

# THE WORLDS OF HARVARD



## *Pointing Our Thoughts*

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*Harvard University Campaign Kickoff Speech  
Sanders Theatre, May 14, 1994*

THE FIRST TIME I really saw Harvard was in September, 1960. I arrived as a graduate student, on a brilliant autumn day, ready to study Renaissance literature.

Just a few weeks earlier, I had been a first lieutenant, commanding a tattered field artillery battalion at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Day after day, we had fired 105 millimeter howitzer shells into vacant stretches of desert sand, littered with the extinct Buicks, Chevrolets, and abandoned oil drums that were our targets.

After Fort Sill's acres of silicon, the modest grass and shrubs of Harvard Yard seemed like an unimaginable green oasis.

I sat more or less motionless for two or three hours, perched on the edge of one of those high parapets that flank the front steps of Widener, looking out over Sever Hall, Memorial Church, University Hall, and the buildings beyond.

Those hours on Widener's parapet began my own romance with Harvard. Like many romances, it started as a form of intoxication. But it also contained the sense of something inevitable. It was an encounter that I knew would sooner or later take place,

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and that I could no longer postpone. The reason, in the end, was very simple.

To my mind, Harvard not only *set* the standard, it *was* the standard. I realized that if I failed to keep a rendezvous with this university, I would always feel as if I had been unwilling to test myself against the very best. Like the uncertain hero in Cole Porter's ballad, I would have constantly wondered, as I wandered through life, looking at things:

*Is it the good turtle soup, or merely the mock? ...  
Is it Granada I see, or only Asbury Park?*

I had reached the point when I knew that I wanted the very best turtle soup. And so I found myself perched on Widener's parapet, ready to begin.

Why is it that I (and so many others, before and since) have felt so certain that this journey to Harvard was eventually bound to happen? How did the University move, from its fragile beginnings in the 1630s, to the magnetic institution that it had become three and a half centuries later?

The transformation did not happen by accident. The story is both surprising and absorbing. It also has a great deal to do with the reasons that we find ourselves together in this historic room.

Harvard College started with only one acre of land and just one house. And that single acre was part of a larger cow yard, where all the local bovines were herded every night, to graze or laze or simply slumber.

Harvard Yard was originally Harvard's cow yard: a place where our earliest students and the neighboring beasts of the field co-existed in odoriferous proximity, until the College finally got enough money to buy the cattle out.

Very little went smoothly in those days. After an unsteady beginning in 1636, Harvard literally had to close its doors and remained entirely empty for the academic year 1638–39. In fact, even after the College reopened, the size of the graduating classes

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varied from somewhere between seven and eleven students per year, and never reached a steady state of more than twenty graduates until nearly a full century later.

With very few exceptions, Harvard's early presidents came and went with all the regularity of a distinct migrating species: seventeenth-century frequent fliers. Dr. Leonard Hoar, for instance, was a learned and pious man. He was also so overbearing that the students (never at a loss for words) parodied and satirized him quite mercilessly. Mr. Hoar became increasingly despondent. Then suddenly, in the winter of 1674–75, literally all the undergraduates packed their bags and left the College *en masse*. Harvard was totally deserted once again. "After Hoar's experience," wrote Samuel Eliot Morison in his wonderful history of Harvard, "the College found great difficulty for the *next thirty-four years* in procuring a President."

Those early days were more than a little precarious. And we must remember, too, that the drama of the College was being played out against the backdrop of an unsettled New World society. There were virulent epidemics; destructive fires; skirmishes, wars, and threats of war; economic recession and depression; harsh winters and severe privations of every kind.

From day to day, one did not know what act of devastation might simply eradicate so tiny and vulnerable an institution of learning – an institution subject to the constant mutations and permutations of every chance and circumstance.

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Given this situation, we may well wonder how Harvard survived at all, let alone flourished. Three important factors (including some strong prevailing attitudes) made all the difference.

The first had to do with our original chartered purposes.

We decided from the very beginning that we wanted to educate youth to become learned, pious, and useful members of society. We cared, in other words, about service and the public good. We also decided not to become a denominational college or theo-

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logical seminary. We would be open to a variety of creeds and faiths, committed to a broad liberal education, including “the *advancement* of all good literature, Arts and sciences.”

In short, no sphere of knowledge or field of inquiry would be ruled out of bounds. And that single phrase concerning the “*advancement*” of learning ensured that we would concentrate, not only on the preservation and transmission of knowledge, but also on its extension and creative growth. The process of research and discovery – that determination to press beyond the limits of what we already know – was part of our mission from the very start, and guided all our aspirations.

