Bodger their meeting felt familiar and strange at the same time. He was repeating something he had done a thousand times, chatting informally with a student one-on-one. Yet, he no longer had the old purpose. He no longer had to work at finding the fit between institutional imperatives and student wishes. Bodger could detect the bud of a newly sprouted freedom as he told Michael the story of his coming to the college. He had told it often over the years. Students in time would push beyond formalities and, with their raw curiosity, ask him to tell them where he came from, how he came to be in this seat of authority. Michael was one of a lengthy line. With his new freedom, still dawning, Bodger could begin to feel less editorially cautious.

"It was 1964. I was thirty-four and caught in the labyrinth of corporate America. I was making a living for my family but feeling as if I was slicing off a small part of my inner self each day for sacrifice. I was well liked in the company. It was essential in the company of the 1960s to be well liked if you wanted to move up. And no one would ever admit he did not want to move up.

"I had a good deal in a way. I was in the industrial relations department of the Philadelphia gas utility company, where we attended to the care and feeding, the hiring and firing, of the work force, several thousand strong, if memory serves.

"I fancied myself as a writer. I had finished my novel, the labor of my early adulthood, five years earlier. I gave it to a college classmate who had become a literary agent in New York and waited for the verdict that would make me the famous voice of the new generation. You can guess the outcome. '*Somewhere in Time* seems to be the first novel Mr. Bodger had to write before writing his first novel,' said one of my friend's contacts who read manuscripts for a major publisher. I started another novel, *The Untimely Death of John Braine*. The overtones of self-destructiveness in the title were not accidental.

"I stayed up late writing short stories. In those days the big magazines that published popular fiction, *Collier's*, *Saturday Evening Post*, were crippled but not yet dead. I could still have fantasies of becoming successful in print. Print still was king--though its reign would soon end. I wrote poems, and a couple of little magazines accepted some of them. But nobody ever read little magazines except the other people whose poems appeared in them. So, in terms of success, they added up to zero.

"You feel you have to blame someone or something when you don't realize your youthful ambitions. I became a champion at blaming. I blamed mostly myself. I also blamed having a family. I blamed the organization men who imposed their conformist values on me. I blamed the Cold War, the iron net that kept us imprisoned in a fear of obliteration. I blamed my elders who had fought World War II against Germany and

Japan and believed anything was possible, including defeating the Russians in the end. I blamed them for expecting me to believe like them.

"Our home was a neat little house in the Delaware County suburbs. We looked young and attractive, and we behaved ourselves and cared about our son and daughter. Yet, it was a torture of sorts. Blame and resentment ran in several directions at once. My unbounded and frustrated ambitions were a source of deep distress in our home. I'm not even sure they were ambitions. I felt driven to write. I had fears I could not even name. There were many days when I got on the Media Local and wished it would never reach 30th Street Station so that I would not have to deal with the company, or anything, for another day. Writing was somehow like drinking; it made me feel better for a while, no matter what it led to. My failure to write fiction seen to be good by professional people who judged such things commercially, however, made it the instrument for self-blame, which I played like a virtuoso. Anyway, Michael..."

Bodger paused.

"But you said you had a good deal in the company," Michael said.

"I did--because my job was to edit the company magazine. People still were calling such things 'house organs' in the early '60s--amusing. I did other things too. I wrote reports and did research projects for the general management. The magazine, though, was my major responsibility. It came out every month. I thought of it as an art form. I worked at articles on gas manufacturing and on the hobbies of employees as if they were pure poetry.

"Today you can't imagine a time when Hemingway's idea was still fresh and important. I had internalized it so that it pervaded what I was doing on the job without my being conscious of that until many years later. It was a simple matter of doing a deed with purity, integrity, even when you knew that intrinsically the deed did not matter a damn in the world at large. I got satisfaction out of writing and editing that magazine. Management and the employees appreciated what I produced. All the while the world ignored the other things I wrote, the important things, as I thought. I imagined myself stuck in the grip of the company for life, working to produce elegant ephemera as if it were lasting, subject always to the tyrannous whim of corporate policy.

"And then one day I got an unexpected letter in the mail. It was from Dr. James E. Wagner, vice president of the college. The alumni secretary was leaving to become a fundraiser for his seminary, and a couple of untimely deaths of faculty members created a need for someone to teach some English composition. My name came up as someone who might fill the need. Would I be kind enough to come out and meet Dr. Wagner? I did not know what an alumni secretary was or did except to edit a journal for alumni (the college's answer to a house organ). I had done a master's in English at Penn without ever having taught English to a college class. I had had only cursory contact with the college since my graduation eleven years before.

"What seemed to have attracted Dr. Wagner and the president, D. L. Helfferich, was an unsolicited article I sent in to the alumni journal. It dealt with the 'creative minority' in American corporate life. I suspected they liked it for the wrong reason. It made me sound like a publicist for American business, but what I really cared about was the idea of a creative minority. I saw creativity infiltrating the encrusted organizational structure of the post-war corporation and revolutionizing it from within. Then again, as I soon

learned, Helfferich cast himself at times as a flamboyant iconoclast in his own right. He may have read my mind better than I gave him credit for.

"When I arrived for the interview with Dr. Wagner and learned that he was the former head of the Evangelical and Reformed Church of America, I was discouraged. When he told me that the president of the college played a prominent role nationally in the church, the situation looked even worse.

"Throughout my four years at the college, I was what we then called a day student; you call yourself a commuting student today. Same thing--no residency on campus. In those days--I graduated in 1953--the college required all students to attend morning chapel except those who lived more than five miles from campus and who did not have a room on campus. Our family lived in Mont Clare, four and a half miles from the perimeter of campus--I once measured it carefully in a car. I always had a nagging concern that a dean someday would make that measurement and gig me for all the hours of morning chapel I had missed since matriculating.

"I knew little about the practice of Christianity. We had no affiliation in our family. Churches made me nervous, owing to my unfamiliarity with what was going on and to a traumatic boyhood event. My fallen-away Catholic mother now and then would drag me to a church. She would become periodically conscience-stricken, I imagine, for not giving me a proper religious upbringing. These crash experiences in religion did nothing to increase my understanding or empathy. The incident that I could never forget happened because one Sunday we sat near the center aisle. The priest came by swinging a container of holy water and dashed some of it into my face. There were only a few drops, I am sure; but after I got over the shock of the surprise assault, I felt spooked. Somehow, the water in my face assured that I would go to hell for failing to live up to some awful law I never heard about. The uncomfortable sense of guilt and my ignorance of church practice came with me to the meeting with Dr. Wagner years later.

"He had been the architect of a merger of the old German Reformed denomination of the college and the Congregationalists. For a year or so he was a co-president of the newly merged organization. 'Then we got clobbered,' as one of the faculty, an ordained Reformed clergyman-philosopher, put it to me much later, after I came to work here. Wagner was out. A New Englander was in. Helfferich then gave Wagner a berth doing public relations for the college and churning up what money he could from churches. He was a churchman and therefore put me on my guard. Still, before I left the interview I could see how his style would have been a powerful resource in negotiating something as momentous as the merger of two Protestant denominations. He was ponderous but forceful, and he made me believe that he would help me in a storm. I could tell he liked me. Corporate life schooled me well in the art of making people like me.

"The college invited me back for a second interview. Dr. Calvin D. Yost, the professor who had been my English department adviser when I was a student, took me to lunch at Lakeside Inn. I had always been grateful that he treated my thoughts about literature with interest, even though I was pretty sure they were half-baked. He encouraged me to do an honors paper on F. Scott Fitzgerald and approved it for recognition at graduation. It looked pathetically thin when I read it years later. With Yost I was practicing my best behavior for the interview with the president, which would take place after lunch. Lunch talk went well. I could not have known it then, but Yost was



probably putting on a soft sell to help persuade me to come to the college to work. He must have guessed that an offer would be forthcoming and that the salary would no doubt be less than I was currently making.

"It was a Saturday in the fall. President Helfferich was going to the afternoon football game. He met me for a brief interview beforehand. We had never met through my four years as a student when he was a part-time vice president. He ran a bank full-time before they made him president of the college in 1958. He too, I felt, liked me. Yet, I was apprehensive about his grand manner. The vision of being a heathen among churchmen like him continued to nag me.

"He was to me an old guy. I had enough trouble in my company maintaining relationships with the assertive can-do men who fought in World War II. It seemed to me that my experience would always be pale compared to theirs. I spent my teenage years in their shadow during and right after the war. Helfferich, in the college class of 1921, was from another generation even farther removed. I learned from Dr. Wagner that Helfferich was in the air corps in World War I. He wore a natty vest and a crushed hat on that Saturday afternoon. It was easy for me to picture him in an open cockpit, scarf flying, wings wobbling, machine gun at the ready. Truth is, I don't believe he ever left the Texas training field for the fight in Europe. He remained from another time, another experience, and that contributed to my discomfort.

"Finally I had to tell him, as he was honing in on an offer: 'If I will have to do church or chapel duties, I really won't be able to accept a position.'

"He fixed me with a bemused stare. Either it did not matter or he was certain he could correct my shortcomings after I came into his orbit.

"'Are you an atheist?' he asked.

"'No,' I said.

"'You'll be fine,' he said."

Michael asked Bodger whether the salary offer was less.

"It was. I nearly turned down the job. When I went home and talked to my wife, she opposed the move. She thought the job was a dead-end, and on its face it was. I would be running a funny little alumni office with hardly any help and teaching a course I knew nothing about and doing other things for a man I was initially apprehensive about. There was no promise of any perceptible future. I did not have the standard license for higher education, since I left Penn before a Ph.D. was in sight. Not auspicious circumstances, with a wife and two kids, one five and the other just a year old. But she did not fully know how dissatisfied I felt in my company job--even though it looked like a good deal."

Michael said, "And even though they liked you."

Bodger continued, "In those days a husband's career was central to the family whether or not the wife had one of her own, and Margot did. She was a music teacher, finished for the time being because of the birth of our second child. She had good reason to think the move was imprudent. But I prevailed. Something in my gut said there was a promise here that was not showing on the surface. I had a sense of returning to roots. There was an unspecified rightness in my mind about leaving a corporate job and taking one in academia, especially since it was at my own alma mater."

Bodger smiled and added that the rest was history--things worked out. "Margot was long-suffering but stayed loyal and supportive throughout. Men in those days were rarely grateful enough to their partners."

Michael said, "It was a different time. Gotta go. Meeting my girl. You didn't have to tell me all this. Thanks."

Bodger wanted to say, come back, there's more. Michael saved him from having to say it.

"I wanted to ask about something else," Michael said. "I don't want to be a nuisance."

"You're not," Bodger said.

"Great," Michael said.

"We'll get together again. Come to my house. We have a deck. I'll give you a drink, if you're not underage."

"I'm not."

"Done, then."

### Work was a way of living

They sat on the deck behind the Bodger house. Michael turned his head so that he was not looking into the afternoon sun. Bodger, glass in hand, welcomed the younger man's curiosity without wondering about its source. Margot was shopping with a friend and would not interrupt.

"What interested me," Michael said, "was your work. Work itself. I used to watch you, believe it or not. I thought you had to be everywhere all the time, which was one thing. Then I saw you one night leaving your office at one in the morning; and that was another thing. I couldn't help thinking, that's hard work. Right?"

"It was hard work," said Bodger. "But I didn't work any harder as president than I did as assistant editor of a house organ. Work was compulsive for me. It was almost like the tic someone has who is suffering from dyskinesia--I couldn't help myself. Margot kept a book around the house for years, *Living With a Workaholic*. She thought I would learn from it and reform my ways. I never did, although as years went on I came to see dimly what upset her.

"She probably never realized how much positive reinforcement I got from working. The people I worked for loved it. So did the people I worked *with*. This was true of my subordinates, I think, after I became a president, too. I think I relieved them of work because I was so eager to do it myself."

"Did you work harder than other presidents, do you think?" asked Michael. "Isn't it a killer of a job?"

"Exhibit A: it did not kill me. I have conflicting thoughts on my work compared to that of my peers. Leave out the issue of productivity, and I have no doubt I worked at it more than many of them. Did that make me more successful than they, more productive? Surely not. I always felt ambivalent about my powers of thought, especially the quantitative. I never fully outgrew an irrational discomfort in social intercourse. Since much of the work required me to present a position to a public of one kind or another, on paper and in person, I overcompensated by preparing as much as I could in advance. As

years went by, habits of leadership overcame some of that feeling. I could operate a little less compulsively. I could never feel completely natural in an impromptu action, though. I must have wasted vast quantities of time others never had to spend. They had more natural social ease. They had better-disciplined minds. Many nights, walking the streets of the town or shooting hoops alone in the gym, I would say, 'You're not meant for this! Get out before it caves in on you!' Inertia won, I'm afraid."

"People would not believe you were self-doubting," said Michael. "You were decisive. Kids thought you were too much so. Remember the Zeta Chi case?"

"When I was young," replied Bodger, "self-doubt was my medium. Lacking experience, of course I had no message. That could explain my failure as an imaginative writer.

"When you are older, and you look back on an actual working career, the message overwhelms the medium. Experience is everything, no matter how or why you shaped it. In retrospect, all the angst about self is so much smoke. I suspect it was smoke even then. Or, it was a component in a dialectic, maybe, which forces you forward. You can see yourself, at my present stage in life, as a dupe of the system. You were agonizing over life and love and wondering about your worth, and feeling terrible half of the time, while you went to work, filled with anger or fear, and beat the work to death. Nobody cared how you felt. They just accepted the results, thank you. There was a lot of talk about the schizophrenic character of organizational life in the 1950s. I guess I knew something about it.

"It's old, dead stuff now. I tell you about it only because you asked. When I jumped from a corporation to a college, I thought it would be a liberation, and it was, in a way. My product now was knowledge, not gas. Friends joked about my having been a gasman. That fundamental change of purpose never fully erased the compulsive character of my work, though. The things people applauded me for doing on the job were the products of what I now think was virtually a psychosis. At the time, I thought I was living out the destiny of the American male by striving and achieving in a challenging world. Most people probably thought the same. My wife knew differently, of course."

Michael said, "In a contemporary American lit class, we dealt with American male values. The lectures made your generation sound hopelessly phallicentric and detestable. Hemingway's world came off as medieval. I guess I wouldn't know how it felt before women's consciousness rose up."

Bodger thought a long time. "When Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* hit the nation, the direct confrontation with femaleness as a social and political reality violated taboos I learned growing up from the 1930s to the 1950s. I can still be momentarily stunned when I come across an article by an academic speaking from a 'cliterary' perspective. Still, it is almost as hard for me to remember as it is for you to know how it felt to live in a pre-feminist environment.

"It comes back when I see black-and-white movies from the Depression years. They seem like cartoons now but ring true to my memory. Men worked. Women had children and took care of the home, gave sympathy and support to working men. As feminist research has shown, that was a truism, not reality, but it fixed the minds of my generation, whatever it was.

"It's possible, even easy, for you, Michael, to think of alternative life styles. You get that courtesy of your parents' generation, the baby boomers. There was only one acceptable life style for my contemporaries and me, at least in the social space that we occupied. There were alternatives, yes, but they were somewhere south of the border. The pressure of family expectations was truly numbing, as I remember. I did not want to bring embarrassment to my mother and father as a kid. Something always pulled me to the edge. I thought I was different, maybe because I read books and my buddies did not. We lived near the Schuylkill River. In my fantasies I could see myself in a small boat, going down the river into a strange world where you were free. Huck Finn in Pennsylvania. These were boyhood exercises but they stayed with me as I learned to do my duty. You might say I never got to take the ride on the river and vaguely regretted it my whole life. Instead I obeyed the instructions and learned to work. I learned well. The stars I got on my report cards were corrupting, you might say, from a Huck Finn viewpoint. I knew I could live an alternative life but it always remained stuck in my head and could not play out in reality. Just words, ideas, much of which I kept to myself, not sharing with anyone, not even my wife."

Michael smiled a wry smile that seemed to Bodger to belie his inexperience.

Bodger continued, "My point is that I grew up in a world of limited material means and limited options. Being a man meant being a working man. Mostly that meant working in a mill or factory, doing something with your body. My father worked in a steel mill in Pottstown for more than thirty years. That was reality. Coming home tired and sweaty to a meal cooked by a wife was reality....having her wash clothes on Monday and hang them out in the back yard....listening to Gabriel Heater's version of the news on the radio in the early evening and going to bed early....getting up before dawn to get out to work....returning home in the late afternoon and cultivating tomatoes, corn, and beans in the empty lot next door....repairing the engine on a used '37 Oldsmobile in the driveway on Sunday afternoon. Reality. How would a kid growing up in our household know there were alternatives to men working and women helping them by their side?"

Michael said, "You were lucky to be able to transfer this idea of men at work from the steel mill to the business of editing and then to managing."

Bodger said, "Still, I was my old man's son in my valuing of work as a man's responsibility. That did not make it normal for me. It simply made it inevitable.

"When I was in my early thirties, working in a corporation, remembering the ride on the river I never took, I was a bag of contradictions. One of my poems was entitled *The Suburban Monk*. I can't remember all the lines now but the gist of it was that the good life was bad for the soul. I was an amusement in my angst then."

Finishing his drink, Michael seemed to Bodger to grow ill at ease. He appeared to detect unseemliness in a man of authority showing this much of the private side of himself. Yet, he was a budding historian at heart. In spite of himself, he asked why Bodger would have become a president with so many conflicting personal feelings about the system.

They heard the door of the car slamming in the garage. Margot was home from shopping. "Another time?" Bodger said.

"I'll come back," Michael promised.

**The head office became Bodger's natural habitat**

After Michael left, Bodger rummaged in the file cabinet for confirmation of his remembering. The young man had further loosened the rope tying up the past. Dimly remembered pieces of it were falling out. He found the *The Suburban Monk* and read it with an amused expression:

This is my charterhouse.  
Arbor Shade Lane, USA.  
Mea culpa, mea culpa.  
And no forgiveness, no absolution,  
no prayers, no sacraments,  
no rules, no ritual,  
no bell, no candle,  
no healing book (but books, yes books).

A hopeless monk,  
and this my hopeless monastery.  
As holy men give up to God,  
I give up to hopelessness.

Some have mountain fastnesses,  
slab beds, stone floors,  
spare meals, short sleep,  
rag clothes, crude sandals.

Here are township curbs and playgrounds,  
Sealy mattresses, inlaid tile,  
roast beef, long Sundays,  
Botany 500s, Florsheims.

These too chafe the body.  
But they destroy the soul.

Bodger smiled at the tracings of his former self. The Romantic Egotist, F. Scott Fitzgerald's creation, had come to life again a generation later, far from the Ritz, in the flat, uncolorful world of Cold War suburbia. "Michael," he said to himself, "I will spare you this."

Then he realized the curiosity of the young man had been useful at just that moment when he could be developing post-presidency pangs. He might spare Michael some details, but he would continue to peel his onion, now that he had started.

Bodger thought further about Michael's curiosity about work. "*Of Bodger it is no fable, he is always ready, willing, and able.*" He never forgot what the editor of the high school yearbook indited about him under his callow visage in the photograph.

When, just out of college, he got to Mannheim, Germany, as an Ordnance Supply Specialist (MOS 1815) in the bitter days of January 1954, Major John J. Meyer seemed to see something in Bodger he did not see in the six other replacements just shipped in from

the ZI. (The military term for the Continental US--Zone of the Interior--had always made Bodger admire the baroque complexity of the metaphor of the world imagined into being by the United States government during World War II.)

Instead of sending him to the shop, the major tagged him to replace Corporal Critelli as the chief clerk in the head office of the field maintenance unit. The major's judgment proved sound. Bodger worked hard and well. As a game of sorts, he succeeded in imagining the major's responsibility in the convoluted organizational structure that made up the USAREUR Command headquartered in nearby Heidelberg. That allowed him to anticipate the major's needs. They derived mainly from his desire to survive as an active officer. Like a Dantesque soul teetering on the brink, the major could look down and imagine himself getting a decommissioning order and being consigned to the reserves back home in the ZI. Because Bodger was prompt with reports and accurate with the letters he composed for the major's signature, the major seemed to come to believe that his non-commissioned clerk could help save him. He flattered Bodger and made his life in the office pleasant.

For a two-year volunteer for the draft in Cold War Europe, the whole of military service felt like a postponement of living. His satisfaction in the office contrasted with the pervasive unease of the military arrangement writ large. Bodger believed that, in that contrast, he discovered the paradigm for his subsequent working career. He would get a kind of satisfaction from doing work well within a system designed to make him a mere object of command. He was a kin of Private Pruitt in James Jones's *From Here to Eternity*. Sweet notes from Pruitt's bugle would envelop the parade ground, unconnected to the military machinery, with all its faults, that enveloped him. Like Pruitt, Bodger would play the instruments of the military system without worrying about its larger purposes.

One of Bodger's board members once characterized himself as a natural-born inhabitant of boardrooms. "I'm really alive when I belly up to a table and line up support for a vote." Bodger said he understood, because ever since his days in Major Meyer's office in Germany, he knew his native habitat too--the head office.

At the gas company it was not long before the general manager saw Bodger's abilities. The G.M., Charles G. Simpson, recruited him for duty in the little group around him who were conducting a political fight for life with city hall. That work was on top of editing the magazine, with no extra pay. Bodger read transcript by night, wrote tactical suggestions in the early morning, and occasionally sat in on meetings with the general manager himself. Simpson could not have been more unlike Major Meyer. He was self-confident, clever in a corny way, and combative. Work was his passion. He carried work home from the office in two suitcases each evening. Although the prose he wrote for reports and speeches was often turgid it sparkled periodically with granules of his surprising insights. Since he was on the public docket virtually every day during the most intense part of the battle with the city controller and the mayor, he welcomed any help available. Bodger found himself drafting arguments, while he indexed the hearings and annotated them daily. Simpson and his senior staff took Bodger's work and asked for more. Bodger gave it eagerly, pleased to be pleasing the top man. In the end they won the battle for a new lease for the company to operate the city-owned gas system.

### Bodger read Zen with his necktie on

It was at the time of the fight with the city controller and the mayor that Bodger read Alan Watts and D. T. Suzuki on Zen Buddhism. Al Elseroad, an Army buddy who remained a lifelong friend and fellow adventurer in ideas, had led him there. Commuting on the train, Bodger read for forty minutes in and forty minutes out each working day.

The beatniks had made Zen a popular part of their iconography in the 1950s and 1960s. Jack Kerouac's *Dharma Bums* was a banner. But Bodger read with his necktie on. He never connected with the people who were connecting esoteric Eastern practice to peculiarly American impulses. In the neurotic climate that made the building of back yard A-bomb shelters a rational act, the search for a radical style of personal release seemed equally rational to Bodger. Those conducting that search, however, lay beyond the borders of his corporate life.

Once, in Camden, he visited a writing friend, Ann Ellwood. He had met her through the industrial editors' network. She had another network of friends that touched that other world, where the beats were smoking, wearing something else, and looking for windows in the fortress walls. When she invited him for spaghetti and wine in her hot walk-up apartment, not far from Whitman's Mickle Street house, he met some of them. They were hip, and they talked smartly about the new writing. Bodger mostly listened. Well into the evening, Ann shook her head. No, she said, Bodger was not ready yet. She sealed his feeling of corporate entrapment. He went home feeling low.

But he read further, leaving the likes of Kerouac--and J. D. Salinger too--where they belonged. He came to believe Ann did not know what it was really about. He practiced in his own way, late at night, walking in the nearby woods, suburban traffic just audible over the hill. "Dualistic thought" became the targeted adversary. He thought he could see his contradictions and the maddening absurdities of the organization in a more tolerable light. They would become manageable if he could stop the desire-driven world, as it were, and experience radical reality. He did not care if this was an illusion. After a while, he did not care if he really understood what Watts and the more challenging writings of D.T. Suzuki were telling the western mind. He found a pragmatic effectiveness in his reading and in the imaginative journey to a Japan that he never expected to see (but, years later, did).

Hui-neng, the sixth Zen patriarch (637-713), became the closet hero of the reclusive commuter on the 7:24 am Media Local. He would keep his distance from his nameless companions on the platform. He would find a seat as far from everyone as possible and bury his head in his book. He would not look up until the train reached Suburban Station. When he would get to the office, he would put Watts or Suzuki on the corner of his desk, a reminder that the company agenda was not the only agenda. It also told his associates that here was somebody slightly strange. Their curiosity was the surface of a lurking intolerance for the unknown, which, in the end, kept the company, and the great white-collar horde, in order. Bodger instinctively felt the hazard of being identified as a potential source of disorder in the ranks. That he had a master's degree in English from Penn and that his job was to write about the company helped him. Without knowing how, he managed to avoid being stigmatized. When they quizzed him, he somehow kept control. They ended by thinking his reading was not a serious matter. It was like someone's idiosyncrasy in wearing white socks with a dark suit, odd but harmless.

Bodger did not want to flout their tastes or flaunt pseudo-sophistication. Even a lifetime later, he could imagine himself back into the anxious, self-absorbed state that attended that stage of his life. His fellow workers seemed to bear easily the combined responsibilities of bread-winning and being spouse and parent--but not Bodger. Studying Zen happened along at a critical point. Even now it looked like a happy accident that kept him from diving off the deep end. A point of view from another world allowed him to break out of the world into which he had been indoctrinated and which on the surface he had come to know how to manipulate.

When he met Michael next time, he tried to tell him about it.

"It takes an effort to re-enter the intensity of such a past time," Bodger reflected. "The books I was reading, however, I can return to, even now. After we talked last, I went home and pulled the old books from the shelf. They survived the cut of half of my collection when we moved out of the president's house on campus.

"You forget what you have read after you internalize it so completely that it becomes a part of your behavior, the way you address a new day. That's what I discovered the other evening. There, on page after yellowing page, were Suzuki's reports on Hui-Neng's definition of enlightenment, and I read them as if they were from uncut pages. Good Alan Watts's little paper back was coming apart at the stitching. My red-penned underlines leaped from the brittle pages. It was an entrancing new experience, as if I never had read them before. At the same time, they reminded me how I used to crave for the unconventional turn of thought, the shocking phrase, which would explode the conventional stance that constrained me.

"I knew once again that books are not building blocks in the scholarly build-up of an argument to support an hypothesis. They are medicines, rather, that save you from life-threatening disease. Dis-hyphen-ease, I mean. Here, look at this."

Bodger opened to a page of Suzuki and read the words of Hui-neng:

*All the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, and all the Sutras belonging to the twelve divisions are in the self-nature of each individual, where they were from the first...There is within oneself that which knows, and thereby one has a satori...O friends, when there is a Prajna illumination, the inside as well as the outside becomes thoroughly translucent, and a man knows by himself what his original mind is, which is no more than emancipation. When emancipation is obtained, it is the Prajna-samadhi, and when this Prajna-samadhi is understood, there is realized a state of mu-nen (wu-nien), 'thoughtless-ness.'* (From William Barrett, ed., *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D. T. Suzuki*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956, p. 186.)

Michael mused politely. Bodger realized that he had proffered him a small slice of a long loaf of explanation of something virtually unexplainable. He left it at that. When Michael went home, however, Bodger looked at his private journal from the 1960s. He had not read it for years. He leafed through the yellowing hand-written notebook pages in search of a particular account. When he found it, the date surprised him: Fourth of July 1967. It was an all-American experience, colored in Oriental tones. He had been working at the college for two and a half years. He had been happy to leave corporate culture behind and had been trying to piece together the meaning of his new life at the



college. His familiar handwriting curled around his consciousness and tugged him back to that night. To this moment, he was unsure about it. On its face, it was merely a copycat imitation of the experiences he had been reading about, a psychedelic trip without drugs. It felt right at the time, Bodger said to himself, whatever it was. It felt like a smooth plane intersecting many planes of striation--the crosshatches of the stressful existence he had not yet completely escaped. He found the following, dated Tuesday, 4 July 1967, written in a choppy hand:

*Tonight while out on a walk I was indescribably freed of myself, and stood in a strangely erotic awareness of being in and of the all. I cannot write about it now, so soon afterwards, while my whole consciousness is still drawn toward that unspecific reflection upon nothing and everything. There is a danger of dramatizing the experience in language and cheapening if not destroying it. Suffice it for me to say that this evening will be one of the two or three most important points in my life. It was as if seven years of walking brought me to a cliff, and I was taken off it. Perhaps later I can reflect on tonight. Not now. In truth, though, no talking about it afterward could possibly alter it, make it inefficacious. It was, and is, that is the all-important fact: Tathagata realized, I think.*

He entered nothing more in his journal until 23 July 1967, when he returned to the experience:

*I do recall a light rain falling, and all houses silent, and few cars passing. No fireworks cracked, and the sky was very dark with the rain. The street lights on Ninth Ave. shined mistily through green leaves bent low with the wet, and toward the bend at Heist's one shone as if at the end of a heavy low green tunnel. I walked toward it, my steps growing light and unconscious and slow, as if I were walking automatically. A glaze gradually came over my eyes: I did not see things very sharply, but was staring outward in the slowly building expectation that I would soon be capable of looking inward at something whole. This happened in part--as if a door half opened--while I was on the return leg of my half-hour walk. Then it passed, and I was walking down the driveway in front of the house. Off to the left down the sharp slope of hill I could see the highway, with a wavering island from the street light, greenish and pale in the steamy atmosphere. Beyond, where the Perkiomen Creek lay, a darker darkness could be vaguely seen, and beyond that a pool of utter blackness, the horizon--a mellow sweeping line on usual nights--obliterated. Sky and earth might have been one.*

*I paused to look, and at once my sight snapped out of focus, my knees bent slightly, my backbone became taut and I felt a kind of lifting of the weight of my own body. I also felt goose bumps rising. These physical sensations accompanied the significant experience: the lucidity. I could not look at any particular thing adequately, but I was aware of my total momentary functioning, as it happened on the edge of my heartbeat, and as it partook of that which is conventionally thought to be outside oneself. There was no outside myself: it was all the same. I felt that my existence was the existence of all I was aware of around me, and the existence of that, whether it prevailed or was annihilated, was my existence. I had a sense of lovingly leaning into all around me and*

*ceasing to feel critical of it or able to discriminate it in its parts. There was a marvelous ease about all this: no effort, no strain. I could even think of not being in this ecstatic condition of awareness, and still hold to it. It might have been like sky diving or surfing: while in the free fall, or on the face of the wave, all the trouble of getting up in the plane, or paddling out from shore, is behind one and forgotten. One is in and of the air, or the wave, and all elements--including the ones in the body--harmonize. A mere thought was incapable of cutting the fabric.*

How far away the Bodger of that epiphany was from the one reading it nearly three decades later. Yet how near: he could not deny the freshness of those nearly forgotten moments, naive though they looked. Did it matter whether or not he had correctly absorbed the subtle categories of Buddhist thought? The important thing was that he had coped. What he had felt that night made it possible to do so. It had made it possible for him to live with the increasingly disciplined regimen that he had fallen into.

Once opened, his old files yielded poems from the suburban years when he was first reading about Zen, before coming to the college in 1965. Those pieces of evidence made it obvious that he had been warming up for some time for that night of epiphany:

#### NIGHT WALK

I'll not arrange from this night walk,  
when snug behind a desk once more,  
a pretty Vase of Images  
for decorating idle talk.

Two moon-struck hounds begin to bay;  
a muffled stranger scuffles by--  
why magnify with poetry,  
when there is nothing more to say?

I seek no pre-planned mood, nor hope  
to squeeze from this experience,  
like Joyce, a Paragraph, or Verse:  
I walk; I do not interlope.

Thinking only what occurs,  
measuring the length of night--  
each by each, and all by all--  
I join the mindless multiverse.

And if the moon is steely bright,  
and traces shadows of the branches  
on the path, like filigree,  
without my Saying, it is right.

Not stepping with a poet's sight,  
nor arrogant, nor reverent,

empty of intent (yet full),  
I walk the silent way tonight.

For a bizarre moment, he imagined a television screen on which he appeared in black and white. He was reading this report from his restless night walking many years ago. The foreground silhouettes of the cartoon boneheads who watched the B movies on Comedy Central, Mystery Screen Theater 3,000, jiggled and chortled. And then the screen grew brighter, and it simply wiped them out.

Alfred North Whitehead's paperback books--*Modes of Thought, Science and the Modern World, Adventures of Ideas*--preceded Bodger's reading of Zen. In Whitehead he heard a paternal voice, which enjoyed the acclaim of the established world, artfully debunking the conventional reality by which Bodger felt bound. It was Whitehead who seemed to assure him of a freedom to function beyond the conventional boundaries that he felt from every side. Intellectually, at least, Whitehead legitimized an adventurousness that seemed always to lie elsewhere, inaccessible to him.

"There is more than this," Bodger, the commuter, needed to say to himself. Whitehead said it for him. The universe is infinite; you have the right to grasp as much of it as possible; you will not grasp it entirely; that is reason for joy, not lamentation.

It took Zen to gloss that Whiteheadian text. The two lines of reading converged. The convergence freed Bodger from a feeling of ironbound limits. On walks in the night through the streets of suburbia and its residual wild patches, he could have the visceral sense that categories of thought--and their consequent social structures--did not have final sway over him. He could even get beyond the very thought of thought on fortunate nights.

Despite his discovery that an enlightened state of being could be possible, he always knew that, in believing he had attained it, he proved that he had not. It was enough for him to know, at the edges, of a possible other way, even as he continued to toe the line and work like a dog and meet his deadlines.

One of his thoughtful company friends was a committed Christian. He was among the curious who saw Suzuki sitting on the edge of Bodger's desk at the company. Unlike the others, he sought to know what Bodger was pursuing. Bodger pointed to that possible other way, which had come to him painfully through reading about the ancient practices of China and Japan.

"Well," his friend said, "you didn't have to go by such a roundabout route. Didn't you learn the simplest Sunday school lesson? You lose your life in order to gain it."

Reflecting on his ignorance of Christian practices, Bodger said to him, with a touch of rue, how typical it was of him to do it the hard way.

### Literary good guys and bad guys in graduate studies

"If you go to graduate school in history, you may not get a job," Bodger said to Michael the next time they were talking together.

"I wouldn't go for that reason," Michael said. "I just like it."

"You like beer but you wouldn't drink it all the time."

"I did get buzzed last night with my girl friend," Michael smiled.

"Go if you can," Bodger relented. "I went without knowing what it was or where it would lead. I've not regretted it, but, of course, I quit before it was too late."

"Too late?" Michael asked.

"If I had stayed and gone for a doctoral degree, I always believed I would have been a very unhappy man. I am glad not to have become a typical academic. It was a fluke that, in the end, I later left corporate life in retreat to academia. I suppose I never closed doors completely on possible alternatives when I was in my twenties and thirties. The romantic side of academic life I never fully rejected, although the orthodoxy of scholarly discipline I instinctively found contrary to my liking. I had a youthful vision of smoking a pipe through the late evening and discussing great ideas with a small group of like-minded people. Such a vision, of course, had nothing to do with the reality of academia as it presented itself to me either at graduate school or on the job here. But it may have explained why I was willing to jump in, despite Margot's doubts, and leave corporate America behind. Maybe it was prophetic that whenever I tried to smoke a pipe, before long the smoke would irritate my tongue.

"I went to graduate school in English literature with very mixed feelings. Throughout two years in the Army, from 1953 to 1955, right after my four years as an undergraduate, I started writing a first novel. The thought of going to study English literature when I wanted to be writing the novel distressed me. My wife thought I should be getting a job, not indulging in either of these two foolish fantasies. I went through with graduate school because in late June, a month after I came home from Germany, the dean of the graduate school of arts and sciences at Penn notified me of a university scholarship. It would pay my tuition. I lived in the reflected shadows of World War II veterans. So the GI Bill, a little modified, still was in place and paid me a subsistence stipend during my enrollment. Combined with Margot's new job as a music teacher in suburban Delaware County, this and the free tuition allowed us to rent a third-floor walk-up apartment in Media. It was an easy commute in late afternoons from there to West Philadelphia. You would think I was set for a long and happy haul through graduate school.

"Two weeks before I started, I came back to the college for a visit with Dr. Yost and other professors who had done their graduate work at Penn. I got some good advice on the lay of the land in College Hall. Still, I went home with a strange feeling of discouragement. Something in their manner of speaking about Penn sounded sour. The prospect of the hard struggle to reach what they had reached looked dispiriting. One of them said 'poor fellow' almost involuntarily when I told him I was probably aiming at a college teaching career. Another reacted when I said I did not want the high-spiraling world of business to suck me in: 'Perhaps you're being sucked in no less by the high-spiraling world of higher education.'

"Be wary of the clerks in the grad school office,' Dr. Yost cautioned me.

"The foreboding that I took from this encounter did not stop me, however. By that fall, frankly, I had no alternatives ready at hand. The experience was good for me intellectually. But stress and strain filled our new life. Married only two years, we were making our first real go at a non-military way of existing. Domesticity was not my strength. Working all day at teaching and keeping house by evening pushed Margot to her limit. I was not providing her the rosy connubial life we had thought was ours for the taking.

"I became certain after a few months that literary criticism in the academic mode was not to be my life's work. I toughed it out from September until the following summer of 1956, overloading on courses so that I could at least pull a master's degree out of the experience before getting on with something else. Many years had to pass before I could see the benefit of the experience. While I was in the thick of it, I created a kind of black-and-white warfare in my mind. The professional literary critics were the bad guys. Creative literary artists were the good guys. It was an egocentric thing to do. I had gargantuan ambitions as a writer of fiction, even though I had produced negligible evidence of my abilities. I was a good guy anyway.

"The warfare had one good long-term outcome, however. Without fully knowing it, I was cultivating an irreverence for the foundations of academic disciplines. Only much later did I find that useful. The disciplines seemed to pull the wagon of knowledge like a team of old plow horses. The wagon is dead weight and keeps them plodding at a maddeningly slow pace. Their common enterprise harnesses scholars together. To be responsible, they have to reference the works of their peers. That makes for rational discourse--or the appearance of it, anyway. The drudgery of research obscured from me the inspiration that some of them, at least, felt. The conformity to received critical opinion in the humanities I could not stomach.

"I retained this critique of the academy until much later, when I came to the college. I lacked credentials and had no track record as either a teacher or a researcher. My secret critique of graduate school days gave me a voice in curriculum debates despite this lack.

"When I read *The Reforming of General Education* by Daniel Bell of Columbia in 1966, it was as if I had discovered the tools, in one volume, to apply to the entire liberal arts curriculum. It was a book I had prepared myself to read years before Bell wrote it. The book gained in appeal because Bell was a one-man committee on curriculum revision, the only one I had encountered. I always wished for the guts to appoint a similar committee. Regrettably, Columbia exploded in the fury of the boomer revolution just as Bell was completing his report. To my knowledge, it had little influence when students pushed raucously to relax requirements and, more deeply, to doubt the very foundations of established knowledge.

"Bell saw that the university had evolved to the point where it could no longer preserve a traditional canon of knowledge, because in modernism innovation had become part of the tradition. So, he went to the root of the disciplines and argued that the university had to teach their methods, the process by which they inquired. This is a commonplace insight now but in the mid-'60s Bell's idea was fresh. It was the foundation for whatever force I brought later to the curricular changes we went through during my presidency.

"Graduate school made me feel that scholarship, in the humanities, at least, was a tyranny of conformity. It also revealed that it was a made-up construct at the hands of the scholars. This held out an opportunity for creativity that at that time I failed to appreciate. A body of knowledge was a malleable corpus, and it took its shape from the rules in the hands of crusty seniors like the men at Penn. I missed seeing the malleability because the hands wielding the rules were so overbearing. When I was there, Penn people were powers in the Modern Language Association. Though the New Criticism was supposed to be dominating the schools, I found at Penn an emphasis on literary history and the

history of the language in a late-Germanic mode. Nor did I find anything like an ideological critique of prevailing values, except in Morse Peckham's course in Victorian literature. If there was a Marxist line of thought, either I did not find the professors or it was too cryptic for me to discern.

"As with the men I would work for over the years, so with my professors at Penn. I was respectful at a certain level. I was harshly critical of them at a different level, unknown, naturally, to them or the world. I respected them and criticized them with equal sincerity. I rationalized this as the ambivalent temper that I inherited with my generation.

"One of those worthies sticks in memory as a special influence for the good side, Dr. Frank Laurie, my professor of modern British lit. I liked him because he seemed able to prevail in the grad school ethos without yielding to its polite but cloying tyrannies. In class, Laurie was an incurable romancer, a white-haired, fiery-eyed, self-styled 'old man' with a bouncing sense of wonder. He did not prepare lectures like the others; he spun them, made a fabric of personal memories of literary figures and their works, the wonder-filled stories of other men and their creations. It was doubtless a false reading, created by my biases, but I saw in him not the cold intellectual but the non-professional lover of life and writing.

"I remember talking with him after class. 'It's not my job to teach,' he told me one time, 'but to unsettle your minds. I need to throw out sparks, unanswerable questions on the nature of literary problems. I want to see some of them catch in your hair and make a fire.'

"I asked if that was the inspirational theory of literary criticism.

"Sure!" Laurie said engagingly.

"But you do agree, don't you," I said, 'that the professional literary student should have a solid understanding of formal esthetics, so that his critical inspiration has a systematized foundation?'

"Sure, if that's what you think!" Laurie answered. It wasn't clear to me what he thought.

"Take a course in esthetics--can't hurt!"

"The old man had a leprechaun in his ancestry. In the stuffiest of university halls, he insisted on trying to de-classroomize modern poetry and drama. I applauded him for making me feel that the manic coverage and classification of vast glaciers of material did not constitute the whole enterprise.

"Scouten virtually conducted worship over his dated lists of Restoration plays. Spiller organized all of American literature around his cyclic theory, which scholars have largely forgotten. Peckham's ambitious theory of romanticism bullied the most disparate works of nineteenth-century England into his designated place for them in the canon--although he delivered his critical ultimata with charismatic performances. Leach was awash in the critical cross-tides of Arthurian legend. Haviland's seminar in the Gothic novel kept airtight compartments for its American and English practitioners. Shaaber pronounced on quality in sixteenth-century poetry as if he were reading weights and measures. Chester Arthur taught research methodology the way a lenient company commander would shape up the troops.

"Laurie alone sticks out in memory as someone who had it right. He became ill toward the end of the course I took, and I never saw him again. A decade or so later,

when I ended up in front of a college class for the first time at the age of thirty-four, I may not have consciously remembered Laurie. I think, though, I had internalized his example: make sparks. From a pedagogical viewpoint, I had no idea what I was doing and yet I felt confident of what it was that I was aiming for. I had Laurie to thank for that."

Michael, while listening with interest, looked worried. He ended the session abruptly.

"I have to go and meet my girl."

"Later," Bodger said.

"Later."

### **Bodger crafted a liberal humanist framework**

When he was alone, Bodger, flushed with remembered feeling, had to remind himself why he was dragging out of the dark some of these fragments of his Penn experience. Combined with the canon rigidly delivered in his undergraduate years, they fixed in him an orthodoxy of liberal humanism. They conferred on him a kind of literacy that allowed him to pass even where he may not professionally have belonged. Without that quick and frantic year in College Hall, Michael would never have had reason to ask his question of Bodger, for he never would have become president anyway. At Penn he completed a frame of reference. The great Victorians and great nineteenth-century American writers lined up on one side, the esoterica of Arthurian legend and the Gothic on a second side, Dryden and the great prose writers of the eighteenth century in England on the third, and the heroes of American modernism on the fourth--especially Fitzgerald and Hemingway and, gradually, Eliot. (Wallace Stevens, who died the year he entered Penn, did not have a place at all until years later when he read him on his own.) Henry Adams had a privileged place, an ornament in the frame, only because of his pivotal importance to Spiller's cyclic theory. Adams's quirky attack on the meaning of his life in the context of national transformation would come to serve as a reference, if not a model, for Bodger.

"Not altogether accurately," he said to Michael at a later session, "I have told students for years that I was mostly self-educated. It was not altogether true, since I crafted a liberal humanist framework in college and in graduate school. But within that frame there was not much content at the start. I filled it up through years of reading on my own--much of it on the daily commute to the city to work. Readers read the way they breathe, all the time, without even thinking they are reading. For me reading was a desultory process, though, not an orderly movement in pursuit of a research question.

"However, the fundamental question of artistic expression--what, at bottom, IS it--was never far from my attention. That gave me some direction. It also gave me openings into the fringe that flourished beyond the kind of graduate school environment I knew. Besides Zen, I read Carlos Castaneda and Henry Miller. I read at the edges of history, where the knowable disappears into something that cannot be parsed. Yet, it is more than nothing.

"When I became an administrator, and gave up the romance of being a committed writer of fiction, my interest in the creative process remained and shaped the way I tried to run things. It was a foolish misapplication of the idea of art, I'm certain, but it gave me the impetus to do something that I think I was otherwise not well suited to do.

"A last word on Penn. When women finally identified the old boy network and attacked it, I knew they were right. The old boys of Penn on our college faculty got me into the graduate school, and the old boys later eased the way toward my job at the college. I even owed my first job after Penn--in an insurance company--to a fellow alum of the college who worked in its personnel office. I learned only years later of this invisible pull. I did not appreciate the power of the reference in those days. But I have no doubt my life, lived over today, would be ten times more difficult, because the network does not have undiluted power anymore.

"It's only in retrospect that I have come to see I was in a privileged position, male, white, with a last name that did not threaten or sound too strange. It never occurred to me when I was young that obstacles moved out of my way owing to no merit or action of my own. As a blue-collar kid from a small steel town, trying not to end up on the open hearth at the mill, I would have characterized myself as struggling. I would have called myself handicapped by the lack of cultural depth in that background. But looking back, I see a path that was easy for me."

Michael said, "Getting into the system seems complicated now for me, no matter which direction I decide to go."

"Different from years ago, certainly," Bodger said.

### **The authenticity of growing up locally**

Later Bodger asked Michael where he lived in the region.

"Eagleville, between here and Norristown. Why?"

"I was a local kid, like you. People in academia mostly are itinerants. I never got far from where I grew up. I went to the college that was around the corner, like you. Then, by a trick of fate, I returned to spend my working life here."

Michael nodded yes when Bodger asked if he had time to take a short ride. They got into Bodger's car and drove three miles out of town, to Black Rock Road, just off Route 29. Bodger parked the car by the side of the road and beckoned Michael to get out with him. In the distance they saw the superbly designed campus and buildings of the newest drug research company to come to the town. Apparatus on the roofs shone in the afternoon sun. The high-tech labs, made of brick, commanded the landscape. On the opposite side of Black Rock Road, a small herd of dairy cows looked at the two men as they walked around a discernible patch of ground in the larger corporate campus. Bodger could remember staring at the dumb faces of Troutman's cows in that pasture nearly sixty years ago. A Troutman stubbornly held onto the farming operation while the neighboring farms became corporate parks.

"I would stand right here," he told Michael. "You can see where the grape arbor used to be. And I would look across the road and see the forebears of these very cows. They had a vast importance to me that I could never understand. The house was just over there, a few steps away. You can still see the outline of the foundation if you look carefully. The trees around the perimeter of the lawn still make a defined space, as you can see. This is where the hand pump for the well stood, and there were benches on either side, with roses growing up."

"How long did you live here?" Michael asked.



"I was here, in residence, I understand, for a brief time just after my birth. My mother and my Aunt Anne were sisters. My father and Anne's husband, Bob, were brothers. They made a menage in the little farmhouse with the two families. With Anne and Bob, who had no children, there were my mother and father, my sister, who was seven years older, and I. But this is virtually hearsay. My only real memory of living here is probably authentic, although I could not have been a year old. I remember spilling hot applesauce in the kitchen and getting burned on the arm. Of course, someone might have told me the story.

"My parents moved to Oaks and then to Mont Clare, villages only a few miles distant, as you know. They seemed like far places from here when I was small. When we visited here we would call it 'going up to the country.' Aunt Anne, childless, would give me almost anything I wanted to eat. She was the surrogate mother who never nagged me the way my mother nagged me. It really was the country. She and Bob had a vast garden and for a while grew chickens commercially. The grape vines and sour cherry trees would be chock full in summer. She had a way of flavoring her home-made ice cream with fruits."

Behind the two men, the rush hour was beginning to crowd the road, once a high-crowned country lane. Now it was wide and menacing with its overload.

Michael said yes again when Bodger asked him if he had time for one more pilgrimage a few miles distant. They drove to the canal in Mont Clare, and entered the old towpath, now paved, which led to the locks at Black Rock dam. Leaving the car at the locks, Bodger led Michael along the water toward the dam in the distance, which cut the Schuylkill River at a wide bend. They soon came to the face of the steep ravines, and Bodger pointed up through the trees at a promontory.

"High Point," he said. "The ultimate place when I was a boy. You could see for miles. The roar of the dam, so loud here, fades to a whisper up there. When kids got older, they took their girls up there. It's untouched, no different than when I went there as a boy of ten. When I finished college and was about to leave for the Army, that was where I went to write in my journal. It was the perfect place to record my humorless and wonderful anxiety as I looked at a lifetime ahead. I still will come here when I can't find an answer to a problem. It always refreshes me, and I go home knowing more than I did when I came.

"The highway department, I've read, may some day run a bridge across the river at this location to by-pass Phoenixville. So far, nothing's happened. If it does, I will lose something I thought I could never lose."

Michael stared up a long time and then looked at Bodger a long time. The generations, Bodger thought, catching him out of the corner of his eye, have a hard time knowing what matters most to the other.

When he dropped Michael at the supermarket and went home, he ferreted out an old file. He wrote about High Point twenty years before, when he was in his forties. That was the moment when he began to realize that pursuing a professional life near his boyhood haunts had an unusual meaning for him. It evoked a droll charm for him that he did not need to share with anyone. On a certain fall day those twenty years ago, however, he had found himself sharing High Point. He shared it with boys who had discovered what he and his boyhood friends long before had discovered. When the old piece of writing fell out of the box, he read it as if someone else had written it:

*As I did hundreds of times in boyhood, I leave the shade and moistness of the woods and burst upon the light and transcendent view of High Point, the ultimate destination of every trip to the ravines. I see again the river's wrinkled surface far below, the endless white foam of Black Rock dam, the farm fields in strips of green and burnt sienna across in Chester County, the Cromby stacks smoking on the horizon, the thin line of Route 113 slashing the middle distance between Tunnel Hill and Collegeville. Except for a house or two I do not recall, the scene from High Point is the same as it was. I have the sense of arriving at something too important to forget. It is a thing of the senses, transformed into the shapes of memory.*

*The brilliant blue bird at the level of my eyesight must be a quarter of a mile above the leaf-specked water. If I stand at the outermost tip of High Point, where it is decked with crimson sumac, I can forget that my feet are on earth and imagine that I am hanging in the air with the blue bird, master of the space between us and the water. I am reminded of something almost sacramental by this reenactment out of boyhood. We would stand here and feel the pull to go out there into air and would transform that impossibility into the dangerous next-best thing, a climb down the nearly sheer face of the cliff to the flood plain below.*

*Suddenly four sweating teenagers crash up the path to High Point. They pause to catch their breath. We exchange a brief, distant greeting. They half-ignore me because they are looking outward. I note familiar shapes in their faces and, when they tell me they are from Mont Clare, I am tempted to ask their parents' names. But I decide that nothing would be served. What would it matter to them that I know details of their lives? Because they come to High Point and stop and look out, I guess that they know something light and lasting; because I am here when they arrive, they seem to take for granted that I, too, know.*

*One, acne-faced and ragged, picks up a stone. I remember what he will do. He hurls it outward, and the four of them watch silently as it reaches its apogee and plunges downward. Seeming to hold their breaths, they wait (I wait) to see whether the stone will reach the water or fall short on the bank. We see a tiny, noiseless, white explosion a few feet out from the river's edge. 'Made it,' says one. They think about this and then say good-bye and disappear.*

*I know they are moving toward a decision: either they will go right into a path that leads toward farm fields, or they will go left over the edge of the cliff, in search of a downward route to the river. They face two different afternoons--one controlled, sane, responsible, the other irrational, slightly mad, brought on by the desire to leave earth for a freer dimension.*

*Nearly an hour later they return, puffing and heated. There is victory in their faces. I know the route they chose.*

*As if I am not present, they sustain the surge of their feelings by throwing more stones toward the water. One after another, over and over, they reach for stones--small ones, flat ones, big ones, round ones--and pitch as hard as they can into air. At first they watch to see how far from the bank the stones strike, but soon they are absorbed in the sheer act of throwing.*

*Finally they stop and sit next to me in a row and look out. That I was still here when they returned seems now more than an accident. Abandoning an earlier reticence, I ask their names. Their parents, as I guessed, are former schoolmates or neighbors. Through these faces and names, something is reconfirmed for me. Those cues that I heeded in coping with the day do not, after all, come merely from a private inner world. They are enriched by a shared, mythic past, a set of performances remarkably alive even now.*

The next time Bodger met Michael, he asked him whether he had anything comparable to High Point in his boyhood experience in Eagleville. He told Bodger of a hidden place along Skippack Creek, where the muskrats dug and deer drank. "It was just a few yards from the traffic noise of Ridge Pike bridge," Michael said. "That seems amazing now. I haven't been back there in years."

Bodger told him why his rootedness in the region grew important as his presidency enveloped him.

"There was the constant feeling that inauthenticity would overcome me," he said. "I had to bureaucratize to make anything happen. Yet I hated it. Couple that with the inherent need for academic people to deal in abstractions, generalizations. I worked in what seemed at times a simulacrum rather than a real world. One could make the stupidest errors because he took as real something that was a bureaucratized refabrication, which left reality itself lost in the mist. When faculty members griped about the evils of the administration--a constant hum--I could empathize. As small as we were as an institution, we were as vulnerable as the biggest organization to the dangers inherent in bureaucratic processing.

"As long as I remembered where I was from, kept a sense of my growing up here, I could resist the constant pull toward what I think of as inauthenticity. I don't think that would have worked if I had been from some other place, or if I had moved away and become a president elsewhere. There was something subjectively important about my life happening in its entirety right here.

"Daniel Bell said, 'Provincialism is a source of arrogance, and knowledge a source of humility.' (p. 152) I define a kind of provincialism, however, which inoculates knowledge--the rational process, anyway--against the virus of Faustian arrogance, withdrawal from the facticity of life. I'm sure my little experience is too meager an example for such a broad message. Still, I have a feeling of having been protected against the hazards of professionalism by having been a kid from the county."

Bodger paused and said that he hoped he had not laid more on Michael than he had asked for.

Michael said, "No way. I have it all up here." He tapped his head. "One thing's really clear."

"What's that?"

Michael said, "You don't get ready in college. You get ready to get ready. Seems as if you were putting it together because you were ready as it came along."

After Michael left, Bodger sat on his secluded patio, musing on his recent exchanges. He doubtless had outrun the young man's original curiosity about the presidency. Bodger had seized on it at a personally needy moment. He had identified in his conversations with Michael ingredients he thought were important in the make-up he brought into office later.

He had in common with other college presidents an overdeveloped need to give order and structure to an evolving process of reality. He had learned how much he differed from them, however, in conversations at bars, in committee meetings, and in public forums where their academic rhetoric revealed a cast of mind he did not share. Michael's conclusion from it all might serve him little. But Bodger gained something he had not been expecting to gain and was grateful.

A few days later Michael knocked on the door. Bodger invited him in and they sat at the kitchen table.

"I guess I came to ask for some advice," Michael said. "I found out yesterday that my girl friend is pregnant. She's not sure what to do. Neither am I. We were thinking about getting married, but we don't have any money. I still think I want to go to graduate school after I finish at the college. She has a job, which doesn't pay enough to support us both. If she has a baby, things would be that much worse. What would you do?"

Bodger fumbled through a set of questions and responses, the net effect of which was to dump the question back in Michael's lap. He was never more painfully aware that the generations cannot walk in the shoes of one another. Some time later, he learned that the girl friend had had an abortion. Michael was going to go to graduate school in history. It was not clear from the feedback whether he would take his girl friend with him. He would ask him next time they ran across one another.

"President Bodger!"

Someone called from across the parking lot at the shopping center. It was the parent of one of the graduating seniors. He expressed his thanks to Bodger for helping his daughter with a scheduling problem in her last semester.

"We got her through!" the parent said. "Thanks to a lot of helpful people, including you. I wish you had been able to preside at commencement, though. Somehow it felt as if you should have been there. It was a nice ceremony, anyway, except in the beginning. Somebody must have forgotten to turn on the public address system."

*END CHAPTER ONE, MICHAEL (Returning to Origins)*



## CHAPTER TWO

### MARGARET (*Re-entering the college's life, 1965-1970*)

"I'm not sure you get it," Margaret said to Bodger after they had been talking in his office for a while.

She was in her second year in the Modern Languages Department. Bodger was nearing the end of his presidency.

She came to the college fresh from her Ph.D. program in New England, just about thirty. Like others recently hired, she had a refreshing interest in the practice of teaching. It separated her from her older colleagues, who thought that teaching was a gift, not an acquired skill, and not to be spoiled by conscious meddling in methodology.

Bodger had suggested, ever so gently, that some critical distance helps a faculty member get through to the students.

"I want to get CLOSE to the students," she said, "not put distance between us. They can hear my voice, generationally, I think. Feel it. That's important. I could reach them as a teaching assistant in grad school. It carries over now."

"I understand--been there," Bodger said.

Her skeptical glance invited him onward.

"When I came here to teach," Bodger said, "I was nearing my mid-thirties. I never had taught a college course in my life. I did not have a doctorate to mask my inadequacies. I was thrown in with an English department made up substantially of people I had studied under as an undergraduate. This led to cross currents of deference and outrageous rebellion, all unspoken and unseen by them. Since I had no professional allegiance to an objective body of knowledge, I was free to align myself with the students as SELVES. I don't think my department chairman--my former teacher--suspected the disloyalty to the discipline that this represented. But I was teaching freshman composition anyway; nobody really cared what you taught as long as the students practiced writing."

Margaret, Ph.D., looked slightly puzzled at Bodger through her round glasses. He understood that his sense of getting close to students and hers were not precisely the same.

"I could not be that cavalier," she said. "Syllabi have to be handed in. Students need evaluation. They have to prepare for a general examination."

"I know," Bodger said. "I was not overtly accountable to anyone but myself in class. The department head, the president, and colleagues all made an unspoken assumption. It permeated the entire college then. That was long before we put in a formal faculty development program, with deans and department heads hovering over syllabi and doing performance evaluations. That only happened after I was president. In those old days, people made the grand assumption that each faculty member could be depended upon to do the right thing. Without that, I never could have given the self-referential spin to teaching that I gave. No one checked on anyone else, at least not bureaucratically or formally.

"My own needs were mixed up in this. I over-prepared and studied hard to stay ahead of the students; but it all had to do with my own self as much as theirs. It was important to me to tell them that THEY and not the books they were reading held first

place in the priorities. Looking back, I am not comfortable with the emphasis I felt compelled to give the students. Undergraduates have always been preoccupied with themselves anyway. The quest for self was something that was more important to me, probably, than it was to them. It was something I should have completed long before I got there, perhaps.

"One year I devised the 'yellow paper project' to give structure to this insistence. The essence of it was that yellow tablet paper liberated the students to say anything they wanted to say. There was a contract. I would read their yellow papers but never say anything judgmental about what they wrote. The mere fact that they wrote knowing I would be their audience was powerful. Naively, they wrote of private things. They were quite open. I never violated the contract. I learned about drugs on campus, loves and losses and cheats and youthful dreams of fame and fortune. The contract allowed me to respond as I wished to their submissions, as long as my responses supported them or added something substantive. So I got close to the students; but the medium of the yellow paper gave us both some space between."

Margaret said, "Yes, I see. It made students very vulnerable."

"It made me vulnerable too. To them. And to my colleagues, who mostly ignored my experiment. Even after it received some notice in the *College English* journal."

Margaret asked if Bodger thought he really taught them anything in this way.

"It was not the only thing I did with a class, of course. But, yes. You always teach something with half an effort, although you don't always know what it is they're learning. I am sure they learned that words on paper can matter to one in a personal way. Frankly, that was enough for me in one small comp course on a small campus hidden away in a small town."

"Cool," said Margaret.

After she left his office, Bodger tried to put a definition to "cool." He failed. He guessed it affirmed something he had said; what it was affirming, however, escaped him. Given the difference in their ages and in their generational markers, Bodger realized that Margaret and he had at best an approximate sense of living on common ground. Yet their occasional conversations continued after he was out of office. She lacked the unvarnished curiosity of Michael about Bodger. But Margaret kept coming back to him. She was rather like a tongue drawn to a missing filling in a molar.

Months later, after he left office, Bodger leafed through his journal for something he said to himself in 1973 about his teaching. He wanted Margaret to see it. When she came to his new office away from the main campus, he gave it to her to read. It was written on yellow tablet paper with the old manual typewriter now prominently situated on his new desk.

*June 4, 1973: Yesterday the president announced at commencement that I was one of two recipients of the Lindback Award for Excellence in Teaching.*

*After reviewing all the reasons why I should not have received it, and all the bad reasons why I did receive it, I am left to poke around in the residue of possible merit in my teaching. It is for me an added thing, tacked on to the end of my days, knitted and mended late at night and displayed--with no time to correct slips of the needles--at nine the next morning. But it is also my link with authenticity, my opportunity, three times a*

*week, to deal with things as they are and not the way I must push them into being. Hence it is a seemingly unimportant segment of my life, which has in fact great importance.*

*A scholar I am not. The unhurried, ordered marshalling of information around common themes is a luxury I cannot afford. I'm not even sure that, if I could afford it, I would know what to do with it. My preparation for class is a combination of long-remembered postures, of hastily gathered information, and of overriding desire to Face the Fact, to cut out all the bull shit and get down to It.*

*My skill, if any, lies in the ability I have to be in the classroom and to preserve it and mock it at the same time. The classroom is a mortuary, which is in search of a live body. To provide even a half-live body is an accomplishment, I think, and to stir even a few minds to look at things as they are is "excellence," perhaps.*

*When I am sixty-five, I suppose I still will be a smart-ass kid who can't stand the stuffy atmosphere of the established way of doing things. I remember when I was about to be graduated from eighth grade at Mont Clare School. I was the Legion Award winner, a big cheese identified by the Big Cheese for future Big Cheeseism. I distinctly remember blowing away at least part of the glory by tearing up all my art papers for the year and throwing them all over the front lawn of the school. To be straight is to be dead. I recall that the principal, Raymond Spaid, withheld another special award that I would naturally have received if I had not chosen or been compelled to stick my fingers up to my nose.*

*That's the kind of person it is who has been named Lindback Award winner this year. Dangerous business.*

"Real cool," Margaret said.

Bodger reconsidered whether Margaret's usage of "cool" was affirming anything. But she continued to draw him out in their occasional chats. Bodger sometimes felt that her interest was that which she might bring to an Andy Warhol lithograph: she liked the feeling you get when you run your eye over smooth surfaces that don't connect to anything else. For her their talks may have been like a recreational drug, fun for the moment and forgotten the next. Whatever the reason, Margaret sustained her interest in his apprenticeship years at the college. It gave Bodger's memories a focus on that time of tumult and exhilaration. He was in the very midst of it before he was conscious of a deliberate process of preparation. It was one thing for him to be grabbing indiscriminately for new experience--to be developing himself out of instinct. It was another to be the object of an agenda, raw material--in his own hands, in the hands of D.L. Helfferich, or both. Yes, both. Margaret over time may have devised a game of making that distinction, but she did not tell Bodger.

One day, she had a particular reason to draw him out. He went to the 800s in the library stacks in search of a book on Kurt Vonnegut. There he saw Margaret, squatting on the floor, head tilted, studying the titles on the book spines on the lowest shelf.

"I was thinking about you the other day," she said. "I was trying to tell my class about the feelings at colleges when Kent State happened. I was about five years old at the time. I only remember the pictures in the papers and vaguely see scenes on the screen in my memory."



"Take them out to the main gate and look in toward the campus," Bodger said. "Look to your left, at about ten o'clock. You'll see a maple tree. It's twenty-five years old. Students and the president planted it to mark the moratorium against the war."

"It sounds pretty tame," she said.

"Planting the tree was the alternative the administration put in front of the students. Some wanted to close the college."

"And they bought the alternative?"

"After much talk and persuasion."

"By you? Were you president?"

"Not yet. President's helper. In charge of whatever the president wanted me to be in charge of. So, yes, I did a lot of the talking with the students about the moratorium in the fall of '69. The talking was even more intense when guardsmen shot students on the Kent State campus in the spring of '70."

"Tell me more," Margaret said.

Bodger agreed to meet Margaret in the chapel some days later. She wanted him to remember more about his involvement in campus affairs in those times. Beforehand, Bodger sat in his study at home and tried to recall specifics of those troubled years of the '60s and early '70s. He did not feel confident that he could describe it so that Margaret could make sense of it. He had to do some reconstructing ahead of time.

### **A sense of vocation led Bodger back to the college**

Bodger arrived at the college in 1965 with a sense of life as a vocation. It was grounded in the Germanic work ethic of his family. Only in retrospect, after he was grown, did he see the relentlessness of his mother's pressure on him to achieve. The beauty of her project, he realized after she was gone, lay in her neglect of WHAT he should achieve. He never felt inhibited by her in pursuing his secret ambition to write a great novel or to publish the greatest poetry. She did not say, "Become a great doctor!" or "Become a college professor!" Without being fully conscious of doing so and without ever saying it explicitly, she said, "Become!" She taught him to fear indolence, lack of purpose. She never went beyond high school and spent her whole adult life as a housewife and mother. She read *The Reader's Digest* for serious fare. But her mind flew. Her handwriting seemed to take wings across a piece of paper, skipping the leaden weight of careful grammatical structure. He could feel her nervous energy whenever he was in the heat of a creative task.

The quick energy of his mother contrasted with the passive place of his father in his young life. His father would get up and go to work at the steel factory and come home and fix the house and smoke his cigar and talk little and go to bed so that he could get up before dawn for the next day's work. His father and Bodger had an arms-length relationship. Yet he was a Large Presence in Bodger's life. Bodger feared him because of what he did not do but could. In a day when children were still routinely beaten "for their own good" by loving parents, his father never put a hand on him. But Bodger always knew he could. And he kept a safe distance from him. In the end, his father's presence complemented the forceful messages implanted by Bodger's mother. Work! Become! Be good!

When he read in college about the grand ambitions of the major writers, they enriched this ingrained disposition. The Romantic greats--Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats--attracted him with their combination of revolutionary impulse and heroic scope. The high Victorians and major modern Americans deepened the feeling that he had a vocation to discover. He thought it was to be found in creative writing, because his teachers said he knew how to write a sentence. For a while, the texture of the prose of Fitzgerald and Hemingway seemed to him to have grown out of the shape of his own feelings. He was slow to set aside that conceit. He had to learn bit by bit that his vocation would be the utilization of his gifts--writing among them, certainly--in pursuit of organizational imperatives.

That realization blossomed only after he went through a decade of corporate servitude following the Army and Penn graduate school. During that time, he experienced the superficial satisfaction of shaping events in the company through the printed word. He also experienced the pleasure of shaping a good piece of prose for its own sake, even when the content was the trivia of company affairs. And he learned the rhetoric of management relationships in an environment of masculine camaraderie. He discovered a knack for knowing the flow of a deliberation and riding it just ahead of the others while making them feel good. He thought of it as gamesmanship of a kind; but he felt too that it had something to do with his private need to discover vocation, to give himself over to something large.

After arriving in the college setting in 1965, Bodger closed some of the distance between his public life on the job and the private world of his ambitions. The college was a more congenial setting for the merging of his public and private zones. If he had revealed the extent of his sense of vocation in the conventionalized setting of the company, he had feared that his superiors would label him "weird." Still, after moving to the college, he felt that he had to retain a guardedness about himself when talking with the college president and with his colleagues. He still feared that they would think he was odd if they knew the whole truth about him. In worst moments, this made him feel like an out-and-out paranoid. It lent a tone of duplicity to the way he envisioned himself in action. He felt that he was not leveling with those with whom he worked. He felt devious and vaguely guilty.

When he read his journal entries from the first couple of years after coming to work at the college, the high seriousness of it all made him chuckle. He saw there the thinnest wisp of a reminder that he had once immersed himself in the hyperbolic psyches of F. Scott Fitzgerald's romantic young heroes.

*17 Sep 1966: A fatality [sic] grows upon me. This is all there is to do and it will take all of me and the outcome is not as important as the absorption in the process. It is a joyful sinking, a dread irresponsibility, an inescapable contract with that in me which has the most value. Above all, it is all risk, and there is the likely chance of utter failure but it doesn't matter: that's the joyful part. It doesn't matter.*

*24 August 1967: I believe I have seen the transformation of my youthful neurotic anarchism into a useful social agent. There has always been a tension between the wish to rebel, to make the old bastards look out the back window and gasp at the field we set*

*on fire, and the opposite craving to be accepted without ridicule, embarrassment. I had long assumed that the two desires were mutually exclusive. Now I see they are not. I am paid to rebel against what has been, and my judgment as to the best method of rebellion for the whole institution is respected, if not always accepted.*

*26 January 1969: The real thing is always the same for me, and always will be, I guess--the fatal fascination at the conflict between myself and the social Other. The validation of myself for deep unexplained reasons hinges still on daring to oppose the Other while being OF the Other. This may be heroism but quite possibly instead may be hypocrisy or cowardice: lacking in guts to state your position unequivocally. The private business between me and Chaos, or Karma, or God if you will, seems submerged under that great social conflict--or seems maybe to be contingent upon it.*

*So I manifest the great American dream of being suicidally involved and of saving myself by total sudden escape someday.*

What a funny innocent! "A good thing I hid some of me from DLH and the rest," he said to himself. His struggle for self-understanding in the heat of action lay now in a past for which he felt only marginally accountable. DLH was gone from the earth, with many others. Bodger himself in retirement was no longer the object of public scrutiny. For Margaret, he was doubtless an historical artifact, worthy of a small curiosity. He could talk freely to her now with impunity.

#### **A presidential apprentice learned in the unrest of the '60s**

Margaret and Bodger sat alone in the balcony of the empty Bomberger memorial chapel. The large overhead chandelier lights were dark. The afternoon sun coming through the massive stained glass window in the rear cast their figures in a soft pink light. The founding president of the college, for whom the chapel was named, looked out from his prominently placed portrait, vintage 1890. Enclosed with Margaret and Bodger in the afternoon light, he mutely watched them talk. The great white forked beard seemed to be the most important thing about him. To Bodger the portrait was a happy combination of historical pastiche and venerable icon.

"This whole thing started because Bomberger and his crowd BELIEVED," Bodger said, pointing to the portrait. "Believed in a way I can't adequately grasp."

Margaret replied, "But he wouldn't grasp your way either, or mine."

Bodger thought a moment. "True enough."

"Belief in a different sense," said Margaret, thinking probably of herself as much as of Bodger.

"I suppose the '60s could be cast in terms of a sense of belief," said Bodger, not having thought of it that way himself. "In those years, through all the hype and gamesmanship, some basic questions of belief were at stake in our lives. I was contending in two different confrontations of belief, I guess. One was with the students. The other was with my superiors in the administration.

"I came to work at the college somewhat blindly. I was getting away from the way the corporate life squeezed you into a small package of efficiency and left the rest of you

to dry up. That was clear. I didn't have clearly in focus what I was getting *into*. I spent the first couple of years here finding that out. The pace of my life was so fast that I was finding it out on the run, in the heat of the conflict."

"Conflict with students?"

"I was discovering an accord with students more than conflict. The conflict was more with my elders. And with my own ambitions. I had a sense of vocation. That is, I felt I had to use myself up in a great worthwhile endeavor. But I was unclear about the particulars. It was an attitude ingrained in me from childhood. I always imagined myself as a writer--that would be the way. But by the time I got here, I had developed an organizational talent. I could harness my writing to the function of the company. I had learned to write my way into an understanding of an organizational situation. Then I would use that piece of writing to make something happen in the organization.

"Before leaving the company, I wrote a question-and-answer piece for the general manager on labor negotiations for our company magazine. Nothing about the union ever had been said so directly in print before in that medium. The G.M. liked it and it went to press--making our legal counsel nervous. The employees soon after voted not to strike. My piece did not bring that about. But it helped. It made my boss look forthright without giving in on any substantive points. He thanked me. I felt as if I had done something useful."

"Did you believe in what you did?" asked Margaret.

"I would not have thought about it in terms of belief," said Bodger. "At that age and stage in working, don't you want to feel your mental muscles strained to the maximum? You want to show that you can move something. It doesn't much matter what. You want to be in it, with it, doing it. That's the way it was in the company. And I did enjoy that. But you get over being high on your own sheer ability. So leaving that and coming here in some way involved me in something I guess I could label 'beliefs.'

"Funny. My relationship with my father was distant. I never got close to him. In all the jobs I have ever had, I have built a special relationship with the men under whom I worked. I felt that they approved of what I did. They encouraged me and applauded when I did something right. And that meant more than I realized at the time, I think. It made me follow them and perform for them whether or not I 'believed' in what they were trying to do. Their loyalty to me was functional, I am sure: it got more out of me. But that was fine. Without getting psychoanalytic about it, I enjoyed my relationship with them as if they were supplemental fathers. I needed their loyalty to focus my attention, to get my energy into gear, to postpone, at least, the doubts I had about the worth of what we were doing together."

"You had doubts," said Margaret.

"Beliefs. Doubts. For me they go together. I've gone through the letters of Bomberger in the archives of the college. If he expressed a doubt about his mission to create this college or about his resolve to hurdle the thousand and one obstacles against him, I did not find it. He did not falter in his belief. If he had done so, we would not be sitting here in the ambience of his memorial—under his fearsome gaze. I could never get inside the feeling of such unflagging and simple belief as he must have had.

"I remember the hour after I left the meeting at which the board told me I was the new president in 1976. I went out to a special place of my boyhood in the ravines above

the river, just a couple of miles from this spot. 'What have I done!' I said to myself. It was the most desperate moment I ever had in the whole time I was president. Believe it or not, I was thinking of Bomberger, and of all the men who had come after him. Compared to their steadfastness, my resolve to have a vocation, to do something worthwhile, seemed like mere juvenile ambition. How could I ever represent what they represented? I will never forget the pain in my stomach at that moment. It felt as if someone had stabbed me."

Margaret asked, "You didn't think you had the same degree of belief they had in themselves?"

"Right--for that dreadful moment. I doubted myself and the institutional imperative, the sense that it was all-meaningful. But that moment in the ravines was merely a relapse. By the fall of 1976, when I was inaugurated, I had pulled together a set of convictions that operated. I think you could say I believed in something."

"In the nick of time," said Margaret.

"Right on schedule, actually," said Bodger. "Any lingering sense of doubt about my fitness for the job died from that stab wound out there along the ravine. I never again felt I had made the wrong decision to accept the presidency. That's not to say I did not have many painful moments afterward."

"So--what you had to do in the days of Kent State was useful for you," Margaret said, arching her eyebrows in a question.

"Yes. My work with D. L. Helfferich from 1965 to his retirement as president in 1970 was filled with cross currents and exhilaration. In the six years that followed, from 1970 until 1976, while I was vice president to his successor, the dean, DLH as chancellor continued to provide the main tension that led to my learning and growing."

"You call it tension."

"One of the conditions required for learning," said Bodger. "DLH created it. In a sense he set the agenda for my existence for eleven years. Growing up, my mother and father drilled into me, without being specific, that I had to achieve something. DLH picked me up and gave me the specific thing to shoot for. Within two years of my coming to work at the college as alumni secretary and English instructor, the agenda became overt between us. Even then the politics of the college were intense. The small and parochial character of the place only deepened its political intensity. So DLH could make no promises about my future. Still, he wanted to shape me as much as he could so that at least I would be a possibility for succession.

"He wanted people to believe that he could make anything happen. He was incurably romantic in his way--it startled me once when I first made the generational connection between him and the hyperbolic strutters in *This Side of Paradise*. DLH was only four years younger than F. Scott Fitzgerald. World War I was a defining experience for him too. He too was of the 'lost generation.' He had a kind of Nietzschean freedom from bonds and limits.

"He said he could put anyone in a job and influence him sufficiently to do it well. That, by the way, led to some pretty wrongheaded appointments in his time.

"When he was president, he sought to make the institution the shadow of himself. He bestrode the place. He was one of four brothers who followed their grandfather and father to the college. His wife and son were alumni. His grandchildren were enrolled

during my years under him. So to him the college was family. This somehow turned the college in his mind into an absolute good. It also made his sense of personal ownership close to total.

"The Helfferichs were historically folded within the Pennsylvania German tradition. DLH said that his grandfather was in the group associated with the German Reformed Church in the US that started the college. Bomberger's religious beliefs therefore were always central in the Helfferich vision of the college."

"So, Helfferich was a 'believer' in the same sense as Bomberger himself?" Margaret asked.

"Yes-and-no," Bodger replied. "I think he and I got along so well because of that yes-and-no. DLH was closed and open at the same time. He was firm in his adherence to his sense of the origins and meaning of the institution. He affirmed the religious heritage and sought to give the college the outward appearance of it until his last day on earth. The Helfferich family tradition rested securely within the womb of the denominational tribe--DLH's father and a brother were preachers in it. He liked people to think of him as a quintessential Reformed character. He was a pillar of the church. He took a major role in the merging of the old denomination with the Congregational Christian churches in the late '50s and its aftermath through the '60s.

"His behavior, however, belied his apparent respectability as a churchman. The Helfferichs had a family tradition *within* the Reformed tradition. It had the appearance of brazenness--a sense of the absurd, you might say. Stuffiness was its mortal adversary. Wit was its weapon. Legend said that DLH's father was renowned within the circle of Reformed preachers of the early part of the century for his phrase-making and his seeming iconoclasm. DLH carried forward this paternal style.

"The structure of that style was the key to its effectiveness. His brazenness was securely anchored in his propriety. He never abandoned his sense of occasion or his leading role in the occasion. With that role clearly established, he could then be brazen. He may never have ceased to be a 'preacher's kid.' A 'pk' lives within the established system like no other kid. He can never get out of it. But *within* it, hey, it's okay if he throws a dead cat into a dark alley.

"Preacher's kids of course get into a lot of trouble for behaving that way. There is something irreconcilable about the structure. DLH to his dying day was unexplainable in the minds of many people at the college. The contradictions seemed too great.

"The absurdist side of him at its best came out as a sheer zest for living. He hated boredom. He despised committees. He was a life-long actor, both on stage and off. For many years he and his wife coached the dramatic club. His gestures partook of the grand when he spoke. Even in more private moments, he positioned himself consciously to achieve the greatest effect.

"His critics thought his theatricality was too much. They missed the essential point: he usually had a purpose in mind when he decided to say something or do something out of the ordinary. He saw the outrageous as a tool. He used it to advance his notion of sanity and respect for a vision of the universe. His vision, I think, was that of the modern man individually upholding a belief in the coherence and the mystery of an expanding and intentional universe. After all the shenanigans, that's where he came down.

"I think that, in the end, he rested quite securely in the accepted Protestant Christian view of the world. He saw undergraduate higher education as a natural manifestation of Christian belief and endeavor. As the controversies of the late '60s on campuses raged, he managed the college with an appearance of confidence because he had that view. He made people feel that the nuttiness would end, that his view would prevail."

Margaret nodded. "Did it?"

Bodger replied, "A style prevails even when views do not. He knew better than many of his conservative supporters that serious change was going on in the late '60s. One part of him was quite clear: he wanted to stop it. The other part of him knew he could not. He saw the conservative business person and conservative church person as his principal constituents. He saw them as the parents who would send their children to us and he viewed them as financial supporters. Accordingly, he pitched his public rhetoric directly at them.

"Overhearing that rhetoric, the faculty were sometimes aghast and fought with him when they could. His inclination toward the unorthodox helped somewhat to keep them from outright rebellion, and it helped him greatly in his relations with students. He could get inside their youthful anarchism and sometimes understand it better than faculty, certainly better than other senior administrators. Once the kids were carrying picket signs in front of his office, protesting about poor food or something. He came out of his office and borrowed one of their signs and walked around with them. He unapologetically manipulated student affairs to keep the kids in tow. He would offer a carrot and then shake a stick and wait until spring break before coming down on a decision. By then, the students would lose interest, as he knew they would.

"He put me out in front with students as his assistant and felt comfortable in doing so. He knew instinctively that I had a maverick streak related to his. But he also knew that, as a well-conditioned corporation man, I would not knowingly double cross him. In parallel, he had a dean who was straight and strict without deviation. The dean attracted the animosity of students and faculty, leaving the president relatively untarnished. He and I to some degree became foils for one another. I'm afraid I had the better bargain in terms of popularity, anyway, since he took so much of the criticism for the administration as a whole. It wasn't fair to the dean. But he was tough and knew how to take it.

"If DLH truly believed every conservative thing he said, he would not have managed the college through the troubled years as successfully as he did. Deep within, he had his family bias for the bizarre to draw upon. He also read the winds and knew he should bend when they were too strong. That's why the '60s did not overwhelm him. He drew upon the loyalty that his conservative supporters gave and had to ask them to go on faith when he sounded as if he was going against their beliefs. Largely, they went on faith. So he never fully had to resolve the contradictions of the times. In the end, if he had to, he could admit a mistake--to whichever party was aggrieved--and go forward. That's what he did after he banned an atheist from speaking publicly on campus."

"Why was that such a controversy?" Margaret asked.

"It grew out of the unusual climate of the campus as it was in 1967," Bodger said. "The college was committed to open inquiry into truth in the academic sense--quite respectable as a liberal arts institution. It was also committed to guiding students in desired behavioral directions in the residential setting. That meant the perpetuation of a

set of social rules and regulations and the survival of a sense that we were building Christian character, even after the faculty defeated compulsory chapel attendance. If DLH sanctioned the appearance of an atheist on campus, he would appear to be sanctioning a 'belief' contrary to this extra-academic intention of the college. He had an especially tough issue because the speaker was the nationally known iconoclast, Madalyn Murray O'Hair. She won the Supreme Court case to ban prayer in public schools. She was a big target and a vivid symbol. DLH believed that the criticism of conservative parents and donors would be unacceptably great if he did not step in and ban her appearance. He erred in weighing that possible criticism against that of faculty and students."

"But how could you reconcile banning her with the freedom to seek the truth?" Margaret asked.

"Precisely," Bodger said. "There was the conflict--although DLH said he objected to her vulgarity and obscenity rather than her espousal of atheism. He ran the risk of reducing religious principle to a question of manners."

The soft afternoon light entering Bomberger chapel through the stained glass window had darkened. Margaret glanced at her watch and jumped to her feet.

"A student is coming to see me," she said as she gathered up her bag.

"I didn't do Kent State justice," Bodger said.

"I'm getting the drift," she said. "Next time."

Alone in the chapel, with no need to go and meet anyone, Bodger stayed on for a few minutes. He had often done just this in those early years, after classes were done for the day and students and faculty were elsewhere.

"Belief," he said to himself. There was a breadth of view in the college tradition that he perceived without understanding it at first. The Reformed theology as it developed in the US in the end seemed to him to be as compatible with free inquiry as any religious tradition could be. Why, then, did DLH have difficulty with such issues as O'Hair? Bodger came to think that Helfferich confused a politico-social philosophy with religious doctrine. DLH mistakenly tried to ground the politico-social objective of preserving a set of norms in a religious position that did not essentially depend on those norms. That is why they later could change under Bodger. But in the meantime, during his years of apprenticeship under DLH, Bodger had difficulty handling the tension. Still, it set the conditions for learning in his apprenticeship.

He looked again at old Bomberger's portrait. In the centennial history of the college, Bodger had read a description of daily chapel during the first administration. Bomberger would call an errant student to his feet in front of the entire student body and faculty. He would point his finger at the miscreant, shake his forked beard, and thunder his admonitions for all to hear. He could imagine DLH in such a role, right here in the chapel named in memory of that first worthy. DLH would have played the role with flair. But his fulsome mustache, in place of the forked beard, would have twitched ever so subtly at the height of his harangue. The student object of his outrage would have caught that subtle signal. Together they would have played out the scene, both projecting the appearance of an informed sincerity while participating in a conspiracy of irony. When Bodger tried to see himself as president in that same chapel scene still another generation later, shorn of both beard and mustache, his imagination failed. His fund of irony was not



rich enough to enable him to pull it off. The student would simply think he had lost his mind. The times were utterly different.

He rose from his chapel seat and headed for dinner at home. He would look for notes of the O'Hair brouhaha and piece the details back together again.

### **In the O'Hair affair, Bodger tried to walk a fine line**

In his files, Bodger found a clipping from a local paper. "College Boots Out Atheist," the headline read. The YM-YWCA student organization invited O'Hair to speak on campus. Neither the president nor anyone else in the administration knew it had taken this initiative. DLH took the position that the college had not authorized the students to make such an agreement. Technically, he said, it was not the college's agreement, and the college therefore was not obliged to welcome O'Hair to campus. Her appearance would be incompatible with the Christian background of the college.

The students rented a hall at a firehouse in a neighboring town. O'Hair appeared there to a cheering crowd. The rebuff by the college president made her feistier than usual. When she said that freedom of speech and thought were lacking at the college, the crowd of several hundred students and faculty roared their approval, according to the article.

The report was accurate, Bodger reflected. His presence at the event symbolized the tension in the college community and in him. He remembered his personal turmoil the afternoon before O'Hair's speech.

If he did not attend, he would be demonstrating his solidarity with DLH, his boss-- who a few days before had confirmed that Bodger would formally become executive assistant to the president. At the same time, he would be showing students, with whom he was sympathetic, that he opposed their initiative; and he would be putting uncomfortable distance between his faculty friends and himself.

If he did attend, he would be running the risk of inviting the ire of DLH, the dean, and other administrators who would stand firm in support of the ban. But he would be showing students and friends his tacit personal support for them and being faithful to his own belief that the ban was a mistake.

As he wobbled back and forth throughout the afternoon, in a desperate maneuver he concocted the idea that his attendance would help the administration. By attending, Bodger would be perceived by students and faculty as a surrogate for the president. This would undercut the impression of DLH's total hostility toward them. If the president's assistant could be present, surely the administration's declared posture was more a publicity maneuver than a substantive opposition. They would attribute to DLH a measure of irony and soften their criticism of him. They would see that his opposition mainly served his purpose of putting a good face on the college for the benefit of its conservative supporters.

So he attended. His administrative colleagues failed to see the virtue in his action. They let him know archly the next day of their sense of his apostasy. But apparently it did not upset DLH himself. This became evident to Bodger as the president processed the discontent that lingered among faculty and students after O'Hair's appearance at the fire hall. The humanities faculty formally criticized the banning and urged the president to

approve a resolution prohibiting the ban of speakers in the future on grounds of academic freedom. To deflect the heat, DLH created a special committee on academic freedom and appointed Bodger to it as a representative of the administration. To Bodger, at least, this was DLH's implicit affirmation of his decision to show up at the fire hall. To his other administrative colleagues, it must have been a confusing signal from a boss to whom they had been loyal.

The president resolved the confusion at a faculty meeting some time after O'Hair appeared. "In retrospect," DLH said from the chair, "I made a mistake." By then, his decision had rallied the admiration of conservative supporters, a main objective. He did not go out of his way to apprise them of his subsequent admission on campus to the faculty.

Bodger felt that DLH's admission of a mistake vindicated his decision to attend the O'Hair event. But he felt troubled by his failure to influence DLH at the outset of the incident. If he had done so, the president would not have had to try to unscramble the egg that the ban cooked up. He was with DLH and other administrators on the afternoon when the president began to formulate his resolve to keep her off the campus. The others urged the president to ban her by "unilateral action" to protect the college's "institutional self-respect." That meant not consulting the faculty ahead of time. Bodger knew his faculty friends would react to being ignored. He thought this was a price too high to pay for a position that he felt was wrong. He said none of this at the meeting and watched quietly as DLH came to his decision to act against O'Hair. About to be newly minted as the president's assistant, he did not want to tarnish his position so early by talking contentiously against a view that the others clearly held and that DLH himself wanted to adopt. He left the meeting with a dead weight over his eyes. He apparently saw more clearly than any of them that DLH's decision was about to rend the fabric of the campus community in a willfully unnecessary way.

He found the following entry in his journal about this moment:

*If I had not allowed my own political considerations to keep me quiet, I might have raised a rational dissent and perhaps given DL a chance to think of a different course of action. My job is to give the man counsel, and I sure muffed the chance. From now on, if I have any conviction on an issue, I will let him know what it is, even if I know it is counter to his own inclinations or to others counseling him.*

When he recounted all this to Margaret at their next meeting, Bodger said that his involvement in the O'Hair episode was a useful example of his entire eleven-year apprenticeship under Helfferich. "I did not rest comfortably with what seemed like the narrower aspects of the tradition of the college," he said. "I was naturally pulled toward those people and events that seemed to push toward openness, breadth, greater freedom. It was remarkable to me that DLH took me into his inner circle so willingly and supported me and taught me what he knew. No matter how I circled around or wobbled in the face of an issue on his desk, he always gave me a feeling of trust. That was a powerful motivator. It made me loyal to him. It made me do administrative duties I never thought I would want to do or be capable of doing."

"But you kept doing them," Margaret chided. "Something in the administrative work must have satisfied you at some level."

As she spoke, another snippet from his journal of that time scrolled in his mind's eye:

*I reaffirm my belief that Gully Jimson [Joyce Cary's protagonist in The Horse's Mouth] is greater than all: art will outlast all. In the end, administration is the manipulative art which, though it do good unto others, drains the administrator of his life-juices and pours them off into oblivion. The fulfilling art is that which deals with the materials of semblance, as dear Suzanne [Langer, Philosophy in a New Key] would say, not of reality. Administration is an art all right, but it sucks out one's creative power and there is no deposit in form. It is evanescent and deathly.*

"You are right," Bodger said. "It was what I called my 'excremental vision' that kept me going, against another vision, of art as everything."

### **The campus felt the effect of the Kent State killings**

"Kent State," Margaret said.

"I can talk about the years of the late '60s leading up to it. You have to remember that the college was a tightly managed little place in the heart of a conservative WASP community. Many alumni--by no means all--had a rock-like sense of reality, which translated into political caution. They liked the idea that, while the ivy campuses and 'liberal' places like Swarthmore were erupting in student violence, our college was noticeable by its absence from the headlines."

"You kept the lid on," Margaret echoed.

"We were less prone to disorder for a couple of reasons," Bodger went on.

"For one, Helfferich was a tough, combative bird. He briefly had been a professional prizefighter and a merchant marine as a young guy. He always relished a good bout. In a special issue of the college magazine on his life, you see him pictured bare-chested aboard ship in 1920, when he was a sea-faring man. It's easy to imagine that well-formed physique in the ring. The belligerence shown by students got his blood boiling. The fatal heart attack of the Swarthmore president in the heat of a student protest affected the feelings of all college administrators around here. The national coverage of gun-toting kids in front of the library at Cornell, the rise of rock in a cloud of marijuana--the whole cultural swing of youth was to him like a red flag to a bull. He was damned determined that they would not get the upper hand here.

"His stance went under the disguise of cultural responsibility. His admirers among the board and alumni applauded his declarations that the college stood foursquare against the insanity of the times. He saw a herd instinct at work among the feisty youth of the late '60s, not the flowering of free-thinking individualism, as the ideology proclaimed. He thought the kids were conformist sheep in their putative nonconformity. He claimed the high ground of liberal education against the young people calling for the revamping of the very grounds of learning. He said the college would continue to teach students to think and to prevent them from all thinking alike."

"That doesn't sound very hide-bound," Margaret said.

"It wasn't. DLH felt the need to make almost a fetish of 'conservatism' for the sake of his presumed external audience. But the cultural wars of the '60s did not split conservatives from liberals. They lumped conservatives and liberals together on one side, although they repudiated one another. It took me some years afterward to realize that my liberal leanings did not differentiate me from DLH and the board as much as I feared.

"On the other side were the extreme leaders of the youth revolution. To them, it did not matter if you were conservative or liberal. You were wrong either way. In the extreme formulation of the '60s revolution, the whole system of government and industry and the military and education had to go. Liberals had a harder time than conservatives in dealing with this because they wanted to allow room for the students' viewpoint. At least conservatives could stand foursquare against the forces of New Left youth and pit force against force to support their stand. That suited Helfferich's disposition.

"The SDS--Students for a Democratic Society--epitomized the radicalism of the campuses in those years. If you looked at their pronouncements, you saw that politically they opposed the broad liberal consensus even more than a specific conservative posture. Marcuse's concept of the 'one-dimensional society' helped SDS and their ilk to define the enemy, which turned out to be ubiquitous. The capitalist hegemony that sustained the Cold War as well as the hot Vietnam War became the target. What I found interesting was the translation of a political agenda into a personal agenda. To achieve a political upheaval, a young person was called on to achieve a personal upheaval--to turn on, drop out, wear different clothes, allow hair to grow, join a commune, and so on. All this was to be in the service of a romantic vision of a permissive, unhierarchical vision of a world that could never be."

"*The Greening of America*," Margaret said. "I read it in college, after it was forgotten."

"Right. Charles Reich thought that eating unprocessed peanut butter and wearing bell-bottom trousers would bring in the revolution. In the case of SDS, the theme of the revolution was power to the people. The power was supposed to manifest itself in radically democratic forms. Students were being urged by SDS to hold teach-ins on campuses against the war and against the 'system's' victimization of minorities and the poor.

"One day word spread around campus that a rider for the SDS would arrive on a motorcycle at noon. He reportedly would be organizing a chapter then and there in order to radicalize our too-quiet campus. The handful of activist kids on campus put out the word that everyone should get together in front of the administration building at noon that day to greet the emissary from the great cultural war blazing on American campuses. We alerted the local part-time policeman, just in case--we had only one. Our dean of men doubled as football coach. He and a few of his hefty linemen were out of sight but at the ready. At noon, about fifty students responded to the call and milled around together. Soon they heard the gunning of a motorcycle engine as the SDS representative rode up the campus drive. When he pulled to a stop, the president strode out of the administration building and walked right up to the visitor, his white mane waving. They exchanged a few words, which I could not hear clearly from where I was standing. They had something to do with the privacy of the campus and our wish to keep it that way. The visitor had a few

words with a couple of the students while DLH stood his ground. And then he turned his motorcycle around and left!"

"What would the president have done if he hadn't?" asked Margaret.

"We didn't discuss it beforehand, so I could not know for certain. On another campus, the massed students would have raised hell with him then and there. Most of ours treated the incident with mild curiosity and went off to one o'clock classes. The few organizers were so outnumbered that they had no immediate recourse.

"We had a spectrum of political commitment among our students, of course, but the majority of them were watching out for number one, not throwing themselves onto the ramparts for the revolution. The draft put a damper on the men. They did not want to get kicked out of college, so they played things cautiously. The women were quietly going through the revaluation of values that was fast becoming the women's liberation movement. But our place was not the place where the wave was breaking.

"While the campuses in the limelight thrashed it out over national issues surrounding Vietnam and civil rights, our students thrashed it out with the administration over the campus rules against alcohol and visitation in the women's dormitories. Often the conflicts seemed trivial. But the board and administration were solidly against changing those rules. Students were increasingly unhappy with them. Later even some parents and alumni would favor some modification. But the late '60s were not the time for DLH to bend. So the administration took hard knocks, and life was quite stressful for us all.

"Still, the kids worked out a *modus vivendi* of sorts. They widely ignored the rules but managed to keep a semblance of obedience in place. The student life deans, for their part, along with student proctors, figured out an unacknowledged double standard that allowed youthful life to go on. To keep up appearances, now and then the deans would come down hard on this dorm or that and students would be kicked out--a few of them no doubt destined to deal with the vagaries of the draft as a consequence.

"The stand-off on social rules drove some students away from the campus. Although the fight over rules usually centered on the ban on beer, marijuana became increasingly evident. Kids even suspected of using it would be dismissed by quiet administrative action, but that did not stop the trend.

"To escape the regimen, a small group, I learned, rented the old town train station. By then passenger trains had stopped running. The railway company had not yet disposed of the property and had rented it as a domicile. I had a special relationship with a couple of the guys in the group. One night they invited me down. With much hesitation, I went. They ushered me into the old waiting room and then up a ladder to the windowless loft. It was the pad of pads--mattresses on the floor, blankets and pillows here and there, plus an unmistakable redolence of sweet smoke. Fortunately, they did not do marijuana in my presence. They offered a beer but I refused it. We had a fine old bull session together. We settled the fate of the dawning world and worked out the answers to the campus dilemmas as well.

"That visit has stayed in my mind all these years because of the naiveté both of us displayed and the newness in the air that it captured. All students were required to live only in college housing or at home if they were locals. By inviting an administrative officer of the college to their cozy pad, they put themselves in danger of being disciplined if not dismissed for violating that rule. Offering me beer and allowing me to infer they

used the place to smoke pot only compounded their vulnerability. By accepting their invitation, I put my administrative position at risk. My fellow administrators already thought of me as a weak-willed sympathizer with students and liberal faculty. If they learned of my clandestine visit, my dependability would be doubly questioned.

"However, although I never told him about it, I was sure that DLH would have disapproved only if I had been compromised publicly. He knew that I was connecting with the students in a way that he could not. He wanted to know what they were thinking from the inside. I seemed to be the only administrator who could give that to him unfiltered by the bureaucratic screen through which the other administrators viewed things. It was one of the benefits that came with my never before having been an educator."

"Where was the train station?" Margaret asked.

"The railroad sold it to a fast food place after the town failed to raise the money to make it an historic landmark. Next time you have a pizza at the Hut, shed a tear for the '60s."

"So," Margaret summed up, "a tough president with imagination and a cautious student body equaled relative tranquillity?"

"Every baby boomer felt the waves of change," Bodger said, "even those who thought the hippies and yuppies and war protesters were wrong. But it was surely the case that the particular circumstances here kept things from falling completely apart."

"You had no really *good* anti-war riots, then?" Margaret asked.

"I'll try to catch the flavor. In the spring of '69, just a year before Kent State, an unofficial group of students formed a 'Concern' organization. They sent out a flyer calling for a rally in the football stands. The issue was not the war. It was the social rules that the college insisted upon. An official student-faculty-administration committee had put forth some proposals for open dorms and drinking on campus. The convoluted process for reviewing them prevented quick review and passage. As the weather warmed, impatience rose. The 'Concern' group sent out a flyer--I found an old copy of it."

Bodger handed Margaret the paper to read:

*The official committees are hamstrung by paper shuffling. The "Concern" is a body of students who wish to, in a peaceful, orderly, and rational way, call to the administration's attention the students' wishes, especially in regard to the imminent decision on the recommendations for open dorm and drinking privileges.*

*"Concern" has two main goals.*

*1) To promote a sense of cohesiveness and unity in a student body now in a state of anomie, alienation, and disinterest.*

*2) To provide a channel for the students to make the college a more livable, modern institution in keeping with other schools of its caliber. "Concern" is of, by, and for the students. It is not behind or in front of them--it is with them. It has and wants no power without a firm base of student support.*

*The first priority is a show of support for the proposals for open dorms and drinking. To best accomplish this, on Tuesday, May 13, the "Concern" will meet on the football field with anyone interested in taking part in a peaceful, orderly and quiet show of*

*student feelings. From there, we will move to the president's office, congregate for a short time, and finally disperse.*

"Let me guess," Margaret said. "The president was displeased--and not just because of the majestically split infinitive in the second sentence."

"The students toting guns on the steps of the Cornell library had recently been on front pages across the nation. The week before the planned rally, a board committee had told us they expected us to be as rough as possible on any students who disrupted the college.

"We made elaborate preparations. DLH was a special patron of the football team. He had been a player at the college in his student days and connected, man to man, with the guys. He called in the captains and asked them to take some of the squad members to the rally, but to stand at a distance as visible non-participants. The leaders of 'Concern' were not part of the jock culture of campus. --You may see why I thought DLH would understand my complicity with the students at the railroad station lair. The dean of men was detailed to go and note the names of speakers and other organizers. Again, the local authority was put on alert.

"We met in advance with the student leaders of 'Concern' and laid down some specific ground rules. There was to be orderly discussion, and there was to be no march on the president's office afterward. As an alternative to the march, Helfferich agreed to meet afterward with a delegation from the rally of any twelve students. In this advance meeting with them, he adopted his brusque persona. He made it clear that they had walked onto thinner ice than they might have gauged.

"On the day of the rally, about two hundred students showed up at the football field. Many were there out of curiosity, not as loyal followers of the 'Concern' people. They drifted away before the end of the speeches. The speeches were mild in tone, cautious in substance. No delegation went to see the president. 'Concern' died, I think, when the semester ended shortly thereafter. The leader, however, got an invitation from DLH to attend the college board meeting afterward and handled himself well."

"The art of co-option," Margaret observed.

"Absolutely," Boger replied. "It was a main ingredient in the glue to hold the place together. By fair means and other means. We followed up with plans for seminars in the fall on values, discussions among students, faculty, and administrators. One thing DLH was never unwilling to do was talk. There was a kind of effrontery in the basic attack made on the 'system' by the ideologues. They saw the system manipulating the young into positions of subservience and, in the case of service in Vietnam, terror. To a degree our small campus efforts, mostly successful, to keep control fitted the critique. Ours was a benign terror, to be sure.

"That summer saw the rise of the national Vietnam Moratorium Committee. By August, I was in discussion with the student leadership about plans for a moratorium in October on campus, to coincide with the national moratorium. The emphasis was on fair and open discussion of all sides of the issue. Helfferich constantly impressed on me the political value of the highest commitment to open discussion. He was right, I thought, to expect student rallies of any kind to be intolerant of the other viewpoint. The students could never credibly argue against his call for representation of both sides of an issue.

Our faculty strongly supported that rational stance as well. Actually, if DLH had listened to himself more carefully, he would have pitted Madalyn Murray O'Hair against a credible opponent and allowed her to enter. He could have claimed victory of a different sort over O'Hair and her student hosts."

"Did the moratorium lead to any greater trouble than the event on the football field?" asked Margaret.

"Not in numbers. The college had certain numbers written in the stars. We would have 300 freshmen, give or take, forever. We would have 200 activist students forever. That would leave 900 students who would watch the 200 activists while quietly forming their own private opinions, and meanwhile doing their work.

"Again, Helfferich did not let events drift toward confrontation. Before the students came back in September 1969, he sent a letter home to parents and students. I worked well as a ghostwriter with him. In that, my relationship with him extended a lengthening history as a loyal spearman to leaders in need of words on paper--my major in the Army, Charlie Simpson, head of my company, now DLH. Helfferich had a totalistic kind of mind. He would size up the entire situation and develop a position within it, even before he had words that explained where that position was. He would have a phrase, often vivid, to tag it, but it would take a word smithy to make a presentable public package. I increasingly provided that service.

"The letter congratulated ourselves for escaping the unhappy headlines of recent months about disorder on college campuses. It commended the common sense of the majority of our students--an act of faith by DLH, to be sure. It applauded the willingness of administration and faculty to listen. It underlined our determination to deal firmly with students who crossed well-defined limits of behavior.

"The letter acknowledged, however, that the college was not without a share of student discontent. It indicated that we were sending the letter to make sure that students and parents understood that we expected students to obey the rules of the college. It promised that the college would continue to consider student suggestions for change. But it declared that our willingness to listen did not mean a willingness to agree to every proposal.

"It forthrightly told drug users that they would be subject to dismissal. It acknowledged that the rules on drinking alcohol and visiting dorms were less liberal than many students wanted and remained unapologetic about that.

"Finally, it said love us or leave us, in effect. If you can't hack it here, we'll help you find a place elsewhere. Go in peace.

"My liking for Alfred North Whitehead's style made marks on more than one piece coming out of DLH's office. This letter ended with Whitehead's justification for a university from his Harvard Business School speech of 1924. 'The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest for life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning.'"

"You had a happy fall semester?" asked Margaret.

"Essentially, yes. 'Happiness' was not a word for that time, though. It was as if the energy emitted by the fireball of a whole generation was scorching most established functions and values--from peanut butter to the definition of reality itself. The waves of enthusiasm and anger had a tantalizing quality for most of the students, regardless of



particular issues--that's why some of our students could be as exercised over funny little social rules as others elsewhere became over international policy. I have to say that much of the faculty and staff similarly felt charged up at that time--and everybody, including the president, had to modify rhetoric because of the student audience.

"I had only recently abandoned the corporate scene because of the limitations I felt that it set on my development. The college offered up a stark contrast. To be riding the back of what seemed like a unique wave of college and national history was exhilarating, even though it caused great anguish and uncertainty day by day. Looking over my notes of the times, I would have to conclude that, yes, I was happy.

"The Vietnam Moratorium in the fall actually went well here. It was messy at some campuses around the country, I'm sure. The students and administration and faculty here worked together on it. Our students did not make the mistake that others made. They did not equate their educational institution with the larger establishment target of their discontent. Helfferich had the good sense to work along with the students. I dare say my influence and direct involvement with the students helped him to find a comfortable way through this. We had speakers, discussions, a candlelight walk. A draft counselor came to tell students how to do alternative service. A German professor, with Quaker convictions against war, keyed the day. Other professors took polite issue with him. At lunch students 'fasted' by eating plain rice instead of the standard dining hall fare. Two other humanities instructors and I led a discussion on 'art and violence.' I don't remember what we said. I would be amazed if I did not hold forth on the transformative power of art. DLH gave a talk at a tree planting for peace in which he declared war as a political procedure to be archaic and parochial. It was what the protesting students wanted to hear, but he carefully couched his words to be sure they could be read approvingly by conservative board members.

"So much of what we were doing involved political language and symbolism. It was the game of the war protesters, of the youth movement generally. We had to play the game their way, to some extent, at least, with language and symbolism to match. The two hundred or so who were involved had energy, but most of their political ideas were borrowed. Our Moratorium itself was in response to a national call, not to an indigenous urge.

"By the time Kent State happened in the spring of 1970, we had this train of experience behind us. There was an expression of anger on campus, yes. We had to process it, yes. We had an audience off-campus in need of reassurance that we were not allowing a bunch of kids to wreck the place. I can't emphasize enough how important that seemed to be at the time. There was outrage at a whole generation on both sides. The young people were mad at the leaders; the leaders were mad as hell that youth had somehow escaped from control and were dictating the course of events. That was outrageous in their eyes.

"We never lost sight of that other audience off campus, embodied in some board members and leading alumni. We knew that words acceptable and useful in keeping the lid on in the campus situation could raise the hackles of off-campus onlookers. Helfferich was just about seventy years of age in that last year of his administration, when the moratorium and Kent State took place. He taught me how youthful and resilient one can be in managing affairs, regardless of chronological age.

"Kent State came a couple of days after Nixon decided to make his extraordinary bombing raid on Cambodia. I personally think of it as the last act of the World War II generation. You had to have lived through World War II to understand how Nixon could decide that such an attack made sense. As a kid in the '40s, I sat through many newsreel films and movies that celebrated the raining of bombs on cities. It was an icon of our times, a symbol of good--just as pictures of black smoke belching out of stacks came to symbolize industrial progress after the war. I have not read Nixon's books and have never been that interested in understanding what he thought the bombing would bring about. We know what it brought about on the domestic front. It raised the pitch of war protest to a new height.

"When the four students were killed at Kent State on 4 May 1970, the spring semester had only a couple of weeks remaining. Professors were scheduling a lot of tests. Students, faculty, and administrators all shared the frayed feeling built up by a long, hard academic year. The college community also was coping with the uncertainties of a search for a president to succeed Helfferrich. He had announced a year before that he would leave after the 1969-70 academic year.

"His impending departure from office undoubtedly made it easier for him to manage the tension of Kent State. His off-campus audiences mattered less to him. He felt less compelled to look like a hard hat. The annealing fact in the whole thing, of course, was the violent death of four students. Who on a college campus could not mourn the death of students by any means? Who could not feel outraged at death itself?

"Students at Kent State had plundered the town's business district in the course of the protest demonstrations. In hindsight, it would be possible to understand the Guardsmen's feeling that the students were out to destroy their own civic fabric and needed to be stopped. The pictures of felled young people, their friends weeping over them, however, prevented any balanced view. I have found that college students always are very sensitive to the death of the young anywhere, under any circumstances. Here and on campuses everywhere, students treated the death of the Kent State students like the death of students on their own campus. But the mourning went forward in the hot brew of political outrage.

"So you *did* have violence," Margaret said.

"Violence of mind, sure. We did not have any senseless physical violence. The closest I came to it took place in my classroom. I was teaching an English comp course in Bomberger after lunch. The flagpole, just outside our windows, became the focal point for mourning the death of the Kent State students. Our students were pursuing a fairly well-organized agenda of commemoration. In the dining hall, a student had played taps. Then 'the 200' massed around the flagpole. Four white styrofoam tombstones were inscribed with the names of the Kent State dead and placed around the flagpole. Then the flag was lowered to half-mast and faculty and students gave speeches.

"I had a Vietnam veteran in my class. He walked with an artificial leg but was physically robust. He was still trying to come home. He wrote long, tortured papers about death and dying in war. He would write two thousand words for a five-hundred-word assignment. I seem to remember he was a medical corpsman--so his basic assignment in battle was to reach the wounded. It was clear to me that the writing was

therapeutic for him. I did what I could to encourage him while meeting the requirements of the course. Emotionally, he was on the edge and ready to go over at any time.

"The class was watching the proceedings outside the classroom. I gave up trying to conduct the usual lessons. When the students outside lowered the flag to half-mast, our vet lost it. He came up out of his seat with a roar and plunged out of the room. He would have weighed in against the students who lowered the flag if some of us had not succeeded in restraining him at the door of Bomberger."

