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A View from Melrose

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The Linfield launch pad

My father dropped out of high school in ninth grade. My mother graduated from Simon Gratz High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Soon after graduation, however, she married my father and gave birth to the first of four sons. Any path to higher education was effectively cut off to my parents, as they worked hard to take care of and support a growing family.

Despite the challenges they faced – or because of them – my parents viewed education as transformative. Not that their lack of formal schooling made them uneducated. My father, in particular, read and found deep meaning in the writings of W. E. B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson and Booker T. Washington, to name a few. But my parents made it a point to tell us regularly about the ability of education to lift a person out of poverty and position him or her to have an impact in the community. They shared books with my siblings and me that reinforced the idea that we could be more than what society defined us as, especially if we pursued higher education.

Now that I am president of Linfield College, I want to make sure we offer the same opportunities for economic mobility, transformative education and social uplift. We are actively engaged in outreach to first-generation students, and in this issue of *Linfield Magazine* you will hear some of their stories.

However, the stories you read here are only the beginning. It is one thing to reach out and bring students into Linfield; it is another to offer support and services that make sure they

are successful and position them for life after Linfield.

Gerardo Ochoa, special assistant to the president, has worked hard along with others to make sure we have the infrastructure at Linfield to allow first-generation students to live up to their potential.

In these pages, you will read about our new (and wildly successful) Linfield First program, about alumni who were first generation and are now giving back, and about ways you, too, can help. Linfield is a launch pad, rocketing students toward futures they and their families might not have imagined possible. Each one of us provides a little bit of the fuel, and I thank you for it.

– Miles K. Davis, President

Both President Miles K. Davis, right, and wife Naomi Pitcock, visiting associate professor of nursing, are mentors in the Linfield First program. Davis earned a Ph.D. from George Washington University. Pitcock earned a D.N.P. from the University of Virginia.