The second important factor was that Harvard had a clear vision of what a great college (and later, a great university) ought to be. Our founders, many of them graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, brought with them a vivid image of residential college life, and they insisted on nothing less than the best in their new homeland.

Their successors, especially in the nineteenth century, had an equally strong vision of what a major *university* should be: they wanted doctoral studies, professional education, great libraries and museums, and extensive research programs. Gradually, element by element, century by century, Harvard began to give shape to an ideal which drew on the experience of other nations but was also distinctly American.

That brings us to the third main factor: Harvard’s boldness in the midst of all of its prudence and sobriety. There was the driving ambition and sense of confidence, the stamina and persistence, to create something unique and unsurpassed. All of this was accompanied by a New England-style directness in asking for help from alumni and friends, as we set out to build our own Georgian, Victorian, and modern temples of learning.

The ambition and drive, however, were anything but indiscriminate. Those original chartered purposes and goals served as constant guiding stars. In addition, the University chose its most

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important moments carefully, reserving its greatest efforts for just those times of maximum challenge and opportunity.

In fact, the capacity to rise to significant occasions, the ability to sense when major decision points were at hand, has been more critical to Harvard's development than any other single factor in the University's long history. Time and again, when it would have been understandable and even natural to move more slowly, or to avoid a particularly difficult path, Harvard deliberately chose to press further and to reach higher. It refused to be satisfied, or to settle for anything except the most that could be achieved.



To watch some of that ambition in action, to see something of the living institution as it struggled and grew, is worth a few minutes of our time.

For instance, the College decided very early that it wanted a printing press, to turn out religious tracts, as well as the first translation of the Bible into a Native American language. Harvard had virtually no buildings at the time, so the press was conveniently located inside the President's house until about 1655. Soon it was turning out "almanacs, law books, broadsides, catechisms, psalm books, sermons, . . . and [even] a few books of poetry by New Englanders such as Anne Bradstreet. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, this whirling dervish, tucked away in a tiny college, was literally the only printing press in all the colonies for about twenty years. Harvard was not content, in other words, simply to collect books for the use of its faculty and students. True to its purpose of advancing and expanding knowledge, the College began to create new books, and then to distribute them widely.

At that time, we possessed few if any detectable scientific instruments. But in 1672, Governor John Winthrop presented us with a telescope. (We were not able to afford scientific equipment then, any more easily than now.) In 1680, young Thomas Brattle, a

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recent alumnus, had made and recorded observations of a new comet, observations that were significant enough to be cited later by Newton in his *Principia*. By the 1680s, the Copernican system was freely taught at Harvard: one of those resounding judgments that turned out to be scientifically accurate as well as theoretically correct. Meanwhile, the College's one and only tutor in science compiled all the latest astronomical data, and with the help of our printing press, he began to circulate new almanacs to the farmers of Massachusetts, keeping them fully abreast of the recent discoveries by Galileo, Kepler, and Gassendi.

Of course, the telescope of 1672 was soon hopelessly out of date. We went through a number of "upgrades," thanks to the generosity of a sequence of donors. By the middle of the nineteenth century, we acquired a stunning new instrument, exactly the same size as the one at Pulkova, in Russia. These two instruments were "the largest refracting" telescopes in the entire world. Within months, observers at Harvard had discovered an eighth satellite spinning through space around the planet Saturn, as well as three new stars in the neighborhood of the trapezium in the nebula of Orion.

Even more remarkable, the new telescope enabled us to measure time much more exactly, because we could now record very precise observations of the transit of stars over the meridian. Railroads soon relied on the information from our accurate Harvard Observatory clocks to set their train schedules up and down their lines. In his 1849–50 Report to the Overseers, President Everett reported this fact, and announced astonishingly that "the motion of every railroad car in the Commonwealth [of Massachusetts] is now being regulated by the time at the [Harvard] Observatory."

In other words, the results of what we would today call "basic research" – research propelled by the sheer human desire to discover more and more about the nature of our universe – these results were turned into practical applications. Moving from Copernican theory, to the Harvard telescope, to the regulation of

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the Commonwealth's clocks and railroad cars, proved to be one of our earliest triumphs in technology transfer.

This was cause for real celebration, but it also brought its share of fiscal woe. The largest of our telescopes turned out to be more expensive than anticipated. Then (inevitably) we needed a building in which to house it; plus a full-time observer; then an assistant to help the observer; then money to publish the data, and so on. Student tuition could obviously not be used to pay for such costs. President Everett acknowledged (in his annual report of 1847) the immense value of the Observatory and the teaching of astronomy. But he also noted that the temporary funds to support most of these new activities would expire by the end of that very year, and there were no obvious alternative funds in sight.