"He believed in the war," said Margaret.

"At that point, of course," said Bodger. "Think of his investment in it. God knows what he came to believe in time. I do not remember his name; I think he left the college without taking a degree. I always have thought of that young guy as a victim no less than the students who were shot at Kent State. The cruelty that became common currency in the '60s did not cease to circulate in our society after we got out of Vietnam. It just took on different shapes and colors."

"And that was Kent State here, sum and substance?"

"I went back and looked at the student paper that reported the week. It reminded me that about a hundred students marched down Main Street to the Perkiomen bridge and back on the day of the shootings. It was 'a solemn and orderly show of peace desires.' Bear in mind, if a hundred marched, a thousand did not. The guys in a Main Street dorm water-ballooned the marchers as they went by. The police stopped the water bombing. I had not remembered that.

"The student leaders tried to get all tests and quizzes canceled on 7 May, when the flag pole proceedings would take place. This became a point of continued conflict. Many faculty informally cooperated, I think, but officially the college did not grant the request.

"With the experience of the moratorium the previous semester, students were pretty well schooled in setting up discussions and talks. We worked as closely with them as we could to keep the whole proceeding in a mode of rational discourse or prayerful reflection.

"The flag pole remained the rallying point. After our vet ended my class, my students and I joined the group. Faculty spoke. One of our philosophers gave his 'curse of all philosophy' speech, a plea for reason and compassion. While he spoke, the flag unaccountably was raised again to the top of the pole. There was much debate and discussion before the flag again came down to half-mast.

"I was surprised to learn from the paper that at that very point I spoke to the group, one of several faculty invited. I had completely forgotten that. The complete quote from my talk in the paper was to the effect that the campus is where mind and emotion meet. We always were trying to put the brakes on the emotional excess of the students. We were always trying to hold them to a commitment to rational discourse. At least I think that's what I was getting at. Control, largely, was our game, whether we liked it or not.

"By then I was a vice president. My presence at the flagpole to some extent was as a representative for the president. He did not speak there. But the students knew he would take a benign view of things as long as they did not get out of control. After the rally around the flagpole ended, the flag again went back to the top, put there by pro-war students and some townies who were members of the American Legion. They had watched the march down Main Street, apparently, with disapproval. The styrofoam tombstones somehow lit up their pro-war sentiment.

"When DLH learned the flag had gone up again, he came out of the administration building and personally returned it to half-mast. It was one of those moments when his instincts merged with the mood of the students. There was something quite beautiful about the way this seventy-year-old man caught the youthful feelings in that gesture. Of course, I am quite sure he was thinking of the need to control their behavior.

"The student reporter quoted Helfferich's assessment of the Kent State remembrance. 'The only difference between you and me,' she reported he said, 'is that I walk on the sidewalk and you walk on the grass.'

"The Kent State days wound up on the following Saturday, May 9. It was time for the traditional Spring Festival dance, once called May Day. The college perpetuated this tribal tradition from more innocent days. Ours was probably one of the last to do so. Before the dance, about thirty students carried an American flag and peace signs on the football field in front of the assembled students and parents. You get the pulse of our students when you read what happened then. The thirty went into the stands and watched the rest of the May Day show."

"Delightful," Margaret agreed.

"There was one lingering desire among the seniors. They wanted to show their feelings about Kent State and Cambodia at commencement, scheduled for early June. There was talk of walkouts, impromptu speeches, and other now-familiar commencement antics. This called for real negotiation. One of the honorary degree recipients was a target for a proposal of a major gift. She had a conservative political tilt, and she did not like youthful disorder. Her money-laden family and corporate minions would be in the audience, compounding the danger of losing financial support.

"I was apparently the first administrator to learn about the movement among seniors. By chance I encountered the leader in the administration lobby two weeks or so before commencement. He asked if I had heard about the protest plans. I quickly learned that no one had told the president about them. I sought out the class president, who was to be the front man. I told him he had better see the president right away, since their plans had possible consequences that they could not imagine.

"The path of Helfferich's changing position between his first meeting with the leaders and the day of graduation revealed much to me. At first, he asked the students to do absolutely nothing, in deference to our guests. They showed an understanding of the problem but still wanted to have a show of concern about Kent State and Cambodia. They were willing to talk about a moderate approach without promising that they could control the students already incited to act. At that point, DLH was hard-nosed. He told me that he would not permit those who wanted to demonstrate to appear for their degrees. One of the student life administrators gave hardball counsel. He encouraged DLH to write to parents a week before commencement and tell them that their sons and daughters would get diplomas in the mail--student commencement would be cancelled. The president had often thought of such a move and was so inclined. I thought it was fortunate that he continued talking with student leaders after he got that advice. I was sitting in on most of the conversations. He gradually became convinced that we could deal with the desires of the students and still be deferential to our honorary guest.

"Finally we came up with an agreement. Those who wanted to could wear blue armbands with a peace symbol. The president would include in his remarks an explanation

of their significance to the students. There would be no student walkouts or peace speeches or other disruptive demonstrations. There would be a moment of silence.

"Then I had the task of writing the copy that would explain this in Helfferich's address. After he approved it, I asked the student protest leaders to read and approve it, and they did.

"DLH did not become comfortable with the assurances of the leaders until a few days before the event. His original plan was to change the order of business so that he could cut the ceremony short if any disruption took place. At the final instant, he followed the usual order of business. Everything went as planned. Not a single student walked out of the convocation in protest."

Preparing to leave, Margaret said, "I want to read that issue of the student paper."

"Check the college archive in the library," said Bodger.

"Check," she said. "I have a date with my department head to talk about my annual evaluation. I'll look tomorrow." And she left.

### **The social changes on campus were inescapable**

Local student issues were harder for Bodger to deal with than the big national issues. "Harder for DLH too," he said to himself. On balance, the president handled the moratorium and Kent State affairs well because he had a thread of understanding if not of agreement with the youthful protesters. The religious denomination of the college harbored plenty of war resisters. The mounting evidence of the counterproductive nature of the war became increasingly hard to dodge, despite the inclination of conservatives to support the military through thick and thin. The students were insisting on an ethical judgment of the war. That was attractive to DLH. It made him responsive to Bodger's attitude.

There was no similar thread of understanding to soften his stance on campus social rules. The students year after year battered away at the rules. The college yielded inch by inch. Sometimes, as in 1967, when the dinner dress code fell in an evening of mass protest, it yielded a foot. But the dynamic, for Bodger, was uninformed by anything like enlightened social thinking. He struggled to grasp why the college stood so stiff-necked in the doorway of social change. He tried to counsel students to move gradually and accept small gains gracefully. He finally found himself trying to rationalize the status quo to himself so that he could continue serving Helfferich with a good conscience. For he did feel like an apostate at times.

One day Margaret met him for coffee at the Hut, where the old train station once stood.

She told him about a woman student, Adrien, who was having trouble studying and sleeping. Her roommate's boyfriend was sleeping over in the room. At first, the boyfriend did not seem to care that Adrien was in the other bed while he bedded with the roommate. Eventually, however, he hinted that he would be happier if she disappeared for the night. The roommate silently confirmed the wish for privacy, and Adrien complied. She bummed around the residence hall, finding a floor here and a sofa there for the night. Her study habits fell victim to her nomadic night life. Margaret learned of this when she called Adrien into her office one day to talk about the drop in her grade in intermediate French.

She empathized with Adrien. Something similar had happened to her when she was an undergraduate. Margaret had marched into the residential dean's office and complained. A rift between her and her roommate had ensued. The dean, however, had maneuvered her into a private room down the hall. Her life had gone on. Her roommate had soon outgrown the charms of her bedmate and had come back to live with Margaret. They forgave each other.

"I told Adrien about my experience and recommended a similar course," said Margaret to Bodger. "So far no help has come. The resident advisor convened a non-judgmental discussion between Adrien and her roommate. The emphasis was on mutual respect. When Adrien said she respected her roommate's romantic attachment to the guy, the discussion ended, with no change in her nightly vagabondage. I want to talk to the president about this."

"Something eventually will work out," Bodger smiled.

"You smile."

"At the oceans of distance we have sailed in student administration in my career."

"Managing student life seems like a necessary evil," Margaret said. "Which oceans have you sailed?"

"On my way to the presidency, I nearly drowned in the sea of student life administration," Bodger said. "It was the hardest lesson put in front of me by Helfferich."

"Was he that deliberate in designing your apprenticeship?" Margaret asked.

"I will never really know. He was managing the college through the storms of social change. The war in Vietnam was a focal point, but I think the baby boomers' attack on World War II values would have occurred even if the US had avoided the Southeast Asia conflict. With John Kennedy's death in 1963, we entered a time of violence in high places. It set a tone. The highest towers could fall. JFK's death now seems like the beginning of the end of World War II. Kent State seems like the very end. The postmoderns soon were attacking the 'hegemony.' That bashing of the establishment encouraged the rising expectations of women and blacks and gays and lesbians, anybody without a piece of the power."

"And students," Margaret added.

"Students. Not just female and black. Students who were children of the establishment as well. Even well-mannered students at our college. One of my vivid memories is of a girl named Eileen--she died at forty of cancer--and her band of followers marching down the campus street to dinner one evening, chanting, 'One-two-three-four, we won't take your shit no more.'"

"Bad grammar," said Margaret.

"That was the point," said Bodger.

"What shit wouldn't they take no more?"

"Guys being banned from visiting women in dorms. Beer being banned from campus altogether. These were the local manifestations of the global uprising against the established system. Even the moratorium, even Kent State didn't displace these chicken shit rules in the minds of the students and some younger faculty.

"Oppression, repression are the same even in a Halloween costume," Margaret said.

"Correct," said Bodger. "And sometimes it must have seemed to DLH that he was running a Halloween parade. I happened along, and he picked me up as a usable baton. If

I could help him run things, he could assume that what I thought about these things did not much matter. He was of a generation that could think of my happening along as providential. I can't imagine he would have picked me up so readily if he did not have a blind confidence that my role would work itself out."

"Did you think you were the wrong baton for his purposes?" Margaret asked.

"I guess I thought that he would have thought I was not the right baton. He watched me wiggle around and agonize about the college social rules. He did not understand fully that I did not understand their symbolic importance in defining an ethical purpose at the root of the institution. But he did see early on that I would drive myself crazy TRYING to understand. I wanted to please him; I wanted to help him. To a few of my colleagues, at least, that had to appear naive."

"Self-serving?" Margaret asked with her characteristic tilt of an eyebrow.

"Yes, that too. I was self-serving, of course. But not in the customary sense. I was a kind of zealot in search of a cause. There was a sacrificial streak in me that would not go away. It made me indifferent to mere 'getting ahead.' I think that DLH could see that while others could not. Maybe that was at the root of his decision to make me an apprentice for the presidency. That, combined with the sheer need for a tool, a helper, in the midst of the storm. Some of his board members, I later learned, worried about him. Despite his appearance of vigor, he was aging. They wanted him to have someone with legs. Several of them were more vocal in advocating my apprenticeship than I imagined at the time. I think he listened to them."

"Student life, then, was the hardest lesson," said Margaret, "because of the gap between his thinking and yours?"

"Yes. And no. Yes, there was that gap, and I had to bridge it if I was to be of use to him in the operation of the college. No, it was not the gap that made it the hardest lesson. What made it the hardest lesson was that DLH himself was reaching unsatisfactorily for an expression of the traditional parental role of a college even as students were denying that role. The courts soon followed in denying it too."

"This seems quaint," said Margaret. "It only matters now because it helps explain how you were moving from apprentice to president. Right?"

Bodger thought a moment. "Except that adjudicating the social life of students did not go away when *in loco parentis* went away--it merely changed form. DLH would have told you we HAD the answer to Adrien's problem long before Adrien was born. Ban the horny cad from the room!"

Margaret protested: "There are feminine issues of freedom and choice."

"Sure," Bodger interrupted. "I am talking about the moments of their birth. In this little place, the vocabulary with which to discuss them was old and aching. The president had to use it because he had no other. But he never stopped trying to hear something new. He wanted to reaffirm *in loco parentis* in terms that would make sense in the 1960s. That is what I came to want too, as a condition of my staying on at the college. Without it, I felt that I would self-destruct. The contradiction of what I was expected to do as an administrator and what I thought about it was too great.

"DLH and I engaged in an ongoing discussion about the policy position of the college. We even called it the 'philosophy' of the college, a limp but comforting word under the circumstances. Memos from me, dropped on his desk like time bombs,

punctuated this discussion. He would scrawl his reactions in the margins. I often could predict them, but sometimes he would amaze me by agreeing with a point that seemed to be from the far left.

"In the summer of 1968, I precipitated his reaction in a more complete form. I was editor of the alumni magazine. I had assumed a fairly free hand in determining content and emphasis. My closeness with students led me to encourage Pat, a bright senior, to give her idea of the purpose of a college in the late 1960s. Of course I knew I would get a polemic for change at our college. I knew her argument would ride the hobbyhorse of what was now being called the 'counter culture.' I knew also that I would get a civil, even ameliorative, voice. Before the women of the late '60s learned to express their rights, they learned manners the old-girl way. The combination of fresh outspokenness and social grace produced a posture to be reckoned with, even if the argument for change was laced with the liberationist romanticism of the moment.

"Pat agreed with many that her generation was in the midst of a world-wide social revolution. It was a revolution against the social 'schizophrenia' caused by the depersonalized technology at the heart of modern mass society. Young people, the first to see clearly into this schizophrenic quality of contemporary life, had to speak out, drop out, or go crazy. Pat took the position that American colleges could fulfill their historic mission by becoming a 'channeling device' for speaking out, the healthiest of the three alternatives. To do that effectively, she argued that they would have to create more realistic social conditions. They would have to be freer, more willing to allow the crossfire of opinion on the street. They would have to be better able to allow students to engage directly, not just intellectually, with the larger issues of the day.

"Pat's message for her own college grew out of that line of thought. She acknowledged that the social rules, against which she had valiantly fought, might have seemed petty and local. But the college's heavy emphasis on them showed that it did not understand the necessity to encourage students to participate in the critique of the larger social situation in the world. By being obsessed with petty social rules, the college assured that students would also be obsessed with them and ignore the big picture. The college effectively shut down the students' inclination to speak out for a better world at large. The apathy of the majority of our students in the face of the world revolution supported her argument, as she saw it. She even accused herself of a too-narrow focus. She called for a college community as an effective organ of the body of the larger society, there and then, not after commencement."

"Sounds right to me," Margaret said, beneficiary, as she was, of the two decades of change that flowed from the activism of the Pats of the world.

"Pat clearly caught the note of the moment," Bodger continued. "I had the foresight to show the article to DLH before going to press. He was upset by her direct criticism of our college, however indulgent he might be of her general argument and her civil tone. He denied the logical link between social restrictions and apathy toward 'real world' issues."

"He censored the article?" Margaret asked.

"I think there might have been a moment when he wanted to kick me in the shins for having invited Pat to write her piece. He didn't tell me to pull it out, though. Instead, he told me to make room for a comment to accompany the article. This was a space problem, but I managed to squeeze it in with small type."



"You ghosted the comment?" Margaret guessed.

"He wrote it. I edited, but he wrote it. That's how strongly he felt about it. His basic point was that a college is a place for *preparing* to deal with 'real world' issues. College was not an arena for the 'real world' as such. If he could hold to that distinction, then the social conditions on the campus by definition could be--and should be--different from those in the larger society. When I read her article, I had missed that critical distinction. I admitted to myself that he had a point. It was probably the biggest step I had taken so far in the struggle to grasp the so-called philosophy of the college on social matters."

"But he missed her point," Margaret said. "They talked past each other."

"Categorically, yes. Practically, no. DLH did not deny that the social conditions of a college could change without destroying its preparatory function. But he did insist that its function was categorically preparatory. Pat did not deny that a college had a preparatory function even as she insisted on making the social conditions more like those of the real world. But she did insist that the social conditions categorically must change. It was in the practical overlap of their positions that I took a smidgeon of comfort."

The Hut was filling with young families coming for early pizza dinner. A paper plate winged by a sneaker-clad kid in a nearby booth missed Margaret's head by a few inches. She made a move to leave.

"I'm talking to a group of non-traditional-age students tonight," she said. "All women. Trying to balance work and studies."

"What will you tell them?" Bodger asked.

"Hang in there. You have your rights."

And she was gone. At home after dinner, Bodger took down the bound volume of magazines from the 1960s and found that his recollection of the article and Helfferich's comment was fairly accurate. The comment by DLH on Pat's article evoked a memory of many moments in his office when in clipped exchanges they talked about the tilt of the institution. DLH wrote:

*I enjoyed reading Pat's article because as I know her, she has a serious concern for the welfare of higher education. However, I see the relationship between a college and the "real" world in a rather different light. A college cannot--and in my view should not--be completely representative of the society around it. A college has a special purpose, the transmission of accumulated knowledge and the stimulation of young intellects to add to that store of knowledge and perhaps thereby someday to attain wisdom. A college must limit itself to particular functions if it is to achieve such an ambitious purpose. It cannot hope to provide all the confrontations with reality that go into making the well-developed individual. Perhaps the best it can do is to pose **the right questions** about what Pat calls a "viable philosophy" and to make possible a sampling of the experiences that lie in wait after graduation.*

*I believe that as presently structured our own college is capable of channeling the tensions that students experience. I do not believe it is unrealistic to have rules on alcohol, dormitory visits, women's hours and the like....*

*Without giving up their civil rights, students are in a kind of voluntary servitude to the words and thoughts of others. They do not often realize that very soon that servitude*

*will end and they no longer will be classed as students. It is only when they cease to be students that they can become truly effective agents within the body of society.*

*Like Pat, I want our students to be more concerned with the burning social issues of the day than they are....But I hope they spend the great portion of their time in thoughtful preparation in basic knowledge so that they will have enlightened concern when they take up the business of running the world. I believe my generation does better than did former generations and that the next generation will do better than mine....*

*Someone has called the colleges and universities important co-trustees of civilization. Our college cannot maintain that role and be a place where undergraduates are exempt from the consequences of their own action or inaction."*

That last paragraph, thought Bodger, was a zinger out of Helfferich's combative past. He would have envisioned it bringing his conservative alumni and board supporters to their feet cheering. And he would have seen it hoisting the youthful insurgents on their own petard of independence and freedom. After all these years, Bodger also saw that it undercut DLH's own argument. If the college was a place for preparation and not a "real-world" component, it *did* exempt itself--and presumably its students--from some of the conditions of the real world. How could it then be a full-fledged co-trustee of the whole civilization? Pat never had a chance to comment on the comment.

In hindsight, Bodger could see Helfferich's comment as a milestone on the road to the end of *in loco parentis* as a legal doctrine. It would not have occurred to DLH or to Bodger at that time that the college soon would lose its ability to declare students in "voluntary servitude" or that their civil rights would dramatically expand on campus as well as off.

Hindsight also gave him a clear view of the lessons he was painfully learning as the president's apprentice. Even after so many years, DLH's leniency toward Bodger's invitation to Pat struck him as remarkable. None of them had time to reflect on the tactics required to navigate in the changing tides. DLH was energetic for his age but he was of his age. In retrospect, it appeared that he looked to Bodger for a flow of actions that might help and probably would not harm.

### **The college entered a new era of social justice**

One day at the supermarket Bodger ran into Margaret and Antoine. They were holding hands as they cruised the junk food aisle. He was a new member of the faculty, hired since Bodger's departure from the presidency. Margaret introduced Antoine to Bodger as the newest member of the communication arts department. Bodger wished him well.

"He's different," Margaret told Bodger later. "I like him."

Bodger had not talked to her about her personal life before. The survivors of graduate school who did not marry a fellow student usually had social make-up work to do when they started teaching after getting the Ph.D.

"I'm glad to see an African-American come to the faculty," said Bodger. "We have so few."

"He worried about attitudes here before he took the job," Margaret said.

"Understandable. The matter of race in the 1990s could not be much more complicated than it is, here and elsewhere."

Margaret said, "After we met you at the supermarket, he wondered what I would think you thought about our having something going."

"That seems anachronistic," Bodger said.

"Did you think about it?"

"I thought how good it is that the college has come this far in the thirty-some years I have been involved."

"I didn't think about it until Antoine thought about it."

"That's good too. In the '60s, when I was starting out here, we were just touching the surface. The number of minority students was low."

"It's still not high," Margaret said.

"But higher. No one on the staff was of color. Black students had a hard time being seen and heard as people with different needs and outlooks. The entire emphasis, such as it was, came down on equal rights, not on multicultural legitimacy. That was the thrust of the federal civil rights legislation that went into effect only a couple of years before."

"How did the college react to the new push?" Margaret asked.

"Black issues were simmering, along with protests of the war, along with the itch of many students to push basic changes in the structure of all mainstream institutions. The college's historic principle of openness to different ethnic and religious applicants was a fortunate matter of official record. It was expressed in our original charter of 1869.

"In reality, however, most of the people here had little zeal for getting out in front on minority student recruitment. We rightly celebrated our few black students for their inherent ability to make the grade on their own merits in our program. The majority white kids were making about as many waves as we could ride. The student government was pushing for a new student bill of rights. If adopted, it would have had the effect of voiding all the social rules over which we constantly wrangled. If you look at the student newspaper from the late '60s, you find a steady stream of bitching about just about every aspect of the college, from the bathrooms in the dorms to the socio-economic make-up of the board and administration. The students were unhappy in part because their options were few. It was hard for them to transfer to another college. Dropping out meant that the guys might be drafted for Vietnam. Keeping the lid on all of the unrest and maintaining a style of civility and considerateness at the same time took massive energy and imagination. It took a lot of seat-of-the-pants decision-making. The administration was not out looking for an additional crisis agenda. Neither students nor faculty felt the urgency to push the administration very hard on racial justice."

Margaret said, "This was not a proud moment."

"Don't misunderstand. There was much good will and even good intention. There was less organized action for a while. Then there was organized action! Black issues were an important part of my apprenticeship in college administration in the late '60s."

"Antoine is cooking late dinner," Margaret said and was gone.

Alone, Bodger ordered the events of 1969 that he would tell her about some other time.

First, he thought, the college was fortunate to be associated with the United Church of Christ. It had a broad vision of human relationships and was as militant as any

mainstream Protestant church in supporting civil rights and social justice. In the summer of '69, the church's Social Action Commission of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference convened a meeting on the campus. Bodger and the college's assistant for alumni and church affairs made what amounted to a command appearance. Some 35 people were there, virtually none from the college community itself. They were the voices for justice. Bodger now thought of them as the canaries in the coal mine. They did the college a service. But at the time, they made him mad.

The Commission had received a complaint against the college from a group of inner-city ministers and laypersons. "Do-nothing-ism!" Bodger remembered the self-righteous anger of the white leader of the Commission. He was a young preacher filled with the zeal for liberation that crackled in the air of the '60s. How easy it seemed then for people to feel absolutely right. The young preacher spoke *as* the complainant, not just *for* the complainants, whoever they were.

Bodger felt poorly cast as the defender of an alleged "do-nothing" college record. In his years at the gas company, he had been a soldier in the movement to connect the company with the rising expectations of the black community of Philadelphia. The Equal Opportunities Industrialization project under Leon Sullivan had early backing from the company. The company head, Charles Simpson, saw the oncoming movement of black people into the mainstream of professional leadership and into the turf of white workers. He embraced Sullivan under the guise of idealism. But he justified his actions to a socially conservative board and management under the banner of corporate practicality: the work force and the customers of the future would be increasingly black, and the company should move with the wave of change. When affirmative action laws came along a little later, the company stood on firmer ground than most employers in the Delaware Valley.

Enabled by the Simpson agenda, Bodger had the luck to hire and supervise the first black member of the company management. Masco Young was a bright black man about town who wrote a kind of gossip column for a venerable black newspaper. He had a degree in journalism from the University of Illinois. Masco had the high-wire skills of a man who knew how to walk without a net on the thin line of white permission. He forgave America because he saw it under the pressure that would force it to change. He became Bodger's tutor in the praxis of dismantling the barriers erected against blacks. To other blacks, he might have looked like a Tom or a sheer opportunist; to Bodger's white company colleagues, he might have looked like a token. To Bodger, however, he was an instructor who knew that he had a willing pupil. He was usually moving from where he was, in front of Bodger, to someplace else, more compelling, over on the other side of things. He went typically with his cigarette in an onyx holder jauntily clenched in his teeth. He was supposed to be helping Bodger with corporate communications and the writing of personnel policies. Mainly he was injecting a new perspective into the mind of the management of the company. Bodger was his principal hypodermic needle.

Bodger's job exposed him to employees throughout the company, in the pipe repair gangs on the street as well as in the cadre of office workers around the city. He found it easy to befriend people at all levels of the company. After Masco arrived, he worked more assiduously to maintain contact with the numerous black workers with whom he had struck up acquaintances.

In the '60s, the American agenda on race seemed simple and achievable. The discriminatory barriers, overt and covert, had to be dislodged, by legal and all other means. The separatist impulse inherent in the multicultural movement to come later still simmered at the margin of public attention. "Black pride" in Bodger's view was mainly a means of *overcoming* barriers. It was not yet an end in itself.

Bodger's enthusiasm for opposing discrimination did not owe much to the sting of personal experience. His growing up in a small industrial town made up largely of central European immigrant families precluded a direct encounter with the condition of black America. The few black students in his school days had deep roots in the town, probably going back to freedmen families in the pre-civil war period. They were accepted because they were excepted. He had a few black co-workers on the labor gang at the iron company during summer break from college; their individual presence in his mind, however, could not adequately represent the issue of discrimination in its collective magnitude in the American heart.

Bodger's visceral egalitarian bent, which came from within himself, received its support mainly from his reading in college and after. His professor of sociology, Jessie Miller, introduced him to Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* in his sophomore year. Like a good sophomore, he was astounded by it and by his instructor's attitude. To her all-white, middle-class audience, she was teaching social science, but her intention was to prick consciences. The metaphor of the spiral lay at the heart of Myrdal's presentation of the social dilemma of America. The spiral of black deprivation would continue to spin downward, to worsen and worsen, if the conditions of discrimination and denial continued. Conversely, it would reverse and spin upward toward better social conditions as the discrimination and denial decreased. It was one of the lasting lessons of his life. Jessie Miller reinforced the deep-felt notion in Bodger's mind that the justification of scholarship was not in its purported revelation of objective truth but in its service to action, to life itself. Years later, he read Alfred North Whitehead's observation that knowledge keeps no better than fish, that it has to be used in order to have value--Gunnar Myrdal and Jessie Miller revalidated.

Bodger later read Richard Wright's *Native Son* with the eyes of a true believer in social determinism. When he read the text of James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son*, he knew that the matter of race was more complex than he could understand: the statuesque sentences seemed to burn with a fire that, no matter how hot, failed to consume them. He read all that Baldwin wrote with the deepening sense that a tragedy beyond his ken stalked those sentences. While he saw that Baldwin spoke of a dimension he would never enter, Bodger at the same time took reinforcement from Baldwin. His writing to that point made it evident what had to be done in the '60s. The day would later come for the deeper call in Baldwin's voice, to the fire itself.

Bodger entered the meeting of the Commission with his own sense of righteousness. In recent weeks, he had been a proponent of starting a summer pre-freshman program for admitted students who were socio-economically disadvantaged. He had done much of the detail work to get it up and running later in the summer. He had been on a campaign of his own to identify qualified black students for admission to the college. He had been actively cultivating the leader of the black students on campus and had even had a major conflict with his administrative colleagues over that. He was a vocal participant among

faculty members on the need for the college to identify and recruit qualified young blacks with scholarship aid.

When the young preacher poured his ire on the college for sitting on its hands in the teeth of a revolutionary need, Bodger at first was combative and defensive. He took the criticisms of the college to be criticisms of himself. Before the meeting ended, he realized his mistake. The confrontation began to sound like a conversation. Both sides remained wary until the end. The madcap humor of the politics of '60s youth did not reach as far as conferences such as this. The mood was grim to the end. The Commission left in the late night. Bodger maintained an informal liaison with the young preacher and a black inner-city minister for a couple of years. Like the joining of so many passionate issues in those years, the confrontation of church and college simply became tired. Interests changed.

### **A black student alliance sought recognition**

"Antoine cooks Creole," said Margaret.

Bodger and she were together again. They regularly were meeting for coffee on Wednesday afternoons at the Hut. She seemed to have acquired a taste for the pieces of Bodger's pre-presidential years. He dished them out to her as if they were specials of the day to go with the coffee.

"So I finally had my climactic episode in black issues," he said. "It had nothing to do with confrontations with preachers. The outcome had more to do with my apprenticeship in college management than with the welfare of black students as such.

"We had a small handful of black students. Byron was the only one I knew who had it in him to take an initiative. I befriended him. We talked about his plans to go to graduate school. I told him about my involvement in breaking down barriers in the corporate world. I told him about my acquaintances from the work force at the company. They had kids who might go to college. We talked about the fire in James Baldwin's sentences. He came to trust me. I trusted him. I came to believe that he would not willy-nilly trash the place out of revenge.

"In the spring of '68, black students at Columbia and Trinity and elsewhere held sit-ins to protest for student rights. In early '69, black students sat in at Swarthmore's admissions office, and the president, Courtney Smith, simultaneously died of a heart attack in his early fifties. That was a shocker. Helfferich and most of our administrative group knew Smith--I did not know him myself. He was an elegant man who, in retrospect, looked poorly equipped to fight the kind of nastiness emerging on campuses. Our campus had already been through two big conflicts in two years, not counting the unending argument over social rules, which climaxed at the football field in the spring of '69. We had the shock of conflict over Madalyn Murray O'Hair's appearance in '67 and the non-renewal of contracts of two young untenured faculty members in '68. DLH was out to prove that he was no Courtney Smith in '69. That death hardened his position on student discipline.

"He took an especially dim view of black student protest because of the prominence of black student protesters at the time of Smith's death. But of course bizarre concatenations of events were a commonplace in those days. So it was not a surprise that, at the moment of Smith's death, Byron and his quiet supporters were organizing a black

student alliance on our campus. He wanted to test the college by writing a constitution and seeking formal approval for its existence."

Margaret guessed: "You played on your friendship with Byron and persuaded him not to do it?"

"Not exactly. DLH declared in a meeting of administrators that he would oppose the constitution. He assumed that it would exclude all students from membership except minority students. That would enable him to declare it discriminatory and contrary to a founding principle of the college.

"Meanwhile, Byron came to me with his draft of the constitution, sent by one of my colleagues in English who was on the student activities committee. Byron wanted my advice before taking his proposal to the student activities committee. I will never be certain whether my response to him was naive, manipulative, or simply administratively pragmatic."

"You rewrote his constitution!" Margaret said.

"You're getting to know me," said Bodger. "Knowing of DLH's opposition to an exclusive alliance of any kind based on race, I could have--should have, some thought--told him to ice the whole idea. Instead, seeking accommodation, I gave him suggestions, aimed at making the group an interlocking part of the campus life. If he followed my suggestions, he would keep the organization from becoming a separate 'alien' entity. I thought that would be in the spirit of the president's thought. I cautioned Byron to keep my advice between us. I felt pretty good about our exchange.

"Word got back to DLH and the other administrators that a draft was going forward. DLH convened four of us at lunch to discuss what to do. One of my colleagues said rumor had it that I had written the draft. 'Is that right?' he asked."

"A loyalty test," said Margaret.

"You bet. I realized I was on thin ice. In the O'Hair affair, and in other touchy situations, I tried to keep DLH informed of my position and what I would be trying to do. In this instance I was out in front of him, caught flatfooted!"

"The president forgave you," said Margaret.

"That was not exactly what was at stake," Bodger said. "Later he made light of my embarrassment in front of the other administrators and my attempt to rationalize the advice I gave Byron. That only came after the follow-up to my abortive constitution-drafting. Right after that luncheon meeting, I crawled back into my shell and resolved on two courses of action.

"First I would draft a statement of policy on students and black awareness. I would give this to DLH as a way of opening a discussion with him about the ongoing response to black student activism, which we all expected. I would recommend that he take it to the board for approval. That would cement our position, clarify his intentions and mine and give us something to say when the issue reached the media, as we expected it to.

"Second, I would suggest that the president create a task force on black awareness, with students, faculty, and board members. Since DLH would not soften his stance against the black student alliance, I thought such an alternative structure could be a productive lightning rod. It would be a legitimate venue for airing the gripes of the students. I thought I could persuade Byron that this would be a better fruit of conflict than the approval of a student group to which the college could turn a tin ear.

"Both steps took place. With a little stiffening here and there, the policy statement went to the board and it was approved. The task force produced an action agenda that gave us a framework for moving black issues through the life of the college in a manageable way. In the ensuing years there were many tense moments. Black students were edgy. The college was always in danger of becoming merely defensive or doing too little. Conflicts across the nation kept us aware of the need to get on with racial justice while they also kept everyone on pins and needles.

### **Bodger became vice president for administrative affairs**

"When the dust settled on these two steps, DLH referred to the implication at lunch that day--that I was in collusion with students against the president's intentions. I said I thought my skin was getting pretty hardened to such implications. He said on that day he thought my skin was pretty thin. I allowed that I was embarrassed. He said it amused him. Then he went on to tell me that I had been helpful to him. I was making him lazy, he said. He told me I would get a raise for the following year at what seemed like a princely percentage to me at the time. And he advised me to set my price a year or two hence at an even higher number."

"I see you playing a role for him and learning what it was all about for yourself," Margaret said. "I vote that you showed pragmatic administrative action, not naivete or dastardly manipulateness."

"The young always are more clear-eyed," said Bodger. "I used to acquit myself the same. Now, looking back at it all, I would not be so quick to judge myself favorably. But it is certain I was learning what managing the college was about."

"Seems like a lot of tactical skirmishing," Margaret said.

"Seems so. These episodes with students were embedded in a denser narrative. I was only partly aware of what it was saying. Helfferich's approval in spite of monumental mistakes kept me going onward. One day in the spring of '69, in the midst of a scrap within the administrative team about student rules, he told me I would be named vice president for administrative affairs. The academic dean would be named vice president for academic affairs. Our scrap was inopportune and nearly scuttled DLH's plan. He gave me a reflective talk on getting along and going along for the good of the order. This meant I had to try harder to stand fast for the college's position on student behavior.

"While continuing to teach, I became responsible for running the non-educational side of the college, closely watched by the president. My main duty had been and remained promotion, alumni affairs, and fund-raising. But now the business manager, athletics director, and miscellaneous other functions reported to me. I was eager. Helfferich urged me to absorb everything I could. I remained his personal assistant, sat in with him on meetings of all kinds, continued to write letters and articles for him.

"Student affairs were the dean's and the president's. Not mine. DLH thus put some formal distance between the student life stew pot and me. I told the dean I would be cautious with students and would always let him know if I was dealing with a student policy issue.

"It was good for all of us that I became so busy. I could not spend as much time with students. Even so, they knew I would listen to anything they wanted to say. I was



still an easy door for them to open. But they had a harder time finding unqualified support. No more daredevil posturing from me."

"You grew up," Margaret said.

"At age 39, a little late. But not completely. I behaved more discreetly. DLH encouraged me more than ever to think like a president. Privately, and for my own satisfaction, not his, I set out to find common ground between the position Pat took in her article and the position DLH espoused. He could not couch the institutional position in terms that made any sense in the climate of the youth culture. He was sure of what he believed about the fallibility of the human being and the need for structures in the face of that fallibility. His entire Pennsylvania Dutch heritage shored up his resolve to deal pragmatically, without nonsense, with the radical ambitions of the youth movement. Rhetorically, however, he mainly persuaded his conservative supporters and himself. The kids were deaf to his arguments.

"For their part, the students who were pushing for change--not all were--talked mainly in code words and ideological scraps. The Free Speech Movement at Berkeley happened five years before. Its inchoate agenda set the tone. Jerry Rubin was yippifying the nation. The fallout from the upheavals of the summer of '68 in Europe came to our students in the form of anti-establishment snippets. Timothy Leary rhapsodized drugs. The cynical analysis of the government's handling of Vietnam permeated the day's atmosphere.

"Where did you find common ground?" asked Margaret. She left the question hanging in air as she left to meet Antoine.

### **Bodger tried to find common ground**

In the evening, Bodger studied the photograph of DLH on the cover of a special issue of the college magazine, published as a commemoration after his death in 1984. The photo was taken in January 1970 in the great hall of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. The college held a black tie dinner there in conjunction with the year-long celebration of its centennial. The photo showed him silver-maned in profile, standing at a lectern in front of the fluted Greek columns of the great hall. He was raising his left hand royally toward the unseen audience, eyes uplifted. Bodger recalled the massive marble figure of Benjamin Franklin, just out of the camera's range, majestically looking into the truth of things there in the hall named for him.

President Helfferich was in his last six months of office. He was in a mood to give his last lecture, to lay out the truth, once and for all. The words he spoke at the moment the photo was shot were a peculiar blend of ideas. They would never have come together as they did if DLH had not hitched Bodger to his wagon five years before.

Helfferich had a need to make a dramatic statement, a formulaic summation of the essence of the institution. That need was personal as well as institutional. He was coming to the end of his presidency; the institution was coming to the end of its first hundred years of existence. He felt an urgency to characterize the place so that its uniqueness, its special destiny, would be reinforced and propelled forward. He had an increasingly compelling feeling about the waning of his presidency. Time for him was running out. He wanted to do all he could to prevent the same from happening to the institution. As long as he was

on the scene, he doubtless felt confident that he could manifest the essential institution in his being, in the daily drama of his executive acts. The idea behind his acts, however, would have to live independent of him when he no longer was president. He had to give it expression.

Looking at the cover photo, Bodger realized now that Helfferich's own mortality was at issue as he had not realized it then. By nailing down the place of the college, by assuring that it had a particular future, he could suppress his mounting feeling of fleetingness. It fitted his long-honed skills in theater to undertake such a feat on stage, with an approving audience, dressed to the nines, under the giant sculpture of America's first and foremost sage, with a script pretending to be for the ages.

For his part, Bodger had a need to find an expression of the college's purpose that would enable him to continue in its service with less personal conflict. After his embroilment in the black student constitution, the dean in a private talk urged him to reconsider whether he really belonged in a conservative place like this.

"It's a fair question," Bodger said.

He decided to look at conservatism more closely. He now wanted to come to grips with a concept with which he instinctively felt uncomfortable. It was clear that it was the operative concept in Helfferich's world. Bodger would have to make peace with it if his career at the college was to have any chance of continuing. His faculty friends had the luxury of voicing liberal sentiments under the protection of academic freedom. As an administrator, Bodger had a different and more difficult ideological project.

He read Clinton Rossiter's *Conservatism in America* (1955) and Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind, from Burke to Santayana* (1953). He rediscovered a thread of thought in Burke that he had not understood in his graduate school study of the eighteenth century. In doing so, he became aware again of the shallow and unshapely body of what purported to be his formal learning in English literature.

One day in the fall of 1969, the president told him of his goal of bringing strong new men to the board of directors of the college. He wanted to beef it up before his departure from office the next spring. It was a given that they would be conservative. He wanted to construct a "case" that would persuade them of the importance of joining the college board. He asked Bodger to help.

The assignment coincided with Bodger's reading of Rossiter and Kirk. Late one night he drafted a letter to a prospective new board member. He found the draft among his papers. Reading it after nearly thirty years, he imagined Margaret's bemused smile at some of its pronouncements:

*TO A PROSPECTIVE DIRECTOR:*

*You have been asked to consider serving on the board of directors. You may wonder what allegiance you would be pledging if you accepted the invitation. What is our college that it should win your interest and time and support?*

*We who now serve as board members will try to put into words the philosophical temper the college represents. We will also explain why we think its outlook is important today and why it should assure the college of a respected and unusual position in independent higher education.*

*If you find yourself in general agreement with us, we respectfully suggest that by joining us you would find an avenue for the expression of some personal concerns about the direction of our national life; and would specifically gain an opportunity to have your convictions heard in higher educational matters.*

*As interested laymen, we approve of much that is happening in higher education--the emphasis on rigorous standards, the improving of facilities. There is much also that we disapprove of--the breakdown of administrative leadership, the abandonment of reasonable student rules. But rather than deal with specific issues, about which there may be honest differences of opinion, let us give for your consideration a characterization of the general outlook that we see at our college.*

*It should be made clear at the start that our college is firmly committed to liberal education. Like all liberal arts institutions of any distinction, ours holds to the position that a professor of a discipline has the freedom to profess his knowledge untrammelled by considerations other than the demands of truth. The college has no closed ideological system to advocate. It assumes that the answers to the important questions about God, man, nature and society are open to honest doubt and are subject to free discussion and debate in the classroom.*

*Nevertheless, an educational institution is more than the sum of its classroom experiences. The college participates corporately in American society. As a discrete social and legal entity, it makes decisions--about courses to be included in the curriculum, about the size and shape of the physical plant, about the extent of community involvement, about student rules, about candidates for faculty positions, about students seeking admission, etc. Taken together, these decisions express an institutional point of view. This point of view, essentially philosophical, is the product of the attitudes and ideas of those governing and operating the colleges--about the nature of man, the aims of educating men endowed with that nature, the ways of regulating human affairs in general and in an academic setting in particular.*

*Using the word "political" where we say "philosophical," Robert Paul Wolff, professor of philosophy at Columbia University, recently made the same point as follows: "Every university expresses a number of positive value commitments through the character of its faculty, of its library, even through the buildings it chooses to build...No institution can remain politically neutral in its interaction with society or in the conduct and organization of its internal affairs." (The Ideal of the University, Beacon Press, 1969).*

*It is clear enough to us, then, that an academically excellent college such as ours can and should maintain a neutrality of values as a method of teaching subjects; and at the same time, as an organization in society, maintain a commitment to a set of values, or, perhaps more aptly put, a predisposition to a distinctive philosophical temper.*

*At our college this temper historically has been conservative. It is our belief that both the institution itself and the society to which it is an important contributor will be best served if a conservative outlook is maintained.*

*In seeking to define the conservatism of the college, we could look to its origins and link its present-day temper with the careful pietism of its religious founders in the German Reformed Church. It may be more meaningful for you, however, if we take that*

religious foundation as given and try to describe the college's outlook in terms that are more general than strictly religious ones would be.

As we see it, conservatism at our college is not mindless opposition or willful blindness to the upheavals all around us in higher education and American life. Nor is it a naive belief that change can somehow be forestalled; it recognizes, perhaps even more clearly than the most revolutionist doctrine, that change is the essence of history, and it is the first business of men to manage change.

The attitude of our college is that a change in an existing structure or relationship should be encouraged only after the most thoroughgoing study of its concrete effects on people and institutions. It distrusts doctrines and programs that, by neat logical argument, promise to solve every problem. It distrusts policies that depend for success on the naturally good inclinations of people or that take for granted the basic reasonableness of men. It holds that people still have to learn to be good, often through bitter experience; and that, although our rational powers make us unique among living beings, they are harnessed to emotional drives that still shock or exalt us because they are beyond our understanding and sometimes our control. It distrusts innovations that tend to throw men back on their independent resources of mind and emotion, or to turn them away from a shared tradition to a private world of uncharted experience.

On the other hand, the college's attitude trusts a practice or an institution which has proven its effectiveness through experience. It trusts economic, religious, educational and social structures which have mediated successfully among the unbridled ideas and feelings of individuals. It trusts that which already is existing and working rather than that which is merely a theory. It trusts a practice that tends to give people a sense of being rooted in an ongoing, unbroken tradition, whether the tradition be religious, cultural, patriotic, or whatever.

For historical antecedents of this temper, we might turn first to Edmund Burke. In his speeches as a member of the House of Commons, and especially in his Reflections on the Revolution in France, Burke fathered the strain of evolutionary conservatism in British and American public philosophy which we believe is alive today at our college.

In his reliance on custom, in his fear of applying simplistic rational formulas to human affairs, in his insistence on the importance of experiment and experience in making judgments, in his habitual attitude of doubt about the ability of men to manage themselves without reference to the successful attempts to do so in the past--in all this, we see something of our college's attitude. Burke said that to provide for human needs governments must control the passions, and that "in this sense the restraints on men, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned among their rights." With this the spirit of our college concurs.

Although it is hardly called for here to trace the complete history of the conservative outlook, we note that in its evolutionary, moderate Burkean form, it had a profound influence on the founding of the United States through the thinking of such men as Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay (the authors of The Federalist). By resisting the doctrine of natural human goodness and other utopian revolutionary notions, by basing liberty, as Peter Viereck has stated, "on the Burkean principle of concrete roots, prescriptive right and judicial precedent", (Conservatism, 1956), by arguing for a representative republic rather than a direct democracy, the founding

*fathers sewed a conservative thread inextricably into the fabric of the American experience.*

*The thread may be followed through the careers and writings of many men, including John Quincy Adams, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Graham Sumner, Henry Adams, George Santayana, Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, T.S. Eliot. In recent years writers like Robert Penn Warren, scholars like Peter Viereck, Daniel Boorstin and Clinton Rossiter, theologians like Will Herberg have given intellectual expression to the conservative thread.*

*It is important, we think, that our college preserve a conservative attitude because of the counter-conservative posture of many independent colleges of similar size and quality. We think that a conservative approach has contributed significantly to the success of our free society and has much still to give. We do not deny that our technology predisposes us as a society to constant and rapid change; nor that modern methods of inquiry—in psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics—allow us to measure the effects of change with greater speed and assurance than did an Edmund Burke, who could not have foreseen our technological dynamism or the reliability of the social sciences. None of this, however, persuades us to abandon a healthy distrust of pat theories for change or emotional calls to new revolutionary vistas. We remain convinced that it will serve America well for the students of at least one small independent college of quality to be educated in a pervasively conservative atmosphere. For our college to go along with the liberal tendency found on most similar campuses would be to cut itself off from its own best traditions and to abdicate a role in higher education that deserves to be played.*

*We accept the likelihood that such a posture will turn many students and their parents away from us. This is a day when the permissiveness underlying much of home and school life makes a conservative atmosphere unappealing to many well-intentioned people. But we are convinced as well that many students and parents will seek us out because of our conservative atmosphere—that as most campuses drift further and further away from a system of customary sanctions, a great many families will be happy to find a small college where the contrary is true.*

*We thus see for the college a distinctive and unusual position. We see it cultivating academic quality second to none—and that means cautious trial and error in new techniques as well as a holding to the informal, personal approach that traditionally has characterized education here. We see it exposing students to institutional policies and practices that embody the best of the conservative strain in the American experience. We do not see it as a quiet, dull place: conservatism is not opposed to the controversy that new ideas and young people, mixed together, inevitably generate. But we do see it as a reasonably decorous place, where basic good manners are valued because they tend to be civilizing (we hold civility to be one of the hardest and highest-valued goals). We do not see it as an irrelevant haven for the sons and daughters of people who cannot accept the complexities of contemporary life; we see it as a full partner, along with institutions of a liberal persuasion, in showing young people how to approach those complexities, we from a conservative posture, they from a liberal.*

*And finally we see the college as the object of interest of a group of public-spirited, thoughtful men of affairs who believe that the conservative temper must survive if the*

*nation whose fruits we all enjoy is to survive whole. It is our hope that you will wish to be one of them.*

The letter was drafted for the signature of the chairman of the board.

"You were serious," Margaret said when she finished reading the letter next time they met.

"I was seriously trying to survive in my job," said Bodger. "I knew too little to understand the philosophy of education in America. I knew too much to believe that what I saw going on was all that there could or should be. I knew I was in cahoots with men whose bent of mind was different from mine. I did not think they could articulate satisfactorily what they thought in their bones and expressed in their daily behavior. I knew we were on a collision course as a team if I did not figure out how to live with what they felt to be right and fit.

"It took me four years on the job to figure out that a college is not a value-free medium for inquiry into truth, that it is an institution in a specific society with the values of that society. By the time I found Burke, I even had reached the conclusion that there was no such thing as value-free inquiry. This was a recent surprise discovery in my journal of November 1969. The entry had an outright postmodern ring to it, although I had not heard the word at that time. Listen: *I have just this moment taken a quantum leap in my understanding of what the liberal arts college is and is not. The Phi Beta Kappa viewpoint is not free. It is culture-bound and culture-blind to itself. The notion that the mind is a disinterested instrument, that it is uncommitted to anything but the spirit of free inquiry--that notion is dogma, mouthed for years by the colleges and the professors. It is rhetoric which sustains enthusiasm and obscures the facts. The fact is that the institution is committed and that individuals are committed--that the mind is our chief instrument for survival.*

"Is it any wonder that I was ripe for Nietzsche, even though nearly thirty more years had to elapse before he entered my field of vision."

Margaret looked at Bodger the way an archaeologist might look at a newly uncovered fragment. But Bodger could see that she also had some feeling for the effort he had had to make.

"You either had to think your way out of the dilemma or drink your way out," she said. "It was healthier your way. I detect that you were not only trying to live with what they felt to be right. You were also trying to sell them something they might not believe."

Bodger agreed. "The letter to a prospective board member and the re-draft of the black student constitution had similar functions. Both were self-serving, to begin with. I was trying to put the situation into words that I could live with and that others could live with. That meant that my words were trying to win affirmation from people who had not previously affirmed all of the words--both DLH and Byron."

"Did they win it?" Margaret asked.

"When DLH read the draft, he was pleased," said Bodger. "His big speech at the Franklin Institute was coming up in less than three weeks. Suddenly he had something to hold on to. He trusted that I was not hoodwinking him. It was a blatant polemic, of course. I knew it would anger many faculty. But it identified a common ground, and DLH could stand on it.

"Could you?" Margaret asked.

"It cast the issue in simplistic terms of classical rationalism vs. tradition. It left out of the discussion much of the substance of generational conflict and new social ideology then disrupting the campuses of the nation, including ours. The logic of it suited me, though. I enjoyed the blush of discovering Burke through Rossiter and Kirk--late, again, though I was. However, DLH rushed too fast for my comfort to believe I believed it.

"On a cold evening early in January, we met in the board room with William Elliott, one of the biggest financial players on our board. We had the opportunity to borrow several millions from the federal government to build the new gymnasium, which would come to be named Helfferich Hall, with the pool named for Elliott.

"DL had stood firm against taking government support for the college as a matter of conservative principle. If the college got into bed with the government, sooner or later the government would tell us what we had to do. If we did not take the money, the capstone project of the Helfferich administration would probably be postponed.

"Elliott took a small life insurance company from obscurity to success. His financial judgment was sharp. He had a sense of the flow of the social and political process. He also was a super salesman. He had pledged a quarter of a million dollars or so to our campaign, so his voice had clout.

"DLH put it to Elliott. Should we borrow the money or not? Knowing how eager DLH was to go forward, Elliott meandered his way to a rationalization for borrowing the money that DLH could buy. Elliott talked about the trend toward public involvement in the welfare of the nation, reaching back to the WPA and coming forward through the GI Bill and federal capital support of higher education. 'It's contrary to everything I was brought up to believe, but I'm not so sure it's all bad. It's different,' Elliott said. He was confident that at some time in the years ahead the government would forgive indebtedness of the sort we were contemplating, sooner than reclaim the property.

"When the issues were really serious, DLH enjoyed puffing on a pipe. He puffed as Elliott delivered himself of this opinion, a wry smile curling around the stem, his eyes widening and their corners crinkling just noticeably."

"So much for laissez-faire conservatism," Margaret said.

"Precisely. I can't tell you how much that meeting eased my mind over my own difficulties with conservatism. I saw to my relief that conservative truth no longer seemed so impregnable."

"The college borrowed the money, surely," Margaret said.

"Of course--behold the gym today, still being paid for at three percent interest, which we pay with a grant of other federal dollars.

"Later, after Elliott left, Helfferich and I stayed on to chat a little. Still puffing his pipe, he mentioned the 'draft to a prospective board member.' He remained pleased with it and seemed to see it as evidence of a personal conversion. He asked: 'How far away were you from believing what you wrote when you came here five years ago?'

"This was disconcerting to me. I wanted to tell him, 'Wait, I wrote that to put into sentences what I *think* you have been getting at. It's a field test, a model to think about. I need to work out what is there that I can affirm and what I can't.'"

"You didn't say it," Margaret said.

"I said, 'About 25,000 miles.' That confirmed a thesis he often talked to me about. He had seen many young faculty members come to campus with liberal fire in their eyes, only to dampen down into reasonable conservatives. He attributed it to the atmosphere of the place, which, of course, he felt he had a major hand in creating and sustaining. I simply did not have it in me to differ with him at the time. I felt as if my draft had won something important. Clearly it deepened his feeling that I should continue to prepare for the presidency sometime. But I knew that the common ground staked out by the draft was something of an intellectual illusion. It would fool the true believers for a while, and it would certainly get the goats of many of my faculty friends. I would have to own up to my friends on the faculty that I wrote much of DLH's big speech."

"How did the speech go over?" asked Margaret.

"We incorporated great chunks of the draft into his text. The moment was electric--apologies for a Ben Franklin pun. DLH was at his theatrical best. When he spoke, standing under the feet of Franklin's huge statue, I heard my own words with an eerie feeling--a mixture of distance and intimacy. The true believers loved it. Many faculty couldn't believe what they were hearing. I think most wrote it off as sheer entertainment, bravura. But I think to this day that it was a milestone in my path to becoming president. It gave DLH, and those over whom he had influence, a belief that I was thinking the right things and could express them. The text was reprinted in a pamphlet. A faculty member took DLH to task in a letter to the student paper for his pessimistic assumptions about human nature. That was about it."

Later at home, before retiring for the night, Bodger almost visibly blushed when he leafed through the pamphlet containing the speech. He had not looked at it in a quarter of a century. It had mercifully disappeared quickly from public view. It seemed that none of his friends ever figured out how responsible he was for those words. If they had, he hoped that they would have excused him as a subordinate to DLH who had no choice but to smith a speech. They would not have believed that he held such convictions. They would have known that he was elsewhere on the spectrum, at a distance from those who paid obeisance to the tried and true. They had seen his enthusiasm for transformative creativity expressed by Suzanne Langer in *Philosophy In a New Key*. They had witnessed his affirmation of the abstract expressionist art then in the ascendant in America. They had heard him talk about his own wish to break through the forms of the day, to create something truly new. They had come to think his allegiance to something he called "the creative advance" set him apart from his fellow administrators.

Bodger could not have pretended to master the philosophy of process and reality in the heavy pages of Alfred North Whitehead; but he could have emulated--and he had--Whitehead's buoyant, optimistic attitude toward novelty. In doing so, he had set up an unresolved tension in himself: the polemical formulations grounded in Burke simply would not sustain the way he found himself thinking when he confronted an administrative problem. Burke would have had him try to stop the flow; Bodger, in keeping with Whitehead, wanted to gauge its direction and ride it toward something better, a new formulation.

He thought, as he turned out the light: "DLH could not have been so credulous. Surely it didn't matter to him whether or not I *thought* I was a conservative. He saw me



cooperating with him and helping him--that was enough for him. Enough for me too, at the time. I was not in the business of political philosophy but of surviving."

Bodger was thankful in the darkness. He would never have to make such a confession to anyone but himself.

### **Bodger's relations with faculty were complicated**

Margaret was upset about the annual evaluation handed in to the dean by her department head. She sought Bodger's advice after dinner one evening at his home.

"Gone fishin'," he said. "Advising days are over, especially on faculty relations."

"I'm going to write a complaint to the dean and president," she said.

"It's your right," he said. "Faculty culture on an undergraduate campus is deeply communal. At the same time, everyone leads a very separate professional life. The people who know you best don't know you. Often they don't know your work either. Much of it is invisible and resistant to measure. When your status is at stake, you have to do what you have to do."

"I appreciate your encouragement," she said.

"Just don't call it advice," Bodger replied.

They turned to Bodger's experiences with faculty.

"From what you've said," Margaret mused, "I take it that your relations with faculty were complicated but good before you were president."

Bodger reflected: "If the old term 'alma mater' ever meant anything other than sentimental attachments to an institution, it meant something central to me. When I returned to the campus to work in 1965, I found myself becoming a colleague of a dozen or so people who had taught me in class, not to mention a number almost equal who knew me but whose courses I had not taken. Most of them were alumni, like me. It was an experience I never expected to have and even today wonder at. I felt as if I was moving back into an arena where those professors had created the molds for the way I would think and feel. I was one of hundreds, thousands, they had taught. Yet I possessed them--and was possessed by them--in a way that seemed to me unique. This feeling of possession of course exceeded the bounds of what really took place when I was a student. At a time when I had doubted my ability to become much of anything, their affirmation of my class work astounded me. I never forgot it and surely magnified it over time.

"By the time I was a senior at the college, I have a hunch their affirmation had led me to believe I had greater intellectual power than I had. I did not understand that their knowledge and their judgment were limited too. It did not matter. The confidence they gave me in my power to move ideas around surely enabled me to get on with my life after graduation. They knew, certainly, that I would discover my limits without any need of help from them.

"I could never feel on a par with them after I came back to the college because of the special role they played in my youthful development. It did not take long for me to find that they were fallible human beings like everybody else. But that never changed my absolute sense of gratitude and appreciation for what they did to me at a tender age. I hope some of them, at least, felt that. As I moved into administrative work, often saying and doing things that they would find objectionable as faculty members, I always felt they

would grant me a pardon. In a parental and filial sense, perhaps we knew that we would be for each other and not against each other, however hot the policy issue became.

"I feel sad to count the number of funerals where I have stood to speak well of them. I'm glad, though, that I have lived to be able to do it."

Margaret said, "'Alma mater' suggests rah-rah stuff and boys being boys and girls girls, all the rite of passage baggage."

"I hardly experienced any of that. I was a local kid, commuting to campus. I even dodged the hazing routine as a new student, imposed by the sophomores. Pretended to be a veteran, who were numerous in 1949, although I looked like a mere boy. Vets were exempt from soph rules. The college for me was the teachers I had and the latitude to think about doing something with my life. They were the bed of rock on which I constructed the rest of my thinking life.

"As pedagogical styles and expectations changed in the years after I became president, these big figures in my youth sometimes came in for criticism by young Turks. Few did any notable publication after they finished their graduate work. Few practiced any classroom style other than the 'stand-and-deliver' lecture. Some did little to refresh their notes over the years. In a strange way, I heard this and could even agree with it, but that did not alter the larger-than-life perception of them that I had formed and that remained in my thinking about them throughout. We developed a set of criteria for evaluation of teaching during my presidency. By then most of the cohort were retired or senior enough to treat the process with ironic good humor.

"To this day I celebrate them all. They reminded me that teaching is a mysterious process. Most of them became legendary when alumni gathered. Even their weaknesses became the stuff of story and acquired, through time, a special meaning. From the start of my employment, I was responsible for cultivating the interest of alumni in the college. I naturally trafficked in the experiences I shared with so many of them as students under these professors. It was one of the resources that came to me without my having to earn it. By bringing current news to alumni out in the field about the professors they and I had sat under years before, I created a common bond. Many of the senior faculty were themselves alumni. So the circle of loyalty was tight. I sometimes felt that promoting alumni interest was too easy as a job. The common connection all of us had with the campus made it all very natural."

Margaret said, "It was all very provincial too."

Bodger acknowledged this and then moved on to talk about other faculty members. "Beyond the group of my former teachers, I gravitated early to the young faculty. We had a feisty bunch. There was generational magnetism. The young faculty always tend to hang together socially as well as professionally."

"Antoine," Margaret said by way of agreement.

"That's one of the difficulties of aging, I found. I only discovered it a lifetime later. When young, you take for granted that you can connect with your peers. When you become a senior player, you cannot take connection so easily for granted. Sometimes in my last years I found that even great effort to communicate became suspect. The young people did not want connection from my end, or could not seem to handle it at face value. I became more brittle too."

"I'm an exception?" Margaret asked.

"I'm out of power now--that makes it easier for you and me to talk."

"What were the young faculty like then?"

"Wonderful, as I look back on them. I arrived on campus thirsting for intellectual stimulation after years of drinking the watery goop of corporate management philosophy. In English, Mike Foster was fresh out of the Harvard MA in teaching program. He was on his way to discovering linguistic anthropology. He dragged me--and others--along in his wake, full of excitement about the interrelations of language and culture. In Wes Clymer, I felt a kinship based on a kind of purist belief in the power of literary art. He was the mad monkish scholar I imagined I might have been if I had not become an operator. His insight into the darker marks in Joseph Conrad seemed to come out of a cauldron deep in himself. Mel Ehrlich had theatre and journalism in his background and brought a swinging sophistication to the old gray hall. Gary Waldo was in history, a specialist in Mussolini. I did not teach with him, but we shared an enthusiasm for engaging the students in debate. I once taught in Bomberger in a room next to his, divided by a wall that could open up. His voice boomed through the wall as if he were Mussolini himself. A young mathematician, Dick Call, tried to teach us about symbolic logic. There were some mainstays of the faculty who because of temperament connected with the new guys, a psychologist, a political scientist, another English comp teacher.

"We never were a definable group, although for a time some of us met at someone's home. In my journal I dubbed it 'the "new" Vienna School on the Perkiomen.' We did not meet often and soon we stopped. Our logician spoke in a language from which the rest of us were excluded. We poked at the nature of the external world, at the relation of logical thought to the reality of reality. My insights on Zen did not get through. Today we would start a chat group on the Internet and have a better chance of surviving. Everybody was busy, and this was outside of our course obligations.

"In English comp, Foster, Ehrlich, and I collaborated on a freshman project centered on the nature of language. It served Foster's emerging graduate school interests more than it served our students, I'm afraid. Mike went on for his doctorate at Penn and ended up in the Canadian museum system, an Iroquois specialist. But it was exciting for me to be up to my ears in new ideas. I had inadequate credentials even to be on the faculty. I felt as if I had not read enough--of course, I hadn't."

"You had a stimulating process going," Margaret said.

"A couple of years after I arrived, the academic council was restructured. It provided for the addition of a representative from the rank of instructor. When it came time for election in the faculty meeting, I was nominated unopposed. The thought among my colleagues probably was that I could pull more weight, since I was then assistant to the president. Still, such a conflation of roles seems unique in retrospect. Faculty trust of an administrator does not normally come that easily, especially one so poorly equipped with academic credentials and experience. It is hard to go back to that time, through all the impressions of faculty suspicion and criticism piled up through my years as president."

"It looks pretty evident to me," Margaret said. "You had two big blocs of natural support--your former teachers and your current young friends."

"In my corporate experience, I developed a compulsive need for ordering my ideas and actions. This led to lists and check-offs. Editing a magazine, for one thing, made me compulsively aware of tasks to be done by a date certain. I brought this habit to the

campus. I always had to write an agenda. It always had to be comprehensive. I kept notes after most meetings. I wrote in my journal about issues afterward. When I got onto the council, this compulsive bent came into play. By that time, 1967, I had had a full exposure to all the curricular gossip. It was new to me, and I loved the novelty of it. I had been used to a corporate product as a tangible thing, made in catalytic cracking machines, transmitted through pipes. Here, to my delight, I found the product was the stuff of mind, to be shaped and packaged according to wonderfully debatable principles of organization. It was sheer luxury.

"When the faculty elected me to academic council, I pulled in all the ideas for curriculum change that I had heard and made them into an agenda, which I circulated among my young faculty friends. This was unique. Nobody had done it before. Here was a lowly instructor, teaching only part-time, with no legitimate credentials, new to the campus, mobilizing a platform for improvement. The effrontery of it! DLH read it with an amused smile. If half the items were pursued, he would have a headache. However, he said nothing critical. He seemed to look on my list as another step in my basic training--both the content of the curricular ideas and the process I would have to go through in dealing with the dean and other council members."

"Was your agenda all that radical?" asked Margaret.

"It was a pastiche. By this time, I think I had read Daniel Bell's book on reforming the Columbia curriculum. So I was not altogether devoid of a theoretical understanding. It was Bell who more than others advanced the notion that we should teach the method of a discipline and not just the subject of a discipline. That is now conventional wisdom. Thirty years ago it was not, at the undergraduate level, anyway.

"Urged by DLH, the faculty had gone through an extensive study of curriculum and had passed a new plan. Parts of the plan were unimplemented. It was easy for me to call for implementation of what had already been decided. Fine arts was an item, for example. The typical liberal arts curriculum in the '60s was heavily skewed toward the cognitive and away from the creative, a classic liberal arts position, completely defensible. The faculty decided we needed something in art but had not specified what. I'm not even sure why it thought we needed it. There was probably a fuzzy notion of 'rounding' the offerings. Then too, colleges we aspired to equal had such things and they thus were a code for a certain kind of perceived quality. With my friends, I urged the formation of a Fine Arts Committee and the development of guidelines for courses in art theory and the formal problems of art as well as in studio work. Studio courses did become an offering. An 'appreciation' approach to art history remained in place, however, to the exclusion of more esoteric studies of art theory. Art theory happened to be a hobby-horse of mine without much meaning for the curriculum then in place."

Margaret said, "You were the prime mover years later for creating the Berman Museum in the old library." New though she was, she was coming to own the institutional memory.

"Yes, I brought my biases to bear in this, then and later. Nobody ever told me that leadership required the person to abandon all his special interests. The important thing is to match the special interests of the person with the needs of an institution at a particular time."

Margaret said, "Fine arts was one thing. Did your manifesto call for other innovations?"

"'Manifesto'--good," Bodger laughed. "You have to realize that the college in the mid-'60s was still living with the ghosts of penury. The Depression had almost put it under in the '30s. Led by DLH, it had painstakingly reestablished financial stability. It had done so by depriving itself of extras. That was true of the physical plant as well as the program. So, many colleges like it in mission and scope had a richness in curricular offerings unavailable here. Filling in gaps was thus one simple need. That's not to say that DLH or the dean or many of the faculty necessarily saw them as gaps. We didn't offer some things, they would say, as a matter of principle."

"Such as?"

"Our offerings in the social sciences. The college had a reputation as a hard and good place for science. 'Science' meant chemistry, biology, physics, with mathematics. This determined the attitude of the prevailing powers in the faculty toward the other sciences. The others did not quite count. Psychology had been allowed into the curriculum years before because of the pragmatic need to give student teachers the requisite exposure to educational psychology. The prevailing faculty leaders felt small need to acknowledge the rigor brought to psychology through the newer work of behavioral experimenters. At bottom, I think that Helfferich believed that psychology invaded the turf of traditional wisdom surrounding human behavior--of which he felt himself to be a dedicated custodian and practitioner. This was a veiled theological issue. Psychology seemed to pose a threat to the Protestant ethos ingrained in the culture of the college from its start. By the '60s, the college had moved far enough away from that start to disallow a forthright airing of this conflict. It would have appeared even to DLH as an intellectually questionable confrontation. But he knew his feelings; he knew what he had inherited. Instead of taking a direct look at the value of psychology in the curriculum, DLH and the dean marginalized it through budgetary constraints and occasional administrative legerdemain. Faculty meetings occasionally were enlivened by a harangue for psychology from the head of that department, Dick Fletcher. DLH--or the dean--would invariably follow it with a witty retort or an arch expression of gratitude for the thought, which he would promptly dismiss.

"The attitude toward psychology was compounded when attention turned to anthropology and sociology. My memorable experience with Gunnar Myrdal's analysis of the American dilemma on race took place in the single one-semester course in sociology in the early '50s. It was paralleled by a one-semester course in anthropology. That thin diet had not changed in the fifteen years or so that followed."

"What did you call for?" asked Margaret.

"I didn't know enough to call for anything other than the reforms already written into the new Curricular Plan and still unimplemented. Hardly points of a manifesto."

"Such as?"

"Nothing new was promised for psychology itself. In the '60s, the urge to integrate disciplines came alive. The Plan called for an integrated science course for non-science majors and an integrated social science course. I urged implementation forthwith. The faculty set these goals with good intentions, I imagine. But the urge to pursue them was weak, as I saw it. Money was alleged to be unavailable. The only contribution I could

make was to suggest that the integrated courses pay attention to the social effects of science. I cited the work on that being done at Columbia's Institute for the Study of Science in Human Affairs. Perhaps I had been reading Gerald Holton--can't recall."

"'Integration' has a period sound today," Margaret said.

"It was a banner in the '60s for change. Like 'relevance.' Like many others, I thought things should be integrated and relevant. Did I know what I was talking about? Not much. Did I realize that these were political and social banners waving--that the push to restructure the curriculum as a pure academic concern was far less strident? Not until much later."

"Was that all there was to the social science agenda?" Margaret asked.

"Anthropology was targeted in the Plan but not yet implemented. I urged action."

Bodger read from the old paper he had written:

*I recommend a two-semester (six hour) introductory course. Beyond that, we might offer two or three courses in a special field of cultural anthropology, such as South American or African. The area should be accessible enough to permit field work in summer. Urge the administration to hire a person who is qualified to teach the introductory course and specialized in the field we wish to emphasize. The college should set up a cooperative program with two or three neighboring colleges, which would offer courses in other specialties (perhaps archaeology or physical anthropology or some other area of cultural anthropology). Our students and theirs would receive full credit for courses taken at the cooperating colleges.*

"Where did you get these ideas?"

"The young faculty talked a lot. There was a spirit in the air. We were looking outward, looking for connections, embracing the world beyond our little campus. The college to the young faculty seemed quite parochial. I had a denser experience of it because of my student background, and I was older than most of them. But I went with their drift. The college *was not* in the vanguard of academic change. It *was* deficient in offerings, in perspective."

"That was my impression when I arrived," Margaret said. "Still."

"Of course," said Bodger. "It's a given in any new faculty member just out of a creditable graduate school experience. An undergraduate-only environment will not have the velocity of thought found in a decent graduate school environment. But what seems to you to be parochial today was not even on the horizon in the '60s. The Plan called for courses in comparative world cultures, world literature, exemption from English composition. My 'manifesto' said, 'Implement.'"

"Some of the curriculum plans did come into being, then?" asked Margaret.

"Sooner or later. But here, look at my agenda. I took the whole college for my province, not just the curriculum."

Margaret looked through the yellowing memo.

*The faculty should make recommendations to the administration of individuals who would enrich our general educational program by brief periods of residence on campus.*

Bodger said, "Many years later, in foreign languages, we brought in native-speaking graduate students to live in the halls. Some of these ideas had a long life and, of course, they were not mine for the most part. I cribbed anything that sounded exciting. I look shameless in my zeal to push ahead. What a pain in the butt I must have been to some of the people."

*Research: The faculty should study, through a special committee, the place of research at the college and make its views known to the administration in the form of a resolution. Urge that a separate Faculty Scholars Fund be established, the proceeds of which would pay for certain costs of research. Decisions for use of such proceeds might be made on recommendation of a Faculty Committee which would review research projects proposed by colleagues.*

"You mean there was no such thing?" Margaret asked incredulously.

Bodger replied, "You take for granted our faculty development program today. In 1967, my little statement was tantamount to heresy. The college did not expect faculty members to do research. If they did, they pursued it on their own time, in the middle of the night, as Helfferich once pridefully told a group of alumni. The fruits of that labor, he implied, were sweeter because they came from deep within the soul of the professor, not from a mere term of employment. It was not until after I was president for some years that anything like this idea came into being."

Margaret read on:

*Size of classes: Some courses are heavily populated. The faculty should call for a study of those courses to see whether the large enrollments are doing violence to the quality of instruction. If this seems to be the case, appropriate recommendations should be made to the administration. A related subject for consideration is the place of closed-circuit TV and computerized courses.*

"Tight-budget syndrome," Bodger said.

Margaret pointed at the paper and said, "Here's one that surely set the dean to gritting his teeth."

*Divisional Organization: One of the reasons for our failure to implement some of the Curricular Plan proposals is the lack of inter-disciplinary structures. The supremacy of the Departments was strongly asserted when the Plan was approved. Much might be gained by modifying that position. Without destroying the departments, we might set up four divisional councils which would have a more inclusive and coherent perspective on the curriculum. For example, if we had had a divisional council concerned about the social sciences as a whole, the need for an anthropology program may well have come to the surface much sooner. Also, divisional councils would be well suited to devise the integrated science and social science courses called for in the Plan. Some fear that divisional units would create "super-departments" and cause "political" problems. This*

*may be a lesser problem than the one now prevailing--the "splendid isolation" of 14 different departments.*

Bodger said, "Divisional consciousness developed in my presidential years, as you can see today, but nothing this formal ever came into being. More than other items, this one came out of my own observation. My previous corporate experience came into play as I thought about the organization of the faculty. Some faculty gave lip service to the idea of integration. Yet their comfort with their stand-alone departmental structure contradicted their declarations of faith. Partly that came from the sheer inertia found in every social organization. Partly it came from the boundaries they had constructed around their professional disciplines in graduate school. A liberal arts college foists upon the collective faculty a breadth of responsibility for the whole of liberal learning that the average faculty member individually is poorly trained to bear. I came to this conviction soon after sitting through the prickly debates that then erupted in monthly meetings of the faculty. President Helfferich, as chair, sometimes allowed the troops to shoot each other down. When they were shooting at each other, they were not shooting at the administration--a lesson I carefully kept for future reference. Of course, I did not understand the unwritten codes and the esoteric history of relationships on the faculty. I'm confident that I misread much of what I was seeing and hearing in those early years. Nevertheless, 'integration' and the construction of divisional common ground were not burning priorities."

Margaret rippled to the last page. "Here you talked more about divisions and interdisciplinary studies."

*One of the problems of institutionalized learning is that the methodological assumptions of a discipline (and its individual courses) tend to become submerged. With the changes and additions being made in most fields of study, we should try to make our students more conscious of the strategies of inquiry with interdisciplinary courses which take a subject matter and approach it from several angles within one of the disciplines--humanities, science, social science, language (see the program at Amherst College.)*

Bodger said, "If that wasn't straight from Daniel Bell, I would be surprised. Here in the nineties, we are used to the discussion of building the canon of a discipline. We are all veterans of the 'culture wars' precipitated by multiculturalism. The underlying structure of the disciplines in my early years, at least at a place like ours, was rather like Victorian sex. We knew it was there but there wasn't much talk about it."

Bodger turned to the window. "But most of these pronouncements grew out of my naive enthusiasm. It was a grand time to be romping around in the field of academe, new to me, and inhabited by interesting people who were too considerate to shoot me down, at least in public."

Margaret was not finished with his 'manifesto.'

*Student-Faculty-Administration Committee: The faculty should seek to elevate the newly constituted joint committee above the level of petty griping by submitting an agenda for discussion. Items on the agenda should be curricular as well as extra-curricular. We should take the initiative in seeking student involvement in academic questions.*



Bodger responded, "This was not out of step with DLH's thinking or that of most faculty. If we have one deep channel of practice at this place, in spite of the paternalistic history, it is a predisposition to put students to the test of engagement with us. The difference between my intent here and DLH's, say, would have been that I thought something substantive should normally grow out of student engagement with us. New programs should result. DLH, on the other hand, would have thought that talking a lot and following through on a little was more appropriate. Back to Burke--be not hasty to make a change."

"But that's dishonest," Margaret said. "You shouldn't go into a process without intending to get out of it what you said should come out of it."

"I suppose I thought so then," Bodger replied.

"And not later?"

"The fray over time changes you."

Margaret decided not to push the question further and continued reading:

*Ten-year planning: The Academic Council should set a deadline of, say, November 30, 1967, for completion of all 10-year departmental plans. Subsequently, the Curriculum Committee should be charged with the responsibility to digest, coordinate and supplement these plans, so that a unified program emerges. Attention should be given to eliminating courses as well as introducing new ones.*

Margaret asked, "Wasn't this something you already had under way?"

"Memory fails me," said Bodger. "Planning, in any event, became my mantra, and this is an early sign of it. DLH had been talking to me about the planning process. He put me in charge of planning rather early in the game. In one sense, you could say that my entire experience at the college parses into planning stages. I took to it because it allowed me to embrace the entire place, to think globally about it, to ignore the brambles and briar patches that snagged your trousers as you walked between departments. I think 10-year curricular planning may have been a diversionary tactic at the time, however--set up by DLH and the dean to stir some thinking but not to precipitate significant action."

"You sound critical of them."

"Not really. They were exercising a canny wisdom that sometimes is hard to codify or even to express intelligibly. As an apprentice, I absorbed ways of feinting and dodging from them, as I had absorbed lessons from my former bosses at the company. You come to internalize these things. Only now, in retrospect, do I see the conditioning process a little more clearly. Still, planning was key. With our business manager, I worked out ten-year global planning scenarios. They included the buildings we hoped to build, the endowments we hoped to grow, the new expenditures some of us envisioned for improving academic quality."

"And then..." Margaret waved the agenda in the air. "Finally, 'Venture Programs.'"

"Some pie in the sky."

She read:

*The college is more inclined to conserve methods that have proved successful over the years than to experiment with "risky" innovations and untried approaches to learning. (The few exceptions to this merely prove the rule.)*

"You were hearing Burke even this early," said Margaret.

"I was anticipating the reaction of the president and the dean to the fluky ideas about to be spread before them."

She continued reading:

*We should find a way to experiment rather freely with new programs without placing the time-tested system in total jeopardy. We should create a climate in which "venture programs" (as they are called at a neighboring prestige college which shall be nameless) naturally work their way into our curriculum on an experimental basis and, if they don't live up to expectations, naturally work themselves out again.*

*It will be argued that experimentation with curriculum is dangerous because it is unwarranted tampering with a given student's four-year package of courses. It will also be argued that many experimental programs come in with great fanfare and then "fizzle out."*

*Both arguments have a basis in fact. But they overlook the importance of a spirit of adventure not only in individual courses and instructors but in the institution as a whole. There is nothing to fear from "venture programs" if we provide at the outset for the possibility that they might fail, but still provide students with a meaningful experience. In other words, we need not stake the reputation of the college on the success or failure of a given program; we may stake our reputation on our disposition to give a program a chance to succeed or fail. It should contaminate students with the zest for intellectual adventure. It will do this best if it is flexible enough to permit adventure in its own program of offerings.*

"Whitehead's parrot," Bodger laughed. "The dean should have charged me with plagiarism. The unnamed college was probably Swarthmore."

"You proposed language houses for foreign language majors."

"Not original," said Bodger. "We never did this. The department sometime after this began a healthy tradition of conversation at language tables in the dining hall. We started an international house during my presidential tenure but it was not language-specific."

"Here's one," Margaret said:

*Non-graded colloquia. Establish a course required of all students, and taught by all teachers, with pass-fail marking as in physical education. The subject matter of each course would be decided upon by each of the sections individually. The only guideline would be that the course would deal with the broad question of Personal Values. Perhaps something of this sort would be a sensible alternative to chapel-assembly.*

Bodger said, "The pass-fail fad lost its wind after the '60s. It never took root here. This failed idea lingers as a ghost behind our present Liberal Studies seminar, which has no prescribed common syllabus. But something else was lurking in this 'venture' idea, and

you see it in that reference to the chapel-assembly. Required religious chapel was dead or dying. DLH and others wanted to hang onto something that affirmed the importance of moral and ethical behavior as a college goal. I thought I was offering a way to end compulsory chapel while holding onto a compulsory consideration of moral and ethical behavior. But it did not fly. The president, the dean, and most of the faculty thought poorly about non-graded work. It violated in some way the work ethic of the Protestant culture. I did not do battle for this item."

"Here's one that's even farther out," Margaret said, coming to the end of the paper:

*Non-course, non-grade program: Set up a program for 20 specially selected students who would work as a group under a director employed for the purpose. The group would be exempt from all normal requirements and would qualify for graduation by taking comprehensive tests at intervals. Purpose of the program would be to permit freedom for students with special qualifications, and to provide a model of study for students in the conventional curriculum. Obviously, after such a plan were blueprinted, foundation money would be needed to implement it.*

Bodger shrugged, "You have to realize that the air was filled in the mid-'60s with innovation and experimentation. The baby boomers coming to college were brighter than any cohort in history. We were not worrying about remedial work but about offering the best challenge to bright minds. I suppose the Great Books program at St. John's was lying under the surface of this suggestion. I romanticized that purist approach to liberal learning. A few years later, however, I modified my admiration a little when I had a long talk with a St. John's alum. He felt deprived of the mainstream American academic experience; he felt like a strange flower when he sought to get into the workplace. Of course, my idea was at the other end of the spectrum from the prescribed program at St. John's. I would have had the students and the faculty invent their course of study from scratch. But my hope would have been that they would end up studying the best of the brightest."

"Nothing came of your 'manifesto'?" asked Margaret.

"What came of it was that I learned by looking around, relatively late in my life, at the academic landscape as well as I could. I was still in a learning mode, and effusions such as this 'manifesto' were the fallout from the process. Again I wonder at the tolerance I experienced from those senior to me. I think they had an owl's insight: the best way to kill off bad ideas was to allow them to see the light of day. Their indulgence thus may not have come from kindness but from a wary sense of how the battles are finally won."

"Burkean," said Margaret.

"Pennsylvania Dutch, maybe," Bodger replied. "Understand, the ruts of our curriculum ran deep, despite the academic upheavals around the country at the time--and despite yawping at the edges by people like me. Our ideas were possible only because of the stability of what was in place. As colleges did away with core requirements around the nation, we did not. Language requirements, for example, held fast here, while their disappearance across the academic landscape led to a deep crisis in those disciplines."

Margaret looked at the clock. "Duty calls," she said and left.

Afterward, Bodger remained in his chair, reflecting. That was a mad, grand time, no matter how he came at it. He was never so high again, probably. The camaraderie with bright young people, the sense of being able to touch the strings of institutional authority, the affirmation he received from DLH, the awareness that their small scene was a microcosm of the national scene, on the edge of momentous change, the self-assurance that came from being young and healthy--"Rich stuff," he said to himself. The institution, of course, was trying to find its way through an unanticipated moment of change in social and educational values. It was in some ways a more threatening time than the Depression '30s. Then, the threat was financial; now, the threat was less definable and therefore less manageable. The youth generation was eating away at underpinnings of American higher education that had not been questioned theretofore.

In retrospect, Bodger saw a self-centered enthusiasm at play. He should have had more respect for the traditions of the college. He should have had greater humility in the light of his thin preparation for academic life and his inexperience. "Grand time, though," he said as he put away his papers. The word "grand" took his mind back to a passage from his journal; he looked it up:

*Plans afloat, sweeping gestures, heroic terminology--it is a little grand to be this close to the center of motion. I risk failing at so many things, but I don't care at all. There is only an intoxicating sense of doing what I am to do, no regrets, no fear. Things do not get done fast enough--that is the only frustration. All else is the turning on of forces, which may well destroy the old place, but I don't care.*

The passage bore the date 24 August 1967.

#### **Faculty terminations brought student protests**

Next time they met, Margaret told Bodger she had asked several students to write letters to the dean about her teaching. "Will it do any good?" she asked him.

He told her it might. "Be warned, however, that deans suspect faculty of coercing students into such things, using their obvious power over them."

"I would feel insulted if my dean thought that of me."

Bodger said, "Of course you would. You were not wrong to get them to write letters. Student voices have always mattered on this campus, even when the students have not thought so."

Her evaluation maneuver led Margaret and Bodger back to their conversation about the late '60s.

He said, "The students caught the national fever. In the 1967-68 academic year, campus after campus came under siege by dissident students. Harvard itself, the pinnacle of the academy, found students sitting in University Hall, protesting Harvard's alleged plans to tear down black housing for medical school expansion. They were also protesting the ROTC program on campus. President Pusey feared the students would rifle the confidential files in the administration building. He called in police. Harvard Yard, like the hallowed grounds of other colleges and universities, became a scene of violent assault and resistance.

"Here at home, an administration decision to terminate two young faculty members sparked the conflict. First Waldo, in history, then Clymer, in English. They were my friends. Clymer especially. The college had the right to hire and fire such nontenured faculty. In a day when there were no formal evaluation criteria, the dean and president, occasionally with the collaboration of a department head, made staffing decisions based on informal feedback and their canny ability to size up people. Usually a non-tenured faculty member who was not renewed would simply fade away, leaving hardly a smudge on the blotter. A number of them came and went in those years, particularly part-timers hired for a specific annual need. Waldo and Clymer were well-credentialed full-time instructors, however.

"When Waldo learned that he was not going to get a new contract, he told his students. Since he had not learned a reason for the decision from the administration, he assumed that he was being fired because of his outspokenness on politically sensitive issues and on the conduct of the affairs of our college by the administration. That was his report to his students. Appealing to the doctrine of academic freedom and the need for intellectual vitality on our campus, Waldo persuaded a following of students that the decision was unjust. They saw in him a youthful spark plug who could stimulate debate and thus advance knowledge in an interesting and attractive way. Waldo himself was not shy about advancing that self-image.

"Clymer was a non-aggressive and quiet man. He sticks in my mind as nearly a saint. While he took none of the self-serving steps with students that Waldo took, his name and Waldo's became hyphenated in the amalgamation of a single hot issue.

"Pretty soon, the students precipitated a statement from the president to explain the non-renewals of contract. He said that the administration was interested in a continuing effort to provide vitality, to bring in fresh ideas. To that end, it had adopted a 'new faces' policy. This was described as a periodic 'in and out' hiring process for young faculty at the instructor level who were on their way to permanent careers elsewhere.

"Waldo and students derided the statement as an after-the-fact rationalization. The students then circulated a petition calling on the college to retain the instructors. With signatures from an estimated 80 percent of the student body, the leaders presented their petition. The students presenting the petition came away with a report that inflamed the situation. They quoted Helfferich to the effect that most of the students did not know what they were signing. Although his observation was probably accurate, it brought out protest posters and escalated the student newspaper's campaign to retain the instructors. To the Philadelphia press, it looked as if our college was heading for the kind of disruption and violence widely reported at other campuses, including Penn. We became 'protest' news, even though order had not yet broken down."

"But it did break down?" Margaret asked.

"In fact it did not. Back in December 1967, when I first heard about the decision on Waldo, I had sent a blunt dissenting note to the president, completely private between us. He had made a ground rule when I began as his assistant that I could say anything behind his closed door, however frank, however opposing, so long as I held my tongue in public. I was glad that my Waldo note proved that the ground rule could work. DLH did not get mad at me. However, when we talked about it, he advanced the 'new faces' rationale and

failed to convince me. I was thinking of the intellectual fun created by Waldo among his students and among us, his colleagues. Why not keep it up?

"I decided at that point that the motives for dismissing Waldo and then Clymer lay deep in the viscera of DLH and the dean. I respected DLH enough to believe that at some level the 'new faces' notion was bona fide; but at the same time, the decision seemed to be simply wrong and unnecessary. Of course, I learned later that the system of tenure made deans and presidents look ahead to see whether they wanted to spend a lifetime with a new person--for that's what tenure normally meant. I think more indulgently of the administration now than I did then about the weighing of the merits of my two young friends.

"At the time, Waldo and even more so Clymer seemed like innocents in a drama beyond their ken. I remember comparing them to Yakov Bok in Bernard Malamud's *The Fixer*. He was the target of forces beyond his understanding. The power that moved Bok's world--and ours, said I--was not rational, it was visceral, from the conditioned gut, which grunts before it allows for thought. Only afterward did the grunts get sculpted and hammered into reasonable-sounding shapes.

"The tragedy of Waldo, I said then, was that he did not *know*; and the tragedy of DLH was that he did know and still acted as he acted. The tragedy of Clymer was that he knew and did not choose to resist. The tragedy of Bodger may have been that he saw all this as tragedy rather than as the meat and potatoes of ordinary institutional management."

Margaret said, "But the upset students made it extraordinary, anyway, right?"

"It was extraordinary for me, especially, because my relations with the several players complicated things. I was by now a confidant of the president on many matters, including this one. Yet, I was a colleague and friend of Waldo and Clymer. As advisor to the student newspaper, I was on good terms with the editor and other students leading the protest.

"I wanted to serve my boss and mentor as well as I could. I wanted to be helpful to my faculty friends. I wanted the students to voice their viewpoint without damaging their academic careers and without bringing violence to campus--without bringing unwanted media attention. I particularly worried that DLH would mistakenly castigate the student leaders as mere hell-raisers. They were among our best and brightest on campus."

Margaret said, "It was impossible for you to serve them all equally. How did it play out?"

"In the heat of discussions around the campus, I sensed that a violent student eruption was becoming likely. After the student paper reported on the president's alleged slight to students who signed the petition, student antagonism solidified. I heard nothing from DLH that suggested any compromise. Waldo intensified his public outcry against the decision. He cast himself as a cosmopolitan and criticized the inbred character of the faculty and the college's culture. He thus accused me as well, I guess, although the slight went over my head at the time. The students' special flyers around campus hinted at violent reactions if the administration did not heed the complaint. I worried when I had to tell DLH that the students were inviting the Philadelphia press to a massive armband protest in the making."

Margaret asked, "What would be so bad about publicity?"

"In those days the college was not news, good OR bad. Since then we've professionalized our media relations program. The college works hard to get positive media attention. At that time, the only interest the media would have had in us would have arisen because of bad news. It is a little difficult to reconstruct the mood of college administrators then. Many feared a headline could make them look weak in the face of the student movement. No one fully understood the root causes of the unrest across the nation. No one therefore had developed a successful process for dealing with it. Why did Nathan Pusey at Harvard make national headlines? Because even the president of what was thought to be the best felt he had to process the takeover of his administration building with nothing more sophisticated than police muscle."

"It sounds like the smoke from a paradigm shift," Margaret said.

"Except that that whole Thomas Kuhn concept had not hit the street," said Bodger. "Anyway, headline writers didn't talk about paradigm shifts. They dealt in shouting matches and bloody heads. I felt I should do what I could to prevent bad media coverage while trying to find a way through the conflict. I envisioned an outcome that would be acceptable to the administration, to Waldo and Clymer, and to the student protesters."

"Modest goal!" Margaret said.

"It was a measure of my hubris as an administrator at the time, perhaps--or of a more sinister pathology buried deeper in my psyche."

Margaret probed, "An irrational aversion to the uncontrolled?"

Bodger merely smiled and continued, "Plans for the armband protest proceeded. It now seemed likely that the major Philadelphia papers would cover it. The leaders called for the protest two days in advance and asked all students to take part. I decided to make a try at conciliation. I went to DLH and asked whether he would permit me to talk with the student leaders to seek an understanding.

"He puffed his pipe and consented. Then he gave me the themes to work with. Commend the students for their peaceful way of petitioning (by implication, threaten them if they don't do it that way henceforth). Tell them he and other alumni and board members seek excellence for the college as zealously as anyone; neither students nor Waldo and Clymer had exclusive title to the aspirations of the college for quality. Validate students' claim to a voice in governance by quoting the statement on student freedom recently endorsed by the board. Say he is unsure how far apart he is from the students. Set up a review that will shift the final position to the board and away from him. He ticked off the particulars of a procedure he could accept. Make absolutely no promise that Waldo and Clymer will be retained. He said that I should take credit for the procedure and not tell them immediately how much of it would fly. 'See what you can bring back,' he said in effect.

"I called one of the student leaders and told him over the phone of a possible breakthrough. Could he meet with me? I banged out a draft of a statement for possible publication next day and showed it to him in the newspaper office. He was unhappy that there would be no capitulation forthwith on the substantive decision to terminate the two instructors.

"'You've complained that you have no voice in the process,' I said. 'This gives you a voice in the process. I would to take it.'"

"Despite this last-minute grouching, he and the others were ecstatic. They had forced the top man to do something he did not originally intend to do. I showed a final draft to DLH first thing in the morning. It was a go. Within an hour a special issue of the student publication was on the campus in mimeographed form. It called for the originally planned show of support and solidarity for the instructors and the wearing of black arm bands. However, it declared that the students' demands had been well treated.

"At a special meeting of the board the following week, Waldo, Clymer, and a committee of students met with the board members. The president absented himself and promised to abide by the board's decision on the appeal. The students received the respect and courtesy of the board members and said so afterward. Then the board heard the president's case. It finally decided to reaffirm the non-renewal of the two contracts. At the same time, it commended the students for the serious and civilized character of their petition. Helfferich did too. By that time spring break had started. As DLH knew, the heat of the fray would leave campus with the students, who went in search of sunshine."

Bodger produced the late-night statement that led to the orderly resolution of the Waldo-Clymer affair and gave it to Margaret.

"Pretty prose it is not," he said to Margaret. "But it proved to me yet again that institutional management can come down to a negotiation over words on a piece of paper. I think I could say that I hardly ever faced a dilemma that did not in the end lead me to put words on paper on which I would seek the agreement of others."

The statement was from the editors of the newspaper and other student publications. It was headed simply "SPECIAL ISSUE" and dated 13 March 1968. Bodger read it aloud while Margaret stared out the window.

*"The following is a statement from President Helfferich regarding the "dismissals" of Messrs. Waldo and Clymer. We feel the students' demands have been fairly and most satisfactorily treated."*

Bodger interrupted himself: "The student leaders felt that this was a massive concession in the interest of getting a compromise and they agonized about it before accepting it. But they accepted it."

He read on: *"We also commend the student body for its reasonable actions through peaceable demonstration.'* The student leaders knew that unreasonable actions through disruptive demonstration were still possible. They didn't want us to forget it even as they affirmed the reasonable course that they knew we wanted."

*'It is to be hoped that the college community has learned a valuable lesson in student-administration communications.'* DLH tolerated the supercilious tone of the students with mild amusement. *'Today, Black Wednesday, we must reaffirm our support and solidarity for Messrs. Waldo and Clymer.'* They insisted that the black armbands had to appear; the tradeoff was that the leaders would discourage any other form of protest.

"DLH's statement follows this introduction. Here he was teaching me the lesson of changing position while preserving control. In every management situation, I had learned from my mentors that the preservation of one's authority in the face of everything was axiomatic. It was not even discussed. It was a given. This was an even more compelling axiom in the late '60s on a college campus, where it had become evident that control by the authorities was no longer a given. A corollary was, 'When you give a little, get a lot in return for having given it.' DLH gave up the process and allowed a review by his own



board. In return he demanded and got a commitment of the students to reasonable behavior, non-violence, and acquiescence in whatever decision the board would reach. In fact, I would guess that most of the students knew in advance that the board would reaffirm the decision. But they had shown their muscle and could show that they had done so. They had not been kicked out of college for it. In the end, I had a hunch that their own fate became a concern to them."

Bodger then read the text of the president's statement in the Special Issue. Even after all the years, he felt he could tell which phrases were Helfferich's, which were the students', and which were his.

*"I am pleased to be engaged in discussion of academic excellence with students. It is all too seldom that students show concern for so fundamental a concept of liberal education. Those students who have shown sincere concern for this concept in recent days are to be commended."*

"Put yourself on common ground with the opposition," Bodger commented and went on.

*"If the college is to grow great, it needs academic excellence. I am for it and for the means of gaining and preserving it. The issue of academic excellence has now been raised by students, as is often the case, because of a particular set of circumstances."*

"Note that DLH did not equate institutional greatness and academic excellence. The latter was a subset of the former. I clung to that distinction even after academic excellence came to consume the agenda in my later years. Gradually, I think, it came to distance me from some of my colleagues.

*"With a few exceptions I believe that up to this moment the students have presented their views on this set of circumstances in a manner acceptable at an institution of higher education, where rational inquiry, discussion and debate are the primary means of solving problems. The small independent college is the most fitting place where rational discussion should control."*

Bodger paused: "The shadows of violence at big places such as Cornell and Columbia are hovering in this paragraph. The guardedness of this affirmation of students peeps out of the phrase, 'up to this moment.' Meaning: I think you kids could lose control of the situation if you are not very careful."

*"The college community is composed of many groups, including the students, the faculty, the alumni, the Board of Directors (the college's legal entity), the elected officers, and the public."*

"In the hurly-burly of campus life, students and sometimes faculty failed to see this obvious diversity of legitimate interests. The board especially seemed remote if not irrelevant. When it adjudicated the case of Waldo and Clymer, of course, students and faculty both had a refresher in governance. Some, though, thought that the board would do whatever the president told it to do. I'm sure he was confident that the board would do the right thing, although, given the amount of publicity, his position was not invulnerable."

Bodger read on: *"We must recognize that all constituents of the college have pride in it and a concern for its welfare. Our degree has lustre alone on the basis of the college's excellence and the accomplishments of its students and alumni. As a graduate and as president, I desperately want the college to be one of the best small colleges in the United States. I am confident that desire is shared by our alumni, our faculty, and our*

*Board of Directors. And I am confident it is shared no less by you students, who have shown your wish for rigorous intellectual challenge in the classroom.'*

"Take them at their word. Hoist them on their own petard. Say by implication that youthful protest for its own sake is not acceptable here."

Margaret shook her head affirmatively and said, "Also, don't let the students take exclusive possession of the institutional jewels."

"You got it," Bodger affirmed and continued reading:

*"But we must also recognize that each person and each group has differing views on the course the college should set in pursuing excellence. In meeting its constituted responsibility to make decisions for the college, the officers should ignore none of those views."*

"That is," Margaret chimed in, "you students don't have exclusive ownership of the place."

"Correct. *I value responsible student opinion and would be unreasonable to ignore a request from 80 per cent of the student body.*"

Margaret warmed to the game: "He was saying that the petition and protest were not an outrage but simply a very visible expression of appropriate constituency opinion."

Bodger echoed, "That is, don't get to thinking you are pulling off a revolution here, kids," Bodger echoed. "Don't think you're too damned smart."

*"On the specific matter in question, up to this point I have been in disagreement with the petitioners' view. I am unsure how far apart we are. I am willing to listen and to talk about it by reasonable means--the only acceptable means in an intellectual community.'*

"This was Helfferich's special tactic. Declare your position. Acknowledge the opposition to it. Concede on a process for deliberating the conflict. Make sure the process allows you, without guaranteeing it, to emerge the winner. In this case, disarm the exuberance rampant among the students."

Margaret said, "Still, the students must have been happy that he acknowledged he was unsure of anything."

"Absolutely," Bodger said and read on.

*"I quote from a draft "Statement on Student Freedom" which has been reviewed by committees of the Board of Directors and of the Faculty: "It is desirable that students as well as faculty members and administrators have appropriate influence in reasonable discussion through existing structures of organization.""*

Bodger commented: "This statement emerged out of the controversy over Madalyn Murray O'Hair's appearance the year before. A couple of board members, faculty, students, and I had crafted it. We entered into that process to find a kind of closure to the O'Hair affair. Note we used the word 'reviewed' rather than 'approved.' I doubt if the board ever formally acted other than to review. But in this situation, we at least had an institutional statement with community authorship. We felt it gave an air of procedural normality in this abnormal proceeding.

"Next came a warning against violence and a repetition of our commitment to excellence--the save-all mantra: *'Obviously, demonstrations resulting in personal or property damage would be harmful to all students and faculty members concerned, to the*

*dignity of the college and, most important of all, to the cause on which we are all united—that of intellectual excellence."*

Margaret said, "You were obsessively denying the students sole ownership of the issue of academic excellence."

"No question," said Bodger. "Control control control. Finally, after all this defining and positioning for the sake of control, the statement tells the students what DLH will in fact do about their call to keep Waldo and Clymer. A few days earlier, I had privately written a suggestion that never went to him. It would simply have referred the petition to a board committee, followed by a presidential statement that the committee endorsed the non-renewal. I did not think he would even go that far. But once he decided to draw the board into the game, he realized that it had to act credibly. That required an actual appearance of the aggrieved before the students would believe a decision on the appeal. So that's the way it came out:

*"I shall present the petition to the Board of Directors on Friday, March 22, the earliest date on which the Board can be assembled. The president of the Board of Directors has been informed of the situation.*

*"A committee of students, to be appointed by the Student Government Association, will be granted the privilege of stating its views to the Board, as will Mr. Waldo and any others who feel unfairly judged.*

*"Before the end of this week, I shall request a meeting of the Academic Council of the Faculty to seek its recommendations, which will be communicated to the Board along with the petition.*

*"I promise to be bound by the decision of the Board of Directors, and call upon the petitioners and all others concerned to be bound also."*

"We wanted that final emphasis on student acceptance of the Board's decision," Bodger said. "We wanted to keep the campus from disruption. Student passions had blown away similar procedures elsewhere. We were doing everything we could to erect a structure of actions that would withstand the zaniness lurking at the edge of campuses that year."

He ruffled the paper in the air and said, "The final paragraph is vintage Bodger: *'We have it on our grasp to demonstrate to ourselves and others that our college is a place where reasonable men and women, within the established framework of the college, can act with dignity and responsibility in resolving its own problems. That is a true measure of intellectual excellence.'*

"This appeared on 13 March. On 22 March the board would meet. In the interim, I had a date to speak in morning chapel—chapel still clung to life but would soon disappear. I was supposed to tell students and faculty about a new capital fund-raising campaign just then being organized. I feared that the talk about raising money would sound irrelevant or insensitive in the ears of people who for days had heard the din of controversy over Waldo-Clymer. A favorite student of mine had just said no when I asked if she would be on a panel to talk about the need for one of the new buildings. She would have no part in raising money for a college that would not rehire Waldo and Clymer. I decided I had to talk about the fund-raising plans in the light of the controversy. I argued that 'the issue' would help the capital campaign, not hurt it."

Margaret said, "That must have been a stretch to put on a happy face. How did you get to that conclusion?"

"I felt that, with the board all set to act as an appeals court, the students and administration had shown maturity in the face of possible disruption. Prospective donors would see a viable college community in action, peaceable but vital, pursuing academic excellence--while police had to come to other campuses to combat disruption. I thought I could use the platform to reemphasize the concession made by the administration and the expectation for order, whatever the decision of the following week would be."

"Did students react?"

"I doubt that many listened. Chapel was a place they had to be. Most were thinking about the work they were to have done for the next class hour. I don't remember any reaction. Truth is, with the president's agreement to a review, the issue quickly ceased to be the main topic on campus. Campus moods are mercurial."

Margaret asked, "In the end, did the students' view of these instructors make any difference?"

Bodger said, "Did students save their jobs? No. Did students get something educational out of the controversy? Surely."

She thought a moment and said, "I have doubts now about having asked my students to write to the dean. In spite of your encouragement. It won't do any good for them or me."

"Don't have doubts," Bodger replied.

After she left, he read his journal for 27 March 1968:

*Like all intermediaries and compromisers, I suppose I appear badly to both sides. But I think I acted out of a concern for reason: if this controversy could not be dealt with reasonably, on a campus supposed to exist for the sake of reason, how could the college justify itself? I feared the president would take the hard, uncommunicative line he took in the O'Hair affair a year before. I feared the students were sufficiently motivated and organized to take the issue to the violent stage. The result of violence would have been further hardening of the administration position, damage to property, police intervention perhaps, student liability and resulting expulsions, and loss of any hope for reinstating Waldo or Clymer.*

It occurred to Bodger that over the years he had kept up a friendly relationship with many of the student leaders in the Waldo-Clymer affair. Perhaps he did not appear as badly to them as he then had thought. That summer, he wrote a letter to Waldo. Could they still say "friend" in the face of all the stupidities of institutional existence? Whether or not, Bodger wished him well. He did not recall hearing from Waldo again. Clymer bore no grudge against Bodger or anyone else. He knew the destiny of Yakov Bok. He married that spring, a handsome Russian Orthodox woman with a mad mother. Clymer and his wife came to visit Bodger. They talked about the war and probably Dostoyevsky. Bodger felt very good about that.

In his journal, he said:

*Clymer emerges as the memorable one, the still seeker in the depths so misunderstood by the skimming administrative mind. In the end even the president wished he would be saved. He worried that his own black chasms of thought might cause his students to become lost. Haunted by the image of a good friend in Vietnam, who unarmed himself and tried to persuade the villagers to surrender and was shot as he came forward. Is that me? he asks. Would I do that? Lord Jim. What struggle am I capable of? How far can I stretch this wire? If I think to the ends of thought, will I go mad, or find God? Or is it all the same? Whatever, it is lonely, a burden I must carry to my apartment or my billet now that I am draft bait.*

*In the objectivity and austerity and fatalism, grandeur becomes possible. Yet the alienation of a friend too--the gulfs that Position gouges between people in spite of themselves. Waldo and Clymer are the first ones: I see a long procession of faces growing distant, puzzlement or hatred in their eyes, seeing me but failing to see what I see: the mystic swirl of civilization, the inexorable, locked-in logic of a public role, the erosion of the private, simple sympathy of a man for a man.*

He must have been drinking when he wrote the passage that followed a page and a half later. It was of Bodger on the field of carnage, shameless in a Walt Whitman stance:

*I say, Yes, let everyone go, let the young sarcastic bright ones all go, let them flee from the bearded warlords. They shall be replaced by more young ones, eager and bright, loving life and students. They too shall see the tall battered swords of the warriors and fight them and retreat and go to other battles.*

*Yet I shall remain, for I have sheathed the swords and know of the dyspepsia after the battles. I shall remain for I know what they are and they are as meaningful and meaningless as the bright young ones. And there I shall remain and there I shall swell with the blood of those that win and those that lose. I shall be the third army, in splendid alliance with all and everyone. I shall win and I shall lose. I shall count up my gains and losses and strike them off as fairy tales. I believe and I do not believe. I think and I do not think. I fight and I do not fight. My cunning is the cunning of the race. I give it, I use it for it is ours all together. Let me help you deceive yourself. Let me help you see the bone grating flesh at the base of all.*

"Save me," Bodger muttered with a smile.

After Clymer and his wife visited him in that spring of 1968, Bodger reflected on the administrative work that he seemed more and more drawn to do. The creative challenge of the craft of presidents, he saw, was that the materials--people, procedures, policies--were both recalcitrant and immensely variable. Nothing held. The artwork was of the moment, evanescent, made and gone. A balletic leap. Yet even when gone, something of it remained to become an element in the next creation. It was an exercise in real fiction. Realistic illusion. Illusory reality. The deepest reality, the airiest fantasy, all of a piece. There was the challenge. To make people!

### Bodger sought an alumni program with intellectual substance

Margaret wondered one day how he had overcome the credential gap with the faculty.

"No offense," she said, "but how could anybody without an academic career track end up as a president of a college? I can't picture the current faculty buying that."

He tried to capture for her the self-contained life of the mid-'60s faculty. They were familiar with alumni who returned to campus to teach and saw Bodger in an established pattern. Credentials mattered less than institutional identity. While the faculty displayed some fine graduate school pedigrees, a disproportionate number came from the University of Pennsylvania, where Bodger earned the master's degree. The Penn label was almost as important as the college's own in the eyes of some faculty. At least it denoted familiarity with a style of mind. The intellectual tradition of the college was not then demarcated primarily by the standard symbols of accomplishment, books, articles, lectures given at professional meetings. Those who published and received recognition from their peers elsewhere provided the foil for the more indigenous life of the mind of the majority on the campus. The full professor rank was not closed to those lacking the Ph.D. Neither the president nor the academic dean had the Ph.D. That was not to say that the culture of the campus was hostile to standard academic distinction. Helfferich's predecessor, Norman E. McClure, was an acknowledged Elizabethan scholar, a product of a great era under Felix Schelling in the English Department at Penn.

Still, the faculty tended to be egalitarian and functional in its approach. If teachers in class generated good feedback from students, if they held their own in the ongoing faculty conversation over coffee and donuts, they usually would be favorably received, whether or not they wore colorful academic credentials on their sleeves.

Bodger said, "I was surprised when I arrived by their ready acceptance of me. It simply had not occurred to me that I had any right to claim a place in academic life."

Bodger told her that in his first couple of years, the alumni relations program was at the top of his priority list, starting in January 1965. It was for that primarily that Helfferich hired him. It involved running the annual alumni fund, something new to him, directing the alumni association, and editing the alumni magazine.

"The fund raising and the alumni relations program," Bodger said, "involved a lot of smoke and balloons and promotional hype, pretty thin stuff. However, a serious player had preceded me in that position. He was a Reformed pastor, wrestling coach, and instructor in religion, Dick Schellhase, '45. His family ties to the place and his Reformed heritage gave him a legitimacy and seriousness of purpose unlike the typical alumni promotional person. Like many pastors in the '60s who were on campuses, he had a fire in his belly over the current issues of social justice. He had strong roots in the traditions of the denomination that started the college. But he was not a traditionalist refugee from the current debate in the nation. He gave me the feeling that in my position it would be acceptable to think and talk about ideas and strongly held principles, especially those having to do with peace and social justice. He enjoyed a family-like relationship with Helfferich, grounded in their membership in the Reformed church network.

Dick also had a reputation for good teaching and collegial integrity among many faculty. He was a member of a group of faculty who were loyal to the college and its

heritage but openly critical of some of the traditional practices on campus and sometimes of the president or dean in particular issues. In one instance, a few years before my arrival, Dick and others criticized when the president offered an honorary degree to someone perceived to be a right-wing nut.

"He told me after I arrived that it was he who originally brought me to Helfferich's attention when they started looking around for his replacement. He had decided to leave and become a fund-raising head at his theological seminary."

"Did he know you?" Margaret asked.

"Not personally. I had corresponded with him in his role as editor of the alumni magazine. With his encouragement, I had sent him an article a couple of years before his job opened up. He thought that my style of writing must betoken a style of thought that he affirmed. Forever after, I credited him with getting me the job. Through the years, I jokingly would blame him for all my subsequent sins of commission and omission as a member of the college staff. We had that between us. He was a friend in an oddly formal way. We did not see much of one another. In my mind he gave my new job a certain air, and I emulated him."

"So--he had given the alumni job a weightiness?" Margaret asked.

"Right. Knowing no better, I simply saw his example and assumed that it was acceptable for me to take myself seriously as a player on the campus. You would have had to be there at that time to get the feeling of it. It's hard to imagine today."