Nonetheless, the president showed no evident sign of panic. "The Corporation," he wrote, "look with a grateful confidence, founded on experience, to the continued existence and operation of that noble public spirit, and enlightened munificence, that have thus far been the greatest resource of the university." Which is to say: he hoped that new gifts would soon be forthcoming. And in due course, with a bit of effort and much generosity, they did indeed come forth.

This tale of the printing press, the sequence of glittering telescopes, the synchronization of an entire railroad system to Harvard time, and the constant push-pull of searching for more resources to pay for the extra reach and drive of the University: this tale epitomizes a great deal of our entire history. Countless additional stories might well be told. Let me mention just one more.

In 1877, Mr. Francis P. Knight, a local merchant, returned from the Far East to Boston for an extended visit. He had decided, essentially on his own, that it would redound to the glory of Harvard, and presumably to all humankind, if he could raise (and I quote now from President Eliot's annual report) "a subscription of \$8,750 (mostly payable by installments)" – President Eliot rarely omitted any significant financial detail – "for the purpose of maintaining

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at Cambridge for a term of five years, a native teacher of Mandarin Chinese.”

This proposal was accepted by our intrepid Corporation. Mr. Knight returned to China to find a likely candidate. He finally engaged the services of Mr. Ko Kun-hua of Ningpo, for three years, beginning September 1, 1879.

Upon their arrival, neither Mr. Ko nor his wife nor their six small children spoke a word of English. They came bravely, and with great good grace, into utterly unknown terrain. They moved (with an interpreter) into a house at 10 Mason Street. A Harvard faculty member, observing all this, wrote to a friend: “I never heard of [Mr. Ko] until two days ago, but it seems he is to be our instructor in Chinese for the next three years. Who is going to learn Chinese, and how it is to be got into our College [curriculum] are questions that have not [yet] even been considered.”

Here, in action, we see the convergence of mercantile entrepreneurship; institutional aspiration; an imaginative faculty appointment process (surely the most *ad hoc* of all our famous *ad hocs*); an interesting Sears-Roebuck method of funding professorships on an installment plan; and the introduction of a complex non-Western language and culture into the curriculum and the College.

All completely irregular, but also ingenious, risky, spirited, successful, and, in the end, extremely expensive. In time, the University would need additional professors: in Chinese literature, history, art, and other fields. We would also have to purchase the necessary library books, offer fellowships to graduate students, acquire museum collections, and then turn our attention to the study of Japan, Korea, and other neighboring Asian societies.

In the light of all this, we might well ask whether the University should have turned down that original unorthodox proposition back in 1877. Surely not. Might there have been a more prudent way to begin the study of Chinese? Very probably. But the circumstances were opportune. The historical moment was

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right. Mr. Knight and Mr. Ko proved to be willing instruments of Fate. And so Harvard made another move that was prescient and even profound in terms of its educational consequences, as well as significant in its usefulness to society.

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That decision may seem similar to those earlier decisions concerning the printing press and the Observatory. But it was actually very different. The religious pamphlets, Bible translations, and sermons – as well as the study of the stars – were very much part of a long-established tradition of learning and inquiry in Europe and later in America.

The study of Chinese language and civilization, however, concerned a different agenda. It was directly related to Harvard's nineteenth-century ambition to be not only a leading undergraduate college, but also a distinguished *university*. The goal was to include every new discipline and field of knowledge that was beginning to demand serious attention. As President Eliot would boldly put it in his 1869 inaugural address: "We would have them all, and at their best."

Harvard quickly expanded to embrace a wider and wider range of subjects. The first clear signs of this larger vision were visible as early as 1860, when the annual report stated (somewhat prematurely) that Harvard College had already grown "from a provincial school to a national university."

Two years later, President Thomas Hill corrected the record, pointing out the gap between our rhetoric and our reality. "No department," he wrote, "either in the College or among the Professional Schools, can be said to stand above the need of improvement, and few, if any, can court comparison with the most thoroughly furnished schools of Europe. No lower ambition is worthy of our age and our people than that which would . . . at length make Harvard College a University in reality as well as in name."

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In his final report, in 1868, Hill again insisted that it was crucial to build a great national university:

*Such a university does not exist in this country... The easiest place to found a university of a high order is [here in] Cambridge. The addition of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year to our income, or the direct gift of four millions to our capital, would do more toward making Harvard College able to supply the national need than the gift of eight or ten millions to any other college...<sup>2</sup>*

Here, we can see the outline of an emerging plan, including its projected cost, terrifyingly underestimated. There was nothing casual about the objective: to create a university that could take its place among the very greatest in the world. Harvard's educational ambition and confidence, as well as its financial directness, were as plain as daylight. We were challenging ourselves to become something far more than we had ever been. In this way, we began the most decisive transformation in our entire history.

That change in the University's level of aspiration was, by any standard, enormous. We should remember that in 1866, we had only 419 undergraduates in the College, and 542 students in all the graduate and professional schools combined. There was a grand total of approximately fifty faculty members. We were (about a century ago) barely as large as a medium-sized contemporary suburban high school.

In addition, the years of the 1860s were of course years of great national crisis and devastation. They were mainly the years of the Civil War and its immediate aftermath: not a time when many institutions would have seriously considered a bold, expansive, and expensive development. Under these circumstances, Harvard's vision of what it hoped to accomplish does seem, in retrospect, quixotic. It flew in the face of all the reasonable facts. It had the spirit of Marshal Foch's message to headquarters during the Second Battle of the Marne: "My center is giving way, my right is in retreat. Situation excellent, I am attacking."

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Harvard continued to “attack,” taking on successive challenges (some momentous, some less visible) during the past century and a quarter. And the story would be far from complete without some description of the crucial role played by the University’s graduates and friends. If the University continued to rise to important occasions, it was the generosity of Harvard’s many supporters that made this steady rise possible.

Every donation, large or small, advanced the cause. And this was true well before the mid-nineteenth century, even when some of the gifts were slightly obscure in nature, or highly indeterminate in value. In 1719, for instance, a certain Mr. T. Hollis sent the College twelve casks of iron nails from England, without specifying the precise purpose they should serve. This was one of our earliest and most original unrestricted gifts.

Around 1650, John Newgate of Boston gave five pounds sterling “forever,” toward “the maintenance of lawfull, usefull, and good literature” at the College. Later, a certain Mr. Penn wished to make a bequest, but he was extremely suspicious of the religious views of Harvard’s governing boards. In his will, he stipulated that “£10 pr. An. are to be given to poor Scholars, out of the Rents of [my] farm at Pulling Point, but this money is to be disposed & [distributed] by the Elders & Deacons of the old church in Boston, so that neither [the] Corporation nor overseers of the College have anything to do” with it.

Every cask of nails, every five or ten pounds sterling, made a difference: just as every five or ten dollars now, every single new library book, and every act of service add to Harvard’s strength today.

As for the very large gifts in Harvard’s history, they too have mattered, and have often been breathtaking in their transformative power.

There was J. P. Morgan’s famous staccato telegram which arrived from London on June 21, 1901: “Referring our conversation

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and plan submitted I am prepared erect Centre Pavilion and two buildings new Medical School, Harvard University. Said buildings to be ... in memoriam James Spencer Morgan, native of Massachusetts....” And then the important final line of the telegram, upon which everything rested, and which the astute Mr. Morgan knew was essential: “You can,” he said, “announce this.”

Soon afterward, Mr. John D. Rockefeller gave a sum that equaled Mr. Morgan’s, and the two together made it possible for the brightening white Medical School quadrangle to rise from the ground almost overnight.

A few years later, Mrs. Eleanor Elkins Widener decided to construct a memorial to her son. She was modest but also firm in her determination: so modest and firm that she changed irrevocably the idea and image of what a university library might be, creating the centerpiece of an institution that has since become the largest university library in the world.

Finally, there was Mr. Harkness’ vision and perseverance. He was determined to introduce, on this side of the Atlantic, an undergraduate House or College system modeled after the Oxbridge residential colleges. He first presented the idea to his alma mater, Yale, but Yale hesitated. Despite his lack of any prior association with Harvard, Mr. Harkness turned to President Lowell. Would Harvard conceivably accept the funds necessary to build all those stately Georgian structures which now grace our salubrious River Charles? Yes, indeed we would. And thus the entire experience of undergraduate life and education was dramatically transformed with one magisterial stroke.

In other words, Harvard not only challenged itself (and its graduates and friends) to reach higher. It soon found that those very graduates and friends were in turn challenging the University to become even better than it was, to scale heights that went beyond its own ambition, and at a pace that was often faster than seemed possible to absorb.

This dynamic between the University and its many supporters

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has been critical to all Harvard's achievements. Without the constant interaction of mutual challenge and response – of shared investment, shared risk, and shared achievement – the University's most important goals could never have been realized. Harvard could never have become even a faint shadow of what it is today. Nor could we hope to become, in the years ahead, all that we know we must become in order to remain true to our fundamental purposes, and to ourselves.