The interviews leading up to his being hired also made Bodger think that his position had importance. After he was interviewed by vice president James Wagner and by Helfferich, he was told he would have to meet two alumni leaders before Helfferich would reach a decision. One was Harold Wiand, president of the alumni association. The other was Paul Guest, a member of the board of directors. Wiand was a public relations executive with the railroad. Guest, who graduated in the late '30s, was an attorney. They met Bodger for lunch at the Union League in Philadelphia, just down Broad Street from Bodger's office in the UGI building at Broad and Arch.

"Although I was a graduate of the college," Bodger said, "I had no sense of the life of the organized alumni group. I had given a small gift each year and written for the magazine, but that was it. I had a very small circle of former classmates with whom I had contact, but they were mainly high school friends. Like me, they had trotted across the way to the local college as non-resident students and did not engage with the college after graduation. So I did not know the tribal customs of the alumni who were actively involved, like Wiand and Guest.

"I went to that meeting feeling intimidated and ignorant. I sensed that Helfferich was surrounded by a group of alumni heavy hitters who shared his religious position and who protected the institutional walls with their money and righteousness. I was prepared to tell them that I was not really up to the job if I sensed that the conversation was leading nowhere. The appearance of churchiness, you see, still made me uncomfortable. I still suspected that all these people were in some sort of salvation game that I could not understand."

Margaret said, "I can't believe that was true of this place, even then."

Bodger went on, "Of course I was inexperienced and uninformed. I passed the test at the Union League more successfully than I realized at the time. A couple of things were in my favor.

"I was corporate, for one thing, not academic or religious. It surprised me that both men saw my little career in Philadelphia companies as a plus. It gradually dawned on me that they had a paternalistic--if not patronizing--attitude toward the academic and religious professions. They were actively supporting the college to nurture thought, morals, and values. They did not think that the learned or sacred professions could support themselves. So they seemed to embrace me as one of the band of brothers who shared a sense of duty to sustain the college. We were the strong whose obligation it was to nurture the valuable but vulnerable flowers within the academy. I knew the corporate jargon of the time. Without fully realizing it, in my eight years as a corporation man, I had acquired a pinned-down manner, a surface efficiency, which they liked. They respected the job being done by my boss, Charles Simpson, who headed up the city gas company. The fact that Charlie, a fellow Union Leaguer, liked me meant a lot to them. My corporate pedigree removed suspicions that I might be anti-business, or politically to the left. In the '60s, these were important issues in the world that Wiand and Guest occupied.

"Also, by sheer chance, Wiand knew Margot's family. Her father was a railroad man in Phoenixville with the Reading Company. Wiand knew the Denithornes as good church-going people. They were stalwarts of the Reformed church in town. Margot had grown up in the denomination out of which the college emerged. To Wiand, this was a fortunate circumstance. I must have skirted around the question of my non-involvement in a church. Wiand's affirmation of the Reformed pedigree of the Denithorne clan must have brushed that question aside in the remainder of my conversation with him and Guest.

"There was another thing going for me in the meeting. I did not know it at the time, though. Helfferich wanted to hire me. He had to have revealed his disposition to Wiand and Guest before they met me. So their task was not to see if I was worthy of the job. Their goal was only to see whether they could find cause why DLH should *not* offer it to me. They wanted to be supportive of his intentions if they could. And nothing in the interview appeared to make them do anything but advise him to bring me aboard.

"When I got into the job, the gravity of that Union League meeting hovered in my consciousness. These were serious people! There was something going on here that I did not fully grasp but that must be important. Along with the heavy footsteps of my predecessor, this gave a sense of importance to my new work that was seemingly belied by its place at the margin of the central activity of the college, which was academic."

Margaret said, "I can't picture you as the alumni person."

Bodger attempted to sketch his first several years on the staff. As it turned out, he found that his work at the margin made a better connection with the faculty and the academic program than he would have anticipated. His own curiosity about the academic enterprise dovetailed with his need to touch the imagination of his alumni constituents.

"Almost from the start in 1965," Bodger said, "I felt that I had to try to engage the alumni in the current life of the campus if I was to get their attention and their financial support. We had a small body of living alums, fewer than 7,000. They were heavily concentrated on the east coast. The regional character of the student body simply carried



on into their afterlife as alums. I knew I could get directly in the face of many alums with a modest investment of time and travel.

"First and foremost, I thought of myself then as a magazine editor. I thought that I could reach them all through the medium of the magazine. I was like a kid in a candy shop, for the budget was fairly generous, and the editorial focus of the magazine was virtually mine alone to determine.

"I found that only a handful of alumni took an active part in the organized activities of the alumni association. Either I had to involve an exponentially greater number of people in its various committees or I had to reach them and motivate them in a different way. Early on, I decided it would be impossible to increase the direct activity of many alumni.

"I drew upon my experiences as an industrial relations person to develop a strategy. The magazine would be central. It would portray an alumni program as it ideally ought to be. I would set up activities that actually would take place, but their main function would be as media events, to be reported in the magazine. The people actually involved would be small parts representing the whole body of alums. A typical alum would be somewhere out there reading about the activities of the few and vicariously enjoy their experience. Additionally, I would publish substantive articles and not just news about the college and the alumni association. This was a sheer luxury for an industrial editor whose editorial scope had been severely limited by the company's agenda."

Margaret said, "Something manipulative about offering vicarious experiences."

Bodger agreed. "I had long since found that you did not build perceptions of corporate identity by striving to convey the reality of it. Instead, you found just enough reality with the right appearance, and then you built a superstructure of fancy on top of it. In the process, you did not talk about other aspects of the reality of the corporation that might complicate or muddy the impression desired. The outcome, if done well, would be *consistent* with the character of the organization either as it was or, more often, as it ought to be."

"This does not sound good," said Margaret, "probably because I don't see what you're saying, exactly."

"Take the simplest graphic example," said Bodger. "When an event took place on campus, you would want it to be well attended. You would want a picture of it to show that it was well attended. More often than not, alumni activities were not as well attended as you would have liked. An audience would be scattered around the auditorium, with many seats empty in between. You would have to stage a photo to get the desired impression or have the photographer shoot from an angle that would avoid as many empty seats as possible. What was true of getting the right photo was also true of making a vivid impression of the college as a whole and the alumni involved with it."

"I get the picture example," Margaret said. "How does it extend?"

"In the ideal impression of the college, I wanted to show a connection between the academic process and the alumni body. I was taken by a thought from A. Whitney Griswold's book, *Liberal Education and the Democratic Ideal*, published in 1962. A president of Yale, Griswold talked about the obligation for an alumnus to continue learning after graduating. He spoke about the alumnus as a 'patron of learning.' That meant furthering the interests of higher education and doing so preeminently by practicing self-education throughout life. That would lead to the free and responsible life. In the

Cold War context in which Griswold wrote, alumni would preserve a democratic way of life through their intellectual habits in opposition to the communist hegemony.

"I thought it could be the role of our alumni program to help our graduates realize this noble role. It would be self-serving in that it would lead to the pleasures of intellectual discourse. It would be high-minded because it would contribute to the tone of our society and to the welfare of higher education."

"A far cry from begging for annual gifts," Margaret observed.

"Yes, but I assumed that gifts would come when people felt that they were involved with the college in a meaningful way."

With the consent of the alumni board, Bodger organized alumni volunteers and faculty members into a liberal arts committee. Its mission was to make the connection between the academic dynamics of the college and its alumni. Before the end of 1965, the alumni magazine announced a new reading-discussion program. The topic was a timely one in 1965, "the war trap." The choice was not out of the blue. It was taken from the syllabus of an experimental elective course just introduced in the newly installed curricular plan, the Senior Symposium. Seniors came together in an interdisciplinary spirit to study major problems of the space age. It emphasized independent reading and open discussion in small groups, focusing on current movements, ideas and values.

Professor of history, Maurice Armstrong, was the moving genius behind the new senior course. Armstrong had been Bodger's favorite teacher of history in his student years. He turned to Armstrong as his principal resource for the alumni program. It was he who chose the title, "the war trap." With some consultation among colleagues, Armstrong also chose two book titles related to war for alumni to read. The choices were *The Abolition of War* (Macmillan, 1963) by Walter Millis and James Real; and *Winning Without War* (Anchor Doubleday, 1964) by Amitai Etzioni. The alumni association offered the books by mail order. Bodger also published a supplemental bibliography on war in the magazine, the titles provided mainly by the faculty, led by Armstrong. Those who ordered the books became registrants in the Alumni Liberal Arts Program. As such they became eligible to receive occasional mailings on "the war trap" theme. These mailings included notices of television productions, periodicals, new books, on-campus discussions.

The winter 1965 announcement of the program promised a feature for the next magazine on "the war trap." This in the spring 1966 issue was a pair of articles presenting differing views on the vision of a disarmed world. One was by General Thomas S. Power, an excerpt from his book, *Design for Survival*. Power saw a demilitarized world as a pathological escape mechanism and advocated the continued development of nuclear weaponry. Power was opposed to the idea of "one world." He feared that it would turn the democracies over to the Soviet enemies without resistance. The other half of the feature was by Arthur I. Waskow, an excerpt from his booklet, *Keeping the World Disarmed*, published by the Fund for the Republic. Waskow claimed to be no appeaser of communism, any more than Power; but he believed that western democracy would have a good chance of winning against communism in a demilitarized world.

The cover of the spring 1966 issue depicted a welded steel sculpture by local artist Bernard Brenner, who recently had spoken on campus surrounded by some of his works. The cover showed his semi-representational "Achilles," a section of rounded steel

resembling a helmet, suspended on a neck-like stem. "Is the ancient institution of war obsolete?" queried the accompanying cover heading.

The readings, occasional mailings, and the magazine articles preceded spring alumni regional discussion meetings on "the war trap" in 1966, organized by Bodger. They were led by Dr. Armstrong and other faculty members and seniors participating in the Senior Symposium.

The spring readings were capped by a seminar in June 1966 at the annual alumni day on campus. Two expert voices on international affairs debated issues associated with "the war trap." They were Dr. James E. Dougherty of St. Joseph's College and the Foreign Policy Research Institute of the University of Pennsylvania., co-author of a book, *Protracted Conflict*; and Dr. Charles C. Price, of the University of Pennsylvania, immediate past president of American Chemical Society and a past president of the United World Federalists. Like Power and Waskow, Dougherty and Price respectively offered traditionalist and innovative tools for freeing us from "the war trap."

Margaret said, "In view of the subsequent Cold War story that culminated in Reagan's 'star wars,' the hard-line military people seem to have won the debate, even in spite of the disaster then bursting forth in Vietnam."

"Demilitarization and world federalism certainly did not bring down the Soviets," Bodger agreed. "No one realistically in 1966 was thinking of bringing them down. Containing them was more than enough to chew. In truth, the Soviets may have been the main instruments of their own undoing, not our militarization."

Margaret nodded in agreement: "They sprung us from their war trap and left us to fight the dirty little desert and mountain wars that followed."

"The theme today might be, 'war traps,'" Bodger concluded.

Margaret asked, "Was 'the war trap' program like that doctored audience photo you talked about? Something of a falsehood?"

"Too harsh a judgment, I hope," said Bodger. "Everything really took place. The participation was modest at best. The publicity made considerably more of it than the alumni as a whole did. It was successful enough to persuade the association to accept my recommendation to try another round in the following year."

"Not more war."

"The Paradox of Urbia," said Bodger. "The discussion leading up to this choice in the committee was memorable."

Bodger pulled down from a shelf the Winter 1966 issue of the alumni magazine and read:

*The committee members talked over a great range of current issues and problems. Someone suggested readings in American Negro thought. One of the students proposed a comprehensive bibliography on the emerging non-Western nations. This led another to wonder where the U.S. stood with its Alliance for Progress program. But, asked a faculty member, don't all these relate in some way to changing moral values and couldn't that topic tie together a lot of things? Another staff member pointed out that the topic of modern values, along with modern art and the impact of space exploration, was a theme for this year's Senior Symposium course on campus. Well, asked a former Curtain Clubber, why not read something on modern theater, and have an alumni group put on a*

*stage performance on Alumni Day? The talk returned to moral values; the nature of violence became wrapped up in the nature of modern life--urban, fast, confusing. So the topic was finally chosen, by a free-wheeling, no-holds-barred exchange of ideas, some carefully thought out ahead of time, others--like the problem of cities--popping into someone's head because of something someone else said.*

Bodger said, "We offered Raymond Vernon's *The Myth and Reality of Our Urban Problems*, Harvard Press, 1966. And we suggested a spicy list of other books. Among them was a book that even then was taking its place as a classic in the literature of modern cities, Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, published in 1961. It was Jacobs's voice that sounded the charge on the megaplanners who were ignoring people and glorifying functional megabuildings. We also suggested Harvey Cox's *The Secular City*, still being read widely after its 1965 publication. Cox was attractive because, as a preacher, he affirmed the beat of urban life that seemed to jar conventional religious sensibilities."

The second year of the reading and discussion program followed in the track of the "war trap" program of 1965-66. Bodger ran a piece in the magazine about an urban inner-city ministry in Louisville, led by a preacher of the class of 1943. The preacher wrote approvingly of the embrace of urban life in Cox's book.

"I also ran an interview," Bodger said, "with two blue-collar black fellows I had befriended at the gas works when I worked there. 'Negro Voices of the City.' These guys today look rare. They had worked for the company steadily for a long time. One was a World War II vet, the other a veteran of Korea, about my age. Both were married with families, steady and stable citizens who lived in North Philadelphia and Overbrook. It was not uncommon in the 'ghetto' in the late '60s to see respectable and safe black neighborhoods of working class people. My daughter, who was then four years old, still remembers our visit to Lester's home.

"I felt I had found a frank way of talking about race when I would see them around the stores department of the company. They seemed to trust me up to a point. Probably my naivete came through: 'What does this innocent white boy know?' I was obviously not a threat. I stayed in touch with Lester after leaving the company and coming to the college. I tried to help him place his daughter in college. She went through the early stages of application here. She was interested in art and we had no major in it. I still have a painting she did as a gift for me.

"I invited him and his younger friend, Bob, out to the college. They came in suit and tie, looking like two Sidney Poitiers coming to dinner. They said that their apprehensions grew the farther they drove out Germantown Pike from the city. The white suburbs felt like alien turf to them--it was, of course. But they sat with me for an hour in my office on campus and talked candidly in front of a tape recorder. Then I took their picture, out on Main Street. They carried notebooks in hand and walked purposefully into the eye of the camera.

"After three decades, I still think the article is interesting," Bodger said. He handed it to Margaret. She looked Lester and Bob in the eye and scanned the article.

Margaret read from Bodger's lead-in to the interview: *"Both men agreed to take part in this discussion for one main reason. They believe that the real hope for black-white*

*relations lies in showing the white man what the black man really thinks and feels. In their experience, white men rarely relax their complicated racial defenses and speak to them man to man.'*

"Then you invoke James Baldwin's voice," Margaret said, "with a pretty heavy-handed editorial club: *'What we hear in these voices is an expression of the rage that Baldwin says is in the blood of every Negro alive (in Notes of a Native Son).'*'

*"It is one of the ironies of black-white relations"--you continue citing Baldwin--'that, by means of what the white man imagines the black man to be, the black man is enabled to know who the white man is.'"*

"And vice versa," Bodger said.

"That's what you said next."

Margaret read aloud from parts of the interview:

*The men were asked what one thing they would change that would do more good than anything else.*

*Mr. Coleman: "You really want to know?" (Laughing) "You got a shotgun?"*

*Mr. McRae: "No, the one thing you could change would be a very intangible thing, people's attitudes, their minds. That's about the only thing."*

*Mr. Coleman: "I agree. I think the white man must get to know the Negro, which he don't. That's the biggest problem--he thinks he knows him but he don't."*

She turned to the discussion of the new Black Power message of Stokely Carmichael:

*Mr. Coleman: "I think he's all right--but not if I listen to what the white man says about him."*

*Mr. McRae: "I think he's good, he's a necessity, whether you agree with him or not."*

*Mr. Coleman: "Whether you agree with him or not: that's not the question. The question is, is this right or is it wrong, the things he does and says about Black Power. Because we, the Negro race, have tried every way we know possible to, what shall I say, better ourselves or whatever it is, and nothing has come of it. So we can't be wrong in supporting Stokely if his way's working."*

Margaret then read what they said about the Great Society civil rights legislation recently passed in the Johnson administration.

*Did either man see any concrete results from the Philadelphia poverty program?*

*Mr. Coleman: "No."*

*Mr. McRae: "Nothing....In employment, the prejudices are dressed up a little bit more than they were fifteen or 20 years ago. But I don't think the legislation makes all that much difference."*

*Mr. Coleman: "It doesn't help much, all they have to do is say they didn't want someone with this or that qualification. There are so many ways of getting around it."*

She went to the discussion of open housing policy.

*Mr. McRae: "I have two daughters, and I think they're beautiful. Maybe you have two sons next door, practically the same age. You think they're gonna grow up around these girls without ever looking at them as girls? This is what worries people--what's gonna happen in the years to come living this close to the Negro family? But beyond that, I think the average person prefers to live in a neighborhood with his own people. I feel better in a neighborhood where my kids can go out on the street and nobody's going to insult them."*

Margaret said, "After an exchange on media bias on rape by blacks, you bring in another big literary name."

"I'm sure I was using it in my English comp class," Bodger said.

She read:

*So say two voices of the city. Hearing them, we recall hopefully what Ralph Ellison's hero says at the end of... Invisible Man: "The very act of trying to put it all down has confused me and negated some of the anger and some of the bitterness. So it is now that I denounce and defend...I sell you no phony forgiveness, I'm a desperate man--but too much of your life will be lost, its meaning lost, unless you approach it as much through love as through hate."*

She applauded his use of literary spice. "A little dab here, a little dab there," she said. "If I were a faculty member reading this, I would wonder about the college magazine as a polemical tool. You had a message."

"Sure," Bodger replied. "But thirty years ago, a segment of faculty thought I was asking right questions and dealing with them in a fresh way. It sure wasn't scholarship. But I was dealing with timely issues and making defensible bibliographic references. And, by the way, I was presenting a tone that differed noticeably from the conservative vibrations sent out by the administration about life in general. And I involved some of the faculty in the program for the alums."

Margaret thumbed through the rest of the magazine. She found another article on "the paradox of urbia." Dr. Rosa Wessel of the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work gave a talk on alumni day about the urban black slum. She referred to third generation families on public welfare in the cycle of dependency. Dr. Wessel told her alumni audience that she saw hope for their future in the principles of reform adopted by the Johnson administration.

Bodger said, "Rosa was the wife of Herman Wessel, our education department head."

"She didn't predict the future very well," Margaret said. "The Johnson program set the stage for more dependency for another thirty years."

"But having her on the program put lines of connection out to the faculty. I was with them in an unusual way."

Margaret shook her head: "It should not have counted for so much. You were just on the surface."

Bodger said, "In another time, in another place, yes. Here, then, I had the feeling that it counted enough to make me something of a member of the club. I imagined that few understood where I was coming from. How could they? I did not fully know myself. But

I seemed to be interested in the right things. I seemed to want to engage with them in a style that differed from that of DLH and the dean."

### Finding a way to teach English

Alone later, Bodger thought he tried too hard to show Margaret how his alumni programming connected him with the academic life of the faculty. After all, he had entered the classroom. He had held his own in faculty debates about changing the curriculum.

After his first couple of years as a follower of the young instructors of the English Department, Bodger struck out more on his own by the 1968-69 academic year. The "yellow paper project" would happen some years later, but in the late '60s he was already looking for new ways to challenge freshmen in English composition. The students were bright. They mastered the 500-word-paper format and the major grammatical issues in the fall semester. Bodger tried something new in the spring.

He had read an article in *College English* (November 1967) by one Charles Deemer called "English Composition as a Happening." "Happenings" were in the air on campuses as well as on the streets. He said to himself: "Forget about 'covering' a body of material. Look for an understanding of the 'creative process.' Show that expression in literary art can be compared with expression in non-verbal art. Require students to write a journal. Let students have enough freedom in writing assignments to talk about something that *matters* to them. (It was easy to assume in the late '60s that they would be able to identify something that mattered to them--an assumption that became harder to maintain as the tension of the '60s waned.) Shed the role of 'professor' of a subject matter and adopt the role of 'fellow inquirer,' different mainly in that I have lived longer and read and thought some things they may not have read or thought. At the same time, acknowledge that I have not read some things and not thought some things that they have."

Bodger stressed creativity in the course. He had to get the students past the feeling that this was one more professorial ploy of some phony sort. He assigned a menu of standard readings on creative process by Susanne Langer, Jacob Bronowski, C. Day Lewis and Archibald MacLeish. Then he verged away from the traditional track of the course by inviting the students to make themselves "laboratory specimens." They were offered the chance to write a poem themselves.

"Be brief, be honest with your thoughts and feelings; be as free as you wish from conventional restraints of grammar, or metrics."

All but one of the class members took him up on the offer. He reproduced about half of the resulting pieces and distributed them anonymously for class discussion.

"An eye-opener," a few of the students agreed after the class discussion. Bodger had discovered a fundamental fact about college freshmen. If he paid as much attention to their expression as he did to that in the standard canon, he would win their interest and attention. Of course, he had to assume that in almost any piece by a student, something virtuous could be found and highlighted. He had to find it amid the dross of over-blown or under-imagined prose. Usually, he did. He felt that every student had a spark of a universal fire, however dampened it might be by upbringing or inexperience. Only such an

optimistic feeling--it was not at the level of a conviction--could have driven Bodger to experiment as he did with the class.

Still trying to identify the problem of what literature IS, he played a tape of Wallace Stevens reading his *The Idea of Order at Key West* early in the semester. Bodger thought of that recording as something almost beyond belief. Stevens had been dead for more than a decade; yet his cadences, his crystal imagery, sounded like a glimpse at the day after tomorrow to Bodger. The voice of Stevens pulled at him like a siren. He felt that if his students heard it they would at least witness creative action at its highest, even if they did not know what it "meant." He asked the class to picture themselves with "pale Ramon Fernandez," looking off at the "glassy lights" of the bay in the distance, wondering what was real and what was imaginary. A short discussion followed; the students wanted to believe in Bodger's own enthusiasm for Stevens.

He brought the tape recorder back to class again the next day. Before any students arrived, he arranged the seats in a circle. As they came in, the recorder already was playing Wanda Landowska's rendition of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. Bodger then confounded their orthodox expectations. He said nothing about the music--no lecture point, no harangue on creativity. This drove a deeper fissure into the old monotonous surface of the classroom. Henceforth the students on their own moved seats into a circle as they entered class.

One day an incoming phone call made him late for class. Finally arriving, he found that the students had lined up the chairs in orthodox rows--except that they all faced a rear corner instead of the front of the classroom. The students had decided that the circle, however conducive to conversation, was getting them back into a rut. Their decision identified the mood that they had found for the remainder of the course--play merging with thought. Bodger felt good.

The great test of their new mood, however, came when Bodger announced they would have to write a 2,500 word essay, five times longer than anything anybody else was writing in other comp sections. The piece could be fiction if the student preferred.

"Foul," somebody said.

"We can't say that much about one thing," somebody else said.

A lobbying movement against the assignment erupted before Bodger's eyes.

"The assignment stands," he said, quelling the dissidence. "But I hear your pain. Tell me about it on paper. Start a journal."

The journal was ungraded. Entries could be long or short. They could say anything they wished. The only requirement was that to write a journal entry at least once a week. When Bodger read their gripes about the long assignment, he wrote his reactions and suggestions. That led students to react to his comments in their subsequent journal entries. Through this journal "dialogue" he tried to find the aspect of the literary problem that attracted each person. He jockeyed each one toward a topic and toward suggested extra readings.

In time their journals became the medium for comments on class readings, on campus controversy (marijuana use, dormitory rules), on their relationships with fellow students. Bodger became the peripatetic commentator, his words on paper privately directed to each journal keeper. This new experience would lead him later to write a proposal for a course based on "epistolary pedagogy." The entire course would consist of letters from



and to each student. The instructor would select meaningful passages from the letters and duplicate them for the class. Many years later, electronic mail and Internet "discussion lists" reminded him of his experiment of years before. The ease of communicating informally with students made Bodger an early supporter of the new technologies.

Bodger introduced a non-verbal project into the course for two reasons. One, it came at the question of "what is creativity?" from a different artistic angle. Two, it dramatized the spirit of play that Bodger felt was an essential ingredient in any thinking about creativity. The object was to see what could be learned about creative writing by looking at creative non-verbal expression.

Each student had to show and tell about the product of his or her imagination. Bodger could remember none of the presentations concretely, except his own. It was an abstract rendering of white lines on a black field, seeking to convey the feeling of release-and-capture in Kafka's short story, *The Bucket Rider*. He had seen it not long ago in a dusty corner of the cellar and wondered why he had saved it for so many years. Bodger could only remember that many of the students enjoyed doing their non-verbal project. He doubted that they got the conceptual lesson intended. At the time he concluded that at least they were confronted with the notion--through the very fact of the assignment--that *something* about literature *may* relate to non-literary expression. However, he knew it could look like a Mickey Mouse approach in the eyes of other faculty members; he did not keep it in his teaching arsenal for the future.

Bodger knew that his bag of tricks could bring more general criticism from other faculty. The culture of the campus made it clear that students ought to do a lot of work and faculty ought to stick to their business in class; fun and games were not highly prized in the classrooms. To avoid coming under criticism, Bodger experimented on top of the grunt requirements of the composition course, not instead of them. The students in all of the English comp sections were required to read a batch of short stories, a bunch of poems, and three novels: Camus's *The Fall*, Malamud's *The Fixer*, and Meredith's *The Egoist*. Bodger pushed this reading through class discussion, some quizzes, encouragement to the students to comment on the reading in their journals, and essay questions in his final exam. He carefully calibrated the amount of writing done by his students to equal that done in the other sections, where the standard 500-word papers were assigned. He thus guarded his flanks against conservative criticism while siding with younger instructors like Mel Ehrlich and Mike Foster, who flouted the old ways of teaching.

He decided at the end of the semester that the central question of the course--what is the creative process?--was of doubtful importance. It helped him organize the course, but he found that the students as a whole did not pursue the question with great interest to the end of the semester. Their critical reading of texts turned out to be more or less the standard stuff. They did perceive, however, that the question led to *themselves* as worthy objects of attention, and that satisfied Bodger.

In his self-evaluation of the course, he preserved two student comments, the kind that since Socrates has made teachers feel justified in their antics. One day he told Margaret about his experiences in the course. Then he read the two comments:

*For the first time in thirteen years of English classes, I'm interested in the subject and have been considering changing my major....I have learned much concerning my own capacity to create. I received far more satisfaction from writing my short story than from almost any other single creative endeavor this year. I have uncovered a new and challenging field into which to channel my efforts, a new mode of expression, and I am grateful.*

And then:

*As the year the year progressed I began to grope for one interrelating idea to the instructor's method and refused to accept the idea of "literature the work of art" as the ultimate point. Far more important than this, I realized, is the responsibility of "me-the-intellect" to read and analyze the great literary works, both for my own satisfaction and betterment, and for the benefit of those "intellects" that will follow after me. I came to an appreciation not of the literary arts but of myself as an intelligent human being who holds not only the ability but also the responsibility to read the enthroned writings of this time in an analytical manner.*

"This is stuff that gives teachers goose bumps," Margaret said.

"Allow for some flattery of the teacher. And I didn't save the other ones," Bodger said.

"Hey, two converts out of twenty--okay."

"It is evangelism of a kind," Bodger agreed. "If you recognize that, you get beyond the definition of subject matter as the essence of curriculum. You don't avoid the subject matter. But the students see that it is fundamentally not what the whole business is about. Ninety percent of the time they have to concentrate on the subject matter. Still they know that's not what it's about."

"I have a hunch," Margaret said, "that's what your faculty colleagues could see in you. You were an enthusiast for ideas."

"If so, that's what got me by as an interloper in their professional midst."

"It would have been enough," Margaret said, "to get you by academically when it came time to put you in the presidency. They could see that you could be their advocate."

"There also was the curriculum debate. When I first came to campus to work, the president had stirred up a curriculum review. The climate for debate seemed to be free-wheeling, something DLH could generate. So I jumped in, not knowing how little I knew. But I read Daniel Bell's book about the Columbia curriculum and some standard stuff on the liberal arts curriculum. I knew Newman and Arnold from college and understood the heart of the modern tradition of liberal education. I had learned about it from some of the very voices now in the campus debate."

"Were they really interested in changing the curriculum?" asked Margaret.

"At the time, I think DLH was ambivalent. The maverick in him made him want the faculty to be more exciting to students. Not being a man of an academic discipline, he could not lead by example. His predecessor, McClure, was the quintessential scholar of English lit. He was respected for his work on the Elizabethans, Shakespeare especially. His classes were classically medieval. We sat and listened, for the most part. I enjoyed his

classes, but DLH never could have taught like that. Nor could I. DLH didn't teach at all. But he read the literature on pedagogy. He knew the rising pitch in the '60s had something to do with youthful expectations. He was an exhibitionist and thought that teaching always should be dramatic.

"On the other hand, the conservative in him made him suspicious of novelty. He knew it would cost more. And, anyway, he knew he could not impose it. So he allowed the faculty deliberative process to grind away in its own time-consuming way. I think he figured that, sooner or later, they would come up with something. It would be less than desirable, probably, but it would allow him rhetorically to point to it as progress. He probably thought that, if they at least would refer to the current movement toward 'integration of knowledge,' he would not care about the substance of changes, so long as he could afford them. He never told me any of this. I'm guessing."

"Did the faculty want to change?" Margaret asked.

"I soon discovered there is not a faculty. There are faculties. Some wanted change. Others thought it was newfangled nonsense. They knew what they were teaching."

"So, they actually revamped the curriculum after you got here?"

"Only after years of deliberation. The dean summarized the process for an article in the magazine in spring 1966. He traced a lengthy path. I think it all began as a half-surreptitious faculty movement in the early '60s, years before I came aboard. They called it the core committee and then the planning committee. By the summer of 1964, one of the bright young lights, Dave Hudnut in English, received a stipend to write a lengthy report on the two years of deliberation already behind them. A year more of discussion took place. Then Jerry Hinkle, a bright young Philosophy and Religion professor, pulled the ideas on the table into a package. In the fall of 1965, the faculty department heads had a major shot at the Hinkle draft and changed it.

"After another academic year of discussion and compromise, the new curriculum was announced in the spring of 1966. It was implemented for the 1966-67 academic year. A new set of categories came in, based on the metaphor of the 'core.' It led to 'pivotal' courses that were required and to 'radial' courses that were elective. It legitimized the truly innovative experiment in the teaching of introductory science. This course combined chemistry, mathematics, and physics into a single integrated course for science majors. It started as an experiment a couple of years before, put together by three veteran teachers, all alumni and custodians of the mystique of science at the college—Blanche Schultz, '41, Evan Snyder, '44, and Roger Staiger, '43. It created a 'senior symposium,' an elective course with loose structure, intended to allow students to 'integrate' knowledge by drawing on several disciplines as seniors. It created a College Honors program, which granted credit for independent work for the first time.

"Hinkle drove for integration as well as that could be determined here at that time. That mainly meant, I think, assuring that majors would take distributed requirements in other areas. This now seems hardly more than tightening the bolts on an already-built ship. At the time, however, the faculty and administration were quite absorbed. The president and the dean worried that new decisions would mean new expenditures."

"Coming in as you did and working where you did, you could not have had much influence on any of this," said Margaret.

"I had none," Bodger said. "But I was able to support the innovations in a public way. I was aligned with the forces for change. And that really did include DLH, no matter what doubts he may have had about major alteration.

"I wrote a piece on curriculum for the magazine that had to attract some notice. I compared the Ursinus changes with the reforms of general education proposed by Daniel Bell at Columbia, in his *The Reforming of General Education*. Bell seemed refreshing to me because his critique attacked the very education I had received fifteen years before. The old system, even in graduate school, emphasized the mastering of a body of knowledge. Faculty paid too little attention to the assumptions and structure that made that particular body of knowledge significant. Bell called for the study of the structure of a discipline, the method of inquiry, how we study what we study. By the mid-'60s, it was commonplace to talk about the exponential increase in 'knowledge.' Educators were recognizing the impossibility of knowing an entire corpus. Bell acted for a whole generation when he turned away from a received canon. He made sense to me when he sought to highlight the grounds or basis for putting that canon together."

Bodger paused. "By the way," he said as an aside, "without knowing it at the time, Bell was softening up the battlefield for the 'culture wars' that would break out more than a decade later, under the pressure of cultural theory based on race, class, and gender."

Margaret said, "Thank you, Mr. Bell." She spoke as a younger feminist scholar in language studies.

"Bell's most attractive proposal," Bodger recalled, "called for 'third tier' senior courses. They would generalize experiences in a discipline by examining one of four approaches--the historical foundations of disciplines in a common field; the presuppositions of methodology and philosophy of disciplines in a common field; the application of several disciplines to common problems; comparative studies, especially of non-western cultures.

"Our faculty were using the term 'integration' as a sort of mantra, without giving much reflection about its mechanics, how it would work conceptually. Bell provided such reflection in his third-tier concept. So I compared it with our proposed new senior symposium. That grafted a conscious intent onto our modest initiative and made it look more significant than it probably was."

"No matter," Margaret said. "Your comparison in print would have put you into the campus conversation."

"Yes. Also, from the start I was in fund-raising. That's what the alumni job was about, when all was said and done. I naively thought that a good cause like ours would naturally attract alumni support just by defining the needs clearly. With editorial and promotional gimcrackery, I injected a newly strident tone into Helfferich's development plans. The centennial anniversary of the college would take place in 1969. He wanted to go out with a bang in the 100th year. He saw his final years as a dramatic spectacle.

"One day we sat in his office with a map of the campus. Pointing with his well-chewed pipe stem, he specified the sites of the buildings he wanted to build before he retired. He wanted a new library in the center of the campus, on the exact spot of the 'old main' building dating back to 1848, Freeland Hall, with its dormitory additions, Derr and Stine. He wanted two new men's dormitories to replace the rooms in the 'old main,' a new athletic facility, new science building, new chapel.

"Many years later, I found a drawing in an alumni magazine from 1918. It was a grand vision of the growth of the campus dreamt up by the then president, George L. Omwake. It displayed the basic form of the campus that Helfferich dictated to me decades later. DLH told me that when he was a senior, president Omwake called him into his office. 'Donald, you have worked hard in telling me how to run the college in the last four years. I predict you will be back.' DLH told that story with pleasure and pride. Indeed, he returned as the youngest trustee in the history of the college. It was in 1927, only six years after he graduated. Omwake had nine more years to serve as president. I think DLH learned a basic lesson about apprenticeship and mentorship in his relations with Dr. Omwake. That example, central to his vision of his own life, must have been in his mind when he put me to his uses in my first years here.

"In any case, I gave him some stage props and some script. Within months of my coming, we threw together an Alumni Centennial Fund program that would last four years, into the 100th year. We had the college mascot arriving by helicopter on the football field. We had a logo showing Zack the Bear loping toward 1969 against a great '100' in the background. We brought in the class agents and redefined their volunteer duties. We pushed them to reach every classmate. We made new charts of gifts and held them accountable as we had not before. We created committees and I bugged the chairmen to perform. Helfferich's die-hard alumni supporters reached out and recruited new supporters like themselves. George Spohn, of the class of '42, came in to head up the program. He was a super achiever with one of the Philadelphia-based oil companies. I knew George's style, having just come from the corporate environment. We could speak the same promotional language, and we went at the game as if I were still at my old gas works job.

"There was an obvious stylistic clash between that alumni program and the academic culture. This had to have been evident to my new faculty friends and familiar professors of student days. They probably saw it as benign hokum. If it would help generate the money they knew was needed to get the college out of its threadbare tradition, then give Bodge the benefit of the doubt."

"You represented hope?" asked Margaret.

"I'm sure the level of skepticism was high: 'This too shall pass. Still, why not watch and see how much he can do? --Maybe we'll get something from it. In any event, Bodge seems unthreatening. At the least, indulge his boosterism. Moreover, he's in with DLH anyway, so we may as well live with what he is doing for now.'"

"You are not describing a noble road to the presidency," said Margaret.

"Even in small political games in academia, noble tactics hardly count," Bodger replied. "At the time, of course, I didn't even know I was in a presidential game."

### **Bodger was learning how board members influenced events**

"Can the board help me?" Margaret asked Bodger one day.

"Is the dean still giving you trouble?"

"Not yet. But I think he will. Does the board have a final say?"

"Yes," Bodger said. "But it's not that simple."

It took Bodger some years to fix the board in his understanding of the college. To the ebbing and flowing of classes, the daily traffic of students and faculty, it seemed irrelevant. Early on, he saw that the president mainly wanted affirmation from it--and money. When it became directly involved in campus issues, he became nervous about it. Yet Helfferich seemed to take seriously his routine pronouncements to them about their relevance to the reputation and advancement of the college. It was that that took time for Bodger to understand.

"DLH sought advice," Bodger said to Margaret. "Of course, mainly he was seeking advice in the form of approval for something he had already decided was right. A year or two after my arrival, I scheduled a weekend meeting with an alumni group in the Washington-Baltimore area. Tom Beddow, '36, and his wife, Virginia, '37, were the leaders of the alumni group there. Tom was one of that cohort of alums who graduated in the late 'thirties, fought World War II, became professionally successful, and supported Helfferich in his effort to make over the college. He was on campus for a board meeting and offered to drive me to the weekend meeting and put me up at their home. The trip down Route 95 in his big Oldsmobile felt in the end like another job interview, friendly and supportive though it was. He wanted to know what I thought about the chances for the college. How did I envision the future? What would I do to make the college improve?"

"Lying in a strange bed that night, unable to sleep, it hit me. DLH had seen to it that Tom would invite me to ride with him. He had wanted Tom's opinion about me. It was one of my clearest early insights on what a board member does in working with a president. It was probably lucky for me that I was too green to see what was going on at 65 miles an hour in that Oldsmobile until afterward. Tom liked the unvarnished things I said to him, long on enthusiasm, short on understanding. I am certain he told DLH so.

"Years later, when I became president, he was among my steadiest supporters. Two years into my presidency, he put the motion to liberalize student rules that rescued me from having a fatally split board of directors."

"Bedfellows, so to speak," said Margaret.

"There was an old boy feeling. Absolutely. I knew it from my corporate experience. My Army experience. It felt familiar. Generationally, however, I was different from Tom as well as DLH. Being younger, I lapped up their support, almost took it for granted, it came so easily. I suppose I gave my quid pro quo. But I never felt consciously that I was doing so."

"Does that mean you were disloyal to the old boy code?"

Bodger answered, "A good question that I can't answer well. For one thing, nobody ever spelled out the code in so many words. Tom was not always in agreement with Helfferich. He faulted the use of endowment funds to build buildings, something DL believed we had to do to jump-start the capital improvement program. Sometimes DLH talked about the alumni board members as if they were still students--he knew them then, after all. Years later, I was guilty of the same attitude toward some of my former students. So, even in the tightest alliance between Helfferich and a board member, there was an edge. No one could ever forget that the president held office at the pleasure of the board. DLH acted like a patrician, even a prince, as if he were the institution. But in tense moments, he let me see that that was a pose. He knew the board had final authority, even if they exercised it gently, or not at all, in deference to his judgment, or to his pride."

"You absorbed that understanding from him," said Margaret, following his line of thought.

"And added to it in the relations I began to build with individual board members," Bodger said.

Margaret asked, "Was that part of the job you had?"

"Yes and no. Yes, because as alumni secretary I was supposed to cultivate the interest and support of as many successful alums as I could. No, DLH did not tell me in so many words to create a coalition of board members who would later support me for the presidency. And I was not doing that at the start at all. Nothing was further from my mind. Still, it turned out that the early bonds that I built contributed essentially to my successful bid for office in 1976."

"Was Beddow the main one?" Margaret asked.

"One of them. My alumni position brought me into natural contact with all of the board members who were alumni, and a majority of them were alumni. That included the board president, William Reimert, '24. He was head of the newspaper in Allentown, Pennsylvania. When DLH gave me the responsibility for running the centennial fund-raising program, I complained that I could not do everything he asked me to do without some help. He was not receptive. I got in the car and drove to Allentown to see Reimert without telling DLH. He was a courtly, generous man. If there was such a thing as a German Reformed culture, he was its flower. He had been born in China to missionaries of the Reformed church. I think his father was killed there in the Boxer Rebellion.

"I told Reimert that I feared failure for lack of help and did not want unfair blame. He listened sympathetically. He assured me I would not be hung out to dry. When I told him DLH was unaware of my visit, he told me not to worry. I was naive enough to think that he would not have called DLH before my appointment to see what was up. But I never knew. DLH never let on that he knew that I went to Reimert behind his back."

"And you never got your help?" Margaret asked.

"I got it. I hired Lee Dickson as a fund-raising consultant and others for publicity and alumni contacts and a succession of people afterward. I know better now than I did then why Reimert and others listened to me. I was young and full of energy and willing to knock myself out for the cause. That didn't seem to me to count for much, contrasted to my vast ignorance of what I had become involved in.

"Especially fund-raising. Dickson was the toughest critic. He told me every day how mistaken I was in almost every step I took in the fund-raising program. He was a kind of monomaniac about fund-raising. What I learned from him in a year or so lasted my whole career. He gave me the hardest lessons about fund-raising. Above all, Dickson taught me that fund-raising is not about money. It is about building allegiances to an institutional epic. The money comes in after you have built a network of loyal advocates of that epic. People of conscience would not violate their allegiance to the institutional epic."

Margaret said, "It sounds as if your ignorance was getting you somewhere."

"Now I can see how valuable youth is to an organization, despite its vast ignorance. It is all that the organization has to carry it into the future. I guess it's lucky that most young people don't fully know their importance to the ongoingness of the organization. It's lucky, too, that the seniors don't tell them the secret. Otherwise, the young would demand more than they do. They're insufferable enough sometimes. Certainly I was."

"Do you have more to say about your insufferability?" Margaret probed.

"Maybe later."

"Can I assume that somebody can be insufferable and still be retained?" she asked.

"Living example," Bodger said as she left, looking a little weary.

When he was alone, Bodger mused further about administration-board relations. They divided into three parts. He could identify each part with a person. Bill Heefner, '42, stood for the innovative alums. Paul Guest, '38, stood for the traditionalist alums. Bill Elliott stood for the non-alumni business supporters. Bodger's adaptability enabled him to win the favor of all three parts. It was not that he deliberately sought favor for future payoff. He simply had learned in his US Army stint and in his corporate decade that it was his job to get along with whatever powers there were. Right or wrong. For the time being, anyway.

Elliott presided over a small life insurance company in Philadelphia. He also owned rural property near the college, a productive dairy farm, complete with a retail store. Walebe's farm-made ice cream was a highlight of the community. He served on the board because of his personal loyalty to Helfferich, flavored with a pinch of local *noblesse oblige*. He had little apparent interest in liberal education as such. He reluctantly allowed his name to be used as an honorary co-chairman of the capital campaign that came to be called the All-College Anniversary Drive. Helfferich expected large dollars from him in the end, and the pool at the new gym came to bear his name.

Elliott knew that Bodger had worked for a couple of years at Provident Mutual Life Insurance Company in Philadelphia, a major-league competitor to his small but successful company. Like other business people on the board, Elliott seemed to take that past history as Bodger's seal of acceptability. He never knew the cross currents of Bodger's loyalties and had no reason to want to. Bodger was okay because he had business experience and because DLH said he was okay.

Guest apparently felt that way too. He was an entrepreneurial attorney with an office on South Broad Street in center city Philadelphia. He had piloted a B-17 bomber over Germany in World War II. He was named the alumnus of the year in the year preceding Bodger's start on the job. He was a co-founder of the alumni Loyalty Fund. He loved the college he attended in the '30s, when order prevailed and roles were clear. On social rules prohibiting dorm visits by members of the opposite sex and the consumption of alcohol on campus, he was an absolutist. The revolution in social behavior in the '60s to him was a total calamity. It called for adamant resistance. Guest encouraged DLH to hold the line against social changes for which students were constantly agitating. He viewed the college as an extension of the church. He expected the numerous clergy on the board to be his natural allies. This was in spite of his concern that the clergy at times seemed willing to legitimize the national *angst* over Vietnam and the rise of youth as a moral force in the public arena.

Guest seemed to like Bodger's aggressive approach to fund-raising and his familiarity with the rhythms of the city. As a leader of the capital campaign, he espoused Bodger, gave advice and encouragement. They met in early morning sessions over breakfast at the Union League, a short walk from Guest's South Broad Street office. A friendly intimacy developed. Bodger appreciated the affirmation he received from Guest. They both felt



that they were connected to the spirit of the institution and were working together for its enhancement.

Guest, however, never stopped testing Bodger's bearings on the social and academic policies of the college. As one of the men who had passed favorable judgment on Bodger when he was a candidate for his job, Guest had a serious personal investment in him. Guest appeared to want to believe in him. But he was inquisitive where Elliott was simply accepting. He was wary of waverers. Bodger was sufficiently separated from decision-making on social and academic policy in his apprentice years to preserve the trust of Guest. He admitted to himself that he sometimes had to say less to Guest than he had on his mind about the social upheavals of the late '60s in order to keep that trust. A decade later, Bodger would reap the consequences of those omissions when Guest opposed his recommendations for change in student life policy. But that was only after he gave firm support to Bodger for the presidency.

Bill Heefner came to the board in 1969, well after Helfferich had confidentially tagged Bodger as a presidential apprentice. He too was an attorney, busy building a major firm in Bucks County. He too fought the war in Europe but on the ground in Italy. Like Guest, he had the GI generation's commitment to goals and results. Like Guest, he valued institutional loyalty and team play.

From their first meeting, however, Bodger saw in Heefner someone with a different and more adventurous outlook. To Guest, the challenge of change was to build a strong wall of resistance. To Heefner, the challenge of change was to seize it and manage it. A talented performer at the organ keyboard (he played for chapel during his student years), he pursued his profession with a conscious sense of style. He would do the expected thing, but he would do it his way. That was true as well of his volunteer activity for the college.

Bodger had met him for the first time in his office in Morrisville. Bodger was there to ask him to become active in the alumni association. Heefner was quick with a quip, and he agreed to emcee the annual alumni luncheon--"but only if I get to choose the color scheme, the menu, and the flowers."

"Agreed," Bodger had said.

And he did choose the color scheme for the tablecloths and napkins, did review and modify the menu, and did order the flowers for the tables. The meeting was a grand success. When Bodger visited him again to debrief the day, Heefner told him to be careful of involving him further.

"If I'm involved, I want to be involved, not used for show. I will want to lead things. I will push. This may make you or your boss uncomfortable. So think before you ask for more."

Here was someone he could work with, Bodger said to himself. He came back to campus and urged the president to approve Heefner as a candidate to run for election to the board by the alumni association. His election to the board began a formal relationship that would last until the end of Bodger's active service to the college. It also started a personal friendship that gave Bodger a steady pole through the ups and downs of his years on the job and into retirement.

Heefner was in the heat of building his law firm into one of the biggest in Bucks County. In addition, he was a bank director, a leader in the state Democratic party, a

mover and shaker of cultural and historical organizations in the county and the state. He played the organ at the local Lutheran church every Sunday. He molded and shaped his spacious country place in Perkasio with the attention of an artist. If there had been an American squirearchy, the charm of his estate would have signified his leading place in it.

Heefner seemed to sense Helfferich's intentions toward Bodger from the start. He never deviated from his posture of steadfast support for Bodger's advancement. When he became the chairman of the Century II fund-raising program, which followed on the heels of the All-College Anniversary Drive, he replaced Guest as Bodger's regular companion at breakfast or lunch. They mapped the campaign with a sense of fun and comradeship. He took a deliberate and intentional approach to the prospect of Bodger becoming president. The campaign ran from 1970 to 1975, the very years when Bodger was finishing his preparations to be president. Heefner's voice therefore had a formative influence on Bodger in his most malleable period.

As the deliberations for Helfferich's successor began in 1969, Heefner talked with Bodger one day at lunch. It was before Bodger made a decision to remove himself from consideration.

Heefner said, "If we want your election to be the outcome, everything that you say, everything said by those trying to bring it about, should be said with that outcome in mind. By the time the board votes, their choice of you should be so obvious to everyone that it will happen as if there were no alternative."

Heefner was constitutionally disposed to *make* things happen. He was patient in the face of obstacles but impatient when the sought-after goal could not be defined. He thought that to make things happen, one had to have prescience. One had to have the insight to know before the other people where events were tending. Then one had to go to work. "Going to work" meant doing all the messy things required by organizations to move people through the glue of fear and ignorance. He took the long view on setting goals and the short-term, nitty-gritty view on getting something done.

That combination, it turned out, reinforced Bodger's own bent. He took confidence from Heefner. Bodger sometimes felt that the dilemmas of the management of a college in the heat of the late '60s were irreconcilable. He sometimes wondered how Helfferich could balance contradictions on his shoulders with such apparent aplomb. Heefner's attitude reassured Bodger. Heefner gradually came to believe that conditions on the campus had to change and that they would change for the better if the right things were said and done at critical moments--and if the leadership had a destination in mind. This was so even in the face of apparent intransigence from some board members on some issues, especially social life and student freedoms. For Bodger, Heefner became a trusted confidant. With discretion, he would listen to Bodger's most outrageous diagnoses of current campus distress. As time went on, more and more he also listened to Bodger's developing visions of what the college might become.

As the 1969-70 academic year grew longer, the board's search for the president's replacement limped. Ellwood Paisley, of the class of '13, orchestrated it. Paisley was a retired executive who now gave much of his time to his role as secretary of the college board. Paisley perpetuated a family tradition of service to the college. His father, a railroad vice president, had set a world record for longevity as president of the college's board--54 years!

"That's incredible!" Margaret said when Bodger reviewed these events with her at their next cup of coffee at the Hut. "He couldn't have lived so long."

"I never met the man," Bodger said, "but his name is on my undergraduate diploma."

"Ellwood was to the college born, then."

"I count four generations. The Paisley family figured large in the German Reformed Church in Philadelphia. Ellwood was like Bill Reimert in that sense. The same gentility and courtesy. He spent several days a week on the campus. He won the respect of students and faculty on a 'concerns' committee, which he served as secretary representing the board. He was a dapper little fellow, who blossomed into colors and fashion after his retirement from business. He modeled mature men's clothing in center city for the fun of it. He had a sense of design, having apparently studied drafting in high school. He created the shield of the college that appeared for decades on the convocation program covers. His athletic emblem hangs in the gym over the basketball court in Helfferich Hall. The students and faculty saw in him the embodiment of the old college, a kind of mascot or cartoon. They were benign in this perception. In the heated fights over social rules and anti-war rallies, he was a walking symbol of civility and respect for everyone. Helfferich was shrewd to put him front and center as the visible representative of the board. He never spoke out on issues but listened attentively to everyone."

"But he ran a limp search process," said Margaret.

"He was under Helfferich's thumb, I imagine. There were several candidates who appeared publicly on campus in the fall or winter of 1969-1970. The public interviews were uncoordinated. One candidate had to eat hot dogs for lunch because Ellwood neglected to order a special luncheon in the president's dining room. It almost seemed as if the search was supposed to fail.

"In May 1970, with the field thinning to virtually no viable candidates from outside, Ellwood made an appointment to see me in my office. It became evident to me after a few minutes that he had been coached by DLH. He reviewed the months of searching and said that the arrow was now pointing inward at the campus, since the pool of outside candidates had pretty well run dry. The last great hope had been that Fred Binder, a seasoned college president who graduated in 1942, would come back to alma mater. But a liberal arts college in California made him an offer first and he took it.

"Ellwood told me, 'Now, I'm here to tell you that I will submit your name if you are willing.' This turn of events did not seem quite real to me. Perhaps he did not think it was completely real either. But he went on. 'As I see it, the next president needs to be a good administrator, and you have shown how good you are as an administrator.' I had been named v.p. for administrative affairs just the year before. The dean had been named v.p. for academic affairs at the same time. I protested. He went on. 'That would be the case I would make for your candidacy. The committee has letters from several faculty members, some students, and an administrator endorsing you. Would you be interested?'

"You were, surely," said Margaret.

"I had the good sense to defer my response. I wrote him a note that evening and explained why I was not the best qualified person. I said I would be willing to try anything they wanted to try but in my judgment this was not the time for me.

"By the following month, the campus was a bog of speculation and anticipation. The search committee had one more outside candidate, who did not appear to be strong. The

growing sentiment among board members, I sensed, was that the college could not trust an outsider to hold the line against student unrest. They wanted assurance that the college would not follow Swarthmore and others into the headlines about permissiveness and the violence that flowed from it. I indulged in some secret play acting in my journal; I thought about the way I could play at the role of conservative defender of the castle. It seemed like a game, but the reality of the college's situation kept sobering me.

"It was at that point, in June, that DLH finally confided in me. He told me it might come down to a choice between the dean and me. The board would ask for his recommendation. 'In that case,' he said, amusement on his face behind his cigarette, 'I will have a trying half hour with myself.' I do not remember my response, but I am sure it was an attempt, at least, at self-effacement.

"A few weeks earlier, he had broached the subject with me without referring to our particular search. 'You're going to be a college president in maybe two years or four--if not here, then someplace else.' And then he gave me some advice on how to train Margot for the job of president's wife!"

"O wow," said feminist Margaret.

"It was a different day," Bodger smiled.

"By mid-summer, they interviewed the only remaining outside candidate. He was a genteel southern scholar of English literature. Paul Guest was leading the discussion in the search committee. He was increasingly emphatic that the person chosen would control the students, or else. A southern gentleman just wouldn't cut the mustard here. So, it was evident that the choice would be the dean, another year in office for DL, or *moi*. I told myself that I would not take the job if offered. I knew I would lack the clout to lead on my own. Everyone would see that I was out in front as Helfferich's voice. I knew that Guest's expectations were dominant in the board. It was clear that I did not have it in me to conduct stone-walling tactics with students and faculty of the kind he and others expected. What's more, I felt that my lack of academic standing was a mortal handicap."

"You're telling me this because you want me to know that you were learning something useful for later," Margaret said.

"About boards of directors," said Bodger.

"Yourself too?"

"That too. Boards seem remote from the classrooms. But they establish the tone and the framework in ways mysterious to students and faculty. I was fortunate, as I look back on it, to have been a target of their interest, a pawn, in a way, of their moves to guide the place."

"Heefner--wasn't he beating the drum for you?"

"He was very new to the board. He didn't presume to play a big part this time around."

"Let me see," Margaret said. "Five years after you escaped from the chains of corporate conformity, after you were adopted by Helfferich as a malleable talent, you came up to the starting line but did not run."

"In a nutshell," Bodger said.

"But life went on and you waited for the next race."

"Right again. 1976."

"By then you were ready."

"No, but the board deemed I was ready."

"The board," Margaret said. She returned to her evaluation problems. "Reassure me the dean can't get rid of me without sensible people seeing that I'm worth keeping."

Bodger replied, "I think you're worth keeping, but I may not be a sensible person. And I'm not involved now. It depends how far toward decision the president has gone before he brings a question like that to the board."

"How can I influence that?"

"Keep on being an imaginative teacher. Keep on studying and involving your students in your study. Be patient. You have a couple of years before the tenure decision. Do you want to be here?"

"I do."

"Trust the gods a little bit."

"They don't exist outside the board," she said with an arch look.

"Well then...." Bodger said as they left the Hut.

### **The Kennedys called for bearers of the burden**

"The worries of the eating class," Bodger said to himself. Raking through the first years of his service at the college, he still could feel the constant pounding of anxiety. Anxiety over nothing in particular and everything in general. The anxiety of being in one's thirties, with two kids and a wife and a mortgage. The anxiety of doing the bidding of a superior whose expectations often seemed to go beyond sensible bounds. The anxiety of the insurmountability of time. The unmet demands on him were so deep, so all-around, that he could not look beyond the moment at hand.

At some point, though, anxiety modulated into exhilaration. He knew the sheer pleasure of being pushed to the limit of physical and psychic power. Helfferich's attention to his performance reinforced his sense of self worth in strong if subconscious ways. If he had known how to calibrate the anxiety, the fear of just about everything, so that it sustained itself as exhilaration, his life would have been euphoric. He was not that emotionally agile.

In the main, he told himself, those first years on the campus were the most exciting and the most exasperating of his career. He had little perspective and no time. That compelled him to reach for examples and resources already at hand when he started to work at the college. For one, he privately looked to the slain John F. Kennedy as an exemplar of style, of a manner of commitment. Kennedy was of that older World War II generation in whose shadow Bodger, of the younger Silent Generation, had grown up. Bodger saw in him, as in others of that committed cohort, clarity of purpose and forthrightness of action. Kennedy had the extra merit of putting himself into service with high humor and quick imagination. There was a seeming selflessness about his passage that appealed to Bodger, his rich-boy brazenness to the contrary notwithstanding.

When war in Vietnam started to fill the screen two years after JFK's bloody end, Bodger could feel the fading of the romance and relevance of Kennedy, both in the life of the nation and in his own life. But its trace lasted. By the time Robert Kennedy was shot in 1968, Bodger was embroiled in his own small wars on the campus. That doubtless made him more vulnerable to the emotions of that second Kennedy death. It was as if it

took Bobby's fall to move him beyond a certain naivete about leadership--at that moment when he was moving and being moved into a small-scale position of leadership himself.

He ruminated on it in his journal of that time. As he had done often in his ongoing conversations with Margaret and Michael, he went to that on-again off-again archaeological dig. For 9 June 1968 he found he had written:

*Although I have watched another Kennedy go down to rest, I cannot fully believe it. I have the feeling that tomorrow is planless, beyond control. The web of rational public conflict is destroyed. The nation is dangling, subject to whims and powers too erratic to allow hope. The madness of high places runs as a constant through history. But the violent death of two Kennedys is a fact for ME, for MY lifetime. It is my personal tragedy, history be damned. These were the flesh of my times. They held out some hope for an adequate response to the needs. They ended up powerless. The promise, the poise, the passion, the desire, the dreams, the drive: Bobby, like John, was close to Camus's existential man--pushing his rock for all he was worth, and damn the consequences, even the irrelevance of it. It was all Bobby could do: he had his 'special responsibility'--not just toward Jack's memory, one suspects, but toward himself most of all.*

*--Ironic that these jet-age Medicis act out their tragedy in the forms of the old Christian institution before the eyes of millions via TV. Here they speak of Bobby with the angels at his side. Far from smiling, they pray solemnly as Bernstein conducts Mahler's 5th symphony! When the fallen is a prince, one need not strive for petty consistency. The very richness and variety of the mix of style--the combination of rhetorics--comes close to the heart of the Kennedy charisma: a going off madly in several directions, but with a quiet and simple stability at the center.*

*Let them be hated if that is the price we have to pay for leaders who will speak out. The hate cannot hurt them now, anyway. They stood up and stood out. It's something to be a man of courage, even if it kills you and leaves the survivors to doubt.*

*I take a private vow to try to prove what both Kennedys sought to prove: a man can affect this society for the better.*

*Perhaps that's the only way to dispel the disillusion, to make a personal decision in spite of one's feelings. To shrug at this moment is to die. To study 'the problem of violence' sociologically now is to count angels on bullet casings. Let Milton Eisenhower's commission call for a three-act tragedy from Edward Albee, Arthur Miller, or Tennessee Williams--and then all go home and meditate on the depravity of humankind...on the ritual means required for hemming in or transforming rage and revenge. The Kennedys deserve better than a beady-eyed analysis. Let the nation at least give back what they gave. Art. An American Odyssey.*

Bodger was seeking a private expression for a public event. It did not matter then, or now, that it risked crossing the border of bathos. Three decades later, he was trying to calculate what made him go on to become president of a small principality. The terrible events of the '60s at the highest places of power became a solution in which he was able to bathe his own motives. He could see that now.

"We will bear any burden," JFK said at his inauguration. Bodger would serve, come whatever. He would serve where he could, where chance had put him. It was lucky, he reflected, that he had kept this rhetorical extravagance within the confines of his private journal.

### The board finally chose a new president

"And finally," he told Margaret, "there was a letter to my ten-year-old daughter. Of course, she never received it. Even to this day. It was in June 1970. The search process was losing all its steam."

He handed her the pages of lined, yellow tablet paper.

"Read them at your leisure," he said. At home, later, in her study, she read the following:

*Dear Kar:*

*I think of Anouilh's Joan of Arc, in The Lark. Joan advised the timorous king to be afraid as he had never been afraid before. She said, 'You say, one thing is obvious, I'm frightened, which is nobody's business but mine, and now on I go.'*

*"So, Kar, I'm frightened of the whole crisis of leadership. So what's new? Now on I go with the business. Please guard my secret--that I'm scared to death, and to hell with it.*

*Strunk advised his composition students at Dartmouth College, when they knew they were about to make a mistake in speaking, to SAY IT LOUD. Maybe that's the way to purge the squeamies too: when you know you are afraid, look your fear right in the eye and howl like hell. OK.*

*You will know, if you look in my private journal, that I have been sneaking sips of fantasy about presidential leadership for more than two years--long before the problem reached its present crisis, long before I was anything more than a mere dabbler in organizational dynamics, ironic-uncommitted intelligence hanging on the ambivalences of the 'fifties like a free and occasionally panicky chimpanzee.*

*Yet not unadulterated fantasy.*

*After all, there wasn't any doubt that the Helfferich era would move toward a climax. There was a small reason for me to think that, over and beyond all the waves of feeling and all the intellectual ambivalences, I had a core of something that was brute and stubborn enough to endure.*

*ENDURANCE: A certain final imperviousness to the erosive emotions that lead you by the nose.*

*I came to understand it was that final imperviousness that made it possible for my old boss at the Gas Works, Charlie Simpson, to come to the top from the ranks. It was the same thing that enabled D. L. Helfferich to absorb and dissolve contradictions of thought and attitude that would have disabled other men. I knew quick wits counted. I knew you had to have a fatalistic sense that each turn of the organizational wheel may crush you.*

*Leadership, I realized, was a mysterious contradiction. It was at once a willingness to risk everything and a pathological determination to hold everything together. But Endurance counted most.*

*Not unadulterated fantasy--BUT CLOSE to being that. How could a graduate school dropout presume to think seriously of Presidencies? Someone who plied the most superficial conventions of corporate PR, a marketable hack, lacking fibre for sustained creative performance?*

*The crisis is simple. Helfferich has publicized his retirement. There is no replacement. The board's search committee has been looking for more than a year. If there were good candidates, they have slipped away through maladroitness committee work or a darker motive rooted in the parochial soul of the place.*

*With no one in sight, attention has turned toward me. I am popular with various segments of the campus partly because the president and dean have been willing to take blame for unpopular decisions. I have been cast in the role of conciliator, friend of students, reasonable colleague. The director of the play has been D. L. Helfferich. Few know they have been watching his play. They think I can BE as well as PLAY those characters.*

*"The board will be wiser in its judgment, I hope. Too young and untried. Too ambitious. Too sympathetic to some of the ideas of some faculty members. Too lenient with students. Yet also, the ghost who wrote THE college speech of our times, the notorious Franklin Institute speech on the philosophic temper of the college.*

*"Today the president told me he has all but given up on the faculty. He decries their self-centeredness. First, they are watching out for number one. Second, they are watching out for their disciplines--how can each get more courses, more professors, fewer teaching hours, better offices? Third, they are watching out for nothing else at all. Certainly not for the goal of sensitizing students for a moral and ethical mission in life. They do not acknowledge the primacy of the board's role in deciding on a philosophical commitment for the institution. The president said these things more in sorrow than in anger.*

*Meanwhile, Kar, students are busy busy busy. Reading about the free university. Asserting the rights of students to have a say in the decision-making process. Determining their life-style their way, no thanks to the college.*

*And the focal point of these conflicting lines of force is the hot seat in the president's office. With enough time, one perhaps could study the problems and produce a document that would resolve the conflicts of ideas. There is no time. One makes do. Hoping that those who don't agree will agree to continue speaking to each other. Hoping that the creative tension will not increase and become transformed into a destructive tension. Despairing, finally, at settling the thing suitably for all. But knowing there might be a moment, a blessed point of rest, when at least in one's own mind, each force is counterpoised to every other force in a harmony of conflict. At that point, anyone mad enough to be a president might be wise enough to quit, effective at once, and hurry away to the hills to write his personal memoirs.*

*It does seem to be a personal matter at bottom. We have the crisis because the shadow of a man has been so long that no one believed it would really withdraw. Now people know. It is late.*



*The conflict of outlooks, the conflicts of definitions have been held in constructive tension because they have been played along the nerve ends of a single man.*

*My Larkian panic derives not from lack of will to decide issues. Rather, I doubt the suppleness of my nerve ends. Could they sustain that kind of electrical charge for very long? Those nerve ends sensitized early by admiration for Stevenson, conditioned by New Republic rhetoric, Henry Miller exuberance, the arcane godmanship of Alan Watts? Tuned into non-verbal communication, half-persuaded by the merman of the tube, McLuhan, fascinated by the indeterminate universe of Gully Jimson: can I be guardian of a conservative temperament? Or, can I turn an entire board and college around? Gas Works man? Publicist? Word tinkerer? Pied piper? Madman?*

*Remember, when this has been decided, your nutty father had the sanity to laugh at it and himself. That's the most serious thing I've said here."*

"And so it did come down to a choice between the dean and me," Bodger told Margaret.

"And President Helfferich did have his trying half hour with himself," said Margaret.

"And he did make the prudent choice," said Bodger. "On 25 September 1970, the board met in special session to elect William S. Pettit the next president, to take office on 1 November. It elected D. L. Helfferich chancellor, a unique position without portfolio. He was to watch over the comedy. To the degree that Pettit and the rest of us were willing, the board expected Helfferich to see that our play did not bomb."

The day after the election, Bodger wrote a letter of support to Pettit. He told DLH he was doing so and promised him that he would do everything possible to help Pettit. DLH seemed pleased with the sound of sincerity in Bodger's voice and told him that Pettit would need all the help he could get from anyone at hand. Bodger heard a voice in his head, saying, the institution is bigger than any of us as individuals, and the office molds the man. He sensed that the next years would call for Service and Duty in ways that he had not yet fathomed.

"You must have played an acceptable part, since you survived to run again," Margaret said.

Bodger said, "I don't know how acceptable it was. I did survive."

When Margaret called on the phone a week later, her anxious tone seemed to have faded. She was high, in fact. Antoine had an offer at a liberal arts college in the south that he could not refuse. The president and dean there liked the way he combined ethnicity with his use of deconstructive tools.

"You'll go back to living here alone," Bodger probed.

"I'll go with him," she said.

"What will you do--for work?"

"I can edit, I can teach introductory French as a part-time lecturer, I can tutor rich kids who lack language skill...."

"You mean you'll go even if our dean says you're okay?"

"Outahere," she said.

Bodger saw her some days later and said he would miss talking with her. He hoped his roaming around in his own past had not burdened her.

"I think I made you do it," she said. "You've taught me more than you know. Come hell or cranky deans, be master of your own fate, captain of your soul. Even if you feel the chains around your ankles. Even if it's not possible."

As she turned to leave, she could scarcely believe she heard Bodger say, "Cool."

*END CHAPTER TWO, MARGARET (Re-entering the college's life, 1965-1970)*



## CHAPTER THREE

### MATTHEW (*Preparing to preside, 1970-1976*)

Bodger henceforth saw Margaret hardly at all. Then she left. Bodger missed her. She would have helped him reflect on the final six years of his preparation to become president, from 1970 to 1976. These were hard years to explain to himself.

One day he had a phone call from the Rev. Matthew. Matthew had been pastor of one of the old German Reformed (Evangelical and Reformed) churches in the area of the college. He grew up in that very congregation and went to Lancaster Theological Seminary. He was in the early generation of pastors to be ordained in the new United Church of Christ. The Reformed church and the Congregational Christian churches, the old Pilgrim church, merged to create the UCC in 1957. Matthew graduated from Lancaster in 1976, when Bodger became president of the college. Matthew's home flock invited him to be their pastor not long after his ordination. In the mid-eighties, a call from a big UCC church in the midwest took him away from the area of the college.

"I'm back in town," Matthew said. "Associate head of the Pennsylvania Southeast area conference of UCC churches, nearly three hundred congregations. No promises, but I'll be contending for the top position in the next year or two. Reverend James has been in for a long time. He's told them he is ready to withdraw soon."

"I'm glad you're back," said Bodger.

"I can't believe you're out," said Matthew.

"Believe it."

"We should talk," said Matthew.

"We will," Bodger said.

A few years after Bodger took office in 1976, the conference designated Matthew to be its local liaison with the college. It was a natural way for him to serve the larger denominational body from a comfortable position on the doorstep of the college. This responsibility brought him to Bodger's office periodically. They liked each other from the beginning. Matthew was straightforward and listened well. Bodger drew something from the younger man's quiet sense of himself. He brought affirmative energies to the table, even when there was an issue to contest. The integrity of the Reformed character that Bodger had found in Helfferich, Reimert, and Paisley he also saw in Matthew.

Although not a graduate of the college, Matthew knew it well. He had grown up in its shadow. His congregation had been one of those involved in its founding in the 1860s and valued its sense of that history. It traditionally supported the college with annual gifts; Matthew had increased its amount of giving during his years as pastor. Bodger had let Matthew know that he wanted to draw strength for his administration from its historic roots. Matthew understood Bodger's need to dress the traditional tie in more contemporary style.

Following up his phone call after his return to the area, Matthew came to visit Bodger at home. Bodger was celebrating his ninth month out of office.

"Why did you get out?" Matthew asked.

"Personal rhythm, institutional rhythm," said Bodger. "Both. When you see 65 on the horizon, your sense of inexhaustibility decreases. And flexibility."

"But your predecessor was in his early 60s coming in," said Matthew.

"Bill Pettit had the energy of a bulldog," Bodger said. "He budgeted time well. And his administration was for six years, not eighteen, as in my case."

Matthew sat back and reflected: "When I was doing my undergraduate years in North Carolina, several of my local high school friends enrolled at your college, when Pettit was becoming president. They said he was hard in class, hard in discipline. They said charity was not his strong suit. Foul up, and pay. Sometimes, pay even without fouling up."

"When I became president," Bodger said, "Pettit told me something that stuck. 'Keep up the standards. If you do that, everything else will be fine.' He believed in standards, and he believed that he knew what they were. He thought everybody should know what they are."

Matthew said, "I had the impression from my friends that he was a classic conservative. Natural inequality of humans. Traditional norms of behavior, handed down from the past. Need for respect and reverence. Hard work. Every man responsible for his own destiny. Accept the results of providence one way or another. No excuses on the basis of 'soft' feelings. Stick to hard conscience...."

"Pretty good," Bodger said.

"When I was in college, I saw the traits in a couple of my senior professors," said Matthew.

Bodger said, "He did not readily excuse poor performance in students, that's certain. Like all of us, he was a man of his time. He was in college at Penn when the Great Depression hit. It cut deep scars in him. I think his father lost his business. He was a rugged individualist at heart. As a chemist, he knew that matter could be described with precision. And should be. That orderly, precise sense of the physical world he applied also in the behavioral arena."

Matthew said, "Truth about chemicals and truth about morals and studying ought to be equally evident, then?"

"I never heard Bill say that," Bodger replied. "I have a hunch he would have been sympathetic to the idea that they *ought* to be. He was not so simplistic as to think they could be, I imagine."

"Some of the old timers in my old home congregation used to be critical of the college of those years," Matthew said.

"Well they might," Bodger replied. "They were very tough times. Nationally, the US was trying to get out of Vietnam, not very gracefully. Our society had just gone through the biggest shift in values in memory--and it was not finished. I think it took much of the '70s to normalize what we did with and to ourselves in the '60s--and never did it satisfactorily. Watergate, double digit inflation, stupid popular music, and the oil crisis all symbolize a kind of distemper that followed the excesses of the '60s. Some pundits point to the 1973 oil embargo as the closing act in America's sense of limitlessness, its post-World-War II hegemony."

Matthew joined in: "The end of twentieth-century high modernism, the beginning of the postmodernist critique of it."

Bodger continued, "At the campus level, we were trying to find a way to accommodate the changes of social behavior within the traditional practices of the college. We were trying to satisfy a faculty receiving less pay than peers elsewhere with a budget that permitted salary increases of two or three percentage points a year. That's when annual inflation nationally was in double digits. It would take a little more time, but we also were beginning to see that the thought underpinning the '60s would create distress lines in the curriculum itself, in the way we thought knowledge took shape. The '60s brought an epistemological revolution, not just a social revolution."

"A daunting time to be president," Matthew volunteered.

"The office makes you want to do the right thing for the institution, no matter who you are or what your talents," Bodger said. "Pettit tried as hard as anyone to move us on a correct course. Many people criticized him. A lot of the criticism he brought down on himself by his manner. They did not understand that whatever he did in office he did because it seemed to him to be the right thing for the institution at that time."

### **Bodger learned to be subordinate**

"How did you help him?" Matthew asked.

"Why do you ask?"

"I've never really been a number two man before in an administrative situation. Now I am. You've been there."

Bodger said, "Denominational administration and college administration are two different things."

"A professional working under a professional must have similarities, whatever the mission," Matthew said. "Your experience with Pettit could teach me some do's and don'ts in the new job I have."

Without time for thought, Bodger said, "I helped, I guess, by trying to be subordinate." After his years of ramming around campus under President Helfferich's tolerant eye, after coming into conflict with Pettit more than once in his green years as Helfferich's helper, Bodger could not help laughing at this knee-jerk recollection.

"You laugh," Matthew said.

"It was a complicated situation for Pettit and for me. I don't know how much DLH talked with Pettit about his expectations for me in the future. Certainly Bill knew I enjoyed a special relationship with DLH, and DLH remained on the scene. He had an office in the administration building with regular hours three days a week. Much of his time he spent on contacts with the donors he had cultivated over the years. Some of it he spent on privately counseling Pettit, I'm sure. Some of it he spent on shaping me--keeping me in line for Pettit's sake, but not discouraging me from learning by doing."

Matthew said, "Judging from what the management textbooks say, you had the makings of a real management mess."

"True. A president who had to defer to a predecessor who remained actively on the scene. A vice president who had presidential fantasies if not ambitions, fanned by the predecessor president."

"Did the mess materialize?" Matthew asked.

"In truth it did not. Helfferich's title was chancellor. When asked for his job description, he would say that the chancellor is responsible for 'chanceling.' When asked what that entailed, he would refer to the lyrics of the campus song: 'When across the Perkiomen, the chimings wing their flight....' In the trope of the song, the chimings--notes from the bell of the college tower--leave campus and fly over the nearby creek and then fly back to campus, where the students have 'for a time their books laid by.' To chancel, DLH would say, is to tend to the chimings."

"To ensure that they winged their flight back home," Matthew chimed.

"Winged back home, yes," Bodger smiled. "Helfferich had a consummate sense of theater. He could cast himself and the rest of us in what for him was a play. He could direct and act in it

at the same time. That sense of theater gave him a distance from his own actions. What he did was not necessarily who he was. To chancel, to look out for the chimings, was his droll way of letting others know there was a play in progress. Everyone took for granted that he was the director, but not everyone could see that the directorship itself was a part in the play."

"Very complicated," Matthew agreed.

"It was unusual, if not unique. I wouldn't put it in the college management textbook as a model for others. There was something tribal going on, perhaps, despite the seeming sophistication of DLH's theatrical posture. The college was parochial. It knew itself from within. It had an authenticity. It affirmed character rooted in internalized values. The mystique of the Reformed tradition had a lot to do with this, even though it was hard for outsiders--new faculty--to put a finger on it. The college-as-tribal-community was more powerful than the college-as-administrative-organization. That empowered Helfferich after he left the presidency. It made all of us accept the arrangement as a given. Few could imagine the college without the defining presence of DLH. Pettit and I were comfortable in this parochial matrix. It was only years later that I could discern its uniqueness with what seemed like some objectivity."

"So, it was Helfferich's canny way of playing a role that allowed Pettit and you to work together," Matthew said.

"We all had an understanding," Bodger said, "even though it was not codified. It was not even fully expressed. We each kept our eyes on each other. We all subscribed to the conviction that first, last, and always, the college's best interest was our best personal interest. That dissolved a lot of potential grit in the machine. I guess that's why I think of a 'tribal' situation."

"But it was partly expressed," Matthew prompted.

"Not many days after the new administration started, I wrote a letter of acknowledgment to one of our board members for a fairly generous gift. An information copy went to Pettit. As new president, he called me on that. Wasn't it his role to acknowledge major gifts of board members? I countered, saying it was something I did as a natural response of the college's development officer, which I was. He said it was his role to decide who should acknowledge what. He was right. Helfferich during his presidency allowed me--encouraged me--to presume. In Pettit's administration, it was my job to stand back and support him, to stay out of the limelight. After that mild air-clearing, we had few differences henceforth.

"Helfferich warned me now and then that Pettit felt I was pushy on this issue or that. This may have been true or it may have been a Helfferich stratagem to get my attention and to influence me before any conflict blew up. I would try to trim my course accordingly.

"Pettit and I were of different generations. We were very different people. He had a patrician air, which was artful and consistent. I guess it was always at the back of my mind that my old man was a steel mill man. But the task joined us. Military and corporate life had conditioned me to fit in, to recognize authority over me. It was a relief for me, in a way, after the five helter-skelter years of free-wheeling as DLH's spearman."

Matthew said, "When I got to know you, after you became president, you seemed impatient with the constraints of organization."

"I was. But I also had mastered the mechanics of organizational life. It wasn't that I thought of myself as an obedient organizational creature. I simply had learned how to get something done by working within the organization's constraints. That included deferring to one's boss. I was able to think privately like a free man and behave publicly like a good company man."

"Not sure I can empathize with that kind of split," said Rev. Matthew.

Bodger said, "It may seem to hold the seed of hypocrisy in it. Remember, though, my origin in a steel man's family and my upbringing in the Depression of the 'thirties. Being a wannabe came a distant second to my first drive as a bread-winner. I was my father's son in that I thought it was axiomatic to work like a dog to put bread on the table. One did not state this; one simply lived it out. I enfolded whatever I thought about leadership and teaching within this fundamental assumption. Life was work. Pettit and I of course understood this between us without our ever saying it. He had been on the faculty through most of my lifetime and knew the kind of local kid that I was. So, in spite of my feeling of great difference, he actually had a good grasp of where I was coming from and what I was. He understood me a lot better than I understood him, I am sure."

Matthew asked, "Did that make him more indulgent of you than you expected?"

"'Indulgent' is not a word I would use. I think he saw early on that I was useful to him. I was driven to work, and it was easy for him to take advantage of my eagerness, once it became evident that I would not wreck the set-up for him. He made a point of not assigning me a portfolio. While I retained my title, Vice President for Administrative Affairs, I did what I thought I should and what he asked me to do. We tacked and trimmed together as we went along. This gave Pettit maximum latitude to lead. It allowed me to experiment with initiatives, always with a wary eye for being out of bounds. He knew that Helfferich saw me as a future president. The loose administrative arrangement allowed him, I think, to buy into Helfferich's notion without having to say so. He never talked to me about my own future until after he had announced that he was retiring."

Matthew asked, "Are you saying he did not assign work to you?"

"I'm not saying that. I was self-starting, compulsively, to be sure. But he made certain my platter was full. He was more budget-conscious than DLH had been, at least in the non-academic side of the house. He tried to minimize staff strength. For a time I returned to editing the college magazine, the task that brought me to the college staff in the first place. We were into an intensive fund-raising effort and that consumed much time. I took my teaching of English composition very seriously. In the summers, Bill and his wife spent a long vacation in Nantucket. That meant that I kept the store on campus for him. My vacations were brief. In a way I was satisfied to lose myself in all this action."

"It kept you out of trouble."

"That--and then the whole immersion fed an addictive impulse in me. I was at the peak of my energies. Being up to my eyes in work gave me a compartment. I could keep out anything that made me uncomfortable. This was a self-indulgence of a kind. Your priorities--as a preacher, I mean--are better at this stage of your career than mine were, I am sure."

Matthew said, "I don't covet James's position. There is the will of the Lord in this move back to Pennsylvania for me. If I am to be the next conference leader, God will lead me there. That's not to say that I am not anxious or that I am not preparing."

### **The fund-raising agenda continued from Helfferich to Pettit**

Bodger said, "DLH started the remaking of the physical plant. He built Wismer Hall, which opened in 1965. He razed Freeland-Derr-Stine, our old main, which dated back to 1848. In their place in the campus core he built Myrin Library. Before he left office in November 1970, he briefly occupied the splendid new offices in a new administration building, to be named for Philip



and Helen Corson. He was still president when we broke ground for the physical education facility--later to bear his name--in September 1970. He pushed to completion in quick time a new men's dormitory complex to replace the lost space in old Freeland, Derr, and Stine. The college would name it for Bill Reimert, our board president, who died in the fall of 1969, a princely man, one of Helfferich's best-informed supporters, in my view. He built the science building, triggered by DuPont money, for biology and psychology, behind Pfahler Hall. DLH imagined a chapel building at the perimeter of campus that would cement the relationship with the church. He got the fund-raising started for that. Jim Wagner started it, and Milton E. Detterline, who came on as chaplain and alumni secretary, picked up the effort. But it foundered. The limited amount raised from churches went for the renovation of Bomberger Hall after Helfferich left office.

"And that's my point," Bodger continued. "Pettit inherited a dynamic physical plant financial development agenda from his predecessor. We did not stop moving when Bill took office.

"Pettit led us through the renovation of the old library into a student union. He oversaw the restoration of Bomberger Hall. With his artistic bent--he was a creditable painter in his leisure--he gave that project his special interest and care. He chaired the planning committee for Bomberger from the start, while he was still dean. He saw us through to the completion of Helfferich Hall and the relocation of playing fields and tennis courts. He saw that his old academic home, Pfahler Hall of Science, was refurbished. He even approved the renovation of a snack shop in the book store building into a rough and ready theater arts site."

"Busy," said Matthew.

"Being in the command post, Bill could have impeded the momentum of the physical plant agenda that he took over from Helfferich. But he did not. He went ahead. Helfferich had persuaded himself and the board in the earlier '60s that a first-class plant would sell the college to parents and students. By 1970 this was cast-in-iron doctrine, and Pettit bought into it too.

"It was a revolutionary approach considering the college's past. For decades the college espoused a bare-board simplicity--the proper setting for the building of mind and character. That happened to fit well with the extremely frugal posture of the board leadership and the thin flow of charitable dollars from one and all. Helfferich had the guts to attack that and to begin to challenge people to give more. He said it was time to stop putting patch on patch and build things right.

"I happened along at the very moment when Helfferich needed someone who was not cowed by the college's past diffidence in fund-raising. There had been a start in the early '60s, when DLH and Dick Schellhase, my predecessor as alumni secretary, conducted an ambitious solicitation to support Wismer Hall. In truth, however, DLH saw that as only a modest start. I was naive about fund-raising. But I brought a promotional tool kit from my corporate years. I had no reservations about thumping for more dollars from alumni and friends. I was too green to know how rough it would be. I did not know enough to know how many ways I could fail.

"So I became Helfferich's point person for fund-raising in the last several years of his term. We cobbled together a kind of campaign called the All-College Anniversary Drive, tagging on to the centennial anniversary coming in 1969. Altogether, we raised \$2.9 million, mainly to help pay for the buildings. DLH had crossed the Rubicon on taking federal funds for buildings when he applied for and received a modest amount for Wismer Hall in 1965. That had cost him a board member who could not stomach getting into bed with government. The library and the physical education facility both had heavy infusions of public money. He received encouragement from younger board members, from Reimert, from Bill Elliott. We had recruited a group of board

members and alumni to lead the committees to raise funds for DLH's ambitious expansion program.

"So, the change of face at the helm in 1970 did not fundamentally alter the energy in the development program. I was in the thick of that program as the guard changed, responsible for on-campus coordination with builders and for raising funds outside. In fact, at the special board meeting to elect Pettit president, in September 1970, there were other heavy items on the agenda.

"One of them was a report that the All-College Anniversary Drive had met its goal. This was given by Paul Guest, who had chaired the drive and given DLH the legal counsel and reinforcement to forge ahead with the building program.

"Another item was a preliminary report from Bill Heefner. Heefner at the June 1970 meeting already had been appointed chairman of a new fund-raising committee. It had the euphemistic name Academic Development Committee. I think that was my concoction. The point was to emphasize the programmatic uses of the buildings that were coming into being. Bill was talking about raising money for faculty enrichment and the like. He reported on talking with faculty in the spring and on his intention to talk with students in the fall. The next fund-raising plan thus was born even as the old one ended.

"At this special meeting the board also recorded the signing of a contract for the start of construction of the new physical education facility. The short of all this is that Pettit's election took place amid great to-do about financial development and unfinished building plans."

Matthew raised a finger. "I think I hear two things. The board handed Pettit an ambitious agenda. In the process it also handed you one."

"Yes," said Bodger.

"That no doubt made it easier for you to be a good subordinate," Matthew said. "A predetermined structure shaped the behavior of both of you."

"True," Bodger said. "The Heefner committee turned into a fund-raising campaign called 'Century II.' It ran from its start in 1970 to 1975, most of Pettit's administration. It kept my nose to the grindstone and relieved Pettit of the need to make strategic decisions about voluntary support. Century II was the medium by which Bill Heefner and I cemented an alliance. He was then in the midst of building his Bucks County law firm into one of the biggest in the suburbs. He had little time for volunteer work; so he leaned on me as much as possible to act on his behalf. In the process he seemed to solidify his belief that I could be president.

"Century II raised some money for faculty development and other educational needs, but not as much as we hoped for. We met our general target, more than \$5.5 million. However, the specific designations were out of whack. Too much was specified by donors for plant as opposed to faculty development and student aid. And we counted government grants for buildings in the totals.

"Regardless, Pettit should have received credit for the effort. Unfortunately, the faculty came to see it as a major failing and used it to push him into retreat at the end of his term. The effects of double-digit inflation on spending power demoralized the faculty. Pettit went to the board and told them faculty and staff needed more money. The board approved some supplements to salary, but they were drops in the bucket compared to the losses to inflation. The faculty never believed that Pettit acknowledged the dilemma. But the constraints in our exchequer daunted him. He would not risk the financial stability of the whole place by paying out more than seemed prudent for salaries. The spin among faculty on that cautious and responsible course was terrible. It crippled his ability to manage."

"Then it must have harmed your standing too," Matthew said.

"Oddly I don't think it did. The fact that we had a structured and visible fund-raising effort was still a kind of novelty. I got credit, I think, for its creation in the eyes of faculty. I frankly don't know how I escaped criticism for perceived fund-raising deficiencies. In truth, my experience in fund-raising still was shallow. I had learned some sound fundamentals from a consultant whom Helfferich hired in the late '60s. Still I did not know very well how to apply them. But the whole place was naive about the fund-raising game. Relatively speaking, I guess it looked as if I knew something."

"Looking at this as a number two person, wouldn't you have to say you failed to help your leader?"

The question gave Bodger pause. "You saw that both of us were working in a structure created out of the circumstances of Helfferich's last years as president. We both did our best within that preestablished frame. Sure, I could have stood up and taken all the responsibility for the shortcomings of Century II. In fact, I did report to the faculty in 1975 on what did and did not happen with the money. Pettit's biggest critics accused him of making misleading statements about the campaign. It was my job to show them the facts and to prove he was not misleading them. I think I did that. But it did not help much in the end, probably. Faculty could not see past what seemed to be his condescending manner toward them. Style really did become substance in the Pettit years, I think."

"If you appeared to be credible, it would have helped you and perhaps not helped him," Matthew observed, as he rose to leave.

### **Bodger built a public persona on campus**

That's possible, Bodger said to himself when Matthew had gone. He remained on good terms personally with a large number of faculty, the younger ones with whom he bonded and the older ones to whom he looked as former teachers. He felt they were predisposed not to doubt him. His own self-righteousness seemed to insulate him. It would not have occurred to him then that any of them would mistrust him. Naiveté is an effective life preserver in certain seas, he thought.

Indeed, he solidified his sense of belonging to the faculty in the Pettit years. He continued teaching introductory English composition and a section of Senior Symposium, a loosely structured course for reading, talking, and writing about contemporary issues. He worked hard at his course preparations. He went to English department meetings and tried to be a professional colleague. His "yellow paper project" in composition received a small notice in *College English*. In 1972, to his surprise, George Storey, the department head, recommended him for promotion to assistant professor, a full-time title for a part-time performer. He received tenure the following year. That year, the president selected him to receive the Lindback prize for excellence in teaching. The announcement at commencement stunned him. Pettit had not told him ahead of time. He was busy in the background that day, seeing that the crowd was under control and that the loudspeakers were working. He took it as an affirmation by Pettit. In the life of the campus, it reinforced the appearance that he was a practicing faculty member, despite the paucity of his academic preparation.

Each year for several years, he invited students interested in writing poetry to meet at his home. A handful would respond, and a remnant of that group would stick it out for the year.

They would sit on the floor at 27 Glen Farms Drive, drinking soda or coffee, reciting their poems. Bodger would recite his now and then too. The rule was that one could say only good things about a poem. Corrective criticism was banned. He formed bonds with those students that overrode the tensions and disagreements on the campus.

The students would never realize it, but he had ambivalent feelings about the poetry groups. He succeeded in breaking the wall that on campus irrevocably divided students from faculty. But once he was through the wall, the students unconsciously made him feel vulnerable. The students had a vocabulary of emotions that he could not share. He always felt that they would take off in a direction that they would expect him to understand. Sometimes he sat quietly as they connected, hoping that they would not notice that he was not getting the youthful twist of a fresh phrase. On the other hand, he saw how receptive they were to his presence. It gave them an experience with a faculty member that was outside the fence. There was something of the clandestine in the room, although none of them, including Bodger, could have put words to it.

Through these and other informal gestures toward students, Bodger felt that he was building a kind of public persona on campus in those Pettit years. He was accessible to students, willing to hear their most outrageous complaints about the college. Despite his title and his faculty status, some students seemed to level with him. They were the ones who came to know him in class or in the numerous committees on which he served with them or those who came to his home for poetry sessions.

Open though they were with one another, however, he could not offer promises of official receptivity. He attempted assiduously to remain the loyal subordinate to Pettit. Faculty and students both criticized the leadership's commitment to a conservative position on social rules. They faulted the administration for resisting further revision of the academic curriculum. Bodger developed a manner of interest in particular complaints. By the very intensity of his attention, he paradoxically signaled that the problem was beyond his ken and beyond his reach of influence. More often than not, however, he knew the inner meaning of the problem from an administrative perspective. In his mind it was in the nature of a trick to appear to listen sincerely without conveying the impression that he could or would respond. He would worry about someone seeing through the trick. He never lost the feeling that at any moment a student would see through the apparent pretense and blow a whistle at him.

In Helfferich's style Bodger had seen the value of role playing. But Bodger lacked his mentor's flamboyance, his thespian bent. Bodger was too self-conscious to emulate him. Yet he managed to put a persona before the students and his colleagues on the faculty that seemed to work.

### **1972: A watershed year for Bodger**

When they met again, Bodger told Matthew about the feeling of misleading students or colleagues in his mixture of roles.

Matthew was quick with an analysis: "You probably didn't give them enough credit for understanding the power structure. They knew where you were in it, surely. You were successful in your relations with them because of your apparent openness and willingness to be vulnerable."

"Willingness' is probably too strong a word. I was vulnerable in spite of myself, I think. There was always in me a reluctance to become wholly the administrative functionary. I felt a bit like an outsider even after managing to be included on the inside."

"Are you saying you wanted it both ways?" asked Matthew. He thought he spied a thread of significance for his own impending change of duty.

"It was clear to me fairly early in the Pettit administration that I was going to go all out for the presidency. Deep within I may have had many reservations about it. But the organizational imperatives of my upbringing were inescapable. I became less and less hesitant about the goal as the Pettit years wore on."

"You never seemed to have lost a bit of a sense that you were outside, critical of the seat of authority," Matthew offered.

"I suppose that you saw that when you came along later, after I was president. I have to tell you I never resolved the tension and felt a kind of guilt."

Matthew sought his own lessons: "Still, a healthy self-doubt in an administrator is rarer than it should be, don't you think? I've seen a lot of leaders, in the church and elsewhere, who were too insecure--or too filled with themselves--to allow for much self-criticism."

"At this point of my development, in the early '70s, I had a vast capacity for self-criticism. But I repressed it in order to move along--sheer panic never was very far below my hard surface and I managed to keep it there most of the time."

Matthew asked, "Was there a definite moment when you began to behave consciously as someone who wanted to succeed Pettit?"

"There was. The fall of 1972 was a watershed for me. We dedicated Helfferich Hall on 21 October 1972. I think that put a kind of period to the Helfferich era. The dedication combined a mellowness and a kind of grandeur. DLH after two years out of office felt relaxed. The new gym named in his honor was the biggest building on campus--appropriately. To me, and to many, he still seemed a little larger than life. How right it seemed that our big-name speaker was George Murphy, actor turned politician--he made the turn in advance of Reagan. By then former Senator Murphy was president of the Football Hall of Fame, which fitted him for his ceremonial task with us. More important, he complemented Helfferich's qualities--actor, doer. Anna Helfferich, who equaled her husband's stage skills, gave a tribute when she unveiled the big dedication plaque. I think DLH drafted it. It had a valedictory ring."

Bodger went to his file and brought out the college magazine covering the event.

"The dedicatory plaque described Helfferich as 'student, alumnus, board member, president, chancellor.' After reciting it, Anna went on to say, 'There could be added--athlete, aviator, orator, poet, musician, sailor, dancer, husband, father, brother, friend, and always the actor.'

"Then she added: 'He is good at almost anything that does not require a hammer, saw or screwdriver. He moves everywhere with ease, skill, strength and assurance, and no one has ever taken a neutral position towards him. Because of his life-long love affair with his Alma Mater, it is fitting that she return the affection with this beautiful, gigantic gesture. A very generous and thoughtful man--Ty Helfferich. Long may he wave!'

"I recall that day, that fall, in a glow. As Helfferich took this bow and moved toward the wing of the stage, I somehow felt new strength. It is always so, perhaps, when the generations gaze on one another at fateful turns. Bill Pettit, I suspect, felt it too. You see him in the photo in front of Helfferich Hall with DLH and Bill Elliott, for whom the pool was simultaneously being named. Pettit is smiling knowingly, uncharacteristically unguarded, the man in the middle, in

charge. DLH is already at the margin in the shot, though still gesturing to Elliott, his friend, with a show of fading majesty.

"So much seemed to be in place by then. It was time for movement, to try to read the tide and ride it through. DLH was not a scholar but he had a vibrant sense of himself as an actor on an historical stage. He talked often to me about the record, the legacy. He felt that he was writing a history with each day's act; and he acted often so that the history would read favorably in the years ahead. As we listened to George Murphy laud the virtues of a sound mind in a sound body, I must have taken a private resolve. To get on with the agenda.

"By this time," Bodger reflected, "the irrational excesses of the late '60s seemed to cool. The end of the draft for college students helped restore some calm. And the sheer novelty of hippie culture lay in the past. For a while, Pettit was playing a transparent but successful game of delay in response to never-ending pressure from kids to allow dorm visitation and alcohol on campus. It would take a year or so for the inflationary spiral to inflame faculty impatience for more money. Students were transferring out at a fairly high rate, but our incoming class enrollments seemed steady and the total enrollment held fairly constant. There was fractional erosion each year but not enough to raise red flags in Pettit's mind—though he certainly was watching it. The board seemed comfortable enough that Pettit had taken charge. They gave their support as well as they could. Through the Century II program, we appeared to be raising a fair amount of money from board and others.

"Taking everything into account, I could hypothesize that in the fall of 1972 we saw a moment of stability, when God might still have been in heaven in spite of the '60s and much might be right with our little campus world if not with the world at large.

"I kept my skirts as clear as possible of campus political muck, supporting Pettit as well as I could. I continued to take my teaching of freshman composition and senior symposium seriously. I was surprised by my promotion to assistant professor in the spring of '72 and the awarding of tenure and the Lindback prize the following spring. There was a feeling of inauthenticity about these moves that made me uncomfortable. On the other hand, I took them to mean that Pettit as well as DLH and some board members were looking favorably on my role at the college, not just in the classroom. I took them to be political signals."

"They would not have recognized you if you in fact were not perceived to be doing a good job in the classroom," said Matthew.

"Let me flatter myself that this was so," said Bodger. "I could not judge the outcome, but I know I worked like a dog to prepare myself for the classes I taught--overprepared, partly out of a sense that I had no right to be there in the first place. Being in class with students kept me fresh, in contrast to the constant drain of administrative work."

"I know the difference between being in a pulpit with the people and being in a church conference office," Matthew said.

"I felt that you had to stay open with students in a radical way. If you pigeonholed them, or the subject, too aggressively, you killed something in yourself as well as in them. It takes a sustained naiveté, I think," said Bodger.

"Teaching and preaching are best done when they are not manipulative," Matthew agreed. "When you are in a college administrative office or a church office, you are by definition converting people, to some extent, into objects."

"My serious teaching commitments at this time went with the general atmosphere of stabilization at the college that I am remembering," said Bodger. "And Pettit's acknowledgment

of me as a teacher may have helped legitimize the case for me as a presidential wannabe. But it was all very 'in-house,' very parochial."

"And so you set out in the fall of 1972 on a long journey to the top," Matthew prompted.

"Again, looking back, I see how by that time Pettit contributed to my candidacy in other ways besides endorsing me as a teacher. He stood out front and took the criticisms of his administration without pointing to me standing behind him. He could accurately have blamed me when the Century II fund-raising campaign drew heat for failing to raise enough for salaries, but he did not. He gave me space to learn and grow, less expansive than that which DLH had provided but real. But he also expected me to stand on my own and do my job as assigned, without excuses, and I did that. I was able to continue testing ideas about administration without running a great risk. As long as I did his bidding well, he granted me some protection and some space. A fair bargain, good for me, certainly. Maybe good for the institution as well."

"And Pettit," Matthew added.

"There was a moment that fall, yes--as if I felt the inner stability of that day when we dedicated Helfferich Hall and secretly said to myself, 'OK, now I'm going to begin to destabilize this place from within. Nobody is going to know I have made this decision but I am not going to rest until we know the final outcome. I am deliberately going to try to make this thing happen.' In a sense, DLH's Galatea finally stirred with life."

"You seem so clear about the turning point," Matthew said. He seemed to be wondering whether he was at such a point yet in his own turn of career.

"I documented it," Bodger said, moving toward his files. He handed Matthew a single leaf from a journal and Matthew read the following:

*Nov. 21, 1972...A new game plan dawned on me this morning while shaving. Ever since DLH, more than a year ago, told me Pettit thought I was too pushy, I have trimmed sail, not challenged, followed orders, drained dry ambition.*

*That ended this morning. I am now campaigning. All constituencies, alert! The big wave is coming.*

### **Bodger's plans included joining the church**

Bodger chuckled as he heard the words. Matthew paused and smiled. Both behaved like conspirators behind a screen, watching an amusing fool talk himself into a lather. Matthew continued reading:

*More appearances in public: news release quotes.*

*More overt leadership role among alumni.*

*More words of mine in print.*

*More cultivation of faculty support --veterans, middle group (DeCatur, Vissers, Reiners)-- invite to lunch to tell me what's happening in their disciplines: off campus (check Pen & Ink back room).*

*More policy-level proposals to Pettit--heighten the pressure by 10 degrees.*

*Begin DLH biography. Visit DLH more frequently.*

*Win Bozorth the dean--accept his oft-offered hand of camaraderie.*

*Build a new set of objectives: downplay philosophical air, set down good things others on faculty want.*

*Amend Heefner's image of me as an "exec" officer: think big.*

*See Creager re church.*

*Stay loose--don't overwork: outfox the bastards.*

*Practice public speaking.*

*Build set of quotable quotes.*

*Do some silly things--kiss babies.*

*Write letters of thanks to people who aren't expecting them.*

*Pay attention to the edges that reach the center--Mrs. Bone, Mrs. Paul Wagner, Jim Wagner.*

*Stop tending store--go fishing for bigger things.*

*Build a following among student leaders only--let the small fry find out for themselves.*

"Even now this is embarrassing," Bodger said, "but you will understand." He laughed again at himself.

Matthew laughed too. "And yet..."

"Right," Bodger said. "Many of those things, one way or the other, directly or indirectly, I did."

"*Stay loose--don't overwork?*"

"Skipped that one, I'm afraid," said Bodger.

"Thought so," said Matthew.

"I may have had some beer when writing that," Bodger said, "but it has been a funny part of my private story all these years. It did seriously signal a shift. Two years before, after Pettit's election, I had written to myself that the way to prepare for president was not to prepare for being president. So the worm turned."

Matthew was trying to relate this revelation--amusing but puzzling--to his own development. "Were you really that--programmatically?"

"That I had to write a list suggests how unprogrammatically I really felt," Bodger said. "Call it planned overcompensation for a feeling of directionlessness. Most of the time, I doubt if I knew where I was headed. Aren't you always aware of a kind of buzzing that the moment at hand generates, masking out the other sounds, the sense of them?"

Matthew looked knowing but responded slowly: "Maybe not the same buzzing others hear? For me, the presence of God is a constant. I feel that fills my spaces."

Bodger said, "Of course." He realized he should not have made a presumptuous comparison between his feelings and those of Matthew.

Matthew said, "Could we talk about '*See Creager re church?*'"

Bodger responded, "My appreciation for the qualities of character nurtured by the Reformed tradition grew rapidly under the influence of DLH and other mentors on the campus. However, I felt unprepared to be one of that band. My relationship with churches throughout my life was furtive. They were not places of consolation for me but of self-consciousness, embarrassment, discomfort even."

"This is something beyond me," Matthew said.



"I know, and I can't expect that you would understand it," Bodger said. "You grew up inside the church and I grew up outside it. I was never churched as a child. Maybe that's as much as I need to say by way of explanation."

Matthew said, "I just assumed you grew up as a Reformed kid."

"In any event, behind my manifesto was the conviction that I could not become president if I did not show the religious colors of the Reformed church, by then a part of the merger into the United Church of Christ. Al Creager was pastor of Trinity Reformed church across the street from the main campus--as you know."

"He was a familiar figure in church circles in my youth," said Matthew. "He was on the committee that wrote the United Church of Christ statement of faith in the 1950s."

Bodger said, "You know, for many years he did double duty as a college staff member--chaplain of the college, professor of religion. Trinity had an historic association with the college. Al was an alumnus, class of '33. In his dual role, he embodied the common Reformed roots of the two institutions. He was one of the numerous Reformed folk who had treated me kindly when I came to the staff, more so than I believed I deserved. He thought I did some good as an ameliorating presence in the administration during the confrontations of the late '60s."

"Margot was a Reformed kid. She always wanted me to join the church. Her private wishes now converged with my own programmatic sense of the fitness of doing so. In his friendly way, Al allowed me to get beyond my lifelong sense of distance, alienation, in a sanctuary. He even affirmed it. By starting so far outside, he thought I would be stronger once I was inside the church. He thought in terms of the testing and forging of souls."

"He saw you on a 'pilgrimage,'" Matthew said. "The Reformed merged with the *Pilgrim* church to create the UCC."

"In early 1973 I started attending services, dragging my nine-year-old son along for moral support. Margot was directing the church choir at the other Trinity Reformed church, in Skippack. Not too long afterward, I met a couple of times with Al to talk about theology. I read some work by Paul Tillich. I found that the Heidelberg tradition, as Al talked about it, made behavioral, practical sense. It was not, I discovered, a 'Eureka' tradition, of seeing the light in a flash and coming ecstatically to the cross. Acquiring faith was more like learning to walk or to talk, and when you had it you performed it with a certain unself-consciousness, a naturalness. This of course allowed for all the hesitations of someone like me along the way."

Matthew replied, "Not everyone would isolate that theme of the Reformed faith at the expense of others." He was being cautious not to allow Bodger to oversimplify the complex fabric of which he was a steward.

Bodger continued, "As time went on, I tested how much I could say about religious faith without feeling hypocritical. I discovered I could say a good deal if I carefully chose my words. The vocabulary of personal faith easily employed by the typical Christian simply could not come out of my mouth. Al Creager was sensitive to this. He found a way to incorporate me into the church body without histrionics and without putting me to an embarrassing public test. One quiet evening, Margot and I met Al alone at Trinity church. He performed a bit of a ceremony for adults entering the church, the specifics of which you would know better than I can remember. And the deed was done."

Matthew said, "However you felt personally about church, your administration is seen as a time of renewal and strengthening of the relationship between the college and the denomination."

Bodger said, "I could not have pushed a UCC agenda, however, if I had not taken this personal step. Many people, like you, assumed that I had come up in the religious tradition of the college. To my knowledge, nobody made a fuss about that quiet little evening experience with Al. So, in a sense that simply gave substance to a perception that many people had all along. I never said a word about it to Pettit. He was himself not of the Reformed church--he went to the Episcopal church in Evansburg--but he knew and respected the folk from his long years of association with them at the college. I told DLH what I had done. It surprised but pleased him. We talked a little about my personal rationale but not so much about the politics of becoming 'churched.'"

"In truth," Matthew asked, "do you think now it mattered to your becoming president?"

"Who will ever know? It made no difference to faculty. If anything, it would have been a negative with many of them but they would have understood my sense of the necessity for joining. It made me a member of the *Freundschaft*, the power structure. It removed a reason for the board to turn me down.

"Speaking nonpolitically, however, it made me more fit inside my head to be a candidate, regardless of other feelings of stress and contradiction it may have caused me. I needed comfort as an administrative operative, a sense of being able to move with ease and skill, as DLH so often put it. The religious grounding of the college was still very much part of the rhetoric if not of the program. I could not envision myself at the head of the place without an unambiguous position vis-à-vis the body of the church. I would have felt a dissonance and that, I believed, would have made my behavior dysfunctional. Unacceptable."

Matthew mused, "A papal-like blend of worldly and religious politics."

"I did not try to resolve the tension about 'belief in myself," Bodger said. "I was not hostile to Christian faith and thus at bottom could not accuse myself of hypocrisy. I was deeply grateful for the way it seasoned the environment of the college, to which I was attaching myself more and more firmly. The exclusiveness of it, I guess, never finally would make me comfortable. My understanding of Zen was superficial, based on the popularized stuff by Alan Watts and D.T. Suzuki in the '60s. But it had a permanent effect on the way I dealt with religious faith. The radical reality sought by Zen beyond language, beyond expressions of faith, never left me as a kind of ultimate religious consciousness. It put the deeper, more distant issues of faith, in my mind, out beyond the formulations of Christian belief. It did not contradict them but relativized them. It was that that I simply could not presume to resolve."

"But, pilgrim, you tried," Matthew said charitably.

"You're too generous in thinking so," said Bodger easily. "Meister Eckhart's Zen-like sermons came as close as anything to telling me Christian faith was not restrictive. The congruence between his medieval European insight and Asian tradition amazed me. But once I took the step with Creager, I did not worry much about this. The times were filled with interesting developments and I was busier than I can now imagine."

Matthew said he had not intended to press Bodger into so much self-revelation.

Bodger said that he felt no discomfort, now that so much time had passed. "But I fear my little tale of balancing religion and politics holds small meaning for your situation as a church administrator."

Matthew said, "You had an easy balancing act by comparison, I suspect. Faith for a church administrator may be a given. But the playing out of faith, the ongoing life of the church as an

expression of the life of Jesus, makes the politics far more volatile by far than anything you were going to deal with."

"Amen," said Bodger.

"Must run," Matthew said. "Be back sometime if you're willing to talk more about your list."

"Willing."

Bodger found the journal entry for 30 March 1973: *I tried to tell DLH why I could consider joining and not feel it was hypocritical. It all has to do with my coming to work at the college. I came here partly as a lark and partly because I felt it might be the right thing to do. In the intervening years, I have become convinced that it was a correct move, a move into a friendly sea by a finny vagabond in search of a mission and enough to eat. I make no apology for having married my fortunes to those of the college: it is a force for good and light in the world, it deserves to survive and flourish, and I am happy giving my energies in its behalf. As I have sought the truth of the place, as I have read its history and looked in the character of its people for clues, I have come to see that, when one goes down deep enough, he sees the roots of the college begin to intertwine with the roots of the church. So for me, the church is an outgrowth of my discovery of the college. History will say that the church created the college--at least, a splinter group from the church did. My personal arrival at the church door is really the other way around: for me, the college created the church. Grand principles like independence, responsibility for moral judgments and the like are not easily understood, still less easily taught. The sanction of both institutions may tend to support such large and good principles. If they do that together, good. Let them flourish together, with all their funny faults.*

#### **Bodger sought insight from faculty members**

Bodger reflected on his list, thinking of Matthew's next visit and what would interest him then.

*More cultivation of faculty support.*

He had pursued this but not in political terms. He invited faculty members one on one to chat about their departments, their disciplines. Most were younger than he, with fewer years on campus. For Bodger it was a continuation of learning, not a building of a coalition. The political benefit, if any, came as a natural consequence of the genuineness of his interest in what was going on academically. At least he could tell himself that. He was not sure it would look that way to Matthew.

His meeting with John Wickersham stood roundly in mind as an example. With classic academic credentials from Penn and Princeton, and a Phi Beta Kappa key, John was the new man in classics. He replaced one of the stalwarts of the faculty of Bodger's student years, Donald Baker. Wickersham, Bodger remembered, in his early years had a watery look behind glasses, as if his face were continually changing, and only something within kept constant. What kept constant within, of course, was his undefiled concern for the thing that he did--study and teach Greek and Latin.