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Our own future will be very different and obviously far less expansionist than that of our nineteenth-century predecessors. And it will not be at all the same as the second period of major growth in higher education, which began at the end of World War II.

We cannot predict the precise shape of that future. But we know we are at another significant turning point. We are facing major educational and economic challenges, at a time when the need for education and leadership has never been greater, and when the opportunity to make dramatic new discoveries, in many fields, is full of promise. We must not fail to meet those challenges, or to realize that promise.

I want to conclude by saying something more personal about why I believe this venture – this campaign – is so important. It is important because it concerns the essence of what we do, and what we are. It concerns the motives and reasons that led so many of us to Harvard in the first place.

We came because we wanted to test ourselves against the best, and to learn all that we could possibly learn: not simply about particular subjects or disciplines, but also about other people and their points of view. We wanted to learn not only what individuals (often the world's greatest authorities) actually knew, but also what they did *not* know; and where their knowledge began to dissolve into uncertainty, and then slip suddenly into ignorance.

We wanted, in addition, to discover how individuals and great

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institutions coped with uncertainty and ignorance, because that too was a central part of human experience and reality.

We understood, in other words, that our ability to live lives of value, and to act effectively in the world, would finally depend on much more than the limited stock of actual knowledge we could possibly master. We would also have to rely on what we could only infer, or estimate, or speculate about, or learn later: peering through a glass darkly, and drawing on our all too modest share of human experience, our intuition, and our own personal convictions.

Education in this larger sense is what we sought. It would consist of far more than what we definitively knew. It would represent, as well, the sum total of our capacity to continue to learn, year after year.

This passionate pursuit – this desire to find out what lies just beyond the ideas we have barely understood, beyond the discovery we have just made; this desire to marshal the evidence, tighten the argument, polish the stanza, design exactly the right experiment, and convert ideas into effective actions – this is the primordial energy and motive force of the university, in all its many forms and purposes.

There is a poem by Robert Frost that captures some of the passion that I have been describing. The poem is about a slightly eccentric villager who was determined to buy a telescope in order to probe the universe, and come closer to understanding its mysteries.

As we have already seen, there is almost no way to keep a stargazer from the instruments he covets, whatever the cost. One evening, the poet joins his friend in order to see, finally, what the new telescope can reveal:

*Often he bid me come and have a look  
Up the brass barrel, velvet black inside,  
At a star quaking in the other end.*

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*I recollect a night of broken clouds  
And underfoot snow melted down to ice,  
And melting further in the wind to mud.  
Bradford and I had out the telescope.  
We spread our two legs as we spread its three,  
Pointed our thoughts the way we pointed it,  
And standing at our leisure till the day broke,  
Said some of the best things we ever said.  
That telescope was christened the Star-Splitter  
Because it didn't do a thing but split  
A star in two or three, the way you split  
A globule of quicksilver in your hand  
With one stroke of your finger in the middle.  
It's a star-splitter if there ever was one,  
And ought to do some good if splitting stars  
'Sa thing to be compared with splitting wood.*

*We've looked and looked, but after all where are we?  
Do we know any better where we are,  
And how it stands between the night tonight  
And a man with a smoky lantern chimney?  
How different from the way it ever stood?<sup>3</sup>*

These lines have always seemed to me to be a metaphor for the university. There is the driving curiosity – to split the star, as we might split an atom.

There is the actual revelation: that image of the quaking star at the other end of the telescope, seen more vividly than ever before, as if it were alive and almost within reach.

There is the aspiration – pointing one's thoughts upward. There is also the fact that, because the experience was shared, much more was learned than what the telescope alone could have revealed. Looking through the brass barrel creates a moment when suddenly both seekers after truth spontaneously say "some of the best things [they] ever said."

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Finally, there are the difficult, unanswerable questions at the end. How useful is the knowledge we have gained? Do we know any better where we are, or how things stand between ourselves and the surrounding outer darkness?

The questions are real, but they do not erase what has been learned and experienced: the sense of having pressed further, and having seen infinitely more than what we had ever seen before.

That is what universities are created to do.

That is why we come to universities, and why we so often return to them.

That is what prompted generations before us to create this extraordinary institution and to stand watch over it – through the course of centuries – in all its secular sanctity.

That is why Harvard has become what it is today, and why we must make certain it is never diminished: that it prospers, that it flourishes, and that it gives back to the world all that it receives, all, and still more, far into the future.

1 Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard, 1636–1936* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1965), 39.

2 Thomas Hill, *Report of the President to the Board of Overseers, 1867–68*, 18.

3 Robert Frost, “The Star-Splitter,” in *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1979), 178–179. Orig. pub. *The Century Magazine*, September 1923.

## *Integrating Knowledge*

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*An Excerpt from the Commencement Day Address*

*June 10, 1993*

HARVARD'S DIFFERENT SCHOOLS share the belief that this is a time when many, though certainly not all, of the most important advances in research and teaching will depend on our success in integrating different fields of knowledge. We live in an age when people who specialize in a single field (or even two) can scarcely hope to come fully to grips with some of the large-scale systems and immensely complex situations that face us, and to understand them in all their dimensions. Thus there's a strong tendency to try to bring different fields closer together.

This point may seem obvious, but it really is not. For most of the past century, our dominant approach has been to divide and subdivide broad fields of knowledge: to pursue teaching and research in an increasingly concentrated and specialized way. As a result, we have multiplied the number of freestanding departments, programs, institutes, and schools. That pattern made good sense for a very long time. It produced excellent results, and we will always need specialized research and special units in order to make progress in particular fields.

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At this moment in our history, however, we have much to gain by drawing individuals, groups, and programs closer together, rather than by creating more and more separate entities. Many of our specific proposals for Harvard's next decade are intended to achieve just that goal: to consolidate and coordinate, to integrate, and to lower barriers between units wherever it is productive and feasible to do so. This is true not just in how we conceive our academic programs, but also in how we think about our physical-space needs, and our organizational structures.

The renovation of Morgan Hall at the Business School, for instance, has brought together most of the School's faculty in a single building designed to make the boundaries between different research and teaching groups far more fluid, and to let those boundaries shift as needs and priorities shift in the years ahead.

Similar developments are taking place across the University. At the Kennedy School of Government, separate research centers are now working more closely together, and their research is being linked more effectively to teaching programs. At the Graduate School of Design, the basic curriculum is being reviewed; the focus is on creating some "core courses" that would give students from all of the School's different departments a common, interdisciplinary base of knowledge.

In Arts and Sciences, meanwhile, the Freshman Union building will become the centerpiece of a new center for the humanities, once our Memorial Hall renovations are complete. As things stand, faculty from our humanities departments are scattered among many different buildings. In some departments, the dispersion is so great that faculty hardly have a chance to see one another except at formal meetings. By bringing nearly everyone together, in a single complex or center, we can obviously create a much more collegial environment, and encourage more joint work among teachers and scholars in neighboring disciplines. We can also make sure that currently underutilized buildings will be utilized all day long.

Similar plans are under way in other fields. For example, some

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new space and facilities will be needed in the basic and applied sciences, and in the School of Public Health. But in nearly every case, the new facilities will be designed to create, quite literally, physical as well as programmatic “bridges” between separate units. We will link together freestanding buildings and departments to encourage greater faculty collaboration in research and more cooperation in teaching, in graduate student supervision, and in curriculum planning.

We also plan to strengthen the links among our many different libraries, and within our increasingly sophisticated information technology network. We have already made great progress with a single on-line electronic catalogue that will eventually include reference data on all the volumes in our vast collections. And we are hard at work on modernizing our other electronic information networks, so that people can have easy access to all sorts of data (on course offerings, current events, and other subjects) from dorm rooms, offices, and other locations all around the University.

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Another major theme that has emerged from our planning process is the strong conviction (on everyone’s part) that this is a time when the University must work especially hard to help solve some of the most difficult problems facing the larger society. We will do this, in part, by continuing and extending the research and teaching already under way at Harvard. At the same time, we plan to create a stronger organizational framework, and more concentrated focal points of talents and energy, to address carefully chosen topics. Faculty and students from all over the University will be participating in a set of programs to tackle issues of real urgency.

One of these programs will concentrate on public-school education. It will be anchored at the Graduate School of Education but will also bring together people from the Kennedy School, the Business School, Public Health, Arts and Sciences, Law, and

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elsewhere. It will deal with important public-policy questions, such as school choice and the concept of national testing. It will strengthen advanced training programs for school principals and superintendents. It will examine issues such as the relationship between schools and their neighborhoods, the role of parents in education, and the role of school boards. It will address questions concerning child development (including nutrition and health) and the kinds of teaching that can be most effective in different classroom settings. Our public schools face problems of enormous importance and complexity, and Harvard is determined to be more directly involved in providing real help.

Another program, involving faculty from literally every School at Harvard, will focus on the environment. This program was created only in the past year, and it is already well on its way, with a new undergraduate concentration and a major research agenda. A third program, one of obvious immediacy and importance, is focused on health care and the health care system.