In Bodger's office, John had a ready attention to wayward conversation. He quickly grasped the half-clear notion. He went readily with a sudden turn of thought in a different direction. They talked about the state of his discipline ("critical"), the movement of Philosophy from the center to the periphery of the problem of values, the precarious place of Classics on the small campus.

John agreed that it would be mere nostalgia to expect Philosophy to reassert its place at the center of our cultural problem of morals and values.

Wickersham said, "You would have to reject more than two centuries of intellectual development in the other direction. They've developed many methodologies for coping with morals and values. We call them psychology, literature, political science, and so on, you see."

What good was a classicist in 1973? John knew that he was like the coat of arms over the liberal arts door. He valued the specialism of textual research, that rare realm smacking of ancient gold.

"Won't save us, though," he said. "Beyond being a symbol of a mighty tradition, we have to *teach students*. Aristotle will do. Some think Tom Wolfe is better but Aristotle's okay, he's all right."

Wickersham would enrich the platter with service course work for non-majors--translations, history. But he could not do this because he was spread too thin. "Give me a colleague," he said. Years later, Bodger approved a part-time addition to Classics. Wickersham, in his way, came to prevail. He not only taught with a passion but also produced several solid pieces of scholarly gold during Bodger's tenure. And he was in the vanguard of Phi Beta Kappa members who finally brought a chapter to the campus.

As a behavioral psychologist, George Fago stood at a far end of the academic spectrum from Wickersham. George was trained as a rat man. But in his visit to Bodger's office, not long after Wickersham's, George demonstrated the kind of awareness of human values that mattered to Bodger. That awareness influenced his sense of what was going on educationally on a small campus like theirs.

"People are more important than programs," George said. "But you have to have the programs. You can't neglect the curriculum. It's the ground on which we meet the students, where we have our influence as persons."

They talked about the atmosphere of the campus under Helfferich and now Pettit. They agreed that the college had a nostalgic residue of desire to educate the old way, by instilling a value system by forced feeding, by prescription.

"It won't work well much longer," George said. "The '60s happened. Educational theory changed."

"So," said Bodger, "the old liberal arts college knew what it was doing--it was building a value system for students."

"It's still our objective," George said, "but it simply can't be done that way now. We can't stuff values into their bodies like so much cotton."

As George saw it, the college had to show students that forming a value system of their own devising was of first importance to their right living. "We have to say: look, in principle the college is not going to force a value system down your throats. We will, however, force you to see that you must work out a value system for yourself. Through our personal life styles, we will go a step further--we will demonstrate one value system for you to consider. Through the ambiance of the entire college, which is the effect of a multitude of accumulated institutional decisions, we will predispose you to make certain choices. Be honest in your thoughts. Seek the truth in the face of too-obvious answers. Credit others for their efforts. These things we value. But you decide whether or not they are your choices."

"Have we arrived at this approach?" Bodger asked.

"We are talking about the contrast between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation," George said. "Our atmosphere tends to emphasize extrinsic motivation. Students will work because a grading system drives them, not because of their inner convictions about the value of learning for its own sake. If the faculty and the administration tuned themselves to the importance of intrinsic motivation, some change in the ethos could be effected."

"The extrinsic approach has left deep grooves," Bodger said.

"That doesn't preclude making new grooves," George said.

This view, and that of others Bodger sought out for talks in his office, reinforced his growing sense that he could lead the faculty and staff toward an alternative programmatic future for the college. He would keep the essence of the college's traditional purpose while swinging stylistically away from it. He felt a generational affinity at work in his talks with Fago and those like him, even though Bodger was a decade or more older. They were newer to the college than he. They were in the early stages of investing their professional capital in the place. They were looking for assurances that it would adapt to the changes they saw in their graduate schools and their undergraduate alma maters during the troubles of the '60s. Bodger was talking about those changes in a way that others in the administration were not. His talk may have been superficial, but it may have given hope. That may have been enough to create some bonds.

When Bodger told Matthew about his cultivation of faculty members, Matthew challenged him about his motives. "You say that the talks were ways for you to learn the issues of the faculty from inside their heads. Yet all along you pursued them as a prong in a campaign to become president."

"I still had a shoe solidly in the faculty, despite its thin sole," Bodger countered. "I could still claim to be first of all a colleague."

"Still," Matthew said, "you had more in mind about yourself than they did at the time."

Bodger said, "Looking back, I believe that leadership does not have the luxury of making neat boundaries between motives and actions. In this process, I was refining an insight that DLH tried to give me. It had to do with appearances and substances. If people saw you inspecting the state of the trees on the campus, you created for them an appearance of concern about the quality of the learning environment. You might ALSO have seen some sick trees and have told maintenance to bring in a tree doctor. That was optional, extra. Either outcome had value. Both of them together had greater value. That was the objective--from every single act of leadership, get as many outcomes as possible."

"Didn't the Wickershams and the Fagos hear you making commitments to them?" Matthew pressed. "Maybe that's why they were interested in your talks--not your brilliance but your access to the honey pot."

"Altogether likely. What was true for me had to be true for them. That is, they did not have to make neat distinctions between motives and actions any more than I did. If what we were doing was merely talking educational shop, that was fine with them. If in addition they were possibly positioning themselves favorably with a potential power-maker--that was okay also. I never thought they should not play it both ways too."

Matthew said, "Levels of meaning, ironies of effect. You *would* have been good in the church. A parish preacher lives inside an organizational structure distributed more widely than that of a faculty member's campus organization. But it is just as real in his local life on the street and in the pulpit. He rarely knows how much effect he can have--or should have--on the way the

larger church organization lives. Sometimes it seems like a mirage, sometimes like a sledge hammer."

Bodger said, "I had an instinct, I think, for getting at the right themes with the folks in those days, without too much calculation. This was possible because of the reality of a small campus community. We all knew what our mission was and, each in our fashion, felt committed to it. I felt there was more cohesion than was apparent in the fractiousness of faculty meetings and the divide between faculty and administration. We all talked about the same things in different places around the campus. The 'politics' of it was virtually the life we lived every day."

"No apologies for being manipulative, then?" asked Matthew.

"I recognize the multiple purposes at play in any situation and acquiesce in the complexity without feeling 'guilty' about it. I think," Bodger smiled, "that means no apologies."

### **Bodger broadened his perspective one summer at Harvard**

Matthew asked Bodger for another look at the 21 November 1972 manifesto. He wanted to confirm an impression.

*"Make big plans. Shift from being the 'exec' officer. More overt leadership. You seemed to be deciding that the role of 'can boy' had to be put behind you."*

"Right," Bodger said. "My career to that point had been to be the boss's helper. It reached an apotheosis under Pettit. Even if the presidency of the college had not been a possibility for me, I would have begun to shift at that point."

"Was this a kind of burn-out?"

"Not at all. To this day, I think that the small organizational issue enfolds the large one. This is not a standard view. The standard view is that the boss should not do the details. I used to think--and still think--that small problems become great. The microcosm becomes the macrocosm. Feelings about small, private offenses become large, public conflicts. The state of skin temperature becomes an affair of high office. I simply saw a need to shift my focus at that time, not to abandon my sense of the importance of the daily grind.

"I kept a log of little things. Here are slices of summer 1973: Ace Bailey, athletic director, asked me to issue a memo warning others not to book the new swimming pool to outside groups without talking first with him. Five resident summer school women students called me at home at 9:30 pm in a state of revolt over the conditions in their dormitory. The director of aquatics asked me to decide the kind of bench and chair to be purchased for the swimming program (my notes say I chose not to decide this one). I made emergency plans to permit evening summer school use of air-conditioned classrooms in the new gymnasium. I met with the dean of men to decide where to move twenty-four students in September from their assigned suites to allow the Philadelphia 76ers professional basketball team to stay in the dorms. We later had to buy extra-length beds for them. I got a warning from someone that a maintenance supervisor was up in arms because his major medical policy did not cover a condition that his young son had. Threats of labor unrest in the shop resulted. The head of a major department told me that he favored a union for the faculty.

"That summer we were still shaking down the newly opened Helfferich Hall, the College Union, the newly renovated Pfahler Hall. We were doing the renovation of Bomberger Hall. The plant agenda kept on going, and the director reported to me. So I was up to my eyes in the business of running things."

Matthew said, "Organizational life happens. The particulars tend to look more or less alike from one place to another, I imagine."

Bodger replied, "I was in the muck of the college's life, in any event. And I saw the personal need to use that experience, to incorporate it in a larger agenda, not to get away from it. Later, when I was president, people would say that I needed to give up the hands-on management of so much. I did give up a lot over time but not because of a principle of management leadership. I simply did not have the time then."

"It was probably a flaw to try to have so much stuff on your platter."

Bodger said, "Probably. It's not that I did not think a lot about management and leadership. I had hoped to go to Harvard in the summer of '73 for its six-week Institute for Educational Management. Too much was happening in '73 and the plan fell through. But I picked it up and went in the summer of '74 instead, the fifth year of its existence. I think some scholarship money became available that year that wasn't there the year before."

"This was a 'finishing school' experience?" asked Matthew.

"There were more than a hundred participants, mostly upper-level administrators, hardly any presidents. Each got there by a slightly different route. All of us were upward mobile, however. We were there because we wanted to lead the educational establishment. The venue was the Harvard Business School campus, across the Charles from Harvard Square. The faculty largely came from the HBS. The School of Education administered the program in some sort of partnership with the Business School. The Business School 'case method' and its special atmosphere dominated the experience."

"The atmosphere?" Matthew asked.

"An admixture of Harvard elitism, pressure to participate competitively, simulation of real management situations, a pragmatic, action-oriented mind-set. Even an activity this far removed from the center of Harvard could co-opt the mystique: 'this is the best.'"

Matthew said, "It doubtless sorted out some of your thinking about management style."

Bodger said, "IEM at Harvard did several things for me. It got me out of town and into a nationally attuned environment. I got in touch with the hot issues of the mid-seventies. We met and listened to guests of note, such as David Reisman, Hannah Grey--who was still at Yale and not yet president of the University of Chicago--, John Silber, near the start of his long journey as president of Boston University, Harvard President Derek Bok, still fairly new to the task. When a group of us had cocktails with Bok at the Faculty Club, one of us asked him what Harvard's number one problem was and he shot back the same answer that any of us would have given--finances. That *Harvard* worried first about money made me realize that the '70s would hand any new college president a heavy sack to carry.

"The Harvard summer gave me needed distance on the job I was already doing as a college vice president. It gave me the confidence to conceptualize administrative and governance issues with greater objectivity. Even a little chutzpah. The inclination at Harvard was to seize a complex problem as if it were a piece of raw meat in the paws of a predator and to shake it and chew it to bits. I did not talk about it with anyone back here, but the experience privately gave me a cushion, a resource on which I knew I could draw if I were to move on to become a president.

"IEM gave me a network of hopefuls around the country. I stayed in touch with a number of them for some years. One of the most interesting was Walter Leonard. At the time he was a cross-campus commuter. A black lawyer, he was Derek Bok's affirmative action officer for

Harvard. Walter gave us an inside look at the ways of Harvard at a time when legal issues were high on the list. Harvard hired no one before Walter reviewed the application and the process. He later became president of Fisk University. Fisk was a member of the Council of Higher Education of the United Church of Christ. Walter and I saw each other again in a very different venue. He had a rough sea while Fisk's president. At Harvard, though, he had all the luster of the growing group of black scholars and administrators who rose to prominence after the struggles of the '60s.

"The famous case method of the Business School inspired me. The faculty of IEM for the most part came from the HBS faculty. They played the pedagogical game with mastery in their horseshoe-shaped discussion halls, with wrap-around blackboards and big first-name cards in front of each of us participants. Their success, of course, was owing only in part to classroom virtuosity. The key was the case studies themselves, real problems addressed in cross-disciplinary perspectives. I could never duplicate these conditions in a freshman English comp class. But I was so excited by the teaching that I saw at IEM that my classroom never was the same again. I went after structured student participation and became a chalkboard jockey like never before.

"At Cambridge I developed a list of local issues that I wrote up and shared selectively when I came home among board members and maybe even some faculty colleagues, if I remember rightly."

Matthew intoned, *"Make big plans. Shift from being the 'exec' officer. More overt leadership."*

Bodger after some searching showed Matthew the paper that ended with his list.

"This is a report on your experience as a whole," said Matthew.

"It ends, though, with a set of eight items, each of which touched on a significant policy nerve here at the time."

"You were using your report to float a political platform without calling it that."

Bodger said, "You could see it that way. I could also have denied it was anything like that if challenged."

Matthew perused the following text:

*Did my exposure at IEM cause me to perceive our college more clearly or differently? The experience did lead me to compare our college with others and to form some thoughts that might be useful. In listing a few of these thoughts, I reserve the right to explain myself more fully to anyone interested--and to change my mind about any of the items without prior notice!*

*Item: Our unwillingness to diversify our mission--that is, our dedication to an undergraduate liberal arts curriculum--is a strength. It compels us to keep first things first.*

*Item: However, our resistance to change within a liberal arts curriculum is somewhat excessive. Standards are not necessarily upheld by merely standing fast. Colleges around us are reshaping and rethinking the conceptual boundaries of the disciplines, and we should take heed.*

*Item: Administratively, we are thinly staffed with competent people. This has been a strength. As the world encroaches--through government, programs like affirmative action for women and minorities, local population growth, consumerism, regional coordination, State Education bureaucracy--we will probably have to get thicker, and at the same time resist "self-bureaucratization."*



*Item: We have identified our segment of the regional market fairly well in the past. We will have to sharpen our focus and strive even harder just to keep our share of the students in the future.*

*Item: We have maintained narrower boundaries on student behavior than most colleges of comparable academic quality. This has related to our marketing: the "customers" we identified have wanted this "product." We will find increasingly that the narrow boundaries must be carefully relocated each year if we are to keep our share of the market.*

*Item: Mere academic professionalism is not enough to make a great small college. Some sort of overriding social or ethical vision must inform the activity of everyone. Our vision, rooted in the pietism of yesteryear, needs to be studied rationally and articulated in terms that are meaningful to faculty and students of the present day--but by no means should we abandon the idea that there is a commitment larger than the sum of the major academic disciplines. I talked with some disillusioned people from prestigious sister colleges who felt that a graduate school mentality had cost their campuses a soul.*

*Item: We do not adequately recognize or utilize the fact that the most important influence on learning is the peer group, the student's fellow students. (Frank Newman, author of *Health, Education, and Welfare's* influential study, *National Policy and Higher Education*, and president-elect of Rhode Island University, made this point.)*

*Item: We could give much greater attention to the retraining and enrichment of faculty, both within their disciplines and in other disciplines.*

*Finally, I list the goals of undergraduate education as they were expressed by Newman. His thesis was that while these goals are familiar to us, we have no measure to prove that we are presently meeting them. Newman said that education should teach the following: learn to learn; master critical thinking; develop a sense of the humane nature of mankind; learn to communicate in speaking, writing and mathematics; develop scholarly objectives; gain specific knowledge in a subject field; acquire intellectual curiosity and daring; learn to tolerate ambiguity; develop creativity, imagination and esthetic appreciation.*

*These goals had an old sound, but in the refreshing atmosphere of the IEM program, they also sounded like mandates for a new and better order in higher education.*

"Translate the last sentence," Bodger said, "to mean a new and better order here, at this college."

Matthew said, "I could imagine that Bill Pettit would see this as a criticism of what he was doing."

"Oddly, he didn't tell me that. By the summer of '74, it was more and more evident that I would be a candidate when he decided to bow out. We had worked harmoniously together for several years. Much happened, especially in the continued development of the plant--Bomberger and Pfahler renovated, Helfferich Hall opened, the College Union opened, an all-weather track installed and playing fields relocated, even an electrical substation installed. I was a willing go-between for him in these projects. They did not have the potential to separate us on policy grounds. I had direct relationships with key board members and DLH. My fund-raising and physical plant responsibilities legitimated these relationships."

"Still," Matthew said, "I could imagine it."

"Sure," Bodger said. "We both were in an odd position that became more odd as the time for transition came closer. My Harvard caper and the report on it put me in a more serious

running position in the eyes of Ted Schwalm, the board chairman, Heefner, Guest, DLH, and others. Though he kept his own counsel, Pettit must have become conscious of the horizon and the inevitability of his departure. He had to be looking ahead to that as the pressures mounted. The faculty, even old friends, nagged him constantly over salary needs in the double-digit economic climate. Students were after him constantly to ease up on social restrictions surrounding dorm visits and drinking on campus. He had to tuck it in and make a major change when our students honed in on Pennsylvania's new ban on gender discrimination in college housing. It must have been a strange moment for him when he had to abandon the old paternalistic women's hours in dorms and make them equal to those of the men.

"The '60s ended but the first half of the '70s in a way was worse. The idealism faded but the predisposition to doubt the system flourished. The Nixon Watergate tragedy heated up, leading to Nixon's resignation on 9 August 1974. It infected everything in America. It compounded the lingering oil supply dilemma and galloping inflation. Pettit pushed for more salary expenditures in his presentations to our board, but the faculty did not hear him, and they blamed him for their malaise. We had a long tradition of low tuition charges. He could not bring himself to push them up to meet inflation, fearing the negative reaction of families and damage to our retention rate. We already were losing too many students through transfer and drop-out. On social policy, he managed to delay and engage the students better than DLH had done, allowing incremental change without getting into trouble with our conservative board. But student resentment kept simmering and spreading nonetheless.

"Point is," Bodger said, "he had such a heavy schedule of issues that there was little need for him to be thinking about my place in the future politics of the institution. I like to think that he welcomed my help, such as it was, and that he thought the dynamics of leadership change would take care of themselves in due course. He may not have seen it as one of his responsibilities. DLH was still very much on the scene, tending to the chimings. The chimings to Pettit may well have looked like candidates to succeed him and he could leave them to the chancellor."

### Work engulfed family

"Families pay a price for executive leadership," Matthew said to Bodger. "If it was evident to Pettit by 1974 that you would be running for office, it must have been evident to Margot and maybe your kids. I worry about the price tag families have to pay."

"You should worry," said Bodger, "if my example teaches anything."

"My wife and two children have a strong church foundation," said Matthew. "We're close. Even so, I see the traveling that James does and the nightly meetings around the conference."

Bodger said, "Mine is an easily told tale but not a proud one. I was obsessed with work. I took my wife's support for granted. Without realizing it, I paid little attention to the daily needs of my two children. *Mea culpa.*"

"These are the sins of a male-dominated generation," Matthew said, with a stab at charity.

Bodger replied, "I went beyond. I have only been able to see this more clearly since leaving office. Acknowledging it does not erase the loss."

"Overdeveloped super-ego?" Matthew queried.

"That's a way to see it. I was involved in self-sacrifice for the social good. Margot saw that it was workaholism long before I could accept her diagnosis. Then it was too late. I knew only

one way to work, flat out, all-giving, damn the consequences to my body, my family. I had a need to avoid myself. I think it lay behind a suicide theme in those years."

"As a *thought* about suicide?" Matthew sought clarification.

Bodger said, "A thought, yes, not more than that. To think about it was therapeutic. Paradoxically, it may have helped me to survive." Bodger showed Matthew one of his poems as evidence.

### MY SUICIDES

"Even if one does not believe in God,  
Suicide is not legitimate"--  
Camus. But I've contrived a lawful mode,  
A guillotine that's indeterminate.

He chose survival slung between a hope  
Of order and consciousness of empty sound  
Across a cosmos. Lucid heliotrope,  
He raged. I concentrate upon the ground.

It's true: I must survive by any means.  
I have to live; I cannot fully kill  
Myself; I cannot lightly empty veins.  
Expect of me no perfect lack of will.

Yet I cannot leave the house before I've died:  
Each morning I commit a suicide.

Matthew looked up and said, "Literary."

Bodger said, "Words words words. To myself. They were a life jacket of sorts. In that sense, the theme served my family. But isn't that a stretch?"

Matthew held up his hands. "I'm not the judge! I'm just interested in the parallels."

Bodger said, "Your personal priorities are more shapely than mine could ever be. May God save you from psychoanalyzing yourself."

"Doesn't anyone in a leadership position need to be self-aware, if only to function effectively?"

"I'm sure," said Bodger. "I mainly remember being driven by feelings, as if I was compelled to act without conscious reflection. The thoughts I had about my path to the presidency were like flashlight stabs in a dark wood rather than a light bulb in a room. When I read my lists and notes today, they seem sensible only because the drives within--fear, desire, hunger for affirmation--no longer flood my brain. I am lucky to have survived to be able to think about that whole hurricane with a little detachment."

Matthew replied, "It has to be hard to keep family obligations in perspective when you feel like you're living through a hurricane."

"We survived because Margot was long-suffering. We had a rock-bottom sense of connection. We started as teenage sweethearts. I was able to take her support for granted--that

is what I can see and regret now. We were of a generation that were married once and stayed married. If you want to evaluate the influence of marriage on a career, I simply could not have become president of the college without her. This says nothing, however, to the issue of fairness and justice to her."

"Children?" said Matthew. "How do you think family obligations can play out for them in a father's 'hurricane'?"

"Creativity was the key, as far as I was concerned," Bodger said. "Karen was musically gifted. Kurt had a whole palette of talents as a boy, music, electronics, photography, poetry. I always felt in synch with my kids. It was a shock to learn later in life that I might have appeared to be remote from them. I suppose that the work I was doing made that inevitable, but it did not occur to me at the time. I admired their abilities and thought I encouraged them. The masculine values of the time would have allowed me to believe that I was somehow doing them good by succeeding in my work."

Bodger knew he was talking with an expert in family values. He was certain his testimony could do nothing to advance Matthew's knowledge of what might come of his family if he advanced to the big job at the church. Their conversation about family soon ended.

### **It was a dark time to be preparing**

Their talk about the Bodger family in the mid-'70s, however, reminded him of the pivotal character of that time leading up to his election to the presidency. He moved before a larger background dramatically colored by Nixon's emerging Watergate tragedy and the sense of crisis precipitated by the energy shortage. DLH had lessened his influence on the Pettit administration. Pettit had demanded good judgment and performance from Bodger as a matter of course. Bodger no longer had the luxury of being an apprentice. Bodger's children were growing up. His wife was teaching elementary music again and directing a church choir. She too had a drive to work. His reading of American literature had led him to think his life's experience could represent something more than himself in the story of evolving American character. He thought in his younger years the medium for that representation would be literature itself. Now he yielded to the realization that the medium would be the college. The turn of events moved him into position to be an institution builder.

When his father died of a heart attack at the very end of 1973 at age 80, it signaled for him a turn, finally, into the full-blown phase of maturity demanded by such a role. His death was literally a dark moment, coming in that Kafka-esque winter when, to save electric power, people did not unpack their Christmas tree lights.

Bodger and Karen and Kurt walked up the white middle line of Route 29 toward the next village, Rahns, on a foggy Christmas Eve. They feared being hit by no traffic, for there was none. The energy crunch kept everyone home.

Bodger's mood was dark for a while that winter. He felt, as all sons and daughters feel, the edge of the timeless unknown move a step closer to him as his father's large figure disappeared from the space in front of him. But that too was a step in the maturing process he could feel working within him. His six summer weeks in Cambridge in the summer of '74 followed that dark winter. A new light in his life began to emerge. He became less uncomfortable with the still-incredible possibility waiting to happen to him.

In the two remaining years before his election to the presidency, Bodger groomed himself deliberately for the possibility. His friends on the board and on the faculty became increasingly sure that his election would serve the college well. (He guessed also that many non-supporters harbored growing fear that the board could actually make such a mistake.) Faculty politics heated up in ways that Bodger did not fully understand. Tutored by Bill Heefner and D. L. Helfferich, and toward the end by Bill Pettit too, Bodger tried to behave as presidentially as he could without letting people see that he was consciously doing so. Looking back through all the years now, he enjoyed another laugh at himself. His behavior must have been as transparent as glass to anyone watching. But a basic naiveté must have served him and helped him get through.

One day, as the selection process was getting started, DLH puffed his pipe and looked at Bodger, amused and quizzical at the same time.

"Where did this Bodger thing come from? Who are you?" he said, echoing a question someone had asked him earlier in the day.

"God knows," Bodger replied. "I don't."

### **Campus conflicts set the stage**

At their next talk together, Matthew said, "The church has an elaborate selection process. It took nearly a year for me to get this new number two position in the church conference. It will take at least that when I apply for the top position. Colleges don't choose leaders swiftly either, from what I see."

"What can I tell you?" asked Bodger.

"Competing candidates are in a kind of zoo," said Matthew. "Isn't there a brand of behavior that develops strictly for that limited time?"

Bodger said, "When you are candidate for a position while hard at work on the scene of the search, and not a visiting fireman, that is especially so."

"How did your behavior change?" asked Matthew.

Bodger said, "I remained very active in my day-to-day work. I became rather passive with respect to the search." But not totally, he thought to himself.

At Matthew's urging, Bodger reconstructed what went on in the months leading up to his election in May 1976.

Looking back at those campus events from his vantagepoint of some two decades, Bodger felt as if he were looking through the eyes of Gulliver at the land of little people. The citizens of Lilliput were in a conflict with the neighboring nation of little people in Blefuscu. The nub of the argument: which end of an egg should one break before eating, the Big End, as the Blefuscuans held, or the Little End, as the Lilliputians had come to believe? Small issues, he mused, for the small. The parochial process by which he was selected to be the president reminded him now of the bustling and huffing that Gulliver found at the Lilliputian court over Big-Endism. Matthew is not going to believe this, Bodger told himself.

"There are no grown-ups," a priest once said to Andre Malraux. He was summing up his insight into human life after decades of listening in the confessional booth. We are all Lilliputians, Bodger wanted to add as a gloss. The players on the college scene in the mid-'70s, including himself, looked oddly like the subjects of the Most Mighty Emperor of Lilliput, Delight and Terror of the Universe, seeking to preserve Little Endism.

Bodger would not tell Matthew about his Swiftian comparison. It was an indulgence better kept to himself. He recalled an old saw about campus politics: "the passions are so great because the issues are so small."

But the issues of that time on campus were real enough. The selection process, however parochial, was earnest. The institution was approaching a fork in the road of its development. The urge was strong among many on the board to preserve a certain posture in the face of a rapidly changing higher educational scene. They aimed to constitute the college as an avowedly "Christian" institution of an unashamedly conservative kind. DLH's speech on the philosophical temper of the college would be its vehicle.

Yet, Bodger was aware, at the same time, of a more receptive attitude toward change. It pervaded the faculty and the students as a matter of course. It also arose in his conversations with some board members and alumni with an interest and an influence. Those of this persuasion criticized the slowness of the college to change and wanted to see a sharp turn toward a new direction under a new president. Many thought this would require someone from outside the *Freundschaft* of the current leadership--that is, someone other than Bodger. Bodger believed that carefully excerpted parts of the DLH speech could equally well become the vehicle for this course of development.

The transition to Bodger's presidency had its roots in a concatenation of this conflict of vision with other conflicts during Pettit's final year in office, 1975-76.

At a personal level, Pettit was turning 67 years of age, and his wife had been found to have a serious illness. After 43 years of unstinting service to the college, sixteen as dean and nearly six as president, he was doubtless growing tired of the stress and strain. The personal satisfaction of being the top man eroded quickly, Bodger would later learn, in the acid of everyday executive responsibility.

The unpredictability of the politics and the economy of the nation in the post-Watergate years had its unsettling ripple effects even in Lilliput. There was a worrisome downward trend in the number of applications for admission to the college and an upward trend in the number of enrolled students transferring elsewhere. The erosive effect of inflation on salary increases demoralized the faculty and staff.

The hasty termination of a psychology professor's employment in 1973 had left some scars in the body politic. The basis for the termination seemed to the professor and others to be personal rather than professional. It led to an ad hoc review that put Pettit's judgment on trial, but the termination stuck. The scars took the form of nagging complaints among a number of faculty about arbitrary and capricious administrative style. There was a rumbling underground about the virtues of faculty unionization.

Pettit's art of keeping students at bay while preserving conservative social rules deserved to be admired for its cleverness. But the stridency of student voices did not abate. The official student government as well as ad hoc groups initiated demands for reform of rules governing residential behavior. One had to wonder how long he could continue practicing a subtle art of give-a-little, take-a-little with the student leaders. The student newspaper played along with faculty who were critical of the administration.

Pettit became the titular leader of a fund-raising campaign in 1970, The Century II Program, and he worked hard to raise funds. The goals were not of his making but largely worked up by Bodger with key board members. Some specific targets were unrealistic. The aggregate goal was being met, the sub-goals for support of faculty especially were glaringly undersubscribed.

The faculty blamed Pettit for the shortfall. Further, they blamed him for declaring the Century II Program a success and covering up the lack of funds raised directly for faculty.

Hurts and grudges of a personal nature lasted long in Lilliput. In his final year, some of Pettit's old friends and colleagues allowed them to surface. They tended to forget good times of past years together. It was not a happy Empire in 1975.

However, it was not a campus knowingly about to tear itself apart. As faculty discontent simmered and found expression in the fall of that year, their public voices preserved a sense of the importance of respectful but decisive procedure. They framed the conflict in formal professionalism, in the expressed desire to find resolution for the long-term good of the college.

### **Some faculty wrote an open letter of concerns to the president**

The precipitating events in the story of Bodger's election to the presidency started rolling on 7 October 1975. A handful of faculty wrote an open letter of concerns and began asking all tenured faculty members to sign it. They did not ask the untenured to sign. They acknowledged the untenured members' lack of job protection and assumed they would fear the reprisal of the administration.

The initiators of the letter were hardly the stereotypical faculty rabble-rousers. One was Pettit's fellow chemistry department colleague of long-standing, a protege in the department since his days as an outstanding chemistry undergraduate. Two were quintessential alumni faculty members with many years of devoted service in and out of the classroom, both members of the political science department. Veteran colleagues of Pettit on the faculty, they were highly regarded on and off campus. One had capped his career by seeking and winning election to the legislature in Harrisburg. Another leader was a long-time member of the economics and business administration department, respected as a practicing bank board director as well as mentor to several generations of business majors. The fifth was Pettit's own handpicked successor to teach organic chemistry, an outstanding young teacher who in his ten years on campus established a reputation for unflinching integrity in faculty governance. As they told a committee of board members some months later, they represented over a century of service to the college and were steeped in its quality and traditions.

Bodger, it turned out, remembered hearing about the letter of concerns from campus contacts before Pettit but not by much. The faculty had not approached Bodger for a signature. He had not seen the letter, but his circle of faculty friends was abuzz about it. He remembered telling Pettit about the letter in the president's office, perhaps a day before it was delivered. Thirty-seven faculty members signed it, a majority of the tenured faculty. It reached Pettit's desk on the morning of 17 October.

Perhaps unaware that the letter was circulating, but sensing a need to connect, Pettit on 14 October had asked the dean to announce a special mid-day faculty meeting for three days hence, the 17th. He wanted to give the good news that the board had approved the distribution of a salary supplement to faculty to help make up for inflation. When the letter of concerns arrived before the noontime meeting, Pettit resolved to acknowledge the letter immediately but to delay any substantive reaction except on the prescheduled topic of salaries.

Pettit's announcement about a salary supplement fell on largely ungrateful ears and failed to quiet the excitement over the delivery of the letter. The maximum one-time supplement for a year

would be \$400, the minimum, \$100, with low-ranking instructors getting the most and full professors least. It appeared to be too little too late.

The "We're concerned" letter identified "problems which require immediate remedial action." The particular issues:

--"...drastic and imaginative action must be taken to improve faculty salaries if the college is to maintain its academic excellence."

--The Century II Program "has not fulfilled one of its goals--namely, the improvement of faculty salaries." The alumni were allegedly misled by the president, who spoke of the Program as a "success."

--Faculty should "participate in decisions as to the allocation of financial resources, according to AAUP guidelines."

--A "grievance committee" should be formed.

--Faculty should sit on the board of directors.

--The college should utilize the expertise of faculty in making administrative decisions.

The letter concluded, "In light of these concerns, we request that a small group of Faculty representing the undersigned be permitted to discuss with you and with Board members, at the earliest convenience, the seriousness of the situation which exists on this campus and possible solutions to some of these difficult problems. We want to make it clear that this letter is not motivated by personal animosity but by genuine concern for and loyalty to the college."

In the paternalistic, traditionalist culture of the college, such an open expression of dissatisfaction and demand for specific changes aimed directly at the president and board had not been seen since an unsuccessful attempt to overturn the administration immediately after World War II. The faculty leaders made certain that board members received copies at their homes or offices. They thus sought to guarantee that Pettit would be unable to sweep it under the rug.

Circulation to the board members actually helped Pettit frame a response. It gave him some time. Communication with the board was diffused; he could credibly tell the faculty that he needed time to get guidance and direction from the board members. It allowed him to select strong board members as key participants in the discussion of the issues. He thereby avoided a lonely presidential confrontation with excited faculty members.

Pettit delayed an official procedural acknowledgement of the letter until the regular faculty meeting in the first week of November. This was nearly a month after the letter was drafted and some three weeks after Pettit received it. He delayed a substantive response until the following faculty meeting in the first week of December. With the fall semester moving toward a close and Christmas break in the offing, he perhaps was thinking like the veteran dean that he was: the passions of October usually cool a little by December.

At the November meeting, Pettit kept a presidential air. Bodger remembered thinking how hard he himself would have found it to maintain equanimity in front of a roomful of familiar people who had deliberately sought to undermine him. Pettit took credit for having already prepared a strategy to improve salaries prior to receipt of the letter. The salary supplements may have been woefully small, but the step he took was real. He picked on the procedural weaknesses of the faculty leaders with an appearance of deference to the board and to the faculty who had not signed the letter. He read the letter of concerns aloud for the benefit of the untenured faculty who were reportedly left out of the loop by their self-appointed leaders. Many took this as his way of putting down the leaders. In effect, he called into question the leadership's license to represent the entire faculty when they had failed to bring the entire faculty into the process.



Then he advanced his own office and the floor of full faculty meetings as the best venues for airing concerns. He offered all an invitation to visit him singly or in small groups to talk informally about concerns. Special faculty meetings could be arranged, he said, if time were needed to get issues into open air.

The faculty leadership correctly understood these offers to mean that Pettit opposed meeting with *them* as they proposed. Bodger assumed that legal counsel was supporting Pettit's own canny judgment to avoid the appearance of a de facto collective bargaining engagement.

Two days later the faculty leaders parried Pettit's unwillingness to meet by informing him that the 37 signatories to the letter had selected them by secret ballot to speak on their behalf. They pressed to meet with him and the board or with the board alone.

This tactical maneuver went unanswered, however. Pettit already had promised to respond to the whole faculty at its regular 3 December meeting after he received the feedback of the board--and not before.

He also got out in front against the charge that he had not been candid about the results of the Century II fund-raising campaign. At the November faculty meeting, after Pettit spelled out his procedure for answering the letter of concerns, he asked Bodger to clarify the goals and outcomes of the campaign. Bodger distributed a six-page assessment to each faculty member and commented on the achievements and shortcomings of the five-year effort ended 30 June 1975. It showed that the general goal of \$5,450,000 had been surpassed, if government funds and deferred gifts were counted. It showed clearly, at the same time, that support for faculty reached only a little more than half the proposed targets.

His appearance in front of the faculty as the vice president for administrative affairs at that charged-up faculty meeting was a notable if not critical moment for Bodger, the would-be candidate for president. The faculty had been careful not to indict him for the shortcomings of Century II. Yet, the campaign was in reality more his doing than Pettit's. Its shortcomings were sown in the over-optimism of 1970, when goals were set without the research to show they were attainable. Although many on the faculty may have thought of him as a savvy fund-raiser because of his early success in boosting the annual fund, Bodger lacked experience at capital campaigning. He had taken responsibility for the fund-raising campaign without cautioning himself about the consequences of failing. With DLH still active on the board and with Pettit becoming supportive of his ambitions, Bodger continued to feel insulated somewhat from the dangers of performance evaluation by the faculty and the board.

He never sought or received an assessment from faculty colleagues of his report. It was clearly intended to support the president against his critics. It set the stage for the board's confirmation that a renewed fund-raising effort would be made to improve the lot of the faculty. Bodger came to believe, in the absence of word to the contrary, that he had effectively removed the criticism of Century II from the faculty's bill of particulars against Pettit. He had not, of course, changed their judgment that the college was raising too little money to support their salaries and professional development.

From a personal viewpoint, Bodger concluded that his report did not fatally damage him in the eyes of faculty. He had the satisfaction of having been up-front about his role and his allegiance. For better or worse, he was Pettit's vice president, working as hard as he could for the betterment of his alma mater under Pettit's leadership. Period. He avoided any overtures from faculty colleagues to show his agreement with the letter of concerns.

It appeared to Bodger that the president had successfully skirted the danger of inadvertently entering a collective bargaining process. He had carefully communicated only with the whole faculty. He had avoided any formal acknowledgment of the five leaders. In their excitement at having openly joined the issues, the faculty leaders, Bodger felt, failed to see that procedurally Pettit had gained the offensive. Yet, it also was evident to him that they had gained the attention of the board. One way or another, they would have their chance to say their piece to the board. No matter what the outcome, they could feel successful in putting Pettit's presidential leadership on trial.

### **The president and the board responded to faculty concerns**

The air was charged as the faculty convened in the large lecture room of Pfahler Hall for the regular monthly meeting on 3 December 1975. Counting Pettit, 78 faculty members were in attendance, plus five administrative staff members--virtually the whole house. Bodger remembered having almost contradictory feelings. He felt apprehensive because the stability of the entire college appeared to be at risk. But he felt an inner calm because, with the issues finally addressed directly, the collective good judgment in the room would somehow make everything work out--or so he wanted to believe.

Pettit had an air of assurance. He probably had privately decided by that time, without confiding in anyone other than his wife, to retire. That would have allowed him an ease of feeling otherwise hard to find in such a setting.

In his remarks, he continued to insist that the leaders of the letter movement did not represent the whole faculty and that he and the board therefore would not meet with them. However, he had invited them to his office before the meeting to give them advance knowledge of the official response to the 7 October letter. This had the appearance of courtesy. It also no doubt was a long-shot attempt to resolve the conflict by giving the committee a chance to support the official response to their concerns.

The official response came in the form of a letter from the secretary of the board, Ellwood S. Paisley, to the president. Pettit and board leaders deliberately chose the channel of communication to reinforce the doctrine that the president was the only official liaison between the faculty and the board. Later some faculty would say that the Paisley letter sounded suspiciously like Pettit in style. The complaint reflected in Bodger's mind a naivete about the way a president and a board functioned together. Pettit of course had had a major hand in drafting the letter. Bodger understood that that was the way it worked.

The letter began by conceding that increases in faculty salaries were slow in coming and by hoping for more to come on top of those already announced. It ended by encouraging faculty members with a particular expertise in dealing with a problem of the college to offer their help to the administration.

With the other faculty concerns, it did not agree. It forthrightly rejected the allegation that Pettit had not been candid about The Century II Program. It reaffirmed the position of the president as head of the faculty and the medium of communication between faculty and board. It would allow grievances to come to the board through the president on an ad hoc basis but did not agree to create a permanent grievance committee. It flatly rejected the idea of placing voting faculty representatives on the board. At the same time, it reminded them that faculty members and students frequently came to board meetings and spoke as guests.

On completing his reading of the board letter, Pettit spoke out against internal discord. He hinted that that would pull the college down. Instead, he offered his own leadership in keeping the college on a positive course:

*When discontent is sown among faculty members, and among students who contract the contagion, our capital whether in dollars, good will, or mutual trust runs down as the sands run in an hour glass. I ask for your support of the package that I present today. I can't forget that I was once a faculty member and although I no longer teach, don't forget that I have been continuously sympathetic to you and to your needs.*

Pettit then presented an itemized method for addressing the dissatisfactions of the faculty--for "approaching a higher degree of satisfaction among all who have the interest of the college at heart."

His initiatives were thoughtful and responsive to the concerns. Had they come before rather than after the faculty letter of 7 October, they might have struck faculty as useful responses to the hard times at hand. They appeared to faculty in December 1975, however, as a transparent stroke to halt the dissidence.

Pettit reaffirmed the salary supplement announced at the 17 October meeting and promised more for the following year from a just-decided increase in tuition charges. He called for a deferral of capital expenditures so that those funds could be used for salaries.

He promised that Bodger, with the aid of the business manager, would present to faculty five-year projections of income and expense that were presented earlier to the board. This was his attempt to share information about institutional finances more widely.

Then he itemized a set of changes in faculty involvement in governance intended to give them greater knowledge and voice.

A faculty member was to be added to the Campus Investment Committee.

He recommended that the faculty create an Advisory Committee on College Priorities with three elected members. They would sit with the president, academic dean, business manager, and vice president for administrative affairs. They would deliberate on budgetary priorities including salaries. Pettit suggested that one of the three attend board budget committee meetings. He proposed that the three members meet before the March 1976 board meeting with the board "committee to work with faculty and students," which was created ad hoc to deal with the discordant situation.

He then proposed that the economics department develop a lesson in "how to read a balance sheet" for faculty members so that they would better understand the college's financial position.

Finally, he announced that he would appoint two ad hoc committees intended to involve faculty directly in new strategies for fund-raising--Bodger's responsibility--and admissions.

Pettit's proposals provoked a heated and lengthy discussion. One of the five initiators of the letter immediately disavowed the group's participation in the proposals. Pettit's overture to them prior to the meeting thus failed to win them over. The thrust in the discussion was then to legitimize the five as representatives of the faculty to the board. Pettit countered by reminding the faculty that the board had authorized three persons to be elected to the newly proposed Priorities Committee, not five. Several parliamentary initiatives showed that the five did not have unanimous support in the faculty. But in the end they were constituted as an ad hoc committee and elected by their colleagues to represent them in discussions with the board.

Bodger had entered the meeting wanting to believe that the faculty and Pettit would find a way of working things out. Two of the five initiators had been his professors; his respect for them as mentors had remained intact even as he had come to know them as colleagues, fallible and vulnerable like everyone else. He respected the rest of the group as well. By the end of the day, his reserve of respect for them still held, though it was a little diminished. Having a window on both the lonely agony of Pettit and the machinations of faculty activists, Bodger watched as egos contended and as tacticians stumbled through the briar patch of parliamentary procedure. Rather like a child watching parents in a family argument, he kept quiet and tucked the events in his memory for future reference.

The "five" now were legitimized and would meet to discuss concerns with the ad hoc board committee. The semester break and other delays postponed that meeting until 17 February 1976, two and a half months later. In the interim, the "five" sought feedback from all faculty on their feeling about the concerns itemized in their 7 October letter. Several faculty members with loyalties to Pettit urged that the faculty work with the proposals Pettit had set forth in December. They were trying to show that "the faculty" was not a political monolith.

Indeed, while the faculty as a whole was cautious and non-doctrinaire, Bodger became aware that a small segment might be pushing for the recognition of AAUP as a collective bargaining agent. The maneuvering of Pettit around the status of the "committee of five" derived in part from the caution he felt to avoid such recognition. If this was a major objective among faculty leaders, it did not surface and a vote never was called for. Bodger, although out of the loop of faculty chatter, assumed that only a few were willing to push for formal collectivization. Most probably saw the threat--however slight--as a useful way to pressure Pettit and the board to yield salaries and some power.

In tandem with the faculty conversations over the letter of concerns, some faculty gained control of a process for revising the faculty handbook through action on the faculty floor. Theretofore, this had been strictly an administrative task. The handbook had been an administrative tool, intended to inform faculty of the working rules and procedures. The energizing force in The Faculty Committee to Revise the Faculty Handbook was the junior member of the "five" who was now teaching Pettit's own classic course in organic chemistry.

Both sides pretended that the committee was doing "editorial" work and not making new policy. This pretense allowed the revision to go forward in the traditional "collegial" setting of a faculty attending to its affairs. In fact, the draft text introduced substantively new procedures on promotion and tenure and other issues. These provisions had enjoyed no standing in the eyes of the administration and board from time immemorial at the college, although they were common at many colleges of comparable reputation.

On 13 February 1976, the faculty met in special session to discuss and vote on the proposed policy changes to the handbook and to recommend them to the board of directors. Presiding over the meeting, Pettit projected a tone of accommodation. He remained focused, however, on the environmental realities of the college. He cautioned the faculty that the marketplace for independent colleges was threatening and that imprudent internal changes of policy, especially those costing more money, could put the college at a further disadvantage. His admonitions mainly served his own sense of need to remain in charge and probably had little bearing on the proceedings. The changes approved that day and later confirmed by the board ultimately gave the faculty a greater say in the standards and practices of their profession on campus. This would establish a new set of conditions for faculty governance in the Bodger administration.

Four days later, on 17 February 1976, the long-awaited meeting between the five faculty members and the board committee to work with faculty and students took place. The "five" presented written discussions of the main concerns raised by the 7 October letter and reported on faculty responses to their call for opinions from their colleagues. By the time the two groups met, of course, much had been set in motion. The 7 October letter, the response of the board and of Pettit, and the proposed revisions of the handbook had represented a change process that to a considerable extent satisfied many on the faculty prior to this meeting.

The *fact* of the meeting was more significant for many faculty than the substance of the discussion. In the fall, few believed that faculty representatives ever would get around Pettit to a direct confrontation with board members themselves. Yet here they were. In addition to a review of the five key concerns expressed in the 7 October letter, the "five" emphatically requested a continuation of meetings at least once a semester.

In less than a month, the college would learn that Pettit wished to retire from the presidency. Although they were unaware of his intention, the faculty "five" had to have been thinking about succession as they went into the meeting with board members. The issue did not surface in the meeting, however, except tangentially.

One of the "five," Roger Staiger, head of chemistry, produced a letter he received from the board president in February 1969, during D. L. Helfferich's last year in office. The unrest among faculty and students at that time had stirred the board to reach out. In a bold stroke, the board president, William Reimert, picking up Helfferich's inclinations, had jumped ahead of the unrest. He announced that a member of the faculty and a representative of the student body would be invited to board meetings. Faculty and student representatives additionally would be named to serve on the principal committees of the board.

In the minutes of the board, Bodger found that in November 1968 it approved this innovation. There were to be two faculty members and two students on the long-term planning committee and the same number on the buildings and grounds committee. A faculty member was to sit with the Government and Instruction Committee and the Honorary Degree committee.

Staiger commented approvingly on this arrangement as a rational solution to board-faculty liaison. He criticized the Pettit administration for failing to adhere to those procedures. The letter from Reimert that Staiger showed to the board members explained the board's general strategy for including faculty and students and invited him to serve on the committee on presidential selection. The November 1968 board action made no mention of service on ad hoc committees, but the evidence presented by Staiger showed its intention in that direction.

Bodger could not help but agree with Staiger's observation about faculty representation on board committees. He had been at DLH's right hand at the time of the decision to include faculty and students on the committees. He felt that, if Reimert had not ceased to be active owing to an illness that proved fatal later in 1969, the plan would have been fully implemented. He knew that Reimert believed it was a desirable step to keep the college community together amid the disruptions of the late '60s. As editor of the Allentown *Call-Chronicle* newspapers, he was in immediate touch with the far-reaching reshaping of institutional structures in American society. He had developed his own convictions on how to deal with it. The letter in Staiger's hand was as much the product of his thinking as of DLH's--perhaps more so. Implementing the plan, DLH modified it somewhat, and when Pettit became president in the fall of 1970 he modified it still further. It was possible for Bodger--with Staiger--to look back on that failed initiative of the late

'60s as a lost opportunity. It could have made Pettit's administration significantly more responsive to the pulse of the campus community before rather than after the declaration of "concerns."

In any event, by circulating his seven-year-old letter of appointment, Staiger signaled the board members that the "five" were thinking about presidential selection without having to say a word about it.

### Students had their own demands

Students as well as faculty were in Pettit's face with demands for change in the fall of 1975. There was some evidence that student leaders were prepared to endorse the concerns of the faculty in return for faculty support for more liberal social policies for students. Whatever the degree of collaboration, Pettit had to conduct campaigns on two fronts to keep both segments of the campus community in check.

In DLH's last years as president, 1969-70, a formal statement of Student Freedoms and Responsibilities emerged from the conflict between students and the administration. Bodger played a key role in its drafting. It incorporated high-sounding concepts about rational discourse. While granting students the right to talk and request, it essentially kept authority solidly in the hands of the administration and board. It came down foursquare against campus disruption. The board had no difficulty in approving it. And students, with successive graduations, lost sight of it.

Pettit sought to divert the attention of students from dorm hours and alcohol prohibition. He pushed the renovation of the old library into a handsome and functional College Union, which opened in 1973. It gave a sizeable set of students new opportunities for learning about management of an enterprise; and it provided a campus "living room" that received high marks from all. Bodger was the chairman of the Union governing board.

For a time, Pettit also empowered a team of young faculty to generate service projects among students. This initiative became obscure as the concerns of faculty and of students respectively came to overshadow campus consciousness. Such efforts became suspect in the eyes of many faculty and students because of their official presidential sanction.

In spring 1974, Pettit orchestrated new gender-blind rules for dormitories, which removed tradition-sanctioned but discriminatory restrictions on women students. Although the college nominally equalized the rules in order to meet state non-discrimination law and thus avoid a formal legal complaint, Pettit received credit from student leaders. He managed to persuade some of them that the new rules called for new student responsibilities.

Despite his nimble tactics in the never-ending battle with students dissatisfied with social policy, Pettit by 1975 still was a target for complaints. On 8 November 1975--a month following the faculty letter of concerns--he received a letter from 18 student signatories. It called for direct communication between students and members of the board. Mirroring the faculty letter of 7 October, it said, "The attitudes and opinions of the majority of students on campus are not effectively presented to the board of directors." The 18 names were from among the campus's best and brightest. They accompanied their letter with the signatures of other students totaling about 480, half the population of resident students.

Several days later the elected student government representatives caught up with their bright, vocal constituents who had acted ad hoc. In a letter to Pettit they called for a new system of dormitory visitation to "insure the greatest amount of individual choice, through a democratic process, as possible." The letter hit Pettit's desk on the morning of the board meeting, 14

November 1975, the same meeting at which it dealt with the faculty's letter of concerns. Pettit read the student letter at the board meeting. It was referred to the ad hoc board committee to work with faculty and students.

The following week several hundred students and several faculty members assembled in Bomberger Hall, hosted by the Student-Faculty-Administration Relations Committee (SFARC). This was an ombudsman-like group constituted in the heat of the late '60s to channel concerns from all quarters. Its chair was a student. The secretary was Bodger. Intoxicated and unruly students on the previous weekend had verbally abused the academic dean and dean of men at a confrontation in the large men's dorm named in memory of former board head William Reimert. Student leaders realized that the incident jeopardized the political initiative to circumvent Pettit and to gain the ear of the board. A student read a statement of apology at the SFARC meeting but attributed the student behavior to frustration over "archaic, anachronistic" rules. Then SFARC agreed to distribute the 8 November student letter and petition without endorsement to faculty members--a standard channeling procedure.

Like the faculty, students had to wait for more than two months before they met with the board committee to work with faculty and students. They met with the board members on 23 February, a week after the faculty "five" met with them. Like the faculty, they received a polite and interested hearing but not much satisfaction over substantive issues.

Paul Guest, on behalf of the ad hoc committee, submitted a report of the meeting when the board met on 5 March 1976. Guest's contempt for the social revolution served to season his report with heavy humor and ironic regard for student views. He said the documents submitted by the students--a 15-page statement on rights and responsibilities and a two-page proposal for visitation in dorms--boiled down to only two issues, namely, use of alcoholic beverages on campus and dormitory visitation privileges. He said that the students were not aware of the 1970 statement on student freedoms, which the board committee suggested they study before further discussion.

He added:

*There appeared to me to be greater uniformity on these issues among committee members than among the students as one student requested after each arduous week of classroom activity the right to sleep on weekends with the female of his choice, each fully clothed which would preserve the high morals of each, while another male student more realistically, in my opinion, commented he would not be willing to trust himself in bed even with a fully clothed female.*

Guest said that several of the students commended those responsible for operating an excellent educational institution. He ended: *"Their condemnation appeared to be concentrated in the areas of social life and enforcement of disciplinary measures. This is merely an interim report and requires no action."*

As far as Bodger could remember, no formal action ever really came of the contact between the board committee and the students. A new student government president came into office and wrote a letter to Pettit on the very day of the board meeting. He disavowed responsibility for all previous letters regarding open dorms and called for a fresh discussion. The students felt spring in the air not long afterward. The semester ended, and the students headed for surf and summer jobs.

Most important, at that same 5 March 1976 board meeting, President Pettit announced his intention to retire no later than 1 November 1976.

This event effectively preempted the attention of the campus. The particular concerns of faculty and students, so compelling throughout that academic year, slid into the background for the time being as the search for the new president geared up. They would lurk there like nasty elves of the Perkiomen fog, ready to emerge again when the college settled the decision on leadership.

### The "Pariah factor" influenced events

Matthew raised his hand, as if to ask the teacher a question: "What was the basic motive of the 'five'?"

He and Bodger were sitting on the patio behind the house with drinks in hand. From there, they could hear the Westminster chime winging across town from Wagner Tower in Bomberger Hall.

Bodger said, "I never fully knew whether they started their movement to redress the particular issues or to unseat a president. I was not privy to their sense of timing. There is no doubt that the bread-and-butter issue was very real. People were hurting in their pocketbooks. It looked as if the economy would continue to be inflationary for the foreseeable future. That created a great sense of doom and gloom at every college. Pettit's depression-era view of money seemed to me almost to paralyze his power to think through the consequences of continued shrinkage in the purchasing power of the faculty and staff. His old friends knew that. It may be that they thought the letter of concerns would provide him with a useful wake-up call."

"Considering his initiative on salaries, it did provide that, apparently," said Matthew.

Bodger said, "It turned up the fire. In fact, Pettit painfully knew of the problem. The 'five' did not help solve it. It was waiting for me when I took office, and it would be a stretch to say that the problem of poor pay of faculty ever was *solved*."

"But money was not the whole story," Matthew said.

Bodger said, "Their complaint about lack of input related in part to the way Pettit filled the deanship when he moved to the presidency in 1970. Pettit put Dick Bozorth in the seat of the dean with no consultation to speak of. Bozorth was new to the campus from Penn, untenured and untried as a small-college faculty head. Though his mandarin-like style may have mystified them, many liked him personally. But the faculty smelled cronyism in the appointment. As the time for Pettit's retirement came inevitably closer, the faculty suspected that the choice of a new president by the board would be equally uninformed by faculty opinion--and that Bozorth might get it by simply being in place, so to speak. They harkened back to the appointment of Pettit himself in 1970. Staiger had been appointed to the presidential selection committee in 1969, which drew up criteria for a new president. He felt that the board did not consult properly with the committee before selecting Pettit."

"Was his feeling justified?" asked Matthew.

Bodger replied, "I'm not certain. The record shows that there was a faculty committee on presidential selection, separate from the board committee. Staiger also was a member of this committee, along with Calvin Yost of the library and English and Geoffrey Dolman, the admissions director. On 10 June 1970, that committee wrote a memo to the chairman of the board presidential selection committee, Ellwood Paisley. They recommended that Helfferich be



asked to continue as president until the board officially named a successor. If he chose not to continue, they recommended that Pettit be elected president. And *then* they recommended that the search for a new president continue under the guidelines established by the board selection committee."

"So the board elected Pettit--but stopped searching," Matthew said.

Bodger said, "I think this unmet expectation that Pettit would be a kind of interim created a critical handicap. The letter of concerns may have been long-delayed evidence of that."

Bodger felt that he had not yet put his finger directly on the motivating force behind the letter of concerns. Then he told Matthew about the Pariah factor.

During Helfferich's era, a group of faculty met daily for coffee in the food storage room of the old kitchen in Freeland Hall. Before that original college building fell to the wrecking ball in 1967, its steward's space had a ritual aura. Soon after joining the staff Bodger had lunch with Helfferich there. They sat at a makeshift table amid the coffee tins and jars of spaghetti sauce on unpainted shelves. The setting said something droll about the proprieties surrounding presidential protocol. It reinforced Bodger's attraction to DLH.

Joe Lynch, head steward, was a former prizefighter and roustabout on the Philadelphia docks, a burly classic from the streets. Camaraderie was his stock in trade. He watched over the back room coffee breaks as if he were at a club in Irishtown. Among the regulars was Sieb Pancoast, then dean of men as well as political science instructor and baseball coach. Also among the regulars were Roger Staiger of chemistry, Eugene Miller of political science, Ray Gurzynski and Ace Bailey of health and phys ed. Lynch's street talk mixed with professional chatter to make a unique cloud of gossip and banter.

Helfferich became concerned about the regular faculty gatherings in the back room. Perhaps he suspected a conspiratorial motive or malingering. Perhaps the cost of the coffee and the doughnuts bothered him. Perhaps he feared that faculty were comparing salary notes. For whatever reason, he ordered Lynch to end the back room tradition. One retired faculty member who was on the scene at the time remembered Helfferich saying to some of his colleagues, "You're all Pariahs." And the name stuck. "Cast out" by Pharoah, the back room group melded into the Pariahs and began meeting elsewhere. Their new self-consciousness led to more pointed conversation about the ebb and flow of college life. Lacking the solvent of Joe Lynch's boisterous presence, the meetings of Pariahs took the tone of their professorial participants, critical and articulate--but forever outside the pale of the official college.

As far as Bodger could tell, the Pariahs developed a sense of themselves as the soul of the college, the bearers of the true colors. Their banishment from the back room ignited a resentful feeling of "otherness" that became a point of pride. Administrators and board members might come and go, but the Pariahs, like a secret order, would preserve the essence of the institution. Those such as Staiger, Pancoast, and Miller were graduates and had given their whole lives to service on the faculty and staff. They seemed to embody a college that, though lost in the flux of reality, had a clear sense of itself somewhere within, or above. Individually, some of the Pariahs had enjoyed some administrative power at times in their careers: Staiger had been alumni secretary, Miller admissions officer, Pancoast dean of men. But collectively the Pariahs never had power. They prided themselves on being apart from and more meritorious than the powers-that-were.

Bodger always assumed that a tongue-in-cheek humor seasoned this pride. They were the "loyal opposition" that affirmed the worth of the board and administration. They were at once a part of the established order and a counter to it. By their very counter-pressure, they thought they performed a service by helping to define the college's official machinery. But this was Bodger's speculation. He was not one of them. How would he know?

Matthew said, "Is it that you saw the letter of concerns as the entry of the Pariahs finally into real campus politics?"

"Not as a real bloc," Bodger said, "but as a spirit, a presence, yes. Pancoast, Staiger, and Miller were the heavyweights on the committee of five. Throughout the months leading up to Pettit's decision to retire and my election, there were threads of meaning that seemed rooted out of sight, that never got into the conversation with the board or with Pettit. They led, I think, to an assumed set of deep loyalties among the faculty that did not depend on the administration or the board--or on the AAUP, for that matter. I thought of it as the Pariah factor."

"How did you relate to that assumed set of loyalties?" Matthew asked. He warmed to the hermeneutic thrust of Bodger's look at the Pariah factor.

Joe Lynch had established a private link during Bodger's beginning years on the faculty and staff. After his morning English composition class in Wismer Hall, Bodger would meander upstairs to Joe's office. They would move to the nearby empty president's dining room with a pot of fresh coffee. In splendid isolation, Joe would regale Bodger with the student and faculty gossip of the day. Bodger would give his reading of events, often with a candor that would have embarrassed him had Lynch ever told others. Bodger's years on the streets of Philadelphia with the gas company gave him a rapport with Lynch. Bodger knew Irishtown; he knew North Broad Street and the neighborhoods from the perspective of meter readers only a generation removed from Joe's time on the streets. He found in Lynch a connection to his father's roots in old Philadelphia. From their chatter Bodger took a kind of affirmation of himself, a comfort that he knew whence he came. Cannily, Lynch gleaned the latest scoop on the administration from Bodger as a *quid pro quo*.

Nevertheless, Bodger's one-on-one relationship with Lynch never migrated into an association with the Pariahs. He had been a diligent student under several of the most prominent faculty members in the Pariahs. He believed that they were pleased with his accomplishments off campus and on. Yet, he never ceased to be Helfferich's man and Pettit's vice president.

"I could not be a Pariah," Bodger told Matthew. "I could not be their candidate for president."

### **The search for a new president began**

The day after Pettit's announcement of retirement at the board meeting, Bodger marked his 45th birthday. Coming at the start of the official search, it seemed to him like a private rite linked to the very public life he now could not escape. In his journal his thought was all of style. *"One good thing about turning 45: I can abandon any pretense at a super-youthful style. That's comforting."*

Bodger told Matthew about his behavior during the search process that Pettit precipitated with his 5 March announcement.

"I think of it now in terms of my relations with board members, with faculty members, with students, and with alumni," said Bodger.

"Each group took part in the formal process, then?" Matthew asked.

"In varying degrees," Bodger answered. "The board chairman, Ted Schwalm, appointed the board committee to recommend a president. It was made up of Glassmoyer, Guest, Heefner, and Helfferich, with Schwalm chairing it ex officio. They all were alumni except Schwalm himself.

"A week after Pettit's announcement, some of the 'five' prepared a letter urging that three groups be represented in the presidential selection process--students, faculty, and alumni. About 70 faculty signed the petition, a vast majority. I happened into the lounge in Bomberger the morning they were preparing the copy. I kibitzed with them about the need to petition for alumni representation. I said that five board members nominated by the Alumni Association would participate in the final vote, and the search committee members were all alumni. Staiger then invited me to sign 'as a faculty member' and I declined, saying it would be inappropriate in my position. There was a playfulness about the exchange."

"But you favored the input," Matthew said.

"Of course. I felt the selection process should help heal wounds, forge harmony, generate enthusiasm. These were themes I would have heard at Harvard two summers before."

Matthew said, "They felt a need to petition. Was it a fact that the board was not going to involve these constituencies?"

"I felt that the board failed to seize its moment the week before, immediately after Pettit's retirement statement. Schwalm could have announced he would create an advisory committee of students, faculty, and alumni. Now, with the faculty letter out in front, the board would appear to be reacting to pressure rather than acting from its own sense of fitness. Letters in the student newspaper at the same time were calling for an open selection process."

"Were the students suspecting a closed-door process, then?" asked Matthew.

"Probably reflecting faculty suspicions," said Bodger.

Pressured or not, the board soon announced the creation of an advisory committee of six persons. One faculty member was to be appointed by the board (on Pettit's recommendation) and one elected by the faculty. At the April faculty meeting, Gayle Byerly was elected. As a fellow instructor in English, she knew Bodger as a good teacher. She was a non-Pariah, a non-alum, a younger faculty member with a fierce commitment to high standards of teaching and a maverick's sense that she would never bow to bloc pressures.

It took another couple of weeks for the board to appoint its faculty choice. Pettit asked Bodger's opinion of the person most likely to help his candidacy. Together they focused on Evan Snyder of physics. Evan, like Staiger, graduated from the college in the midst of World War II, came back to teach after military service, worked for his Ph.D. at Penn while teaching at the college. He was dyed as deeply in red, old gold, and black as any Pariah but remained outside the magnetic pull of the group. He was one of the few tenured faculty not to sign the letter of concerns of 7 October.

Bodger told Pettit that he did not know Evan's attitude toward his candidacy. But he had made it clear that he was uncommitted to any candidate in advance. He had the highest possible standing academically with his peers. He could be depended upon to be fair-minded. If Bodger could pass muster with Evan, his position going into office would be stronger.

The student government elected a male student well acquainted with Bodger from class. Pettit and the board determined that the second student should be a woman. The logical choice was passed over when Bodger told Pettit that she was known on campus as a close friend of

Bodger's nephew, then a sophomore at the college. As it turned out, Bodger knew that the young woman chosen was sympathetic to his candidacy.

To represent alumni, the board chose a "two-fer," Ruth Harris. She was dean of women on the college staff as well as a graduate. Pettit, in recommending her, assumed her loyalty to a fellow alum and staff colleague. The alumni president, Henry Pfeiffer, '48, was a Nantucket neighbor of Pettit's on summer vacations and had become active in college affairs at his urging. Pfeiffer liked Bodger's work with alumni. He also revealed to Bodger a peculiar personal bond: as an undergraduate, he had dated Bodger's sister, who entered the college in the same class. Bodger was learning that nothing is irrelevant in politics.

He said, "In a sense, all of my work of the past half dozen years had been focused on earning the support of the board members on the search committee. Helfferich's support was a given. I was Galatea to his Pygmalion. I would be the major test of his belief in his own power to mold anyone into an acceptable functionary to fill an organizational position. That was his ultimate hubris. The fact that the former president and current chancellor was on the search committee in the first place seemed to go unremarked at the time. DLH still towered over the institution. Today, such a parochial patrimony in a liberal arts college of the mainstream would be rare. If it were found, a search consultant would decree that such a presence would be politically unacceptable to the constituencies. It would taint the start of the new person's tenure."

Matthew said, "The churches do not permit outgoing and former incumbents to serve on selection committees. I'm surprised also at Pettit's direct involvement."

Bodger continued, "Glassmoyer was another dyed-in-the-wool alum. He was valedictorian of his class in the mid-'30s and a top graduate at Penn Law School. He married a college alumna and one of their children was a graduate. He acted as the attorney for the board. Glassmoyer probably saw in me a member of the college tribe who had won the support of the leaders. He would follow the leaders.

"Guest was one of the alums who had interviewed and affirmed me for my first job with Helfferich in 1965. I worked closely with him when he headed our fund-raising campaign in the late '60s. He knew DLH supported me and went along because he knew some of my strengths from close observation. He had a keen nose for liberal softness, however. He was wary of my views on student rules, but his loyalty to DLH and the team overrode his suspicions. Regretfully, his suspicions were justified, as he discovered a couple of years after I was in office.

"Heefner was my most open and enthusiastic supporter on the committee among the alums. Like Guest and Glassmoyer, he too was an attorney, with the difference that he had his own firm in the suburbs and did not work in center city. Bill had political savvy as a born-to-the-cloth Democrat--an aberration in our heavily Republican board. I took credit for getting him actively involved in college affairs in 1969, when I asked him to chair an alumni annual meeting. He soon came on the board and accepted the leadership of the Century II program, our fund-raising effort from 1970 to 1975. That threw me into close and constant contact with him.

"The simple fact is that we liked the way we each approached the world. He was a quintessential insider with the subtlety to act as an outsider.

"On 5 May, less than three weeks before the committee formally chose me, he invited me to dinner. The occasion was a small gathering of movers and shakers in the Trenton area to hear an informal talk by the president of Princeton, William Bowen. Heefner introduced me to Bowen and his group as a candidate for president at the college. Since the deed was not yet done, this surprised me. Presumably, it reflected Heefner's confidence about the outcome or at least the

strength of the possibility. After dinner we talked quietly about the process. He had been present four days before, when the search committee formally interviewed me in the boardroom. He told me that I came off okay. He also told me that in his mind the decision was certain. He believed that Glassmoyer, Guest, and Schwalm were with me--along with DLH and himself.

"Schwalm, who chaired the search committee as president of the board, had a simpler view of the process than the campus people, the alumni, or the attorneys. Ted was a self-made man with an insightful mind and can-do instincts. He founded a watch dial company in Lancaster and turned it into a major success as a closely held enterprise. Although not a product of our college, he played prominent roles as a layperson in the Evangelical & Reformed Church and then the new United Church of Christ. DLH got to know and like him in their work together in the national church body. His appointment to our board at DLH's invitation gave renewed strength to our orientation as a church-related college."

Matthew said, "I remember references. He was from the *Freundschaft*, as it were."

"Right. About two weeks after Pettit announced his retirement, Schwalm invited me to lunch in Lancaster to talk. I learned then how direct and 'can-do' he could be. He told me in advance that he wanted to discuss the problems of the college in the months ahead and in particular my part in them. Not far into his oyster stew, he asked me if I was interested in the job, and I answered yes. He asked me if I wanted it enough to fight for it and I said, 'Yes, within reason.' He led me to think that Helfferich had touted me as a future president from the time I was hired. Ted felt that I had measured up during my 'training' program. He thought the board had made a certain commitment through Helfferich and that it should keep the commitment to me. His view was that I was ready to take over in 1970 but the faculty opposed me. I reminded him I myself did not think I was ready then. We talked about presidential styles and his role after the election.

"Except for his unalterable opposition to a faculty union and co-ed dorm visitation, he projected a tolerant and flexible view of how the new president could manage. I liked the guy then and came to appreciate his loyalty and support in the next couple of years. Some of my friends on the faculty who knew of his 'rugged individualist' ways in business thought of him as a hopeless conservative. In fact, Ted was his own man, with a generous spirit and a maverick quality that made him an individualist in the best sense."

"I take it, then," Matthew said, "that you had all the votes of the board committee but they could not guarantee you the job because they could not be sure of controlling the input of the faculty, students, and alumni."

Bodger replied, "That's about it. Schwalm after our meeting, I think, saw his role clearly. It was to move the process along to favor me with as much dispatch as possible. He tolerated the creation of a search committee and gaveled its work with the same directness he would have brought to the floor of his shop. His desire to get the job over with quickly ran in the face of the expectation of many in the college community. The events between March and May could be accounted for largely as tension between two poles. At one end, a good many thought that my election was a foregone conclusion. At the other end, a good many thought that there should not be a foregone conclusion--that the college deserved a genuine search, with an outcome to be produced by the process itself."

"Not unreasonable," said Matthew, student of search processes.

"Eminently reasonable," Bodger agreed. "In the days after March 5, I maintained a public position that I would be a candidate only if certain unnamed conditions were met. This was my

way of buying into the opinion that a genuine search should take place. It allowed me to avoid campaigning or presuming in public."

"What were your conditions?" asked Matthew.

"If the board wanted to exact a loyalty oath from me to uphold the existing rules on alcohol on campus and dorm visitation, I was certain that I would have to decline an offer to serve. Further, I had witnessed the handicap that starting assumptions had laid on Pettit. I knew that a charade of a search would cripple my start. Though I guess I never acknowledged it to myself, I too thought the college deserved a genuine search."

"On the other hand," said Matthew, "you had invested years of yourself preparing for the job. It would have made some sense just to get on with it."

"Absolutely. I gave up the alternative notion of going for a Ph.D. or starving while writing unpublishable novels. I no longer felt well-suited to remaining a number two guy."

Matthew said, "You doubtless did not want to throw the game away in the final minutes."

"Correct."

"So, in your heart of hearts, maybe you did not really want a genuine search."

"Mr. Ambivalence, that was me," Bodger smiled.

### The election process went on a fast track

Reviewing the events leading to his election for Matthew, Bodger saw that the board's timetable gave the search a hurried look.

On 5 March, the very day Pettit announced he would leave, Bodger and Margot went to a production of *Richard III* by the student theater troupe. There they saw Jim Clover and Linda, his friend. Jim and Linda told them the news was out. Pettit had resigned and rumor had it that Bodger would take over. This rumor, so early begun, never abated and ran like a refrain through the campus during the two and half months leading up to the board's decision on 22 May.

In the days that followed, while the college prepared for a search, colleagues came to visit Bodger to offer opinion, advice, and assistance. One in particular, Dick BreMiller of math, appointed himself a campaign strategist. Bre brought Bodger the insight that the faculty--at least his segment of it--wanted the board to make a genuine search but would understand if it ended by choosing him. Bodger's impression was that Bre had accurate (if incomplete) intelligence about the Pariahs as well as other faculty sub-groups. When Bre offered to stimulate a rash of supporting letters from alumni, Bodger took a leap of trust. Bodger held him off for two weeks until he became an "unconditional" candidate. When he gave Bre the green light, letters came quickly to the search committee.

Nelson Williams, the business manager, played an unusual role as a communications link between DLH and Bodger. Williams and Bodger came to DLH's staff at about the same time. DLH maintained a mentor-like relationship with him. With the search public and every word charged, DLH found it convenient on some topics to reach Bodger by talking with Williams. He knew without asking that Williams would relay the discussion to Bodger. And if necessary DLH could always deny he said what Williams said he said.

It was through that link that Bodger gained timely and much-needed relief on the sticky issue of student social rules. A week or so after Pettit's announcement, Williams reported a chat he had just had with DLH. "He knows things are going to change," Williams told Bodger. "But he said

he would like them to hang on as long as possible." Williams did not specify what "things" would change. But he knew. Williams knew DLH knew. And Bodger therefore knew DLH knew.

With DLH, Bodger understood there always would be more than one level of action. DLH would be standing with Guest in support of the old rules unto death. But he would be sending Bodger a softer message that Guest would never know about. It was no message at all, really. It was the whiff of a tolerance that Bodger eagerly wanted to get from somewhere, anywhere. If DLH misled Williams, or if Williams misunderstood DLH, or if Bodger misunderstood Williams, no matter. The assumed signal had the desired effect. It freed Bodger's mind from "conditions."

Williams was a friendly administrator in the midst of a certain set of faculty, centering on the theater group. Before the end of March, Williams gained more comments from his faculty friends. "They say the younger faculty favor you to be president," he told Bodger. That appeared to mean that the non-younger faculty did not. This became evident when the search committee took shape and went to work.

In addition to sources of feedback and advocacy among faculty and staff, Bodger had links with key students. One with whom he talked was George Geist, who years later would become a local and state politician. Bodger hazarded the thought that George might stimulate a handful of letters of support from students. He quickly learned this was not a wise initiative. George's reading of student opinion restored Bodger's contact with reality. He said that students on balance were more favorable to Bodger than to the academic dean (they did not know that Bozorth had removed himself as a candidate). However, before anyone would write letters of support, they would want to know where he stood on "specific issues." He did not have to spell out the issues of student alcohol use on campus and dorm rules for Bodger any more than DLH had had to spell them out for Williams. Bodger said any letters from students would have to be written at arm's length from him. He told Geist he would not even be able to acknowledge his acquaintance with the project. Then he asked Geist to drop the idea altogether and the student was quick to agree.

In spite of Schwalm's apparent desire to move to closure quickly, it was mid-April, more than a month after Pettit's announcement, before faculty and student appointments to the advisory search committee were completed.

Meanwhile, Pettit acted for the board in pushing the process forward. He made a surprise announcement at a special faculty meeting on 17 March. The purpose of the meeting was to review the changes proposed for the faculty handbook. He seized the occasion to call for election of three faculty to recommend the qualifications of presidential candidates.

Bodger told Matthew, "This was in addition to the advisory search committee. That committee's mission was strictly to write a set of specifications."

"If involvement they wanted, involvement they would get," Matthew interpreted.

Bodger answered, "I think that's right. I imagine that their recommendations went into the public announcement of the opening, but Pettit probably would have written the final copy."

At the next regular meeting of the faculty, on 7 April, Pettit made another unexpected announcement. It too had the appearance of involving faculty directly in the selection process. Pettit asked everyone attending to answer two questions: Are you interested in being president? Who is your first choice among faculty to be president?

"What was the intent of that step?" asked Matthew.

Bodger said, "I did not talk about it with Pettit. Perhaps he and the board wanted to flush out the wannabes so that there were no festering desires to lick like wounds afterward."

Matthew said, "A gutsy step—rather incredible. If five or six declared themselves by that process, it would have complicated matters."

"Only three declared themselves," Bodger said. "Pettit called me into his office the following week to tell me who they were: Zacky the Bear, our college mascot; Charlie Sullivan, a young faculty member who followed his own drummer; and me. Of the 55 voting members present, 33 indicated that, of those on campus, I would be their first choice. Dean Bozorth got 5 votes."

Matthew said, "This would have given the board a strong signal that it should name you or else go outside for someone new to the campus."

"Pettit was totally supportive of my candidacy by this time," said Bodger. "He advised me in various ways, trying to gentle the process to the conclusion that he knew the board leaders and DLH wanted. But neither he nor anyone else on the board could close the door on candidates from outside. An advertisement for the position appeared in the 12 April 1976 edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The announced deadline for submitting applications was 20 April."

"That really looks like they were just going through the motions," Matthew observed.

"Nevertheless, about 35 applications came in and Pettit processed them for the board committee in the days after the deadline."

"Yours was among them, then," Matthew said.

"My behavior was odd, looking back. By identifying myself as a candidate in the faculty survey on 7 April, I felt I had made a declaration, although it was not public. Meanwhile, publicly I was saying that my interest was 'conditional.' So I paid no attention to the 20 April deadline. A few days later, with the advisory committee finally constituted and scheduled to meet with Schwalm and the board committee, I sought tactical advice from Pettit. He told me to submit my name to the committee with a formal letter, and I did that. At the 28 April faculty meeting, Evan Snyder, reporting on the advisory committee's meeting with the board committee, announced I had applied, so I could no longer pretend to having 'conditions.' He told the faculty the committee would interview candidates on two successive Sundays in May. I was slotted for an interview on May Day, the first of the month."

"A pretty fast track, Bodger."

"The formal fact of an open search, nevertheless, gave the leaders of the Pariahs the conditions needed for a candidacy of their own. Their choice was Hermann Eilts. On 17 April, Miller formally submitted his name to the committee, three days ahead of the deadline. Staiger sent a letter of support for him. Shortly before that, in a letter dated 6 April, Schwalm received a letter from Horace Godshall, former head of maintenance, a leading local alum whose opinion mattered. He urged the college to go outside for a new president. He emphasized that *no one* on campus was qualified. Godshall and Staiger were neighbors in town and were friends. When Pettit told me about the letter, it seemed like a piece of a larger Pariah strategy."

"Only seemed?"

"I never knew one way or the other."

"Who was Eilts?" asked Matthew.

"He was one of the best known and most accomplished alumni, class of '43, with an outstanding diplomatic career. He was then in Egypt as the US ambassador. Staiger was his classmate. Miller was his mentor. Everyone at the college who knew him regarded him with the utmost respect. Though he had no experience as an academic administrator, he had been an outstanding student of diplomacy and languages at Johns Hopkins. He had a reputation for



running an embassy staff with the greatest tact and professionalism. He would attach significance to the name of the college by virtue of his reputation in the broader world."

"You could have closed the deal by throwing your support to his candidacy."

"I knew him and shared the high opinion others had of him. In fact, I invited him to serve on the board some years later. However, a critical problem for his candidacy was logistical, especially in view of Schwalm's sense of urgency to close the deal for me. He would be unable to come to the campus for a personal interview. When his advocates learned of this, they petitioned the committee to hear Miller as his proxy. Schwalm initially resisted but then allowed the interview to keep peace with the faculty. Miller afterward said the board members seemed indifferent in the interview, and he felt poorly dealt with."

"More reason to suspect the board was fixing the race," observed Matthew.

"The committee members may have seemed indifferent because they knew Eilts had withdrawn even before Miller met with the committee. Miller may not have known of that. Eilts sent a telegram to Schwalm from Cairo a day or two after my May Day interview. As it happened, Pettit was out to lunch and I was alone in the executive suite when Western Union called with his telegraphed message. Eilts said he was interested in the presidency, but he had commitments until late summer 1977, a year and a half away. 'If this leaves me out, I understand,' he said.

"So that would have allowed Schwalm to eliminate him."

"I am sure he seized on it," said Bodger.

"Assuming the other 34 applications were not going to be taken seriously, you could count on your election, then," said Matthew.

"Not quite. The Pariah leaders had a back-up candidate. Even before the Eilts candidacy became moot, the back-up came to the fore. James P. Craft, Jr., assistant academic dean, visited me on 3 May to explain why he was throwing his hat in the ring at the eleventh hour. He thought I would make a fine president and he would be happy to serve under me. But he was not sure I had the backing of the faculty and the board. If it turned out that I did not, he wanted the board to have an alternative on-campus candidate."

"Was he dyed in red, old gold, and black?"

"On the contrary. He was new. He was an Annapolis product. I understood that he mustered out of the career Navy when he learned that he would not reach the rank of Admiral. He went to Penn for his Ph.D. in political science. There he was a dean of students during the rough and tumble of the late '60s. On becoming president, Pettit hired him to assist Bozorth when he moved Bozorth up to dean. Craft combined a tough military bearing with an inventive engineering mind and a talent for negotiating. In an odd way, he was an attractive possibility. He was one of the first on campus to apply quantitative computer methodology to political science problems. He was in the Pariah camp by virtue of his appointment in Miller's political science department."

"Did Miller put him up to it, then?"

"I had no way of knowing what was going on behind the scenes. I moved on the assumption that he was his own man. We got along well together. I learned a little about his role as a Pariah candidate years later, but I could not know whether they came to him or he went to them. At just about the time Craft was telling me of his intentions, Miller was sending a formal letter of nomination for him to Schwalm. That was around 3 May, well after the 20 April deadline. Within

a day or so of Miller's letter, I learned from Pettit that another endorsement of Craft came in from another faculty member.

"Schwalm would have had to reject the nomination for coming in after the deadline," Matthew ventured.

"I imagine he would have wanted to do that," said Bodger. "But the faculty on the committee would have known it would badly sour the atmosphere. So the committee accepted the nomination and gave Craft the courtesy of an interview. I read from Pettit's tone of discussion with me about Craft's candidacy that the board members would not take it terribly seriously."

Matthew said, "If the Pariahs picked up that tone, they would have become more fearful of a fixed process."

Bodger said, "The committee extended every courtesy to Craft, as far as I knew, and that was sufficient for appearances, at least. But by the time Craft met with the committee, on 15 May, the momentum toward a decision accelerated greatly. On 7 May, Gayle Byerly came to see me in my office. She was the faculty-elected member of the advisory committee. Gayle and I had a collegial relationship that allowed us to talk frankly. She always pushed toward the heart of a matter with a certain abruptness, tempered by a hidden desire to conciliate. I knew her style well from meetings of the English department. She was one of the younger faculty who came in out of graduate school a couple of years after I joined the staff. Gayle told me up front I came off well with the board in my interview. She would not be visiting me if it had been otherwise. She had warned me she would play the heavy in the interview and she had done so. She asked me particularly pointed questions about the way I would deal with old friends on the staff who might not be the best people for the future of my administration. She believed I would be too loyal to friends whom faculty perceived to be mediocre."

"She thought you were too dyed in red, old gold, and black?"

"Yes. She came at the issue in the interview so aggressively that Schwalm criticized her afterwards. In truth, her perception of me as an arch-crony surprised me. She thought my ties with Bozorth and Dolman and others were tighter than they were. She seemed to think I would perpetuate the status quo because of my insider origin."

"An inaccurate thought."

"She did not know I had been talking recently with DLH and Pettit about changes needed in the administrative staff. They both agreed that I should make timely changes. Pettit even offered to plant a seed with key staffers that a new president should be free to make a new team as he saw fit."

"Did you tell her this?"

"No. But I seemed to have parried her thrusts suitably enough. Her visit looked like a final check before she resolved to become the honest broker who would bring the search to closure in my favor. She seemed to minimize the zeal of the Pariahs for Eilts--maybe she guessed he would be unavailable. She dismissed other outside candidates. Craft's late emergence did not seem serious to her. The clincher was her clear impression that the board members wanted me. That meant that they did not want Craft or Eilts or Zacky the Bear. Gayle probably thought apprehensively about a board-faculty tug of war over someone other than me. And summer was coming. She told me that she feared most of all an appearance of a 'sneaky' decision after the faculty and students left. It would not rest well and would handicap the new president. From the start she felt it would be important to reach closure before the summer break. Now satisfied with

me, she told me that she thought she could move to conclude the search for candidates and get the committee to come along."

After the second round of interviews on 15 May, Pettit telephoned Bodger at home. Byerly's view prevailed. The committee voted to conclude the search for more candidates and to support Bodger for president. Pettit advised him that he had a meeting on 19 May with Schwalm to talk about the terms of the job.

"I actually met with Schwalm and DLH together. We talked about salary, perks, living arrangements on campus, the awarding of an honorary degree. Schwalm said he was inclined to think that we could work everything out. I said I thought so too. Then I surprised both of them by asking for 24 hours to think it over! I said I had to talk it over with Margot and they understood. I did not tell them I also had a political agenda in mind. I wanted to talk with Miller, Craft, Staiger, Snyder, Byerly, Larry Dalaker, one of the student reps."

"I suppose you saw this as your last chance to secure support."

"I was acting instinctively at that moment. Only later could I see this delaying tactic in two lights. One, I wanted to see how much of a liability the hasty selection process appeared to be. Two, I was by then aware of DLH's concept of the power of office as 'the honey pot.' Everyone wanted some of the honey and would buzz around it like wasps. 'Protect the honey pot,' he admonished me. I think in my twenty-four hour delay, I wanted to let key people have an advance look at the mouth of a honey pot in-the-making and thus win their gratitude."

"You had a manipulative instinct--like all administrators," Matthew said. "This could have backfired."

"It probably cost nothing and gained little," said Bodger. "Except that I felt more secure going forward. No one said he would work against me when I became president. When I accepted the offer the next day, the path was clear for the board to elect me at a special meeting on 22 May. On Pettit's advice, I came to campus and waited with Margot outside the president's dining room of Wismer where they met. Pettit asked us to come in after a long wait and Schwalm told Margot that her husband was the new president of the college. It never occurred to me that the board might not make the decision then and there and that we all could thus have been terribly embarrassed by my lurking outside the chamber door."

Matthew said, "So your program of careful behaving as an in-house candidate was over."

"Almost. I had written a speech and read it after the polite applause. I even made sure a lectern was in place for me to use. I spelled out a fairly clear agenda for the new administration, as I look back on that speech.

*I foresee the need, with my shift in duties, to revitalize our administrative team, the need to fine-tune the management of our resources, the need to reach out for students in creative new ways, the need to arouse the enthusiasm of alumni and friends for our new development campaign, the need to bring this college community together in support of our principles and in support of the long-term plans that we must develop together in the months ahead.*

Bodger said that DLH criticized him next day for his unrestrained style of acceptance.

"I had made a couple of unwise off-the-cuff quips. It was the beginning of a week of emotional hell for me. Pettit told me about an irate letter from an important alum dissatisfied with the search process, a protégé, as it turned out, of Staiger. He also told me about a letter to DLH from another influential alum telling him of the magnitude of the mistake of electing such a

nobody. I walked one afternoon in the magical woods of my childhood, trying but failing to stop the acute pain in my stomach. The feeling in my gut was saying, 'The process was flawed and did not heal wounds.' What in God's name had I allowed myself to get into?"

"Stage fright," Matthew said. "The way I feel before a sermon, even today."

"The election was an open secret until commencement on 30 May. I processed with the faculty in my appointed slot with the assistant professors. Schwalm made the announcement to the crowd of several thousand in Helfferich Hall--graduating seniors and their family members and the faculty and board. I rose in place to accept applause. It was more robust than I ever could have expected. Later, Pancoast, one of the Pariahs and an Eilts supporter, said he disapproved of my election until he heard the applause that day and became a supporter. That gave me great encouragement. Perhaps wounds would heal after all."

Two days after commencement, Bodger traveled to Beloit College with Schwalm in Wisconsin. They were going to a meeting of The Council for Higher Education of the United Church of Christ. It gave Bodger an opportunity to talk quietly about his new responsibilities with the man formally at the top. He came back from that trip further assured that the prospects for his leadership were fair. Schwalm's supportive posture was manifest in their conversation. Bodger was his man and he would stand behind him.

In his journal Bodger wrote the following:

*I told Schwalm I assumed I was chosen partly to provide continuity and that therefore I did not plan a major change at the outset but rather would move deliberately and carefully to change things. He advised me not to worry too much about doing things the old way. He said the board wanted continuity in the sense that it knew it wanted to get to Chicago but it did not mean that I should get there by any prescribed route; there are many roads to the goal, he said, and you should take one that suits you best.*

In his last years, Schwalm in an autobiographical memoir gave his impressions of his leadership of the college board. It confirmed the worst suspicions that Pariahs and alumni might have had about the election of both Pettit and Bodger. Schwalm took great pride in the role he played in first supporting Helfferich, then in orchestrating the elections of both Pettit and Bodger.

Bodger retrieved the red-covered book, published by the Schwalm family's historical association (Theo R. Schwalm. Ed. Richard C. Barth, Ph.D. *Memories of My Life*. Pennsauken, NJ: The Johannes Schwalm Historical Assn., Inc., 1992). He pointed out the chapter on the college for Matthew to peruse. It showed his frontal approach to organizational processes.

Of the election of Pettit in 1970 Schwalm wrote:

*Dr. Helfferich decided to retire and assume the title of Chancellor of the college. I believe that he was looking for the election of Bodger to take his place and that he would act as his mentor until he could fill the job. Dr. Helfferich had hired Mr. Bodger several years before and announced to the board that he was being hired to eventually work into the office of president.*

*I could see no problem with such an arrangement, but the faculty was not about to let a young upstart take over the top job even though some of the board members felt he was qualified. A problem was that he had no doctor's degree. (p. 289)*

The passage went on to describe how Schwalm persuaded Pettit to take the job for five years after having refused it initially. One of the conditions he said that Pettit set was Schwalm's continued service in the board chair.

Of the election of Bodger in 1976 Schwalm wrote:

*I had sounded out some of the board members about [Pettit's] successor. All agreed that now was the time to turn the job over to Mr. Bodger. When the board received the announcement of Dr. Pettit's retirement, I announced that we were fortunate to have a successor for Dr. Pettit who had been in training for more than five years. One of the board members noted, however, that the faculty would insist on a search committee to select a successor.*

*We again went through the process of asking for applications for the job as well as interviewing prospective candidates. After about six weeks of this charade, we interviewed the final candidate who was Mr. Bodger. When the interview was over, I waited until one of the faculty committee members suggested that Mr. Bodger was the best candidate and he was unanimously elected by the board.*

Bodger said, "Ted forgot that a second round of interviews took place after mine. He also forgot that one board member abstained from the vote to elect me. He did not oppose me, he told me later. He opposed the process. It must have looked like a charade to him too!"

Matthew asked, "What do you think I can take from your story that might help me down the road?"

"Not too much, I imagine. Time changes organizational styles and expectations. As a candidate, you have to behave in context to have a chance."

"You actually behaved differently in different contexts."

"Duplicitously, do you think?" asked Bodger.

"Realistically, perhaps," said Matthew.

Bodger replied, "There was the context of paternalistic nurturing, where I was a willing apprentice. There was the context of participatory governance, where I was a contestant in a competitive exercise seeking excellence. It was a transitional time for the institution. The paternalistic system was still in place and working, but the participatory process had become an expectation that the board could not brush aside. My election was a last hurrah for the old way and a muffled yawp for a new way."

"Was it a mixed blessing, then?"

"God knows I cannot be the judge of that," said Bodger. "I was incredibly lucky, going in, to have support from various quarters when it often seemed to me blind and unjustified. I felt like an instrument for purposes I could not fully understand. I was resigned, in a way, to whatever might happen."

"This begins to sound theological," said Rev. Matthew.

"I've said more than I should, then."

Bodger did not see Matthew after that. Then one day he heard that Matthew had moved out of town. Some time later, he received a note from Florida.

*Dear Bodger: Rev. James regained his spark and decided not to get out for now. I decided not to wait around. Here I am in the Sunshine State, ministering to the Yuppie itinerants from up north and the WWII vets who have fought their battles. I think I belong in the pulpit after all.*

*Contexts here change too, but living out faith with the people in the pews remains a constant. Maybe your story helped me to get clear on that. Maybe I didn't want the top conference job. Maybe what you told me helped to clarify that. Gratefully yours, Matthew.*

*END CHAPTER THREE, MATTHEW (Preparing to preside, 1970-1976)*



## CHAPTER FOUR

### M.S. PART ONE (*Getting Started, 1976-1979*)

Maria Sylvia Aumen was her name.

"My grandmother wanted me to be a nun," she told Bodger in her freshman year. "When I was a little girl, I thought my name was the ending of a prayer. When I became a woman, I decided against being a prayer and started using my first two initials instead of my name. It seemed to save me from a fate I didn't want. I didn't believe a nun by any other name could remain a nun."

"So you are not a manuscript, the name of a feminist magazine, a paralyzing disease, or a walking Master of Science degree."

"Nope, I'm just me, M.S."

She was a junior when the board elected Bodger president in May 1976. Her name belonged on a list of a dozen exceptional students with whose minds he had connected over the years. His relationship with them seemed to transcend the generation gap. He seemed to understand the poetry of their ways without scanning. They seemed to sense in him a traveler who had been down their road ahead of time.

At some point after he became president, he looked critically at his closeness with such students. He projected himself to all students all the time, admittedly in varying degrees. He felt this to be a kind of sacrifice of self to institutional service; it was the daily rite of obligation. Had all students had the quickness and compatibility of this small group, their sense of being with another adventurer, he might have shared the same sense of connection with all students. This group appeared to have the sensors to feel what was going on with Bodger. They had the internal instruments with which to respond to his offer of himself. He felt an instant connection with them. He went over the professional wall and allowed himself to be vulnerable. He allowed himself to trust them by lowering the shield of his authority.

He always knew it was a dangerous enterprise. He knew that, when he willingly suspended some of his power, they could come to mistrust him. They could discover a manipulative intention in his apparent openness. They could come to see his shortcomings, the flaws he labored to mask behind official screens. They could betray him.

The gods of feeling roved the garden of intellect with sharp swords and had the capacity to wreak swift havoc. They were all the more threatening because they gained embodiment as young adults, crystal-eyed, hard-muscled, sharp-minded, ever-renewing, buoyed by their moment of invincibility, changeable in their allegiances, remorseless in their conclusions. After taking office, Bodger became more cautious, and the number of students on his list after 1976 was few.

Now such risks were over. Bodger could say that the students on that small list had not betrayed him and only rarely had disappointed him. He knew now that his special relationships with them made up a vintage collection, worth saving and judiciously savoring as he reconstructed his career.

#### An account of the presidency began

Bodger invited M.S. to his office two or three times during the months leading up to his election as president. Her quick readings of campus mood allowed him to think he knew the



pulse of things from a groundling's perspective. Since she avoided seeking membership on the search committee, she was free to say what she thought without appearing to compromise or speak for a constituency. Bodger filled her in on faculty maneuverings and the eager hopes for change of social rules that he heard from students.

She commented from the standpoint of a courtier exiled from a duchy in Renaissance Italy. That was during her year for the course in political theory. She tried to cast Bodger as the would-be prince who foolishly had a conscience. At times in their talks, he found himself suspended on a bridge between the idealism of the Reformed social vision and a Machievellian urge to win control. M.S. smiled knowingly if enigmatically at him sometimes, her lips tightly closed but her eyes alive. These were moments for Bodger when the fray became briefly enchanted.

The day after the board elected him president, M.S. saw him leaving the dining room after lunch. Classes were over but she was working for the food service as a waitress through commencement weekend. The decision still was supposed to be under wraps. The board chairman, Theo R. Schwalm, had imposed a gag on the board so that he could make a surprise announcement at commencement a few days hence.

"I heard on good authority..." she said, catching up to him.

"Don't even breathe it," Bodger said.

"But it's true," she said, meaning it as a question.

"Truth is in the eye of the beholder," he said, not wanting to break his promise to keep silent. He knew now that some board members—or student or faculty representatives on the committee—would have talked, as any reasonable person would expect them to do.

M.S. flitted ahead of him on the path toward her residence hall, throwing the word "fantastic" back over her shoulder as she disappeared around a corner.

When she graduated the following year, after Bodger's first phase in office, M.S. came to see him. She was planning on graduate work in behavioral psychology at one of the big public universities in the midwest.

"A life of scholarly research, then?" said Bodger.

She was not certain that was her final goal but she had come under the influence of her favorite psychology professor and felt a calling, for now, anyway.

Then Bodger made one of those rash moves against which he usually guarded when chatting with students. He knew from hard-won experiences how his casual words could come to mean more than he intended.

"Someday," he said, "I have a hunch you'll end up back here as the first woman president." As soon as it was out, he knew it was more than he wanted to say. She grew sober and only after a minute passed did she say that she took that very very seriously. He knew she would not forget the exchange.

Although he thought at the time that he had created a small specter that would haunt his future, he lost track of her. She did not get in touch through the rest of Bodger's presidency. After being gone from office nearly a year, Bodger one day received her letter in the mail. She had not forgotten. She had sped through graduate work to get a Ph.D. in three years, rushed through a marriage that was over, borne a child who lived part of the year with her and part with her ex-husband. She published solid stuff as a post-doc, won a tenure-track position, soon showed her administrative talent. She chaired a psychology department at a liberal arts college on

the midwestern plains for a few years. Now she was dean of the college and looking at presidencies.

"I'm writing to ask a small favor," she concluded. "Please tell me everything you did in your presidency so I will know what to do."

Even without the implied flattery, Bodger would have responded effusively. It was an excuse to reconstruct his administration. For months he had procrastinated about writing his account. He had felt that more time would have to pass before he was mentally ready to try for an objective rendering of what his eighteen years in office had done to the institution. His whole experience seemed as if surrounded by an inflammation, too tender for the time being to touch. But to tell it to M.S.—that would be different.

### The professional contended with the parochial

"You know how it was when I began," said Bodger.

"Dicey? Ugly? Difficult? Unhappy?" she hazarded, remembering.

M.S. flew in during the holiday break to visit her parents, who still lived in Bucks County. She and Bodger were meeting at a restaurant in Doylestown over lunch. Afterward they lingered for a long afternoon talk in the cocktail lounge.

"'Difficult' will do, though all others somewhat apply."

"Difficult faculty? Staff? Board? Budget? What?" she probed. Her sense of organizational structure had obviously developed on orthodox lines.

Bodger said, "The fundamental difficulty, as I felt it at the start of my watch, you will certainly remember. I had the burdensome sense that the college community was dysfunctional. I thought that the disputes that Pettit had with faculty and students over policies and priorities went beyond surface frictions, beyond personalities. They seemed to me like a fever, symptoms of something more deep-seated. Looking back, I see my election as something that could only have happened in an institution out of sync with its purposes, prone to decisions that would have looked abnormal elsewhere."

"And out of sync with the times?" M.S. asked.

"I believe so, in a sense. Similar colleges by then were using professional agencies to select their presidents. Our board could not bring itself to do that. Some probably masked their paranoia by saying a professional search would bust the budget. At the same time, our faculty was not self-assured enough, professional enough, to push the board to do the orthodox search--though it deserved credit for trying. Students were innocent of the larger picture."

"We thought otherwise," M.S. said.

"I know," smiled Bodger.

"Many alumni," he continued, "understood the crossroads approaching the college, I'm sure. We had movers and shakers, savvy people, all over the country, and especially in the Delaware Valley. But alumni constituted no critical mass, except as a support for the general welfare of their alma mater. Voices of advocacy within the alumni body, one way or the other, too easily blended into the process of selection and became moot."

"What was the board's problem?"

"As a governing body, I did not think it had yet clarified where the college ought to be going. It had cognitive dissonance. It wanted the college to continue to be the parochial, provincial

*Heimat*, the protective place where young people could safely grow up, receiving a heavy dose of traditional values."

"I remember," smiled M.S.

"But it also wanted an academically first-rate college. If you looked at the better national liberal arts colleges of the time and compared them to ours, you noticed real differences. The differences were not just in our lack of some important academic programs and academic depth, our relative scarcity of resources. The essential difference was that their culture was outspokenly that of academic professionalism--tinctured, to be sure, by their particular origins and history, but no longer steered by them. We were not yet there."

"Paternalism lived," said M.S. and Bodger nodded in agreement.

"D. L. Helfferich was in the habit of saying, when he was president, that you could not compare our college to any others. We were uniquely what we were in his eyes. This was code for *Heimat*. His view still weighed heavily with the board in 1976. He still actively served and everyone was deferential to his view. This made it hard for the board to think its way through to the path that it would have to choose, one or the other, parochial or professional. In 1976, it could not clearly see that it would have to give up something it valued in order to take the one path or the other."

M.S. said, "You're saying that the college still had the option to hold a rightward course and become a provincial little place of safety without academic distinction?"

"I don't think it had that option. I think the tide already was taking it toward professional distinction in the long run. To try to turn it around and go the other way would have taken a miracle leader. I do think, though, that some significant number on the board thought the option still existed. Yet, no one could articulate that except by genuflecting in the direction of tight social rules and expostulating on benevolent paternalism."

M.S. said, "So, with all that baggage, the board would have been unable to digest the outcome of a truly objective presidential search."

"I think so."

"But the outcome would probably have been the same," M.S. said—loyally, Bodger thought.

"Negative," he replied. "Credentials would have mattered more. Breadth of academic experience would have mattered more. Professional marks on the world would have mattered more. I was a company clerk who was smart enough to survive and driven enough to chance taking a role I was not fully equipped for, by any informed external standard. It was not just the board that was limited in perspective. Most of the people in the college community looked inward. They were too willing to define the agenda in terms of what they saw inside the walls. Too few could look outward at the academic universe for benchmarks and import them persuasively to the campus."

M.S. said, "Most of us thought you were the right person for the time--in the sense that you knew the terrain better than anyone. You were living and breathing the institution. I think that nearly everybody who paid attention could see that. This was parochial, right. But it was probably the right inward turning at the time. It had the potential, anyway, to move on out the other side, toward the wider academic world, toward professional orthodoxy--if that's what you all wanted."

Bodger said that he was not all that clear at the time that the college should move out from under a parochial umbrella. He did not then envision an all-out campaign to win new standing in the public eye that compared the college favorably with similar but less parochial places.

"Look," he said, "I had just come through years of on-campus preparing and maneuvering, consciously or not, covertly or not, directly or not, to get to the position of president. My head was buzzing with the expectations of D. L. Helfferich and the board, the faculty, the students, even the Maintenance Department. The inaugural moment, scheduled for 7 November 1976, loomed like a psychological wall. I had to get past it before the agenda would really fall into place. An outside candidate would not have been burdened with all that I knew about the state of mind of so many on campus. Too much knowledge, in this case, was probably as inhibiting as it was enabling. And I was still in a mode of listening rather than deciding.

"So, I spent the whole summer before taking over, thinking about it all. But I could not get much beyond a few basic imperatives. Address student life dilemmas—absolutely the first priority. Communicate. Plan to plan. Above all, make people feel better about the college. Lighten it up. And make everyone aware that we would be doing things, acting not reacting, taking risks. I wanted to show that we were not stuck with the established dogma that what had been done in the past was good for the future. That may have meant turning toward a professionalized campus. But that's not the way I was saying it. I don't think many were thinking of it quite that way, yet. And I had to be ever mindful that the board, which elected me, expected me to protect the parochial stance."

### National stresses and strains touched the college

Their talk eventually turned toward the larger public context of Bodger's inauguration. He linked the transitional moment of the college to transitional cross-tides occurring in the nation. It was a strange time of harvesting the results of Vietnam and Watergate. The social unhinging now was being documented and accelerated by the newly arrived marvel of color TV. The result was a muddled public mind, which led to the election of a bright peanut farmer to the White House who would have to try to make up solutions as he went along.

"It should have been a bully time," Bodger reflected. "It was the year for celebrating the bicentennial of American independence. Philadelphia did make a moment out of it. Daniel Bell may have caught the underlying mood correctly, though—'The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism.' He said it was more appropriate to a funeral than to a birthday. He saw the spirit going out of modern life—no reverence left for institutions, no enthusiasm for the robotic continuation of technological progress, no faith left in our democratic process, no optimism in the academy.

"Our faculty's fight with the administration at the college over salaries was our small version of the doldrums created by double-digit inflation everywhere. The country was in a hurtful recession. The effects of the '73 oil crisis lingered. Kids graduating from college, especially in the humanities and the 'soft' sciences, were not finding jobs. The over-educated cab driver was becoming a staple of the cartoon pages. Faculty members at best were stuck in the jobs they had.

"Over the whole scene, I remember a kind of gray fog, created by the mutual distrust of business people and academics. Business leaders brandished a two-edged sword. One edge was their old conservative view of the professoriate as a sink of leftist socialist sympathies, hostile to free enterprise. The other edge was their belief that colleges were failing to turn out graduates with the skills needed to succeed in the marketplace. There was a hue and cry about college graduates who couldn't write, for example.

"On the other side, many academics did have an elitist disdain for the grubby business world. These were hang-ups grounded in the classic Left vs. Right dialectic that drove American political life since the New Deal in the 1930s. It may be that the recession stirred up the passions on both sides. I took the conflict with a grain of salt, having lived in both worlds. Still, it was there as a complicating condition in the environment. Even on a tame campus such as ours, you could feel the tension in the rhetoric of some of our colleagues. I knew that, at some point down the road, I would have to do something at least to orchestrate these biases. We had some pretty conservative people on the board.

"But as I look back," Bodger continued, "what sticks out most prominently about 1976 is the shifting of personal values in the young—your crowd. You were too young to participate in the early romantic surge of the '60s people. But your cohort was old enough to absorb their irreverence for authority. You picked up the ironic distance that they developed, once 'flower power' failed and drugs and disbelief took its place."

"Whoa," M.S. said, "a lot of tar on that brush. Let me just say this about that, Sir. We had our share of concerns. College was costing more and financial aid was tightening, and that we cared about. Many were worrying about the job market, sure. Faculty were warning us there would be few opportunities after a graduate program if we were not careful. But it was not for us to get upset. The Ford administration was trying to put Vietnam behind it as soon as it could--kids beat them to it. We had learned from TV as little kids how to vent anger if we wanted to. Most students, though, were not into anger. Apathy was a word we threw around, but I think we meant something different by it. Apathy toward being angry maybe. Mood mellow, maybe. We weren't the first 'me firsters' but we were warming up the idea for the kids who followed us."

"You expected a wider apron of private space around yourselves as a matter of entitlement," Bodger offered. "You got that from the '60s."

"I can credit that," she said. "And if you were looking for anger, it would come when you presumed to go too far onto that apron."

"That was a basic change," said Bodger. "Small freedoms won in the '60s were yours for the taking, with no thanks to anyone."

"OK," M.S. replied. "And when we didn't say we were grateful, and wanted more, you all got perplexed."

M.S. went on to remind him of the expectations of women by that time. The students had pushed for equal residence hall rules just two years before Bodger's election. But national surveys were revealing the "chill" felt by women students in classrooms, where men professors still far outnumbered women. "Do you remember that the NCAA was still arguing in court that Title IX didn't apply in women's sports?" she said, poking the air with her finger.

Bodger indeed had not remembered that. "I do remember the cigarette ads—'you've come a long way, baby.'" They grimaced in unison.

Bodger and M.S. agreed after a while that their respective recollections of the state of the times when he entered office were beginning to mesh. "Whatever," said M.S., "it was a tough time to become a college president."

Bodger answered, "A view D. L. Helfferich himself held. After the board acted, he puffed his pipe one day in his office. He reflectively told me in that privacy how pleased he was with the outcome for the college. But he was not so pleased at the thought of what I would have to deal with. He wished better times were coming but knew they were not. For we already were getting the dire projections of the demographers. Starting in 1980, the great boom in teenagers that

started in the '60s would end. College enrollment offices would face a long slow decline in the number of college-age kids, lasting fifteen years. This would be especially stressful for colleges because since the GIs went to college after 1945, they had been in a growth pattern that seemed to have no end. As I took office, it was still psychologically impossible for us to absorb the reality of what was about to happen. I knew it but could not feel it with conviction."

"But you were ready to try."

"Hey—'But still try, for who knows what is possible.'" He was quoting the familiar saying by Michael Faraday from the face of the science building, memorized by generations of students.

### **The inauguration was a community affair**

"You know," M.S. said, "the gloom in the atmosphere rose and disappeared, as I think back to your inaugural day."

"Even if it was only for the day," Bodger replied.

"More than a day."

Although certainly it was as upbeat as M.S. remembered, the inauguration was an odd little ceremony in Bodger's memory. In its low-keyed style, it followed the tradition of presidential inaugurations at the college. Pettit and Helfferich had advised Bodger not to get grandiose, and that had suited his inclinations. It was a community affair, patched onto the regularly scheduled annual Founders' Day convocation in the first week of November 1976.

Founders' Day traditionally served as commencement convocation for a small group of students each fall who finished academic requirements over the summer. It also was an omnium-gatherum for other ceremonial business of the institution. That always included an acknowledgment of the German Reformed Church people who started the college in 1869. At this year's convocation, in addition to the awarding of degrees and the inaugurating of a new president, the college ceremonially presented a portrait of Dean Richard Bozorth, painted by the college's art instructor, Ted Xaras. Since in some minds Bozorth had been a fitting candidate to be president, the appearance of this item on the program along with Bodger's installation symbolized something politically bizarre.

"I remember it as a magnificent portrait," M.S. said, "but to a student's eyes, it looked as if the college was saying, 'OK, here's your new president, but don't forget that the established order, familiar in Dr. Bozorth's visage, isn't going to change all that drastically.'"

Bodger explained. The planning for Founders' Day was done months in advance, as usual, in collaboration between President Pettit's office and Dean Bozorth's office. The portrait had been in the works much too long. The artist, the subject, and the outgoing president were all eager to launch the portrait into the official iconography of the institution. Here too, tradition was at play, for it was the custom to unveil portraits of presidents, board heads, and deans at ceremonial convocations. So, the plan to present the portrait proceeded out of an established set of assumptions, irrespective of the other plans that were patched onto the convocation, namely, the inauguration.

"The result was anomalous and, for many, an amusing reflection of the quirky character of the place," Bodger said. "I wondered at the time what our handful of guests from other colleges must have thought."

Unlike most inaugurations at such colleges, there was no procession of representatives from other colleges and universities. Invitations did go to a small list of kindred institutions; when a

few of their presidents showed up prepared to process in regalia, the marshals had to tell them to stow their robes and sit with the president-elect's wife.