Another, also well under way, concentrates on the difficult ethical and moral questions now faced by individuals and institutions in different professions. For example, advances in technology are continually presenting us with new and difficult choices and dilemmas. What use should be made of sophisticated and expensive life-support systems, in circumstances where there is little or no chance that the patient will be able to resume any semblance of a normal, satisfying life? What can we do to define and protect personal privacy in a world where computer databases contain more and more information about all of us, and where more and more people have ready access to that information? How can we think more clearly about problems like these? And what kinds of courses and teaching materials will help our students to think about them in a more informed and fully responsible way?

The last of the currently planned set of inter-School programs will focus on the mind, the brain, and behavior – how the brain

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functions, and how it affects the way we think and act. We are rapidly discovering more about how the brain and mind develop: how human beings grasp new ideas, how we learn, how we become “educated.” We are also on the threshold of beginning to understand the relationship between brain functions and many behavioral disorders, including addiction and different kinds of substance abuse. These are all rich fields of inquiry, full of important insights as well as potential practical applications. And they are fields where scientists, social scientists, and humanists have much to learn from one another.

The particular inter-School programs I have just described have several things in common. They are part of our general effort to bring together scholars from different disciplines and different parts of the University, to work on multidimensional problems that cannot be solved by people in any one or even two fields. They are not new, freestanding entities but programs that essentially draw on and knit together faculty who are already here. It is critical that we make the most of the human and other resources that we already have in place. Finally, these programs represent a strong commitment on the University’s part to be more directly useful to society at a time of real need. Harvard has always taken its public responsibilities with great seriousness; we now plan to give an even more concrete definition to that role in the years ahead.

## *A Spirit Not to Be Quenched*

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*Thomas Dudley Cabot Memorial Service*

*June 14, 1995*

WE ARE HERE to remember and celebrate a remarkable person, and a remarkable life. Whether one knew Tom Cabot for only four years (as in my own case) or forty, or twice forty, the strength and vividness of the impression, and the depth of the effect, were similar: in half an hour, or half a century, one caught the spirit of all that persuasive energy, driving to explore and inquire, to advance the cause, to find out more – and then to act, and to make things better.

It takes a special genius to understand a university, and especially to know how to work with a university, and through it, and on behalf of it. When the institution happens to be Harvard, even more than genius is required. Tom had all the requisite capacities: he created an inimitable role, and an irreplaceable place, among us.

He was our local neighbor, and Harvard became, so to speak, his other address. In the best possible way, he was ubiquitous. Once last year, he turned up in New York, during the worst moment of the worst of winters, for a meeting whose only purpose was to offer advice about the design of the University's campaign bro-

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chure. And at the end of the meeting, having made the journey, he turned to me and said: "Well, you have to have one of those things, but nobody will read it, and it won't raise a dime for you."

Not long afterward, he showed up at our Museum of Comparative Zoology for the celebration of the birthday of a much younger man, the great evolutionary theorist Ernst Mayr, who was just turning ninety.

Wherever something interesting was happening at Harvard, whenever something could be learned, or wherever something useful could be done – in the sciences, or university finance and operations, or undergraduate education, or public health, or the affiliated hospitals – Tom would be there, our Ambassador for Scientific and Medical Affairs, and our unofficial Vice President for Detectable Results.

I have never known an alumnus who was more deeply identified with the daily life and welfare of a university than Tom was with Harvard. That is the record. It will not be easily matched, and certainly never surpassed.

He relished his time with us, and we in turn have relished his presence.

He would not have wanted us to sentimentalize him at this moment.

He would have wanted us to recall that he was not always the soul of reticence – and he had little patience with the conventions of any society that practiced politeness while actually neglecting courtesy. True courtesy of the heart, a sense of unadorned but fitting ceremony, of appropriate deeds and demanding duties – these were his habits, his forms, his own social conventions; so much his own, that he was everywhere himself, everywhere the same, whether at home, or in town, or in the Yard just outside.

Add to these qualities his pleasure in the smallest trace of active intelligence, and his willingness to engage with anyone, on any plausible terms, so long as there was something potentially interesting or useful in the encounter: add all these, and we cap-

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ture at least part of this vital, open, voyaging, and pioneering person – a person of strong devoted feelings, and deep loyalties. That was Tom: a spirit not to be quenched, either in fact or in our memory.

“If the salt [of the earth] has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?”

We have now lost a portion of that precious salt. And as we look to the years ahead, we must somehow find (for Tom’s sake as well as our own) the savour that he has always been at hand to provide.