Bodger also remembered the reception committee. An ancient and honorable custom of the college's convocations involved a committee of faculty wives in arranging and hosting the reception afterward. The custom held for Bodger's inauguration, even though the dining service did most of the actual work. Afterward, in time-honored fashion, the chairperson of the committee submitted to now-President Bodger a two-page report on the logistical and social execution of the coffee and tea service. It was the last act in a long institutional play that was ending.

"I was indifferent to most of these stylistic peculiarities and customs," Bodger said, "because I was thinking—how can I strike the right note of new leadership, hoary setting to the contrary notwithstanding."

M.S. said, "The students heard what you said to them loud and clear. I'd guess all other constituencies also heard you speaking directly to them. You tried to touch all the bases, as I remember."

Bodger said, "And you won't have any choice but to do the same on that promised day when you rise to be inaugurated."

M.S. managed a wry smile.

### Inaugural speech searched for consensus

Bodger said, "Most inaugural speeches are rhetorical exercises that are quickly put aside. In my case, coming from within the established management, I thought it was necessary, if possible, to set myself apart from Pettit and Helfferich, right away. To do that without giving offense would be a trick. I repeated the obligatory, conventional formulas. But I didn't want anyone to mistake me: I was going up against rhetoric that I had earlier helped to forge as helper to Pettit and even more to Helfferich. The concept of the college in the 'conservative' tradition was deeply ingrained in the board and alumni and much of the older faculty. I sought to say something different about that without scaring the folks. Continue the traditional work of Ursinus, I urged, because that renewed our commitment to liberal education as a practical pursuit. But it would open the way to something new."

Bodger was fishing in the briefcase on the floor by his seat.

"I can't believe you brought the speech along," said M.S.

"But I did."

"And then you said a pox on conservatism—or something like that."

"Your memory is failing." Bodger quoted from the text in front of him:

*The college has been called a conservative institution. Since being selected for my new position in June, I have talked about that with Board members, faculty members, alumni, students and friends of the college. And it seems to me that most people think of the college as a **conserving** institution—not a custodian of received ideas and entrenched custom, but an institution that respects the past as it impinges on our needs of the present and the future.*

M.S. took the document and glanced through it. "I can see that you were trying to walk a tightrope by ringing in T. S. Eliot as your reference to support that trope."

"Eliot of course was by then canonized as the great savior of tradition rather than as the iconoclast of the inter-war era. I doubt if many of my conservative board members would have known this, but it pleased my political sensitivities to pin my rhetorical turn to him. And thus get the best of both Eliots. In his essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent,' which I quoted, he made creative effort dependent upon the vigorous exercise of the historical sense."

M.S. read the quote Bodger had used from Eliot:

*The historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.*

She continued: "And then you said, 'What T.S. Eliot said of the poet, who is at the same time traditional and contemporary, can also be said of the creative academic institution.'"

"Sounds tame now," Bodger said. "At the time, I felt like a kid playing with the fire of his elders," said Bodger.

"Also, by the way, sounds Eurocentric and sexist now," M.S. smiled.

Bodger said, "Wonderful, isn't it, how feminist and ethnic studies have made so much look different," Bodger said. "But in November 1976, nobody was remarking on such things here."

M.S. said, "I'm struck, too, by your compulsive need to justify the liberal arts in the speech. But, as I think about it, those of us studying science and social science thought the humanities majors were handicapped persons."

Bodger said, "The whole purpose of higher education was really a big concern on the national agenda. I was determined to ring the bell for our traditional stance on curriculum. I felt it was necessary to resist voices that were urging 'practical' programs because they would fit with emerging but ephemeral markets."

"Not voices in the faculty, surely?"

"A few, but mainly it was a note coming from board members and parents and alumni, together with students. It was an important moment to reaffirm the practicality of the seemingly impractical."

M.S. said, "You associated tradition with liberal education and then pointed to the ways in which that tradition would address contemporary need."

"And by enumerating some of the needs," Bodger said, "I sought to sketch the beginnings of my agenda, though it might have seemed like mere rhetorical flourishing at the time. I had learned from DLH that rhetorical flourishes could be executed in such a way as to suggest substantive significance without delineating it."

"So, you enumerated the importance of building personal values for living, for fostering individualism, for earning what you get in competition with others, for living within institutional means, for casting the liberal arts curriculum as an instrument of usefulness for careers and living."



Bodger said, "There was a coded message for someone in every one of those points. Shamelessly, I was trying to say something to all parties that would make them feel favorably toward this surprising and improbable outcome--that I really was going to be the president."

Still scanning the text, M.S. said, "The instrumental nature of liberal learning—an instrument of the mind in service to a striving for ethical and moral performance—I liked that and even remember it, sort of."

"I had to work in my favorite writers one way or the other," said Bodger. "The large idea from Loren Eiseley--that modern technology created a human paradox--served me well."

M.S. replied, "You threw against the dehumanizing force of modern technology a belief in the individual and the 'old universal truths' inherited by high modernism from the Western tradition—you had to cite Faulkner, didn't you?"

"And Alfred North Whitehead and Meister Eckhardt. The showy furniture of my mind. I really did believe at that time that bureaucracy, the normalization of idiosyncratic human achievement, which technology furthered, could be resisted. I thought it could be countered by a radical affirmation of the idea of an irreducible self, the person, the subject, the soul, if you have to hear it. I became a bureaucrat because I hated bureaucracy so much and figured I could control its evils."

M.S. said she understood. Bodger's appeal at the time, she said, lay partly in the naivete of his stated conviction. Students like her took it at face value. Only later, when they went off to study further and live more life through the postmodern era just dawning in 1976, would they be able to see that Bodger's pronouncement emerged from an overly simplified vision. A more learned scholar, a more experienced practitioner would not have entertained such a simple vision, even in 1976. Old universal values? The sanctity and endurance of the human subject? M.S. and her contemporaries in graduate schools would see the academic engines reshape these traditional formulations into new questions. A speech like Bodger's would become rapidly like a piece of evidence from a world that they lost.

"But it still makes me feel good," M.S. said, and Bodger hoped that her patronizing was meant to be in fun.

Bodger said that the guest speaker, Miller Upton, was supposed to provide an authoritative voice of endorsement. He gave a ringing huzzah for Bodger's notion of liberal education and implicitly for the heroic role still open to the deeply defined individual produced by liberal education. Upton had been president of Beloit College for more than two decades. Beloit too was related to the United Church of Christ. In retirement, he was acting as a consultant to UCC-related colleges through its Commission on Higher Education.

Bodger said, "Miller thus brought a couple of different themes to the program. His presence suggested that I might be tapped somehow into age and experience, young and inexperienced though I was—in fact, he came back later and gave me some useful advice on how to organize the staff. It also said I was remaining allied to the church, although Miller was about as churchy personally as I was. And his message, which we talked about by phone in early fall, gave a rousing endorsement of the practicality of liberal education practiced at small colleges."

Bodger retrieved Upton's speech from his briefcase and quoted:

*The liberal arts do not exist as an alternative to career preparation but as the indispensable ingredient of career education. It's not a matter of liberal arts vs. vocational education but*

*liberal arts for vocational preparation. To educate the worker you must first educate the man, for man is part worker, part parent, part spouse, part citizen, and, in sum, creature of God.*

Bodger went on to cite Upton's personal endorsement of the inaugural speech that Bodger had just delivered. Upton told the crowd that he thought the address demonstrated Bodger's understanding of the significance of liberal education, the nature of the learning process, and the unique contribution of the small liberal arts college.

M.S. said, "So, in the end, you called everybody to the task, group by group. What do you think mainly came out of the inauguration exercise?"

"Consensus," Bodger quickly answered. "My election threatened to widen the cracks in our already-fractured little campus. I was, after all, the candidate of the established power. I still think, after all these years, how remarkable it was that student leaders and a good percentage of faculty came to think of me as their candidate. If you look at the process from the standpoint of realistic politics, you could say that Helfferich and the board, once having settled on me, did a successful job of indirectly selling me to the community."

M.S. said, "It was you who sold you, not Helfferich and the board."

Bodger answered, "You could say I was complicit. But whatever the case, I felt in the end that the college community, by and large, was behind my presidency at the outset. It seemed prepared to give me a chance. I took Larry Dalaker's greeting from the students and Evan Snyder's from the faculty as more than mere politeness. Both were pointed enough."

M.S. said, "Bet they're in your briefcase too." And sure enough, he reached in and pulled them out.

Bodger said: "Here's Larry:"

*The students see Mr. Bodger as a man with new ideas and a sense of community. He has shown his concern for student problems by always keeping his door open to all students. We are looking for him to continue this policy. The students would like to see him take an advocate's role and promote needed changes rather than that of a passive onlooker who merely assesses problems and acknowledges their possible existence. We feel that Mr. Bodger is truly interested in the students' problems and has the desire to work with us toward a college setting where learning, both academic and social, can be achieved in an atmosphere of mutual respect.*

"Here's Evan, speaking directly to me:"

*I suspect you realize that the Board of Directors will make demands of you, the students will make demands, the alumni will make demands, and even the faculty will make some demands. Of course it is perfectly clear that, of these, the demands of the faculty will be the most reasonable and the most important. I should like to discuss two of the demands of the faculty, but first I should like to soften the word and make it concerns or goals. One of the concerns of the faculty is the continuing re-evaluation of our educational program....It is true that new is not necessarily better, but a new program does generate enthusiasm and interest....Another concern of the faculty is the need for candid communication and cooperation between the various segments of the college community. Dr. Pettit has already taken steps in this direction in the procedure he set up to choose his successor. In this process members of the board, faculty, students, and alumni worked together, sometimes harmoniously, on a selection committee. Since*

*the committee chose you, the process was eminently successful....With cooperation, candid communication, and the leadership that we all know you can provide we can change the college from a great small college to a greater small college.*

Bodger said that the subtexts of these public utterances by members of the advisory search committee were forthright for the times. M.S. agreed now, although at the time, when she was a student, she did not find them all that noteworthy. Bodger could imagine now, as he could not then, how Pettit must have felt as he sat in the audience and heard them. Pettit knew, like everyone else, that those qualities were being called for because the students and faculty, by and large, had felt they were lacking. Snyder was able to throw a small bouquet to Pettit only because of his unquestioned reputation for fairness. It would have sounded false coming from nearly any other faculty member.

The hard message that Bodger took from the remarks was that they provided a warning and a benchmark. We're supporting you, although you are the company man and although you are scantily equipped academically. We'll give you the benefit of the doubt, but only if you hear us now and assure us you'll deliver on the promises you've made.

"What, precisely, did you promise?" asked M.S.

Bodger said that overtly he had promised little. But students and faculty alike read clear implications from his guarded language. The students expected him to change the social code of the college one way or another. The faculty expected more salary and more say in the governance of their professional lives.

"The editor of the student newspaper got it about right, I think," said Bodger, dipping again into his briefcase. He read:

*In his inaugural address, President Bodger showed that his appreciation for the college's past will not interfere with his concern for the future. 'It is altogether practical...for us to continue the traditional work of the college. But, unless we carefully calibrate our way of doing so, it is dangerous also. It is dangerous because we may fall prey to our own past success and forget that a new day requires new thought and a fresh approach.'*

*He has made his commitment and now it is up to us to help him in whatever way we can to keep it, whether that is praise for a good decision, constructive criticism for a bad one, or suggestions on how to improve the college. We can be sure...it will be treated with respect and thoughtfulness. It is in that spirit that we will prosper and grow even more.*

Bodger commented, "After six long years of hearing negative stuff from students and faculty about the failings of the administration, I can't tell you how delicious it was to read such words. Coming off the inauguration, I was prepared to break my butt to fulfill the expectations being expressed."

M.S. looked over the editorial, remembering. "Some kids thought the editor laid it on too thick--you weren't that great." She read the first part of the editorial:

*We should be grateful that we will have such an able and efficient administrator guiding the process of this college. President Bodger comes to office with a great deal of support and encouragement from all facets of the college community--his good reputation is the result of a lot of hard work....He was always ready to offer some sort of guidance or solution to all who*

*came to him whether it was a student in one of his Freshman Comp. classes or the editor of the Weekly agonizing over how to balance the budget. We are confident that the policy of openness and understanding will continue in his new position of leadership.*

*President B's job is not going to be an easy one...and we should not try to make it "easy" for him. He will have to cope with demands from all sides and try to reach a solution equitable to all; he needs the input and ideas from all sides in order to keep in tune with what is happening at the college. He has proven his concern and dedication to the college; we must have faith in that dedication.*

"Consensus, you see," Bodger said.

"Whether they liked it or not," said M.S.

"Most people, I think, appreciated the tenacity of the old structure and my need for time and tact to change it. Dick BreMiller, my most ambitious advocate among faculty members, told me they understood that I would have to go at it in my own way. At bottom, I think what I mainly promised was a change of style."

Bodger was counting on that promise to stand in for other, more concrete ones when he found it impossible to deliver them. "That is what most new college presidents promise an institution, I suspect. The need for freshness, for novelty, is very deep in an academic community—the escape from ennui, which constantly descends as classes drone on."

M.S. brightened. "Hey, I think that's my big lesson for today. I'm taking a note," she said. She was more serious about it, Bodger thought, than her tone suggested.

They lingered on in the restaurant lounge, reminiscing about the year when Bodger's presidency was being launched and M.S. was finishing her final year as a student. Then he asked if she remembered the day in his office when he predicted her future. She remembered.

M.S. said, "I've carried it with me like a secret badge of membership in a shadowy society."

Now, she was hoping to run for the job at the college where she was teaching. The president just recently announced he was taking another presidency at a college on the west coast. The board chair had let M.S. know that he hoped that she would apply, with no promises about the outcome of the open search.

"I don't think I'll be a real president, though, until I come back here," she said.

They finally left as the earliest birds arrived for their bargain dinners at the restaurant.

### **An in-house president pursued a new role in a familiar place**

They met again soon after at the college, in Bodger's hideaway retirement office at the far edge of the campus.

"This is the geographic demonstration of the postmodern notion of power," he said to her. "I was the center, now I'm the margin."

M.S. asked, "And you like it like this? Out of the circuit?"

"I like having been the center—it is good to have been there. I like this margin now, yes, yes."

She wondered why he could not continue to contribute to the affairs of the college. He said the new president had to have his own organizational society around him. It would be too incongruous for the former president to be in a team around the current president. It was nothing

personal, he said, but rather had to do with roles, social masks. It had to do with the echo of vibrations that attach to your person from the function that you once performed.

"Even if all that were not so," he said, "remember I opted out because I didn't want to do it anymore. My game was over. Why would I want to play the next game?"

"But you're still on the board," M.S. observed.

"By the book, I should not be. It's a hangover from old times. Heefner, other old hands on the board, probably felt a need for familiarity and comfort while a new man took charge and reshaped things. I have to assume that they persuaded him to ask me to stay on board. Remember, in the whole history of the place, my successor was the first new leader who did not come from within the body of the lodge, so to speak. The old boys naturally assumed I would participate in a kind of continuity that they had seen when DLH became chancellor. Pettit too had stayed actively on the board for a while after he left the presidency. Having been asked, I could not say no. It felt good, I suppose, to think that the college still needed me. But I have stayed distant from the process, despite my seat at the table. On the few occasions when I have initiated advice, I have done so with a feeling that it was out of place. I would not fault him if the new guy had the same feeling, though manners would prevent him from saying so. I'll be cycling off in due course, anyway. That will end whatever anomalies persist by my nominal presence."

Bodger advised her against building any official bridges to the current president at her institution if she succeeded him. There is something almost metaphysical about this, he suggested. If one thinks of the collective energy of the people in the institution as a flow of desire, it gravitates toward the head for its production. A college still has something of the character of a despotic machine, overlaid on the more visible collegial configuration. This drives the attention of the people to inscribe their desire on the body of the despot. Bodger apologized to her for dragging in the language of *Anti-Oedipus* by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

He said, "The president-as-despot is not something the faculty would consciously acknowledge. But their gut feelings about institutional reality would lead them to act according to such a concept without expressing it. I think this partly explains the persistent resentment that manifests itself as irony at wine-and-cheese parties, when faculty let down their hair. If the old despot is still visible after the new despot takes authority, confusion arises in the eyes of people on campus. Their flow of desire for the institution now runs the risk of territorializing on the familiar old despotic body as well as on the new one. The system calls for only one despotic body. So the campus finds itself with a confusion, a social and conceptual dysfunction."

M.S. said, "OK, I guess I get it: hide the old despot from sight." In her case, she added, this would not be a problem, since the outgoing president would be going to a new presidential assignment.

"Good," Bodger said. "One less human tangle for you to manage—you'll have enough of them without it."

"If...," M.S. reminded him.

Luckily, Bodger said, Pettit moved to Florida after leaving office and summered by long custom in Nantucket, where he and his wife had bought a small house many years before. He remained on the board for some years. However, early on, when he opposed Bodger's recommendation for the promotion of a faculty member, the board committee—knowing despotic metaphysics—sided with Bodger. It was the last time Pettit took an active part. Although DLH remained on the scene, his thespian instincts enabled him to play the role of mentor to Bodger

without crossing over to the role of advisor on specifics. He grew gradually farther away, until, by the early 1980s, his presence was an institutional curiosity rather than a significant influence.

Bodger said, "Once authority shifts to your hands, it is impossible to share it effectively except for a certain condition. The condition is that your team members have to understand that you may recapture the authority that you gave them at any time, when political circumstance demands it. That is why it is so necessary to divorce your authority from the person who had the authority before you. That is also why you have to build your own staff."

He said that the case of D. L. Helfferich's presence was unique. Probably no new presidents today in mainstream institutions would have to deal with such a presence.

"In reality," Bodger continued, "DLH's presence was not a problem for me. Though I would not have become president without his nurturance and his political maneuvering, he knew that I could not be on his string, either perceptually or actually. During the summer after my spring election, and before I took office in the fall, I decided I had better make this explicit. I sent him a letter that thanked him for everything and also, by the way, said I would have to be my own master. His reply was vintage Helfferich. He knew I was on my own and supported that."

Bodger began to reach for a file on his desk.

"You have the letters, of course," M.S. smiled.

He read:

*Now that the formalities of my new position have been agreed to, it seems an appropriate time to express my gratitude for your support, guidance, and constructive admonitions throughout the process of presidential selection.*

*Ever since we first talked about the possibility of my preparing for such a job eight or nine years ago, I have felt a rather special relationship between us—one based on our mutual recognition that we were interested in something larger than a career or even personal satisfaction, that we were interested in the well-being of an institution.*

*I have gradually come to believe that I have nothing more useful to do with my life than to devote it to the needs of the institution. Your own life-long service to the college has given me an example and helped persuade me of the good sense of such a seemingly foolish attitude. I will always remain indebted to you for that.*

"And here is the main point of the letter," said Bodger:

*You know better than anyone, probably, that I will often have to act in my own way without the benefit of anyone's judgment but my own. And I will do it willingly. Yet I will seek your help when I need it—and will be grateful for it. We all are fortunate that your seasoned wisdom will remain as a valuable asset to be drawn upon.*

*Thank you for helping give me an opportunity to use my energies in so challenging and honorable a cause.*

Bodger said, "DLH's response was in a characteristically laconic style. He usually sought to be meaningful by understatement. His whole note read, 'I'm well pleased with the letter you sent to me on July 7, 1976.'"

"And with that, you felt you were free to move on your own?" asked M.S.

Bodger said yes and no. "Helfferich labored very hard to stay at a disengaged level. But on the great issue of my first phase, he talked to me directly about my bad handling of things."

"That would have been the change in student life policies in 1978," M.S. said.

"Right. Even then, he struggled to be a kind of Confucius. He never 'ordered' me to change course. Shortly after that, he also told me what he thought I should do about replacing the academic dean. Then too he was careful to respect my status as the president."

Bodger continued, "What a burden he must have felt, though. He virtually embodied the institution. Yet, he had to acquiesce in my assumption of authority. He had to stand aside as I did things and said things he would never have done or said. He more than anyone knew my leadership weaknesses. He seemed to manage an aloofness from decision-making by keeping his eye on a higher definition of the institution. He was looking beyond the mere management of it. I think this attitude at bottom was ecclesiastical. He saw the college in the stream of the Reformed tradition, by then the United Church of Christ. For him, this dimension allowed for all sorts of variety at the perceptual level. The managerial level. As long as he could feel that the college existed in an ecclesiastical sense, he could tolerate being out of the center of management. He was still sitting at a more deeply situated center.

"But it is only now, when I am in an even less-empowered position than he, that I can imagine his feeling. During the Pettit years, he remained almost as a chairman of the board. He gave Pettit his room to manage also, but I don't think it was quite the same as the space I had. Pettit had been dean in DLH's presidency for many years. They had a well-rehearsed way of relating to one another then. It carried over to the Pettit presidency."

Bodger said that such overlays of personal and official relationships were subtle and complex, bound to the particularities of the place and its people. It was not just a question of filling an administrative slot with a competent person. It was also a question of tending to the feelings of people who knew one another well. The college under Helfferich and Pettit was in some ways like a village.

"It was still like that when I took over," Bodger said.

### **An administrative team began to emerge**

"In such a setting," M.S. asked, "how did you go about creating an administrative organization around yourself?" She knew the people he had appointed; but she wondered about his motives in choosing them. "I attended a summer institute on presidential leadership," she added, "and the consensus in our chat group was that a new president should lean toward cleaning house rather than toward maintaining continuity."

Bodger said that in the beginning he thought little about the organizational structure of the college. The main functions were well-defined—academic, student life, business, admissions, development. For six years as vice president, he had exercised managerial oversight over just about everything but the dean's academic function. And he was fully involved in curriculum and academic governance as a faculty member. His energy level was at its peak. He devoured details of daily management like a hungry dog. He had a bias for hands-on management. So, he took the structure as a given. For the first three years or so, at least, that gave him room to think of people rather than structure. He knew that as policies began to change in the years ahead, commensurate changes in structure would follow.

"Starting out," he continued, "I needed people who above all would help me with the attitudes on campus. I needed loyalty to an agenda for change even though the particulars of change at the outset remained vague. I needed people who could put up with my style—the

cocktail of personal strengths and weaknesses, biases and convictions, that determined the way I worked day to day. I needed bright, competent people, of course."

Bodger said that he tried not to upset applecarts that seemed to have wheels that were turning efficiently. He did not set out to replace everyone.

His way of working with the business officer, Nelson Williams, was well established. Williams began reporting to him when DLH made Bodger vice president in 1969. Williams was conservative in his management of the financial and business affairs, loyal to Bodger in a personal way, and trustworthy. Moreover, DLH had hired Bodger and Williams at about the same time and had tutored them in a similar way. This shared experience gave them a personal bond. It lasted through the rest of Williams's active service on the staff, to his retirement in the late '80s. It was a relief for Bodger to be able to assume that the financial and business affairs of the college would go on without change. DLH never hesitated to go directly to Williams with counsel on financial management; his presence on the investment committee of the board gave him a legitimate avenue. In another institutional setting, such a direct line would have given a new president the jitters. For Bodger, it seemed like a natural and comfortable way to work.

The admissions office was led by Geoffrey Dolman and his assistant and long-time colleague, H. Lloyd Jones. They had grown into senior status through the long years when their mentor, Bill Pettit, was dean, dating back to the mid-1950s. Both taught English while recruiting students. As young faculty members, both had taught Bodger when he was an undergraduate. Their attitude toward Bodger seemed to him benignly avuncular. He still had a feeling of respect for them as the teachers who had influenced his early years. This obviously affected the way they worked together when he became the boss. Civility and deference ran in both directions. Bodger felt that his long relationship with Dolman and Jones, now transformed into a working relationship, represented something definitive about the institution itself: he was a product of the developmental process to which they, as humanities professors, felt strongly committed.

"Because of my relationship with Dolman and Jones," Bodger said, "I did not push immediately for change in the recruiting process. But I knew that would have to come in due course. Together, they had developed a successful, no-frills method for making a class from a narrow geographical radius that did not extend much beyond the counties surrounding Philadelphia. Their travel schedules were manageable because they could go to high schools and come back in a single day. Dolman and later Jones, when he took over, enjoyed the respect of their admissions peers in Pennsylvania. In 1970, they had hired their best student helper, Ken Schaefer, upon his graduation. They trained Ken in their admissions lore. The extra legs allowed them to cover the territory better and anticipate greater staff needs in the changing climate.

"Dolman knew that recruiting was getting tougher and tougher. He had been warning the faculty and board about adverse changes for several years before I took over. He would cite economic pressure on families, increasing competition from other colleges, the decline of interest among applicants in studying the humanities. In addition, the dropout rate among our upperclass students was disturbingly high. This forced him to get larger freshman classes to maintain the total enrollment needed for budgetary balance.

"All this told us that a fundamental change was occurring in the recruiting of students. I knew that we would soon have to stretch beyond Dolman's experience, which he acquired in the baby boom years when students were plentiful. He and Jones were more willing than their faculty colleagues to think about their work as a marketing process. But an unapologetic 'marketing'



strategy was not going to take place under Dolman's leadership. Jones was a little more flexible. Even so, he too was limited by what he and his long-time partner had learned in the boomer era."

M.S. said, "But you stuck with them for the first phase because they were stable in what they were doing, and they were willing to support your new presidency. Right?"

Bodger nodded to say she was right.

"So, Dr. Byerly was onto something when during the selection process she worried that you would be too slow to replace your old buddies. Right?"

Bodger said that it might appear so but that it was mainly a question of pacing and timing.

"An era ended, sort of," he continued, "when Jones stepped down in the spring of 1981 after succeeding Dolman as leader of admissions for two years. Ken Schaefer's appointment as dean of admissions to succeed Jones represented a generational transition. Yet, Ken's training under the two old masters also meant that we would not make a clean transition into the new marketing paradigm, which was rapidly overtaking colleges.

"We finally tried to make that turn in 1984. Ken turned out to be a good fit in a newly configured college relations department under John Van Ness. Ever resourceful, Ken transferred out of his old admissions calling and became head of alumni annual giving. That opened the way for me to tap Lorraine Zimmer to lead admissions. She enabled the college finally to define recruiting unapologetically as marketing—though the keynote was promotion rather than analysis. After Lorraine, Richard DiFelicianantonio came in from Swarthmore College to carry that definition into its most ambitious form by the time I ended my tenure."

#### **An executive assistant came from within**

"I remember," said M.S., "that you appointed Dr. Craft as your key administrator right after you took office. Even as a student I thought I could see that this sent a couple of messages. Tell me what you really intended by appointing him. In the higher ed literature, the position of executive assistant to the president gets a mixed evaluation."

Bodger could not help smiling as he remembered Craft. "To understand Jim, you had to remember that he had aspired to become an Admiral in the Navy. He was down-the-line career military as an Annapolis grad. But if that's all you remembered, you would miss the whole person. Did you know that after the Navy he was dean of students at Penn while kids were raising hell in the late '60s? He acquired there a marvelous gift for flexibility, which he masked under his correct bearing. He also was of the South—his courtliness never wavered. Jim was administrative to the core of his being. He had different sized pads for different memos, depending on their degree of officialness. He was almost always operating but never being dishonest about it, as far as I could ever tell."

M.S. said, "He was also too bright for his own good."

"He was bright."

"My roommate had his course in political science methodology. Computer-driven, when computers were tough machines and not cargo ships for electronic information. She busted a gut proving some damned obvious fact about political parties. He talked in engineering riddles when all she wanted to do was learn how to serve the public good."

"But he was a nice guy about it," said Bodger.

"Grade-grinding students had a hard time seeing him that way sometimes."

Bodger continued, "Craft helped solve several problems for my new administration. Over the summer of 1976, after my election, I interviewed a number of outsiders for the position of executive assistant. A couple of them came to me with recommendations from board members. They were all well-qualified people. One of them was military, like Jim, but out of West Point. Another had a Ph.D. in higher education, up on the current management philosophies—but his Mormon religion seemed out of kilter with the Reformed atmosphere. A special note on institutional history: Bob Reichley, '50, who was an administrator at Brown University, was preliminarily interested, at my invitation. He opted out before coming to talk. Some years later I asked him to be on our board. He joined up, and after I left office he became board chair.

"I came to realize by Labor Day that none of the outside candidates would help with internal organizational needs—campus politics colored them all doubtful. I was relieved when Jim made himself available. I was grateful that he was willing to take what for him was the junior-level title of executive assistant. I delayed making him a vice president until nearly a year after his appointment in February 1977."

"What held you back?" asked M.S.

"Generic caution," said Bodger. "I was trained to give away only as much as I had to in order to get what I needed. In this instance, DLH probably counseled me. I was not completely certain we would work out as a team. It would be easier to drop an executive assistant than to unseat a vice president."

The look on her face said that she thought this was an ungenerous approach to nurturing loyalty of staff members, but she said nothing and Bodger let it pass.

He enumerated the problems that Craft's appointment addressed.

First, it was a gesture of peace toward the faculty leaders who had pushed against Bodger's predecessor and against his own candidacy. The Staigers and Eugene Miller had sponsored Craft's candidacy for the presidency. With Craft in the administrative inner circle, they could feel in touch, Bodger hoped.

Second, Bodger believed that Craft's age and experience, plus his military bearing, would calm the fears of some board members about Bodger's youth and inexperience. Craft in short order became the administration's point person on the knotty issue of student life reform, about which some board members were highly concerned. He also paid attention to the recruiting of new students on Bodger's behalf.

Third, Craft helped contain the displeasure of many faculty when Richard Bozorth did not immediately step down as academic dean. They associated Bozorth with Pettit, who had installed him as dean. They wanted to see a new academic leader in the dean's office. Craft had been Bozorth's assistant dean. Now, Bodger announced that one of Craft's duties would be to act as the liaison between the academic house and the president. Without saying so, he thus virtually made Craft the superior over his former superior. Bozorth had declared his support to Bodger early on in the search. Until Bodger could tactfully and honorably deal with Bozorth's position, Craft was able to convey to faculty that the status quo ante in the dean's office was ending, although the incumbent remained for the time being.

Fourth, Craft was just the right person to execute the planning agenda that Bodger installed as the keystone of his new administration. As a former Navy officer, Craft had an exquisite sense of organizational procedure and protocol. He understood Bodger's intent to use "planning" as a multi-dimensional tool for reshaping the college.

Finally, Bodger felt that Craft would give him good counsel on the general management of

the place. He had far more experience than Bodger and was willing to put it in service to the fledgling administration. Bodger believed in his own ability to work with other people who knew more than he did. He was confident that Craft could work well with him. Bodger was willing to defer, in an odd way, to his new assistant; and Craft had proven that he was willing to acknowledge, in an equally odd way, that Bodger indeed was in charge. A stylized but effective relationship between the two men quickly developed.

Bodger said, "He was never wholly mine, and he was gone soon after we hired a new dean, when he felt his usefulness ended. But he served the college and me well when we needed his service most."

### **A senior faculty member became assistant academic dean**

M.S. had a wry look in her eye. "Politically speaking," she said, "you did not forget the woman issue when you built your team, but you kept it in its place."

She was referring to Bodger's appointment of Blanche Schultz, '41, to replace Craft in the position of assistant academic dean.

"You may be accusing me of building a glass ceiling," Bodger replied. "Gender representation played some role in the selection of Blanche, I'm sure. But I picked her mainly because of her peerless reputation for classroom teaching."

"Legendary," M.S. agreed.

"And her sterling character. She represented what people thought of when they wanted to conjure an image of what the 'old' college produced. Salt of the earth. Bright but connected to daily reality. Pennsylvania Dutch. A local. Family connections to the college. Reformed church. Talented woman athlete. A member of the alumnae athlete network, tied to the mystique of legendary coach Eleanor Snell. Math teacher to pre-medders, giving her a large alumni following. A woman achiever long before the women's movement. She taught a subject that was mainly taught by men. She moved into a high rank in the US Navy after graduating in 1941. Blanche was one of a special group of alumni faculty of her World War II generation. They were the 'soul' of the faculty for several decades. She was a member of the triumvirate who conducted the 'University of the Pines' project."

"Where the C-M-P course originated," said M.S.

"Right. Roger Staiger of chemistry, Evan Snyder of physics, and Blanche of math spent a summer under the pine trees in the Staiger back yard, working up the syllabus. Integrated Chemistry-Math-Physics. It became the blockbuster requirement for every entering science student from its experimental inception in 1964 to its demise some fifteen years later."

"I have friends scarred for life by the experience," M.S. said, only half kidding.

"Blanche spelled faculty integrity," Bodger added. "By her presence and with her talents, she added much to the sum of trust between faculty and the new administration. She served the college creditably before she bowed out of administrating in 1983. She gave the advising of students a new priority, especially those who were heading for academic trouble. Like Craft, she combined a no-nonsense military expectation with a large supply of empathy when counseling students."

### Student life staff underwent reorganization

"On the female front, you inherited Ruth Harris," said M.S. "She was also a true sister of the old campus. You surprised me when you kept her in the position of dean of women."

"Ruth was class of '36," Bodger said. "Like Blanche, she was a former woman athlete, one of Eleanor Snell's first generation of students—Eleanor came in the early '30s to head up women's phys ed and sports. Ruth too had a Pennsylvania Dutch practicality about her, as well as an unquestioning loyalty to the institution. She enjoyed the respect of the old guard on and off campus."

"But Ruth had not spent her whole career on the campus," Bodger continued. "She formed her professional perspective at a women's junior college before coming here. She was better able than some other administrators on campus to separate her duties from her self. Students thought she lived the college heart and soul; but she had a devoted husband and they lived a life apart from campus. Her professionalism carried her through the tough transitions of the '60s and the confrontations in the seventies—when your cohort itched for fundamental changes in rules."

M.S. said, "No administrator could have enforced the women's rules by the book. Dean Harris had two sets of books. The one the college said was in effect, and the one that she followed at the grunt level. I would have been sacked three times over if that had not been her way."

Bodger nodded in agreement. "I never did understand how, during the Pettit and Helfferich years, she was able to give the impression of tough conservatism while she also tolerated a zone of behavior in dorms that would have upset the old boys and many alums and parents. But I did understand that she was wise in the ways of the world of students--much more so than her administrative colleagues and most students could comprehend."

Bodger said that from the first he and Craft wrestled with the question of changing student life policy. They knew that they had to change the rules that limited dorm visits by members of the other sex and totally prohibited alcohol on campus. Craft and Bodger both began having conversations with Ruth about the problems. Their intent was to prepare her for changes that were theretofore unthinkable. Craft and Bodger sought to weigh whether she could or would be a helpful ally when the change process became apparent. The concern was that her commitment to the tradition might have made her too rigid to handle a new order of things. By the time Bodger prepared the board and obtained its approval, he and Craft put their confidence in Ruth. In the spring of 1978, she became dean of student life, responsible for men and women students both. Her canny administrative skills, her credibility with the people of her generation on the board and with parents, her loyal service in the past, her overriding professionalism—together these made her the best possible person to ring in the new era of social life at the college.

"But she was in her 60s," Bodger added. "She did not want to wait much longer to change pace. She did us an immense service by heading up the biggest social change the college had seen in living memory. But I knew we would have to relieve her before too long."

"Dick Whatley, the dean of men, was about my age. But he would not have fitted into the new position of student life dean. Before 1978, as dean of men, he ran the male side of student life apart from Ruth. Though the law had eliminated discriminatory rules in 1974, the reality of the old sexist tradition still made the culture of our men's dorms very different from that of women's. Dick was a classic football-coach-and-dean. He came to the college in 1959 as Helfferich's new dean of men, about six years before I arrived. He followed the long tenure of

Sieb Pancoast, an alum who spent his whole life in service to the college. DLH molded Whatley to be his special kind of dean. He operated a classic paternalistic system of a kind that had prevailed on American campuses for generations. And it soon was to disappear in the firestorms of the '60s.

"Whatley added his own peculiar flavor. He had played football in Maine. He brought a non-local perspective to the campus. Like Ruth Harris, he also operated with a real and a virtual rule book. But her professional administrative experience and acumen were hard to match. Moreover, he spent each fall immersed in football coaching. This took his attention away from dorms at just the moment when first-year male students were learning to be grown-ups at the knees of their sophomore elders.

"Nevertheless, by the time I got into office, Dick was a fixture of campus life. He would do whatever we asked him to do, but it would be in his own fashion. I had watched as he had adapted to the social revolution of the late '60s and early seventies. He never ceased to be an independent maverick, interpreting orders from Helfferich and Pettit as he thought best, keeping students off guard with a wily kind of broken field administration."

"And a treasury of malapropisms," added M.S.

"The unforgettable Whatleyisms," said Bodger. "Count off by fives and each group go to a corner of the gym."

"He could not have been a major player in your big change agenda," said M.S.

"But I was not in a mode of cleaning out the house," said Bodger. "I resolved to find a place for Dick as long as he wished to stay on. I felt certain that, with Craft's assistance, he could be a willing supporter of whatever we decided to do. He became associate dean in the new order of things, reporting to his former co-equal, Ruth."

Bodger added how impossible it was for him to capture something else about Whatley, but he would try. He remembered a night in the late '60s on Main Street. Bodger, then assistant to the president, and Whatley were surrounded by a protesting group of students, mostly male. The students had stopped traffic in both directions. The town's only police officer was on the scene. He was about to radio for back-up support so that arrests could be made. He gave Whatley ten minutes to avoid this. Whatley isolated the most influential student leader in the crowd. While Bodger talked to some protesters, he saw Whatley talking one-on-one to the student. Then Whatley climbed atop a car hood and said the student had something to say. The student spoke and the crowd, as if walking in glue, slowly moved off the street. They took more than ten minutes, but the police officer saw that the students were responding and kept still. As they left, Bodger asked Whatley what he had said to the student leader.

"I told him you would arrange a meeting for him with the president to discuss the issue," said Whatley.

"What's the issue?" Bodger asked.

"I'm not sure," Whatley smiled.

Get the job done. Use your wits. Don't look back.

Bodger said to M.S., "Whatley morphed into an outstanding track coach and a faculty character in the phys ed department after he left football coaching. He remained in the student life staff, but always as a lonesome end. A true character. He left here early and returned to Maine. He loved the deep snow. When we tried to find his administrative records, they were gone. He either took them to Maine or destroyed all the evidence."

Bodger said he never thought of replacing Ruth Harris, as her timetable ran out, with an outsider. Inevitably, the liberalization of social rules went forward under her leadership imperfectly. All constituencies of the college had reasons for finding fault with it, although most realized there was no way to go back. Bodger believed that he needed someone in charge who would know the parochial tradition of the college and the history of the change in progress.

"I wanted someone to lead who would take a creative approach to students from a clearly defined moral-ethical position. Someone to attach high educational seriousness to messy post-teenage life. Someone who could outdo even Ruth Harris in elevating the student life program to educational status. Otherwise, I worried that people would see me presiding over the mere legitimization of booze and promiscuity on campus."

Bodger said he found a window of opportunity to groom someone when Jim Craft announced in August 1980 that he would be leaving the college. J. Houghton Kane, assistant professor of political science, came and offered his administrative service. Kane had a law degree, was a popular classroom instructor, and had a high level of energy. He also was ambivalent about a career in academia. He continued to practice some law while teaching. He looked to Bodger to help him resolve his uncertainties.

For 1980-81, with Craft gone, Kane became executive assistant to Bodger, with special responsibility for overseeing and learning about student life administration. His legal training brought an extra resource at a time when college administration was becoming increasingly litigious.

Meanwhile, he and Bodger had an ongoing conversation about the pedagogical and philosophical meanings of student life at a residential college with a parochial history. Kane came to that conversation with an unabashed Christian belief, combined with a lawyer's ability to interpret and bend. Kane grounded his religious commitment in an enthusiastic personal relationship with Christ. He worked hard, however, not to flaunt his personal beliefs; indeed, as Bodger saw it, he translated them into a charitable and open stance toward students and colleagues, whatever their persuasion. Some on campus were wary of Kane's association with a proselytizing strain of Christian endeavor. But Bodger observed that Kane knew how to contain it and adapt to the Reformed campus tradition. Satisfied finally that they could work together on the difficult area of student life administration, Bodger in July 1981 announced the appointment of Kane to the position of dean of student life. Kane's mandate included all student life programming plus other student services, including financial aid, medical services, and career planning and placement. Ruth Harris stayed on as administrative assistant to Kane, thus providing continuity.

#### **Faculty expected a new academic dean**

Bodger said, "The Kane appointment came after we completed the big change in academic leadership, which climaxed in August 1979, when we hired William Akin as academic dean. I approached the leadership of academic and student life programs as separate issues, although I envisioned them as parts of a whole educational machine. Incidentally, this approach to hiring the two leaders, I realized years later, made it impossible to mesh the operation of the machine as successfully as I always hoped we could."

M.S. said, "Dean Bozorth was a decent man."

That of course was not the issue, Bodger went on. "Bozorth held a personal charm for many and had a finely honed enthusiasm about higher learning. He brought the sophistication of university life—Princeton, Penn—to our small island of intellectuality. Dick supported my candidacy—especially after the board chairman, Ted Schwalm, told him on the sly that I was the man. Dick reported this exchange to me behind a closed door, some weeks before the May 1976 election."

Bodger pointed at the honorary degree citation framed on the wall over M.S.'s head. He received the degree at the inauguration convocation. "The text was from Dick Bozorth's pen, I'm certain."

M.S. read the following:

*Farsighted beyond your years, you left a career in industry and public service to return to your alma mater as an imaginative teacher and a vigilant administrator. In the past decade of your service you have given your college a record of peacemaking without unctiousness, discretion without withdrawal, leadership without bombast, and of unremitting labor. You are thus to blame for the occasion that has brought you before us today, and it is our pride and our pleasure to honor you as this convocation draws to a close.*

"Knowing Dean Bozorth," M.S. said, "I think it was genuinely expressed."

Bodger said he thought so too. Yet, he knew from the first day that he would have to replace Bozorth. In the months between Bodger's election in May and his inauguration in November, Pettit had offered to plant a seed with some of his senior staff members, including Bozorth. He would tell them that every new president needs the freedom to build his own team. Pettit never said whether he carried out this intention. But Bodger assumed that some exchange took place. DLH that summer also encouraged Bodger to think about a change. And BreMiller, Bodger's main line to the faculty psyche, made it clear that, sooner or later, they wanted a new dean. They would give Bodger a little time. But not too much.

"I hear what you're saying," M.S. said. "You were from the inside. The faculty was willing to go along with that, for whatever reasons. Still, they wanted a broom to sweep the Pettit years away. You, in yourself, did not symbolize such a sweep."

Bodger nodded yes and added, "As the dispute between Pettit and the faculty had intensified, and people had started to imagine Pettit retiring, their fear had been that he would bequeath the presidency to Bozorth. This probably threw some support my way by default. And even after my election, the idea of Bozorth as Pettit's man would not evaporate. I suspected that these faculty members thought his influence would tilt my presidency back toward a Pettit agenda. This was naïve on several counts. But the notion persisted."

"A rotten reason for you to dump a guy willing to be loyal to you," M.S. said. Bodger saw the impertinence of her student years rise up and speak to him through her bright smile.

He replied, "Desire drives politics, not reason. The position of academic dean was inevitably and inherently political. It is in every institution."

"This I know," M.S. said, speaking as Dean Aumen.

"If my administration was to have a chance of really flying, it had to have an academic rudder that enjoyed the complete support and confidence of the faculty. I think this is true of any administration—it will be true of yours. For mine, it was doubly true. For I was a commander of an academic ship who did not have the standard license for such a role. The academic dean that I

chose had to make up for that lack in an unambiguous way. Dick had the credentials and the experience. He did not enjoy the political support of a significant portion of his faculty. I never knew how much the courtesies of our small campus hid that reality from him.

"Beyond merely subjective likes and dislikes," Bodger continued, "the more innovative faculty members had a proper concern. They saw little reason to think of Bozorth as sympathetic to an agenda for curricular change. During the disputes in Pettit's administration, Bozorth had spoken in favor of the status quo in the curriculum, envisioning changes to it as a minor process at the periphery. He meant this to support Pettit's admonition against spending already scarce dollars for new courses. He also meant it as a refrain to Helfferich's position speech on the philosophic conservatism of the college. Bozorth's colleagues surely did not forget the message after Pettit left office.

"I shared their concern. I believed that we had to address the imbalance in our curriculum and enrollment between the sciences and non-sciences. This would take imagination and some money from somewhere. My discussions with George Fago, John Wickersham, and other young Turks in the faculty involved implicit promises—they had a right to feel I would light fire under some kind of curricular change. I did not doubt that Bozorth would try to do what I would have asked him to do. I did doubt that he would have the fortitude to initiate curricular innovation on his own that would be relevant to our institutional problems."

M.S. said, "In my experience, curricular innovation can easily become a pork barrel operation. Faculty are great at mutual back scratching. You support my new course and I'll support yours. Let the dean and president worry about paying for them. It's hard to be high-minded about curriculum change."

"All the more reason for fresh leadership from outside," answered Bodger. "If the search for a new academic leader is participatory and perceived to be legitimate, the new person comes in with a certain amount of leverage and credibility. He or she can do things quickly that a familiar colleague cannot."

M.S. said she had come to her deanship from within but had been the object of a draft by a significant contingent of her colleagues. That, in essence, made her like an outsider. "I feel it gave me the leverage and credibility you're talking about."

"And your success as dean is the basis of your current candidacy for president," said Bodger. "This is rare these days."

M.S. brightened at the compliment but returned to Bodger's story of transition in the dean's office. "If you didn't want to drop him unceremoniously and if he didn't understand what you wanted, weren't you at an impasse?"

"It seemed so, for a while," said Bodger. "I did not want to hurry. Partly this was out of simple respect for Bozorth. But also, I did not want to appear to have undue haste in responding to faculty desire. There was a window of tolerance. I thought it best to tarry a while in that window. This, I felt, would establish that it was I, not the political winds, that would set the tempo of the agenda."

Bodger said that there were ways of letting the faculty know that he was quietly at work on the deanship behind the scene. Sometimes he could do this roundabout. For example, a senior faculty member's brother-in-law was president of another liberal arts college. When he came to town to visit, Bodger asked to meet with him. They had a president-to-president chat about hiring and changing deans. Bodger assumed that the grapevine would disseminate some information about such discussions.



"It took almost a year and a half to precipitate the change," Bodger said. "Longer than it should have taken, but not so long as to cause a major political problem." Bodger explained that he finally offered job assurances to Bozorth in return for his withdrawal from the deanship. Bodger made the case to him that he wanted a person in the position who would be more administrative—as opposed to collegial. Bozorth was not inclined to think and act programmatically and had an awareness of his own strengths and weaknesses. With support from his spouse, he soon resigned as dean to teach full-time in the English Department.

### **An acting academic dean stepped in**

That was in May 1978. With advice from Craft and key board members, Bodger resolved on appointing an acting dean for the 1978-79 academic year from within the faculty. This would buy a year for a full national search.

"Faculty nerve ends were still sensitive after a year and half," said Bodger. "If I chose the wrong person, political feelings could worsen rather than improve, even for an interim appointment. We all needed someone who would keep waters calm, work competently and systematically, infuse further consensus, support my initiatives without flak, and keep the stage uncluttered while we chose the new person."

"O, you mean J.C. Himself," M.S. said.

"He was unavailable, but by choosing Evan Snyder, I felt I addressed all those needs as well as one humanly could."

"Evan was on the committee that recommended you," M.S. said.

"So Evan had a stake in my performance. He and Blanche Schultz were lifelong faculty colleagues. I knew they would work well together as deans. Of the senior faculty members who were alumni, he was the least likely to exacerbate political feelings. A few might have been secretly unhappy that he had refused to sign the letter of concerns against Pettit. But respect for his integrity was so high that none dared say so. Evan's simplicity of style belied the keenness of his mind. He loved physics because it sought to express the complexity of nature with the simple elegance of applicable generalization. As a child, he spoke Pennsylvania Dutch before he spoke English. If there was a provincial culture of the college that deserved to be celebrated and preserved, Evan as much as anyone embodied it. We were determined to bring an outsider's view to the academic house. I believed, however, that the new person would have a greater chance of success if he could build on a platform of the familiar values with which the college traditionally identified itself. Evan reinforced that platform."

Bodger said that a young Turk movement was gaining steam in the faculty. The Turks were mounting a campaign to install one of them as acting dean. If Bodger did not choose their person, he ran the risk of alienating the rising force in the faculty. Snyder, of all the senior people, was least likely to arouse their resistance.

"In fact," Bodger added, "some people began to doubt that the announced public search would produce an outside appointee. They were thinking the inside acting person would become the permanent person. By choosing a senior colleague, I was able to undercut this expectation. Evan was the least likely person to trade on a de facto position and push for permanency if we did not want him to."

Bodger said that the appointment appeared to work well. Evan took to the tasks with predictable efficiency and quiet enthusiasm. When the new academic leader finally came aboard

in August 1979, he found an office in good order and a faculty prepared to follow his lead. Snyder's even-handed service for the year was the most important reason for this.

### **The eleventh hour produced a new dean from outside**

"You have to see the search for the new academic dean," Bodger said, "against the foil of the search that led to my election as president. The presidential search had been held back by the parochial distrust of the outside, still strong in Helfferich and others on the board. Even those on the faculty and staff and the board who were not xenophobic still had assumed that the body of the college was sufficient to produce its own leader. A consensus that outside blood was essential simply had not formed, though some close to the Pariahs had had the thought. Even they believed, though, that an alumnus from outside would suffice. By electing me, the board had perpetuated a parochial posture.

"From day one, it was clear to me, as it was to many others, that a new dean had to come from outside, preferably with no prior contact with the college. This was essential to give my administration a belated look of academic novelty. It was essential, too, because we sorely needed to focus fresh ideas about undergraduate curriculum and the culture of residential academic life after the revolution of the '60s. It was not that fresh ideas were not arriving on campus—the hiring process brought a steady influx of younger faculty members, aware of new directions in their disciplines, and eager to bring the light to what they doubtless perceived as a benighted campus. What we needed was the academic leadership to direct this influx and make sense of it within our budget and our aspirations."

M.S. asked, "If there was no consensus that an outside president was necessary, was there a consensus that an outside dean was necessary?"

"The feeling in favor of one was widespread. Still, the pull of the inbred culture remained strong. Helfferich thought Snyder would be just right for me. I had asked him to be in the ad hoc group of board members who interviewed final candidates, so he may have quietly counseled others to think so too. He feared that all the fuss over an outside search was being forced on me by a faculty that I could not fully manage. In this he was mistaken, but I danced around his perception rather than confront it. Some faculty thought that the appointment of a committee and the outside advertising was just for show. They remained convinced that Evan in the end would remain as permanent dean."

"I've found advisory search committees to be sticky wickets, hard to manage," said M.S., referring to searches for faculty at her college.

Bodger agreed with her but emphasized how essential it was for him to have one in the search for his new dean. Legitimization was absolutely needed, even if the committee was recommending Mickey Mouse. The faculty committee was made up of three persons elected by the faculty and three appointed by Bodger. They were all senior people: Jim Decatur of English, Jane Barth of chemistry, Bill Williamson of philosophy and religion, Roger Staiger of chemistry, Harry Simons of economics and business administration, Jim Craft of political science and the administration. They worked amicably and closely with Bodger in screening and interviewing. He gave heavy weight to their preferences. Craft was able to steer them and Bodger in a way that promised agreement on the choice of finalists.

"Still," Bodger said, "it was a tightrope walk at the eleventh hour and I had no safety net. The search came down to two finalists in early June 1979. Both had demonstrated competence as

academic administrators. But they could not have been more different from one another. Both came out of a strong religious-ethical position. The one was Quaker, quite liberal in his thinking about the world, given to conversation and consensus, casual, informal, articulate, charming in a slightly unkempt way, a biologist. His wife was even more opinionated on issues than he, and she talked more than was good for him. Neither of them understood the college's tradition and therefore were clueless about the gap between their style and the prevailing parochialism of our place. He captured the imagination of many faculty who met him, a somewhat romantic figure who would embody their image of themselves as adventurous intellectuals. One of them, though, thought he was still in mid-life identity crisis.

"The other finalist was from a midwestern Lutheran college. He knew the Reformed tradition, knew the history of our college somewhat, felt empathetic with it. He had a professional historian's comfort with context. Our committee perceived him as cautious and somewhat colorless, unlikely to be a change agent. At some point, owing to misunderstanding, faculty came to believe he was my choice.

"With neither finalist meeting the test in a second interview, I decided to invite Bill Akin back for a second interview, without consulting anyone. He had made a good impression on the committee members on his first visit. DeCatur had argued that he should be invited for a second interview ahead of one of the other two finalists. But I had disagreed, on grounds that his application came very late and that he seemed ambiguous about the prospect. When I called him in Montreal, the very evening after the second candidate left, I was pleased that he was still interested, contrary to my impression after his first visit. I told him to stand by.

"Then, *ex post facto*, I lined up some support with individual members of the committee, starting with DeCatur. Happily I found that other key members were eager to see a third finalist and had good impressions of Akin from his first visit. When he visited again, he wowed the department chairs and other faculty. He talked knowingly about achievable projects to professionalize the life of a faculty. He referred to such things as summer stipends and released time, simple strategies but still unknown here. As dean of humanities at Concordia University in Montreal, he had hands-on experience with motivating a faculty to reach for its next level of competence. He was likable, yet carried himself with a guarded reserve that seemed professional, though it was rooted, probably, in a personal need for protectiveness. Like one of the other finalists, he was an American historian. His graduate research at the University of Rochester had been on the technocracy movement in the US before World War II. But his passion was to see American society through the prism of baseball, his first love.

"I felt that his guardedness masked a free spirit. He had left the US a decade before for French Canada when a first marriage ended and he and his second wife needed space. The Quebec independence movement arose meanwhile to make life uncomfortable for expatriate Americans. They were ready for reentry. Our deanship would be an avenue. When I worried that he would merely be using us for that purpose and would have no commitment, he said he understood the concern. He promised me five years.

"When I drove him back to the airport, I think we both felt a comfort with the day and with one another. He seemed to accept my abnormal academic profile. I liked his reserved and professional surface, having discerned something more beneath it. I had to do some selling with DLH and others on the board. And he and I later had to get down to terms. But the deed was done that night going back to the airport, when we both made commitments.

"Akin began in August 1979. The five years he promised extended beyond the length of my term as president. He was the right person for me at the time. I suspect our place, in the end, was the right place for him, though it took a long while for him to resign himself to that. I think he may have persisted in seeing himself better suited for the larger university environment.

"The lesson to be drawn from our relationship seems to be this. We each had a sense of the protocol of one another's office. We tried not to presume or impinge on it. Throughout, we were aware of a personal space around one another. Sometimes this professional and personal respect caused him, or me, to tolerate actions that we would not have taken ourselves. But I can't remember a time when we were not mutually supportive. In addition, Bill was careful to try never to surprise me. I tried the same, but he had to work harder at that than I did, given the different places we occupied in the hierarchy. We would disagree by silence and omission rather than argument. And the disagreements were, in my recollection, few and principled. His field of American studies gave us an intellectual common ground. We enjoyed talking together about the social and intellectual experiences of our lifetimes and about the books that dealt with recent American experience. I think we both felt that the way we grew up, each in different places, gave us common ownership of a uniquely American dialogue. He understood the south as I never could. I understood the industrial north as he never could. "

M.S. asked, "If he was a good dean, was this the key element—his relations with the president?"

"A key element," answered Bodger. "Not the only one, of course. I'm not ready right now to give a full-blown assessment of Bill's strengths and weaknesses," replied Bodger. "I'll say this. Good deans are first good teachers and scholars, not necessarily of the top rank but passable in any company, and particularly respected in their own faculties. They have easy and unquestioned membership in the professional body. But they have an array of extra talents and the most important that comes to mind is a talent for the architectonic. They have a knack for seeing the whole structure of an intellectual edifice; they have to play the curriculum—and by extension the faculty--as if it were an orchestra. Another 'most important' is a certain social skill, a comfort in the sticky stuff of human intercourse, a tolerance for foibles and fools. And another is a capacity to blend toughness into tenderness, to have the obtuseness, it may be, to make a decision and sleep with it. Bill had all these qualities in good measure."

Bodger watched Dean M.S. meditating a moment. Finally, she said, "I think it's time for me to move on."

"Up, rather," replied Bodger, and added, "It might have served my administration if Akin had landed a presidency before my last phase, as I look back now. But that's a complicated speculation for some other time."

### **The administrative team rounded out**

Bodger said he fleshed out the team as need dictated in the first phase of his presidency. Helfferich and Pettit both had run the administration on budgets as small as possible. Bodger did not change that stance in his first phase.

Ted Kavanaugh, a seasoned advertising professional in semi-retirement, came in part-time starting in 1978 to do press relations. Mary Ellen DeWane, '61, a school teacher with young children, signed on also part-time to handle alumni relations. Frank Smith, whom he had hired while still assistant to the president under Helfferich, remained as the only full-time fund-raising

person. It would take until 1984 to make changes in fund-raising and promotion that would bring basic enrichment of that operation. That was the year that Bodger hired John Van Ness as vice president for college relations.

In July 1979, Charles Lesveque in the Evening School expanded the continuing education staff by hiring Erlis Glass and C. Joseph Nace. This started a growth pattern for part-time enrollment and community outreach that would last throughout the Bodger administration. In September 1979, Bodger was forced by unrest in the maintenance shop to change leadership. Howard Schultze relinquished his position as director of physical plant. He concentrated on facilities development and purchasing, while his erstwhile assistant, Fred Klee, took over the management of the department. This was a painful maneuver for all concerned, but Bodger's labor advisors insisted it would help prevent unionization in the shop—and it did, on a close vote.

M.S. said, "Starting out, then, you were biased heavily in favor of trusted alumni staff members. You did not want to start with a clean sweep of the broom. You worried a lot about faculty perceptions. The parochial tilt of the college seems to have helped determine much of your staffing agenda. You were budget conscious, no doubt to a fault. A new president from elsewhere, who was not an alum, would probably have been freer to shape a staff from the start."

Bodger knew she was thinking about her own options if she got the job at her college.

"Right," he said. "I've never pretended that my beginning team was the outcome of anything but a pragmatic need to get on with the business with as little friction as possible. When he was still president, DLH once said to me, 'If I weren't so lazy, I could run this whole thing myself.' While I did not have that much hubris, I did think that I could keep the whole thing going without staffing up with expensive outsiders."

"Was it the right way to start?"

"In the very short run, probably. In the longer run it inhibited movement on major issues. I sort of stumbled into a grander agenda only after some years of planning without being seriously committed to spending a lot of money on overhead."

M.S. mused, "You had to reshape yourself, then, before you could reshape the college."

Bodger said, "Interesting thought."

### **The first phase--1976-1979--was "getting started"**

M.S. held up three fingers and said, "Seems like a lot of years went by before you could say your staff was in place and ready to go. I don't think I could take so long today, starting out."

Bodger replied that the three years that preceded the hiring of a new academic dean, from fall 1976 to fall 1979, made up a definable first phase of his administration. Much happened, he felt, considering the history of the early 1970s on campus and the handicaps surrounding him. Akin's arrival provided an ending as well as a beginning.

"Definable how?" asked M.S.

"As I analyze my whole administration," answered Bodger, "I distinguish three main phases—getting started, making headway, and arriving. Then I had to end it as gracefully as I could. In the period up to Akin's arrival, we were getting the college started toward something big. First we had to take care of old business hanging over from the past—most important, altering the student social climate that represented a discredited parochialism. That was a prerequisite for trying to improve the educational atmosphere of the campus. How ambitious would we be? I didn't know at the time. The details were still murky, although it was obvious

that it would involve the movement of the institution in the direction of professionalization. We would have to recalibrate the balance between a parochial definition of the college and a professional one.

"This would involve making the college more competitive with other small residential liberal arts colleges. I was getting a team in place. We were laying the keel for a new curriculum, which emerged out of the Middle States ten-year self-study. This was finished by the time Akin came aboard. I was thinking about changing the demographics of the board and particularly its leadership. Riding over all of this, we were installing a new method of management. Planning as a method of management was resoundingly in place by 1979."

M.S. asked, "Were the steps you took in the first phase clear-cut in your mind as you began?"

"You know the answer or you wouldn't ask the question," smiled Bodger. "You know how events arise and determine the short-term agenda. Then, time goes by and the long-term agenda takes some of its shape from what you have been doing to fight fires. Nevertheless, when you get up in the morning, you have to remind yourself that there is a larger design and no one but you is ultimately responsible for drawing it. All through the first three years, even with crises, I felt confident that a larger vision was coming into being. I saw myself leading the college toward it. Without that sense, I think it would have been impossible for me to reckon well with the exigencies--the thousand things that every week demanded. We had to show intentional action, while we also had to react to circumstances."

Bodger offered her a pair of examples from those years. One showed the administration's proactive, intentional way of "getting started" by reviving a dormant issue, calendar reform. Another showed how it had to react to those opposing a field hockey trip to South Africa, where apartheid still prevailed in the face of international opposition.

### **The administration managed change through calendar reform**

Most colleges in the mid-Atlantic region already had shifted to a calendar that ended the first semester before Christmas. The college's unreformed calendar called for final exams after the Christmas break in a short lame-duck end of the first semester in January. Once the norm throughout higher education, this calendar allowed for a leisurely holiday season on campus, when good will and celebrations could take precedence over hard work. Students would leave for the Christmas holidays laden with last-minute papers to write and with studying to be squeezed into their weeks off. During the Pettit administration, the college's increasingly anomalous calendar came in for study by an ad hoc committee. It did a diligent job of marshalling the pros and cons of change. Receiving no signs of preference from Pettit, the faculty committee submitted its findings without making a recommendation. There the issue languished until Pettit left office.

Bodger entered office with a need to do something that would touch everyone quickly. He wanted to show that he intended to be an active agent for constructive change. Most major policy issues would have to await the dynamics of a planning process and did not lend themselves to immediate action.

The issue of calendar reform, already well studied, was tailor-made for his purposes. A calendar change would show an assertive approach toward a representative issue left over from the previous administration. It would be controversial but not mired in the issues of faculty pay

and governance that nagged at the whole community in recent years. If the administration could lead the way toward a change, it would demonstrate a determination to act rather than react. It would provide a model for leadership involving more important changes to come.

At the January faculty meeting, two months after taking office, Bodger announced that the new administration favored a change in the academic calendar. He said he hoped for implementation by the 1978-79 academic year. This declaration was a test of how much moral authority Bodger could command at the outset. If the faculty were disinclined to follow his lead, it easily could scuttle this call for change. Since he had done some communicating one-on-one with key faculty members, he knew there was a core of support. As it turned out, a consensus arose informally. By fall 1977, the faculty and the board approved the change, on schedule for implementation in 1978-79.

M. S. said, "You could have ended with egg on your face and your moral authority besmirched. I myself thought the change would be a pain, but I was about to graduate and didn't really give a damn."

Bodger replied, "I had no guarantee going in. But it seemed like a small risk to win a considerable symbolic gain. Craft favored it and he did plenty of politicking for it after he became executive assistant in February 1977."

"But the old Christmas spirit got blown away by pre-holiday exams."

Bodger said, "Frankly, I personally thought the change was frivolous except that it brought the college into line with the norm around the country. The change helped make us look a little less weird in the eyes of students, I thought. So at bottom calendar reform was a marketing issue, though we did not emphasize it as that at the time."

M.S. reflected, "I'm wondering now whether there's anything we do as administrators that is **not** marketing in the end."

"You speak the current wisdom," said Bodger.

### **South African apartheid threw a crisis Bodger's way**

Women's intercollegiate field hockey at the college long enjoyed a special prominence. It was the linchpin in a stellar women's sports program built by Eleanor Snell, who joined the faculty in the early 1930s. Over the course of several decades, Snell's field hockey teams dominated national competition. When alumnae of the program moved on to coaching positions in schools, they nudged their top players toward the college, perpetuating and strengthening its women's athletic prowess. One of Snell's best alumnae, Adele Boyd, '53, became her assistant in 1967 and took over when Snell left in 1972. Before it became an Olympic sport in the 1980s, women's field hockey had its own form of international competition through the U.S. Women's Field Hockey Association. The world field hockey network fostered an ethos of amateurism and gave players friendships throughout the world that for some lasted a lifetime. The culture of the network celebrated athletic prowess, but, in that pre-Title IX era, equally valued the relationships among women emerging from the game.

Having competed against the world's best players internationally, Adele Boyd had maintained relationships with fellow athletes, especially in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and South Africa. She believed that traveling to compete had given her an invaluable extra dimension as a liberally educated person. When she joined the college staff, she wanted her students to enjoy the same advantage and similar international friendships. With the help of alumnae friends, she regularly

arranged summer trips abroad for the field hockey team. She had a knack for making arrangements quietly and efficiently.

In the Snell tradition, Boyd kept administrative baggage to a minimum. She informed the administration of her plans but asked for little more than the license to do the whole thing herself. For Bodger, like Pettit before him, Boyd's summer adventures seemed to involve plenty of gain and little risk.

For the summer of 1977, Boyd planned a trip to South Africa, where women played some of the most competitive field hockey in the world. She had toured there with the US team in 1973 and established friendships that she sought to sustain. Boyd knew that the apartheid racial policies of the South African regime were the target of worldwide opposition. But she also knew that her friends in South Africa were working at integration and education of the non-whites of South Africa—at least to the degree that they could. This combination of circumstances led her to believe that a trip to South Africa in the "winter" of 1977 (seasons there being the opposite from North America) would be uniquely productive. It would give her players a valuable experience in playing world-class hockey while they gained a first-hand look at one of the most troublesome political spots on earth.

Boyd quietly cultivated the support of Bodger (her undergraduate classmate) for the trip. In February 1977, she sent him a rationale that emphasized its educational benefits. In it she acknowledged that the college group might appear to be tacit supporters of the apartheid system. She countered with a statement of the value of her firsthand experience as a traveler to South Africa, which enabled her to form her own opinions. "What a wonderful opportunity for college students to experience a problem situation." She cited other parts of the world where human rights were being violated but where travel still took place. By traveling to South Africa, she said, students from the US would build common interests and common goals with their counterparts in cultural activities as well as in sports. This, she hoped, might "help to bring understanding and equality among people." Besides, she insisted in conversation with Bodger, the students would be traveling as individuals, not as a team representing the institution.

Bodger said to M.S., "In retrospect, Adele's position was naïve. She wanted to travel into a smoldering political impasse that would break out into revolutionary change in not too many years. She did not gauge accurately the political symbolism that could attach to the trip in the eyes of people actively working against the apartheid regime. Playing field hockey, in truth, was doubtless--and rightly--her main objective."

M.S. said, "If she couldn't see the power of the symbolism, did you?"

"I was no better at anticipating the problem than Adele. We were long-time friends and colleagues. I wanted to support her because she was well intentioned, and she demanded little other than moral support. The anti-apartheid campaign had been around for some time. I did not have the gut feeling it was going to come to a climax that year and, frankly, paid too little attention to it. Often you have to do crisis management because you've been inattentive to something before it explodes."

M.S. remembered, "Some of the players who planned to travel were in my dorm that senior year. I'm afraid they were all as naïve as the coach... and you. Well intentioned, to be sure."

"You remember the story, then," said Bodger. "A classic case of a president being overtaken by an event and having to manage it reactively. It taught me a lesson but it did not make me immune to future occasions when crisis management was my only option."



The plans for the trip quietly came together during March. Meanwhile, however, the social action people in the United Church of Christ got wind of plans. The UCC was in the national forefront in urging organizations to withdraw investments in South Africa. Its social justice stance was as unyielding as that of any mainstream church in the US. Though the college board governed itself independently, its willingness to acknowledge its historic church tie made it susceptible to UCC criticism. The UCC's criticism came sharply and unequivocally in the form of letters from higher-ups and pastors in the field. Soon Bodger was receiving letters from alumni and from pastors in other denominations.

"At some point," Bodger said, "I realized that I was not dealing with a neat little educational trip led by a good-willed coach. I was dealing with the institution's reputation in the public arena. I had quietly okayed a student trip and ended with a public relations hot potato."

Bodger knew how hot it was when he received a call in early May from Margaret Roach, a reporter for the *New York Times*. She wanted a full run-down on his reasons for sanctioning the trip. Didn't he know that it would run up against church policy? Did he intend to flout the human rights boycott of relations with the white regime in South Africa? By then he assumed that the UCC people, who were headquartered in New York, had put Roach onto the story.

"So, under siege, I had to find a position that would rescue the college from an appearance of insensitivity to apartheid—and keep my administration from just looking dumb about international and organizational realities. But in the same breath I had to try to salvage the loyalty and support of Adele, her students, their parents, and the far-flung alumnae network that backed the trip.

"The close collegial relationship I had with Adele was a key. When I told her how serious the public relations issue was, she understood that her little sports project had become a big institutional issue. Because she did not want to make it a bigger problem, she quietly contacted other field hockey friends in New Zealand and sought alternative arrangements. That gave me time to jawbone with parents and people from the UCC.

"The UCC people gave me the other key to managing the crisis. They gave us field reports from South Africa that played up the personal danger to Americans traveling in an increasingly tense region. Valuing the personal safety of students became my face-saver. Adele did not believe the danger was all that serious, based on her telephone talks with her South African friends. But she acknowledged that a concern was plausible. With her tacit support, I was able to persuade some parents to back off from their support of the South African trip on grounds of safety. At first, some, like their daughters, were stiffening their backs and wanting to resist the presumptuousness of critics of the trip."

"Neat trick," said M.S.

"With plans for New Zealand quickly drawn up, I announced the cancellation of the trip to South Africa in a 13 May 1977 news release. We sent it special to Roach at the *Times*, and she was on the phone to me at once. Her coverage came out two days later.

M.S. said, "Do I recall correctly that the *Times* did not laud you for bravery?"

Bodger said, "From a public relations point of view, I felt that impressions could have been worse. True, Roach wondered why I was initially so obtuse about the political significance of such a trip. She did, however, use ample quotes from our official statement. That took some of the edge off her criticism. I was relieved that she reported on our abhorrence of apartheid. Most important, she reported my observation that the players and parents were distressed at having their motives questioned. This, I felt, would help sustain the sense of community that was in

danger of being lost in the controversy with 'outsiders.' Adele confirmed that the quotes helped salve feelings.

"When the players returned from New Zealand in the fall, they told of having a tremendous experience, staying with families, holding hockey clinics, winning lots of games. End of lesson on crisis management. But I could never really learn enough from one such incident to avoid another one. You simply have to remain in shape as a reactive crisis manager."

Dean M.S. concurred. "I've already learned."

Later by himself, Bodger sorted through his memory for other instances when events blindsided him. Fraternity hazing incidents stood high in his memory, along with the near-fatal stabbing of a woman student on Main Street by a would-be rapist, false alarms in residence halls that sent the local firemen beyond the pale of reason, the sudden death of a student in a residence hall from a cause never to be determined. He decided that M.S. had enough examples and tucked these memories back where they had been.

### **"Planning" became a mantra of the new administration**

M.S. would be going home to her campus shortly. She had heard from the consultant to the search committee for her college's new president. He told her that the committee had put her on the short list. It scheduled her for an interview in two weeks.

"What's the most useful thing you can tell me?" she asked Bodger.

Bodger replied that times had changed from 1976 to 1996. "What was current then is old stuff now," he said. "I'm wondering how much of my experience will help you today."

"Trust me," she said. "Talk to me."

"OK," he said. "To succeed, an administration does best if it identifies a dominant note--a key goal or theme, something that outlines and stamps it as recognizable and positive in the eyes of all its constituencies. You can do this up front, at the start, or you can let it bubble up to the consciousness of your publics over time. In a time of institutional crisis, the circumstances will establish the dominant note for you. But one way or the other, before too long after you start, people have to be able to identify in a word or two what you are doing. At least you have to be able to do that if they ask you. And you had better be the one who determines what that word is. If they do it, they may be saying something about your goals that you do not want to hear."

M.S. replied, "In your case, it had something to do with inclusiveness."

"Right," Bodger said. "It had to do with shared planning. 'Planning' became the mantra of my first years. It meant just about everything that was on my platter. The product became the process."

"I don't think I could use it," M.S. said. "On our campus it would be a given, hardly worth claiming as my own. We call it marketing."

"Here," said Bodger, "in 1976, the conflicts between Pettit and the faculty produced a representative priorities committee, a new medium for cooperation. It departed from a long tradition of unilateral presidential decision-making. When I took office, I appointed the members of the priorities committee to a new administratively created Campus Planning Group, with students, faculty, and principal administrators. The priorities committee continued to have a separate life, but it dealt narrowly with financial and faculty compensation issues.

"'Planning' was the fashionable management thing in the '70s. Higher education was trying to cope with demographic and financial distresses. I was in the first generation of college presidents

who were compelled to think more consciously of themselves as managers of a business-like enterprise. My six weeks at the Harvard Business School in the summer of 1974 had acculturated me to this new leadership model. Indeed, that experience helped to legitimize me in a job for which otherwise I was poorly credentialed. So, when I talked about planning, I hoped that the college community believed that I knew what I was talking about.

"The lessons about planning that I brought home from Harvard, reinforced by my experience and further reading, reduced to three--participation, continuousness, and comprehensiveness. You had to involve the faculty and students so that their ideas and your ideas fused into a vision for the future. You could lead but not dictate without consensus. You could not write a plan and put it on a shelf. Rather, you had to think of planning as a never-ending round of envisioning the future, setting goals and objectives and timelines, assigning responsibilities, checking outcomes, and starting all over again. A conversation. You had to encompass in planning the whole institution—not just the finances and bricks and mortar, but the curriculum, the enrollment process, student life, the articulation of the basic values, the soul of the place. The agenda of the Campus Planning Group, therefore, became the agenda for the college in a rather total sense. It was a little too soon for us to identify all of this as a 'marketing paradigm'—that would emerge a few years later. But that's what 'planning' in those early days was leading toward, as you surmised.

"By lucky coincidence, the college was coming up for its ten-year self-study, a prerequisite for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Middle States Association. By making the new Campus Planning Group the self-study committee, I was able to give immediate purpose and focus to planning in the eyes of the campus community. Everyone knew we had to do the self-study to satisfy Middle States.

"I was also lucky to have hit upon Jim Craft as my executive assistant, for he became the chair of the Campus Planning Group, and it was, in my view, a perfect match. His training in bureaucracy made him a master of process. His connection to the faculty leadership made him credible. His breadth of view made him comfortable with a comprehensive and complicated agenda for planning and action. His willingness to serve under my leadership—good old sailor that he was—made the machinery run smoothly. Jim was my superior in age, credentials, and experience, and yet he saw a duty to perform as my subordinate and he did it with dignity and good humor. He shared with me a sense of the adventure of a totally new beginning in an old institution that had not seen anything like our agenda before. We secretly shared an iconoclastic bent. We conspired to mask it for the sake of public appearance."

M.S. said, "'Planning', then, enabled you to characterize your leadership."

"I think so, to the degree that it could be characterized at that early point. It was a convenience. Lacking heavyweight academic experience, I would have been unpersuasive if I had tried to get out in front of the faculty as an academic leader—you won't have that handicap. 'Planning' had the virtue of subsuming academic issues under a broader management umbrella, which I felt I could credibly claim to carry."

"So by identifying yourself as the 'planning' president, you thought you were establishing your bona fides?"

"Much more than that," Bodger replied. "By raising up the process as the dominant note, I was trying to create an environment where we could grapple with the old baggage of student social policy while probing for a new set of words that would take us forward. In the clarity of

hindsight, I was getting ready, through planning, to rearrange the tension between a parochial and a professional ethos."

"In favor of the professional," said M.S.

"Yes, but in truth at the start it was more important to me to get our planning process legitimately into place. I was assuming that the content, the hard objectives for professional performance, would emerge by natural force once the process was in place to accommodate them. It was not as if I felt compelled to attack the old character of the place. I was a product of it and was too close to it to scan it objectively.

"Planning itself was not my invention. D. L. Helfferich had made much of plans, especially after I became his assistant and we cobbled together goals and financial projections for board digestion. Indeed, I hoped that DLH himself, along with Paul Guest and a few other hard-line board members, would at least be compelled to stop and listen if they received recommendations wrapped in the rhetoric of planning."

Bodger went to a file and produced a near full-page advertisement from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, dated 10 February 1980, from which he read the banner message of "good news": "It's no coincidence that this college is starting the new decade in a position of strength." It was no coincidence, the ad continued, because "of a tradition of careful management and a new planning process involving students, faculty, administrators and board members."

The body of the ad sang the college's praise for increased enrollment and alumni giving, its aim to educate for leadership, its traditional strength in the sciences, its commitment to the humanities, and its development agenda. It attributed these good developments to the planning process.

"We had been sitting around wringing our hands about our lack of visibility," Bodger said, "even in the Philadelphia area. Our part-time public relations guy, Ted Kavanaugh, persuaded me that we could begin to attack the problem frontally by simply buying space and bragging. When he sat down to write the copy and looked for the differentiating factors that would set us apart, he saw our planning work and made it his hook."

"With what effect?" M.S. asked.

"It made some of us feel good, just seeing our name in big letters. The blatant bragging disturbed some sensitivities on campus. I myself was secretly uncomfortable. The feedback was small. It was impossible to measure the ad's worth. My point is that the ad put 'planning' in a neat package and said 'this is important.' For my administration, it was important."

"Just for the inclusiveness?" asked M.S.

"More than that. I thought the planning process would give me a palatable means for talking with the board about substantive change in policy. The process and its seasoned admiral, Jim Craft, gave me the feeling that we could develop new policy from the bottom up and present it in a blanket of legitimacy to the board."

"The students and recent alums were expecting results no matter how you got them," M.S. said.

### **Changing student life policy: the necessary first step in "getting started"**

When Bodger set out to define his presidential priorities in 1976, it went almost without saying throughout the campus community that the quality of student life had to receive priority attention. Students were unhappy; faculty were unhappy in part because students were unhappy;

board members, when they elected Bodger, recognized that something was persistently bothering the campus and, whether they liked it or not, most seemed to see that the new administration would have address it.

The college had clung to a set of social rules that mainstream America was casting aside in the late 1960s. In the two preceding administrations, the social system imposed by the rules had come to be a shorthand for the college's commitment to conservative educational principle. Most students and many faculty did not perceive the rules as a sign of principle but as an obstacle to communication and a personal irritant. There was a widespread perception that the rules prevented students, faculty, and administration from dealing together on common ground with extracurricular life.

Since the rules forbade much of the social life actually lived by students, the students could not discuss social behavior with the faculty or administration in anything like realistic terms. Many, including Bodger himself, traced the problematic morale of the college community in 1976 to this inability to communicate. Moreover, many younger faculty said that the preoccupation with social issues on campus worked against academic priorities. The distress over student life policies, they believed, took attention away from academic priorities and inhibited a lively intellectual climate.

The deliberate decision to preserve a conservative social climate as a positioning strategy came in the administration of D. L. Helfferich. It was a conscious effort to create an alternative college atmosphere to that which was rising on other liberal arts campuses with the social revolution of the 1960s. The board endorsed Helfferich's policy statement on conservatism while it was in the process of selecting William Pettit to be Helfferich's successor.

Pettit comfortably accepted this policy position for his administration. He worked throughout his six years in office to hold the line against the constant pressure of students (who often had the tacit support of some faculty) to liberalize the rules surrounding residential life. Pettit had had to make tactical concessions on the rules against residence hall visitation by members of the opposite sex. A milestone concession came in 1974, when state law on the rights of women compelled the college to equalize rules for women and men where theretofore they had fundamentally differed. Meanwhile, the young people coming to the college were continuing to absorb the changed values legitimized by their older siblings in the late 1960s. However, by the time he left office in 1976, Pettit could say that he had met his promise to the board to hold the line on social life as much as possible. Open visitation during the week still was forbidden, and the consumption of alcohol on campus anywhere anytime remained forbidden.

Although the students protested against these particular rules, it was the negative climate created by the college's general approach to student behavior, more than the specific rules, that seemed to cast a shadow on the campus. Bodger had felt for years that the tone of administrative action was as telling as its substantive policies in determining student attitudes. The college appeared to many to be overly paternalistic and tradition-bound, insensitive to the psychological needs of current-day students, disconnected from newer theories of human development, committed to an older model of discipline as the key to education. They perceived that the college valued the nitty-gritty administration of rules over the developmental needs of young people in a volatile and complex American social environment.

The acceptance of Bodger's election to the presidency rested to a considerable extent, he felt, on the belief of students and many faculty that he would take a fresh approach to student life. He had surely indicated as much to plenty of people in the months leading to his election.

"But," he said to M.S., "I avoided specifics as much as I could. And I avoided deadlines and target dates."

"But you knew," said, M.S., "that people wanted to change the dorm rules and the alcohol prohibition, and you knew they would not wait very long."

"I knew students wanted that and would lose patience with me before too long if they did not see action. I remember an editorial by two seniors in March 1977, only several months into my term. They stated four myths about the 'rules and customs' that they believed the college clung to. And they laid out their arguments to dispel each of those myths."

M.S. confessed that she was in the dorm room the night the editorial was born.

She remembered: "The editorial said that one myth was that, when they entered the college, students were fully aware of what the rules and customs said. I sure wasn't, and most hadn't a clue what they were getting into. The editorialists argued that it was wrong of the college to insist that the consent of students to the rules and customs could be based on their initial ignorance."

Bodger said, "Another myth was that parents, who paid the bills, were conservative and happy with the rules and customs. Your friends knocked down that argument with demographics. They hypothesized that the clientele of the college had shifted from rural to urban and, with that shift, parents as a group became more sophisticated about social customs. They assumed that the older constituency, which supported the rules, now were sending their kids to 'Bible colleges', which were booming, and new community colleges. It was a valiant try, though the editorialists acknowledged that they were only guessing at the data."

M.S. said, "It really outraged them when an administrator told them that the rules were working just fine. Most of the time, a dean would persuade students caught up in wrongdoing to forego trial by peers in the judiciary committee and take the certainty of an administrative judgment. Students saw something fundamentally wrong when the discipline officers acted as police, prosecutor, and judge all at one time."

"And then," continued Bodger, "they denied that the rules and customs represented 'traditional values.' They instead characterized them as dead conventions. They appealed to the authority of Thomas Merton, who differentiated tradition as living and active but convention as passive and dead. Convention was an evasion of reality in Merton's formulation. That fitted perfectly with the students' sense of the rules and customs."

By now, Bodger had found in his bound copies of the student paper the editorial in question and he read aloud:

*If the college truly wanted to be a part of the tradition of liberal arts education, ... then the rules and customs would have as one dominant theme the development of individual freedom within a community to make choices as a free moral agent. Instead we find a thoroughly conventional set of blanket restrictions on how we may express ourselves publicly, whom we may visit and when, what we can eat or drink, and where we can live and under what circumstances.*

"And then," he added, "they called for a transition to systems like those at Moravian and Lafayette, which were in their view reasonable and workable."

"I thought it sounded pretty good then," said M.S. "and still do, granting youthful exaggeration."

"They certainly captured the sense of urgency and expectation," said Bodger. "Faculty were less expectant of particular policy changes than students. They wanted a more academic environment. They didn't care much how we created it. If they had to accept some of the appearances of a 'party school' in order to make a transition toward greater academic engagement, they were prepared, I think, to acquiesce in such nutty logic."

M.S. said, "In truth, of course, the youthful lack of perspective of my peers blinded them to the complex reality. The rules and customs were as ridiculous as they said. But the faculty and the administrative staff were already in the business of developing individual freedom of students in an intentional community, according to the educational light of the time, anyway. The students could not have been expressing their criticisms of the social policies if that were not so. They would not have had the freedom."

Bodger agreed with her and said, "No one on the faculty thought that we could just do away with rules and customs. Nearly all of us felt the rules had to be put into the context of the social revolution that was just about completed by 1976. The social revolution had brought nothing less than a revolution to educational practices as well. Most colleges were in the process of discovering the consequences of those changes. It is just that our college, because of its deliberate attempt to hold fast, had not yet seriously engaged with the issue."

Bodger said that a successful transformation of student life would depend on two things and they would take some time. He first had to decide concretely what changes he could realistically advocate to improve the social and affective climate of the campus. This was largely a political matter of finding the point of agreement where all the constituencies could be minimally dissatisfied and willing to concede ground. Second, he had to prepare the most problematic constituency, the board of directors.

"To find consensus in the campus community, we needed a credible process," Bodger said. "The Campus Planning Group headed by Jim Craft was the most credible vehicle I could devise."

M.S. said, "Students were listening carefully as you started talking about changing student life policy. They were hoping you would do something even before the 1976-77 academic year ended. I remember that you wrote memos for the student paper and weasled around about a specific timetable."

"My first intended audience was not the students or the faculty," replied Bodger. "It was the board of directors. The question was how much change the board would stomach. I felt that a robust planning process, with plenty of participation by faculty and students, would show board members the legitimacy of the need for change. I deliberately put the process, with Craft in the lead, at the center, and tried not to shoulder the whole thing myself."

"But you could not avoid being in front," M.S. said. "The students and faculty saw you out there."

"I could not avoid it and didn't want to. I wanted the process for the legitimacy it could bring but tried not to kid myself about who was in charge. I had one-on-one exchanges with most board members over the summer before my inauguration. I tried to tell them of my belief that change in student life was tops in importance and stressed that a planning process would be put into place to address it.

"I vividly recall the reaction of one of the most thoughtful board members. He was the one who, while not opposing my candidacy, told me that he abstained in the final board vote because he thought the process leading to my selection was flawed. After I talked to him about student life, he told me he was opposed to alcohol on campus and cited Gettysburg's bad experiences

after it permitted it. He thought dorm visitation would put romantic needs over study needs in rooms. Nevertheless, he mainly hated the simplistic confrontational situation the college found itself in, with students saying 'we want it' and the administration and board saying 'you can't have it.' There must be reasons, he believed, for each viewpoint and they needed to be laid on the table in blunt and forthright terms. I told him it was my intention to ferret out those reasons and counted on his forthright evaluation of them in due course."

One of the most laborious pieces of work of Bodger's first few months was writing a white paper on student life policy. He needed something substantial to put in front of the board members. He wanted them to get an unmistakable signal that student life, in his mind, was the most important policy issue of his new administration—not just rules and customs but the whole range of out-of-class activity. It went to the board committee on government and instruction in February 1977, only a couple of months after the inauguration.

Bodger said, "I intended it as a shot across the bow and a harbinger of things to come."

The paper, which he handed to M.S., was titled "The Quality of Student Life." From the start, Bodger tried to move the focus of discussion away from the negative student complaint about restrictive rules and toward the pedagogical root of the question: Was the college residential for educational reasons or for the mere convenience of putting students in close proximity to their classes? The obvious answer, which everyone in the college community unhesitatingly would endorse, was that the traditional "collegiate way" of the American residential college had a developmental purpose from the start. It professed to build good moral character through the benign influence of a structured campus environment, removed from the hurly-burly of the larger community. Lessons and campus living went hand in hand. They contributed to the outcome sought, the well-rounded person able to think critically about the subjects that came to furnish his or her mind and adept at living gracefully and productively in society. This ancient and honorable ideal of American residential colleges by 1976 was placed under fatal pressure by the dynamics of social and political change that erupted a decade or so earlier. By the time of Bodger's inauguration, any college that had not sought actively to accommodate those dynamics was sure to be in distress. That precisely is what Bodger felt the college was in as he took office.

M.S. read from the white paper:

*We assume that Student Life and what might be called Academic Life are halves of a single college experience that leads to informed, sensitive and effective adult living. We assume that the college is predominantly residential not merely to make it convenient for students to go to class but also to immerse the students in a 24-hour-a-day educational process that includes but transcends their strictly intellectual development in courses. In some fashion, directly or indirectly, this round-the-clock experience, we assume, has an educational impact on the thinking, the attitudes, and the behavior of students. In theory, at least, every activity on the campus, whether generated outright by specific policy or stimulated by the general conditions and expectations of the institution, affords students a chance to learn.*

"I felt a need to make these seemingly obvious statements," said Bodger, "so that the discussion would move beyond the narrow issues such as dorm visitation and the prohibition of booze. It was important to contextualize those narrow issues by talking about broader goals."



"Most students," said M.S., "saw such rhetoric as smoke off the kettle. The real question was whether the college was going to get off our backs and let us live the way we figured we had a right to do while growing up away from home for the first time."

"True enough," Bodger said, "except that research at the time showed that young people were looking for **more** rather than less attention from the system."

"But of a different kind than that traditionally offered by our college," rejoined M.S. "You show as much in your paper when you quote a student: 'Of course we need guidance. This, in part, is a purpose of a liberal education. But I say, let the administration and faculty give us guidance, not surveillance.'"

Bodger said, "Having established the importance of a student life program, I indicated to the board that Jim Craft and the planning committee would be looking systematically at everything associated with it. I let it be known in a student newspaper article that I saw May 1978 as a target date for recommendations for change. This was a calculated effort to stave off the impatience of students and some faculty while allowing a comfortable cushion of time for educating the board on the need for changes."

"It also put you under the gun to deliver change or else," M.S. said.

"Absolutely. I knew that my administration would be in deep water unless the board approved something substantive by spring 1978."

M.S. walked through the white paper with Bodger, summarizing as she went. She read Bodger's obligatory tribute to the status quo by discussing the accomplishments under the old system of student governance with a dean of men and a dean of women.

"Dick Whatley and Ruth Harris were troopers of the first rank," said Bodger, "and I was in awe of what they could do under ambiguous, even contradictory, conditions. But they never had the freedom to raise basic questions about the policies they were expected to enforce."

M.S. read off the reasons Bodger advanced to review the student life program at that juncture. There had been no systematic review for a long time and that in itself demanded one. Perceptions of many, and not just of students, were negative. Evidence from the admissions office suggested that negative impressions of the quality of student life led a significant number of accepted students to decline the offer of admission. The long slow decline in the cohort from which the college recruited, soon to begin, gave particular urgency to this concern. The characteristics of current students were different because of the changes in American life and demanded a reconsideration of the student life policies designed to help educate them.

M.S. read:

*Sesame Street, freeways, jet travel, the socialization of marijuana, 18-year-old legal adulthood, the blurring of sex roles by federal mandate, the segmentation of adolescents into a lucrative commercial market, for food, cosmetics, clothing, and music, the relaxation of social constraints on personal behavior, the energy crisis, consumerism, the decline of belief in material progress and in institutions—all these deep-seated changes came into the consciousness of a member of the class of, say, 1950, after he or she graduated from college and was embarked on an adult career. For the member of the class of 1980, however, they were facts of life before he even entered college and began defining himself as a person. We may assume that the member of the class of 1980 sees social reality in a manner that makes him noticeably different from his counterpart in the class of 1950 at a similar stage of life.*

"I would think this was telling—or disturbing, maybe—to your board audience."

Bodger replied, "It was my attempt, again, to move the discussion to a broader arena. I was desperate to make the most hide-bound board leaders look at the changing world in a more realistic way."

"You say it will be important to compare our college policies with those of similar colleges."

Bodger reminded M.S. that the traditionalist social policy was in place because of a deliberate attempt to set the college apart from competitors by identifying it as a conservative place. The white paper did not challenge this but simply said that the college should look across its fence at the neighbors to learn what it could learn. In fact, Bodger already was thinking of adapting programs well in place at competitive institutions that shared other characteristics. Gettysburg College was high on his list, for example—in spite of criticisms of it by at least one board member.

"And you end with a peroration on the importance of doing a 'student-centered review.' What other kind would you have imagined?"

Bodger replied, "The existing policy, however unexamined, had been propped up to answer the societal turmoil of the preceding decade. It reflected the goal of positioning our college to the right of center in the marketplace. In what might have been a perverse way, I was suggesting that we address our marketing position—we never called it that at that time—by **ignoring** market considerations for the moment. I urged that we think primarily about educational effectiveness, what we had to do to enable students to learn better. I thought that if we could show an improvement in our educational effectiveness by changing our traditional student life policies, in the end we could strengthen our recruiting position in the marketplace."

M.S. observed that the students' preoccupation with open dorms and permission to drink obscured more systemic deficiencies in the student life system that Bodger could address without fear of board opposition.

"Right," Bodger said. "The judicial system on paper was student-centered but by practice it had atrophied. Administrative handling became the norm, with no peer participation. Student proctors in the dorms were a weak link in the system. They had no training to speak of. By the book they were expected to see that rules were obeyed but in practice did not. There was no formal system of advising and counseling of students, so the student proctors had no back-up system in dealing with social problems. The college made little attempt to put a friendly appearance on official student life policy. Prescription and judgment were the prevailing themes. The rule book issued to every incoming student was a classic example of paternalism.

"In truth," continued Bodger, "the years of social upheaval from the mid-1960s on had taken a heavy toll. The administration became mainly concerned about keeping order. The price was that it gradually removed students from active participation in the order-keeping process. As the heat of the social change began to abate after the peak of the late '60s, I found myself assuming office with a moribund system of student life. It was, as you say, not just a matter of dorm visits and alcohol—they were the surface issues atop a systemic educational problem. Anyway, my predecessor, under the constant pressure of student demands, gradually had liberalized dorm visitation de facto, without formal authorization by the board. Students consumed alcohol widely in dorms, as you know, with less and less enforcement. When there was enforcement, it was erratic and arbitrary."

M.S. said, "We discussed a 'ripeness' metaphor at one of our recent regional meetings of academic deans. Some policy issues ripen to the point where they demand comprehensive review,

irrespective of the details that led up to that point. You saw student life as a chronic case of overripeness, I would say."

"Hence," replied Bodger, "my decision to make student life a major target of the new system of planning."

Bodger turned to his colleagues at the Harvard Institute for Educational Management for help in establishing the new planning process. He adopted a system of setting goals and objectives and assigning tasks from an example offered at Harvard by an IEM participant from the College of St. Thomas, Don Leyden. Another participant, Scott McDonald, who moved to Drew University, became a friendly adviser when Bodger and Craft visited him in March 1977.

"These people had rigid procedures," said Bodger. "Jim Craft and I felt nervous about getting too rigid. We emphasized the **disposition** to plan. We emphasized planning as a **process** not a final product. We wanted a feeling of open-endedness to attach to our planning, although, obviously, we had to reach conclusions and decide on particular targets. It was important to begin by allowing the campus community to declare consensus on the values it espoused and the goals that would permit it to manifest those values. We felt that we could narrow broadly stated values and goals into concrete administrative and academic programs through ad hoc task forces.

"I announced all this in spring 1977 and by May 21 we held an all-day broad-based planning conference to identify values. After that I constituted the Campus Planning Group to follow up and guide the planning process, with Craft as chair and the faculty-elected Priorities Committee members as key players, along with students and appointed administrators. And so we launched the process. Though modified over time and shepherded by several different administrative colleagues, it lasted through the rest of my administration."

"Surely," said M.S., "you did not set up such an elaborate planning process just to cover your tracks in changing student rules on dorms and booze."

"Surely not," answered Bodger. "But there was no doubt that the quality of student life would take a priority place in the process. And a task force in due course came into being, with Craft in the chair, to carry the spear in the charge for change. Formally engaging students and faculty in the process was more significant than it appears in hindsight. The college traditionally kept student and faculty input as informal as possible. Pettit and Helfferich had felt that power belonged to the authorities and should be distributed only to the extent necessary. The new planning process appeared to be a kind of internal revolution. Nothing short of revolution was needed, I felt, perhaps naively, if I was going to move the tired policies on student life."

"And thus gain the moral authority to move the tired policies on academic life?" asked M.S.

"Just so," he replied.

M.S. said, "Nearly two decades have passed between my student days and now. It's hard to reconstruct the consuming feeling we had that the student rules had to change before the college could take charge again of its academic soul—but I know some of us students felt it that way."

"The time indeed has passed," said Bodger. "I too am unable to reconstruct the intensity of that feeling. But I was quite sure that if I could not effect basic change in our approach to student life, I might as well get out."

"So you did not hesitate to risk all for the sake of it."

"Right. The irony was that my mentors, those on the board who pushed the process to get me elected president, didn't understand the firmness of my conviction in this. I realize now that America was undergoing a fundamental shift of values to what we now know as postmodernist culture—the whole social climate was moving. I can see myself now simply as an engineer

responsible for turning the organizational levers that would enable the college to shift tracks along with the rest of the society. At the time, though, I lacked such perspective. I felt the fervor of the revolutionary who does not know the outcome of his actions but knows he has no choice but to proceed. I was engrossed in the particulars of a particular institution. That kept me from clearly seeing the national context. I felt at moments the way I did in eighth grade. I trashed the schoolyard at the end of the year, just before the recognition ceremony. That forfeited a big American Legion award the disappointed principal had planned to give me. I knew DLH would be disappointed in what I now was planning to do."

"Truth is," M.S. said, "the college was simply hurrying to catch up with competitors who were ahead of it in adapting to the inevitable social change. The rules changes surely were not revolutionary in the perspective of what was happening to mainstream American liberal arts colleges, particularly in the mid-Atlantic region."

Bodger, nodding his head in agreement, produced a paper that spelled out the changes.

"Amusing," he said, "that we rhetorically subordinated the big issues of dorms and alcohol. At the top, we emphasized the programmatic changes to be made. Career testing, career counseling and placement should be considered an integrated program with staffing of at least one full-time person. Intensive provision should be made for orientation of new students. The college should investigate the feasibility of coordinating all aspects of student life in one office. The college should investigate the feasibility of an academic counseling program utilizing trained student assistants. The college should investigate the feasibility of an expanded training program for resident assistants. All these recommendations became, one way or the other, the agenda that we pursued after the board approved them in May 1978."

The operative changes in student social life came in the form of editorial changes to the student handbook. Bodger read from the document:

"Although the college does not encourage any use of alcoholic beverages by students, it recognizes the fact that many students do drink beer and other alcoholic beverages.' This recognition tacitly permitted students to have alcohol in their rooms without penalty. It acknowledged that enforcement of the old rule was more and more unrealistic as the behavioral transition continued from the late '60s into the '70s."

Bodger read the set of regulations for parties at which alcohol could be served: "A sponsoring group—that was code language for fraternities and sororities, mainly—had to register a party. Seventy five percent of the residents of a dorm had to vote approval for a party. The sponsoring group had to post a \$100 bond. Parties were limited to Friday and Saturday from noon to 2:00 am. The regulations prohibited parties by groups with a bad history of party management."

All this came into force after M.S. had graduated. "My God," she said, "salvation was in the details. But did you ever believe such a regimen could be enforced any more than the old prohibition?"

"Frankly, no one knew. Craft kept assuring me it would work. The best students kept promising responsibility. But of course they soon graduated. It wasn't long before we realized the system did not really work well. We spent the rest of my administration trying to improve on it. But the end of prohibition did much to win the main objective--to move the fight over social regulations to the periphery and allow us to get on with building up the academic life of the college."

M.S. asked if the new dorm visitation rules helped to that end also.

"From my perspective, they indeed did so," Bodger said. "A new 'social hours' program allowed residents of a hall to elect visitation hours up to a maximum allowable. The maximum was Sunday through Thursday, noon-to-midnight each day, and Friday and Saturday from noon to 2:00 am. I think the rules against visitation were so openly flouted by the time I became president that this formal change a year and a half later mainly brought precept into line with practice."

"And removed it from the students' list of gripes," added M.S.

Bodger said that another significant change came in the judicial system. "The Judiciary Board, a faculty-student joint committee, had long existed but had become less involved in discipline. Student offenders tended to avoid the uncertainties of J-board actions and to choose the more certain method of accepting administrative sanctions, which deans encouraged. The college sought to put new life into a more participatory judicial system. We assumed that it would be more educationally productive for all students. It would lessen the appearance of arbitrary action by the administration. New procedures aimed at fairness and even-handedness came into the handbook. They included a formal notification of charges, presumption of innocence, open hearing, right of challenge to J-Board members, rules of evidence, right to name a campus friend and to participate in all proceedings."

"More catching up with what had already changed at other colleges," M.S. said. "And did you feel that the total effect of the May 1978 'revolution' was positive?"

"Except for details of procedure on alcohol control, I would do it again in a minute," said Bodger, "even though it cost us a major board member. Paul Guest, '38, was D. L. Helfferich's choice to be the next president of the board. He had been the most vigorous defender of the college's conservative social position in arguments with students going back to the 1960s. He foresaw what we were planning to do and warned me that I would lose his support if we turned the college into a 'whorehouse.' Since he saw the recommendations in just that light, he voted in the board meeting to table them for further consideration. No one supported his motion. I had done careful political homework with nearly every other board member."

"How did he deal with the changes afterward?" asked M.S.

"On the Monday after the board meeting, he sent me his letter of resignation from the board and ended all support for the college for the rest of his life. Some board members privately sympathized with Guest's position but followed the lead of the administration anyway. Others thought that the changes, despite their sharp departure from the college's past conservatism, had to be made to allow the institution to move ahead. Guest and I agreed in believing that the changes represented an historic shift in the posture of the college. He disagreed with my belief that the shift was necessary."

M.S., thinking of the need of presidents to keep peace with board members of every stripe, asked how Bodger handled the aftermath of Guest's defection.

"First I had to deal with DLH. Remember, he still was an active member of the board, though now in his late seventies. He was absent from the climactic 19 May 1978 meeting. It was his first unexcused absence since he first joined the board in 1927. Later he told me he 'forgot' the meeting. I had to believe this was a subterfuge. He knew what was coming up. Had he been present, he would have felt compelled to agree with Guest in delaying action. But he would have also felt compelled to support the administration. In his wily heyday he would have been able to finesse such a contradiction. But I think age had caught up and he no longer had the zest for doing the politically impossible that drove him all his life.

"When I showed him Guest's resignation, he tried to assure me that this was not the end of the world. After he talked to Paul, his tune changed. He felt I had pulled one over on the board and regretted that it had cost us Paul's loyalty. He urged me to meet with Paul and try to patch things up. I did that but we found no common ground. We parted politely, and that was the end of it. It was a bitter turn of events for him. He had been one of the alumni who recommended that DLH hire me in 1965 and had backed my candidacy for president."

"Except for Guest," M.S. said, "I take it that the rest of the board felt comfortable with the changes."

"Some were comfortable, I guess. Others acquiesced. My strongest supporters knew what I was doing because I had talked to them over many months about the importance of it. Some expressed privately to me that Guest had backed himself into a corner from which he could not escape. I discovered that Paul's assertiveness over the years had not had the unqualified support that DLH thought it had among other board members. Beddow believed that I should have aired the whole thing in the committee of the whole instead of in the confines of the government and instruction committee. He was relieved that I had dodged the effects of that flaw in procedure and had landed on my feet. He was upset with Paul's opposition and glad we could get on with the changes. It was Beddow who cut short the discussion of the recommendations in the board meeting and called for a vote. Bob Anderson's view was important to me. He was the Pew family's designated member of our board. As such he was peculiarly responsible to tend the conservative flame. However, he also was a new model of corporate manager at the Sun Oil Company, committed to participatory management, forward-looking and comfortable with organizational change. I reported to him on the meeting at length, since he was absent. He regretted Paul's resignation, he said, but it did not surprise him. He believed I was bound to come up against Paul sooner or later, having heard him in action at committee meetings. Bob saw inflexibility in Paul and thought it contradicted the qualities that he, Bob, was pursuing in his own career. So he supported me.

"Ted Schwalm, the board president, was the key player in making the changes happen. He was as fixed as DLH in wanting to preserve the old ways. But he was retired and wanted to get out of the chair. He wanted to go to his workshop every day, where he crafted metal and wood with masterly precision. He had wanted to leave after he engineered my election. I had persuaded him to stay, not wanting to see Guest move in until after we dealt with the issues of student life. Schwalm felt the best way to proceed was to give me his support and to gavel into being whatever program I felt was needed. Then we could choose someone to succeed him. He never really argued with me about the details, to my amazement. Some time later, when we met to reminisce, he congratulated himself for the way he pushed through the action on the changes over Paul's objection. He had backed me as the candidate of choice in 1976 and never wavered in his support of me, come hell or social change. Many faculty saw him as a hard-headed reactionary. He seemed to me to be a complex man with many remarkable qualities. I remained profoundly indebted to him. He could easily have aborted my presidency if he had not felt so supportive of me in a personal way."

Bodger then explained how the policy changes of May 1978 became the template for the administration of student life as it evolved over the course of his administration. They had far-reaching effects on the structure of the staff and its agenda. He eliminated separate positions of dean of men and dean of women. The position of dean of students came into being, with all student affairs under that office. Ruth Harris, erstwhile dean of women, became the first dean of

students. She was responsible for a new and far-reaching student life program. It emphasized the expanded training and use of student resident assistants. Changes in women's roles made it virtually impossible to perpetuate the old system that depended on mature resident preceptresses or "house mothers" in women's residence halls. In men's residence halls, the dean of men had long employed student proctors, but they had lacked training and authority to manage. The new system introduced trained student resident assistants across the residence halls for both sexes. (Eventually, when residence halls began to be co-educational, this earlier step made the transition easier.) Orientation for new students became an ambitious new priority. The theme of the student life changes was individual student responsibility, a particular need in light of the liberalization of rules on visitation and drinking alcohol.

Bodger was certain that the new policies began to engender less negative perceptions of the college by students and prospective students. They enabled the college to move beyond a preoccupation with the tensions surrounding social behavior and to elevate academic priorities. They changed the atmosphere of the campus from restrictive to party-friendly (and thus went full circle in creating a new image problem in ensuing years). They created an unbreachable wall between the older college and a newer one. They signaled the long-delayed end of a "pietistic" concern over conduct and a turn toward the campus style of liberal arts colleges that enjoyed greater regional and national recognition.

In the wake of the changes, the annual report for 1978-79 waxed positive about a "more positive and open atmosphere among faculty, administration and students." "Responsible students became noticeably engaged in discussion about unresolved problems in residence halls, with an underlying support for quality and civility."

Bodger said, "This was our code language. We tried not to talk too much about booze and dorm visitation. We had uncorked a new ethos on campus. The social changes were no panacea, God knows. But they did allow us to move on. In the next couple of years, Ruth Harris stepped aside and J. Houghton Kane became dean of student life. Kane completed the build-up of an integrated student life staff and program."

M.S. said that she would like to hear more about that but had to leave. Her immersion in Bodger's world was over for the time being. She said she felt better equipped to find her way into a presidency.

"But," she added, "we haven't talked about a lot—the curriculum change, for one."

Bodger added, "Also, our first attempt to grapple with the recruiting and retention problem. Our lukewarm look at the mission statement. The faculty committee on committees—a tiger that threatened to take power away from the president's office but that ended up being made of paper. The way we wrapped all this up in the happenstance that the ten-year self-evaluation for Middle States was coming up soon after I was elected. It was all part of 'getting started.'"

"You should tell me about all that," M.S. said.

"We'll find a way to communicate," Bodger said.

"Send email," she said over her shoulder.

And Maria Sylvia Aumen, with a wave reminiscent of her flamboyant student days, departed for her home in the midwest. Her great presidential adventure lay ahead. Bodger knew that he would continue his account, whether or not it was worth anything to an aspiring presidential candidate. By this time, the account had become necessary for him.

Email from: M.S. Aumen  
To: Bodger

Subject: Home to the Fray  
 Sent: 12 June

up in the sky, everything you told me whirled around like clouds out the window.....but when i got on solid ground and back to campus (where the search is closing in fast on somebody) i realized you drew a useful pattern for me.....curriculum please.....m.s.

Bodger smiled as he looked up from his computer screen. He pulled from his shelves a couple of college catalogs of the late 1970s and opened a box where he stored files on planning. His answer would be too long for an easy email message. So he replied:

Email reply to: M.S. Aumen  
 From: Bodger  
 Subject: Home to the Fray  
 Sent: 13 June

Let me know as soon as the committee decides you're the one. Being an in-house candidate means you have to behave with ironic detachment over coffee and lunch. So behave. The curriculum story here was an integral component of the Middle States self-study for reaffirmation of our accreditation in 1979. The task force on student life was a no-brainer—we had to do it. The curriculum study we could have delayed but the mood was for change and we had some young faculty who wanted to get into it. Anyway, I wanted people to understand that we were changing student life policy so that we could get on with the more fundamental academic work. So it was important to look at it as soon as possible. The academic program that you went through as a student dated from the self-study of the late 1960s. People thought its structure had proven to be needlessly complex—"pivotal" courses faded into "radial" courses and vice versa. And we had new insight on what college students needed a decade after the revolution of the 1960s. That led us to create MINOR CONCENTRATIONS for the first time. I'm going off-line now. I'll send a snail mail account of the curriculum revisions of 1979. Be cool.

**New curriculum made a framework for change to come in 1980s**

Over the next few days, Bodger wrote his answer to M.S. When he stuffed the finished letter in an envelope and licked the flap, he was freshly aware of the central importance of the curriculum to his entire presidential agenda. His account of it to M.S. seemed to have tentacles reaching out to the many corners of the institution's life. This is what he sent her:

*Dear M.S.,*

In my run-up to being elected, I had talked with younger faculty members about pedagogy and curriculum. We talked about gaps and needs in our curricular offerings. These talks had two purposes. They were in part political—I was seeking to say to colleagues that I could and would lead them into academic improvement. They allowed me to signal that faculty members should open academic issues that had appeared to be closed. They were also in part diagnostic. I wanted first-hand understanding of where my friends on the faculty wanted to see when we turned to academic renewal.



The mid-1970s were traumatic for liberal arts colleges not in the top national rank. We all were anticipating the end of boom years in enrollment. The prescribed curricula in liberal education at many small colleges lay like wounded deer after the student attack in the late 1960s. Standard prerequisites and requirements fell nearly everywhere under student pressure. The old requirement to take two years of a foreign language—mainly Spanish, French, or German—fell in scores of colleges where they had prevailed from their beginnings. New courses in race, class, and gender were stuck onto the corpus, usually without regard for symmetry and relatedness to a core. The coherence of the whole, never strong in the pre-1960s, became a phantom. A curricular miscellany resulted.

Sooner or later this led people to look more inquisitively behind the wizard's black curtain—they dared to question the virtue of liberal education per se. If it was so fungible, if so much of it could be avoided or turned into electives, what was its inherent virtue? That rising doubt coincided with a renewed demand for relevance. If liberal education was so great, why were so many liberal arts graduates waiting tables and driving taxis? A growing segment of the college-going public no longer saw the liberal arts as a wide avenue to a wide choice of professional ends. They wanted to see a straight lane between undergraduate majors and postgraduate jobs. Since business and industry were the arenas of choice for the majority of graduates, economics and business administration began a long rise in enrollment. The movement of continuing education for adults from the margin to the center of the higher education enterprise abetted this change. Most adults wanted to hone skills directly applicable on their jobs.

Our college held fairly tight in the face of this national conflict. We kept the foreign language requirement, for example. But our language departments began to hurt seriously because the high schools would no longer need language teachers. Their college-bound students would be going to colleges and universities where languages no longer would be required. So the number of our students preparing to teach foreign languages plummeted.

Despite our cautious stance toward loosening the curriculum, some faculty members on our campus began to feel that we should move away from the traditional commitment to a basic curriculum in arts and sciences. I remember chatter from that moment or later about gerontology, recreation, even a nurse anesthesia program in tandem with a local teaching hospital. Little of this went beyond the chattering stage; but its very existence posed a challenge to the classic liberal tradition that defined our college.

So, the decision to review the curriculum was in part defensive and in part creative. There never was a serious challenge to our "pure" stance on liberal education. But we needed to dust off the position and state it in a new way. That would give us new conviction to resist blatant vocationalism. One reason for resisting was that "practical" programs that met an immediate market need often had limited lives and had to be replaced with other programs equally vulnerable to changing demands.

Done thoughtfully, a re-theorized curriculum also would restore life to the tired nostrums about "learning for learning's sake." It would make the virtue of liberal education meaningful in new language in a new time that did not accept traditional justifications.

Although we did not say it, this was marketing. If we were going to continue selling liberal education to a generation shaped by the revolutionary changes in attitude coming out of the late 1960s, we would have to put it in a form that would make sense to new students and their parents.

Given this mixture of motives driving us to curricular review, I knew that the choice of a chairperson for the task force would be critical. We needed someone who could see the depth of the liberal arts tradition at the college. He or she would have to acknowledge—this was easy—that we had a bare bones liberal arts offering that would benefit from judicious enrichment, particularly in the social sciences, funds permitting. At the same time, the person would have to acknowledge the pressures of the times—and have the patience to hear the thousand chirpings that would purport to be collective pedagogical wisdom.

Of all the young faculty with whom I jawboned before becoming president, George Fago in psychology stuck in my mind as one of the more insightful and creative. George got his training in behavioral psychology when the methods of operant conditioning held sway. He was ready with bloody stories of "sacrificing" rats after they served their destiny as experimental subjects in graduate school labs. I always felt, however, that his specialization was an accident of timing in his field. George had a philosophical depth. This permitted him to tap the roots of thought from which psychology grew. It gave him a broad perspective both on the "hard" sciences, with which he was confidently aligned, and on the humanities, where his heart seemed at times to lie. In his subsequent career at the college, indeed, he became interested in the formation of student values and pursued a private journey of some kind that appeared to move him far from the animal lab.

In our one-on-one discussions, George showed that his mind was flexible and his commitment to liberal education total. We enjoyed the exchange of ideas in community. (Let me underscore this. It was long after this before I was able to understand and accept personal bias as a legitimate part of the governance process. In hindsight, I see that the rational decisions that people make are the outcome of confrontations between strong beliefs and resistances. If a person's beliefs and resistances are so strongly fixed that they make it hard for him or her to hear another person, he or she does not make the common search for truth very enjoyable or productive. I developed this insight from a reading of Barbara Herrnstein Smith's *Belief & Resistance: Dynamics of Contemporary Intellectual Controversy*, which appeared in 1997 from Harvard.) I could feel comfortable with George when we agreed and comfortable when we disagreed, and I think most people had that same sense of intellectual comradeship with him. He gave what seemed to me just the right tone to our curriculum study.

With Jim Craft's strong recommendation, I felt out George's disposition toward the onerous business of chairing a curriculum review, that most Byzantine of procedures. Luckily, he was still young enough and unscarred enough to have the necessary enthusiasm. I knew beforehand that he had the interest. So George became our curriculum task force leader, and the task force was complete and ready to go by the end of December 1977.

He had a quality team but not one to follow sheepishly. Three members were my administrative appointees--the dean, Richard Bozorth, the assistant dean, Blanche Schultz, and Jim Craft, the orchestrator of the whole planning process and, of course, the former assistant dean and still professor of political science. I also appointed our most prestigious academic leader from the board at the time to the committee—Millard Gladfelter, retired president and then chancellor of Temple University. The faculty elected five independent-minded and enthusiastic younger members—not one was a full professor. Gayle Byerly of English, Robin Clouser of German, Ronald Hess of chemistry, Marvin Reed of history, and Martha Takats of physics. Then we topped it off with three outstanding students. One of them, Mark Arena, had been one of my best-ever students in my freshman English course.

The tilt toward youth was widely understood to be a sign of changing times in the faculty, and one that gratified me. Nearly all of us had a feeling that the time was right for a fresh look at everything. The pleasure for me was that I could so easily be the agent to legitimize that feeling and make things happen. It was a high time despite all sorts of institutional problems. Every new president, if conditions are right, has that marvelous feeling of being an agent for freshness, a feeling of standing, however briefly, at the crest of a world that wants to be reshaped. (It's a feeling you should prepare to savor!)

The task force formally launched its work on 8 February 1978. The faculty approved its final recommendations by the end of 1978. The new curriculum took effect with the opening of the college in the fall of 1979.

George and his colleagues met many times with many people in a dogged process. But the task force from the start identified an orderly agenda and way of proceeding. That enabled it to drive a reasonably straight path to final recommendations. George had an organizational flair. He applied it well to the work of the task force. The group quickly decided not to be bound by the existing plan. It wanted a fresh set of terms—no more "pivotal" and "radial" courses. It then decided to look separately at the goals of general education and the state of the majors. Then it gathered up several particular issues that had been simmering and now were fair game for analysis in the open atmosphere of the self-study. These included the mission and current state of the Evening School, especially its inter-relationship with the full-time program; the pre-medical program, especially the academic plight of students who dropped out of pre-med; the languages program, especially the question of continuing the foreign language requirement; academic procedures; career emphasis and preparation; and departmental honors and capstone courses.

As I look back, I see how well the task force identified issues that were emerging from the changing market conditions at that time. Its work laid the foundation at the core of our institution for the transition to a more self-conscious pursuit of a better place in the market in the coming decade. So often, foundational work such as this is covered up and no one sees how the edifice depends on it for its stability. The curriculum task force enabled the college to address the mood swing of the 1980s toward more preparation for careers immediately after graduation. Yet, it laid down some important bricks that would underpin our effort later to improve our status as a "university college," committed as a liberal arts college to preparing students for graduate professions.

As for general college requirements, the task force talked about goals before it talked about courses. This was conceptually the right thing to do, for it allowed the group to express a couple of emerging expectations without immediately having to talk about courses. (Ten years later, when the faculty again attacked curricular change, this preliminary step was elevated to a pursuit of "educational *philosophy* and goals.") The group affirmed the need for writing skills. This perpetuated the old required freshman composition course that I taught for many years. Some top colleges had abandoned this requirement or had made it easy to place out. The task force affirmed the need for knowing a foreign language. That too bucked the national trend.

The task force introduced three goals that resulted in a significant shift in the curricular offerings—development of effective speaking skills, development of ability to think and communicate in mathematics and other quantitative analyses, and physical education for lifetime health and recreation.

Public speaking became a foundation course for students. This created a larger staff and later led to the start of a major program in communication arts. (A clairvoyant president will see

massive expansion of finances in such small and seemingly sensible beginnings. Once you expand a service staff for required courses, you begin to get a critical professional mass that will strive to fulfill its self-defined purpose in life—to offer a major. Be warned, Madame President-to-be.)

A math requirement had languished long ago; the curriculum even in my student years in the late 1940s and early 1950s did not force me to take math (and I did not take it!). The rising importance of computer science had much to do with this new goal. It was widely thought in the late 1970s that the impact of the computer would largely be in the realm of statistical computation. Only after the personal computer arrived in the early 1980s did we begin to understand that the computer was bringing a much more radical change in pedagogy. This new goal populated courses in math, statistics, computer science, and logic.

As you know, health and physical education had traditionally been a requirement for freshmen but the pedagogical basis for it had become obscure. It typically took the form of team sports. Throw out the ball and let 'em kick together. The task force took account of a national trend toward lifelong fitness for the individual. That led to a new introductory course that all freshmen had to take, taught as a lecture course with lab. The first-year students then had to take a complementary activities course, aimed at giving them skills in a selected individualized sport rather than in team sports. The idea was that they would carry these skills into their lives after college as they sought to remain fit while growing older. This new academic status for health and physical education reflected the logical rigor of the task force as it defined goals. In practice, most faculty still probably placed it outside the serious curriculum. Still, the innovation represented a significant if small shift in the college's academic culture. Its elevation in status probably received the necessary faculty vote because of internal faculty politics rather than broad philosophical consensus. But the philosophical prologue doubtless made it hard for nay-sayers to stand up and oppose it.

The task force labored long over goals related to diverse world cultures and values and the relevance of the fine arts to these issues. In the end, the faculty modified the group's recommendations and allowed students broad latitude in choosing courses on these issues. At the time, I looked critically and ironically at a faculty that would require all sorts of courses in its majors but require no courses that dealt with the very heart of civility and civilization. However, my mellower perspective today allows me to think my colleagues were not that far wrong. The very breadth of choice in electives spoke of the college's unwillingness to prescribe a codified way of thinking about values; it symbolized an openness to discussion.

But the issue of values was not clear-cut. The task force and the faculty as a whole, I think, felt it was central to our goals. Still, they could not find a way to incorporate the study of value systems into our curriculum. The task force therefore did what all good academic committees do. It recommended the creation of another committee, specifically charged to develop a course designed to familiarize students with different value systems.

On the other hand, "knowledge of the fine arts" as a goal made it into the final formulation because it had political legs within the faculty—and, frankly, I favored it and did what I could to support the political push.

The task force did not dabble with recommendations for new majors. But it did directly address heretofore-sacrosanct departmental prerogatives by calling for a limit on the number of courses required for a major. It set a 30-hour minimum for a core major track but allowed additional hours to be added by students who knew they were preparing for graduate school. This was a direct attempt to adjust the academic program to match student plans and

expectations. Surveys showed that larger percentages of students were expecting to go directly into the job market on graduation and not to pursue graduate work, at least right away. Many of our majors had evolved to prepare students for graduate schools. A fair amount of course revising and model changing took place in the wake of this recommendation.

The vocational imperative of many students also gave impetus to the creation of a wholly new "tier" in the curricular plan. It gave students the formal opportunity to take a minor concentration. The reduction in the number of hours for a major was supposed to enable the introduction of minor concentrations. The classic example was that an English major would now be able to take a minor in business administration and thereby show better preparation for the corporate market in such fields as advertising or public relations. Each department created packages of courses that would introduce non-majors to the discipline.

Additionally, students now would be able to take "special interest" minors and "inter-disciplinary" minors. A special interest minor would combine course offerings from several departments to meet students' career or vocational needs. An inter-disciplinary minor would allow a student to combine courses on a single theme from a number of disciplines.

Such arrangements had been possible in the past but only informally. I myself in the early 1950s double-majored in English and history by taking a minimum of courses in each, but my history work never received formal acknowledgment by the college as either a minor or a second major. Now, students would receive credit on a transcript for minor work outside their major.

By reducing major requirements and adding minor options, the college was responding to the perceived need of students for flexibility in designing their courses of study. The complement to flexibility was good advising. The faculty feared that, left to themselves, students would lack the foresight to devise a solid program before it was too late to remedy their initial mistakes. Because of that, the task force recommended that faculty become more available and better able to advise students on their academic choices. It also recommended that the career counseling and placement service be beefed up.

The task force touched some sensitive nerves. The pre-medical program was our flagship academic track. As our best-known attraction, it brought us a steady stream of students with top high school rankings in sciences. The little secret of pre-med was that the few who got through it were almost certain of acceptance in medical schools but that many did not get through it. The disappointed ex-pre-medders, having failed to hack the big introductory courses in pre-med, became academic problems for themselves and the college. They required extra advising and were not getting it. The task force recommended an increase in staff to deal with them and in due course we did expand.

Another sensitive nerve was the Evening School. It was playing an important role as adult learners, eager for advancement in the expanding corporate scene in our region, turned to formal education to improve their skills. And it was contributing a growing and very welcome chunk of net revenue to the college operating budget. Yet, its unabashed link to the working world made for discomfort for some on the faculty. They felt that it blurred the identity of the college as a traditional residential undergraduate liberal arts college of quality. More concretely, the task force found that fifteen percent of full-time students were taking a course in the Evening School in a given semester. Advisors were permitting it because of convenience or because, in a few instances, elective courses not available in the day were available in the evening. This enrollment development raised questions about academic quality, pricing, and ultimately Evening School mission.

George Fago and colleagues wisely ducked these broad implications and again recommended the creation of a separate study committee. Later I did create a committee under the chairmanship of Houghton Kane. It did a diligent analytical job but the outcome did not resolve the tensions created by our Evening School. When I left office in 1995, the continuing education program was the first major activity to change under the mandate of a new president.

Sifting through the curriculum task force record, I found three threads worth mentioning to you because they connected to the future. A subcommittee on academic procedures made the following recommendation: "It is expected that full time faculty members will be on campus at least four days during the week. When assigning courses, department heads should consider faculty need for schedules with blocks of time open for research and professional development." The first sentence related to the need for faculty to be available to students for advising. It is the second sentence that I think had future significance. The college still had no formal provisions for professional development; they would only begin to take shape after Bill Akin came to us as dean and we received a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts. However, the curriculum task force sensed an immediate need to begin to change the culture of our faculty. This was a pregnant sign of that awareness.

The second thread worth mentioning relates to practicums and internships. A subcommittee on "honors and capstone courses" deliberated on all manner of independent work that fell outside the rigid confines of departmental courses and tracks. The significant finding was that it could come up with nothing! The faculty was still tightly bonded to its traditional forms. Pedagogy still was thought by the heaviest hitters on our faculty to consist mainly of lectures, assigned reading and writing, lab assignments, and testing. The educational power in practicums and internships, aside from student teaching (which created its own set of tensions in faculty minds), would not become evident to the college for some years. The shift to a new pedagogy was coming. Younger faculty showed it in their willingness to be vulnerable to students. It would make the professor a guide and coach and the student a self-directed learner. But our campus was not yet ready for that shift in 1979. The majority of faculty cast suspicious eyes on any academic activity by students that looked too independent of their supervision.

The third thread identified computer science as a newly significant area of study. Interestingly, it was the subcommittee on career preparation that looked at it and commented on it. The subcommittee urged that current offerings in computer science "be considered to be the minimal acceptable offerings in this area and that the instructors be encouraged to implement computer usage in courses where appropriate." This was diplomatic language intended to mean, "Do more." The report explained its intent as follows, and this is the emphasis I wanted you to note:

*Familiarity with computers and computer programming is a potentially valuable job skill. Moreover, as computers and data processing come to increasingly permeate our lives and as technology makes home computing facilities more feasible and probable, familiarity with computers and programming takes on the aspect of a life skill as well.*

You have to remember that the personal computer had not yet appeared. The subcommittee was prescient, I think, in seeing computing not only as a vocational skill but also as a "life skill." It did not know at the time, of course, how pervasive the new technology would turn out to be.

In sum, the curriculum revision of 1979 did some adjusting to current reality and set a stage for future change. However, it did not fundamentally alter the way the academic menu of the college presented itself to students. By the time of final adoption, Evan Snyder had become acting dean of the college. His comment on the new plan accurately summed up its significance for continuity and for change:

*Interestingly enough, when the new curriculum was completed, it was found to differ very little from the old. This should not be too surprising because during the 1960s and 1970s when many colleges and universities became very permissive academically as well as socially, we chose to stick to the basics of a good education. Many of those permissive institutions are now returning to the basics. However, there are new things in our curriculum.... There is also a new flexibility in the number of alternative ways of satisfying the ten goals. It is reassuring that the new curriculum so much resembles the old. The work of the Curriculum Task Force has reaffirmed our commitment to a sound liberal arts education.*

So, drawing on the curriculum change of 1979, I would advise you to be ready to make changes that respond to your market conditions. But now, fifteen years later, you know that the pedagogical revolution has now occurred and you will have to make them in terms of the new pedagogy. Give us credit for sensing something in the wind that long ago; but fault us for being less prescient than we could have been. We did another curriculum review ten years later. By then the players had changed, and that imposed a new perspective. But that is another story for another time.

Sincerely,  
Bodger

#### **Middle States self-study offered a showcase for new hopes and plans**

A few days after he mailed his letter to M.S., Bodger's phone rang. M.S. thanked him for his account of the curriculum changes of 1979. She agreed with him that fifteen years since then had changed pedagogical horizons everywhere in higher education. Faculty were rapidly being recast as guides by the side of self-starting students. They were less likely now to be seen as jugs of knowledge that poured their contents into the waiting crania of passive recipients. Still, it helped her to know about Bodger's sense of the importance of choosing the right chairperson to lead a curriculum study. And she had a question.

"When the Middle States team visited, did it focus mainly on the curriculum? Or did it cast a broad net?"

Bodger replied, "Our self-study was comprehensive and the team scrutinized everything on its visit in the fall of 1979."

"As dean, I'm chairing our upcoming self-study," she said. "I've been thinking this gives me a chance to highlight hopes and plans I think are essential—a kind of warm-up if I get the presidency."

"Good thought, but politically intricate. I'll write again and flesh out the picture of the '79 Middle States experience. I was lucky that we had to do our ten-year self-study in the first phase of my presidency. It immediately allowed me to insist that we had to take account of an external

professional reality. The college had nurtured its sense of self-sufficiency for so long—we were so much who we were—that many on the faculty and staff had an underdeveloped sense of our place in a larger scheme of higher education. I had a gut sense that this had to change but did not know enough to put my thoughts into action. That's how the Middle States obligation served at the start. It gave us a mandate, and I was the in-house owner of the obligation. That allowed me to demand self-analysis with a particular urgency."

"Sounds cool—write to me," said M.S. "By the way...."

"Yes?"

"The outside candidate met with the board search committee for the third time."

"This sounds ominous," Bodger said.

"I'll let you know," M.S. said.

### **The greatest worries surrounded recruitment and retention**

*Dear M.S.,*

It's amusing for me to look back at who worried most about what in that "getting started" phase culminating in 1979. The faculty worried most about its compensation and its curriculum. I worried more about making the student life changes work. The board worried about who would become its new leader. Underlying just about everyone's worry, however, was enrollment. It persisted like a dull toothache. And it wasn't very amusing. The parting shot of the Middle States visiting team's report, which I just revisited, is revealing. It said, "The institution faces problems in recruitment and retention of students, but it has faced up to this and is taking a variety of measures to reverse the downward trend."

Sure, we were facing up to the problems but we did not know enough about marketing at that point to come at them with the right weaponry. We developed an approach to recruitment and retention that was long on earnest intent and a little short in genuine insight. In inventiveness, we were behind the hungriest and least-equipped colleges and at best a hair ahead of those better positioned than we were.

In truth, the state of the art of recruiting was in rapid transition to an out-and-out marketing model. I had to deal with the drag of tradition in the staff, with the college's mixed self-image, with tight resources, and with the severe limits on my knowledge of the oncoming marketing revolution. Then too, I had to deal with my desire to preserve the character of the old college even while trying to move it into new times. I was trying to keep on running while changing my socks. As my metaphor implies, this was at the start a crazy challenge. Still, I think we did a good deal to keep the wolves at bay.

Taking office, I was quite convinced that something dramatic would have to be done to improve enrollment. Two findings startled me. One was that the number of applications had dropped 25 percent in the period from 1970 to 1976! (1158 in '70 to 858 in '76). That happened while the number of teenagers in our recruiting area, the five-county Philadelphia region, remained high, the last hurrah of the baby boom. We knew that the flood of teenagers in the college marketplace would end by the late 1970s. The number of eligible applicants would plummet in the 1980s and decline still further until half way through the 1990s. If we could not hold our own market share while applicants were plentiful, what would we do when the number of college-going kids went down?



The other finding seemed less startling because it was not far from the national average. Nevertheless, I was disturbed to contemplate that the percentage of entering freshmen who stayed to graduate—the so-called retention rate—had dropped to 55 percent in 1977. It had been as high as 70 percent in 1972. (That number doubtless came in part from the decision of many male students subject to military service in Vietnam to remain enrolled.) In 1967, the retention rate was 61 percent. It did not take rocket science to figure out that if we could do something to keep students from dropping out, our total enrollment would hold better and we would have less pressure each year to fill the empty beds with new freshmen.

Because of its critical nature, enrollment was a top issue in the first phase of my administration. After taking a few months to get the new administrative staff organized, I called an exploratory meeting on admissions on 14 March 1977. That meeting focused on the stark projection of decline in public schools in the decade from 1975 to 1985. Grade 12 in public schools would decline from 3.10 million in 1977-78 to 2.55 million by 1984-85. The number of kids would continue to slide for another decade beyond 1985 before bottoming out. The mid-Atlantic region would be especially hard-hit.

The exploratory meeting was just to make clear my concern that we had to change something soon and to ferret out the strategic thinking of the admissions staff. Although I tried to approach cautiously, the admissions staff doubtless felt threatened. The other staff members who attended, particularly my new executive assistant Jim Craft and business manager Nelson Williams, knew how critical the enrollment was to our financial stability. Tuition income accounted for 85 percent of our total revenue. They were perhaps less inclined than I to appear non-threatening.

Body language aside, my intent in that and in subsequent meetings was to gain some management control over a function that was used to operating largely on its own. To some, it looked almost like a quasi-independent fiefdom. It had that character because of its historical evolution in a small and tightly knit administrative structure and because of the long and successful performance of Geoffrey Dolman and his small team.

Geoff Dolman had been working at recruiting and admitting students for more than a quarter century. He knew the ropes. His Ivy League background at Penn gave him a sense of educational quality, which he transferred to his work at the college. He did his undergraduate and graduate work at Penn. His father had been a legendary professor of drama there, and Geoff's values had been shaped by his life-long Ivy League experience. As an instructor in creative writing and the short story, he had a healthy sense of comedy and a human touch. Nevertheless, he had a traditionalist's sense of manners and social structure. This made him into something of an apparent social elitist in spite of the warmth of his personal approach to people. That had not been particularly problematic at an aspiring college like ours through the booming 1950s and 1960s. It helped him define expectations for admission that reached beyond academic credentials.

He felt an enormous sense of responsibility to bring to the college a good class of freshmen each year. With the latitude to set his own departmental agenda, he worked tirelessly and loyally to meet that responsibility year after year. In the heyday of the baby boom era, by early March he would be able to close his logbook on admitted students, pat the cover, and feel confident that the vast majority of those hand-picked students would show up in September. And he achieved this while still teaching a couple of classes of English composition! (I was his student in a sophomore composition course that the college still required in the early 1950s.)

Geoff accomplished this annual feat with the help of H. Lloyd Jones. Lloyd too was a product of Penn's English department. He too taught part-time while running the road. Like Geoff, he was a master at keeping up relations with high school guidance counselors, the college's key to getting face to face with prospective new students. He shared Geoff's sense of social values. For years they performed as if they were the same person, able to understand one another instinctively and able to speak for one another on admissions matters. Lloyd carried a heavier teaching load than Geoff. (As a student I took the sophomore survey of British literature with him, at the same time that I was studying writing with Geoff.)

In 1970 Ken Schaefer joined the staff after having learned the recruiting ropes as a student helper. Then a few years later a young woman came on full-time. So we had two part-time leaders and two full-time "road runners" when I took over in 1976.

At that point, Geoff, I would imagine, worried as much about his organizational place as he did about the enrollment outcomes as such. He was a decorated tank officer in World War II and knew what hierarchy and organizational discipline meant in that context. However, his sense of direct operational accountability in wartime somehow did not migrate intact to his work at the college afterward. He understood his obligation to bring in a class. He assumed, however, that within the budget he was finally responsible for strategic planning and execution of the recruiting and admission program. Presidents and deans found it difficult to penetrate that sense of ownership, except in hard-won cases when they pleaded for the acceptance of a candidate with connections. Geoff always was properly deferential and gave the appearance of being cooperative; yet, he stood firmly on his departmental turf. The early evidence that I wanted direct access to that turf, that I wanted admissions to integrate with a coherent planning process for the whole institution, probably troubled him more than I knew.

Deep as the experience of Dolman and Jones was, Jim Craft persuaded me that it was not sufficient to address the new challenge of teenage shrinkage in our market area. Consequently, we began to poke and probe.

Bill Pettit in his last year had appointed a faculty advisory committee of admissions, chaired benignly by a senior faculty member, Robert Cogger of education. That faculty committee was supposed to aid the admissions staff. Pettit's main intent in creating it had been to give faculty members a semblance of involvement in a critical administrative function. Of course, it also spoke a soft message to Dolman that Pettit too thought he did not hold exclusive ownership of the function. Sometimes the members of the advisory committee helped with interviews of applicants. They periodically made suggestions for fine-tuning the recruiting process: select and train student tour guides more carefully; engage alumni in a more systematic role in recruiting; make department heads available to chat with applicants interested in their major; ask the United Church of Christ for help in recommending the college to church-going high school seniors. Dolman and his team seemed to have worked out a *modus vivendi* with the Cogger committee. They fielded such suggestions without departing from the course that they knew best. The advisory committee lacked the teeth to bite into the deeper problems, and Craft and I decided not to expand its use.

The day after the exploratory meeting of 14 March 1977, I met with the head of a consulting firm, Enrollment Analysis. He had a stable of consultants at his call, eager, for a hefty fee, to solve all our recruitment and retention problems. When I talked about such a possibility with Geoff, his resistance was as palpable as his politeness was polished. Outside experts and our inside old hands, it was clear, would mix like oil and water.

With that clear, and counseled by Craft, I decided for the time being to rely on Geoff's ability to address on his own the concern about the future of enrollment. On 4 April 1977, I sent him a request to develop a written plan of actions that would lead to an increase to 1,200 total students by the 1979-80 academic year. I said this plan should be a major undertaking. It should result in an inventory of our present techniques, possibly the change in some of them, and the addition of new ones. It should also result in a statement of specific goals by geographical region and/or high school. I offered to support outside consulting services and to hold an all-day "brainstorming" session to help him meet the request.

For the life of me, I can't find evidence that he ever responded directly to that call. Two months later, I wrote another memo, this time asking him to look into his "crystal ball" and tell me what he saw for enrollment in the years just ahead. This was evidence of my continuing anxiety about recruiting and my felt need to stay on top of the process. It also evidenced my reluctance to relieve Geoff of the new pressures of the changing times. I still hoped that he and his staff would tackle the problems with fresh insight. My memo, I must have thought, was another opportunity for Geoff to offer an analysis and the rationale for a change in strategy.

I found in the files Geoff's reply to my "crystal ball" request and here it is:

*Twenty-five years ago our students were middle-class, of the protestant ethic, and seeking higher education for the sake of learning.*

*The blue-collar worker, largely Irish, Italian, and Polish Catholic, improved their lot, moved out of the city and, with the more successful Jewish shop owners and small businessmen, became the suburban middle class. Their sons and daughters and grandchildren constitute a much larger part of our student body today.*

*Statistical studies give some of the reasons why students come to the college and the social and cultural changes also suggest why some of them have not come. I suggest that socially and culturally our college has changed less than the students in the last twenty-five years. Courtesy, manners, pride in personal appearance, respect for authority and elders, willingness to work hard and respect for the language have virtually disappeared. As a result, permissiveness and liberality (an almost anarchistic freedom to do one's thing) are the rule and high school students, in increasing numbers, gravitate toward those institutions which permit them to take the path of least resistance.*

*For these reasons, and others, I do not see any signs of improvement in the quality of our students in the near future; however, we will be as careful as possible to hold to the quality that we are now receiving....*

*We will find it impossible to compete with [community colleges and state colleges] on the basis of cost and on the basis of such "job oriented" fields as medical technology, occupational therapy, nursing, dental technology, secretarial training, law-enforcement, and the like. To offset these offerings, we will have to maintain our own "gimmick," and that is quality education, academic standards, and intellectual competition in the best sense of the liberal arts tradition of teaching the best of what men have written, spoken, thought, and practiced.*

This was an incredibly revealing document, I thought at the time. It encapsulated, in its own code, why the college had been so slow to change its social environment or to look analytically at its academic program. We would teach those blue collar kids how to behave even if it killed us.

We would stand fast with the traditional canon even if nobody in our market knew what it was or wanted it.

I should have realized at that moment that the current staff in admissions would not make basic changes. Geoff knew we were on a slippery downward slope of applications. He knew the world was turning toward vocationalism—another way of saying that students and parents were looking for a better understanding of the link between courses of study and employment after graduation. Yet, he could see nothing in his crystal ball that he could do. I remember feeling that this was not a failing on his part—he was of his time and generation. The memo confirmed for me that the college had been undergoing fundamental stresses. Geoff did not see their full significance and had no strategies to offer for survival.

His realistic acceptance of suburban Philadelphia as the principal recruiting universe for the college revealed an unexamined bias. The surrounding counties of Philadelphia historically did constitute our main market; he would have misled himself to think otherwise. But the historical reality, for Geoff, somehow appeared to be an unshakable destiny. It did not occur to him—or to many others at the time—to suggest that resources be expended to change this reality. He would have thought that the budget for recruiting would remain at its current Spartan level. He would not have pushed to make a significant increase in the number of recruiting staff members available to travel. This low threshold of recruiting ambition characterized the college and differentiated it significantly from higher-profile institutions in the region and around the state.

But Geoff's memo insightfully touched on the vital link between academic program (the product) and the marketing of the college. Faced with positioning the college vis-à-vis upstart competitors in the region, he instinctively referred to the college's position as a liberal arts college with allegiance to the best intellectual tradition.

That, indeed, became the dominant marketing theme in the long run. But first the college had to work its way through questions of vocational relevance and geographic reach. It had to discover the operational link between an active faculty development program and an intellectual community capable of challenging bright students in creative and productive ways. These and other initiatives would hatch in years just ahead. So, the "crystal ball" of Geoff Dolman in an odd way revealed a fleeting glimpse of the fundamental answer for the long range. It failed, though, to point toward anything we could do to alleviate the immediate problem.

Had a new president just come in from the outside, with no ties to Geoff and no obligations to institutional tradition, he or she would have had the insight and will just to call it quits at that point and start with fresh leadership in the admissions office. Because we knew one another so well, because I had been his student in years past, because I did not want to alienate the old establishment any more than necessary, I took a more circuitous route toward a change in recruitment leadership and practice.

It's any critic's call as to whether that was wise. Looking back, I conclude it was not. It probably served Geoff as badly as it did the college. At the time, though, I had much to balance. The compelling need to change the climate of student life on campus never left my mind—this was critical to any hope for improving the retention rate. I knew I would be flouting the old parietal system and thus be raising doubts among the many who had worked so hard to keep it in place during the Vietnam years and afterward. Geoff and Lloyd had been loyal supporters of Helfferich and Pettit in that effort. I felt a need to avoid the appearance of kicking over all the traces. I felt that if I could bring Geoff and his staff along step by step, I could have it both ways. I could keep their loyalty as I brought about other changes and hold their support when I changed

the social system. I believed that I could help them see the limits of their traditional recruiting practices and persuade them to retool and revise for the new day.

In this balancing act I had the support of my new executive assistant, Jim Craft, and of the business manager, Nelson Williams. Others on the staff and faculty also seemed to understand. Geoff and Lloyd enjoyed the respect of colleagues, even those who quietly criticized the way they were running the shop. I felt that most of these people supported my view that the less I alienated the powers that had been in place before me the better.

My reluctance in part, of course, arose from my own lack of sophistication in marketing. I should have realized more fully that the important market factors that would improve recruitment and retention lay outside the scope of admissions office activity. I was asking a field officer to make changes in his tactics when, as the commanding officer, I should have been connecting more clearly the strategic changes in the direction of the college with the enrollment results in the field.

I want to believe I would have made better management decisions if I had it to do over again. Yet, it's impossible, from this later vantagepoint, to appreciate how little out-and-out business marketing practice had entered academia at that point. For example, during this period I circulated to the admissions staff an article on the new marketing activities by *New York Times* education editor Edward B. Fiske. Fiske captured the trend of the moment when he reported: "As the nation's colleges and universities struggle to maintain their enrollments in an increasingly competitive atmosphere, more and more of them are turning to the personnel and techniques of marketing." (*NYT*, 22 January 1978). Fiske cited Philip Kotler, professor of marketing at Northwestern University, whose book on marketing non-profit organizations soon would crystallize and promote the transformation of management in colleges and other charitable organizations. Kotler saw marketing as the final area of business technique to be taken over by higher education institutions: "College administrators have been lapping up modern theories of accounting, personnel and finance as necessary evils. And now they're beginning to take notice of marketing. It's still disguised by terms like 'development,' but I predict that within five years we will see the position of vice president for marketing in 10 to 15 percent of our colleges—in substance if not in name." Given that state of the art, maybe I can be a little less self-critical for failing to see fully that enrollment solutions should come from total institutional market positioning, not just from tinkering with the methods used by the recruiters. All of us were learning while running.

In any event, with the Dolman team in place we pressed on with the attempt to improve recruitment. In the 1977-78 academic year, it went on pretty much as usual, with little change in results. But by then the Campus Planning Group had identified recruitment and retention as a major topic for the institutional self-study mandated by the Middle States Association. In December 1977, the CPG created a task force on recruitment and retention, with John D. Pilgrim of economics as chair. Although this formalization of concerns sent a strong message to the admissions staff, it was not until after the task force submitted its final report in September 1978 that we moved in a defined direction. The task force report became the plan of action that I had hoped to get from the admissions staff more than a year before.

The task force did an exhaustive job of analyzing and recommending, evidence of skills in Pilgrim that later would result in his entry into the administrative team. The task force ferreted out the damage being done to total enrollment by unfavorable recruitment and retention trends over the preceding decade. The task force recommended enrollment targets into the middle of the next decade, designed to yield the needed net revenue and demographic vitality in the student

body. We should increase the total enrollment by about 100 students, with 850-880 resident and 250-300 commuting students. And this, it underscored, would have to happen even as the total pool of candidates was dramatically shrinking.

The task force also recommended more specific characteristics for the future student body: more non-science majors (we were "maxed out" on lab space), a higher proportion of commuting students compared to resident students (because of the limit on bed spaces and our high visibility at area high schools), more students from geographic sources beyond our traditional market in the five-county Philadelphia area (to make up for the radical downturn in numbers soon to come), and more women students (the ratio of women to men had been dropping).

The task force also urged that, while achieving these targets, the college maintain or improve the current academic ability of students, which was above the national average for liberal arts colleges.

Then the report suggested sixteen ways to improve recruitment strategy. The task force at least had an elemental grasp of the relationship between our educational product and our target markets. It recommended that we acknowledge our commitment to quality liberal arts education. It urged that our recruiting message change to appeal more frontally to the type of student who desired such an education. That, however, did not prevent the task force from bowing to the rising parent-student expectations for vocational relevance. It urged the faculty to restructure the majors so that students could choose career-oriented combinations of elective courses. (The task force on curriculum, meanwhile, was proposing minors for that and other purposes.) It encouraged a revision of the catalog and other promotional material to highlight the relevance of liberal education to professional careers—a relevance that current students and parents would not see. (Shades of Geoff Dolman's finding about the social changes in our clientele; in the old days, the college would not have had to point out the then obvious value of a liberal education.) It even cautiously suggested that we might discover "vocational-oriented" majors in harmony with a liberal arts degree.

To give a community boost to the admissions folk, the task force then suggested a variety of ways for involving faculty, current students, and alumni in the process of promoting and recruiting. Like me, the members of the task force wanted to see admissions come out of its isolation. They felt that recruiting would benefit if the community had a sense of ownership in it and contributed directly to it.

The sequel to the submission of the task force report I can quickly tell. On 27 September 1978, I asked Geoff to prepare a comprehensive recommendation for follow-through on the objectives and general strategies offered up in the task force report. I followed that up with a special "brainstorming" dinner meeting between the members of the admissions office and the members of the task force on 21 November 1978.

That meeting witnessed a wide-ranging discussion of tactics and strategies aimed at improving the enrollment outcome. Among the topics discussed was the need to set realistic enrollment targets and not to expect the impossible. The group discussed the changing role of the high school counselors and our need to re-think the traditional relationships with counselors. Traditionally, the admissions staff depended heavily on its personal cultivation of guidance counselors, who would recommend selected students to our college; but since the 1960s, high school counselors were adopting an increasingly non-directive stance and this was eroding the system that favored us. This meant the college had to make a radical change of emphasis: it had to begin to manage the inquiry file more directly without the mediation of counselors. Ken

Schaefer said this was a new insight, and the college still lacked the computers, memory typewriters, experience, and management know-how to make this radical change. The group discussed the need to emphasize the strengths of the college—academic reputation and attractive campus—in better brochures. Every aspect of the publicity program needed upgrading, some felt. The prospect pool was not yet computerized and some thought the college should do that in order to manage the process more effectively. We talked about the task force recommendation to use alumni, faculty members, and current students in the process.

The morning after this meeting, I received positive feedback from Geoff Dolman and from Nelson Williams. Dolman wrote in a note, "You handled the meeting last night with patience, skill, and good humor. Thanks!—We got a lot out of it. I was ready for more, but I was pleased at the way Ken & Kim spoke up." Williams wrote, "I felt that things may have got some positive reactions from Geoff and company. They now admit their need for aid and assistance, and the need to do things differently—something they never admitted before...now they seem convinced the rest of the recruiters are not afraid to use better marketing approaches."

Despite evidence of a forward-looking spirit in this meeting and in others, I saw no evidence that the admissions staff was organizing a plan to meet the suggested targets. Meanwhile, however, the curriculum task force was moving ahead with recommendations for an emphasis on career relevance. In February 1979, I appointed Jim Craft to lead a special administrative team to develop a marketing plan for the recruitment of students. Its task was to define the recruiting goals and to draw up a detailed plan for subsequent execution by the admissions office. The memo appointing Craft stipulated that Geoffrey Dolman and Ken Schaefer be named to the team. It was to have a plan in place in time for the start of recruiting for the freshman class entering in the fall of 1980.

This was the last straw for Geoff, I guess. He submitted his resignation shortly afterward. It came after a long and successful career and with no need for apology. I guess in the end his former student and he both became pawns in a game neither of them imagined possible in their innocent classroom days in 1951. I know he enjoyed his new-found freedom from admissions when he took up full-time teaching before retiring. We remained good friends. I spoke at his funeral. These are things not found in Kotler management books. They bespeak the precious subtleties of college community.

Geoff's decision meant that the old quasi-independence of the admissions office turf was at an end. I appointed Lloyd Jones to succeed him and tried to establish a strongly supportive climate around him, with Ken Schaefer as a major player. The task force recommendations, naively conceived though they were, gave me a template for administrative communication and action. At least I no longer would have to knock on the door to gain admittance to the admissions office. However, the systemic issues of marketing that surrounded it would outlive Lloyd's brief tenure and that of Ken, who followed him at the helm.

### **New retention strategies became a priority for meeting enrollment goals**

Bodger continued his letter to M.S. by shifting to an account of the related study of retaining enrolled students until they graduated:

I don't think I ever fully "solved" the recruiting problem, but not because I didn't work at it throughout my eighteen years in office. Retention, though harder to grasp as a process, in many

ways proved to be more tractable. The 1978 report of the task force on recruitment and retention gave a detailed set of recommendations for improving the graduation rate of entering students. With changes stimulated by that report, we substantially improved our retention rate in the course of the 1980s.

At the time of the self-study, the faculty and staff together were coming to a new appreciation of the college as a process. We saw with growing clarity that enrolled students would respond to premeditated actions aimed at keeping them enrolled. Thus we could serve our total enrollment objectives. I'm sure that our predecessors were conscious of this and worked at it in their way for their times. But I think that in the late 1970s the daunting pressures of the marketplace raised the collective awareness and resolve to a categorically new level.

John Pilgrim brought an economist's orderly analytical style to the recommendations of the task force. It laid out a set of actions that would not have been identified in an ordinary examination of departmental responsibilities. The task force made two initial assumptions. The accuracy of those assumptions led to specific recommendations that over time improved our retention rate.

First, it assumed that students tend to stay at their institution if they feel that the college "fits" with their sense of educational need—they perceive that it can "deliver" for them. New research being done by consultants such as Enrollment Analysis supported this insight. The theme was "congruence": if you showed students that there was congruence between their expectations and the program of the college, they would remain in their course of study.

Second, it assumed that every individual student—not just a "problem" group or a set of majors—should be the target of proactive programming aimed at retention. Traditionally our faculty tended to be passively available for advising. Students had to initiate contact with a faculty or staff member. We had been taking for granted that students were feeling favorably about their experience at the college until they came forward and told us otherwise. The flip side of this passivity was our notion that students now were young adults and should learn to initiate action independently. We were learning how disastrous this was from the viewpoint of retaining students. By the time a doubting student came forward—if she ever did—it was usually too late for a rescue effort to succeed.

I know these assumptions will seem obvious to you now. At the time, it took effort to persuade some faculty that they were valid. It took further effort to move the machinery of the college accordingly into a different mode of operation. "Do a better job of delivering on the promises we make to students to treat them as individuals; scrutinize how you approach students' needs in and out of class and modify your behavior so that students feel they are getting the service and the attention that they deserve." This was the retention message. It was a sound marketing message, as I look back on it. And new for us. It was not that we did not work hard at our tasks. Now the message told us we had to reconfigure our tasks.

I think the most useful result of the task force recommendations was to compel us to focus on retention as a discrete window into the operation of the whole college. That enabled us to stimulate a range of activities, all aimed at retention. Jim Craft and the student life staff began to track withdrawals with unprecedented precision. A "concerns" committee came into being; it assembled staff from the academic and student life offices to look one by one at students with emerging academic or social problems. This led to specific actions that aimed to keep the student enrolled.



In due course, we did a study of student values that led to a new approach to student advising. Advising of new students in their first semester became a discipline aimed at assuring the fit of the student and the college program. We hired new student life professionals to give particular attention to advising. We took a root-and-branch look at the orientation of new students and made it earlier and deeper. In June, we invited parents as well as incoming freshmen to campus for pre-registration in courses and for help sessions on how to start college—traditionally they didn't register until the fall. We involved upper-class students in advising freshmen.

We identified the financial aid office as a key player in retention—worry about paying tuition was a high priority for students. We tried to see financial aid and advising through student eyes as services rather than as administrative obligations, or, worse, as a residual paternalism.

Retention, the task force had argued, should begin at the moment a prospective student first inquired about admission! This message slowly began to take hold.

The work of the recruitment and retention task force dovetailed nicely with that of the student life task force. It encouraged a major change in social life because it would help retain students. It endorsed the administrative and regulatory changes recommended by the task force on student life.

The recommendations for curricular revision likewise reinforced the recruitment and retention recommendations. In sum, we tried to construct a coherent strategic analysis out of the three major studies. And all of them together in the 1978 Middle States self-study sought to express in fresh terms what we were about and how we were going about it.

In some ways we were reaching back into our past to reshape the informal, small learning community that had existed before the air became politicized by the student movement of the late 1960s. That air had had a corrosive effect on campus patterns; they had collapsed before our eyes without our full understanding of the need to rebuild them on new post-1960s foundations. Coming into office, I felt responsible to begin rebuilding in the wake of that cultural trauma. As president I tried internally and externally to make our innovations sound without thumbing my nose at the college's tradition. I told myself that my status as an alum and as an inside appointee in some way helped me in this effort.

### **The mission statement changed but didn't change**

Bodger's letter to M.S. then turned to other parts of the Middle States self-study that he thought she should think about--revising the mission statement, restructuring the committees of the faculty, and assessing financial strength for getting started:

What we did with the mission statement in the Middle States self-study further illustrates this balancing act between the traditional and the innovative. The mission statement in the college catalog had remained unchanged for many years. I think it was the outcome of a revision by President Norman E. McClure in the late 1930s of an earlier permutation from the pen of his predecessor, President George L. Omwake. It encapsulated both (A) the clear resolve of the college to be a liberal arts institution and (B) its religiously based moralistic intentions. The latter began in pietistic Protestant Christianity. In the beginning, the college could unabashedly proclaim its pietistic taproot. Over the decades, however, it had to temporize as professional

academic priorities gained weight. By the time I became president, the congruence of this duality of vision was in grave doubt.

Some on the faculty would have liked to seize the occasion to expunge the Christian rhetoric. They would have liked to acknowledge forthrightly the decline of the religious role in the actual conduct of life on campus. That, they felt, would free us from parochial drag and allow us to pursue the model of the best-known national liberal arts colleges.

Luckily for me, this view did not yet dominate in the faculty. The majority could live with a continuation of some religious reference as long as it did not represent actual interference with academic values and priorities. I say "luckily" because a significant alumni constituency and most board members still valued the religious characterization of the college. You have to bear in mind that D. L. Helfferich remained on the board. He was living testimony to an older concept of the college as a player in a Reformed Church (now United Church of Christ) drama. I had nothing to gain at that time and a good bit to lose from an all-out fight to divorce the college from its relationship with the church. Despite the traditionalism associated with religion on campus, the United Church of Christ denomination was in the forefront of the national agenda for social justice. Better than many on campus and on the board, church representatives could see the point of social changes that we were pressing. Ironically, by continuing the traditional connection with the church, we were conserving some external sympathy for an innovative agenda.

A review of the mission statement came first in the Campus Planning Group's schedule of activities for the Middle States self-study leading up to the 1979 review for reaccreditation. By the fall of 1977 we had received input, revised it, and obtained the approval of the board for a modest revision. The old chestnut that opened the statement stood intact:

*The college is a Christian, coeducational, liberal arts college which seeks to help the student to understand and to emulate excellence in scholarship and in conduct. Although in recent decades the college has extended its work to include the preparation of men and women for a variety of professions, the college continues to emphasize the fact that however varied and specialized the changing needs of the day, the fundamental needs of man remain constant. Each student, whatever his field of specialization, is required to study those subjects which are the core of our cultural heritage.*

I never read those sentences without hearing the dour cadence of Norman McClure's voice, embedded in my memory of his classes in Anglo-Saxon and Shakespeare. They would survive for another decade before they finally would wash away in the next self-study. Related phrases, however, fell to our need in 1977 for fresh vision. We would no longer say that it was our duty to "preserve the cultural and spiritual tradition which this generation has inherited." We would no longer acknowledge that we were transmitting "a sense of that duty to future generations." The elitist sense of a liberal education—an implicit noblesse oblige—also disappeared when we deleted a reference to qualities that fitted students "for the extraordinary responsibilities of educated men and women." But the new statement did adopt that forward-looking orientation with the following substitution, which to date has survived as the college's basic statement of purpose:

*The mission of the college is to develop independent and responsible individuals who are prepared for a creative and productive role in a changing world through a program of liberal education.*

(In light of the changing tenor of pedagogy, I can't help but think that the insistent accent on independence and individuality needs now to be qualified by the word "cooperative." But that's for people in charge like you now to decide.)

For the remainder of the statement, we simply made modest revisions to a laundry list of eight qualities that supposedly characterized the graduate after going through our ringer. "Attitudes consonant with the Christian ideal of morality and service" became "Ideals of morality and service consonant with the Christian character." As I recall, the subtle shift meant that a graduate now could act on ideals of morality and service even if Christianity was not his or her motivating force. This was one of the many small steps over the years that kept pushing piety to the periphery until, finally, it fell off the map of the college.

In short, the faculty and staff had no great desire to change the charter. We wanted to solve a host of difficult operating problems. The formal exercise of looking at the mission served us as an enabling ritual, not much more. Middle States expected us to do it, so we did.

### **The committee on committees labored to produce the status quo**

A similar attitude informed the study of the complicated committee structure of the college. The Campus Planning Group appointed a special committee on committee structure in the context of the Middle States self-study. William B. Williamson, head of philosophy and religion, became chair. Williamson and his group were supposed to analyze the effectiveness of the committees of the college in pursuing the mission. They were to consider who was on committees, including the question of student membership; methods of selecting members and the chairs; terms of office; frequency of reports to the faculty.

Craft crafted this assignment; it was, I think, a masterpiece of busy work intended to have no substantial effect. The governance of the college leaned heavily toward administrative control. The president was chair of major committees, such as admissions and academic council. He appointed the key people to many more. This gave the president control of the flow of faculty power; it enabled him to frustrate initiatives if he chose by the power to appoint and to set agendas. Helfferich and Pettit had held onto that power. It was mine by inheritance.

Williamson had his own mind about things, but he gave Craft and me the impression that he did not want to upset the apple cart of governance. That was good in Craft's view and mine. When Williamson and I exchanged thoughts about his mandate in March 1978, I was forthright in advising him not to replace administrative leaders of committees with faculty members. And he accepted that advice.

The committee on committees did away with a couple of anomalous committees. It reclassified committees by type. It recommended new procedures for electing members to the promotion and tenure and judiciary committees. It recommended the creation of a new student life committee to reflect the new priority being given to student life issues; I had suggested this to Williamson in a private memo to him.

These changes did not alter the established tilt of the faculty governance structure that accentuated administrative control. One might interpret that as the committee's affirmation of my election. A decade later, new conditions and the tide of events in my administration led to a shift of control toward the faculty. In retrospect, I think we missed an opportunity to make some reasonable structural changes in 1978 that would have been good for the college as we opened an

agenda of improvement in the 1980s. We had so much on the platter, though, that faculty and administration alike were content to let this wait. It certainly left things easier for me to manage than they would have been with greater faculty oversight and ownership of the structure.

### **Financial stability was the prerequisite to getting anywhere**

The Pettit years from 1970 to 1976 played out in a financially distressing environment. Double digit inflation combined with economic stagnation to create a doomsday feeling. Pettit's Depression-era attitude toward money kept him from investing our very modest resources in educational advancement. His whole effort was to assure that we survive the storm without losing our shirt. Conservative businessmen on the board reinforced him. Our careful business manager, Nelson Williams, and the continuing influence of D. L. Helfferich gave him further reinforcement. As Pettit's vice president, I was passively in step with Williams and Helfferich.

Pettit severely limited salary expenditures along with other operating items. He concentrated on doing as well as we could with less. The faculty largely attributed that to a limit of his vision (and sometimes of his character). His critics faulted him for not trying to do better by finding more resources. Through it all, however, this zealous fiscal caution left the finances of the college in a manageable situation when he left office—though the price for that was a fractious campus community and a lasting scar on Pettit's reputation.

Inflation worked on both sides of the ledger. While it constantly pushed up costs, it also generated hefty increases in investment income. Consequently, the endowment, unadjusted in value to reflect inflation, grew from about \$6 million in 1970 to \$8.8 million when I took over in 1976. We steadily reduced our internal indebtedness to our endowment; Helfferich had borrowed from it to build the plant in the 1960s. We had a no-frills educational operation. Our per-student expenditures were lower than we saw at colleges thought to be comparable in quality. Because we were charging a relatively low tuition, we had not yet begun to give big financial aid discounts—in effect we built the discount into the sticker price. Two-thirds of the students were getting some aid but it was in small amounts.

I tell you about these financial conditions as I was going into office because, without financial stability, everything I have told you about my agenda for starting toward improvement would be so much smoke. I was lucky to step into a financial situation that, while always worrisome, was manageable.

The Middle States team acknowledged this in its 1979 visitation report:

*The examination...revealed a stable, prudent, and highly competent and professional approach to financial management. The college's working capital position is unusually good and cost control is evident.... Student charges are moderate compared to regional norms and increases in recent years reflect a conscious effort to maintain this position.*

In the next breath, though, the Middle States team faulted our in-house management of investments. It failed to see that it was Helfferich's continued involvement in investment that had kept it that way. As he faded in the next couple of years, the board began to professionalize investment management. The team also saw how limited I had kept the financial development office. My old comrade-in-arms, Frank Smith, was the only staff member with full-time fundraising duties. Beefing up development also would become a major initiative in a couple of years.

As a dean, you know a lot about the micro-management of finances within the academic domain. The financial game at the institution-wide level is different. Much of it depends on the philosophy in the board and on the Zeitgeist. Will you be leading in a time of optimism or pessimism? Say what you will about Ronald Reagan, his election in 1980 led to a more optimistic environment, and that made it easier for me to "get started" up the path toward institutional improvement.

I probably haven't told you enough about all sorts of other issues during that "getting started" phase from 1976 to 1979.

Athletics, for example. What can I say? The college had a long-standing national reputation in women's field hockey and lacrosse, and the women kept on winning. In men's athletics, individual athletes carried the college's name into the limelight—wrestlers who went to national NCAA wrestling competition in the 1978-79 season, a baseball great who won the MVP award in our league. A new men's basketball coach, Skip Werley, though limited to a part-time position, was implanting a recruiting and coaching program such as the college had not seen before. By the 1980-81 season, he took the team to the Division III "final four." Such accomplishments came without major change in our funding or program priorities. I took them as gifts and could take little credit for them, except as a fan in the stands. Randy Davidson was newly in charge of athletics, in place of our veteran, Ace Bailey; but it would take a while for a new set of athletic priorities to solidify. I'm afraid that, going in, I did not think that a highly competitive athletics program had to accompany a top undergraduate liberal education program. Even if I had thought differently, the limited dollars for operating the college would have kept at least one of my hands tied behind my back. In retrospect, I think I gave too little attention to that whole complicated issue. That's a discussion we might have some day.

So now, for better or worse, I've told you about as much as I'm prepared to say about 1976-1979. In the summer of 1979, after the Middle States team report came in, we hired a new academic dean. Jim Craft resigned soon after that. Before I knew it, the conditions and problems of that initial "getting started" phase dissolved. The agenda for "making headway" from 1979 to 1984 flowed naturally into place. Some day when you visit, maybe I can tell you what that agenda involved, if you need (or want) to know. Cheers.

Sincerely, *Bodger*

About a week after mailing this letter, Bodger learned that the outside person got the presidency at M.S.'s college. She knew that her position as dean would be in jeopardy as soon as the new man arrived.

"Damn," Bodger said on the phone.

"I'm undaunted," M.S. said.

"Will you be going back to the market then?"

"I need to know more," she answered. "I'll be visiting you again. When I get a presidency, it will be as an outsider. If you had been an outsider, you would not have had an initial 'getting started' phase. You would have been 'making headway' from day one. You need to tell me about your 'making headway.'"

"I'm here," he said. "Be in touch." Bodger opened a new box of files from the early 1980s. Soon he was reconstructing a new round of remembrances.

*END CHAPTER FOUR, M.S. PART ONE (Getting Started, 1976-1979)*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### M.S. PART TWO (*Making headway, 1979-1984*)

It was semester break around the nation. M.S. flew east and again sat in Bodger's study in his home a few blocks from the college campus. Bodger found her as eager as ever. Her failure to get the presidency at her college seemed to have fired her up for more.

She said, "You wrote to me about 'getting started.' Interesting—but I need you to talk about 'making headway.' I mainly need to know that. If you had entered from elsewhere in 1976, you would not have had a 'getting started' phase. You would have started with 'making headway.' Don't you think?"

Bodger said, "I imagine most new presidents need to do some dusting of the office before they can really start. Outsiders as well as insiders. But, sure, you're right in that outsiders don't have to operate from the standpoint of first-hand familiarity with people and issues. The people don't know them. If their search process was legitimate, they get an automatic pass until they prove themselves lacking. In the other case, the two-way familiarity surrounding insiders has to work itself out before the new administration starts making headway."

M.S. said, "So, you're saying that by 1980 you had done your dusting satisfactorily and could think of really moving ahead."

Bodger flipped his pencil in thought. "I suspect that the main outcome of the first several years was the legitimization of my election. I never could have been considered for the job without the push of Helfferich and Schwalm. I was Helfferich's man. That made my election possible. I assume that it also made it initially impossible for many to see me as a president in my own right. When the ship didn't sink, when people saw that I had my hand on the wheel and could steer in a deliberate direction, 'getting started' ended and 'making headway' began."

"But that's just politics," M.S. replied. "I'm asking about the substantive management agenda aside from politics."

"It took me longer to get through 'getting started' because of the political reality."

"Whatever," waved M.S.

"In any event," Bodger waved back, "yes, by early 1980 the college was at a really fresh beginning. I had a staff in place that could work as a team. In particular I had a new dean from outside. I had a record of small tactical accomplishments that illustrated that I could indeed be the president effectively in the eyes of my multiple constituencies. We had made 'planning' into a kind of mantra for the way we would work at developing the place. From that first big round of planning, culminating in the Middle States self-study, I was beginning to articulate and pursue actions that would start the college down an intentional path of development. The direction of that path would begin to define the quality of my administration as a whole when time would come for assessing at the end."

"You initially were **fixing** things, but by 1980 began to **forge** things?" queried M.S., raising her eyebrow.

"Whatever," he smiled. "Something happened in the spring semester of 1980 that made me feel that we were in a change of phase. You might appropriately think of it as

'The upheaval over Upheaval II.' In our planning discussions, we touched repeatedly on the predominance of sciences and the second-place position of the arts and humanities in our college priorities. I was looking for something to dramatize my intention to give the arts a more privileged place. The opportunity came along when Philip and Muriel Berman offered us some monumental outdoor sculpture."

"I heard about the student objections to your monumental art initiative while I was in grad school. But I didn't hear it from your side."

Bodger told her the story.

### **Monumental sculpture signaled the start of something new**

"Though I didn't fully realize it at the time," Bodger said, "the placement of monumental outdoor sculpture in spring 1980 would be the start of something that would put a watermark on my administration. I had a personal discomfort with the lack of attention given at the college to the creative and performing arts. This dated back to my student years. Then, I had wished I could be in an academic environment that would encourage my creative writing; instead, I saw dull scholarship lifted up as the ultimate enterprise, at the expense of imagination and creativity. The college kept these in extracurricular pastures, thus clearly declaring their second-class status. It was this feeling that had predisposed me to give priority to the renovation of the old Thompson-Gay Gymnasium into the Ritter Center for Performing Arts in 1979.

"Didn't you learn that scholarship itself is an imaginative and creative pursuit?"

"Truth to tell," Bodger answered, "I did not learn that lesson well when I was a student here, and my experience at Penn didn't correct the failure."

The Bermans were art collectors who had given some pieces to the college in the 1960s. Philip Berman, who dropped out of the college after his freshman year, 1932-33, received an honorary degree during the Helfferich administration. A successful entrepreneur in Allentown, PA, he was a friend of William Reimert, then chair of the college board. When Bodger became president, he sought out Berman, who was by then leading Hess's of Allentown, an old-line downtown department store, into a successful proliferation in suburban malls.

Bodger said, "Berman responded cautiously but affirmatively to my invitation to become involved in enhancing the college's art program. He made it clear from the start, however, that whatever the involvement, it would be a joint effort by him and his energetic spouse, Muriel. 'We do everything together,' he said. 'And we don't just give money. We want to participate with you in whatever you do with what we give. We get our pleasure from doing things with institutions, not just giving them our bounty. If this makes you uncomfortable, you shouldn't encourage us.'

"The Bermans had collected art eclectically for many years. Mrs. Berman had made herself into an informed and perceptive critic of art old and new. Phil contributed enthusiasm and a gut instinct for identifying art that would catch attention. Both enjoyed the spirit of the chase after new art. It threw them into direct contact with young artists and with the heady business of art. When they decided to acquire work by aspiring artists, their patronage typically led to lasting personal associations with the artists.

"At the time of my overture, they were growing increasingly excited about collecting and supporting the work of sculptors doing monumental outdoor work. They favored freedom of form and were broadly inclusive in their selections, as long as they combined vigor with novelty. They had developed the certainty of their taste by collecting masterworks of major artists such as Henry Moore. They had cultivated a personal acquaintance with Moore.

"Phil's entrepreneurial genius migrated easily from his business to his avocation. He saw Muriel and himself as the motive force behind the production of vital sculpture and its distribution to receptive venues. Because it involved the movement of what Phil called 'tonnage,' I think he was the more enthusiastic of the two when they got into outdoor sculpture. While they built a unique collection of large outdoor sculpture for their showplace in their yard in suburban Allentown, they created a system of buying and then giving other sculpture to institutions. Most of it was by little-known sculptors who needed a market for their work.

"This perfectly fitted with the desire of the Bermans to involve themselves actively, to make a difference. Every piece of sculpture that they bought or commissioned made an opportunity for them to talk to college and university presidents--or mayors or arboretum directors--about their interest in placing it. Phil saw Muriel and himself as purchasers of inventory (Phil's 'tonnage') and then as salespersons seeking 'customers' to whom they could distribute their products. Since they undercut the literalness of this business metaphor by buying and then **giving** the products, they assumed control over the whole process. It turned into a grand game, especially for Phil. He thoroughly enjoyed the search for prospective recipients who would endorse the Bermans' zest for contemporary forms by rising artists.

"Because monumental contemporary sculpture was so visible and usually so arresting, its placement on a campus typically commanded the attention of the whole institutional community. Attention often divided people into two groups—those who reacted enthusiastically to the novelty now in their midst and those who thought the new art was an affront to their familiar or traditional environment. The Bermans relished the controversy. It seemed to them to arouse interest in human values, to compel viewers to examine their reasons for liking or hating art. This motive—to challenge the attitudes and ideas of people through critical encounter—usually persuaded college leaders that an engagement with the Bermans would bring cultural gains to their institutions. At heart, both Phil and Muriel thought of themselves as educators.

"The leaders who accepted their gifts of outdoor sculpture also accepted a risk. The Bermans and the artists they supported often had strong opinions about the placement of the gifts on a campus. The risk was that members of the campus community would resist their preferred locations as well as the style of art, which was certain to be large, bold, and abstract. An institutional leader had to conduct a communications campaign to explain what he or she had decided to do in cooperation with the Bermans. Sometimes he or she had to manage unexpected crisis caused by the negative reactions to the gifts of sculpture."

M.S. laughed, saying, "And now the rest of the story comes from the voice of experience."



"True," Bodger said. "I accepted *Upheaval II* and *Bearkeeper* in the spring of 1980. The previous summer Margot and I went to a lawn party at the home of the Bermans. Their purpose was to share with friends the wonders of sculpture arranged everywhere on their lawn, a unique assemblage of styles, juxtaposed according to the unique sensibility that Muriel and Phil brought to their collection. There was a summer rainstorm. Phil and Muriel somehow created a madcap atmosphere in keeping with the warm summer rain. Barefooted guests sloshed around the yard with umbrellas, thoroughly enjoying the experience, to the delight of their hosts. The party made headlines in the social pages because Phil had insured the party against rain. So, he collected his insurance money although the party happened anyway with great success.

"Phil introduced me to one of the artists in attendance, Glenn Zwegardt, a new find of the Bermans among young sculptors. Glenn was at Alfred University. He was a man's man, out of the midwestern farm belt. He said he found his sense of sculptural beauty in the old rusted machinery abandoned on the fringes of fields out there. He sought similar form in his abstractions, made of large pieces of rusted steel. He had done a series of 'upheavals' that associated the power within the bowels of earth with the transformational function of the world our senses inhabit. I liked the sound of this. Having bought *Upheaval II*, Phil, in introducing me to Glenn, was seeking a home for it—on our campus.

"Glenn made *Upheaval II* in part from I-beams twisted by the power of Hurricane Agnes in 1972 and salvaged from the Susquehanna River. A thin, flat metal plate sat atop these supporting beams. A sleek geometric form—a rhombus—perched precariously on the narrow edge of the upright plate. I thought the whole assemblage, its mass and complex line, made a strong statement about the association of the primeval force of earth and the transforming power of civilization. Glenn read it from the bottom up. He saw destructiveness in the twisted metal beams delicately connected through the vertical metal plate to the mathematical order of the rhombus at the top. The provenance of the beams in the actual hurricane gave the work a link with reality, despite its highly abstract appearance.

"Egged on by Phil, I invited Glenn to study possible sites on our campus. Neither Phil nor I made any final commitments. We were engaging in a Bermanesque courtship, in which Glenn and I would dance. Phil would entertain himself by coaching us and encouraging us to get together. He was manipulating both Glenn and me. Both of us knew that and Phil knew we knew it. What made the process acceptable—to me, anyway—was a sense that we all had good intentions. We all were seeking an outcome that would somehow inch civilization onward. Phil, in addition, doubtless was thinking of the future of his philanthropic enterprise. If he found me receptive to the courtship and adept in the dance, I might do more ambitious projects with him in the future.

"On campus, Glenn identified a site for *Upheaval II* near one of the men's residence halls. He wanted it to be in the students' space so that they would have to confront it, deal with it.

"He went on to identify a space for a second sculpture on the large patio in front of the college library. The library director, Chuck Broadbent, '69, had an adventurous attitude. He strongly urged me to place a sculpture on the site, the more attention-getting the better. Glenn asked the Bermans to commission a second piece to be called *Bearkeeper*. It would create a thematic link between his current experiments with

primitive mythic forms and the college's symbolic mascot, the powerful grizzly bear. It would incorporate a flowing scroll-like form that would suggest the power of text, doubling as the graceful line of a grizzly standing on its haunches.

"It pleased the Bermans that Glenn and I had found a common ground. They readily agreed to pay for the second piece. In truth, I think Glenn had the piece already largely constructed back home. He managed to infuse a local thematic reference into an existing form. Like other sculptors I came to know in subsequent years, Glenn was as entrepreneurial as his patron Phil."

M.S. said, "When I heard about the campus reaction, it sounded predictably peasant-like."

Bodger answered, "Students and faculty both rather liked *Bearkeeper*, perched complexly in front of the library. It was okay because it was smooth, shapely, harmonious. Most did not like its rusted finish but excused it. *Upheaval II* for many people simply bore too much resemblance to a pile of scrap metal. Of course, it started as junk from the hurricane. It was too great an imaginative leap for them—students and faculty both—to see the scrap as material transformed into elements in an artistic composition. The men in the nearby dorm had a visceral need to reject it from their space."

"So they draped it and the nearby trees with ninety-six rolls of toilet paper," said M.S. "The roll count came directly to me from an authoritative source, somebody's girl friend."

"The morning apparition," Bodger replied, "of gently waving toilet paper was awesome as I walked through it on my way to the office. The draping was fun and fair enough. But some went too far when they toppled the piece onto its side. A victory, sort of, for the fascist primitive world that lurked in the hearts of some simple students. The world of the hurricane: I thought it was ironic that the destructive forces symbolically overcome in the sculpture became embodied in some hell-raising kids who attacked it."

Bodger called a noontime meeting of all student leaders. He told them that they had an opportunity to show how big they were as a college community or how small. He asked them to see that students cleaned up the paper at once. And he asked them to persuade the people who tipped over the sculpture to come to his office and apologize to the artist.

"No luck on the latter," he said. "But in the afternoon I went to the dorm for a talk about art and responsibility. I listened to much rationalizing and explaining away. It was their space and I violated it. Finally, they agreed with me that there was no excuse for physically abusing the piece, no matter how offensive they found it. They agreed to write a letter to Glenn to explain that not all people on campus were insensitive to his work. He himself joined me next day for more talk about art and values with some students. That was after *Upheaval II* on its second night received a heavy ornamentation of shaving cream. In the nights ahead, students pushed it over a few more times. Finally, Glenn recommended that we move it to another site that he had approved. It was at the far end of the triangle from the dorm, nearer the gymnasium, space that students did not feel they owned. Students and I wrote pros and cons in the student paper. More than a few faculty members let me know that they were quiet sympathizers with the students."

"I sent copies of all the commentary to the Bermans. They thought it was a great controversy. They were gradually coming to believe I would take a risk for something important. Later they would show that they were preparing to give us more."

The Zwegardt affair, Bodger explained, was a small crisis that grew out of his larger hopes for the advancement of the college. He could easily have avoided it by simply avoiding his involvement with the Bermans. The conflict with students was largely a gain, he felt, because it engaged them in serious discussion about personal and institutional values. A fair number of students, faculty, and alumni told him they supported the sculpture initiative. They too thought it spoke of the need for the college to enrich its perspective—and ultimately its program—on the arts.

"Somebody said it began to change the flavor of the college from plain vanilla to pistachio," he said.

M.S. said, "You had no clear plan. You jumped in without knowing how deep the water was. An external constituent pushed you. You had to wing it when the students reacted rambunctiously. Was that good planning? Was that vision?"

Bodger answered, "My point is that I was looking ahead and not just tidying up. It was not good planning in that it did not grow out of a community process—I was the sole owner going in. I think it was visionary. I wanted to start the college up a path toward substantive change. I wanted to broaden the definition of undergraduate liberal education so that it included the affective and the creative as well as the logical and the cognitive. This required gathering new resources and jumping through the hoops necessary to gather them. That's why the *Upheaval II* affair, small in itself, sticks in my mind as a symbol of the turn from 'getting started' to 'making headway.'"

M.S. reflected, "Sounds like you were inventing your program as you were running."

"Yes, and no," said Bodger. "The planning process provided a forum in which we could grope somewhat safely for a grander vision of the college. The legitimization of my presidency, achieved in the first several years, at the same time allowed me to go outside the forum when opportunity called."

"As you did with *Upheaval II*."

"Yes."

"You could only have done so if you had pretty solid political support across the community," M.S. added.

"I felt by 1980 that the base was pretty solid," Bodger said.

### **Outside evaluation by Middle States pointed the way**

To document his assertion, Bodger showed her the report of the evaluation team from the Middle States Association that visited on 22-25 April 1979. The author of the report, he said, was a veteran president of a well-known liberal arts college in upstate New York. He had seemed to take a personal liking to Bodger. He must have seen in him a novice president who was long on enthusiasm and energy while forgivably short on normal academic preparation and experience. The report was designed in part as one knowing president's attempt to support another's beginning efforts to get things started.

"So," Bodger smiled, "you have to recognize that his favorable comments about the campus climate and my influence on it are more generously expressed than I deserved." He read the following:

*We were particularly impressed to find all significant elements of the campus satisfied that they were having input into policy processes most important to them. Perhaps what makes the system work more than its structure is the underlying sense of openness and willingness to communicate and to share with others. This we learned is a hallmark of the current president's administrative style. The resulting atmosphere on campus is thus extraordinarily set for productive and even innovative consideration of how to resolve common problems.*

*Presidential leadership has not only been expressed with uncommon candor and ready accessibility to everyone on the campus but it has also featured a capacity to keep all concerned focused on priorities. Although here and there in this report attention is drawn to unresolved problems, the evaluators were in total agreement that the college has proceeded to face its key problems in order of importance through a clear understanding of what had to be done first. The president's grasp of institutional needs and his program for action are impressive.*

"Outside endorsement of that kind had to be useful on campus," M.S. commented.

Bodger leafed through the Middle States team report, noting items along the way. He replied, "The report was useful in a fundamental way. It gave me a platform to stand on as we developed a program for reshaping the college. If something appeared in the report, I could claim that we had to pay attention to it."

"You were exaggerating."

"Only when I agreed with the recommendation. In fact, with advice from board members, I told Middle States we were NOT accepting some recommendations for action. It wanted us to hire a registrar right away. It wanted us to get professional investment consultants. It wanted us to get a new auditing firm. I politely said thank you for the suggestions and assured Middle States we would think about them—but did not promise to do them.

"On the other hand, the team thought we should beef up the social sciences, especially anthropology and sociology. It thought we should diversify and rejuvenate the board. It found the faculty too heavily weighted with alumni and not weighted enough with minorities. It recommended that we get some outside consulting help with recruiting. It thought we should stop resisting the student pressure to provide psychological counseling and better vocational counseling. It found that our students used the library as a place to study rather than as a place to find intellectual resources—a finding about the more general limits of our academic culture. We should do something to enrich that culture, as the Middle States team saw it. The team faulted us for a low minority enrollment and no evidence of special effort to recruit minorities. It worried about the rise in business administration majors and the growth of our adult part-time evening program, which was heavily pragmatic and career-oriented; these developments, it thought, might compromise our classic commitment to liberal arts.

"I agreed with all these points and may have been the source for some of them in interviews with Middle States team members. There was consensus on campus that we should do something about them."

M.S. said, "So, the Middle States report gave 'making headway' a third-party endorsement."

Bodger replied, "Yes, it created a frame for the professionalization of the college on a broad front."

### **The desired destination was hard to see clearly**

"But the Middle States recommendations," Bodger continued, "failed to take two complicating issues into account. First, we did not really have a concrete map of where we wanted to go after we got under way—at least in any measurable sense. I knew that we were inching our way toward an ambition to become one of the top fifty small liberal arts colleges in the nation. With our severe limitations on resources and plain vanilla curriculum and faculty, I could not bring myself to think this was any more than a remote dream. The stark reality of comparing our position and resources with those of neighboring colleges of secure and long-standing national stature—Swarthmore and Haverford, to be precise—made me shrink from declaring this as a goal.

"However, as we pushed off, I developed some language that expressed our ambitiousness without making us look foolishly unrealistic—so, at least, I hoped. I talked about becoming one of the best traditional liberal arts colleges 'in the East.' Then I began talking about our becoming the best 'regional' liberal arts college located in the Delaware Valley. I chose 'regional' to differentiate us from Swarthmore and Haverford. Both of them had a 'national' constituency and stood in the forefront of liberal arts colleges across the nation. When *US News* invented the college rating game in the mid-1980s, it confirmed this judgment. And it also, alas, confirmed that our college, though technically in the national grouping, merited a mere footnote. It was not until we were well into the 1980s before we were able to dilute the fuzziness about our strategic destination."

M.S. said, "The road was long."

"I knew we were starting but did not know how far we could go or exactly where we would be when we got there."

"Your planning process should have helped," M.S. said.

"It did and it didn't. It got campus constituencies involved. I think it lowered the paranoia and negativism that lingered from the years of bitter dispute in the first part of the 1970s. When we resolved to do something, the process gave it legitimacy in the community. That was the good outcome of having participation.

"After Craft departed in 1979, Chuck Broadbent, library director, took over the role of my assistant for planning. He was in a doctoral program that put him under the tutelage of Robert Zemsky at Penn, then emerging as one of the gurus of organizational change in higher education. Chuck was great on process. We developed a complicated system of aims and targets and ventilated every issue with our several constituencies in a truly participatory process. Chuck was particularly good at tracking trends in student retention and talking about the whys and wherefores of those trends—which began, happily, to turn upward.

"But our process was less helpful in producing a coherent and clear-cut strategic vision that we could implement with the resources at our command. That still depended on leadership, which resided at my desk. In effect, the planning process gave me a good-willed environment within which to grope for a direction and a destination in the marketplace. The groping took time, put my leadership always at some risk, and produced an incomplete vision all through these years."

"Nevertheless, it showed you that the route was there somewhere," M.S. said sympathetically.

"It was, and we saw it and went ahead, come hell or high water."

### **Revitalizing the college's parochial culture**

Bodger went on to say that the second complicating issue that went unacknowledged by Middle States was subtler but just as real as the fuzzy declaration of a destination. All the items on the Middle States list would turn the college toward orthodox professionalization. The team apparently took for granted that the distinctive culture of the college would continue to thrive even as the new administration introduced changes. Bodger did not. He believed that the advancement of professional quality would dilute the localized campus culture of the college. He would have to work to preserve the college's personality as professionalism deepened.

Bodger had come to think that the college's peculiar flavor derived from the particular circumstances of its past. The college started in a contrarian spirit. The first president had resisted the prevailing establishment in the Reformed Church in the US and had struck out on his own. If the denomination would not see the liturgical issues his way, he would start a school where his way would be sure to prevail. This founding act placed a defining mark on the campus culture that survived down to the moment, as Bodger saw it.

Though the original religious issues faded in subsequent years, the contrarian tilt did not. For those immersed in the culture, it elevated the value of their independence, of going their own way. It affirmed non-negotiation on fundamental issues, even when that made them look odd, out of the mainstream. It allowed them the luxury of feeling a bit self-righteous about their peculiarity. This went hand in hand with a feeling of being beleaguered by the mainstream; and that fostered a feeling of camaraderie, of special caring for close comrades under siege. The result was a tight-knit campus community, sure of itself in its differentness, tolerant and supportive within, skeptical about the usual standards applied in the larger community. Bodger felt that this contrarian spirit enabled the college to elect him president despite his unorthodox credentials and preparation. D. L. Helfferich, the embodiment of the culture, epitomized it when he refused to make measurable comparisons between the college and others such as Swarthmore and Haverford. He thought his college was valuable in a way that no other college could be. It was literally incomparable, and he was not bashful about saying so.

Bodger went on: "But obviously it was not merely Helfferich's continued presence that gave continuing force to the campus culture. The senior faculty amalgamated their loyalty to it in their own contrarian organization, the Pariahs. They met off campus weekly for many years. Even as we speak, a remnant of those still living gets together. The Pariahs became an important political voice in the disputes that arose in the Pettit

years, 1970 to 1976. Some still thought of themselves as my 'loyal opposition,' I imagine, when I got into office."

"You're saying they gave a local flavor to the place," said M.S.

"Yes, with others. A strong contingent of alumni on the board gave life and voice to the college character, each drawing from his or her experience in student years. Old loyalists led the Alumni Association. Indeed, the students themselves, though they fought with the administration over social rules, valued the offbeat quality of campus."

M.S. nodded yes: "There was a kind of cult feeling about the college among a creative crowd of kids in my student years. Its very peculiarities they thought of as funky and cool. A well-kept secret."

"Remember I too was an alum," Bodger said. "My college experience as a kid was so etched in my bones that I was unable to look objectively at what I'm going to label the 'parochial' personality of the college. It was not even a deliberate judgment for me to try to protect that personality, even as our agenda to professionalize got started. The college had its character and I simply would do what I could to protect it."

"So," M.S. said, "you set yourself up to arbitrate a conflict between the parochial and the professional."

"I don't think it was exactly a conflict anymore. It had been that in the Pettit years. You can read what I thought about that in my essay on the disputes over principles and priorities during his administration. As president, I felt that some elements of the parochial culture would naturally melt away in the heat of measurable educational improvements. I felt this could happen without provoking a political backlash from the old guard. But at the same time I felt that we could and should take some elements from the parochial tradition and revitalize them. They would season the new environment that we were going to make. I had a gut feeling that the blending of local character with mainstream academic legitimacy would be possible—and desirable. We had an example of sorts in Haverford, where Quakerism apparently lived in balance with an unqualified commitment to professional scholarship."

"What elements?" asked M.S.

"They coalesced, I guess, around the student life program. A shirt-sleeves attention to individual students had to survive, I felt. We were going to be less paternalistic and permit each student to surround himself or herself with greater private space. At the same time, we were going to raise scholarly expectations. As a counterbalance, I felt we had to preserve our nearly obsessive commitment to nurturing and guiding students one by one. This had its deepest roots, no doubt, in the original concern of Dr. Bomberger to save souls from damnation. That had ceased to be the declared business of the college well before the turn into the twentieth century. But it survived as zeal to help students find their way to living a good life on earth.

"This zeal remained attached in my mind to the college's religious leaning. It made me want to preserve something of the relationship with the Reformed Church tradition, merged since 1957 into the United Church of Christ. The church relationship no longer had to mean that we would make kids go to chapel and pay respect to faith. The UCC was the most active mainstream Protestant denomination in America in matters of social justice. It was the most liberal in including minorities and gays. That made it possible, in my mind, to have our old connection but in a new formulation. In 1983, after the first

fruits of allowing alcohol on campus had ripened, the Council for Higher Education of the UCC gave us a grant to develop an alcohol awareness program on campus. The grant symbolized what we could do to hold onto a traditional relationship and convert it to our agenda for change."

M.S. said, "Holding onto a church relation had little meaning for most students."

"Probably so. Students are so deep in the waters that at the time they cannot perceive all the institutional currents outside their immediate environment. The church relation worked at a level that they could not see—but it was there nonetheless. Politically, I enjoyed strong support from the old Reformed constituency and felt obligated, in my fashion, to be loyal to those people. I was certain that many changes had to come that would take us down an untrodden path. In truth, it was a comfort for me to feel that I still connected to the inner thread of the institution's history even as I engineered change. I did not want to create skirmishes at the fringe while we were trying at the center to push the quality of the educational program upward.

"Along the way I read a bit about our obscure namesake, Zacharias. A pleasant discovery. He was a man of qualities in a turbulent time. It was impossible for me to draw on our founding president, Bomberger, for contemporary relevance—liturgical fine points and denominational politics apparently consumed his mind. I knew Heidelberg from my military duty there in the 1950s. I could imagine myself walking where Zack walked, high above the city on the Philosopher's Way. He was a thinker. He had a certain kind of modesty and integrity. The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563, his masterwork, reflects both qualities. I came to like him.

"In 1978 at Founders' Day I cast my lot with Zack. This would align me with the old tradition of Continental scholarship and with the college's old religious orientation. The scholarly thread, I thought, would finesse faculty discomfort with a continued religious affiliation; and the religious thread would reinforce my alliance with the Reformed constituency while allowing issues of worship and faith as such to remain off the table."

Bodger wanted M.S. to see his maneuver and fished a flyer out of a file. It was a reprint of his remarks that day and he indicated the following for her to read:

*We can be fundamentally grateful that our founders chose Zacharias as their scholarly patron or symbol because the man's qualities of mind give us a substantial foundation upon which to stand proudly as contemporary teachers, students and citizens.*

*In essays about Zacharias, including one soon to be published by our own colleague, Professor Visser, one can glimpse a precocious fellow with an excellent memory, committed by conscience to the unremitting search for underlying truth. Despite physical problems and excessive shyness, he sought through his writings as professor at Heidelberg the conciliation of ideas beneath differences of language or style; he sought the accommodating formula that would avoid needless polemics and allow freedom of interpretation. He distrusted authoritarian control and preferred to see church polity lodged with those who made up the church—a seed of democratic insight.*

*We see a careful scholar, attentive to the various meanings and interpretations of words, anxious to find the truth for himself and not to be a follower of any other thinker, even one—such as Philip Melancthon—for whom he had the greatest respect. And, finally, we see a rather courageous man who, despite a private desire for living in*



*obscurity, felt compelled to remain in the very middle of the action swirling about his patron, the Elector Frederick III.*

"The Visser essay became a book, which came out in 1983," Bodger added. "We made it the centerpiece of a major scholarly symposium on the Reformed tradition in the Palatinate. The occasion was a commemoration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the life of Zacharias, who died in 1583. We had scholars from all over North America and from Europe, and our man Visser was at the center of it. Theology sparkled again for a day in old Bomberger Hall."

"Is that when you unveiled the statue of Zack on the front campus?" asked M.S.

"Yes, courtesy of the Bermans, who had taken Michael Price into their orbit of young sculptors. Price had a scholar's approach to his art. He read Zack's sermons and papers and developed an insight into his character and beliefs that transferred to his statue." Fishing again, Bodger produced Price's remarks at the dedication that fall day in 1983:

*In reading about Zacharias and his times, two things impressed me greatly. First was that it took a great deal of courage to do what Zacharias did. It was not the polite society that we are accustomed to. Firearms were often brought into church, and bodily harm could come to the person whose pronouncements were not well received. It was clear to me that only true conviction could motivate men like Zacharias.*

*Secondly was his commitment in his Commentaries on the Heidelberg catechism, that all of his work, in fact all of religion, is derived from two principles. The first is that of faith, the second is to "love your neighbor as yourself."*

"I liked Price's riff on neighborly love," said Bodger, reading further:

*To love your neighbor as yourself has implicit in its meaning to regard your neighbor without judgment, to not assume that there are differences between you even though the circumstances may appear to indicate that there are, just as I, I'm afraid, presumed about Zacharias and his preoccupation with the interpretation of the Lord's Supper.*

"Yes, but..." said M.S.

"I know, I know," Bodger echoed. "This religious stuff sounds distant from the main business of getting an aspiring liberal arts college started on a course of improvement in the last quarter of the twentieth century."

"Yes," M.S. said again. "At the same time, I see what you intended. You were trying to say that you would not thumb your nose at the old constituency of the college but that you would respect it in your own way—scholarly, intellectually, not worshipfully. There are those who would say you can't have half without the other half."

"Yes," Bodger said. "In retrospect, it was a last-ditch strategy, which would not have the vitality to renew itself. At the time, I did not see this. We went forward with an important programmatic innovation. I thought it would ground the new religious relationship for the long haul."

"You set up a new full-time campus ministry with the UCC," said M.S. "I read about Rev. M. Scott Landis with interest because he was just about my age."

"We had not had a full-time campus minister for years. The regional conference of the UCC and the college collaborated on financially supporting the position and program. A joint committee provided oversight. Today, though the collaborative agenda has probably languished and Scott has left the position, I still think it was a useful thing to undertake. It gave a special coloration to my administration. Scott was not appointed until July 1985 but we laid the foundations for creating the position before that."

Bodger said that the full-time position emerged from an organizational negotiation between college and church, stimulated to a large degree by John Shetler. Shetler was the former administrative head of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. As a new member of the college board, he had supported Bodger's candidacy for the presidency. Shetler probably saw Bodger as a likely agent for keeping the church connection alive in the face of diminishing interest in it among faculty, students, and many alumni. He and Bodger had had offices in the same building, 620 Main Street, in Bodger's first years on the staff, when the headquarters of the Conference was housed upstairs. The joint committee with members appointed by the college and the Conference approved a job description and plan of activities. The campus minister would have standing with the Conference as a pastor but also have full employment with the college.

Hammering out such details became a labor of love for an alumni contemporary of Bodger's, Robert Hartman, '54. Hartman was the son of a Reformed pastor. He had firm loyalties to both the denomination and his alma mater. He embodied an earlier time when the people of the college and the church participated together in a vital Reformed community. Hartman would serve for many years on the board of the college at Bodger's invitation. His career as a personnel administrator made him a useful resource for the college. That same expertise gave him a role in the search and selection of the first campus minister under the new agreement, the Rev. M. Scott Landis.

"Scott appeared to be made for the job," said Bodger. "His youth, candor, caring, enthusiasm, flexibility, inclusiveness—all made him acceptable to all camps, as far as I could tell. He became a valuable ally of the student life staff and did heavy duty in counseling individual students. He was a master in crises, when students were at risk. He gave confidential counsel to faculty members. If the college's religious tie resulted in providing such a valuable campus citizen, the tie must be okay even if it seemed old hat—that's my sense of what many thought who otherwise would have objected to the continuation of the UCC relationship."

A year after Landis's appointment, Bodger evaluated the pilot project in a memo to Hartman and urged that the campus minister position become permanent. He discussed it in terms of market positioning. He thus tied it in with the question of destination—where did he want the college to go? Bodger handed M.S. a copy of his memo, dated 3 November 1986, and she read the following:

*The Campus Minister position as it is evolving will help the college to position itself clearly with the constituency that we seek to attract. One of our important factors in promoting the college is that we give individual attention to the student not just in the classroom but in the entire educational experience in a residential setting. The position,*

*as Dean Akin has said, is a visible **symbol** of our caring and nurturing role. More than that, however, the position provides a substantial resource for actually carrying out that role.*

*This function combines with our active participation in the United Church of Christ Council for Higher Education to show that we are actively engaged with a value system that prizes the Christian approach to human relations and the old Reformed emphasis on the independence and responsibility of the individual.*

*Such a position will mark us off from other selective liberal arts colleges that are less willing or able to make a formal show of commitment to a Christian tradition. Yet it will also keep us separated from colleges that are more doctrinal and less open to a range of beliefs and styles.*

*In marketing jargon, the Campus Minister position helps us define our niche and differentiates us from others in our segment of the market.*

"The college had an active role to play in the national Council for Higher Education of the UCC during these years," said Bodger. "This reinforced our commitment to our local campus ministry project and to our open acknowledgment of religious roots. I was chair of the national Council in 1983-84. When the Council required institutional members to reaffirm their active association with the Council, we did so with no difficulties on campus with faculty, students, or board. Other presidents such as my counterpart at F&M could not 're-enlist' because of the degree to which professionalization had advanced on their campuses at the expense of a parochial past."

Bodger made Landis his executive assistant some years after his arrival. He continued to grow as an administrator and orchestrated the search for Bodger's successor in 1994.

"Sounds like the kind of person any president should have," said M.S.

"You should look for one right away," Bodger said.

"So," she continued, "was your decision to hold onto the church relationship the only strategy for seasoning a more professionalized campus with healthy parochialism?"

"Another holding action was in the academic domain itself," said Bodger. "As we looked down the road toward professionalization, we could see the totem of 'publish or perish' looming in the mist. How could we move forward without having to bow down completely to that totem? I of course had never immersed myself fully in the research culture of graduate school and had never internalized the value placed on research and publication by the orthodox academic world. We had not required our faculty to jump through the hoops for promotion and tenure that were standard at places such as Haverford and even F&M. But many younger ones wanted to move in that direction. I felt fortunate in our choice of Bill Akin to become academic dean. He took a middle position, and it served us well, I believe, in this period. With a faculty development committee, he advanced the notion of 'visible products' rather than 'publications.'"

"But why did you want to resist 'publish or perish'?"

"To do so, I felt, would reinforce our commitment to caring and nurturing individual students. It would be consonant with the state of the art in our existing faculty—most of

them were simply not ready for such a professional leap full tilt. It carried forward that 'contrarian' spirit that I thought I detected at the core of our institutional personality, grounded in Bomberger himself. It kept a focus on students rather than academic discipline. It kept the purpose of faculty linked to the institutional mission, which focused on students."

"All things in their season," said M.S.

"The season for 'publish or perish' had not yet arrived," said Bodger.

### **New dean led the reshaping of academic culture**

M.S. was going home to her midwestern campus. Her resolve to try for another presidency remained solid.

"I've got the bug," she said during her last visit with Bodger. She knew her position as dean was in jeopardy, now that her new president weighed the merits of retaining a person he had defeated for the job. "I'll keep my head low, do my job for the time being, say 'yes sir' and polish my resume," she said to Bodger. He advised her not to jump at the first opening but to look for more than surface compatibility between her qualifications and the opening.

"Thanks," she said. Then she set the agenda for their next conversation. "Tell me what tools your new dean used in remaking the culture of the faculty."

"First of all," Bodger replied, "conditions were ripe when he entered the scene. The start that we already had made opened a path for him. The new curriculum went into effect the very moment he arrived—all that harrowing committee work was over. It gave him a fresh framework that could be enriched or expanded as time went on.

"And just the year before Bill arrived, we began the first formal faculty evaluation program in the history of the college. It came out of the deliberation of the priorities committee. The energy behind it arose from the distress of the faculty in the last Pettit years. They were sure that arbitrary and capricious tests, which were unwritten, had led to bad decisions on promotion and tenure. The faculty's impulse to professionalize was thus an impulse against patriarchal arbitrariness. It led them, of course, into a rigorous new set of expectations for professional performance. Not all of them in the end were happy to see bureaucracy creep into their lives. There was particular doubt about how much weight to give student evaluation of courses, which was coming in too. But the expectations were public, had the legitimacy of faculty sponsorship, and presumably could be reasonably applied by department heads, dean, and president."

"But no 'publish or perish,'" M.S. said.

"The criteria simply said that all faculty members should involve themselves in professional growth activities. The college—and their colleagues—expected them to develop their knowledge so that they kept abreast of work in their disciplines. They should read the appropriate scholarly publications and regularly attend scholarly conferences. They should participate in on-campus faculty seminars or lecture series. They should lecture in interdisciplinary courses and supervise student research on campus. The faculty handbook specified a number of outward-looking activities that they should undertake—obtaining fellowships and scholarly grants; attending extended workshops and

seminars; engaging in active research; presenting scholarly lectures or talks; and developing expertise in fields related to theirs.

"Under Akin's leadership, the evaluation rewards soon came to include special recognition for juried scholarly work. I'm reading from a faculty handbook of 1984, which says, 'Recognition will be given to faculty members who attain a high status or make a significant contribution in their field, who present papers at scholarly conferences, who write scholarly publication, or who produce creative works.' The recognition for the best came in the form of an annual award at commencement—and, of course, heavy points at the time of promotion or tenure deliberations. The point was to nudge the faculty in the direction of professional achievement with carrots not sticks."

Bodger added that perhaps the most important pre-condition for modifying faculty culture was an improvement in salaries. The bitter feelings of faculty in the last year of Pettit's administration did not flow exclusively from the personal distress created by the dismal economic climate of the mid-1970s. However, their lack of hope for adequate compensation had darkly colored the other grievances. Bodger had no choice but to be aggressive in seeking improvement. Had faculty not believed that he would give it top priority, faculty surely would have resisted his election. In this mission from the start, he had the sympathy and support of the board.

"I worked closely with the faculty-elected priorities committee to devise a plan of multi-year improvement by rank. We based it on a comparison with the AAUP's national averages in rank for colleges of our type. The plan was transparent and had support because faculty members worked on it—and because it had an external benchmark in AAUP. It was fiscally cautious while promising that the college would spend more on salaries. When Akin came along, the faculty were just coming to believe that salaries would improve further in some reasonable way.

"I tried not to kid myself—there was never going to be enough money to make people really happy. But there was enough to enable us to move away from money as the main issue. We had to get on with the business of changing the culture of faculty in the direction of professionalism. Fair pay was necessary but not sufficient in that business. And we felt obligated to spread the money around, given the low pay that generally prevailed. We clung to the principle of merit pay for commendable performance; but the merit increments were small. It would be years before merit commanded a really noticeable chunk of new salary."

The final pre-condition for the new dean's program, Bodger told M.S., was that the Middle States self-study had already analyzed the demography of the faculty.

He said, "Its weaknesses, from a professional perspective, were easy to enumerate. There were more non-Ph.D.s in senior ranks than similar colleges would have had. The tenure ratio was inching upward and beginning to threaten the general vitality of the faculty. We were at only about 56 percent tenured in 1978. We projected an increase to 82 percent by 1984 unless interventions by early retirement or death took place. Women were underrepresented, especially in the full-time and senior ranks, and their pay was not equal to that of men. Minorities virtually had no representation. Teaching loads were twelve hours and often more when individuals chose to add evening school courses to their workload for extra pay. The percentage of faculty who held the Phi Beta Kappa key was small.

"At the same time, a new dean could see in the college faculty considerable strength and potential. A younger cohort had led the curriculum revision; they were eager to realize its potential under new administrative direction. In the disputes of the Pettit years, the faculty had pulled together as an entity and had a rising sense of itself as the soul of the college.

"And," Bodger added, "scattered about were teacher-scholars of quality, who were numerous enough to suggest a tone. A few of the senior people enjoyed respect for their charismatic teaching and active scholarship. Derk Visser led a happy few in an interdisciplinary program, where they breathed on the flickering flame of liberal scholarship in its purest form. A number of assistant professors still had the enthusiasm for scholarship that came with them from graduate school; they were prepared to perform as soon as conditions of employment gave them half a chance."

M.S. responded, "So, the dean's work of identifying demographic priorities in the faculty was pretty well done by the institution; it was Akin's job to begin implementing changes in hiring and retention."

"Sure," Bodger replied. "But the immediate job was to work with what he had. Bill early on began to strengthen the work of departments. The academic program traditionally was highly departmentalized in its small way. But the departments were short on process and long on custom. Shortly after he arrived, Bill had to navigate the nasty wash that flowed from the denial of tenure for a member of the German Department. The case accentuated a need to evaluate all the foreign language departments, and that led to a new language department embracing all the languages under a single chair. The health and physical education department, driven by a concern over 'market share,' also underwent a program review. That led to the inclusion of a recreation component and a change of name to exercise and sports science. By these and other means, under Akin's leadership, the departments changed into units that were accountable. The chairs of departments acquired a more important voice in the promotion and tenure process. In the course of time, it became normal for departments to undergo periodic evaluation by outside peers."

#### **Pew funded the professionalization of the faculty**

Bodger said that the college turned the corner toward a new academic culture when, with Akin's guiding hand, it devised a systematic faculty development program and won a half-million dollar grant to fund it from the Glenmede Trust Company.

"A half-million dollars for faculty development may not seem like much today," he said, "but in 1982 I thought it was magical. As a new dean, Bill had to have been pleased with our success in winning it from the Glenmede Trust Company, which became better known as Pew Charitable Trusts. The Pew family had been solid supporters of Ursinus owing to the personal cultivation done successfully over many years by D. L. Helfferich and then Bill Pettit. Myrin Library, named in 1970 in memory of Mabel Pew Myrin's husband, is our most visible monument to that relationship. When I entered office, Pettit was able to give me a cordial introduction to the president of the Trust, so I had expectations of continued success.

"From Akin's first day we agreed that professional faculty development should be second to none on his action list. It did not take long for him to persuade me that our next

approach to Glenmede should be for professional improvement rather than for more bricks and mortar. He then worked hard with a representative faculty task force to forge a three-year faculty development program. Since the task force was a creation of the Campus Planning Group, it had the stamp of high priority and institutional legitimacy.

"The faculty members on the task force made a good mix of senior people and younger people, and of divisions of the curriculum. They were Juan Espadas of Spanish, J. Houghton Kane of political science (and Dean of Student Life), Eugene H. Miller of political science, John Pilgrim of economics & business administration, Blanche Schultz of mathematics, and Peter Small of biology. Two board members of high academic stature also served and provided legitimacy as well as professional insight: Millard E. Gladfelter, former President of Temple University, an historian; and Eliot Stellar, former Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, an internationally regarded neurobiologist—he became president of the American Philosophical Society after his departure from office at Penn. The interest and participation of these two board members sent the message to faculty that the college was in earnest. We were declaring a new day in the professional academic life of the professoriate at Ursinus.

"Eliot was a successful supplicant at Pew on behalf of Penn. He accompanied Bill Akin and me to deliver the proposal later. I felt that his endorsement pushed it over the top."

M.S. said, "The task force was really your way of trying to follow up the Middle States self-study to tone up the academic endeavor, wasn't it?"

"It was. And that too, I think, helped give the proposed program timeliness and persuasiveness both inside and outside the college. When the Campus Planning Group initially charged the faculty development task force, we cited the renewed self-confidence of the college in itself, referenced in the Middle States self-study. We said that the faculty development program should fulfill this feeling by enhancing the intellectual tone and quality of teaching. A heightened professional ability and intellectual activity would bring this about. And that called for a specific formal program."

M.S. said, "Merely by calling for it, you set the transformation in motion, I would think, given the absence of any substantive support for active scholarship in the past."

Bodger, nodding yes to her insight, said, "The task force called the past position of the college on scholarship 'passive and permissive.' There was scant encouragement for systematic professional growth. There were few penalties for failure to be an active scholar. Promotion and tenure procedures were aberrations in that they tended to ignore the normal professional benchmarks of progress. The college would now lay the foundation for an academic culture that would begin to look like that found at residential liberal arts colleges of acknowledged national stature."

"Long long road," M.S. said, repeating her refrain.

"Not only that, but at the same time we were being careful to pin faculty development to the newly formulated mission. This emphasized not academic activity as such but the broad development of the students for independence, responsibility, creativity, and productivity. I wanted to avoid a proposal that would appear to serve faculty without tying their self-improvement directly to the larger purpose of the college, which meant service to students. The specter of a deep division between the professoriate and the administration and board had quieted with my appointment in 1976. It was still lurking in

the wings, however. If it revived by making faculty improvement an end in itself, we would be going backward not forward, I felt.

"Happily, Akin, though fresh from a university environment, understood. He came to see why I worried. He led the task force toward a plan that would be professionally creditable. He was careful, at the same time, to root it in the broad behavioral values expressed in the mission statement."

Bodger continued by explaining how the proposal depicted the need for academic renewal as a natural next step to follow the three major initiatives of the first several years of his administration. The college had sought, first, to enhance the quality of student life consistent with the mission; second, to change recruiting and retention methods so that enrollment levels and standards would hold up; and third, to update the curriculum. With actions taken on all three fronts, the time was ripe to turn to the professional concerns and needs of the faculty. This would hone its most critical resource as the college strove to meet new aspirations for student life, recruiting and retention of students, and curriculum. A survey of faculty in 1980 showed that heavy teaching schedules and lack of financial support for research were the main culprits in retarding professional growth. The proposal that emerged put these problems in the crosshairs.

The new dean's vision of a transformed academic culture at the college keyed the specific proposals. The program would address all facets of faculty development. It would "emphasize a series of one time projects designed to move the faculty to a new level of quality and achievement and establish a new set of norms for what constitutes a satisfactory performance in the areas of teaching, professional growth, and advising."

Concretely, the program aimed to heighten computer literacy among at least a third of the faculty as an extension of the curriculum improvement already accomplished in the revision of 1979. Of particular importance was a "Dartmouth Mentor Program." This would send selected college faculty members to Dartmouth College for a brief, intensive immersion in the computer environment at one of the most advanced campuses. The college still was buying its computing services as a long-distance user from the Kiewit Computation Center at Dartmouth. During this period, Dartmouth's Thomas Kurtz, the co-inventor of the widely used Basic programming language, was a close adviser in this program. His partner, John Kemeny, had become Dartmouth's president; and Bodger had a meeting with Kemeny to put ceremonial cement in the connection. The value of computer literacy as an objective, Bodger explained, was two-fold: it could reach a broad range of faculty members, and, because many of them would be in the humanities, it showed a collaborative posture between non-scientists and scientists.

The proposal secondly concentrated on improvement of advising skills, with components in values development, personal and career counseling. The sharing of student advising duties for freshmen across the faculty was an important college goal. Advising would also take on new importance as faculty tried to guide students in the selection of the newly created minor concentrations.

The proposal gave some attention to the development of teaching skills, including teaching seminars. But an interest in pedagogy as such remained modest at this stage. It would be some years before a new cohort of faculty members brought fresh attitudes toward the importance of methods of college-level instruction.



Professional development was more important at this time to faculty; the proposal reflected this priority. It recommended a menu of activities—summer grants, research support grants, release time, travel grants, faculty seminars, more generous sabbatical leaves, and professional achievement awards to celebrate outstanding performance in scholarship. Akin had aired nearly all these when he came to interview for the deanship.

Bodger said, "As soon as we had advance word of an approval from Glenmede in the fall of 1981, Bill kicked off the program as hastily as possible; we launched it in January 1982. The announcement in the middle of an academic year made for some breathlessness and much excitement about the future. It was a high point for Bill and for me as well as for the faculty. In one fell swoop, the college ceased to be 'passive and permissive' about professional growth and became 'active and supportive.'"

"You probably thought this was as important as building a new academic building," said M.S.

"Probably more so," said Bodger. "Dormant in the proposal was our promise to sustain a newly institutionalized faculty development agenda as an ongoing part of our operation after the three-year grant period. In the blush of new excitement, that sleeper went unnoticed. But if we could do that in the longer haul, we would have basically changed the college."

"And that happened."

"I think yes, it did."

Bodger said that, with a year still to go on the three-year Glenmede grant, Akin was declaring "a profound increase in the life of the mind" on campus. Virtually all faculty members took part in one component or another of the program. More than half of the faculty went through computer literacy training and some were expert enough to be appearing at professional meetings to share their new competencies. Faculty members who attended professional meetings in their fields increased from less than a half to two-thirds of the faculty. Papers presented by the college's faculty at professional meetings increased five-fold. Scholarly publications doubled. "Of course the baseline was small," Bodger added. In 1984, ten faculty members devoted their full summer to research, with meaningful compensation to make up for gainful employment they might have forgone. The Glenmede program also provided for workshops on student advising for about one-third of the faculty.

Faculty members, Bodger reiterated, were least attracted to the part of the Glenmede program that encouraged them to rethink pedagogical practices. Akin had hoped that roundtables to discuss teaching in an informal atmosphere would dispel their original disinclination. These produced little enthusiasm. Pedagogy remained as an unaddressed issue for another five years.

"The Glenmede program," Bodger continued, "ironically gave a boost to my parochial efforts in a most professional way. We used grant funds for a scholarly colloquium on campus. But the colloquium dealt with 'Controversy and Conciliation: The Reformation and the Palatinate, 1559-1583.' This was the productive period in the professional life of the college's namesake, Zacharias. The gathering commemorated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his life—he died in 1583. This obviously was a specialized topic that would appeal to only a small group of our faculty, led by historian Derk Visser. Yet, Visser enjoyed the professional respect of his peers on campus. And the assembled presenters were among

the world's top Reformation scholars. The colloquium thus dovetailed the academic initiative with my effort to revitalize our historic connections with the church. Akin was politic enough to understand the public relations value of the topic and, at the same time, insisted on nothing but the scholarly best in the make-up of the program. It was an interesting blend of motives and outcomes. A decade later, it would not have happened, I think. Professionalization by then would have moved so far that faculty would have resisted such a parochial topic."

Bodger paused. Midway through the Glenmede grant program, he remembered, around Thanksgiving in 1983, Dick Bozorth, former dean, suddenly died of a heart attack at age 63. It was a personal tragedy for his attractive family and for his many college friends. His life as a full-time faculty member, following his withdrawal as dean in 1978, had been less happy than he might have wished. He was not comfortable with the more bureaucratic ways that inevitably came in the wake of the new faculty culture. His status as former dean made it necessary for him to tread carefully in the new dispensation.

"His faculty friends occasionally came to me to protest some felt slight surrounding evaluations of his teaching," said Bodger. "I doubt if anyone could fully fathom his personal feelings. I have often imagined Dick standing on a divide between a faculty world that we lost and one that we gained. He remained gallant and loyal in his relationship with me as he watched me nudge the college farther away from that informal and comradely world that he knew well. His sudden death has stood as a sad symbol, for me, of the heavy stakes involved in managing the reshaping of an institution. Bill Akin made it a point, understandably, not to consult with his predecessor in office, beyond the usual civilities. Even so, I think he felt what I felt about a passing era."

"Academia is the real world," M.S. said, "despite what our critics sometimes say."

Bodger nodded in agreement.

He said that as an end of the three years of the Glenmede-funded project loomed, the college hatched the idea of holding a faculty development symposium. It would solidify the gains made, point to future activities in faculty development, and let the larger—"real"—academic world know about the college's achievement. It would take the college beyond its parochial boundary. Akin received support and encouragement to undertake this from the newly arrived vice president for college relations, John R. Van Ness. The event on 3-4 November 1984, as it turned out, blended academic and promotional goals. Robert I. Smith, president of Glenmede, representing resources not professionalism, became a significant figure in the two-day affair. By giving him a place on the program and an honorary degree, the college hoped to cement further the relationship between that deep funding source and the college.

Bodger continued, "We called it *Faculty Development in Liberal Arts Colleges: An Unfinished Agenda for the '80s*. Main presenters were Robert H. Edwards, President of Carleton College, and Warren B. Martin, scholar in residence and senior program officer at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and author of *A College of Character*. Edwards spoke on 'The Role of Faculty Development in the Liberal Arts College' and Martin on 'Institutionalizing Faculty Development Programs at Liberal Arts Colleges.' Moderators were Eliot Stellar, our board member, and Akin. Respondents in addition to Smith were William C. Nelsen, President of Augustana College; Peter Beidler of Lehigh University, named 'Professor of the Year' by the national Council for the

Advancement and Support of Education; Geoffrey Marshall, deputy chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, who would become one of our board members; and Christine Young, Vice President of the Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education and former Provost at Hood College. Attending along with members of our faculty and staff were representatives from some 30 institutions."

"Strong voices from the real outside world," said M.S. "Anti-parochial."

Bodger found the remarks he made to open the symposium and gave them to M.S. to read:

*The three-year faculty development program funded by the Glenmede Trust Company already has permanently affected the professional style of our faculty and significantly stimulated the "life of the mind" of our campus.*

*...[W]e made a commitment to ourselves as well as to Glenmede to institutionalize beyond the lifetime of the grant a formal faculty development program. We believed that this would be essential to the continued success of the college in pursuing its mission in liberal education—and believe so even more now....But we also came to realize that...the college would have to clarify precisely what faculty development in the next phase should be. It was at that point that it appeared that a broader dialogue would be beneficial. The problem is not uniquely ours but touches the very center of the operation of every liberal arts college in America. We came to see that a sharing with other voices from the academy and the philanthropic community could sharpen our definition of the role of faculty and point to strategies applicable generally in liberal arts colleges....We hold the dialogue, then, still for our own ends....But we hold it in the conviction that understanding can be heightened today that will benefit every aspiring liberal arts college and many funding agencies trying to decide on priorities for the rest of this decade.*

*Everyone here is aware, I am sure, of the severe criticism leveled at higher education recently in the study sponsored by the National Institute of Education. One of its principal recommendations is that liberal education requirements be expanded and reinvigorated and that students and faculty integrate knowledge from various disciplines. With such a call, liberal arts colleges have an exciting and unique role to play. And the faculties in them have a special problem and promise. We have the capacity today to make a significant contribution to the emerging national dialogue on the revitalization of liberal education.*

"Your reach for 'national' significance is hard to miss," M.S. said, smiling.

Bodger said that it was Akin who first connected the local concerns about the next step in faculty development with problems being experienced at similar colleges across the nation.

"That gave us a bridge to the outside," Bodger continued. "These colleges, Akin held, had common characteristics. They defined undergraduate teaching as their primary purpose. They fostered a breadth of knowledge in their curriculum. They were concerned with the development of student 'character.' They were small and residential and stressed

a sense of community. At the same time, they shared the common problems of the day. Many voices were rising in the 1980s to question the utility of a liberal education. The number of traditional college-age persons was falling and would continue doing so for more than a decade. This was bringing financial stress and instability. Moreover, student mores and expectations were changing. This was raising the need for new teaching approaches and academic services. We were seeing a sharp increase in the number of students majoring in economics and business administration, and so were many colleges. We all were addressing an increasingly pragmatic, show-me-how-now generation. Faculty were less mobile, especially in the humanities and social sciences, which showed distressing downturns in enrollments nationwide. Tenure percentages were increasing. Colleges were hiring fewer new young faculty, increasing the risk of academic stagnation.

"Given these common characteristics and problems, we identified some important issues for the generic liberal arts college. Should the mission of liberal education lead to faculty development programs that differ from those at universities, community colleges, and professional schools? Will traditional scholarly research conflict with teaching at the undergraduate level? How can faculty development reinforce the liberal education of students? What impact can faculty development have on student development? How can faculty development foster collegiality and a sense of community? How can colleges with robust faculty development programs fund themselves without perpetuating their dependence on external foundation support? I think the nationally recognized people who responded to our invitation were doing so because they too felt the relevance of this kind of inquiry at that moment in American higher education."

"And what were the answers?" asked M.S.

Bodger retrieved a slim volume from his shelf. It was a collection of the papers, edited with an introduction by Akin.

"In a word, the answers for colleges like ours tended to push faculty development into harness with institutional mission and with curriculum renewal. Student learning remained the unchanging priority."

Bodger read Akin's summing up as follows:

*For all but a handful of liberal arts colleges, it is clear that faculty development needs to be conceived more broadly than traditional scholarship. We need to think more creatively about ways to improve classroom teaching, ways which move beyond the concentration on methods and techniques of the initial faculty development programs, and which somehow allow us to address fundamental philosophical questions about our teaching mission. It is also clear that just as institutions have differing faculty development needs, so faculty in the same institution will have different needs over time and career stages. Finally, one might reasonably conclude that if the first phase of faculty development [in the 1970s] was motivated by a concern for students, and the second phase was impelled by a concern for faculty, the next stage will be driven by a concern for the institution. If the focus of phase one was teaching and phase two was on comprehensive development, the unfinished agenda is curriculum.*

"I can see," said M.S., "how he was pushing toward curriculum enrichment through faculty renewal. And he was putting up a barrier to the simplistic notion of traditional publishing or perishing on the university model."

"I do think this position over the next decade served us well," said Bodger. "My point in digging into this is to emphasize how hard we were trying to balance a growing professional activity with our priority for developing students as individuals—all the while trying to hang onto something of the flavor of the old parochial campus. By bringing in outside voices of authority, I think we reinforced the message on campus."

"And having the head of Glenmede on the program made your new development chief happy, I'm certain."

"It did," said Bodger.

Bodger added that in addition to Smith a venerable professor also received an honorary degree that weekend--G. Sieber Pancoast, '37, professor of political science and former dean of men and long-time baseball coach.

"Pancoast epitomized the 'collegiate way' of parochialism," Bodger said. "Aside from military service in World War II, he spent his entire adult life on the campus, earning his advanced degrees by commuting part-time to the University of Pennsylvania—like a number of others of that generation. While teaching half-time, he spent fourteen years in the Pennsylvania General Assembly toward the last part of his career. Pancoast represented the faculty on this weekend when the college raised up the professoriate as its essential resource."

"The significance," interpreted M.S., "was that you would honor the parochial tradition of the college even as you sailed into a new world of professional priorities. Right?"

"The decision to award an honorary degree usually arises from several motives; but certainly you've pinpointed one of them behind this award. Sieb was one of the original Pariahs who were kicked out of Joe Lynch's kitchen—he was true blue. I thought it would help the traditionalists to know that we honored them. But the symposium was saying that something new henceforth would be going on."

### **New faces rejuvenated a forward-looking faculty**

However, Bodger went on, the internal audience for the faculty development symposium primarily was the young cohort. "We were trying to say to them that this place would live up to their expectations for a supportive scholarly climate. The cultural divide between the Pancoast generation and that of the newcomers would widen substantially because of the institutionalization of professional development started in the Glenmede program. With Akin driving the hiring process, we brought on board a lively bunch of assistant professors and instructors in his first several years. They became the nucleus of the faculty that would enable the college to 'arrive.'"

Bodger then ran through a number of names, none of which was familiar to M.S., since they arrived after her '78 graduation. In history: Hugh Clark. In political science: Nick Berry (he led the charge to change the name in due course to politics, connoting something more classical), Gerard Fitzpatrick. In economics & business administration: Cindy Harris, Bernard Lentz. In languages: Colette Trout; Lynn Thelen; Shirley Eaton. In health & physical education: Tina Wailgum, '77. In chemistry: Victor Tortorelli. In

communication arts: Jay Miller. In biology: James Sidie. In English: Joyce Lionarons; Patti Schroeder, '74. In mathematics: Jeff Neslen. In the library: Charles Jamison.

A second wave of new faculty arrived in the later part of the 1980s, as senior people cycled into retirement, egged on with early retirement incentives. They constituted a significant block of the next generation of faculty who would carry the institution well beyond the early steps toward professionalization—such people as Doug Cameron in Spanish; Carol Dole and Jon Volkmer in English; Dallett Hemphill and Richard King in history; Steve Hood and Paul Stern in politics; Andy Economopolous and Heather O'Neill in economics; Stew Goetz in philosophy; Eileen England and Ken Richardson in psychology; Gina Oboler in anthropology and sociology; David Mill in the library. In 1986 jazz specialist Tony Branker came to the music program, bringing not only a new musical dimension but denting the waspish coloration of our faculty. "Diversity" had a hard time getting legs, in spite of good intentions.

"All are just names to me that have appeared in the college alumni magazine," M.S. said.

"I name names simply to say to you that we had a major influx of young talent during the 1980s. The flesh and soul of the professoriate metamorphosed. The climate newly created by the Glenmede program enabled us to recruit them. We were building the kind of faculty that finally would bring approval for a Phi Beta Kappa chapter—we gave candidates with a PBK key extra points and hired a number of them. The new climate would finally elevate substantial scholarship to a norm. This cultural change was less visible than buildings going up or endowment funds increasing. But it was the essence of institutional reshaping. I'm arguing that the transformation of academic culture that started in the first years of the 1980s provided the foundation for what the college would become academically before I got out."

"I'm not disputing it," said M.S.

"The earlier cohort, like the later, brought sterling credentials from excellent graduate schools. They brought new blood—only a couple were alumni. Mainly they brought a blank tablet that had no writing on it about the bitter disputes of the first half of the 1970s at the college. They took Akin and me for granted as the established administrative authorities and were not measuring us against old scars. Bill, of course, as the person who recruited them, felt a special responsibility to nurture them as young professionals. I think they could perceive this, and in a couple of years we had a new and fresh spirit to work with."

"Berry," said M.S., "was different, I gather, in years of experience, from what I read. Didn't he come in as full professor to replace Gene Miller, our revered icon, at the head of political science?"

"Correct. Nick was in a category of one. He felt a mission to shake up the faculty and the students. He was Akin's 'shock trooper' who stirred controversy about the style of teaching and learning at the college. Until Nick's arrival, few wanted to talk about pedagogy. The Glenmede program tried to sweeten the issue but there were few takers. Nick blasted the faculty for failing to challenge students to think. Then he blasted students for being 'brain-dead.' That got him into hot water, where he seemed to enjoy swimming.

"I don't think Bill Akin and he had a premeditated plan to stir the pot about pedagogy. I think Nick was just a free-spoken guy whose penchant for blunt talk happened to serve

our purpose at a pregnant moment. Bill simply didn't discourage him. A lot of his colleagues got mad at Nick but they could not deny his sense of the priority of connecting with students in an intellectually exciting way. For some years, he enjoyed popularity with many faculty and students on campus. One year we experimented with commencement by giving the students an opportunity to choose the main speaker from among the faculty—Nick was the choice. He was instrumental in starting a noontime open forum on hot issues of the day. It flourished for some years. I think Bill saw in Nick a kind of Huckleberry Finn. He enjoyed tossing dead cats into dark alleys.

"Nick set an example in a couple of substantive ways. He insisted on hiring unusually articulate and challenging young colleagues. Candidates had to 'audition' for a campus audience to show how interesting they could be. This became the standard practice under Akin's leadership. Nick also revamped the departmental curriculum offerings shortly after his arrival.

"Biology, economics & business administration, health & physical education—all sooner or later were doing similar reviews of their offerings. Dust and debris shook out of the course offerings. Departments dove into this partly because of a new sense of competition for students taking minor concentrations. And departments that lacked suitable major enrollments began to think in entrepreneurial terms. How could they win a greater 'market share' of the finite total student count? It took the changing of the generations to make such thinking acceptable among academics. Faculty members got the message that it was okay to make broad recommendations to academic council for curricular changes; its agenda each fall around Thanksgiving grew and grew. Akin was responsible for setting up the climate to make that happen.

"It was in the earlier 1980s, too, that we institutionalized Japanese studies in partnership with our friends at Tohoku Gakuin University in Sendai. Margot and I went over in the summer of 1982 and came back with a signed intent to develop exchanges of faculty and students. Our continuing church relationship was an essential element in this new partnership. TGU was founded with the encouragement of old Reformed missionaries from Pennsylvania in 1886. TGU had preserved its identity as a Reformed Christian institution for a century, through war and peace. Without the sense of community that our shared roots gave them, they would not have been so comfortable about entering a partnership. We returned in 1986 for their centennial celebration. For the rest of my term in office, the TGU connection grew and prospered. It gave us a venue for faculty exchanges and opened a global window for students. The Japanese studies program always seemed to me like our outdoor monumental sculpture initiative—it was a detail that gave texture to our otherwise bland exterior."

M.S. asked if Pennsylvania German Studies were also in that category. "They were around even when I was a student."

Bodger said, "To a degree. The college became serious about teaching courses about our ethnic forebears when chance brought it the ownership of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society at about the time Helfferich was retiring and Pettit was taking office. Tom Glassmoyer of the board engineered our acquisition. He knew the Lancaster attorney who was then working the Society out of bankruptcy. The Society began at Franklin & Marshall College in 1949 under the leadership of Professors Shoemaker and Yoder. They had a grand vision of a center for ethnographic study of the Pennsylvania German culture

of the region—out of which both F&M and our college emerged. A centerpiece of the vision was an annual folk festival at Kutztown. When the operation ran into financial straits, Attorney Eaby stepped in to rescue the operation. F&M no longer wanted an affiliation with it. By that time, I think President Keith Spaulding had set his sights on enhancing F&M's national reputation. This, I guessed, made it timely to downplay the parochial 'Dutchiness' of F&M's Lancaster County origins. Whatever the case, Eaby turned to Glassmoyer in search of a comparable tax-exempt entity to which to attach the Society. With our board's consent, they changed the name of the owner from F&M to our institution with the stroke of a pen. We thus came to own a valuable collection of art and artifacts, a rich bibliographic collection amassed by Shoemaker and Yoder, a piece of valuable real estate along Route 30 east of Lancaster (where Shoemaker had planned to situate his center). We also acquired the assets of the Kutztown Folk Festival, which Eaby was operating on his own, with aid from his family and accounting partner. He not only worked the organization out of bankruptcy but began to show real surpluses from the summer festival. It became a 'cash cow' for us through the 1980s."

Bodger added that American historian William T. Parsons, '47, had in recent years espoused the regional culture as his specialty and was working up courses to offer in the summer.

M.S. said, "I remember his article on the cultural significance of Pennsylvania Dutch outhouses."

"That told you something, perhaps," Bodger smiled. "Our ownership of the Folklife Society gave impetus to his studies and led him to offer an elaborate set of courses, some of which he taught in the summer at Kutztown, others on campus in the evening and summer. The long-term failure of his program is a complicated story I won't relate here. But for the time being, in the mid-1980s, yes, we looked on the program as a 'market differentiator.'"

### **The end of *in loco parentis* meant a fresh start for student life**

M.S. said that the regional ethnic studies program seemed like an anomaly to her and her friends when they were students. Bodger said most of the interest came from adult students in the area. He acknowledged a "disconnect" between some programmatic priorities, such as Pennsylvania German, and the market realities of the residential student body as it developed in the 1980s.

Bodger continued, "A significant number of students still were kids of parents who had not been through a four-year liberal arts curriculum themselves. Family income levels were lower than those at places we were beginning to compare ourselves with—Gettysburg, Muhlenberg, F&M. Studying the esoteric and the arcane was not popular—more and more students wanted to major in what we called economics and business administration. Most of them just called it 'business.'"

"You can see what was happening in the changing number of majors. When I took office in 1976, about 15 percent of students majored in economics and business administration. In 1984-85, about twice that percentage of the whole student body was in that major. Meanwhile, our traditional bread and butter major, biology—which meant for most students 'pre-med'—remained about the same at around 24 percent. English



remained the same at about 5.3 percent. All other majors declined. Health and physical education, for example, dropped from 9.5 percent to 2.9 percent."

M.S. said, "This was morning in America, after all. The Reagan revolution was making it neat to go into business."

"Especially if you were coming out of the cultural corner of many of our students, where 'learning for learning's sake' was less valued. Geoff Dolman's lament about the decline of 'breeding' had captured his sense of the generational change in his special language. He was not fantasizing."

Bodger said that the changing characteristics of the student body gave impetus to the reform of the college's student life program in the 1979-1984 period.

He said, "The first changes in student life staffing and the liberalizing of social rules in 1978 had reflected business realism."

M.S. said, "But didn't you rationalize them on educational grounds?"

"I did. Still, they were necessary adjustments to negative 'customer' attitudes. The new social setting, I hoped, would stop the dropout rate from worsening. And I hoped it would move us beyond the disputatious experiences of the recent Pettit years. Indeed, I think they did that. As we entered the 'making headway' period, we thought more about how to have a genuine educational impact on students in the newly liberalized atmosphere."

M.S. said, "Truth is, the students were having a ball with their new social freedoms."

Bodger replied, "Life at the grunt level got pretty messy. There was some predictable fall-out. With the move away from a parochial position of *in loco parentis*, we had to beef up our minimal security system. A serious sexual assault on a woman student occurred in a dorm at 4:00 am on 8 April 1983. This gave renewed urgency to our planning for campus safety. I appointed an ad hoc study group on security to revise and beef up the system, with Nelson Williams, our no-nonsense business manager, as chair. Talk about professionalization—we put a former state police officer in charge and hired a team that must have numbered half a dozen or more. If anything symbolized the end of the old parochial college, I think the new security system did it. Not too many years before, the whole security system of the campus consisted of the eyes and ears of the students, faculty, and staff.

"Meanwhile, we tried to encourage students to take more responsibility for their personal lives by instituting a formal 'wellness program' that targeted alcohol abuse. Beverly Oehlert, a nurse with advanced counseling skills, energized this, with the help of funds from the United Church of Christ. We tried to empower students by making the judicial board more representative and more responsive to standard judicial process. We created double tracks for the Forum program, one for lectures and one for performing arts. We thought that this enrichment of out-of-class activity would counterbalance the purely social life in the dorms. I even tried to foster an 'alternative weekend' program, which would give students non-alcoholic activities, including visits to the homes of faculty and administrators."

M.S. said, "It sounds like cultural warfare between the forces of post-teenage excess and the forces of liberal learning."

"In a way it was," he said. "We hardly ever took our eye off the mission of the college, even when it seemed we were just trying to fight back against sheer grossness."

We were determined to develop 'independent and responsible individuals'—the ancient and honorable aim—in a way that accommodated the social changes in America without abandoning some of the texture of our tradition. We were trying to mesh the agenda for social life with the agenda for academic life—narrow the gap between beer and books."

"And beer resisted the rapprochement," said M.S.

"It did," Bodger confessed. "Kids drank too much. Damages in dorms distressed us. The guys in maintenance would patch a wall one day and find it punched out again the next. The student life staff inventoried beer keg use in 1984-85. Students went through an estimated 615 half-kegs that year. That was an average of almost a quarter keg per student, if the statistic was accurate."

"We drank a lot in the preceding decade," M.S. said, in defense of students. "But nobody in the administration wanted to count how much."

"Exactly," said Bodger. "The students' game now was our game, whether we liked it or not. In loco parentis died, but we bought into the lives of students in a new way, which had unique perils. And many faculty didn't like it. But their suggested alternatives, when they had any, tended toward the prescriptiveness that we could not return to. We had to continue to try to change student behavior from within themselves."

"The Protestant tradition in extenso," M.S. said.

"Not a bad reference," Bodger said. "We talked about 'values' instead of religion but the intent was the same—to lift up the quality of student life. When the faculty revised the curriculum in 1978-9, it set a lofty new goal. The college was charged to give students 'knowledge of the diverse cultures and value systems of our society and the contemporary world, and the development of a capacity for making independent and responsible value judgments.' It was a great expectation—but the curriculum committee lost steam before it could recommend how to implement it. Instead, it recommended the formation of a new committee to do further study."

M.S. commented, "Academia's catch-all solution, or cop-out, to all problems."

"In this instance it was the right thing to do and the outcome was productive. We created the ad hoc 'committee on values' in 1980, after Bill Akin took office as new academic dean. Chairing it was one of his first major undertakings. I appointed Dick BreMiller of math, Gayle Byerly of English, Jim Craft of the administration and political science, and Jane Shinehouse, '52, of biology. The faculty elected Tom Gallagher of sociology and anthropology and Bill Williamson of philosophy and religion. Later Evan Snyder, '44, of physics and Dave Rebuck, new associate dean in student life, joined the committee. Two students also served.

"On 15 April 1980, the committee members held a faculty colloquium to talk about student values. They took from their colleagues some clear guidelines on what to recommend. I was immensely relieved when after the colloquium the committee decided that the usual academic remedy to a problem would **not** suffice for this one: that is, they decided that a formal course would not be the most appropriate means to the desired goal. The corollary conclusion was that the arena for developing a greater capacity for making independent and responsible value judgments in students lay **outside** the classroom.

"For two weeks in June 1980, a sub-committee attended the Lilly Endowment's Workshop on the Liberal Arts at Colorado College. Akin, Byerly, Snyder, and Williamson comprised the team. That retreat enabled Akin and the others to study the literature on

student development and crystallize it into thinking that would apply to our particular circumstances."

M.S. said, "I take it their report was not the typical product that gets buried in a file."

Bodger said, "Right. Their report went to the faculty in the fall of 1980 and received approval for implementation in the 1981-82 academic year. It became the template for a major revamping of the students' first-year experience and for further professionalizing the student life staff. The proposed plan built methodically on our seat-of-the-pants first steps in student life reform in 1978. I attribute its professional tone to Akin, who combined a teacher's open spirit with a seasoned administrator's cautious hand."

Bodger sketched in the main features of the template. It started by assuming that a concern for values pervaded the environment of the college and inspired its mission. The committee intended that its conclusions touch and change the entire college. The report said the following:

*The college environment must present each student with ample opportunities to explore personal values, must encourage students to exercise responsibility in personal decision making, and must foster values consonant with the mission of the college. Such an environment is one in which the faculty act as mentors and models to support and sustain appropriate values, and to demonstrate their care for students as persons.*

The committee, Bodger explained, assumed that the most formative moment in the students' campus career happened during their first year, and more narrowly during their first semester. This assumption led to recommendations for basic changes in freshman advising, the role of freshman advisors, and their selection, training, and assignments. The old system of advising focused mostly on the course selection students would make in a major. They did this upon admission to the college, before they even arrived for classes in the fall. The new system made the faculty advisor a "mentor/model" who would help freshmen develop ethical standards and clarify career directions while continuing to give academic advice. This called for a far closer working relationship than the one in place and a formal training program for freshman advising. By allowing students to defer the choice of a major until the sophomore year, the new system set up the conditions for informed discussion about majors and careers with their advisors. The committee recommended creating a coordinator of freshman advising, who would select and train about thirty-five colleagues for the freshman advising duty. Each would have only a dozen or so advisees. The committee also recommended a "freshman values symposium." It would focus on ethically relevant texts for (non-credit) discussion at the outset of college.

M.S. said, "It sounds like a big step beyond the old departmental advising I was familiar with—strong on good feeling, short on substance and method."

Bodger said, "The committee's report applauded the major revision of freshman orientation, which we undertook in 1979 and 1980. The members liked the way that revised program projected the care and concern of the college toward incoming students."

"Am I hearing a marketing message here?" asked M.S.

Bodger simply smiled in answer and went on, "Departments of course remained in charge of advising students after they declared their major. The freshman program helped heighten everyone's perception of the importance of advising all the way through the four years. The committee urged major advisors to encourage upper-class students to take electives that dealt with diverse cultures, fine arts, and interdisciplinary topics. Such courses had to compete for attention with courses that students could now take in the new minor concentrations, many of which pointed toward practical career preparation. So, we did little to lessen tensions over academic priorities."

"But you expanded the student vision of what was possible."

Bodger said, "Well put—I hope so. Following the values committee advice, we placed students on more faculty committees, particularly academic council. That helped season the institutional discussion of academic issues."

M.S. said, "I can see academic enrichment was happening in several directions at once, in the interest of values. However, I would think a committee on student values would say something about dormitory life, fraternities and sororities, personal counseling, things like that."

Bodger replied, "It did. Indeed, the committee urged greater self-government in dorms to promote a renewed sense of community and responsibility. At the same time, we were creating a resident assistant program that would pay students to take major responsibility for administering dorm life under the guidance of student life deans. The resident assistant program blossomed into a powerful educational experience in its own right for those selected."

"So, the ghosts of house mothers past finally went to their rest," said M.S.

"They represented a generation that was indeed gone."

M.S. continued, "But the nub of social life was the Greek organizations—did the committee have the backbone to take them on?"

"Many faculty members would have preferred to see the college do away with Greek frats and sororities," Bodger continued. "Their traditions seemed to contradict college values as we expressed them in the mission statement."

"They were saying that when I was a student," M.S. said. "Lotsaluck."

"The committee made a noble statement about Greek reform," Bodger said.

M.S. laughed, "To no great effect, I bet."

Bodger answered, "Well, at least to a little effect. All the carping about Greek life done by faculty over the years often struck me as myopic. Faculty had the naïve idea that intellectual values could and should predominate over the affective lives of a cohort of libidinous post-teenagers, residing cheek to jowl on a tight little campus. You know the depth of currents flowing at that point. Most faculty members as undergraduates already were heavily intellectual and valued Greek social experiences less than the majority of their peers—some were exceptions, of course. So, I felt that the typical faculty member entered the professoriate with a personal bias against fraternities and sororities. This intensified when they observed the ritual extremes stimulated by the intense desire of their otherwise-sane students to 'bond' with friends."

M.S. said, "What you say of your faculty is true of every faculty I know of."

Bodger said, "The values committee huffed and puffed about the conflict between some Greek activities and the values of the college. Mainly, this helped my administration

to put Greek behavior officially on our agenda. We wanted the students to know it was there so that we could talk to them about limits and responsibilities. Houghton Kane became dean of student life in July 1981. He had the job of implementing much of the program that came out of the values committee report. He kept up a good-willed contest with Greek leaders for the rest of our term together. Greeks never ceased crossing the line of acceptable behavior. It was an unending tug of war. Kane's main goal was to squeeze some educational juice out of the eternal conflict itself. This often seemed to many like a great rationalization for tolerating outrageous misbehavior; but Houghton persevered and I along with him."

Bodger found a particular issue of the student paper in a pile and showed M.S. his weekly column from 2 March 1984. "Frats move in desirable direction," ran the heading.

"You weren't being truthful," said M.S. with a smirk.

"I wanted it to be true," replied Bodger, "even if it wasn't, quite. If I said it, I thought that might encourage the Greeks to behave. They had been declaring their good intentions in official discussions with Kane. These discussions were by now a mandatory step in pledging preparations—Kane's effort to educate leaders. I thought it right to acknowledge at least that they were talking to us."

M.S. skimmed the article. She said, "As I interpret this, frat pledging was about to begin and you were warning the rascals they had better behave as promised or you would again bring down the wrath of the institution on them. I heard that you just about closed down ZX when they mooned the Todd girls one night from the front lawn of your home on campus."

"That," Bodger said, "regrettably involved my presidential persona directly. I foolishly came out of the house and personally confronted those guys in the act. It was an exception, which the students precipitated by their ignorance of my place and position on the campus. For the most part, Kane maintained the direct contacts with Greeks."

Pointing to the page, M.S. said, "You cited Amherst and Colby as examples of colleges where Greeks were banned. Your threat was transparent."

"When communicating with Greeks, Kane discovered that a shout was equal to a whisper, and he taught me that I should shout—judiciously. It wasn't easy to get their attention. I was not about to take on a host of alums by seriously talking about abolition. But it didn't hurt for the students to fear that I might. Kane was a master, I thought, at structuring situations where they had to listen. My newspaper piece was just a small component in a complex strategic effort to persuade."

M.S. read from the article:

*Pledging activities, in their present, concentrated form, are simply not essential, from my standpoint. Short of my own preference, I recognize that students enjoy the game of pledging. It is surely a part of campus life. As long as the college position against dangerous or disruptive activities is clear and enforced, and as long as communication with fraternity leaders remains open and positive, I believe we are moving in a desirable direction, toward the enhancement of independence and responsibility—central goals at the college.*

Bodger said, "'Independence and responsibility' by then had become the secular piety of the institution. In any event, the values committee endorsed our intrusion into Greek life and left it more or less at that. One of the unwritten functions of student organizations, Greek and otherwise, was that they gave a student a group of friends to whom to turn when troubled about things. Traditionally, the college had avoided specialized counseling services; it had made the community as a whole, students and faculty, the responsible agent for counseling. As the lives of students became more complex in the aftermath of the 1960s social revolution, this community approach simply did not seem to serve adequately anymore. The values committee finally broke the institutional taboo, perpetuated under Helfferich and Pettit, against professional counseling for personal adjustment. It recommended that a service be created to help faculty advisors meet their now-heightened obligation to be mentors to students in a more personal and invasive way. It extended the notion of counseling to include career counseling and recommended new staff for that purpose as well. In due course, Kane hired Bev Oehlert for counseling and Carla Rinde for career counseling. He also brought aboard a student life professional to oversee student activities."

M.S. observed, "These were additional moves in the direction of professionalization, I take it—in tune with professionalization of the faculty itself."

"Yes," said Bodger. "Of course, much of what the values committee recommended was already in the air. In 1979-80, we had created a campus life committee to monitor the entire out-of-class dimension of college life. A student chaired the committee."

When Bodger said his name, M.S. replied, "I knew him when he was a freshman. He would push the boundary without knowing it, but had a winning way with upper-class students."

"By 24 March 1980, after months of discussion about the policies of the college," continued Bodger, "the campus life committee came in with a big set of recommendations. There had probably never been anything like them before. They demonstrated that, in the freer climate of the new administration, the faculty and the students on the committee had negotiated a mutual support treaty. The menu of expectations included enrichment of social activities across the board, control of Greek hazing, provision of alternative housing such as quiet dorms and co-ed dorms, outreach to day students, improvement of college public relations with help from student journalists, better use of alumni for career counseling, introduction of personal adjustment counseling, and greater socialization among students, faculty, and administrators.

"The faculty signed onto these student-generated initiatives. In return, the students supported a key recommendation for adding an elected voting member of the faculty to the board of directors of the college. Here I saw evidence that the spirit of the 'committee of five' still lived. That was the group that carried faculty concerns to the board in 1976, during Pettit's last year."

M.S. said, "It probably also gave evidence to you that the new open style of campus management would make your life complicated. Surely you couldn't agree to that recommendation."

Bodger said, "The board had no wish to open its membership to faculty. On that there would be no negotiation, I was certain. I therefore had to do some talking with the students on the committee. By that time, faculty members were sitting on several board

committees, though not on the full board as such. I was regularly inviting a member to board meetings as a guest. I had initiated board-faculty dialogues after board meetings and had been inviting all board members to attend the annual faculty dinner at the start of the college year.

"So, there was a case to be made that the communication lines between faculty and board had improved dramatically since the tense last year of Pettit's administration, when they were drawn up against each other. Moreover, there was a legalistic argument that would deny faculty membership on the board. It would be a conflict of interest for the faculty member. He or she would be acting as employer in a board capacity and as employee in a faculty capacity. In the good will surrounding these years, faculty did not push further after I told the committee that the board would likely oppose the recommendation. The laundry list of improvements to be made in social life were the main interest of the students, and for the most part we took them seriously as the values committee was swinging into action. "

M.S. stood and looked out the window and said, "See if I understand. When I graduated in May 1977, the college was still set up to operate in loco parentis. However, the mores of students and faculty made its posture no longer effective. The laws supporting student privacy and equal treatment of men and women made it officially impossible to continue in the old way. And the marketplace was telling you to change to a more student-friendly style on pain of losing your market share. The support among students and alumni for your election to office the year before gave strong evidence that our college community was ready to make a new beginning in the new era. You used committees such as the campus life committee and the values committee to do the grunt work of refocusing the agenda and winning over those who remained unconvinced of the need for some fundamental social changes. It all kind of worked, though the process was complicated and messy. And as you worked through the 1979-1984 period, you completed the reshaping of student life management, which began with the big policy changes in spring 1978. Life in the dorms became messier and sometimes embarrassing, but students were freer to develop themselves. And the college remained as intentional as ever in seeking to help them develop core values of independence and responsibility. Now, however, the college did this within the constraints of new law and new social custom."

Bodger mocked an applause. "You've got it. It might have seemed revolutionary to the old guard as you recount it. But from my seat I thought I saw a remarkable continuity of change within the institution. I often felt in those years that we were simply adjusting the external and formal features of the college to conform to what already had changed in the spirit of the place."

M.S. said, "But somebody had to craft those features so that appearance and reality did not diverge further, and you were the artisan they turned to."

"Fair enough," Bodger said. He made as if to hammer a nail into the stack of books at his side table. "But I have to credit Houghton Kane as the artisan on the ground who kept pushing appearance and reality toward one another. His training in law helped give him a professional distance from the messiness of student life. As we expanded the staff, he sought out young professionals coming out of graduate schools of student personnel administration imbued with the new research in developmental psychology. The student

life program under Kane sought to empower students to solve social and ethical dilemmas from within their own personal and collective resources. Staff members were to be facilitators. Our student life program before long lost its last semblance of parochialism and came to resemble those at the more selective liberal arts colleges. The appointment of Kane led to organizational consolidation of functions under his supervision; it followed rather closely the recommendations coming out of the values committee. Career Planning and Placement, Financial Aid, and Health Services combined with Dean of Students, with its cadre of professional assistants and student resident assistants, to make up the Office of Student Life. Those functions up to that point had reported directly to my office."

M.S. scratched her chin. "You depended on Kane more than people knew."

"Thanks," said Bodger. "That's what I was attempting to say."

### The college had to try new recruiting strategies

M.S. would be flying back to work early next morning. She thanked Bodger for new insight into the way he had sought to intertwine academic and student life objectives. From the outside, as an alum, she had previously believed that some of the organizational steps he had taken were disjointed. "The parity you sought to give to social life now makes more sense to me—but you never really pulled it off completely, right?"

Bodger answered, "You're too insightful. It was an uneasy balance, never without tension. Later, when I made the academic dean a vice president and did not do the same for the dean of student life, the reality was visible to everyone who wanted to think about it—although Kane continued to report directly to me. In addition, the academic program, as it gained strength, was like a currency that consumed all else."

M.S. said, "Wherever I go as a president, circumstances won't be quite the same as here or at my present college. To some extent, your experience will not inform that situation. But my thinking about it will season it."

"Let's wait and see where you go," Bodger said. He thought he had ended their dialogue, but M.S.'s curiosity about his experience remained partly unsatisfied.

Standing at the door, M.S. said, "You've touched on new marketing initiatives several times in different contexts. But we didn't look frontally at the central marketing issue, student recruitment. With the downturn in teenagers happening rapidly in the early 1980s, I know you had to retool staff, engage alumni, remake the printed image of the college, use students and faculty as never before, and all the rest. Midwestern liberal arts colleges were hit before their east coast counterparts by the demographic disaster. We had to do all that retooling before you in the east got around to it. I'd be interested to know what you were doing, if only for comparison."

Bodger said, "I think you know the basic story."

M.S. said, "Now we've totally run out of time. Email me when I get back."

Bodger said, "I'll do it."

Watching his former student climb into her rented Taurus, Bodger knew she would return to see him seldom. The market offered rich opportunity to women aspiring to lead as she aspired. I'll go to her inauguration, he promised himself, certain she would have one soon. She tooted and disappeared down the avenue.



Email from: Bodger  
 To: M.S. Aumen  
 Subject: Recruiting/enrollment  
 Sent: 3 January

In brief, as far as recruiting was concerned from 1979 to 1984, I continued to change socks while running. Changed staff leadership. Did a lot of micro-managing. Hired consultants. Hired new people. Pulled various departments together to help the common cause. Changed promotional materials. Used the football program to add bodies. And so on. Bottom line: we dwelt on tactics in the Admissions Office, not enough on the large strategic fit between educational product and position in student marketplace. Our thinking about marketing was crawling but at least we knew we had to be crawling. Always seemed as if the next recruiting cycle was in our faces before we could step back, get our breath, and do serious market planning that would effect real change. Doubt if you need to know more. Keeping your head low?

To this brief message, M.S. replied that she wanted to know more, especially about the difference between tactics and strategies. He said in an email reply that he would poke around in his files a bit and be in touch by snail mail.

*Dear M.S.,*

When Geoffrey Dolman bowed out of the admissions leadership in 1979, it went without saying that the baton would pass to his long-time partner H. Lloyd Jones. Lloyd was a little more receptive than Geoff had been to the invasive steps I was still taking to gain managerial control. He also seemed to me to have a more realistic grasp of what the market held in store for us. The dire reports of the baby bust predicted for the next fifteen years were stark. It took all Lloyd's resolve to alter the attitudes and habits he had developed as a recruiter during the long baby boom years. But he did his best to adjust. He resolved to change with changing times. He had the trusted help of protégé Ken Schaefer, '70. Ken's experience was limited to the college, but, young and eager to get ahead, he responded enthusiastically to greater responsibilities under Jones.

Together, Lloyd and Ken worked up a plan with monthly goals for applications. They targeted higher numbers from outside our traditional markets of eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. They went along with a plan, which I pushed, to increase non-resident full-time students from high schools in our immediate area. They hired additional help. While all this added up to little more than tinkering with the long-established admissions system, Lloyd's efforts produced satisfactory freshman numbers, though he could do little to increase the academic quality of the new classes or to buck the trend of interest toward business administration.

After two years at the helm of the admissions office, Lloyd Jones assessed the very steep declines still to come in the teenage market. He decided to step out in 1981 while he was still ahead and give Ken the chance to blossom as the leader of admissions. He returned to the English Department to do full-time teaching until his retirement some years later. In those last years of his professional life, Lloyd secured his unique place in the

English Department, respected by younger colleagues for his prodigious grasp of material, particularly the plots of Victorian triple-deckers, and by students for his gruff but never-flagging empathy.

The conversion from a genteel tradition of student recruitment in a boomer market to an outright marketing model in a declining market by this time was well along in many selective liberal arts colleges. We entered the new period of declining numbers of teenagers with the handicap of our strength. That is, we traditionally had recruited a solid freshman class from the narrow geographical base surrounding Philadelphia. From a limited pool of fewer than 1,000 applicants, we had managed to remain selective, with a remarkably high yield of those accepted. The administrative cost was low, and promotion was largely by word of mouth. Our strengths—and weaknesses—were fairly well-kept secrets. Other such colleges in the eastern US with similar academic quality had a broader geographic base for recruitment. They enjoyed better name recognition. And they spent a lot more money on their recruiting programs.

Ken led the admissions office from June 1981 to March 1984. The competition for top high school students intensified in those years as the number of teenagers in the college's marketing area continued to plummet. Ken worked hard to move beyond his training during the boom years, when Lloyd Jones and Geoff Dolman taught him the job of "weeding out" applicants. He adopted the new vocabulary of "enrollment management" and tried to accommodate his department to the close scrutiny that I insisted upon. Through the Campus Planning Group, we continued to set specific targets for freshman class size and quality and for retention of upperclass students. Ken did all he could to live up to expectations.

When I look back at the enrollment numbers for those years, I fail to see in them the sense of anxiety that surrounded the recruiting process from year to year. My senior staff colleagues shared my nagging fears about our narrow geographic market, our lackluster promotional style, our seeming lack of currency in the competition for the better students.

My middle-of-the-road approach as president did not dispel that feeling. I was backing Ken, a home-grown operative whose energy and stability were counterbalanced by his experience in the "old school" and a tendency to be cautious about marketing innovation. I was unwilling to expand the budget beyond a certain limit to retool the promotional material. I talked a lot about admissions with my fellow presidents around the area, and it was comforting to know that recruiting troubled all of them. Still, I did not take seriously enough at first the transition of higher education to an out-and-out marketing model. In the total array of responsibilities that made up the presidency, I was pushed to make the college a marketing machine but then pulled to immunize it against commercial taint, to uphold the ancient and honorable tradition of disinterested learning. The ghosts of predecessors and mentors in that tradition such as President McClure and Dr. Yost had a place in my mind and I would not forget them. The result was that I would go so far and no farther in marketing until circumstances pushed me.

The numbers suggest that recruiting and total enrollment were good from 1979-80 through 1982-83, despite all the uncertainties:

YEAR	FRESHMEN	TOTAL ENROLLMENT
1979-80	310	1073
1980-81	316	1139
1981-82	307	1149
1982-83	291	1168

The increase in the total enrollment showed that our early decision, when I first took over, to do everything possible to improve the retention rate was beginning to pay off. The retention rate for the class of '82 was 62 percent and for the class of '83 it was 63 percent. The rate had been down in the high fifties in 1976. We set a target of 65 percent for the class of '85. The record would show that we achieved it and went on above 70 percent before I got out in 1994.

The freshman numbers showed that, despite our marketing drawbacks, the admissions office was delivering on its promise to meet specific targets. Moreover, quality as reflected in SAT scores and class rank was not eroding as it was at many less competitive colleges in the Delaware Valley and around Pennsylvania.

The numbers, however, masked weaknesses in our situation. The college had not yet switched to a fixed date for admission. Under its old "rolling" admission policy, we told students that we would accept them as soon as their credentials showed their admissibility. Colleges such as Muhlenberg and Gettysburg, with whom we heavily competed, by this time had moved to a fixed date in spring for acceptances. This was the practice at the most competitive national liberal arts colleges. Our practice tagged us as a less competitive place. Although we sought to wrap up a class by the traditional May 1 deadline, we never had our complete class; we had to continue accepting applications and admitting students through the summer, up to the start of classes in the fall. We were glad to augment the May count with those later recruits. But those who came in during the summer were more likely to develop social or academic problems. They were thus likely to make our struggle to improve total retention more difficult.

Furthermore, the competitive climate made families increasingly savvy about financial aid. We found ourselves giving more aid to more students so that we would assure their acceptance of our admission. Remember that the Reagan administration was cutting back on federal grants and pushing students into federal loans. We put in an installment plan to help families meet the higher costs. By 1983, the record shows 84 percent of all our students receiving financial assistance, whatever the source of funds, in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, or self-help employment. Nearly everyone!

In the 1982-83 recruiting year, we made a decision to begin targeting our aid money more aggressively on students with superior academic quality. As we studied our data, we saw that we were granting more aid money to students with middling academic ability and less to those with higher ability. Understandably, the data showed also that we finally enrolled a higher percentage of the middling sort than the higher sort. We decided that, if federal policy and market forces were conspiring to push our financial aid budget ever higher, we at least should begin to deploy it to our competitive advantage. So, we began to abandon the old doctrine that emerged in the late 1960s under the pressure of federal policy. That old doctrine said that we should make awards strictly to meet the financial need of all admitted and eligible students, regardless of their academic rank or other attributes. "Need only" was the old mantra.

We created several new academic scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,500, which was full tuition in 1983. Steinbright Scholarships came into being, supported by the Steinbright family and their Arcadia Foundation, to denote full rides. We also created Board of Directors Scholarships, Community Scholarships, and Bomberger Scholarships. Merit rather than financial need determined the winners of these discounts dressed up in the name of scholarships.

We made these moves in the anxious climate I've suggested above. While they were tactical moves made without a full understanding of long-term impact, they represented a fundamental turn in the direction of a marketing strategy. Years later, this turn would define and dominate the way the college presented itself to prospective students.

Such improvisations did not add up to a rational recruiting strategy in 1983, however. In May 1983, only about 250 new students had accepted our offer of admission. The minimum target was about 300; and we had missed that target the year before by a small amount. I knew that we would add incrementally to the 250 over the spring and summer. (The official final count by fall was 271.) But I could not ignore the danger signal. We really were as vulnerable as the next college down the road to the shrinking teenage market and the resulting competition. If we could not routinely recruit the 300 freshmen that we needed to make the budget work on our accustomed scale of operation, I would have to do something more drastic than I had done so far to improve recruiting.

And I had no doubt that this had to be my personal handiwork. There was no one on the senior staff to whom I could lateral the ball and feel comfortable about getting results. I alerted the board to the seriousness of the problem. I brought in an experienced recruiter as a consultant to examine our marketing process—Thomas Huddleston, Jr., associate provost for student affairs at Bradley University. I contracted with a new public relations vendor to remake our recruiting image and materials—Tom Adams Associates of Devon PA. I supported Ken's call for additional staff strength. I empowered a "Recruiting Coordinating Group" to steer inter-departmental activities that supported recruiting. It included staffers from the offices of admissions, alumni, financial aid, college communications, athletics, and president.

I delivered my statement to the board at its spring meeting on a sober note:

*I am viewing the recruiting results this year as critical. I expect to conduct a thorough analysis of recruitment results, the recruiting program and the personnel involved. I will seek help in this analysis as appropriate. During the summer, I expect that a revitalized recruiting and admission plan, based on the results of our analysis, will be developed and operating in the fall. I ask the Board to join me in giving the highest priority to this project.*

*Meanwhile, I intend to work with the Campus Planning Group to develop alternative institutional strategies for staffing, programs and budget control that would enable us to accommodate a somewhat lower enrollment if we should find that our current objectives for the number of students must be altered.*

I never made such sweeping forecasts to the board without being certain that I could show later that I had followed through. That was true in this case too, except that I had

no way of knowing in spring 1983 whether my actions would bring satisfactory results in the final count of the freshman class entering in the fall of 1984. Many changes took place. They added up to a giant step in the direction of the new order of "enrollment management" through systematic marketing practices. The administrators signed onto a comprehensive Recruiting Plan (29 July 1983) that came from my office to guide the work and act as a check on actions taken.

Advice from the outside consultant and the advertising-public relations firm laid the groundwork for changes in policy and practice.

Tom Huddleston came to my attention as one of a growing band of successful admissions officers who were spreading the gospel across the nation's campuses about "enrollment management." He came to campus in the summer of 1983 for a talk with me; then in January 1984 I exposed him to Ken and other admissions staffers. He knew that I needed him both for his knowledge and for the catalytic effect on the staff that his mere presence would bring. Bodger must mean business! His advice was basic but important as we tried to learn the ropes. Do methodical research on the important market factors that motivate your students to apply. Devise your strategy to connect prospect and college over the bridge grounded in those market factors. Do the tactically alert things to show applicants that you have the answer to the things they want.

Huddleston helped us see that the admissions office had to embellish its traditional role of "gatekeeper," which led it to allow only the worthy to enter and partake. Without abandoning the gatekeeper role, it now had to become wiser in the ways of persuading those who might be worthy to look and ultimately to enroll. Like so much in management, we needed to acquire a new vocabulary and new body language. Huddleston's visits, though brief, were important to me in setting forth that vocabulary and suggesting new body language. (Years later, he moved from the midwest to our area in a corporate job. Then he went back to academia as admissions head at one of Philadelphia's Catholic universities.)

The publications and materials sent to prospective students underwent a quick overhaul at the hands of Tom Adams. The college mailed them to a larger cohort of prospects, obtained from the College Search service in Princeton, NJ. They all reflected a new promotional theme aimed at accenting the college's important market factors-- "College With A Difference." The theme picked up on the rising vocational turn being taken even by traditional liberal arts colleges in the frenzied attempt to recruit bodies. By remaining steadfastly committed to requirements in liberal education and resisting the proliferation of courses and the introduction of vocational programs, the college would be different by remaining the same!

I explained the theme in one of my regular columns in the student newspaper as follows:

*An amazingly small percentage--about 15 percent, as I recall--attend strictly undergraduate, independent liberal arts colleges such as ours. In categorical terms, then, our college is atypical....Most students with high ability--such as those who come here--will do one of two things: (1) they will go into a professional or graduate school after receiving their bachelor's degree; (2) or they will enter a career path that will take them into several different kinds of work and up to increasing levels of responsibility.*

*Both groups of students are best served by a solid grounding in a basic and rigorous undergraduate program of general education with a strong major in one of the liberal disciplines. Our college differs in that it focuses almost all of its institutional energy upon such a program and avoids more narrowly defined undergraduate objectives and graduate programs.*

*We remain relatively small and keep the faculty/student ratio low in order to reach students personally and effectively. Because we are strictly undergraduate, experienced faculty members, by and large, teach nearly all courses. The teaching assistants encountered by undergraduates at large universities—even the very prestigious ones—are not found here....*

*We try to educate students to think of themselves as responsible persons who must deal with moral dilemmas throughout life—both private and public. We try to emphasize that ethical responses to those dilemmas can be rationally based and compassionately pursued. Many of the problems in dormitory living provide grist for this mill. And extra-curricular activities give students the chance to develop leadership skills and cope with real operational problems. Life in the "real world," one may say, is life at the college writ large.... Mirroring this emphasis is the recent commemoration of our namesake and our active partnership with a religious denomination concerned about human values, justice and peace.*

*Besides, a college with a tree in the end zone of the football field and a namesake called Zack cannot be just any old college.*

The findings from some surveys of students and parents supported the deliberate emphasis on requirements and liberal education. The informed judgment of the admissions staff and the traditional self-image of the faculty reinforced it. It involved no significant shifts in the way the college was going about its work. It had the effect of validating the mission in liberal education. Recent years had seen some faculty study groups flirt with vocationally oriented programs, such as gerontology and nursing anesthesiology. The "College With A Difference" theme buttressed the existing wall against such changes. (Recreation in the Health and Physical Education Department had a brief life in the mid-1980s but did not develop into the major program originally envisioned. Instead, a biology-based program in physical therapy emerged. It maintained a root in the basic science disciplines of liberal education.) While the "College With A Difference" theme lasted only a short time, it probably helped move the college along toward a marketing position that later would put it head to head with better-recognized national liberal arts colleges.

Accepting the risks of micro-managing, I worked closely with the staff in the admissions office to reorganize the way it worked in the field and in the office to attract the interest and applications of high school students. We invited high school guidance counselors from targeted high schools in the region to spend a day on campus. We gave them an up-to-date understanding of the college's strengths and tried to influence them to acquaint their students with the college. The admissions office organized spring

receptions for students considering the college. In the fall, we invited students who inquired about admission to visit campus for a night to get better acquainted--"Red and Gold days." The first took place in October and November 1983. They had a big impact on the yield and continue to be a centerpiece of recruiting to the present time. Through the Recruiting Coordinating Group, the admissions office reached out to the campus community and the alumni for ancillary support of its efforts.

The effect of all the new activity on the size and quality of the class entering in fall 1984 was positive. New students totaled 340. The quality of the incoming class held steady and in some categories improved over the previous year. In terms of SAT scores, improvement in the 500-599 range--then the heart of the Ursinus market--appeared for both verbal and math aptitudes. The merit scholarship program had almost immediate effects.

But the intensity of the recruiting agenda persuaded Ken Schaefer earlier in the year to seek a new direction within the college administration. His lengthening institutional knowledge made him a valuable addition to the new development team that by then I was assembling under the leadership of a new vice president, John Van Ness. Ken transferred to the Van Ness team in March 1984 to head up annual giving. Into the breach jumped a young and enthusiastic recruiter who had shown exceptional grasp of the Huddleston model, Lorraine Zimmer. Under Lorraine, recruiting marched foursquare into the marketing world even as Van Ness mobilized our institutional development forces for an unprecedented entry into fund-raising. But that's another story.

Sincerely, *Bodger*

M.S. did not answer Bodger's letter for several weeks. One evening she called on the phone to say that her prospecting plans were moving far faster than she ever thought they would. She was in conversation with a national headhunter about an opening at a small private college in the south.

"Count on me to be on the lookout for them from the very start," she said.

"For what?"

"The 'important market factors,' of course."

That was his last conversation with her before he would board a plane many months later heading south. He would be going to her inauguration.

### **The board came to life with new leadership**

In the meantime, Bodger reflected on the gap he had left in his conversations with M.S. "The buildup of the board leadership was the indispensable piece in 'making headway' and I never talked about it with her." He would not burden her with more of a tale already too long. But for his own satisfaction he wrote a few paragraphs. Filing the short piece, he said to himself, "This provides a last narrative touch, though it should have been the first—strengthening the board was the first order of business." This is what he wrote:

## REVITALIZING THE BOARD

Paul Guest resigned from the board in May 1978 to protest its approval of my changes in student life policies. Since Guest was in line to become president of the board after Ted Schwalm, his departure compelled us to consider new options. The main consideration was to start a new chapter in the life of the board.

Schwalm had become chair during Helfferich's administration and had held the position throughout the Pettit years. I had prevailed on him to remain as a holding action in my first two years. This prevented Guest from quickly stepping in before I could make a move on student life changes, which I feared he would oppose. After Paul resigned, Schwalm knew that he had served my purposes to a kind of completion and insisted on retiring. By then, he wanted to spend time writing a memoir about his active and productive career as businessman, churchman, family man, and civic leader.

In my years as assistant to Helfferich and Pettit, I had gained some insight into the evolution of our board. You cannot understand it without referring to something that happened in 1946 and its effect on D. L. Helfferich. In that post-war moment, as I understand it at a distant remove, opposition arose among some alumni to the leadership of President McClure and his vice president, Helfferich. The alumni association initiated an inquiry into alleged shortcomings. The board apparently agreed to receive the findings. Helfferich expended a good deal of energy behind the scenes to assure that the resulting report found no substantial fault.

Although the crisis passed and McClure went on to serve until 1958, with Helfferich succeeding him, it left a permanent scar on Helfferich's mind. He must have vowed to himself to do everything possible henceforth to protect the administration from such threats. One strategy for doing so was to keep close to the vest the vital statistics about the operation. And when he moved from vice president to president in 1958, he sought to create an imperial aura around the office and its functions. He once told me it was somewhat like nurturing a cult of personality. Its purpose was to create a shield around the administration, to keep potential critics at bay. Helfferich's histrionic bent enabled him to play such a grand role. He combined it, however, with his innate sense of humor and talent for surprise, both of which he employed to keep faculty, alumni, and other would-be challengers to his authority off guard.

Consistent with this strategy, Helfferich worked to keep the board of directors (as well as the alumni association) passive and compliant to his initiatives. No one came onto the board without his careful scrutiny and affirmation. He managed the board agenda with an iron hand. He kept its work compartmentalized by committee so that a critical mass of opinion on the operation as a whole would not crystallize. Two criteria for membership predominated. A director should agree with Helfferich's conservative attitudes toward education and be prepared to support his policies. And a director should be prepared to give financial support. Not everyone, of course, towed his line to a T. Because of his allegiance to the Reformed church constituency of the college, he invited some church representatives to serve who proved at times to be more loyal to their convictions than to Helfferich's policies. Additionally, a number of board members who were alumni felt an ownership of the college independent of their service to Helfferich. The non-alumni



businessmen on the board were usually his most supportive members. In all, however, the board did his bidding.

Having learned from Helfferich, Pettit sustained a reactive and supportive board when he took over in 1970. Even when the issue of board-faculty-administration relations heated up toward the end of his administration, the board steadfastly stuck by him. During his six-year administration, Pettit recruited twelve new people, a good number of whom would prove to be valuable in my administration. Among them were John Shetler from the church; William Robbins, '29, who would leave a generous estate to the college on his eventual death; Marilyn Steinbright, whose personal gifts and those of her Arcadia Foundation had a greater impact on the college in the next quarter of a century than any other single source of financial support; L. G. Lee Thomas, a friend of the Helfferich's, who tightened our ties to the Main Line and to Lee's circle of corporate influence; and John Ware, head of the American Water Works and former Pennsylvania state Senator and US Congressman. Ware was a classmate of Pettit's at the University of Pennsylvania. He would become a key figure in my effort to move the board toward renewal.

Coincidentally, I had heard of John Ware in the 1960s before coming to the college. I then was working at the Philadelphia Gas Works. Ware's corporate empire went beyond water to gas and other products, and he was then presiding over the Pennsylvania Gas Association. My acquaintance with his name came from my PGW bosses at the time, Charles G. Simpson and Walter P. Paul, who served with him at the Association.

But I first met him when he joined the college board. Pettit had offered Ware a convenient venue when he needed to become acquainted with new constituents in the wake of a legislative redistricting. He agreed to join our board as a kind of payback after his legislative service ended. The old Red and Blue tie had a lot to do with it too.

Ware's presence added significantly to the public image of our board. He was a quiet and simple man, but he carried great weight and respect in corporate, governmental, and philanthropic circles in our region and nationally. He operated out of a nondescript office in his hometown, Oxford, PA, which was southwest of mushroom country, almost into Maryland. From that off-center position, he played major roles at his alma mater, Penn, and in philanthropic support on a broad front. His presence on our board sent the message that the college had the endorsement of a businessman, public servant, and philanthropist known for integrity, reasonableness, and loyalty.

A number of alumni board members urged me to recruit Ware to preside over the board in the wake of Ted Schwalm's retirement. He was the strongest person we had. When I met with him, I proposed a relatively short time of service, a couple of years, during which we could cultivate a new leader for the longer term. I would try to limit his time to that required by the formalities of presiding. John readily agreed, to my pleasure and amazement, with one condition—that I do everything possible to identify a graduate of the college to lead the board after him. He had bought into the doctrine at Penn that a college or university board is most vital when an alum with a life-long loyalty and commitment to it is in the chair. He had noted that Schwalm was not a graduate and felt it limited the reach and persuasiveness of the chair.

I readily agreed to his condition, for it accorded with my own view. During Ware's brief term of leadership, 1979-1981, I discussed succession with him and with other key players on the board, including Helfferich. One of my fond memories is that of driving out

to the Red Rose Inn near Oxford on Baltimore Pike to have lunch with Ware. There we would review the agenda for an upcoming executive committee or board meeting; and there, in a private corner reserved for him, we would scan the candidates to succeed him.

Thomas P. Glassmoyer, '36, emerged from this process as the natural candidate in the minds of most board members. Tom had given long years of service to the college and epitomized the loyal alumnus. Originally he was an officer of the alumni association. That led in the mid-1950s to his election to the board as an alumni representative while McClure was still president. Only Helfferich and a couple of old-timers from the Reformed church had been on the board longer than Glassmoyer. Throughout his years on the board, he gave pro bono service as the board's legal counsel.

Everyone felt that Tom's reputation as one of Philadelphia's top corporate tax attorneys would boost the reputation of the college itself in the region. He was happily married to a college alumna, who was also actively involved with the college over the years; and their daughter was a graduate. Tom had graduated as valedictorian of his class and had excelled at Penn Law School. He cherished his memory of undergraduate years and was happy to acknowledge that the college laid the foundation for his professional success. He equally enjoyed his memories of events and personalities associated with the life of the board over the years. He had seen the board evolve from a lethargic body under the extraordinarily long leadership of Harry Paisley to a governing body ready to step out vigorously into the new decade of the 1980s. He enjoyed nostalgically reminiscing about the whole span of his college experience. In short, he was a walking example of the college's brightest and most loyal graduates.

I had seen Tom in action as a board member during the Helfferich and Pettit years. He was a congenial team player with a somewhat gruff exterior, a stylistic trait familiar to me in other Philadelphia lawyers. His first instinct as a board member was to support the incumbent leadership, even when he was not sure its position was the best one. He was temperamentally conservative but operationally pragmatic. I knew that he would be lukewarm on some issues but would usually defer in the end to what I felt was best for the college. He felt self-confident about the inner workings of a board that he had served and helped to develop for many years.

I went to his center city office to propose the new role and found him ready to move up—he already was first vice president. As his law career peaked, he had the time now to give significant charitable service. He sensed that I was trying to push the college to a different level of perceived and real value and saw himself supporting such a push for an indeterminate period ahead. It clearly pleased him to contemplate capping his life-long service to the college by becoming the leader of its board.

With Glassmoyer's assent in hand, my next stop was the office of Bill Heefner, '42. He was altogether as qualified to take the chair as Glassmoyer except for Tom's seniority. Bill had led a major financial campaign during Pettit's presidency and served as treasurer for a number of years. He too had an exemplary undergraduate experience and, like Glassmoyer, looked at the college as a foundation of his success in law school and in the building of his large law firm in Bucks County. My working relationship with Bill was closer than the one I had with Glassmoyer. Bill had been one of the earliest advocates of my candidacy for the presidency and had been a confidential and trusted advisor as I went through the process of getting elected. He understood my sense of the need for deliberate

change at the college in a way that few others did. I felt it was essential for the college to keep him in a leadership role. When I proposed that he become the vice president of the board behind Tom, he agreed. His strong commitment to institutional decorum made it comfortable for him to see Glassmoyer as next in line. As a fellow attorney, he knew and respected Glassmoyer's attributes and knew he would work well with him. At the same time, Bill and I understood, without having to express it, that he could not wait forever to assume the chair.

In Glassmoyer and Heefner, two fellow alumni were in place to give me the guidance and support needed to move ahead toward the institutional objectives that were beginning to crystallize for the 1980s. The move toward a roster of more active members under their leadership took place at first through evolution and attrition rather than through a systematic program. Death or retirement in the years from 1981 to 1984 removed a number of major figures who started serving in the Helfferich era—Philip L. Corson, William Elliott, Harleston R. Wood, all prominent Delaware Valley businessmen. I lost an activist ally when Joseph T. Beardwood, III, '50, died prematurely in 1983 of cancer. An early computer specialist, he had been head of the alumni association when I first came to work at the college in 1965. He and his wife Louise, '50, had remained trusted comrades as I moved up through the college administration.

In this four-year period, I sought out a number of new members. Each of them brought substantial new talent to the table and broadened our horizons. Nearly all of them would come to play major parts when the board bought into an ambitious plan to move the college forward.

Hermann F. Eilts, '43, was the former US Ambassador to Saudi-Arabia and then Egypt. In 1976 he had withdrawn from consideration as a candidate for the college presidency because he remained obligated to his State Department post beyond the deadline the board had set for making a choice. Negotiations between Egypt and Israel made his presence there critically important. Eilts was the candidate of a powerful group in the faculty, led by Eugene H. Miller, '33, his former political science professor and mentor (and mine, for that matter). I thought that by inviting him to be on the board I could neutralize residual feelings of disappointment in that group. His presence might give them the sense of having a trusted overseer and pipeline at the board level. Hermann was a steadfast friend of his alma mater throughout his illustrious diplomatic career. I don't know how much attention he paid to the political fault lines within our little campus community, but I'm sure his global diplomatic vision made it a snap for him to put them in perspective. He had trouble attending meetings after he took a major professorial position at Boston University under President John Silber. But I traveled periodically to Boston to meet him and benefited greatly from his insights on higher education, his new-found profession.

John E. F. (Jef) Corson was the adoptive son of recently deceased Phil Corson. We had named our 1970 administration building in honor of Phil and his wife, Helen. Jef had been managing the old family business for Phil and his brothers before it was sold to a public corporation. A Williams College alum, he had a quick mind and sharp business acumen. He was a member of the Republican Party establishment that dominated Montgomery County politics for generations. He thus represented an old local constituency of the college; but he had a good-humored, no-nonsense style, based on his

certainty of who he was. We had become acquainted during his father's last years. After Phil was gone, I proposed that Jef take his seat on our board. He immediately acknowledged a sense of family obligation and began his service. Like Glassmoyer and Heefner, he was a team player with a predisposition to support and encourage management—just the kind of younger ally I needed. Jef became an officer of the corporation in a few years and oversaw the finances of the college for many years, beyond my tenure.

William G. Warden, like Jef Corson, accepted my invitation to join the board out of a sense of family duty. His father, Clarence, who died in 1980, had been on the board since the McClure years. As president of the local tube manufacturing company, Clarence had represented the county business community. He also brought the quiet dignity and resources of an old Main Line family. Bill Warden followed his father into the management of the company after a career as a fighter pilot in the Air Force. Encouraged by Clarence's widow, Bill's stepmother, I met with him to suggest a continuation of Warden service to the college. He too felt the weight of family obligation and said yes. Coincidentally, he was like Jef Corson in having graduated from Williams College. Bill and I got along well from the start. We found a special bond when I told him that I had once worked for the UGI Corporation. The first William G. Warden had founded the huge utility holding company in the nineteenth century.

Other recruits came from the ranks of successful alumni.

Donald E. Parlee, '55, had been president of the alumni association and we shared a knowledge of the campus as it was in the early 1950s. Don typified the loyal alum who had married his campus sweetheart and, having attained professional success, was preparing to "give back" to the college that laid the groundwork for his happy place in life. He was head radiologist at one of the largest suburban Philadelphia hospitals. Don's sense of responsibility as a director would grow over the years to make him one of the quintessential leaders during the later period of my presidency.

Thomas G. Davis, '52, was another of the scores of alumni physicians who had the qualities needed to strengthen our board. He too had married his campus sweetheart. He felt heavily indebted to the college for the intellectual challenge he received from gifted professors in his student years. His career path had taken him from general practice to a vice presidency with a major Philadelphia drug company. Early in his service he chaired the board's Business Economics Council. I had cobbled this into being soon after becoming president to bring the business and academic perspectives to a common table. Some board members and alumni worried that the college would be infected by the anti-business bias that they perceived to be endemic in higher education nationwide. (My own sojourn in the corporate world before coming to the college apparently absolved me of their suspicions.) Tom's energetic work in recruiting provocative panelists for the Council's symposia showed that he would be a major player in the life of the board through the decade. He helped make the Business Economics Council more than a defense mechanism. Its programs enriched the academic program in the social sciences with real-world voices on current issues. It brought the name of the college to Delaware Valley opinion makers. It was a proving ground for identifying possible board members. Tom had a clear vision of the multi-dimensional value of the Council.

Betty Umstad Musser, '45, combined two essential qualities for distinguished alumni service to her alma mater. One, she was passionately interested in the transformative power of the college in the individual lives of students. Her passion focused on the fine and performing arts and the humanities. She liked to mix it up on campus with creative faculty and students. Second, she was married to one of the Philadelphia region's most enterprising business leaders, Warren V. "Pete" Musser. Pete was a Lehigh University alum who was emerging as a prophet of the entrepreneurial breakthrough that would transform American and global business in the coming decade. Pete was known to be a generous philanthropist, and Betty made it clear that she was willing to help advocate her college with her spouse. More than all that, Betty combined a lightsome personal quality with a lively curiosity about ideas.

From the standpoint of higher education, the best addition to the board came as we entered the next period of my administration. Eliot Stellar was the father of Jim, '72, a campus leader with whom I had spent many hours agonizing over college policy in those stressful Pettit years. Eliot was then the Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, the number two officer. He resigned his position during Penn's own stressful times in the Martin Meyerson administration. His default position was to become president of The American Philosophical Society. With Jim's encouragement after his father's return to the medical school faculty at Penn, I invited Eliot to serve and he agreed. He immeasurably broadened and deepened our board's academic perspective. He became a mentor to our new academic dean and added his persuasive voice to our application for faculty development funding at Pew. As chair of our government and instruction (academic affairs) committee, he gave us confidence as we sought to enrich our program. Eliot's marvelous self-confidence, brilliance of mind, happy sociability, and acknowledged place among America's leading intellectuals injected a unique quality into our institutional life. If I were to count the five or six most important acts of my entire administration, I would be certain to put on my list the recruiting of Eliot Stellar to our board.

The informal process of identification and capture that brought such new members aboard did not proceed fast enough to effect the needed transformation of our board's culture. That led us to create in the mid-1980s a President's Council, an "incubator" for growing board candidates. We invited promising potential board members to serve for a couple of years on the Council, which met twice a year. We would inform them of current policy issues and ask them to analyze problems in simulations of business school case studies. This gave them a chance to think about further service and gave us a chance to choose the most promising and most interested candidates. A number of new members joined the board through this process. These and others who came aboard by less formal recruiting efforts reshaped and revitalized the board in the years from 1984 to the turn of the decade. Without them, the senior leaders, particularly Glassmoyer and Heefner, would have been unable to mobilize the board support needed for the college to "arrive" during my administration.

The board received a unique infusion of energy and perspective in 1984 when Gladys Pearlstine joined its ranks. She and her spouse, Raymond, lived on the perimeter of the campus in their home, "R Glad House." Ray, a Collegeville native, was the long-time solicitor for Collegeville borough and head of one of Montgomery County's outstanding law firms. Gladys was a charter member and former chair of the board of the

Montgomery County Community College, which came into being in 1965. With Ray, she was an active alum of the University of Pennsylvania. She brought a cosmopolitan interest to social and educational issues, all the while remaining happily rooted in the local community. Gladys encouraged the board leaders to look beyond the parochial boundaries of the college and supported Bodger's efforts in that direction. The Pearlstines climaxed their support of the college later when they gave "R Glad House" to it; with renovations and expansion, it became the home of the president following my tenure in office.

Gladys Pearlstine was not the only local leader to give new strength to the board in the mid-1980s. David Cornish, then president of the local flag and costume manufacturing company, grew up in Collegetown. He played on the campus as a boy. Family members had attended the college, though David went away to Gettysburg. When he served the borough as mayor, he learned of the complex ways in which town and gown complemented and at times conflicted with one another. In that role he worked to smooth and strengthen the town's relations with its largest organizational inhabitant. His appointment to the board in 1986 thus symbolized a coming together of the interests of the community and the college as the institution's plans for aggressive development grew.

Throughout, a basic principle was driving me as we sought new board members. I was elected to office by a passive board. In the Helfferich and Pettit administrations, the power to act had gravitated heavily toward the administration. The board had become an affirming rather than an initiating governing body. I wanted to move the college to a new level of quality. I knew that this would be impossible unless the board transformed itself from a passive to an active board. I knew that a more active board would ultimately allow less latitude for initiative by the administration. It was a shift I was willing to foster if it would allow the college to gain substantial new academic strength within itself and new market strength.

An occasion arose on 6 December 1984 for me to express this conviction. What I said there serves to round out this reflection on the board. The occasion was a seminar with a group of American Council on Education Fellows. John Pilgrim, who under my sponsorship was a Fellow in 1984-85, organized the meeting for a dozen or so other Fellows. John asked me to talk about the way our board and I worked together to make policy decisions. I reflected on the demographics of the board at that point and described the way the board and I were relating.

I reported that about half (20 of 39) of the members who elected me president in 1976 were still serving eight years later. Ten had died, seven had become life members, and two had resigned. In 1984-85, virtually all of the 19 no longer actively serving had been replaced. Of these, I had identified and cultivated seven new members. Seven others were identified and cultivated by another member of the board with my help. Four were identified and cultivated by the alumni association with my help. The new members were in a rainbow of categories: local corporate leaders; women; a local community leader; United Church of Christ representatives; persons of wealth; sons of former members; an outstanding academician; a socially prominent Philadelphian; successful alumni in business, diplomacy, and the professions.

The ACE Fellows mainly wanted to talk about our policy-making process. I painted an impressionistic picture of a proactive president working with a board that, with the

injection of new blood, was steadily gravitating from passive to active. Here are some of the statements I made to them before we got into a question-and-answer session:

*PRESIDENT LEADS: In our traditional way of operating, the board expects the president to lead actively and aggressively in identifying priorities and new policies....The board is an affirming board, not a corporate board or a "rubber stamp" board....[R]ecently board members have been encouraged to take a more direct hand in prior policy deliberation.*

*CONTROL OF THE AGENDA: He who makes up the agenda of committees and the schedule of meetings guides the governance system. Here, the president's office does this, in collaboration with appropriate staff.*

*WE ARE CHANGING: Our board is more passive than active, but it is supportive and, we hope, informed. It is in a developing process toward a more active mode of operating. The president is the chief instigator of this change process, not the board leadership itself. As this new process evolves, the president's role will be to coordinate and orchestrate more variables.*

*PRESIDENT LEADS, BUT...The president has to walk a narrow edge in his relations with the board. The board that hired him becomes subject to his own influences and priorities, but he is always accountable to it. The board expects him to initiate, but he must successfully confer ownership of his initiatives on the board itself. He must take the initiative but be prepared to attribute it to the board and give it the credit.*

*A HUMAN RELATIONSHIP: The relationship between president and board that matters most is not the legal or formal relationship but the human relationship. Trust, respect for the role each can play on behalf of the college, sensitivity, shared commitment to the welfare of the whole enterprise, a joy in the spirit of the place--these matter most. If the institutional mission is clear-cut, these human relationships will generate the most momentum for the progress of the institution.*

*NEVER-ENDING ATTENTION: The president should NEVER become lulled into a complacent attitude toward board dynamics, especially when things seem just fine. Whatever its strengths and weaknesses, the board is absolutely important in the one crucial decision regarding the president: it alone hires and fires him. The president needs to create the board situation actively. This needs to be done with individual members as well as with the board as a governing entity. In our case, the president can move with confidence that the board leadership will support his initiative--and with equal confidence that, if he errs or presumes too much, the board leadership gently but effectively will send him a signal, with plenty of room for him to heed it and adjust gracefully. If he misses the signal, the board's ultimate authority will be demonstrated in spite of him sooner or later.*

*STRENGTH OF BOARD ESSENTIAL: A weak board leads a weak college. A strong board leads a strong college. A president who keeps a board weak to protect his authority will lose his ability to lead more readily in the long run than one who builds a strong board. Nevertheless, a president needs to preserve the strength of his own position with a strong board. A strong board that wants a weak president will lead the college into weakness.*

D. L. Helfferich died at the age of 84 on 23 January 1984, nearly a year before I made these pontifical remarks. He and his wife Anna had moved to a retirement home a few years before and he hated what it foretold of his future. He had a circulatory problem that grew worse and that toward the end resisted treatment. However, he remained on the roster of active board members. I communicated with him from time to time, mainly in notes, still seeking his counsel, but mostly his affirmation.

When we hired John Van Ness as vice president for college relations—a major step toward speeding up the advancement of the college—I sent him John's resume. I covered it with a note saying I thought he could do the job. Some board members were uncertain John was the right choice. I feared that they might convey their reservations to D. L. My note to him was thus preemptive. He returned my note in the mail a few days later and attached a comment on a small slip of paper. "I'm for him," it said. It was his last word to me before his death. I took it as a good omen for the next big phase of my administration.

Throughout the eight preceding years, D. L. had been there as a force, wishing only my success, and doing anything he could to assure it. I felt inordinate gratitude that, even as he neared his end, he had seen what I felt I needed and had given it. He wanted to reassure me that I was doing the right thing. In D. L.'s passing I saw a perfect marker for transition to the next period of my presidency.

Bodger ended his paper on the board and filed it neatly in a drawer. Perhaps one day, he mused, M.S. and I will be able to compare notes on how she went about building a board at her new place.

*END CHAPTER FIVE, M.S., PART TWO (Making headway, 1979-1984)*





## CHAPTER SIX

### MARTIN (*Arriving...and ending, 1984-1994*)

Some time after leaving office, while vacationing in the Caribbean, Bodger ran into Martin Allott. Martin had been a fellow president of a small private college in Pennsylvania resembling Bodger's in size, age, and regional character. Martin and Bodger had struck up a friendship over the years at meetings of Pennsylvania's independent college presidents. The Commission for Independent Colleges and Universities usually met in Hershey, near Harrisburg. Its agenda, in the hands of its president, Francis Michelini, a former college president himself, dealt with governmental relations and issues of program, finance, and governance common to institutions in the independent sector. (Bodger served his obligatory term as chair of the Commission in 1984-85.)

The meetings of the Commission and its committees also gave harried presidents a safe haven for off-the-record conversation with peers about management problems and about their personal feelings in the peculiar leadership journey that they found themselves taking. Over beer and pretzels in the Hershey Hotel bar late at night, or on afternoon strolls over coifed grounds high above the chocolate factory, safely distant from their home campuses, Martin and Bodger discovered common ground and ease in sharing their sense of things. They developed a professional friendship that was open because it was unencumbered by significant obligation one way or the other.

Martin had left his presidency a couple of years before Bodger. He became a gun for hire by colleges in the throes of changing presidents. He would enter and act as interim chief executive during the institutional search. This would enable him to clean up some messes left by the outgoing administration and to prepare the ground for the new regime. Meanwhile, he would keep the machinery running. His nuanced sense of organizational life would enable him to read a client institution quickly. He would do a job without sinking his feet deeply into the soil and would be ready to move out the minute the new leader was aboard. Martin had done two such tasks since he left his presidency. He would be undertaking a third after his respite in the islands.

Watching the sun go down over the blue waters from a comfortable deck, cold drinks in hand, the two former presidents both felt nostalgic.

"Old warriors touching the welts of their long-healed wounds," said Bodger.

"Well," Martin replied, "I'm still accumulating some surface scratches in my consulting role. Now, though, I can walk away from the battlefield without being shot for treason."

Bodger said, "When you and I began in the 1970s, few had yet fully acknowledged the fierceness of the competitive marketing paradigm for private colleges. Despite the upheavals of the late 1960s, traditional academic style still keynoted institutional life. It gave that life a heft that we thought was unchanging. I can remember feeling pangs of guilt, at the start, for trying too aggressively to fold the spice of marketing into the parochial pottage I knew as my alma mater."

Martin said, "A retrospective assessment now would undoubtedly fault you for having been less aggressive than you should have been. In the full span of our careers, strategic

marketing moved from the periphery to the very core—that's what it all came to be about."

Bodger agreed: "I think you could evaluate my administration by tracking its progress from its exploratory marketing strategy in the beginning to one that was more explicit and nearly full-blown by the time I left."

Martin said, "Mine too. I'm envious that your college, as you left office, appeared to have moved farther. When I leave the islands and head back, I'll be running a college much like yours. The last president got it started toward a stronger position. Now it's poised to get to a really new position in the market under the lucky person it chooses to be president while I'm managing the place temporarily. I have a sense it is about where you were just as you mobilized for your big campaign in the mid-1980s."

Bodger said, "We had changed a lot up to 1984—staff, curriculum, student life, board, faculty. Above all, I think we changed the atmosphere, more open to the world, more desirous of being in the big swim with the best of our kind. And more professional—our Pew-funded faculty development program was having a transforming influence on faculty culture. But I still felt that we lived with one shoe in the old parochial pottage and another on the new professional runway."

Martin said, "Without a deliberate and vigorous push, you might have remained in that compromising position."

Bodger said, "And with the count of kids plummeting nationally and even more so in the mid-Atlantic area where we recruited, we could have been left standing there without a viable student body."

Martin said, "Looking back, don't you feel that we always were anxiously watching out for the crisis that would catch us off guard and deliver a mortal blow?"

Bodger agreed that they had had their run in what felt like one of the most trying periods of history in American higher education. "We came in when the baby bust was beginning and left when the echo of the baby boom began."

Martin continued, "And that's why I liked what you did. You declared a bold advancement agenda, took the risk of going for it, and colored your whole institutional life with that advancement initiative. I took a more low-keyed ad hoc approach. I would probably do it differently if I could do it over."

"We had been getting ready for years and we were already started," Bodger replied.

Martin ordered them another piña colada and said, "I'd like to talk when we get back home. We never talked details about your big push from 1984 to 1991. Your experience could help me lay the groundwork at my next venue. I'd like to see if my new college has developed to the point of launching itself toward a new market position. If so, I would want to take some actions as interim that would set a stage for the new person taking over."

"If not?" Bodger asked.

"I'll hold my tongue, keep my shirt on, and hunker down for my short stay."

Bodger said, "Our push surely looked more tightly thought out, more organized than it was. But perceptions take you a long way. Certainly looking back I feel as if that period was one of deliberate effort to push the whole works into a clearer position in a fast-changing marketplace."

"Well?" said Martin. "I'll have a couple of weeks before I start."

"Sure," Bodger said, "when we're back home, let's meet."

### **The college by 1984 appeared to be on the move**

Martin and Bodger met a few days after their vacations ended. In Bodger's office at home, he had piled up some files on his desk before Martin arrived. Martin patted them and ribbed Bodger for still being compulsive about preparing for meetings.

"The best starting point, I found," Bodger said, "is something I said to Middle States when we had to do a five-year periodic review report in 1984, following up our 1979 big report. This was the first time that Middle States required an interim five-year report."

Martin said, "Middle States always seemed like an intrusive bother."

Bodger said, "It probably was. But I didn't know how to handle it except to take it seriously. The requirement for self-study always seemed to serve us well in a timely way. So we simply made the external requirements a kind of internal mile marker. Middle States liked that. I've gone through our 1984 report and culled the items we said we were going to address in the next couple of years. They make an interesting ensemble.

"We were going to continue having academic departmental reviews, something our new dean had instigated, using where possible outside visiting committees. We were on the verge of deciding to build out the 'Residential Village,' renovating the old dorms on Main Street and turning the area into an upscale space visible to the community at large. We were going to work on a physical plant master plan, stimulated by the Residential Village prospect. We were going to strengthen the administrative support for development, public relations, and communication. In fact, we had just taken the key step to that end by hiring a new vice president for college relations, John Van Ness. We were going to get serious about a resolve made more than a year before to mount a major fund-raising campaign. The campaign would aim to build endowment to support faculty compensation and professional development and to augment scholarship aid."

Martin commented, "These were big promises."

Bodger said, "But they did not emerge out of the blue. They were logical extensions of the headway we had been making up to that point. The periodic report to Middle States of 1984 also told what we had been doing on the issues that the 1979 Middle States visiting team had raised with us."

Martin said, "That list would give a pretty good indication of what you had done in the 1979-to-1984 period to 'make headway,' as you put it."

Bodger waved the report and proceeded to read off the highlights. "The 1979 team had criticized us for our weak curricular offerings in sociology and anthropology—long-standing omissions at many small colleges dedicated to strength in the natural sciences. The 1984 report boasted of additions in anthropology on the peoples of Latin America; North American Indians; peoples of the Pacific; a course on deviance; on the family; and new topical research courses. It also reported new courses in the sociology of religion, plus research and seminar courses.

"In 1979, we reported that full-time faculty were overloading their schedule by teaching about 50 percent of Evening School courses in our continuing education

program. The reviewers registered a 'serious concern' that this overwork would jeopardize the quality of instruction."

Martin scoffed. "A typical bureaucratic myth. They could re-use their preparations for regular daytime courses in the evening courses, I'm sure."

Bodger nodded yes and said, "But we bought into the criticism at least somewhat, reporting that the percentage had dropped to 30 percent by 1984. In truth, as our measurement of quality went up, the end game someday would have to be withdrawal or inclusion of evening courses in the normal full-time teaching loads. This remained an unresolved tension throughout my administration.

"For the time being, we took credit for paying people better and thus reducing their need to moonlight. We also took credit for the professional upgrading that was coming out of the \$500,000 faculty development program grant from Pew Charitable Trusts. A key component of the program was to change pay for one-semester research sabbaticals from half to full pay. More faculty now were taking sabbaticals because they could afford to, and because peer pressure increasingly made them want to. We told Middle States that a fund-raising goal would be to endow faculty development so that the transformation of faculty culture wrought by the Pew money would be permanently institutionalized. And indeed that came about in one way or another in the 1984-1991 period.

"The visitors in 1979 also thought faculty vitality was endangered by alumni inbreeding and the prospect of a high ratio of faculty on tenure. Sure, we were inbred--I was as much an example of it as a cadre of senior professors who had been hired in the 1930s and 1940s. Here again, we agreed with the visitors when in 1984 we boasted of a decline in alumni faculty in the intervening five years. We reported that the number would decline further with retirements in the offing. And so it did. In 1986, we would create a formal early retirement incentive for all faculty, and it would take out of active service a significant number of senior folk with their undergraduate roots in the college. This of course also would reduce the percentage of tenured faculty as we would bring on a new bunch of assistant professors."

Martin said, "You and I both were pushing to increase the ethnic and racial diversity of the faculty and of the student body. What did you have to say about that?"

"We couldn't say anything good about faculty recruitment, I'm afraid. And the 1979 team was emphatic that we were not doing enough."

Martin said, "The pool of black Ph.D.'s in 1979 was simply not big enough to bring quick diversification to all aspiring colleges across the nation, even when those colleges diligently recruited."

Bodger said, "I went up to Harvard sometime before our 1984 report and had a talk with Professor Charles Willie in the School of Education. An African-American educator with national stature, he was blunt and helpful. He said some obvious things—for example, go to your minority alumni for students, board members, even faculty. He gave me hope and encouragement. But for the moment, I could merely say to Middle States, 'We intend to persist.'"

Continuing to scan his papers, Bodger said that the 1979 visitors were unimpressed with the salaries and professional development of administrative staff. In 1984, he could report that a dramatic evolution in the professionalization of the administrative staff had occurred in the intervening five years. He pointed especially to the five new staff persons

in the office of student life and the staffing up, virtually from scratch, of a college relations department.

The 1979 team observed an aging board of directors and urged a youth movement. Bodger could report in 1984 that a dozen members had since left, taking with them an average age of about 75 years. Sixteen new members had come aboard, averaging 57 years of age, with the number of women doubling.

"From three to six," Bodger added reluctantly.

"But I'll bet that the number got better in the years since 1984," Martin added charitably. Bodger nodded affirmatively but his expression said not enough.

The 1979 visitors paid a lot of attention to enrollment, and rightly so. Starting that year, the number of teenagers would plummet in the mid-Atlantic region. The team urged the college to use outside marketing consultants, to do an even more diligent job of analyzing and improving student retention. To that end it urged beefing up the services offered in career planning and making short-term psychological counseling and referral service available to students.

Bodger said, "We could say in 1984, yes-yes-yes, we're working at it as hard as we can—within the limits of our understanding. Marketing for students was evolving too rapidly for us to understand fully. All colleges in our tier in the Middle Atlantic area were learning a whole new way to recruit and retain without ever having the luxury of stopping and catching breath. We could not just stick to familiar knitting the way the top national liberal arts colleges could. At the same time, we were far enough away from the bottom to avoid tactics for sheer survival, such as changing the mission and adding bread-and-butter courses to meet the immediate job market."

Bodger continued, "In 1979 we did not have a full-fledged registrar function, believe it or not. The visiting team properly gipped us for this and by 1984 we remedied it."

Martin said, "I guess this was just an instance of 'catch-up.'"

"Yes," Bodger said, "but we had persisted without a registrar in the contrarian spirit of the institution, which said we know it looks odd but it's the way we do it. Similarly, the team urged improvements to our bare-bones bookstore. We outsourced the management of the store by 1984 and gained noticeable improvements."

Martin said, "I think all small private colleges enjoyed their parochial peculiarities. If you couldn't afford to compete with Swarthmore, you could nonetheless feel self-satisfied about the authenticity of your character. And that sometimes surfaced as practice in everyday management, such as your registrar and book store stance."

Bodger said, "There was more. The 1979 team saw peculiarities in our desultory budget reporting to departments, in our casual purchasing procedures, in our very long marriage to a single auditing firm, in our amateurish management of investments."

Martin replied, "And I bet that by 1984 you had changed to conform to their suggestions or were promising to think about them."

Bodger said, "Yes—so much for the persistence of the contrarian spirit. We were destined to conform more and more to the commonly perceived model of the national liberal arts college."

Bodger turned to the final page of the 1979 Middle States report. "Finally, the team thought our fund-raising program was less sophisticated and organized than it should be, given our aspirations."

Martin said, "Some presidents would have taken offense at this as a criticism of their administrative leadership."

Bodger replied, "Not so in my case. In those first years, the problem as I saw it was to heighten the sense of responsibility of the board of directors for fund-raising. D. L. Helfferich for more than thirty years had instilled the notion that the president would take care of the fund-raising, with ad hoc aid from a few individuals on the board. Bill Pettit his successor had not done anything to alter that. The notion of collective board stewardship for new resources was simply not in the psyche of the college in 1979. So, the critique by Middle States was immensely helpful to me as I tried to remedy that lack. It gave an outside official voice to back up my plans for fund-raising. By the time of our 1984 report, we had hired John Van Ness and were well on the way toward creating a new fund-raising practice. But not without some private discomfort among some of the veterans on the board, who might have thought we were getting uppity."

"Or," Martin said, "they might have worried that a more aggressive program would tap their personal coffers more seriously."

"There's always that," Bodger said.

Martin said, "The essential message was that between 1979 and 1984 yours was a college definitely on the move forward."

Bodger said, "Yes, but... When Middle States replied to our 1984 answers, it pointed to some real unfinished work. Despite our emphasis on faculty compensation and the academic program, our financial statements showed that the ratio of instruction and library support to total expense was declining. We were spending more in student life and administrative areas. We had to resolve to haul in more voluntary support for the educational program.

"Though faculty salaries had improved steadily, the continuing inflation and our spending conservatism kept them well behind the levels at a comparison group of colleges. We were paying full professors \$32,700 on average. Franklin & Marshall was paying \$43,900. Even Albright was ahead of us at \$35,900. It's interesting that tuition charges usually paralleled these differences. F&M, for instance, was charging \$11,050 in 1984-85 and we were charging \$8,725.

"Middle States was most disturbed, and rightly so, over our abysmal enrollment of minority students—nineteen in the whole place! After being personally invested heavily in minority recruiting when I first came to work at the college, I had let it lapse while I worked at all the other issues on my platter. Mea culpa. With the marketing anxieties of the late 1970s and early 1980s, we were thinking about numbers and not social justice, regrettably.

"Middle States, moreover, questioned whether our projections for an 1150 full-time student body could hold up in the sharply declining marketplace—and we knew of course that every year would be a challenge."

### **The stage was set for expansive development**

Continuing the conversation, Martin said, "Well then, you had a college showing some forward movement and poised for an ambitious climb up the ladder of quality."

Bodger said, "We were beginning to study indicators of comparative quality in faculty professionalism and compensation, in our academic program, in our physical plant. That was happening in the Campus Planning Group, where I tried to build consensus among faculty, administrators, and students."

Martin said, "Building consensus--always a work in progress, always about to unravel."

Bodger continued, "Yes, but in our case at that moment, I could feel the college moving with me—or, better, perhaps, I could feel myself dancing in step with the tune of the community. By now, we all had a clear sense that broad movement, on just about every front, was the order of the day. We had been getting started and making headway for some years, since 1976. Had I not been ready to lead into an expansive agenda at that point, I think the college community would have begun to withdraw its support of my presidency. We had all waited long enough for old demons to withdraw and new visions to crystallize. The time was ripe finally for arriving somewhere.

"And, as you know too well, once a consensus resonated throughout the college, it translated into a money game. Through the entire history of the college, money was the root of shortcomings. It always colored almost everything. In his history of its first hundred years, Calvin D. Yost, who advised me when I was an English major under him, had captured that central theme in a passage that stuck in my mind. He quoted President George L. Omwake's 1917 statement that the college was 'founded on debt instead of endowment.' And Yost added, drawing on his own lifelong experience with low salaries and Spartan teaching conditions, 'Finance has been the college's greatest problem throughout its first century.' (p. 12)

"By 1984, it was possible for the first time in more than a century for the college to feel on relatively secure financial footing and able to think ambitiously about developing itself. After my years of working in that Spartan climate and seeing it first-hand as an undergraduate, it dawned on me how historic this moment was. You get the real sense of it from the comment of Middle States on our finances in that 1984 review. Middle States saw 'a profile of a stable, viable and fiscally prudent operation characterized by substantial liquid reserves, a healthy endowment fund, low accounts receivable, low ratio of plant debt to plant assets, a sturdy operating surplus, and no reported deferred maintenance.' That was the legacy that Helfferich handed to me, abetted by Pettit who through very tough years kept financial solvency at the top of his priorities, even at the expense of other things deemed by many--I myself at times included--to be more important. "

Martin said, "At that same point in the mid-1980s, my institution was seeing the net revenues declining as our student financial aid budget soared. Our endowment was not growing and we were taking out every cent we could for operations. We had some deferred maintenance and considerably more capital debt than you did. My operating statement on 30 June 1984 showed a small but real deficit. You were a lucky man."

Bodger continued, "Having husbanded our resources and kept the expenses tight, I now felt tremendous pressure to change course and begin to spend. The death of my patron, Helfferich, and the rising number of voices who wanted to see substantial enrichment of programs and plant combined with our fiscally favorable situation to convert me into a spending president.



"One late-summer day the senior partner of our auditing firm brought me an analysis of his findings as of 30 June 1984. All trend numbers were good, and our operating surplus was substantial to the point of embarrassment. 'What should I do?' I asked him. 'Spend to strengthen your program,' he said. 'Improve your position in the market.'"

Martin whistled. "When a bean counter tells you to spend, that's something."

Bodger said, "At that point, we had \$20 million in endowment, up from the \$7 million when I took office in 1976. That grew because the double-digit inflation was earning big interest and because we enriched our academic programs cautiously—to a fault, critics could say. We were transferring operating surpluses into endowment instead of spending the money outright. We carried a debt of only \$3.5 million and the cost of it was low. Our operating budget was pushing \$20 million at that point."

"Moreover," Bodger went on, "our net revenues were getting a healthy bump from our Evening School operation. The market was great as women retrained to enter the working world and as education became the key to promotion in the many companies in Montgomery County. We beefed up the staff and saw a steady rise in part-time enrollments, until eventually the body count exceeded our full-time enrollment. In 1985, we became a partner with St. Joseph's University to promote and offer its MBA program on our campus. This flourished and added further net revenue over the years. Our Evening School was a happy 'cash cow', and we were able to claim that we were providing an essential service to the corporate community."

Martin said, "My college also did well with adults at that time. But continuing education created a question about our focus. Could we focus on teaching full-time traditional-age students while we were busy teaching adults in the evening?"

Bodger said, "Could you rub the top of your head with one hand while rubbing your stomach with the other? We certainly had the same question of focus. I appointed a task force to study what we were doing in the mid-1980s. But its conclusions affirmed the status quo, and the tension did not go away. We really wanted that extra money because it subsidized our traditional operation so generously. I was willing to live with the question of focus for the rest of my tenure."

Martin said, "Few presidents I know would deliberately have turned off that financial spigot just because it created an internal tension."

Bodger agreed and went on, "So, in spite of our financial stability, a critical analysis would have shown that we were not measuring up to quality indicators in the best liberal arts colleges. We had low visibility. We were recognized in a very narrow geographic circle. Most of our students still came from the five-county Delaware Valley area. The market for traditional-age students was now in a dangerous decline. It would get worse all the way to 1995. The competition for the better students, as you know, was fierce. It seemed like a 'no-brainer' to decide to spend in order to strengthen competitive advantage while the treasury was healthy."

"Spend—and also get," Martin said.

"Absolutely," Bodger replied. "It became clear that our charitable support came through an old model--the penurious college gratefully receiving small support from its loyal but tight-fisted constituencies. It was time for a major overhaul of our approach for voluntary support. While we had some operating surplus to spend, we needed vastly more money than that."

Martin said, "I never would have thought your fund-raising apparatus was so far behind the curve. But few of us were doing all that was possible, as I look back. Still, you couldn't have improved fund-raising without changing your strategic vision."

Bodger said, "Precisely. We had to clarify what we were and who our clientele was and how we had to change—with lots of new money—to attract them and serve them better."

"You were talking fund-raising but you were really doing strategic repositioning."

"In our fashion," replied Bodger. "Getting there was not clean and clear-cut. Always there was institutional inertia, always a ceiling on our ability to imagine our future. When you're leading a change process like this, you know in a general way where the goal lies. But bringing it off is like chopping yourself out of a thicket of bamboo armed with a dull machete. And you have to hack away at the stalks with your head down, just trusting that you're moving in the right direction."

Martin's silent smile said that Bodger had just articulated a feeling that he knew too well.

### **Three obstacles blocked a change in development practices**

Bodger went on to sketch for Martin the path that had led to the decision to break out of the old model and in 1984 to mount the most ambitious development campaign the college had seen to that point.

"I look back to November 1982. The board of directors received a confidential assessment of the financial development staff and program from Barnes & Roche Inc., a consulting firm from nearby Bryn Mawr."

"Well regarded," Martin said.

"I had initiated the consultation, with the encouragement of Bill Heefner and a few other board members. We all knew, more or less, what had to be done. But several obstacles were holding us back. I became convinced that a consultative report from a reputable outside source would help remove them.

"One obstacle was that, while I had a general sense of what we should do, I needed a concrete menu of actions to be taken and an ordering of them by priority.

"The second obstacle was entrenched campus attitudes about the cost of administration. Many faculty members were like drug-sniffing hounds whenever they suspected the administration was fattening the non-instructional budget for no good reason. I knew that they would raise their voices as soon as we began adding people to the development staff. In fact, in the administration itself, my chief financial officer, Nelson Williams, took a skeptical and understandable stance toward additional expense that did not show immediate payback in substantial increases of income."

Martin interrupted, "Let me guess that the third major obstacle was the reluctance of some board members to become really aggressive in fund-raising."

"You said it. As I mentioned earlier, the culture of the board had not yet changed enough. It had a good and growing cadre of new and younger people. It had a core of senior members, like Heefner and Glassmoyer, who were ready for it to make a big change. But the dominant note had not yet shifted. When the Barnes & Roche report came out, one member, for example, took some offense because it seemed to be overly

critical of fund-raising in the immediate past, when he was development committee chairperson. I had no more loyal trooper behind me than Frank Smith, whom I had hired in 1968 to help with fund-raising. Before the build-up of a college relations staff, Frank carried most of the weight in the fund-raising office. His integrity and diligence gave volunteers great comfort. Combined with the personal attention I tried to give all our board members, his services led some of them to like the way things were. But the entire effort was simply not robust enough to meet our newly defined needs.

"Barnes & Roche enabled us to move those three obstacles. They made it clear that the change in the action plan had to begin with me. I had been the hands-on administrator for fund-raising since Helfferich's last year in office in 1969-70. When I took the presidency, I continued to manage Frank and the whole fund-raising operation out of my office. I had the intuitive understanding that this had to change at the right time, but I maintained this situation for more years than was healthy. Some of my own staff members recognized this but were hesitant to press their point too aggressively with me. An outside voice like that of Barnes & Roche could simply tell me to back off and do things the orthodox way and not worry about sensitivities."

Martin said, "So they told you to hire yourself a qualified VP for development, which you had not done partly because of the cost, probably."

"Yes, but with our auditor telling me to spend, my hesitation withered. The rest of their operating recommendations were what you would expect. Hire more staff under the new vice president to do research and keep good records. Convert part-time positions in annual giving and alumni relations into full-time jobs. Clean up the keeping of gift records—get a computer system. Strengthen the prospect pool through professional prospect research. Heighten the positive image of the college in the Delaware Valley through a comprehensive and integrated public relations program. Create highly visible 'cultivation events.' Build my role into the operation as a proper presidential cultivator of major donors rather than a hands-on micro-manager. Convert the veteran Frank Smith into a special gifts officer responsible for selected major donors, people who knew him from long years of contact. Begin systematic and ongoing cultivation of traditional groupings of prospects. Sharpen up the 'stewardship' process of acknowledging and accounting to donors for their gifts."

Martin asked, "Did the faculty members on your Campus Planning Group buy into this? It clearly would cost a lot more money and it would not be going into faculty pockets."

Bodger replied, "This of course was one of the big obstacles the consultant's report was designed to remove. Those on the CPG did understand and they did support the move. The farther you went out from that core in the faculty, the more skepticism you found. And as the new college relations team actually assembled, I absorbed kibitzing about costs from some faculty members. Even from my spouse! Most people, however, saw the strategic reasons for expanding the staff. When the campaign later began to show some results, the doubters became less vocal even if they never became completely converted."

"Did many board members resist?"

Bodger said, "The consultants said what they needed to say. We should shape the board into an informed and active fund-raising resource. We should revitalize and charge

the board development committee with responsibility for increasing gift income. Sure, something of the old parochial suspicion of money as a corrupter of the institutional soul lingered in the minds of a few. Nearly everyone understood that we were involved in nothing less than a transformation of institutional culture beyond the mere surface. It would have been odd if there had not been some who continued to worry that we were putting money ahead of our historic mission. I took that tension as a sign of the integrity of the institution's sense of itself."

Martin said, "And you?"

Bodger smiled, "You guessed it—I had my own worries at times as we started hiring staff and beefing up a small fund-raising and promotion budget. My roots in the old ways of our charming little campus, going all the way back to 1949 when I started as a freshman, had to be transplanted with care. Despite personal feelings like that, though, I obviously had to be the most committed of all to change. I think I was."

### **New college relations department pushed the pace**

Bodger told Martin that the hiring of John Van Ness came through a recommendation from Barnes & Roche, which knew of his experience as a capital campaign manager and consultant. Barnes & Roche thought he would fit the college situation because he combined thoroughly professional fund-raising experience with impeccable academic credentials. A graduate of Colorado College—a useful model of small-college distinctiveness—John received a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in anthropology, specializing in the mestizo culture of the American southwest. When he took a faculty position at Knox College in the 1970s, demographic downturns and financial tightness descended on such mid-western colleges. Feeling that his academic career would lead to a dead end, he turned to development work. His wife Chris, also a graduate student at Penn, followed the same route. At about the time he came aboard, Chris was becoming the head development officer at Hahnemann University. Their combined fund-raising expertise and academic bent made them an unusual "power" couple, adept at navigating the rising tide of institutional fund-raising throughout the Delaware Valley.

Bodger continued, "John was interested because of the readiness of the college for advancement. He was devoted to the mission of small liberal arts colleges and saw that we were not going to compromise our purposes. He felt that he could implement for us the change that Barnes & Roche had charted with their consulting report. He would bring us a professional fund-raising discipline and insist that we submit to it, even if our parochial constraints made us uncomfortable with it. On top of that, his scholarly standing would look good to the faculty and help overcome resistance to what many would surely perceive as administrative empire building. He would be able to meet faculty on their own terms.

"In October 1983, I brought him to the Union League in Philadelphia to meet with Bill Heefner and a few other key board members. John's cerebral approach made him different from the 'hail fellow' usually conjured up by board members when they thought about professional fund-raisers. There was some feeling that he might have trouble adapting to our institutional personality. Would he be able to work comfortably with the

rest of our staff and our key board members? But the board members involved saw that he had a firm grip on the principles of college advancement and knew the administrative and promotional requirements to make a program go. And he talked knowingly, I thought, about the college's evolution up to a certain point and its need for a big push. His reading of the situation seemed accurate to me. I had met many development types in the course of my career, having been one, after a fashion, myself."

Martin interjected, "And you knew how many lacked substance, despite appearances to the contrary."

Bodger answered, "Exactly. I thought his strengths outweighed his perceived weaknesses by a considerable margin. I was in a hurry to get on with it. So I tried to calm concerns and invited him for a day on campus later in October. When D. L. Helfferich's very last communication to me before his death affirmed John's candidacy, I felt it was time to move."

Bodger tried to give Martin a sense of the upheaval signaled by the arrival of Van Ness in Corson Hall. Student life dean Houghton Kane moved downstairs so that Van Ness could take the big office adjacent to the president's office. As new staff members came on board, they took over newly arranged offices in basement space where faculty had had offices. These moves had domino effects on the campus spaces that alerted many to the new day dawning.

Bodger had resisted pressures to name vice presidents. After James Craft resigned as vice president for planning and administration in 1979, he was without any senior officers with that title until now. He felt that he had to confer a vice presidency on Van Ness. Indeed, Van Ness would not have considered the position if it had a lesser title. To maintain harmony within his senior staff, Bodger, with the board's concurrence, named Nelson Williams vice president for business affairs. From having no vice presidents for several years, now he had two, and others no doubt aspired to the title.

Martin said, "Hierarchy and status were the rewards we threw to people. But I think you and I agree—it would have been better to manage by committee of the whole, with everyone in an equal position around the table."

Bodger replied, "In actuality, my senior staff colleagues behaved as much as I could ever have hoped like an assemblage of equals. We had a fairly open forum, I think, before the Van Ness expansion. Akin, Kane, Williams, and I constituted a weekly 'RAWK' gathering, where just about all management issues were on the agenda and fair game for comment by one and all. We did some juggling of personal tics and pet peeves, to be sure, but we all knew what they were and who had them. Each summer we would go off campus for a day of reflection together. One year I called our day the 'strawberry dialogues' after our chocolate-dipped strawberry dessert.

"I always aimed at anti-hierarchy by instinct. I told many over the years that I became a bureaucrat because I hated bureaucracy so much and felt I could tame it. In fact, of course, I was president, and the unspoken rule was that everyone in RAWK would talk freely in order to register his viewpoint as strongly as possible with me. For my part, my antennae had to pick up whether a point I was pressing was being persuasive or was simply winning agreement because I was the boss. If the latter, I had to know how to temper my voice and allow that we should not come to a final decision yet. When I was

far enough off base, I was sure that someone would say so, either in our staff meeting or privately afterward."

Again, Martin nodded knowingly, having been there.

"The arrival of John Van Ness inevitably complicated our comfortable way of managing. Coming in, John had no inkling of our management ways. When he came to the table, he did not always have the patience or the institutional understanding to let the dialogue run its course. Each of the other senior staffers had to accommodate themselves to this new presence in their own way.

"John wanted his new department to have the right tools, which would cost money—a computer system for gift recording, for one. Our business system still had not been computerized, so we went ahead with a computer system designed solely for development operations. My staff had to grit their teeth quietly as they watched this and other development costs suck resources away from their departments.

"John was listening and trying to tune his voice to the local culture, but often his expectations for his department or for the college as a whole simply seemed extreme. My veteran staffers would look to me for guidance on how much to object. More often than not, I would agree with John, and the others had to wrestle with the outcome as well as they could.

"For by this time, I was clear in my own mind what we were doing. In that fall of 1983, I had said to myself as we opened the academic year on Labor Day that it was the first year of my second administration. That was the year we completely changed the freshman orientation program—to a 'customer-friendly' style. It symbolized for me that the old guard was gone and that we would now build a wholly new tradition. And by the end of that 1983-84 academic year, when Van Ness and his team had been in our midst for some months, I tried to say in my journal what we were doing."

Bodger read from a paper he had obviously had at the ready for Martin at the right moment:

*The history of my administration is that of seeing the obsolescence of a system of college life, laying it to rest with some decorum and respect and finding an alternative system that will work to achieve ends similar at bottom to those of the old system. 4 July 1984.*

With such an inclination to basic change, Bodger said that he supported Van Ness as much as possible as he built up the college relations department in the months following his arrival. Bodger thought of Van Ness as his chief instrument of institutional change. Staffers in alumni relations, public relations, annual giving and other development activities all had been reporting directly to the president's office. Now they were placed under Van Ness's supervision.

Bill Stahl, '81, a bright young alum who dropped out of law school, was an apprentice to Bodger and was primed to take major responsibilities in a new department.

Mary Ellen DeWane, '61, went from part-time to full-time in the alumni office.

Jill Leauber, '78, was an adjunct English composition teacher who switched to full-time development work. She had been a student of Bodger's in her freshman year. Jill

took to fund-raising with ease and skill. Years later, she left the college staff to become vice president for development at Lehigh University and then at Haverford College.

The build-up gave Ken Schaefer, '70, who had been heading up admissions, an opportunity to make a career move into fund-raising as director of annual giving. (This opened the way to the appointment of Lorraine Zimmer to head admissions, a staff change that shifted the emphasis further to a marketing mode in student recruiting.)

In public relations, Andrea Detterline, '72, decided that Van Ness's arrival was a trigger for her to move on. The college upgraded the position and Van Ness identified Debra Kamens to fill it. She was an F&M graduate, hence with a grasp of our kind of college, and with an imaginative approach to promotion and a strong graphic background.

Then he found Ingrid Evans to fill a new position as director of development. She parlayed her experience in the development office at Swarthmore into a major expansion of responsibility under Van Ness.

Van Ness had placed great emphasis on the importance of prospect research in advance of a campaign. A new position for that purpose led to the hiring of Pat Benes, a graduate of Oberlin College.

"In each new hire," Bodger continued, "we concentrated on depth of understanding of our mission, on brightness of mind, and on capacity to grow and learn. Van Ness knew the market for fund-raising and public relations people was overpriced. The available talent too often was run-of-the-mill. So, John took us to people who were not all that experienced but who were adventurous enough to get involved in a department-building exercise in a promising place, where they would stretch their skills. Meanwhile, the in-house people that he folded into his department went through a learning process under him. He helped them broaden their sense of what the college should be doing in promotion and fund-raising. This process did not always please them. The tension between old ways and new never completely dissipated. Still, they bought into the basic agenda.

"The college relations department quickly developed a style of operation. Van Ness was tightly organized, cared at times to a fault about details, held people to weekly accounts of their work. He chaired heroic weekly staff meetings in the boardroom of the entire departmental team, clerical people and all. All reported on their doings, all listened for the cues from their new leader for the next steps in transforming the college. I would sit in now and then to report on policy issues, but by and large this was John's gig. Out of all the frenzy of new activity, he was following a plan for promoting the college much more ambitiously, for broadening and deepening our cultivation of alumni, and then for constructing and conducting the biggest capital campaign in our history.

"Part of the fun--and frustration--for the newcomers to the department was their swapping of stories about the quaint ways of our college culture. 'You won't believe this,' became their theme over coffee, where they would exchange anecdotes about odd characters with peculiar duties, antiquated methods of keeping records, anomalies within the organizational structure.

"The rest of the campus watched and waited, basically indulging the new department but secretly, I imagine, suspecting that the air might go out of the balloon before it brought the promised glory to our parochial little institution. Fortunately, operating funds were abundant, salaries were moving upward, and no real political opposition to what we

were attempting could gain traction in the faculty. As it became evident that the faculty and the academic program would be the central object of attention in a campaign, their wariness seemed to diminish.

"As the goals took shape within the staff and the board, Van Ness's perspective had a major influence. He brought that influence to bear on our market positioning, on our academic plans, and on our physical plant plans.

"Lacking a long and intimate experience of the institution such as mine, he was uninhibited by its past history of penury and its limited horizons. He saw no reason to hold back from a vision that would elevate the college well above its prevailing position in the hierarchy of small liberal arts colleges. 'Excellence' for him was a professional concept not a local expression of self-worth—it came from the whole world of higher education, not from local self-perceptions. Applying it to us, he could assess our strengths more objectively than I could; and he could name our weaknesses candidly without the restraint that I felt a need to exercise.

"So he pressured me to define more explicitly where we wanted to be in the marketplace. He held my feet to the fire—to live up to the heightened aspirations I had expressed for the college. What did I mean? Where was the college's constituency now and where should it be five years hence? How much better in academic credentials could our student body become in five years? How could we enrich the intellectual experience of students through an improved curriculum and through a social atmosphere more receptive to the excitement of ideas? How could we change the physical space of the campus to make it more distinctively academic and culturally sophisticated? And as to resources needed to bring about change, how could we extend the reputation and influence of the college so that we would capture support from the movers and shakers from the region and beyond?"

Martin said, "Are you saying that your planning for the institution's future market position moved from the representative Campus Planning Group to the office of college relations?"

Bodger said, "I guess I conducted an administrative balancing act. The CPG kept working, in tandem with a board long-term planning committee. But the planning for a fund-raising campaign by Van Ness fed back into those policy forums and had a determining effect on what we recommended to the board."

Martin replied, "Regardless of organizational complexity, wasn't it all the agenda of the president, not the CPG or the college relations department? How you balanced Van Ness with representatives on the CPG was mostly an issue of management style."

"Mostly," Bodger said. "I could let John propose his loftier view of where we should be going and allow the others to react, without my having to take a hard position at the outset. In that way he was a useful instrument to me for pushing toward a progressive program."

"The prerogative of presidents to be manipulative," said Martin.

Bodger said, "I kept talking with everyone and listening. For me, managing at that point seemed like conducting a daily conversation about the future of the place. Every day brought nuances and shifts of insight. They became the content of my conversations with John and everybody else who reported to me. In due course, I would become sure



that I was hearing a consensus about a given issue. That would spin out of the ongoing conversation and solidify into a recommendation to the board."

Martin said, "That style works best in a small place where the trust level among the people talking is pretty high."

Bodger said, "I think in 1983 and 1984 I felt as much trust among my staff and the larger campus community as I would experience, plus the board. Without such trust the goals that we developed would have been reduced by the thousand cuts that an academic community knows how to administer so adeptly."

### **Campaign emphasized faculty development**

Bodger talked further about Van Ness's influence on campaign goals. As an academic, he said, Van Ness saw the limitations of the college's curriculum and the constraints on its scholarly life. He tended to take for granted the unprecedented strides recently taken toward professionalizing the faculty. The point for him was to consolidate and make a permanent change of culture after the Glenmede money stopped. As an aficionado of architecture and design, he took an immediate interest in the space and plant problems standing in the way of forward movement of the educational program. His arrival coincided with a decision to engage Dagit Saylor Architects for a renovation of Duryea Hall, one of the old buildings across from the main campus on Main Street. Van Ness quickly hit a cordial note with architect Peter Saylor—they were both Penn products. And he was prepared to lend his strong support when Bodger had to decide whether to use Dagit Saylor in the next steps for plant planning.

Bodger continued, "As it turned out, Van Ness's take on our academic needs meshed pretty well with what the rest of us were seeing. Our success in the market would increasingly depend on the validity of our undergraduate liberal arts mission and its delivery by a high-toned faculty to a bright undergraduate student body. We already had a good start on improvement through the Glenmede faculty development grant. But we needed to institutionalize professional development after the grant money ran out. And we needed to enrich the curriculum, which was thin in spots and not yet evolving out of the scholarly dynamics of the newly energized faculty.

"When we applied fund-raising realities to this situation, we concluded that one of the most attractive ways to support the faculty and the curriculum would be to sell endowed professorial chairs. We had no chairs that enjoyed anything like a self-sustaining fund behind them. We figured that three benefits would flow out of seeking endowment funds for endowed chairs. By paying a portion of the salaries for those holding them, they would relieve the total faculty salary budget. By providing some financial help for professional growth, they would help sustain the change in scholarly culture begun with Glenmede money. And their very existence would signal that the college had moved up in the world—only the better colleges had the luxury of endowed chairs."

Bodger fished out another paper, a memo prepared by the academic dean, Bill Akin. At Bodger's request, he had collaborated with Van Ness, seeking to define specific targets for endowed chairs. Their objective was to name possible chairs that would enhance the academic program and that would be likely to attract donor interest.

Martin said, "Who ever said that the world of learning is not shaped by the world of money?"

Bodger replied, "Van Ness believed in reciprocity between the worlds, I think. He genuinely felt that the money would flow in the most constructive channel. Some of my old-time colleagues thought of John as a fast stepper in a crass money game. He struck me sometimes, on the contrary, as a somewhat innocent believer in a philanthropic creed. It was that seemingly innocent attitude that made for a good working relationship between him and me, I think—a relationship that many of my long-time colleagues seemed hard put to understand. We were going grubbing for big bucks. My own sense of the world demanded that we go grubbing in a noble cause. It was John who reassured me of our nobility of purpose when the process itself grew grubby."

The memo in Bodger's hand blended academic and financial possibilities by identifying the following possible endowed chairs: chair of Pennsylvania German studies; Eleanor Snell chair of health and physical education; The John Mauchly chair of computer science; chair of health science; chair of music; artist in residence; visiting professor of the college.

Bodger said, "In fund-raising, you know as well as I do that intentions and outcomes often don't match up. But in the case of professorial endowments, we didn't fare badly.

"The Pennsylvania German studies chair did not materialize. Van Ness thought it would be attractive outside. But the subject was peripheral. It had no base of broad support, and it did not attract sufficient interest.

"A chair honoring Eleanor Snell, our legendary coach of women's sports, on the other hand, did win broad support and became a reality.

"John Mauchly was our physics professor in the 1930s. He went off to the University of Pennsylvania in 1940 and, with Presper Eckert, invented the world's first operating computer, ENIAC. The college wanted to tie itself to his famous coattails. But it didn't happen in the campaign. However, the kernel of an idea for a math chair found fertile soil. Joe Beardwood, '50, had been president of the alumni association in my first years on the staff as alumni secretary. He then came onto the board. Joe was an early computer guru, who knew what it was from an engineering standpoint. He did much to heighten everyone's consciousness of the computer revolution, including mine. Joe died of cancer in late 1983, a few months before D. L. Helfferich died, leaving a spouse, Louise, who was his classmate. Louise created a chair in memory of Joe.

"The idea for a chair in health sciences emerged from our celebrated pre-medical program. It had been the spawning ground for the largest and most affluent segment of our alumni population. Harold Brownback, '15, and Paul Wagner, '30, had been the biology professors who led that program from the 1930s until Wagner's untimely death in 1970. Hundreds of alumni physicians felt that their professional careers rested squarely on the mentoring and teaching those two men provided. We promoted a Brownback-Wagner chair of health sciences, and that segment of alumni responded generously.

"The chair of music would not have been on the list had it not been for the interest expressed by Bill Heefner. Bill became the board development committee chair. He was eager to set an example. His passion for music made it the target of his charitable interest, and he proposed to make major gifts to elevate the status of music in the college priorities. First, through the resources of his mother, he provided for a magnificent pipe organ in Bomberger Hall. Then he committed to endowing a chair in music. Both gifts came as

the campaign was just revving up. They set the intended tone and did much to stimulate other board members to give and get.

"In the 'visiting professor' category, Thomas G. Davis, '52, M.D., of the board and his wife, Nancy Bare Davis, '51, created an unusual chair that focused on 'Judeo-Christian values.' While we did not endow a position of artist-in-residence, Philip and Muriel Berman endowed the directorship of the museum that came to bear their name in the course of the campaign."

Martin said that he associated endowed chairs with university research positions, not undergraduate college teaching positions. Bodger explained that the guidelines for these new chairs made them different. They were to be held for a finite number of years. They were to provide for specific professional development projects in the faculty member's field. They did not require recruitment of new stars; rather, they were designed to uplift existing faculty members for a period. With a \$500,000 minimum, the chairs would provide some but not all the income to support a salary.

Bodger continued, "I can't stress enough the symbolic value we attached to these endowed chairs as we set the campaign goals. We felt that they would begin to differentiate us from the run-of-the-mill liberal arts colleges from whom we were trying to separate ourselves. They would tell the faculty unambiguously that the college valued academic excellence above all else. They would give the college some concrete perks with which to motivate faculty members. They would also tilt the image of the college toward professionalism and away from parochial concerns about social behavior."

Martin said, "You had soft money for three years from Glenmede to jump start a system for faculty development and renewal. Endowed chairs would not in themselves provide the funds for institutionalizing that system after the soft money ended."

Bodger replied, "Income from the hoped-for endowments of faculty positions would relieve other operating income, which we would then direct toward general faculty development projects. In addition, we intended to shift our operating priorities, supported by annual giving, to favor faculty development. One way or the other, we were uncompromising in our intention to sustain a more professional academic life."

Martin reflected, "Where I'll be going, they have a long track record in anthropology, an oddity for a small college. That may be the focal point for an endowment initiative to celebrate past faculty heroes."

### **Campus and plant improvements became priorities**

Bodger told Martin that, while he and his colleagues honed the plan to raise endowment funds for professorial chairs, they were simultaneously assessing improvements to the physical plant. If academic advancement was to be the keynote of the campaign, it would have to include changes to the physical environment for teaching and learning in a residential setting.

By the time Van Ness arrived to organize the college relations department in early 1984, the college already was working with the Dagit Saylor architectural people. They were assessing what to do with the collection of old residential buildings on Main Street, opposite the great lawn of the main campus.

Some of those buildings bore evidence of the earliest life of the college in the nineteenth century. Notably, Schreiner Hall, at the corner of Sixth and Main Streets facing the Eger Gateway, was originally the home of the founding president. Super House, farther to the east, was the home of an early president, Henry Super. President Donald L. Helfferich lived in the house until his retirement in 1970. Over the years, the college acquired properties along Main Street as they came on the market. A rough division of territory assigned many upperclass women students to the Main Street dorms and men to those on campus. The college had maintained the Main Street properties at a utilitarian level. It had paid little regard to the historical character possessed by some of them. It made additions and alterations over the years as demand for space dictated. Keeping the maintenance budget tight dictated how much upkeep to do. Since several properties in the area from Sixth Avenue to Eighth Avenue (in addition to Trinity Reformed Church east of Sixth) did not belong to the college, it managed the properties as separate entities. It did not conceive of the entire area from Fifth Avenue to Eighth Avenue as an integrated unit.

By the early 1980s, some vocal townspeople were criticizing the college for the run-down appearance of the dorms. Tour guides showing the campus to prospective new students carefully steered their guests away from the old houses.

Bodger said, "We realized that something had to be done to turn these resources around. In December 1982, a volunteer engineer analyzed the Main Street buildings to see if they could be renovated. He was a member of the staff of Roberts Filter Manufacturing Company, headed by the chair of our board buildings & grounds committee, Charles V. Roberts, '32. His findings encouraged further thought about renovating some of them. Several months later we discussed the feasibility of renovations with Dagit Saylor Architects. Dagit Saylor had recently attracted attention in Philadelphia for its handling of the restoration of the president's home at the University of Pennsylvania and for other successful renovations of old buildings. Peter Saylor quickly turned out to be a compatible collaborator. He worked well particularly with Nelson Williams, our financial officer who had responsibility over the physical plant.

"Dagit Saylor confirmed the finding that most of the buildings were restorable. We took a test flight by restoring one of the best-constructed buildings, Duryea Hall, named for Rhea Duryea Johnson, '08, daughter of one of America's first automobile manufacturers. Then we commissioned Dagit Saylor to provide an evaluation and master plan for developing the entire area facing the campus green on the other side of Main Street. At first, the architect and we thought in terms of demolishing some buildings and building new ones. Soon Peter Saylor was urging us to acquire the remaining properties. He envisioned an integrated 'village' with all the old buildings restored to Victorian style and limited new construction. They would be tied together by a winding pathway and landscaping in back. A completely new wing was designed for old South Hall on Sixth Avenue, which later was espoused by Pete and Betty Musser, who funded it as an international house. A parking lot took up some of the backyard space, with neighboring properties protected by a new wall behind it. Fetterolf House, the oldest part of which predated anything else on campus, was serving as a make-shift studio for fine arts, and the plan kept that function. Also, Super House next door would remain as housing for faculty members. The entire Residential Village on one side of Main Street would represent the

Victorian façade of a small college town. It would interplay gracefully with the grand open greensward on the other side.

"When Van Ness came on board, he immediately seized on the plan as a key piece of our fund-raising strategy. We came to name the entire project the 'Residential Village'—after first toying with the term 'Academic Village.' John saw the potential for leveraging alumni gifts for this target. We put together a proposal for a challenge grant to the Kresge Foundation, where we had had success in years past. Peter Saylor became an advocate for us at Kresge. We won the grant, and the challenge was for alumni to match the Kresge grant three dollars for one. That campaign within a campaign succeeded—a major piece of the over-all effort."

Martin said, "A Kresge grant would also have given your campaign a 'Good Housekeeping' seal of approval. If you won a Kresge grant, it said to the world that you were getting to be a player on the big scene."

"Right, even though Kresge had the nasty habit of giving their money after the project was finished rather than when it started."

Martin said, "I assume that the townspeople who had been criticizing your stewardship of the old houses were won over."

Bodger said they were. "Indeed, the Residential Village came to symbolize the effort we made over the years to be a good citizen of the town. Sensitivities often were large because our town was so small, and the college sometimes seemed to bestride it like its mascot, the Grizzly Bear. But many townspeople were employees and the town had an intimate understanding of the rhythm of the college's life. There always was pressure for more voluntary college support of the fire company and other borough services. Our responses were generous enough to keep peace, I guess. Anyway, the Residential Village instilled a new feeling of pride in town."

Bodger continued his account of the creative relationship between Dagit Saylor and the college in planning for a new campus setting. "Our confidence in Dagit Saylor was now deep enough to push us toward a next major step. We engaged them to do a master plan of the main campus. A residential campus is an expression of the values of the education proffered by the institution. Ours had grown and changed piecemeal over the years. Helfferich had followed a 1918 vision when he decided on the placement of new buildings in the 1960s. Since then, the college had to anticipate new site needs and solve problems of traffic flow. The legacy of ad hoc development was that the parts of the campus did not fit well. We knew a new academic building had to be done sometime. We had a crying need for more athletic fields. The campus road knifed through the heart of the campus since its early days and made for an ungraceful and dysfunctional space for students going to and from the dining hall.

"The campaign mood pushed us into thinking comprehensively. Peter Saylor assumed that on the main campus we needed to create a more closely integrated academic community. A bird's eye view told him that the campus was functionally fractured. He saw in front the formal greensward, our great lawn, facing the newly defined small-town façade in the Residential Village across Main Street. He saw in back, toward Route 29 and the Perkiomen Creek, the organized playing fields. And he saw these two great areas interrupted by the roadway cutting through the entire campus, paralleling Main Street."

Bodger summarized the master plan reorganization for Martin. The old campus roadway would close to become a pedestrian spine from one end to the other. It would become a landscaped promenade and the fulcrum for future building projects. A plaza in front of Wismer Hall would become the center of action. Maintenance functions in the center would move to the peripheral shop area at Fifth Avenue. Anachronistic sites for waste would disappear. New space for athletic facilities would extend into the old college woods toward the Perkiomen Creek. A new "beltway" would move traffic to the back of campus, away from the academic and social core. It would connect with the west end of campus, allowing flow all the way through in both directions.

"The master planning was prescient," said Bodger. "We had it in hand when in the course of the campaign we defined two major building projects. One was an art museum in our college union building, which had been the old Alumni Memorial Library—what would become the Berman Museum. The second was a new humanities building, which would come to be named F. W. Olin Hall. Without the master plan, our case to Philip and Muriel Berman and to the F. W. Olin Foundation would have been weak. The plan demonstrated the coherence of our vision and made our case persuasive."

Martin said, "Are you saying that the Berman Museum and Olin Hall were not goals of the campaign?"

"Not as we announced it."

"But they became goals after the campaign began?"

#### **Estimates of gift sources shaped the list of other campaign goals**

Bodger replied, "The general idea of the campaign was that the college had to take a big leap forward academically, that it had to heighten the perception of its character and quality in a bolder way with a broader public. The campaign had a list of specifics, but these always were seen as representative not exhaustive. We specified the endowed academic chairs and the re-shaping of the campus plan, along with a longer list of specifics. Defining the campaign goals was somewhat like running a vacuum cleaner through the organization and sweeping up the unmet wants and needs. Our list included money to sustain the faculty development program started with Glenmede funds. It included a \$3 million increase in endowment to support scholarship funds to offset the higher tuition charges we knew we would have to set. We identified the need for new academic computing facilities, which would allow us to cut our umbilical cord to the Dartmouth Time Sharing System. Our science departments drew up a list of equipment and instrumentation needs that came to three-quarters of a million dollars. Before we formed the final campaign plan, the library staff had been studying the ways and means of converting the old card catalog to an online system and, in the process, renovating the building. Our staff was near the forefront in re-thinking information science as the digital revolution warmed up. So, we set a half-million-dollar goal for automating and renovating Myrin. Van Ness was disturbed to find that our fund-raising record keeping was still in the green eye shade era—nor had we yet computerized our general business operations. So, we included an item to pay for the computerized automation of administration. The health and physical education people weighed in for a weight training

room—this was just becoming popular with students—and for the renovation of tennis courts and hockey fields."

Martin said, "You probably could have had a list twice as long."

Bodger replied, "Of course—we were constrained by the gut estimate of our capacity to raise funds from our known constituencies. You were right when you said that money dictates academic priority. The board endorsed these staff-defined goals, knowing they were half the result of wishing and half the result of informed planning. The total came to about \$20 million, not counting another \$3.5 million for much of the campus master plan reconfiguration, such as parking lots."

Martin wrinkled up his nose. "I bet you didn't raise the precise amounts designated for each of the items."

Bodger replied, "We were able to direct some undesignated giving to items that did not have sales appeal. But, yes, in the end there were significant gaps between amounts announced and amounts raised, item for item."

Martin said, "That's why I could not bring myself to put a big package of a campaign like that together. I was fearful of setting up expectations, failing to fulfill them, and being unable to explain why."

Bodger said, "It depends what you want a campaign to do. Sure, we wanted to hit those specific targets. But that was not the big message. Helped by Van Ness, I came to think that the campaign would be an orchestration of separate needs into a semblance of institutional wholeness—the classic purpose of a capital campaign. The individual parts were less important than the vision of institutional movement on a broad front. In the campaign literature we began to talk about advancing our position among the nation's best independent liberal arts colleges—it took the campaign to push me into that assertion.

"The parts, as a matter of fact, did seem to cohere. They involved annual program support, endowment growth, and capital growth. And for good measure we figured on \$2 million in deferred gifts for future interest. The campaign goals were an expression of the college's self-understanding. If that self-understanding appeared to be clear to donors, we figured they would endorse it with their gifts."

Martin said, "And I know they did, one way or another."

### **"Patterns for the Future" demanded institutional discipline**

Bodger continued: "They endorsed us largely because of the discipline we enforced on ourselves to execute the campaign. I had been working up toward a campaign since Barnes & Roche studied our readiness to campaign in 1982. The board development committee, chaired by Bill Heefner, had accepted the discipline of soliciting the board to create a nucleus fund before any public notice of campaigning was contemplated. John Ware had committed \$200,000 to the nucleus fund, and this became a motivator for others. But when Van Ness came aboard and we structured the campaign, that nucleus fund exercise became a preliminary step. We solicited the board all over again. That would have been unheard of in the old days at the college.

"The selection of Heefner to chair the campaign was the most important single decision. Without a qualified chair, a campaign just wouldn't succeed, except by a fluke. Bill was qualified in any number of ways. He was in the number two position among the

board's officers, behind Tom Glassmoyer, and the presumed heir apparent—and he was quite open with me about his eagerness to take on the chairmanship of the board in due course. He saw the campaign as a step to that position, and so did I. He was at the peak of his legal career in Bucks County, well respected in the region. He had a philanthropic track record as long-time head of the Bucks County Historical Society. He and I had a close working relationship that dated back to the late 1960s.

"Most important for the campaign strategy, he understood that a lead gift by the chair was key. And his lifelong love affair with music gave him focus. He wanted to support the music department. He had played the pipe organ in Bomberger Hall during his undergraduate years and was still playing the organ at the Lutheran Church down the road from his rural homestead on Old Bethlehem Pike in Perkasio. We had identified a chair of music in our list of goals because of his early expression of interest in endowing it. Bill had already 'adopted' our bright young music director, John French. The good chemistry between them created a solid basis for Bill's commitment to the endowed chair.

"He also attached a kind of string to this pledge. The pipe organ Bill had played as a student in the years before World War II had died and a mediocre electronic instrument stood in its place. It was an embarrassment in his mind and certainly out of keeping with the grand space of the chapel that memorialized the founding president of the college. Bill proposed to replace it with a new pipe organ designed for the hall. He saw such an installation as a symbolic statement about the general aspirations of the campaign and the college. It would say to the world: 'We're going top drawer.' This was in perfect harmony with the strategic planning we had been doing to identify a higher market position for the college.

"Bill was closely involved in the choice of the Austin Organ Company in Hartford to custom-design and build the organ. He followed the project each step of the way. It was for him a labor of love. And his expertise combined with his pocketbook to shape the instrument into the symbol of excellence that he had foreseen better than I.

"For me the project provided an education from the ground up in organ building. It was not my favorite kind of music. Schooled by Heefner and French, I came to the threshold of appreciation for the rich tradition of organ music in Western culture. It was a marvelous marriage of the physical and the artistic. An organ is a great big hunk of physical reality! Having a music teacher as a spouse of course helped me to accommodate the whole initiative. And I hope it helped Bill to understand that he had a genuine ally in the president's corner, not just an opportunist.

"Not everyone on the board shared Bill's sophisticated insight into the symbolic value of the instrument, but they understood his generosity, and that stirred generosity from others. In setting an example, he was the consummate campaign leader. The total of his gifts for the endowment and the organ exceeded a million dollars, and that was generosity indeed for a self-styled 'country lawyer.'

Martin said, "A lead gift was essential from the chair, but I take it that it was not the only contribution he made to the campaign."

Bodger replied, "His financial pledges were integral to his leadership. But his leadership was far more than that. He was available, involved, engaged, and responsive to the proposed campaign tactics coming from Van Ness and the rest of the development staff. The interplay between staff and the campaign leaders provided a discipline for the



entire campaign. It was always in danger of falling apart. But Bill insisted on schedules, on keeping feet to fires. He schmoozed and entertained and asked for the dime, always with the support of the staff. 'We'll do what we have to do,' was his theme.

Martin said, "The trust between you and him had to be critical."

Bodger answered, "I feel I was lucky in my working relationships throughout my career at the college. I guess I had a compelling need to be trusted and supported. That made me want to be trusting and supportive. And that involved a mutual willingness to be vulnerable."

"To take risks together?"

Bodger replied, "That's it."

Bodger drew for Martin a thumbnail sketch of the execution of the campaign. It was an exercise in willed institutional discipline. Bodger empowered the senior staff to make day-to-day decisions without him. He withdrew from some off-campus commitments at the state and regional level so that he could be on the road in pursuit of major gifts. The Campus Planning Group became a monitor of the progress toward campaign goals and watched over implementation as new resources began to flow in. The college abandoned its Spartan approach to ceremony and held splashy 'cultivation events' designed to bring new supporters into the fold and to expand the gift potential of existing supporters.

Bodger's black tie saw frequent use.

Bodger said, "The splashiest was the first, on 1 November 1985. We kicked off the campaign publicly with a black tie bash at center city Philadelphia's finest hotel, the Four Seasons on the Parkway. The mere fact of the event symbolized that we were going to do things with more style, more glitz. It was a typical event as these things went in the larger world, but for us it was a breakthrough. That night, Bill Heefner announced that donors had pledged \$6.5 million of the \$20 million goal. A million of that was his own gift for the chair in music and the Bomberger organ.

"The stage for the public kick-off was set at the board meeting the previous May. It was there that Bill Heefner obtained formal approval of the campaign after he announced his own lead gift. The theme of his remarks was important. I had been saying all along that the campaign for money was a surrogate for a search for higher institutional status. And Bill caught that. I have what he said here:

*All of the steps taken to date are linked together. A synergism is at play. One gift supports another gift. In a campaign, each part contributes to all other parts. We are not merely securing gifts, we are raising the sights and the level of performance of the whole college. Our students tell us we need that. Our faculty tells us we need that. Our admissions people tell us we need that. I believe that the board agrees that we need this. What we do will affect the quality of the students we attract, of the faculty, and yet the quality of future boards.*

*Now we are prepared to go public. This is the time, here and now, for the board, the alumni, friends and supporters--the entire college community--to put the campaign formally into motion and to take it and the college to new heights of success.*

Martin said, "It sounds like campaign rhetoric at almost any decent college. But I know it was a new note for your college."

Bodger said, "New in a couple of ways. Heefner's was a proactive board voice. The board was not just getting a sermon from the president, as in years past. Someone from within the board was giving the sermon. Also, he was rolling the dice for the quality of the whole college, not just for this or that campaign objective. Win or lose the campaign, I felt the college never was going to be quite the same again.

"This sense of novelty permeated much of my agenda in the months following the kick-off. In December 1985, Margot and I and an entourage from the development staff mounted an unprecedented six-day assault on the alumni of Florida. We traveled from Orlando down the East Coast and then swung over to the Tampa Bay area, with stops all along the way. Van Ness was unrelenting in pushing me to meet with major gift prospects one-on-one. Meanwhile, he and other staffers organized meetings with groups of alumni. We had a freshly minted video production to stir nostalgia and set the stage, complete with Handel in the background. Everything we did aimed at bringing alumni a new and urgent sense of occasion. The 'Patterns for the Future' campaign was the most ambitious financial outreach in our history. But it was also an unprecedented effort to alter the culture of the college—and that needed explaining. How would we preserve the old college that alumni had experienced and remembered fondly while changing it into something they would not recognize?

"I found my speech to alums at the Tequesta Country Club, where Tom Beddow, '36, and his wife Ginny, '37, were hosts. You can see me stretching to identify a market position."

*First, we will solidify our status as the best regional liberal arts college in the greater Delaware Valley, measured in quality of students and faculty, quality of curriculum, and endowment per student. Second, we will do a far better job of letting our public know of our premier status in the region through improved communications. Third, we will set as a longer term target the attainment of comparability with the leading liberal arts colleges throughout the east, building upon our top regional position. Fourth, we will spend more dollars per student than we ever had done to bring this about. Fifth, we will generate that money through somewhat higher tuition and through an unprecedented capital campaign, "Patterns for the Future."*

After identifying the financial goals, Bodger explained his personal priorities:

*It has become my personal mission for the next couple of years to reach out and activate the interest of as many alumni as possible, so that the campaign will be successful.... I am here today to extend an invitation. I invite you to give serious attention to what is happening at and to the college at this time. If as a result you come to share ownership of the vision of our college at the pinnacle of regional leadership in liberal education, then I invite you further to help us achieve our goal for the campaign. I invite you seriously to rethink your personal giving priorities for the next several years, or, with the aid of planned giving instruments, your lifetime charitable commitment.*

He finished with a reference to two themes that ran through Calvin D. Yost's centennial history of the college:

*One is that the college was always dedicated to seeking the best. The other was that it never had enough money to seek the best in the best possible way. In a real sense, then, this campaign is designed to put an end to the penurious tradition and to enable us to demonstrate once and for all to the academic world that we properly belong with the leaders. I do hope all alumni will want to take an active part in this historic adventure.*

### **Campaign forced the college to seek its market position**

Martin said, "What did 'regional' mean in your mind? Why did you limit the vision?"

Bodger said, "Positioning was a brand new game for us. Van Ness pressed it. I felt strongly that I would have been just whistling in the dark to declare that we were one of the 'national' liberal arts colleges."

Martin said, "Christopher Jencks and David Riesman in *The Academic Revolution* used the term 'university college' to mean something similar."

"Exactly," said Bodger. "In fact I used that term at times and felt it worked better than 'regional liberal arts college.' We did fit into their category—ours was a college that prepared undergraduates for graduate school. But the culture of academic professionalism that predominated at nearby colleges of unquestioned national stature, notably Swarthmore and Haverford, simply had not matured yet on our campus.

"Nevertheless, by defining the campaign, we were defining our aspiration to move in that direction. Our changes in student life programs by now had weakened the hold of parochialism—we were freer to concentrate on academic vitality because we were freer of the need to sit in loco parentis over student behavior. Some years would have to pass before the 'regional' rhetoric would yield to the message that we were seriously contending for national status. By traveling to Florida and elsewhere, we were at least beginning to assert an identity that meant something beyond the five counties surrounding Philadelphia."

Martin said, "So, you were campaigning for identity as well as for money."

Bodger nodded in agreement. "And campaigning for a future."

He put a copy of the college bulletin in front of Martin from January 1986 to press the point further. "I said that the 'big plan' represented by 'Patterns for the Future' was to position the college as 'the premier liberal arts college of our geographical area' and as 'one of the best such colleges in the east.'"

Martin said, "In your mind you were excluding the national Quaker colleges, but it does not sound that way."

Bodger laughed, "Ambiguity on positioning was my strong suit at that point—I was groping for what I think became the right direction. That year, Edward B. Fiske, *The New York Times* education reporter, included us in his *Best Buys in College Education*. This resulted from a combination of our relatively good academic quality and our still-low tuition price. It was the first time, I think, that the rating game brought us national recognition. It was actually the ratings by *US News and World Report* that finally allowed us unabashedly to call ourselves a national liberal arts college. The Carnegie Endowment criteria put us in that category, and they were the criteria adopted by *US News*. As the rating game heated up and the criteria became better understood, our problem of identity

changed. Granted, we became identified as a member of the national liberal arts college group. But our ranking within that category was nothing to boast about.

"While the campaign was going on, however, my language was still ambiguous. 'Patterns for the Future' shakily moved us along a trajectory of perceived quality in the marketplace. And along with the movement came parallel movement of our needs and expectations for more financial support."

### **Board members had a "greatest generation" attitude**

Martin told Bodger that the limits of time on the calendars of his board members created a perennial problem for him as a president. "They were on our board because they were busy and successful. But I had to scurry to get their time and effort just because they were busy and successful. Didn't you have that problem, especially during the campaign?"

Bodger answered, "We set a monthly schedule of regular campaign committee meetings. Heefner and those of us on the staff relentlessly held to the schedule although we knew we would rarely have full attendance. That regularity had a stabilizing effect on the soliciting and did much to move the campaign forward when reports went to the full board and other constituents. We worked for new gifts between meetings so that we could report progress at the meetings. It wasn't pretty, but it sort of worked."

Reflecting, Bodger added that the campaign seemed to tap into a reserve of personal loyalty and pride among the alumni leaders. This made them eager to put the college's needs at that point ahead of other activities.

Bodger continued, "They believed that the quality of the college was greater than its public reputation. They believed that by improving the quality even more we could correct its low public profile. They wanted to do that to ratify their sense of self-worth and to pass on a better institution to a new generation. Furthermore, they agreed with my view, I suspect, that a change in public perception would not undermine the college's traditional homely virtues grounded in religious and moral principle, which they had experienced as students. The campaign would enable it to get out from under a barrel and receive recognition for the worth it always had quietly possessed."

Martin said, "You were fortunate to have this sense of the ripeness for a campaign. It's something I will have to look for in my upcoming task."

"Remember," said Bodger, "many of the leaders were from the World War II generation. They had a simple sort of optimism, a conviction that, once resolved on a mission, they could succeed, as long as they stuck to the program."

"The 'greatest generation' mindset," said Martin.

This attitude became unmistakable by the time the campaign reached its half-way mark, Bodger remembered. The campaign raised about \$10 million by June 1986. Van Ness urged a celebration to mark the moment and renew the enthusiasm of leaders and major prospects and donors. James Baird, '38, and his wife Betty, '45, volunteered to provide the venue at their country club. As a retired executive of the DuPont Corporation, Baird retained his social standing among company managers. This gave him membership in the exclusive Greenville Country Club outside Wilmington. A Sunday brunch on a bright summer day in that graceful setting was just the lift the campaign called

for. The campaign leaders reported on recent successes. One of the most notable was a \$1 million memorial bequest from Katherine Wicks Perry of Washington, DC, an elderly daughter of Ross Frederick Wicks, of the college class of 1897. Another was the approval of a \$350,000 challenge grant in support of the Residential Village from the Kresge Foundation. Riding the tide of success, Bill Heefner announced that the board had re-opened its pledging process and would increase its original nucleus fund commitment.

Bodger said, "Bill Heefner's committee piloted the campaign successfully through its second half. From the start, it sponsored high-profile events to lend drama on campus, among our constituents, and in our publicity. The most symbolic and most telling for the dramaturgy of the campaign, I think, took place when we held Founders' Day in Bomberger Hall on 2 November 1986. We dedicated the Russell E. Heefner Memorial Organ and installed John French as the holder of the William F. Heefner Chair of Music. Our guest speaker was Joseph Polisi, the president of the Juilliard School. New at Juilliard, Polisi was thinking of bringing music and the liberal arts into closer integration. His enthusiasm for his own agenda was just right for us, since, working from the other end of the academic spectrum, we were proposing a closer integration of music in our liberal arts program.

"Bill Heefner's willingness that day in Bomberger Hall to stand up and be counted, and to bring his mother into the picture besides, captured the attention of all members of the board and major donors beyond them.

"Then there was the dedication of Musser Hall. Betty Musser of our board had led me to her entrepreneur-husband Pete, then beginning his rise to the top of the high-technology corporate revolution in the Delaware Valley. Their \$500,000 pledge early in the campaign lent lots of credibility to the effort. We applied it to the building of an international student residence hall, actually an expansion of a classic old dorm, South Hall, on Sixth Avenue. It was the cameo of our newly conceived Residential Village running the length of Main Street across from the main campus.

"Another campaign event involved the Bermans in our rededication of the oldest building on campus, Fetterolf House, also a component of the Residential Village. We added an art studio to the old building. The Bermans loaned some of their most attractive work for an exhibit in the newly renovated building. Phil Berman had bought a monumental outdoor sculpture from Mary Ann Unger titled "The Temple." It was a multi-colored mushroom-like affair standing perhaps fifteen feet high. You could walk inside it. Guided by Peter Saylor, the architect working on our grand master plan, we located the Unger piece on the open greensward in line with Fetterolf. The point was to establish an axis of art across Main Street from the art studio to the sculpture. This decision aroused predictable pros and cons on campus and among townspeople, who could not avoid the new campus feature as they drove by. All of the action around art of course was a run-up to a decision by Bermans and the college to take the plunge and create a new art museum.

"The campaign hummed along, with solicitations vigorously taking place at all levels. The challenge grant from the Kresge Foundation helped us push smaller donors to a more generous level of giving. It supported the transformation of the old houses on Main Street into the Residential Village. The campaign moved to closure by 3 March 1988, when we announced we had crossed the \$20 million goal. It took a pledge by Tom and Nancy Davis

to push the campaign over its goal. I had been talking with them for months about an endowed chair in Judeo-Christian values. Their enthusiasm for such a focus had to fit with the academic culture of the campus. In the end, their endowed gift funded short-term stays on campus for visiting professors dealing with values and religion.

"To mark the attainment of the goal, we held an all-campus celebration, with a special dinner for students, faculty, and staff in Wismer Hall."

Martin asked, "Did students buy into what was going on?"

Bodger said, "You know that student perspectives are likely to be self-centered."

Martin added, "And blunt as a bludgeon."

"Sure," Bodger went on, "campus chatter stirred some doubt about the grand enterprise that excited so many of us on the staff and board. My very public commitment to adding an art museum to the campus drew fire. Phil Berman's gifts of monumental outdoor sculpture made it impossible for students and faculty to ignore the commitment. A good many thought it was Berman's insult to our integrity. More, though, seemed to see the bigger purpose. I felt affirmed more often than not by the campus buzz."

### **Despite weaknesses, the campaign leveraged the college's strengths**

Bodger said that the campaign raised nearly \$4 million for annual program support, more than \$7 million for endowment, including a number of newly endowed professorial chairs, more than \$6 million for capital improvement and \$3 million for future interests. The college said it would continue raising funds for specific objectives that were undersubscribed, such as faculty development endowment and computer science.

Bodger added, "Though in hindsight, \$20 million does not look large, at the time it was more than the sum of all dollars raised in previous campaigns. It was the first campaign of modern times at the college that proceeded with the kind of professionalism found at the most ambitious American colleges and universities."

Martin nodded: "The point of it, from my viewpoint, remains 'institutional bootstrapping.' Your college leveraged itself by drawing on its strengths and taking the risk of setting very public targets."

Bodger replied, "I guess the weaknesses of the whole effort stand out in my mind. I would hesitate to tell a new president to jump into a high-profile campaign, considering the inherent problems. Sure, we made the over-all goal. We did not make a lot of subordinate targets. After kicking off, the Bermans caught fire and gave for the museum but it was not in our campaign goals. That over-inflated plant gifts. Not all the proposed endowments for faculty chairs attracted support—notably Pennsylvania German studies. We failed to raise significant money to support computer science, one of the stated program goals."

Martin said, "Did these anomalies make your faculty and donors question the legitimacy of the campaign's over-all success?"

"They did not, mainly, I think, because we promised to keep going after funds for the unfulfilled objectives. So, we dodged some bullets."

"That's my point," Martin affirmed. "It was worth it to you to risk looking bad on particulars if you could convey a general feeling of advancing the college on a broad front."

Bodger said there was something more. It was as if the campaign had a talismanic effect. In the period immediately following its successful conclusion, the evidence that the college was "arriving" accumulated. Many in the college could feel that its success was begetting success.

"I could paint a pretty picture, leaving out negative nuances lurking in shadows," Bodger said. "As the campaign success was being announced, the Bermans were deciding to take the plunge with us and go for a museum. Our application to the F. W. Olin Foundation received a friendly welcome and led to our winning of the annual national Olin sweepstakes—to finance a new humanities building at the heart of campus. The Middle States Association ten-year visit by an outside committee led not only to reaffirmation of our accreditation but to an endorsement of what we had been doing and where we were headed. The Phi Beta Kappa fortress—after decades of rebuffing pleas for entrance from our Phi Beta Kappa faculty committee—finally showed signs of opening up for us to have a chapter. The faculty committee on curriculum revision, after time-consuming and frustrating labor, produced a fresh package that conformed to the philosophical goals set by a previous committee. The multi-year effort cost our academic dean a case of the shingles but he won the day in the end. We did some new packaging of the student life program too. The Centennial Conference for football—and later for all sports—burst into being after midnight telephone calls among its eight founding presidents, of which I was one. It meant that our college was moving into a differentiated company of peers that later would benchmark our further moves in the market. Bill Heefner's leadership of the campaign and the trust between us had led to his move at last into the presidency of the board. Bill resolved to run the board more aggressively than his predecessor, Tom Glassmoyer, who remained as chair of the executive committee. Bill's move into the chair set the stage for the final chapter of my tenure."

Martin said, "Sounds like the fruits of success, falling into your lap."

"Sounds like," Bodger repeated. "These developments felt very good. I said there were background clouds."

Checking the clock, Martin rose and prepared to leave Bodger's study. He said that he wanted to run through the fruits of success that Bodger had ticked off. "And give me something about clouds. I think I have to look carefully at some clouds before I wander off to my new venue."

The veterans promised to meet again in a few days.

### **Fruits of success--Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art**

Rain was lightly falling the day Martin knocked on Bodger's door for their final conversation. Over coffee in the comfort of Bodger's study they returned to the markers of "arriving" that he had enumerated last time. Martin seemed to be looking for a pattern of priorities, growing out of the successful campaign. He said it might provide a template against which to compare conditions where he was going.

"I hear you saying that the Bermans were the most promising and challenging major donors to surface in the campaign," Martin said, raising his eyebrows.

Bodger nodded yes. "Promising yes. Challenging yes. Fun yes. Demanding yes. Generous yes. Controlling yes. Cooperative yes. They rejected the typical role of donor.

Giving resources—art, money—was their start, not their end. Their goal was to become intimately involved with the target of their philanthropy. They wanted to have an active part in the institution's development. They liked to be thanked like any other major donor but it was more important to them to help set the agenda. They were wary because so often they had been the target of proposals that sought their money but not their involvement. There was an abundance of folklore among area college presidents about hopeful relationships with them becoming testy."

Martin said that he might have contributed to the folklore, having made proposals himself for their support when he was president—unsuccessfully.

Bodger continued, "Phil was retired from his merchandising enterprises but he had not retired his zeal to win, his love of gaining advantage and making a good deal. He transported his business approach to the philanthropic activities that filled his later years. Heads of colleges and other charitable entities were not always tuned into his style. Muriel and he were a close team, always speaking as a single voice. She too had a sharp eye for the right deal, and together they could intimidate an unwary college president.

"Despite warnings and concerns from board members and others, I went forward with the Bermans, encouraged by Van Ness, who saw in them the biggest hope for a heroic development drama."

Martin asked, "You were a reluctant suitor?"

Bodger said, "Not reluctant. Careful. I suspect that the Bermans came to respect my caution as they came to believe in my desire to go forward. I was cautious partly because of fear of some on the board that the college would be used for the Bermans' personal purposes at the expense of institutional mission and priorities. I did not want to get too far ahead of that view. The Bermans for their part were cautious for fear of being taken for granted once they committed their gift."

"This was a very personal matter for you and them," Martin said.

Bodger carefully replied, "Without question, the Berman Museum would not exist if it had not been for the steady growth of personal trust between us, abetted by trust and encouragement from Bill Heefner and a few others on the board. From the start, Bill supported a Berman agenda as expansive as we could make it. For it would complement his personal interest in advancing the arts on campus through the music program."

"So, the subtext of the Berman Museum project," said Martin, "was the cultivation of a relationship."

"It was the prerequisite for the project," Bodger replied. "And it was the source of benefits for the college and my leadership that went far beyond the museum project. The Bermans bestrode a broad stage. It extended beyond America to Europe and Israel and even Japan. They never hesitated to bring the college and me onto that stage with them.

"Their circle of friends and acquaintances included, for example, medical pioneer Jonas Salk and his spouse, Francoise Gilot, once Picasso's partner and mother of his children. It included writer James Michener. Phil had served in the South Pacific with Michener in World War II. He remembered when Michener and he met the original of the character Bloody Mary in Michener's story, *South Pacific*. Honoring his old friendship with Phil, Michener made the trip to Collegeville to keynote the dedication of the Berman Museum. The Bermans visited with Henry Moore and Lynn Chadwick, England's preeminent sculptors. Through Martin Meyerson, president emeritus of the University of



Pennsylvania, an old friend, Phil helped persuade Daniel Boorstin, former Librarian of Congress, to visit the college. And so on. Phil and Muriel managed their network of friendships and relationships with a joy of living that infected the air around them. This became a resource for the college too as our relationship matured.

"There actually were deep foundations that augured success for the relationship between the Bermans and the college. We were not just getting acquainted for the first time. Phil's feelings about Ursinus were favorably colored by his youthful adventure as a freshman at the college in 1932-33. He enjoyed telling the story of his daily jaunt down the Perkiomen Valley by train from his home near Pennsburg to take classes. He dropped out after one year and never returned to college. That may have made the memory of that one year as a student long ago more precious to him. When he was a powerhouse in the civic life of Allentown, Phil and Allentown newspaper publisher William Reimert became friendly and mutually supportive. Reimert, of the class of '24, served for many years on the college's board of directors and presided over it for some years before his death in the late 1960s. Reimert saw to it that Berman received an honorary degree from the college. When Wismer Hall opened in 1965 with a small gallery for art in the back of the auditorium, the Bermans were quick to agree to display works from their collection at an opening exhibition. The then-president of the college, Donald L. Helfferich, and the Bermans got along amiably, albeit cautiously.

"The legitimacy of the college's need for an art program also helped solidify the relationship. Phil was an entrepreneur first and last, and Muriel had the same instinct. They both saw that a museum would be more than an educational resource on campus. It would become a new indicator of quality for the college in the marketplace. A marriage of art education with marketing was just right to them, as it was to us.

"My relationship with the Bermans began a few years after I became president. They brought Glenn Zwegardt and other young sculptors to the fore, and I decided to accept Glenn's 'Upheaval II,' a piece of rude rusted steel sculpture, taken from twisted wreckage created by a major hurricane. This and other abstract work kept the campus buzzing and kept our relationship cooking. Campus critics of the very contemporary stuff appearing on campus had to take a second breath in 1983. The Bermans agreed to commission Michael Price to do a statue of our college namesake. Price's sensitive and thoroughly representational rendering showed campus critics that the Bermans had eclectic tastes that did not exclude traditional work. The unveiling of that piece took place at the 400<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the life of our namesake.

"The personal bond between us tightened in the summer of 1987. Phil and Muriel organized an elaborate two-week tour to Israel for a dozen or so people, all expenses paid. In the group were Phil's daughter Nancy and her husband Allan Bloch; Martin Meyerson and his wife Margie; Robert Smith, erstwhile head of the Glenmede Trust Company, manager of Pew charities, and his wife Tamara; Joseph Rishel and Anne d'Harmoncourt, husband and wife, of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Eric Outwater and his wife Myra Goldfarb, a writer from the Lehigh Valley. We traveled the length of Israel with our private guide in a private bus. We met many of Israel's political leaders, including the prime minister and Teddy Kollek, mayor of Jerusalem. Kollek was a long-time Berman friend. We were in Jerusalem for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. The Bermans gave a massive Liberman sculpture to the Jerusalem

Foundation headed by Kollek, and the dedication of "Peace" was a highlight of the trip. We met veterans of the '47 battle for independence and our guide was a veteran of the '67 war against Egypt. We met Moshe and Trude Dothan, world-renowned archaeologists at Hebrew University, who enjoyed backing from the Bermans for their work. The Bermans, including Nancy, who had done a summer of digging in Israel while she was an undergraduate at Wellesley, had friends everywhere in Israel. Tiberias, it turned out, was a sister city of Allentown, PA, owing to the initiative of Phil and Muriel years before. The Bermans were buying sculpture by young Israeli artists and having it placed in towns like Tiberias. It seemed as if we went to a public dedication every day in the week. The bonds we made on that bus trip with the Bermans and their band of friends lasted for many years afterward."

Martin raised a finger for a moment in silence and carefully asked, "After such an experience, courtesy of the Bermans, were you still in a position to be cautious about the museum project?"

"I think so. The Bermans wanted to see whether I was a trustworthy partner, I think. The total immersion of a trip like that allowed them to see Margot and me without mirrors. Whether or not they intended it, it also allowed me to see what kind of partners they would be. I obviously came down on the affirmative side. Though they enjoyed their place with the rich and powerful, they were personally unpretentious. Phil never forgot his roots in rural Pennsylvania Dutch country. I liked that about him and I think he liked my common origins. The trip allowed us both to conclude that we could trust one another.

"I called for a special board meeting in December 1987, when the agreement with the Bermans received approval. They would give art and cash while the college would foot the bill for renovating the old library building, now the college union. The Bermans became involved as we went to the market for a director. They and the college were happy with Lisa Tremper, fresh from the graduate program at the University of Southern California and a position with the Armand Hammer Foundation, where she helped manage Hammer's traveling collection. Lisa was Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Richmond, full of energy and ideas, flexible and fun to work with. Flamboyant on the surface, she proved to have solid stuff and stayed the course for many years."

Martin said, "And so the museum project went forward. At the same time, if I understand the story, Phil was negotiating with Lynn Chadwick to cast a large number of his sculptures for an American venue."

Bodger said, "With the death of Henry Moore, Chadwick, many thought, was the king of British contemporary sculpture. The Bermans had bought his work and had become personally acquainted with him and his wife. Phil and Chadwick agreed on a casting of more than a hundred pieces of his work, some of it large for outdoors, more of it small for museum display. The entire collection was a gift from the Bermans to the college. Margot and I visited the Chadwicks at their country estate, Lypiatt, in Gloucestershire, in the summer of 1988. Our mission was to assure Chadwick that the college and we were worthy stewards. He flew over on the Concorde for a visit on campus in the fall of 1988. The Chadwick collection was worth an incredible amount on the market, though the terms were that we would not sell. The whole Chadwick

transaction, occurring as we negotiated the final terms of the Bermans' gift for the museum, gave the museum project itself a world-class air.

"We had our opening in 1989, featuring James Michener speaking outdoors to a crowd of students and faculty, alumni, townspeople. It was great. We held the customary formal dinner and the inaugural exhibit featured favorites from the Bermans' collection, showing their eclectic 'passion for art.'"

Martin said, "You absorbed a fair amount of criticism for the museum. Any regrets?"

"None," Bodger said. "We spent more than we planned to, of course."

"One always does," Martin said.

"But the museum was our most visible sign of change from the old college into something new. The negative criticism was small by my estimation, spray from the breaking wave. I never doubted for a minute that we were doing the right thing."

Martin encouraged Bodger to say more about other "fruits of success," signs that the college was "arriving."

### **Fruits of success—F.W. Olin Hall for the humanities**

Bodger replied, "The museum in my mind said it all without having to say a word. Indeed, securing the commitment of the Bermans significantly influenced the F. W. Olin Foundation to choose us as one of their two winners in 1988. Phil Berman, having signed on, did all he could to endorse the college with the foundation. Lawrence Milas, head of the Foundation, saw the Berman commitment as a sign of life and progress."

Martin said, "How envious we other presidents in Pennsylvania were of your success with Olin. And regretful in a way, for we knew that Olin distributed gifts by state. Once it made an award in Pennsylvania, it would not do so again for some time. So you put a whole bunch of wannabes like me out of the running."

Bodger and Martin talked further about the unique place of the F. W. Olin Foundation. It was the only major foundation in the nation to give the entire amount needed for a building. A college could not add other funds from elsewhere. Olin had a construction management team that followed construction from start to finish and controlled the disbursement of construction funds. In its application procedures, it was fiercely independent of "pull." Competition was intense. Milas had his own fine sense of protocol for applicants. For years, the veteran development staffer, Frank Smith, had paid the college's respects to Olin in Milas's New York office, but the time to apply was slow to come. Urged on by Van Ness, Bodger decided that the clear signs of new strength, symbolized in the museum plans and Heefner's support of music and other gifts, indicated that the time had come. Architect Peter Saylor took a critical part in the development of the proposal and accompanied Bodger on his visit with Milas.

"The amazing thing about our proposal," Bodger said, "was that it did not offer a plan for the building. Saylor created a master plan for the campus that placed the proposed building right in the middle. Olin wanted to make a big impact on a campus, and our plan showed that it would do that. Our proposal of course did specify the academic program for the building, the number of rooms and so on. But except for a footprint on the master plan, it lacked an architectural design. We told Milas that Saylor would design the building when he gave us the award."

Martin said, "This was close to being foolhardy."

"But it was the right strategy," Bodger said. "Milas and his board bought into our story that we were a college demonstratively on the move. It showed in the success of the capital campaign, in the decision to do the Berman museum, in our hiring of well-credentialed new faculty, and so on. By giving our college their money and therefore their endorsement, Olin would give us the kick that would take us to a new level of perceived and real achievement. Milas liked to deal with seasoned presidents, not newcomers, and I clearly was seasoned. He did not like to give to those that already had, such as Swarthmore. He had a kind of democratic sense that Olin money ought to go to aspiring colleges that could be excellent if they had just an extra measure of support. We certainly needed an extra measure of support and certainly had not yet arrived. So, our situation at that moment happened to match Olin's ideas. Despite Larry Milas's claim to objectivity, I have to say that our board members who met with him, along with Phil Berman, felt good vibes. There was something about us that caught his fancy."

"How did he react to you?" Martin asked.

"I think we hit it off," Bodger said. "You know when you are on the same wavelength."

"And when you're not."

On 28 August 1988, Milas came to campus for an announcement of the Olin decision to award \$5.37 million for a new academic building. Bodger produced the student newspaper reporting the event, complete with a photo of Milas with Phil Berman, Peter Saylor, and himself.

The college and one other were the only two winners out of a field of 75 that had been invited to submit final proposals that year. The newspaper reported how Milas explained why Olin picked the college. He said that it showed strong and active leadership from both the administration and the board. It had growing strength in the quality of students. (Milas also mentioned growth in numbers, though that picture changed from year to year in the depressed teenage market conditions.) It had a faculty committed to teaching, excellent financial management, strong annual fund support from board, alumni, and others.

Bodger said, "The Olin project had a domino effect on the physical plant. We had to move the bookstore, which occupied the building site. We had to close the old vehicular street that ran from one end of campus to the other. It became the grand brick-paved pedestrian spine of the campus that ties Berman at one end to Olin, Wismer, and Myrin library in the middle to residence halls and the science complex at the far end. As we were seeking the Olin grant, we were building a new underground utility tunnel on that spine. The mud, ugliness, and disruption of that ditch caused us grief and may have persuaded some prospective students to turn us down. So when the new promenade appeared in the wake of Olin, it was like finding ourselves on a new campus."

Martin said, "Such dramatic physical changes quickly become digested and taken for granted."

"Still," Bodger insisted, "they evoke positive feelings even when people don't know why."

**Fruits of success—Middle States approved**

"Meanwhile," Martin probed, "with Berman booming and Olin on the way up, the Middle States team was coming to campus to evaluate how truthful all your self-proclaimed steps to glory really were."

Bodger said, "John Pilgrim orchestrated the ten-year self-study. I promoted him from executive assistant in 1988 as we were getting the self-study into final shape. He replaced Nelson Williams as the business and finance vice president. I had made Nelson a vice president when we hired Van Ness at the vice presidential level. Pilgrim naturally expected to inherit the same rank and he did. To maintain parity—and some peace--among my senior staff, this meant Dean Akin also received the additional title of vice president for academic affairs. So, I started with no vice presidents and now had several."

Martin said something about the necessities of senior staff development but returned to the Middle States visit. "A team could have come in and thrown cold water on the grand narrative of 'arriving' that you were advancing. Did the visit help or hurt progress?"

Bodger replayed his refrain of approbation for the Middle States process. He had sought to make virtues of the necessities of reaccreditation ever since the 1979 self-study, which keynoted the first phase of his administration.

"Helped," he said. "Our study looked back over the decade to indicate our direction. The cumulative effect of that summary was affirmed by the visitors."

Bodger pulled out the weighty 1989 document and opened it to page 4 for Martin to peruse. Martin saw an array of changes in the ten years. New majors included anthropology and sociology and communication arts and extensive revisions of major course requirements. The residential life program, freshly minted in 1979, evolved and now included enrichment through intellectual and cultural offerings. The music program took on a whole new life, owing to the support of William F. Heefner. Academic computing was no longer a telephone wire to Dartmouth's time-sharing system; it had its own extensive mainframe system, a personal computer network, two microcomputer labs, and a collection of microcomputers through academic departments. A faculty development program had trained many faculty in the use of the computer in their fields. The new art museum of course received prominent mention. Enrollment of residential students increased in number and diversity. Faculty grew in size and took part in more professional development, owing to the faculty development program, by now fully institutionalized. Salaries were improving. The administrative staff was more professionalized, a goal Middle States had suggested in years past. The college was carrying a small and manageable debt and had one of the strongest balance sheets among independent colleges in Pennsylvania. The report noted the successful \$20 million "Patterns of the Future" campaign. It also noted the automation and renovation of Myrin Library, new athletic fields, and the Residential Village. And it noted the comprehensive plan for the physical plant, precipitated by the Olin building project. That building was under construction as the college made finishing touches to the report.

### Fruits of success—curriculum revision changed the tone

Bodger said, "From an educational viewpoint, of course, the self-study mainly was valuable because it pushed the dean and faculty into a study of the college's educational philosophy and goals. The faculty was anxious for a new design that would cut their course loads, give greater reward for professional activity, provide them and students with more depth and less superficial 'coverage' of materials. The dean and other key members of faculty had insisted on a review of philosophy and goals before the faculty dove into a wholesale revision of the curricular offerings as such. They correctly felt the need for a roadmap so that special interests did not run amok and leave the college and students with a badly lobbied result."

Martin said, "But comprehensive curriculum changes always are 'badly lobbied' results. The structure of knowledge always grows from a social process that at bottom is political. In undergraduate colleges, I've found that the limits to resources and the historically strong departments are the biggest influences."

Bodger said, "Given all that, Bill Akin and his committees, I thought, produced a design that at least was self-consistent, and it resonated with our reaffirmation of the practical values of liberal education."

"Right," said Martin, "its main virtue, I bet, was negative—it said by implication at least that the liberal education curriculum would NOT include such and so."

Bodger smiled, "You've been around the circuit too long. Of course, you are right. On the other hand, for our institution, at least, some innovations occurred. Freshmen now took a four-hour liberal studies seminar designed to model the intellectual life of liberal inquiry. Effective communication in writing and speaking and in quantitative skills gained new priority for all students.

"The faculty tried to interpret the old 'distribution requirements' in new language, which in many areas led to new introductory courses. It came up with 'conceptual communities.' There were few arguments over naming 'awareness of science and society' and 'awareness of society and the individual' as conceptual communities. However, sparks flew over 'awareness of historical consciousness and the individual.' This latter had the effect of ordering humanistic knowledge by reference to historical development. It offended those who believed that the humanities should line up differently, in particular, according to philosophical concepts."

Martin observed, "Your dean was a historian, I believe."

"And of course the non-historians saw in this move a deaconal bias. But it won the vote. I thought the strength of what came out was its acknowledgment of the instrumental nature of disciplinary strategies of thought."

"Truth began to be acknowledged as 'truth,'" laughed Martin.

"In any event, the new system precipitated four-hour courses where from time immemorial we had mostly three-hour courses. It led to a reduction in over-all course loads for faculty and students. Depth won over breadth. Along the way, we ditched our ancient and honorable grading system based on 100 and adopted the 4 point system that had become the norm in higher education while we stood still. We urged students more strenuously to study abroad, emphasized diversity in the curriculum as well as in the social make-up of the campus community. We were doing all we could to look more like an

elite little college worthy of note on the broader stage and less like a parochial regional institution with its feet buried in the past and traditional pre-med.

"In the course of a couple of years, we hired a whole cohort of bright new faculty. Many of them were Phi Beta Kappa and deliberately hired because of that. Most of them had ambitions to make a mark in the scholarship of their discipline, while they obviously also wanted to influence bright young undergraduates to recreate their own excitement over ideas and learning. The new curriculum, built on a conscious attempt to articulate a pedagogical vision, gave them the signal that this was a compatible place for them."

"Okay," Martin said, "the picture begins to fill in. You were damned determined to get a Phi Beta Kappa chapter before you were finished. The Middle States outcome helped that."

Bodger said, "The Middle States team was supportive of our advances. In reaffirming our accreditation, Bob Chambers, Western Maryland president who was then chairing Middle States, wrote, 'The Commission commends the college for the excellent and productive use it made of the self-study process and in particular for the major effort in the evaluation of the curriculum. The college, in the words of the evaluation team chair, is an institution 'with an enduring tradition, a college which knows what it is.'"

Martin wondered why the team had not picked up as keynote the college's movement to a new level of quality in the marketplace rather than emphasizing tradition. Bodger answered that the team had no college president on it and lacked a perspective on institutional development.

"Actually," Bodger continued, "their 'gig' list was pretty extensive. They had suggestions and criticisms of our Evening School adjunct faculty policy, our enrollment targets, our financial aid budget, excesses of our Greek system, our reluctance to take on new capital debt, our affirmative action policies and procedures. They offered a list of specific suggestions for additional faculty positions in individual departments. I wrote a letter disagreeing with or correcting most of their observations on these points. Looking at it now, I sound pretty self-righteous."

"Self-confident, probably," Martin offered.

### **Fruits of success—Phi Beta Kappa finally noticed**

Bodger nodded in agreement: "Right. I felt we were on top of our game. The faculty's Phi Beta Kappa group reinforced that feeling some months after the Middle States visit. In October 1989, they submitted a general report to Phi Beta Kappa, having been invited to do so after having been rebuffed many times over in the preceding decades. The PBK report drew substantially from the Middle States self-study. When the Society scheduled a team to visit campus for two days in February 1990, we all got excited. The visit went well. The team consisted of two emeritus professors, historian LeRoy Graf of the University of Tennessee and physicist Albert Bartlett of Colorado University. After they reported favorably to the Society, in May 1990 mathematician Jef Neslen, who headed our committee, got good news. The Committee on Qualifications would recommend us to the Senate. If the Senate approved in December 1990, the recommendation would go to the whole Society Council in October 1991."

Martin said, "And it all happened and the princess came out of the pumpkin."

"What made it the best thing to happen in our 'arriving' story was its gratuitous nature. Phi Beta Kappa did virtually nothing except proclaim self-superiority to the world. The purity of the message was great. It is the essence of academic elitism. For decades, the college stood outside the castle, shivering and wishing. When we got in, it of course resulted not from wishing but from all the huffing and puffing of the past years, trying to 'arrive' in demonstrable ways."

Martin said, "Many might have wondered why your college didn't have a chapter years before."

Bodger replied, "Many did. The reason looking back is simple. We remained in a parochial trough longer than some liberal arts colleges of similar character and perceived quality. All the indicators of quality had to move before we could look like a serious candidate. And that happened. That's why I did not try to be too discriminating in our development agenda as we were coming through the 1980s. We needed more quality in just about everything. Gradually, it came along. So, the seal of good housekeeping from Phi Beta Kappa was a victory for our faculty first but it was a boon to the institution and my administration in wonderful ways.

"In that period other good news might have helped our case with Phi Beta Kappa. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute awarded us \$500,000 under its undergraduate biological sciences educational initiative. Hughes had turned us down in its first round of undergraduate grantsmanship. To come back with a victory like this was incredibly encouraging on the science end of campus and, indeed, throughout. Academically, it put our science program out front and encouraged newer faculty lights just coming aboard. It built on a \$480,000 grant for science that came in the year before from our long-standing supporter, Pew Charitable Trusts."

### **Fruits of success—an altered setting for student life**

Martin asked if it was time yet to talk about clouds.

"Not quite," said Bodger. "We've touched on most of the signs of 'arriving' but not all. The administration of student life was always in process, ever since I led the changes in 1978 that loosened the laces on student behavior. In the intervening decade, student life dean J. Houghton Kane steered us between control and freedom, always proclaiming 'education' as the singular purpose of all social life on campus. My mind blurs when I try to recall the conflicts over drinking rules, over rules against hazing in Greek pledging, over the shift from the college union building to Wismer as a center for student life. We had a succession of staff members who came to us from graduate programs in student personnel and counseling. There was productive discord between their formal professional training, which was being applied across the country on campuses of every variety, and Kane's approach. His legal mind combined with his finely honed moral sense to make him an unusual resource in the constant battle to make student life programs creative.

"My main impression as I headed into my final years in office was that we had altered the conduct of student life. I felt we had found some kind of creative control that we had been seeking for years--partly because of internal changes and partly because of external changes.



"The collective efforts of our whole student life staff drove this change. In addition to them, I also had an unorthodox student life resource person in my executive assistant. M. Scott Landis doubled as campus minister and my administrative aide. He worked directly with Kane and the counseling staff. He carried 'pastoral care' into the nitty-gritty stuff of student culture with a special intensity. He was hands-on in the most helpful way. Probably the most dramatic project he undertook was to lead a support team to help John Chang, '90, make it through college. John became quadriplegic after his freshman year in a surfing accident. He needed total attention to his personal needs every day. With Scott's devotion to his needs, John graduated as president of his class. In this extraordinary way, the college illustrated a commitment to educating handicapped students.

"My point of view on student life administration was inevitably influenced by my history. I was chiefly responsible for altering the prescriptive parochial system of controlling students that came down from an earlier generation. I never ceased to wonder if I had unleashed the social whirlwind and would not be able to control it. That is why I had a mixture of people with strong principles, such as Kane and Landis, along with professionally trained young people from graduate schools of student personnel. I didn't trust one or the other alone to be able to handle students. The faculty members of course exercised their influence on student attitudes, but they were day workers. Most had only a dim understanding of how intense social life was in residence halls. We had to have around-the-clock presence and flexible policy approaches. This was the price we paid for broadening student freedom and trying to balance it with student responsibility."

Martin said, "A price you had to pay if you were going to escape from a parochial orientation and the charge of hypocrisy from students trapped by double standards."

"Sure," said Bodger. "In the decade or more after we loosened the rules, the larger society swung toward a more conservative position, especially on youthful drinking and on hazing. Pennsylvania came up with new laws that forced colleges to institute tighter controls. In some sense, when we caught up with the social revolution we were already behind the next curve, which was seeking more controls."

Martin said, "My college and yours zigged and zagged on about the same course over the period—like so many of our peers. The social climate became more and more challenging and complicated. We started educating students on AIDS in 1987 and distributing condoms if they wanted them. Women raised concerns about sexual harassment to a new level as the old social conventions disappeared—or became illegal. We overhauled campus security after the Clery murder at Lehigh University and the Pennsylvania legislature passed new requirements for security reporting. We managed a more complex campus society as we added more non-WASPS to the student population, driven by a strong push from Middle States to diversify."

Bodger said, "Our stories are similar. In addition, this college had to adopt an emergency radiological plan. We were only a few miles away from the Limerick nuclear generating station, which started producing electric power in 1987."

Martin said, "That proximity surely didn't make students feel more comfortable."

Bodger said, "Not at first, I guess. People didn't notice so much after a while, either on campus or in the region. Housing boomed in the ten-mile Limerick radius, contrary to predictions. Our area became the fastest-growing residential area in the state. The farms

disappeared. Although we continued to notify students and staff periodically of emergency procedures in case of a nuclear accident, they acquired an air of unreality. But the real presence of Limerick and the rapid development of the Perkiomen Valley placed our old rural college clearly in a new environment, with all the complexities of postmodern America on the students' doorsteps. The traditional student gripe that Collegeville was Deadsville began to lower in volume."

Martin said, "For better and worse, I'm certain that managing in Deadsville was simpler than managing in a heated-up contemporary climate."

Bodger said, "Musser Hall for international studies became a symbol of the new residential model of student life. There the college was trying to merge living and learning in one setting. Faculty were directly involved along with student life administrators. We wanted to think of this as the model of residence hall life for the future. The model was slow to replicate itself, but at least it stood as a goal. Kane and I talked about it as 'the social life of the mind.'"

Martin said, "A fruit of success that was trying to ripen."

### **Fruits of success—Centennial Conference**

Bodger said that developments in the intercollegiate sports field around this time abetted the college's drive to differentiate itself in the liberal arts college marketplace. The Centennial Football Conference had sprung into life in the 1980s as a maverick move by eight Middle Atlantic Conference members. The initiative seemed to come from the presidents of the central Pennsylvania group, Franklin & Marshall, Gettysburg, and Dickinson. They and others were frustrated by the failure of Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) to unravel a complex and long-standing knot of scheduling problems. The breakaway group also had increasing concerns about an excessive emphasis on winning in MAC and the expanding athletic budgets and recruiting machinery--and standards--that this entailed. They worried that too much emphasis on football in some colleges was translating into not enough emphasis on academic standards for athletes. They couched these worries, however, in careful language, seeking to avoid giving offense to fellow presidents and their institutions in MAC.

When the group announced its decision to schedule football outside MAC, it emphasized that its primary goal was compatible scheduling. It would aim at the simplest and most unbureaucratic style possible. It would stress the love of the sport rather than the need to win.

The conference members remained in MAC for all other sports. Nevertheless, many other MAC presidents did take offense and said so forthrightly to the eight Centennial Conference presidents. They saw that the newly aligned group would inevitably claim to have academic and athletic priorities that differentiated them from the others.

After several years of life as an informal, collegial body, dominated by the presidents, the Centennial Conference took the step that its critics predicted at the outset that it would take. It pulled out of MAC altogether and created an all-sports conference, complete with a full-time executive director.

Martin said, "You know I've forgiven you, Bodger. But I was one of those who protested at your pretentiousness and high-handedness at the time. You left us out in the

cold. We all saw the market position that inevitably would accrue to the conference. It spelled elitism and superior selectivity. When the papers picked up on the clever phrase the 'egghead eight', we gritted our teeth. Many of us remaining in the MAC could show indicators of academic quality that were better than yours. You took 'centennial' as your marker because all of you were more than a century old. Big deal, we said—many of us were older. It was a grand marketing strategy, at least for some of you. We just regretted being overlooked."

Bodger acknowledged that the power of the conference to position the college was certainly in his mind as the negotiations raced ahead in the beginning. "But I did not think it out in advance," he continued. "It was so right that I didn't feel the need to spell it all out for myself or the board. Our dean and athletics director were keen on the idea from the start. So, we went ahead. I admit that when the football group expanded to include all sports and left MAC in the last phase of my administration, we were far more calculating about marketing ourselves as a member of the conference."

Martin added, "The indicators of quality of the Centennial members clearly would become benchmarks for your college and others, even if you did not hold them up as such in the beginning."

Bodger added, "It took the administration after mine to seize that strategy by the throat and put it to full use. Through the rest of my tenure, the Centennial was mainly a symbolic marker."

"A kind of Phi Beta Kappa tune on a different instrument?" Martin ventured.

Bodger waved the idea away with a smile but doubtless saw the point.

### **"Clouds"—limits on revenue, growth in spending**

"Clouds now?" asked Martin.

Finally, Bodger turned to problems that shadowed the garnering of the fruits of success as the 1990s opened.

He said that the considerable financial strength of the college was proving to be insufficient to cover the growing expenses of "success." Some on the board and on the staff favored a dramatic increase in tuition charges to enrich net revenues. Bodger, however, feared significant market resistance to dramatically higher charges. His cautious stance prevented the college from generating the new revenues needed from tuition.

The market for new students grew more and more competitive as the number of teenagers continued downward. The college failed markedly to bring in a robust number of freshmen in the fall of 1989—nearly 50 fewer than the hoped-for 300. This led to a change in leadership in admissions. Lorraine Zimmer had bravely carried the burden through the 1988-89 year following the shock of her husband's suicide. Bodger shifted her to a less stressful role in student life after the year ended and brought aboard Richard DiFelicianantonio from Swarthmore College's admissions office. He started an even more aggressive market-driven strategy for recruitment, but admissions continued to suffer for the next two years until a complete overhaul kicked in.

Bodger continued, "The tone of my stewardship began to shift to a darker shade as the problem of matching revenues with spending levels grew. Pew Charitable Trusts, our long-time supporter, now on a new mission, and other national voices were by now

decrying the escalation of college costs. They were calling for structural reform of finances. Grants from such sources would come only if you could show evidence of cost control. This public debate was creating a new zeitgeist for college leaders across the nation. The Ivies were jumping all over themselves to show cost containment and operational restructuring. The media enjoyed a new era of doubting higher education because of its alleged profligate ways and its failure to show measurable outcomes in return for high tuition charges. Voices from the national higher education establishment, not to mention self-proclaimed gurus and pundits, were telling us that the time had come for institutional restructuring, for doing better with less."

Martin said, "How well I know."

Bodger found a document in a pile. "Robert Atwell, president of the American Council on Education—we gave him an honorary degree years before--said it this way in his 1993 annual report: 'Many institutions are facing the challenges of scarcity head-on. Beyond simply cutting their budgets, colleges and universities nationwide are engaged in restructuring, resource reallocation, strategic planning, and total quality management—an indication that our enterprise remains vital and responsive and committed to serving its many constituents.' Bob hit the main buzz words of the moment."

Martin said, "But it was serious—and lasting--business."

Bodger continued, "The gadflies added to the official voices. Mel Elfin of *US News & World Report* perfected the commercialization of the college rating game during the 1980s. As the issue of escalating college tuition rose higher among public concerns, the voices of critics such as Elfin also rose. He appeared at the annual meeting of the National Association of College and University Business Officers in 1994. He accused leaders—that's you and me—of being in denial about the problems involved in restructuring to save costs. He accused the faculty of failing to recognize that they worked for institutions that were essentially economic--failing to face up to supply and demand. He thumped the drum for accountability—what were people getting for all the money they were paying for tuition? 'Get real,' he said.

"This reinforced the insight that John Pilgrim had of a tightening financial situation in our little shop. He persuaded me of the accuracy of his dire predictions about our financial prospects in the years ahead. His projections graphically showed that on existing assumptions we would not bring in enough revenue to cover our expenses by 1995-96. And he emphasized that we had few strategic options at our command to change this scenario. So, the euphoria of our successes lingered in the campus psyche while we wondered how to persuade the faculty and the larger community that a new and tougher day was dawning. This led to a final big effort on my part in my last months to educate the community and change our revenue-expense ratio."

### **"Clouds"—Recruiting new classes grew harder**

Bodger continued: "Our disastrous admission results in the fall of 1989 did not improve enough in 1990. In 1991 the incoming class total again dropped to around 250, at least 50 off our target. These were big subtractions of revenue for a small operating budget like ours. Ricky D. was getting his head around the game but was still learning—and teaching us the day after he learned.

"After that failure, we went into full battle mode to recruit the class to enter in fall 1992. I gave recruiting my primary attention. Ricky D. threw off all lingering restraints and entered the fray like the feisty southpaw pitcher he had been in college. He went after the goal as if he were pitching in a championship playoff game. He was stung, I think, by the shortfall under his leadership. He was still learning the ropes as new admissions head, and now he learned more quickly. We coordinated the efforts of the athletics department, my office, financial aid, academic departments, and admissions. The whole campus became a welcome mat to prospective students in a new way. We laid to rest lingering notions of equity in distributing financial aid. Instead, we cranked up a system of financial aid incentives based on the likelihood of a student to accept. Our money went to the students who would be most likely to come. Collaborating with an econometrician in the economics department, Rick adopted an elaborate multivariate analysis of candidates' characteristics, which pointed to their inclination to accept. My office took a direct role by orchestrating a personal mail campaign to selected alumni. I sought their personal referrals of good applicants. Like other strategies, it was productive. We opened the fall 1992 academic year with more than 400 freshmen, probably more than in any previous class since the post-World War II years, when returning GI's inflated the numbers.

"Even that success, however, did not assure success in following years, for the number of kids would decline even more dramatically through 1995. Like other successes, the turnaround in recruiting gave people an impression that all was well. But Pilgrim and I were still troubled by the financial trends. We still saw problems in the continuing rise in faculty expectations for more and more spending on academic quality."

#### **"Clouds"--A new sense of disconnecting from the community**

Martin said, "If faculty thought the spigot was still open and you were planning to slow the flow, you needed to be talking that talk before surprising them with the tough news."

"In one sense," Bodger said, "they believed a little too much in our ability to continue succeeding. In truth, many of my senior staff administrators also had a hard time buying the Pilgrim numbers. They too were believers in our successes. They had bought my long-told tale of hope. By 1990, I was trying to season their thinking without destroying their confidence.

"Through most of my years as president, my message was that we had or would get the resources to do what had to be done to claim our place finally in the sun. I could say that only because I had begun with a stable balance sheet and resources that were not eaten up in debt management. Bill Pettit, my predecessor, absorbed massive faculty criticism in his years as president. A considerable amount of it arose from his unwillingness to spend. He felt so threatened by the external conditions of the mid-1970s that he preferred to take blame for preserving resources. He feared blowing the whole financial soundness of the college. That was for him a politically damaging position, and I could probably agree that he was too cautious. But I was grateful that he handed me a financial situation that allowed me to be as bullish as I was. So, even my closest allies, I think, had trouble understanding that I was beginning to sing a different financial tune by 1990."

Martin said, "This test of your leadership differed from any before it, I suspect."

Bodger said that was so. He felt that in a fundamental way he failed to do what he had succeeded in doing in earlier stages of his administration.

Martin the consultant said, "This is an important insight. Please explain."

Bodger said, "I felt that I failed to connect my sense of the college's need to the sense of the community. In the beginning of my administration, I did not doubt for an instant that I had to change student life policies. The community had a score of ideas about how I should do that but the consensus was overwhelming that I had to do it. My feeling of being supported was palpable. I felt in synch and took all the risks without thinking twice.

"A feeling of connectedness persisted in my mind through the next decade. It enabled the Patterns for the Future campaign to take flight in the mid-1980s without a lot of bitching and second-guessing. I could feel in step with the rhythm of the campus. I was aided in this when our son Kurt decided to attend the college and live with us in the president's house. Elliott House at 785 Main became a friendly place for his friends. They saw me with my necktie off, and I saw them as kids in the neighborhood rather than as my student customers. Kurt's insights on the campus psyche were usually on target. There was an organic flow that told me inside that I was on track.

"Throughout my tenure, I wrote a column nearly every week that appeared in the student newspaper. I worried about usurping student space and ownership. When editors changed, I usually offered, gently, to bow out. But editors over the years were consistent in wanting my commentary on the flow of an academic year. I confess that I enjoyed the journalistic discipline, which took me back to my undergraduate years when I wrote a political column for the very same pages. The weekly trek from Elliott House to the newspaper office in Bomberger on deadline late in the evening became one of my favorite rituals. The student editors were usually buried in the details of putting the paper together as I delivered my disk. But we would exchange a few comments on this or that. I imagine that students would not have seen significance in such casual exchanges, but, for me, they were important. They were like holding my finger up to mark the direction of the wind."

Martin said, "You were probably as interested in what you did not hear as in what you heard."

Bodger said, "Such small exchanges helped reinforce my general sense that the college and I were still moving to the same beat. On my tenth anniversary in office, in 1986, the newspaper ran a sympathetic interview on my years as president. My tenth year was my personal high point, I think, though much would be accomplished well after that marker."

Martin said, "Many in the consulting game on college presidencies even then were arguing that a decade was time enough in which to put a distinctive stamp on a private college. The mounting pressures since then have made it easy for some to argue that less than a decade should be the norm."

Bodger said, "I spoke to Joseph Pirro, '87, the interviewer for that article, about my longevity in office. In effect, I told Joe that I would decide on how long to stay at it depending on the degree to which my energy level held up and how much the college would benefit from my continued work."

Martin said, "That gave you plenty of wiggle room."

"And of course in the end I stayed at it--longer than I ever thought possible on that tenth anniversary. By 1990-91, I was beginning to feel out of step as I tried to identify a

new structure of resources in the light of the new financial constraints. I was beginning to lose the feeling that my voice was an instrument of the community. Faculty and staff seemed to me to take my concerns about financial tightness at something less than face value, as if I had some other intention that I was not exposing. After all, we had come through a period of years when many fruits of success had ripened. People were unaccustomed to hearing bad news from my office. I felt unable to persuade the campus of the unvarnished truth of where we were as an institution and what we had to be doing to sustain our success."

Martin said, smiling, "Surely you had not become just a voice in the wilderness."

"I guess there was a reservoir of respect, and people were probably reluctant to contradict my view of things. But I had the feeling the reservoir was getting lower as my final years loomed. Freshly hired new assistant professors perceived that I did not hear their concerns. Some senior faculty, old fellow soldiers from the trenches, discreetly suggested that I move up to chancellor and hire a new president."

Martin reflected, "From my own experience and that of presidents with whom I've worked, I've come to think institutional leadership when effective has something of the tribal about it. The leader and the tribe have an organic relationship and resonate to the collective awareness of things. This overcodes the merely rational communications of a leader with employees about policy."

Bodger said, "Yes. You might say that the organic tribal relationship lends meaning and credibility to efforts to communicate in the usual managerial way."

"Okay."

Bodger continued, "I guess I could say that I felt the relationship weakening between the tribe and me as we turned into the 1990s."

"And this was not just because you were becoming the messenger with bad news."

Bodger thought a minute. He wanted to capture the sense of a senior president who was consolidating gains while instinctively anticipating an end of his tenure even before anyone expected that he wanted to leave—even before he himself was conscious of wanting to leave. He finally took up his report to the board for the 1989-1990 fiscal year ending 30 June 1990.

"The keynote was our 'long march toward distinctiveness,'" Bodger said. "I quoted the F. W. Olin Foundation's endorsement: 'The Foundation believes the college, already possessing high academic quality, will gain increasing notice in the years ahead and emerge as one of our nation's leading liberal arts colleges.' Then I offered instances to illustrate our march forward. The new curriculum began, setting a new academic tone for the 1990s. The Berman Museum opened in 1989, bringing its enrichment and broader recognition in the Delaware Valley and beyond. Students and faculty demonstrated serious moral concerns through a vital Coalition for the Environment. The campus took new steps toward diversity, both in recruiting and in campus programming through an umbrella committee on minority affairs."

Bodger interjected that the administration, especially in the efforts of his assistant Scott Landis, tried to give the diversity agenda a thoughtful and positive flavor. The college sought to strike a celebratory note. He read from the document: "It is not enough to deal with 'the problem.' A college with our principles and traditions, grounded in the

United Church of Christ, and with our intimate scale, has an opportunity to foster diversity with a special style."

Each person, he said, was called on to celebrate the ethnic or racial characteristics not only of himself or herself but also—and with equal enthusiasm—of all the others in the community. Encouraged by Scott Landis, Bodger urged that the college community make a celebration of its differences the very basis of its consensus.

"Sounds almost casuistical," Martin said.

"Yes, but we were determined to transcend guilt trips and blame games and make a more joyous sound, if we could. And I had confidence in Scott to lead in that direction."

Continuing to scan the report, Bodger read that the outcome for minority enrollments in the class entering in the fall of 1990 would continue an upward trend, despite an overall freshman yield that was less than planned. His report noted the emphasis at commencement on the college's clear sense of its values. This was expressed through high-achieving alumni in the commencement speech (Paul Doughty, '52), the baccalaureate speech (John Westerhoff, '54), and honorary degree citations (Doughty, Westerhoff, plus Ismar Schorsch, '57, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.) All three were of Bodger's generation of students on campus; this set a tone that combined shared nostalgia with achievement. The speech by John Chang, handicapped senior class leader, further symbolized the character of the college community. His return to college after a devastating accident demonstrated his courage and the resolve of the college community to be supportive.

Bodger reported historic new levels of funds raised in 1989-90. The newly designed campus was emerging with the rise of the Olin building and the central campus walk. Signs of vitality showed in the capture of the national Division III championship for the second time in a row by the women's lacrosse team. Bodger commended the Evening School for its continuing growth and maintenance of academic quality as the region began bursting its old rural bounds, opening new educational needs and institutional opportunities.

His wrap-up emphasized the strength of the board as the college's key resource. He thanked Thomas P. Glassmoyer, '36, for his leadership through the 1980s and saluted William F. Heefner, '42, who would lead the board in the 1990s.

Martin said, "Our colleagues at sister institutions would have been pleased to have such a 'brag list' of achievements in their annual reports."

Bodger said, "I'm trying to say that, even with much to brag about, I could feel my administration reaching a state of advanced maturity. This meant what no one, myself included, was yet ready to express—that the end of an administration had to be looming somewhere on the horizon."

Martin said, "That's when you decided to take a semester away from campus, in the fall of 1990, as I recall."

Bodger said, "I billed it as a period of personal renewal for Margot and me. But I said I hoped to reflect on the college's directions. A year before, in fall 1989, we had learned that our son was victimized by mental illness. He had graduated from the college just a couple of years before we received this heavy news. Doctors told us he would spend his life coping with it. It took us a while to understand that we would spend the rest of our lives coping with it too. It took even longer for us to understand how much



that would change us. Until now, I had sacrificed personal and family needs for the sake of the college's needs. I don't think Margot could ever fully forgive me for this—rightly so, I'm afraid. Now, I began slowly to see that this no longer could be my way of operating. Through a botched dental operation, Margot had become a permanent pain victim herself, and that added to the refocusing of my attention.

"The time away certainly helped us get our bearings. I prepared to teach a section of the new Liberal Studies Seminar for first-year students. This academic exercise liberated me from the feeling of unremitting administrative weight. I had spent little time in classes with students after becoming president. It would be an indulgence to teach a class. The readings surrounded a topic I dreamed up, 'the idea of the journey.'"

Martin said, "That would seem to have fitted with your own situation at the time."

"It had a nice ring to it, and the open-endedness of discovery seemed to please students—just starting their college careers--when I returned and met them through the fall semester."

Martin, a psychologist by professional training, said that he had found it impossible to remain in the classroom after taking the presidency of his college. Bodger nodded with understanding. He said that the decision to teach the course was not just to give him a change of pace. He wanted to demonstrate how important he thought that it was for the faculty to embrace the new curriculum, the centerpiece of which was the Liberal Studies Seminar. Martin said that leading by doing in such a moment made great sense.

Bodger answered carefully, "But the leave from campus and my immersion in the weekly round of classes in the semester when I returned had unintended consequences that no one ever fully acknowledged or measured."

"Could this be the darkest cloud?" Martin asked.

### **"Clouds"--color the administration gray**

"How can I put this accurately?" Bodger pondered. "My fuel gauge was beginning to dip. I really needed a break. I went on leave only because by then I had a strong, experienced, stable senior staff. The management arrangement left Scott Landis to run my daily mail and refer issues to the right senior staffer. I unequivocally designated Bill Akin, who was now vice president for academic affairs as well as academic dean, as the officer in charge while I was absent. But he did not get the temporary title 'acting president.' Bill ran weekly meetings of the rest of the senior administrators, including Scott. Bill and Scott both were consummate processors of administrative stuff, methodical, logical, and fair-minded. They were conscious of the need for correct process as well as right action. They also sought to protect the integrity of the president's office in my absence.

"The semester without me went swimmingly for the senior staff and, I think, for the campus. When I returned and started my class in the second semester, it seemed sensible to continue operating much the same way. Had we done anything else, the senior staff might have felt cut off from their newly won sense of confidence in running the place. Landis enjoyed the facilitative role in my office—almost too much so in the eyes of some close to the operation.

"I laid out the rationale for keeping the staff as an operating committee. It was, first, to 'make the daily operation of the college go as efficiently and effectively as possible,' as it

had during my absence. Second, it was to 'allow me to devote greater time to the financial development and public advocacy of the college.' I told the faculty and staff I would involve myself less in campus matters because I would be involving myself more externally. And that is what happened."

Martin said, "I'm going to guess the unintended consequence."

"Shoot," Bodger said.

"The disconnect with the tribe that you earlier perceived got worse. The senior staff acted more and more as if you were not there. The community began to wonder who was in charge."

Bodger said, "Everything seemed okay on the surface. Those erosive forces doubtless were working, though. I wrote some reflections on leave about the evolution and prospects for the college. Mostly they went into a drawer and had little impact on anyone. I did some theorizing about making the driving myth of the college that of 'informed work' but I never tried to implant it as a goal. Ditto for some thoughts about 'the social life of the mind.'"

Martin said, "The truth seems to be that, despite time off, you were tired of leading. After a while, one does it by rote and doesn't notice that the fire is not as bright—the voice of experience talking."

"Only a good friend would be so direct and so right," Bodger smiled. He said that the anti-climactic nature of his return was comfortable for the staff and for him. "It was bad statecraft, however," he continued. "How clearly I remember consulting with Bill Akin and others about the need to convene an all-campus open meeting on the priorities and future of the college, a standard piece of my leadership in years past. This would have preceded any recommendations about another capital campaign. He and other senior staffers wondered what good it would do and worried that it might stir up resistance that was dormant. I took that advice and regret it to this day.

"Instead of an anti-climactic re-entry, I should have reinvented my administration and called for bold discussions about new directions. Re-connect with the tribe."

Martin raised a finger, "Alternatively, given your changing personal outlook, could you have announced plans for winding up your term of service? This would have been a different way of maintaining stability. It would not have had to be a hasty process."

"Exactly," said Bodger. "Many believed that I intended my leave of absence to signal just that. But on my return, I said nothing like that. The effect on the community probably was a vague feeling of drift."

"Color it gray," said Martin.

### **"The Next Step" capital campaign became a last step**

Martin said, "So you went forward with plans for yet one more major capital campaign. You saw it as a swan song, surely."

"Of course," Bodger said. "My new vice president for development, Pete Scattergood, was a solid thinker and planner. He and his predecessor, John Van Ness, differed in style. John was aggressive and insistent. Pete was quiet and accommodating but incredibly hard working and persistent. John contributed to the sparks of an exciting agenda. Pete had an unyielding integrity that made him good for the long haul. When I

took up the reins again in January 1990, Pete and his development staff were in deep conversation about capital needs with the board development committee. They felt an urgency to do the preliminary work toward a new campaign. I accepted their position mainly because I believed that in my last effort for the college I should try to cash in on the reputation among alumni and friends that I had been building through the years. I might as well expend in fund-raising whatever good will I had accumulated, and then get out."

Martin said, "Mounting capital campaigns was simply a way of structuring work in our generation of college leadership. That old standard approach by the early 1990s was being challenged by more flexible and agile ways of attracting money."

Bodger said, "It had been my *modus operandi* and the board had bought it. To run a final campaign seemed like the most natural thing for me to do. I caught up with my followers, who had been busy identifying goals in my absence, and carried the recommendations to the board. By June 1991, it gave provisional approval for a campaign. By then, Bill Heefner was in the chair, and he was ordering events in the board in an effective way. At the end of the 1991-92 academic year, we kicked off The Next Step campaign, aiming to raise \$39 million for endowment, capital projects—especially the renovation of Wismer Hall as a student center—and operations. Bill persuaded Tom Davis, '52, to chair the campaign. Tom devoted himself to the work despite his departure for a major new pharmaceutical job in England. He became very ill toward the end but persevered. The last time I saw Tom before he died was at the campaign victory dinner in March 1995, after my departure from office.

"Phil Berman remained helpful; he pushed for several millions from the state to finance an expansion of the museum. Thanks to Senator Richard Tilghman, we got as far as the capital budget of the state but the appropriation never came. That phantom money was counted in the campaign total anyway, making it possible to say—with a wink—that the campaign fully met its goal.

"But I used whatever credibility I had with donors to broaden their giving and we did raise a lot of money. In other circumstances, the capital campaign would have been an upbeat and forward-looking event. Regrettably, the need to trim operating expenses persisted and grew more urgent in my final years. And my ability to persuade our faculty and staff of this requirement, even as capital campaign gains were being reported, grew no better.

"We were announcing great strides forward in the capital campaign at the very moment that I was preaching penury on campus. I was pushing the theme that the college had finally 'emerged' from the shadows onto a brighter academic stage, the results of all our 'fruits of success.' The cognitive dissonance never resolved in the minds of most faculty and staff, I'm certain. In some sense, I was revisiting the dilemma that Bill Pettit faced in 1975. Then too, we were reporting the success of a fund-raising campaign while at the same time trying to persuade the campus that our appetites were bigger than our pocketbook."

**After "arriving," it was time to prepare for an ending**

Bodger said that the final stage of his career as president took place through most of 1994. By the start of the year, the feeling of having done what he could do combined with his new family priorities to make his secret decision certain. When he told Bill Heefner that he wanted to get out, Bill took charge of the process with his usual mastery. They consulted with Bruce Alton, a former president of Bodger's acquaintance who was now in the headhunting business for college presidents, operating out of Washington. With Bruce's help, they established a timetable. Announce in the spring, before the end of the term. Establish a representative committee and search through summer and fall. Seize and hire by the end of the year. Bodger would leave by 1 January 1995. "And none too soon for Margot and me," he added. "We were pretty well used up and wondering how we were going to cope with family problems in years to follow."

Bodger would be only marginally involved in the process of finding a new president. He resolved on expending his last burst of energy on fund-raising and on strategic planning. The need for a plan to bring finances and operations into congruence ticked like a time bomb in his mind. John Pilgrim's model kept churning out the negative balances that the college operation would face in the years beyond his departure. Encouraged by Pilgrim, Bodger felt driven to set up a special process for dealing with it. The change in the environment of higher education management that had arisen since the late 1980s gave him the incentive and the vocabulary to address the financial problems from the perspective of strategic institutional planning.

Bodger continued, "So, before I announced my decision to retire, I urged the board to create a special ad hoc committee, a Strategic Study Group—the SSG. Three highly respected board members would serve on it, along with me ex officio. Geoffrey Marshall was provost and senior vice president of the Graduate School of the City University of New York. Edward Stemmler was former dean of the medical school at the University of Pennsylvania and now executive vice president of the Association of American Medical Schools. Jan Smith, '74, was an experienced banker who, as an alumna, had developed trusting relationships in the faculty through previous joint committee activities. Two faculty members, Victor Tortorelli, chair of chemistry, and Heather O'Neill, chair of economics, would represent the faculty. Both were members of the campus planning and priorities committee. As such, they already were heavily invested in the issues.

"Geoff Marshall agreed to chair the SSG. With his impeccable academic credentials—his field was eighteenth century English studies—Geoff enjoyed the respect of key faculty leaders and would be certain to address the strategic issues tactfully but directly. He had intimate working knowledge of the change of climate in higher education from his work at CUNY. His restructuring headaches there were monumental compared to ours. Geoff had been my fellow student at the Harvard Institute for Educational Management in the summer of 1974. He was then an assistant provost at the University of Oklahoma but soon after moved to the Endowment for the Humanities, where he became deputy director. Before he moved from NEH to CUNY, he and I had a conversation about our deanship, but it was the wrong time and probably the wrong venue for him. But he graciously accepted my invitation to join our board in 1986 and brought a cosmopolitan academic perspective that we highly treasured.

"The SSG first met 16 May 1994 and met through the spring and summer, leading up to two reports to the community, the first on 1 September 1994 and the second on 6 October 1994. We dovetailed the deliberations and reports of the SSG with the strategic discussions to take place that same fall under the aegis of the Pew Roundtable. Starting in November 1994, a month before my departure, these discussions were facilitated for Pew by Mary Maples Dunn, outgoing president of Smith College. She helped greatly by demonstrating to our campus that the issues of restructuring were not just local bugaboos that the SSG and I had foisted on it but were nationally significant. The second Pew Roundtable was scheduled for January, and the SSG proposed that the new president lead that discussion as a component of his orientation."

Bodger put in front of Martin the two SSG reports that came out before he left office. Martin said, "And the whole point was to cut costs?"

Bodger said, "One point was to cut costs. Starting in 1989-90 operating year, net student revenues—after the financial aid discount—increased an average of 3.1 percent per year. In the same period, total spending, not counting financial aid, increased 6 percent per year. That was the nub of the cost problem. But our cost problem simply ignited the process—it didn't constitute the declared essence of the exercise. The essence of it was to bring revenues and expenses back into a healthy ratio through strategic planning. In principle, that meant an increase in revenues could serve as well as a decrease in expenses. The times, however, were calling for a rearrangement of revenue and expense so that institutions would become more efficient and do more with less. The people at Pew had latched onto that theme with a passion. The SSG was designed to gain the license to raise questions of academic priorities in a blunt way that we had not been able to do in the Campus Planning Group."

Martin said, "I've seen that the protective hide of the academic status quo is tough wherever you go."

Bodger continued, "We needed to allow the college to look critically at old organizational molds. We needed a new planning approach to do so persuasively, and the SSG was to provide it. We needed to confront the meaning of our growing financial aid discount, which was consuming more and more of our gross revenue. We needed to address our problematic recruiting potential and our tuition trends. We needed to stop spending down so generously the income from our endowment; the board wanted to be at a five percent spending rate but okayed seven percent in 1992-93 to prevent a deficit result for the year. We needed to acknowledge that we could not expect to continue indefinitely increasing our unrestricted annual gift income by ten percent a year. We had to stop servicing our capital debt from plant funds that were supposed to pay for campus improvements. We needed to look at the massive new cost of expensing future employee benefits—the Financial Accounting Standards Board would require this for the first time in our 1995-96 budget year. It was like an ugly sword over our heads."

Martin said, "I was glad to have left office before I saw that sword."

Bodger continued, "Above all, we needed to decide whether we could change the scope and style of our operation so as to 'lower cost and increase productivity,' as the mantra of the day decreed. We needed to do these things and more all in one place under one authority so that we did not end with piecemeal responses leading to business-as-usual. Mainly, this was my last chance to get the attention of the faculty and staff as I had

not heretofore done. I wanted to leave knowing that everyone was seriously aware of the college's need to do something dramatic and visible to bring its financial structure into concordance with its operating structure.

"Your friend and mine at Lehigh University, Peter Likins, at that moment was deeply into his own strategic restructuring agenda. Peter's challenge, too, like Geoff Marshall's, was far more complex than ours. You may recall that he proposed short-term 'fast wave' changes to contain the cost problem and then long-term 'slow wave' changes to restructure the university."

Martin said, "I vividly recall his doggedness in pursuing that process."

Bodger said, "We borrowed Lehigh's two-wave metaphor. The fast wave would make changes in the immediate 1994-95 operating year if possible and in the oncoming budget year, 1995-96. The slow wave would make changes, after broad campus discussion, designed to begin with the 1996-97 budget year."

Martin quickly digested the fast-wave recommendations in the second SSG report. "It appears that in the fast wave you succeeded in keeping the endowment spending rate at 6 percent instead of dropping it down to 5 percent where the board wanted to be. You cut costs by capping senior faculty salaries, giving 1.5 percent increases to others, and reducing part-timers by 5 percent."

Bodger added, "Faculty volunteered savings in specific areas such as printing, mailing, phones, social gatherings, and the like, for the current operating year, 1994-95. Then we froze non-personnel expenses in all departments for 1995-96."

"Why didn't you push the tuition up a percentage point or two instead of cutting it down from the figure in your planning model?" Martin asked. "You gave up precious new dollars for 1995-96 and beyond, seems to me."

Bodger replied, "The economists were clearly declaring that the inflation rate in the year to come would be three percent, not the four percent in our planning model. Our plan called for a tuition increase of inflation plus one percent. So we felt it necessary to lower our budgeted increase from five percent to four percent."

Martin said, "I assume that your reluctance to stay at five percent means that you were uncertain you could recruit the needed number of new students at that higher tuition rate."

"That and other uncertainties made the SSG very cautious," Bodger replied.

"Lurking in everyone's mind also was the imminence of new presidential leadership."

Martin asked, "Did you think that the SSG decisions would stabilize the transition of administrations?"

"The board leaders and I felt that the board, not the administration, should have primary ownership of the financial agenda as the transition took place. I think the faculty members involved in the SSG felt comfortable with that notion too."

Martin said, "But your 'slow wave' vision of change would go well into the beginning of the new administration. Couldn't that preempt the leadership initiatives of the incoming president?"

Bodger said, "It could have. The SSG was careful to keep the specifics of 'slow wave' change fungible. The board members wanted to assure that the leadership baton would pass smoothly and effectively."

Martin said, "As it turned out, then, you're saying that the new leadership had ample latitude to act."

Bodger amended, "I'm saying that everything the SSG did in those last months of my administration were intended to do two things. One was to alert the college community to the reality of the need for change. The other was to contribute to an informed and stable beginning for the new administration. I want to believe that the work of the SSG offered tools that could be employed in the months after I left."

Martin said, "The SSG mandate seemed to pay no heed to the boom times about to occur in America or to the end of the long decline in the number of traditional-aged college-bound students, due in 1995. The student market was going to improve. Both developments, I have to believe, would brighten the dire financial picture that you were wrestling with. Judging from the news from the college since you left office, financial problems worked out one way or another."

"Indeed."

### **"Clouds" lifted as the ending came**

Martin said, "You seem to be telling me that your last couple of years were 'cloudy' even though the college had achieved a position in the sun such that it had never dreamed of having before."

Bodger said, "I never doubted that the 'clouds' would pass. The decision to announce my departure in April 1994 was to be, among other things, an antidote to that gray feeling. I think it immediately began to clear the atmosphere. The financial crunch was not a crisis but an irritation in most eyes and was easy to gloss over in the excitement about new leadership and new beginnings. My announcement, I think, minimized the 'tribal disconnect' we talked about. A moment of good feeling seemed to me to arise and take us through the final months.

"At Founders' Day that fall, I had an appropriate forum for a farewell refrain. I used T. S. Eliot's *Little Gidding* as a text to play on the interlocking themes of present and past. The farewell party organized by the faculty and staff was far more elaborate and generous than anything I would have imagined. So, sure, by December 1994 I seemed to have dodged the worst retribution for all my sins of leadership. The college was on a sound course. New leadership could take it in the professional direction that we had identified toward new academic heights.

"I tried to catch it all in my final annual report, which came out in the fall of 1994. I reported good news about the immediate year in review. Middle States gave the college an accolade after reviewing our five-year periodic review report, which was a follow-up to the 1989 self-study. Recruitment outcomes were on target, with 315 new students in fall 1994. The college had more minority students than ever, with 37 in the incoming class, some of them assisted by scholarship money from a big grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. The academic life of the college continued on the path of professionalization. The faculty sharpened the review criteria for promotion and tenure, with new emphasis on faculty scholarship. Associate Dean Peter F. Small led a charge to increase the involvement of students in undergraduate research. Additional academic departments invited reviews by peers from other institutions. The board approved a

statement on diversity that established a reference point going forward. A wellness program replaced the traditional medical service for students. J. Houghton Kane's leadership course in Liberal Studies attracted more student interest. The college completed the first full year of competition in all sports, not just football, in the Centennial Conference. The shows mounted at the Berman Museum were carrying the name of the college to corners that heretofore ignored it. The college community looked to Founders' Day 1994 to climax a year of celebrating the college's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I could say that The Next Step capital campaign was zeroing in on final success. The college beat back a vigorous legal challenge from the local school board that would have required the payment of an exorbitant real estate tax. Because many colleges were being similarly threatened, I gained state-wide recognition for successfully leading that fight.

"But much demanded attention as I was leaving. The Strategic Study Group's mandate to restore a healthier income-expense ratio was paramount. While modifications to Greek pledging looked promising, they were merely indicators of possible improvement in student life. A study group was working to devise a five-year recommendation on implementing information technology, but the college was not up to speed as my watch ended. Although facilities for life sciences improved with funds from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the old departments of chemistry, math, and physics were crying for improvement of their facilities in Pfahler Hall. Turning Wismer Hall into a full-fledged student center was more of a plan than a working project and needed priority attention.

"My former boss D. L. Helfferich was always looking beyond his own day. Now as I left I tried to follow his example. It was time for me to abandon diffidence about our place in the pecking order. I called on the next administration to make our value 'as a national liberal arts college' greater. Successful capital campaigns, solidification of a recruiting strategy, conversion of the Centennial Conference to an all-sports league comprised of compatible liberal arts colleges, some of unquestioned national leadership stature, Phi Beta Kappa's approval of a local chapter on campus, the third-party endorsement of the F. W. Olin Foundation and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the burial of parochial quirks that the administration had inherited—major developments such as these gave me the comfort to assert the college's place on the national scene. I wanted the world to know that, as the college in years ahead moved toward a brighter place in the group of national liberal arts colleges, the accomplishments of the Bodger administration would have made such advancement possible."

Martin leaned back, looked at the clock on the wall, and prepared to leave. "Some parts of the world know it," he said to Bodger. "I'm glad we talked."

"Will any of this really transfer to other places?" Bodger asked.

Martin said, "Conditions since you've been out already have altered higher education substantially. But the specifics of your 'arriving' remain relevant, at least for certain colleges at a certain stage of development. You were lucky to have resources to work with going in. It was a long haul, not a quick fix. At the college I'll be running as an interim, I'll be trying to set the stage for it to 'make headway' when the new president is finally hired. Your fruits of success will be useful in devising some benchmarks. Your 'clouds' mainly would mean something to a president getting along in his or her watch, not a newcomer. I think I'll stick mainly to sunshine."



"From start to finish," Bodger said, "it always came down to individual students and individual professors at work on the excitement and expansion of someone's learning. Great educational experiences can happen in colleges that are not nationally acclaimed. Still, I had to lead the game of institutional development or else. We had to become a marketing machine or else. But we somehow had to prevent all that from destroying what it was intended to foster. I cringe at the bragging we had to do. I guess I still want to believe that a poem being studied by a student is more valuable than a priorities committee agenda. My parting shot was to encourage my colleagues to stay firmly fixed on their students, for they were the only reason for the existence of the college."

Bodger wished Martin well in his upcoming adventure as an interim president. After he left, Bodger's eye ran over the files and papers he had pulled out for his conversation with his friend in his study. He pictured them gathering dust in a far corner of the carriage house at the edge of campus where he had worked on them. Just as well, he thought. What's ended is ended.

*END CHAPTER SIX, MARTIN (Arriving...and ending, 1984-1994)*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### MIRAGE (*Postlude*)

Bodger began jogging daily in 1976, the year he became president. He especially enjoyed being out at night. The darkness conferred a privacy that he craved. It freed him to sort out events of the day. As his old knee injury worsened with years, he gradually stopped being a jogger but kept up the regimen by walking. In retirement, he was able to be even more diligent about his exercise than he had been when he was under the pressures of office.

One night some time after he met with Martin, Bodger was walking on the track that circled Patterson Field. Hanging in the outer lane, he was just rounding the turn farthest from campus. Darkness was shrouding the trees beyond. He could make out in the light from the distant campus that the mythical Son of Sycamore, rising in the end zone of the football field, was showing early colors of fall. The tree had been planted in 1984 from a seedling taken from the original sycamore that had reached old age and had fallen in a storm in that same place. Decades before, the unique location of the original tree had won the college a place in Ripley's "Believe It or Not." The seclusion of the tree at night for generations afforded lovers a trysting place. Greek organizations initiated pledges into their mysteries under its branches.

Bodger knew that students had recently repopulated the campus with the start of another academic year. But on this weeknight, the campus harbored an eerie quiet. He wondered whether he had not simply imagined that fall and students had arrived again.

He always felt something almost magical about this spot by the tree at night. The ethers of the valley rose from the nearby Perkiomen Creek. They were reminders of his earliest years of growing up in the valley not many miles from here, years that by now seemed mythical, at one remove from reality. A zephyr was always stirring as he rounded the turn of the track, even on the stillest nights. It seemed to suggest the presence of some nature sprite, declaring possession but granting him passage.

On this night, feeling the freshness of the air on his face, Bodger came to a stop. He walked over and rubbed his palm on the trunk of the sycamore tree. He allowed the influences of the place do their work. Soon he was imagining that a mirage had come to have a talk with him. He squinted into the darkness and believed that he could see its visage. It seemed at first to be a composite of the mentors he had followed over the decades, all those who had set goals for him and had kept him running. Soon, however, he imagined that the mix of faces resolved into a single ghostly appearance. He thought he was looking at the face of D. L. Helfferich there in the darkness.

D. L. seemed to be clasping his old corn cob pipe between his teeth. Bodger remembered that he would usually choose that pipe to smoke when he was in a whimsical mood, open to the day's absurdities. He seemed to be wearing a bemused expression. D. L. would put on that expression when he was reflecting on the successes and failures of Bodger's performance. The kindness of the appearance belied the toughness of a critical faculty at work beneath the surface. Bodger imagined that the mirage was prepared to talk with him, and he lingered in the darkness, alone yet not alone.

Bodger said, "You seem to wonder why I pushed so hard to change the old place. I've often thought how things that I did would sadden you. But I never believed you would have insisted I do them differently. You knew that the college had to adapt or decline. I always thought you egged me on to become president because you knew how I would behave. I could make changes that you could not bring yourself to make because you bore so much of the dead weight of institutional history. I bore some of it, though--and that imposed the degree of constraint that I guess gave you some comfort."

Questions came into Bodger's head that seemed to come from outside himself. Why was it necessary to yield so much to the new freedoms surrounding youthful behavior? Why did the college now seem more like an academic shop than an agent for good in the world? For a moment, Bodger's hackles rose. He was ready to argue when the darkness suddenly reminded him where he was and what he was doing. The argument was long over. Only imagined feelings about it remained. He could be indulgent of a mirage, and again he spoke to it.

"You doubted that faculty expertise could provide definitive answers to questions of ultimate worth, questions of basic values. Once you told me that, if you were not so lazy, you would run the college without a faculty in residence at all—as if you could engage the whole student body in a daily discussion about the important things of life and persuade them how to live well. This was in jest—but not wholly in jest. You had a radical inspiration for the college. Some took it to be just a put-on. But I took it at least half seriously. Obviously, the hard realities of higher education never permitted the pursuit of such a fantasy. Still, you used to insist that our college was so different from other liberal arts colleges that it did not share common points of comparison—it was unique. You seemed actually to believe it. I understand how my push toward academic professionalism rubbed against your grand vision.

"Your self-confidence in the teeth of a pack of professionals—at least the appearance of it—exceeded mine by far. I saw no choice but to bring the college into the path of similar institutions and to celebrate doing so. You knew all the time, however, that I was not deeply dyed in academic colors. Language and logic mattered only so much in the world. They were useful, even essential, but not sufficient. I agreed with you then about that.

"Not having to answer every phone call now, perhaps I'm gaining better perspective. 'Passion' for scholarship—much touted these days—might bring language and logic closer together with action. Maybe an altruistic human act completes the usefulness that comes of scholarship. But I'm not sure.

"I guess I'm trying to say that my ambitions for the college—to enable it to cap scholarly knowledge with virtue—far exceeded my grasp, as yours exceeded yours.

"Ludwig Wittgenstein might have said it for both of us. His experience of death and destruction as an Austrian soldier in World War I surely had something to do with what he wrote in his philosophical treatise, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. He thought his way through to the limits of language and logic. But although they could not fit into propositions, he felt that things could exist. They had to 'make themselves manifest' beyond language and logic. One had to take them as 'mystical.' He decided that ethics could not be put into words. But ethical rewards and punishments could exist. They manifest themselves as action, not language.

"In the Wittgensteinian vision, language and logic could enable you to climb up beyond language and logic. Once there, you could kick them out from under you as if they were a ladder. Only then would you 'see the world aright.'"

Bodger imagined the mirage chuckling. It seemed to be enjoying this picture of the limits to professional intellectualism.

Bodger finished his thought: "There was something more than the products of the academic enterprise. Neither of us ever quite figured out how to do something completely satisfactory about that with the campus community."

The zephyr slightly stirring the sycamore leaves seemed to soften. The mirage in the mind's eye of Bodger seemed to take on a wistful air even as it continued to smile. Perhaps, Bodger thought, it was this insight that brought them together as mentor and docent so many years ago. They recognized it in each other without ever fully expressing it.

Bodger lingered a little while longer. A different question seemed to come to him from the darkness where the mirage hovered. It was harsh. It raised a doubt about his very sincerity as a president. Was he all that dedicated to a doctrine of "servant leadership"? Or, did inner demons, personal desires, drive him into office, where they, not the institution, demanded their due? Again for an instant he felt himself rising to an argument and again sank back into a reflective mode.

"I sometimes detected a small voice of doubt in your mind about me. Usually, you charitably attributed my most egregious errors to a fool, not a knave. Still, you were so wily yourself that it puzzled you when I seemed to be deficient in the same quality. In my grand confrontation with Bill Pettit while you were still in office and we both were answering to you, he told me I wanted too much to be loved. He was suggesting that I gave in to students and colleagues too readily. I remain a contradiction in my own eyes. Yes, I wanted to be in tune with the others. But, no, I always was something of a loner, viscerally inclined to do things my way.

"Judge me harshly if you must. I was a member of the Silent Generation. We were children during the Great Depression and World War II. This led us to be trusting of organization. We would grow up to be instruments of organization, well adapted for the rigid life drawn out by Cold War. I often wanted to duck that destiny but never really mustered the independence to break free. One day, you may remember, I confessed my fate to you as you were schooling me in the ways of presidential behavior, trying to bolster my courage to enter the fray: 'I have nothing better to do with my life than to serve the institution.' From this distance in time, how contrived it sounds. No wonder you sometimes had a doubt. I think I meant it, though. If you must criticize now, I hope you still see a fool not a knave at work."

Bodger paused for a couple of minutes. The darkness seemed to deepen. Then he said, "I have moments when I resent the neglect of a part of myself in pursuit of institutional service. I regret the damages done to my spouse and my kids for the sake of the institution. I could write another book--the unadmirable version of my life. It would feature my avoidances and fears...."

With that the mirage seemed to shrug again and recapture its bemused look, as if to advise Bodger not to go down that road. One life remembered would suffice. Then

nothing but the darkness confronted Bodger. He slowly walked away from the Son of Sycamore toward home.

*END CHAPTER SEVEN, MIRAGE (Postlude)*

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