## *Deeds, Not Creeds*

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*John Loeb Memorial Service*

*January 16, 1997*

I MET JOHN LOEB, for the first time, barely six years ago. I knew only the smallest fraction of all that he was, and all that he had achieved, in the course of so long a lifetime.

Nonetheless, because of John's receptivity, because he was so attuned to listening and inquiring, he made it easy to establish an immediate rapport.

I remember our first conversation, and it seems hardly weeks, or perhaps at most months, ago. What was striking about it was not anything that either of us said; it was, rather, the tone that John himself set from the very beginning. He somehow made it clear that no agenda was necessary. He was not waiting to hear profound views about the future of higher education. The only order of the day was to meet, to talk, and to begin to know one another.

It was remarked, long ago, about a particularly celebrated personage, that he lacked the power of conversation, but not, alas, the power of speech. With John, of course, it was the reverse. Mere speech, and certainly speeches, were easily dispensed with, but not conversability, not the words and the views and the play of

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the mildest wit that help to draw and keep people together, rather than set them apart.

As I think back over conversations with John, I do recall some of his views and opinions on various subjects, because he expressed them easily and naturally, and they certainly mattered to him. But I am aware, even more, of his way of *not* pressing his own ideas, not marshaling arguments, not driving toward hard and fast conclusions – at least not over lunch, or even over tea.

He knew, of course, that conclusions and actions were necessary and important. But he had no interest in fostering habits of the mind or heart that might lead to an even more querulous and quarrelsome world than the one we already inhabit. He wanted to play no part in creating even greater antagonisms than already exist among people, or any greater separation of human beings into winners and losers, either in conversation or in life.

When I think about him, I remember, yes, his remarkable strength and that wonderfully natural dignity which never deserted him during these last two or three years. But I remember, and am moved most of all, by the profound modesty and instinctive courtesy which simply emanated from him. It was as if he had come to feel that, although considerateness and common kindness would never cure all of the ills of our planet, they were very likely to help, and at the very least they were not very likely to do harm.

One day, about a year ago, John and I were seated at his customary luncheon table at the Four Seasons, where he was having his customary made-to-order special “Spaghetti Loeb” (which, as far as I could see, bore very little resemblance either to any existing form of spaghetti, or to any existing Loeb). At one point, John said matter-of-factly that he had decided to endow the Humanist Chaplain’s position at Harvard. “The . . . *what*, John?” I asked, not wanting to quite confess the full extent of my ignorance about Harvard’s many ministerial parts and functions. “Yes,” John said, “the Humanist Chaplain. He’s dedicated to being humane. He makes himself available to students, he gives advice and help, and

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he has no official doctrine.” “Deeds, not creeds,” John said, a phrase that he repeated to me several times over the years.

Deeds were indeed what John did. And all the qualities I have mentioned – the receptivity, the interest in the views of others, the mutuality in conversation and in human relations, the avoidance of ideology and dogma, the modesty and considerateness, and finally the emphasis on humane actions: all of these qualities led John intuitively to make philanthropy an inevitable and central part of his life.

His philanthropic concerns, which he shared with Peter [Frances Lehman Loeb], included, as we know, a great many institutions and activities. Much as he cared for all of them, however, I think it is fair to say that his deepest and most abiding commitment – or really, his affection – concerned education, and especially Harvard.

He became a member of his first Harvard advisory committee (to our School of Public Health) nearly fifty years ago. After that, there was scarcely a year when he was not actively involved in one part of the University or another – usually several simultaneously. He was on the Visiting Committee to Harvard College, the Committee on Corporate Relations, the Committees on Fine Arts and the Fogg Museum, Anthropology and the Peabody Museum, Visual and Performing Arts, Visual and Environmental Studies, the Graduate School of Design, the Business School, the Program in Health Sciences, and the Committee on Foundations.

He was vice chair of the fund-raising drive for Harvard College in the late 1950s. He chaired the fund-raising campaign for the School of Design in the mid-1960s. During the tumultuous period of the late 1960s, when alumni support seemed to falter, he stepped in with a challenge grant of his own, urging others to give generously and promptly in order to complete the Harvard campaign which was scheduled to end in 1971. He served with great distinction as one of Harvard’s outstanding Overseers, from 1962 to 1968. He was awarded an honorary doctorate of laws by

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Harvard in 1971. And, in 1985, he received the “Harvard Medal” for his unparalleled service to the University.

John has been an honorary chair of Harvard’s current University-wide fund-raising drive, and until recently, he never missed a meeting. The number and magnitude of his gifts to the University are princely in nature. There is no other word. But it was the quality and character of his giving, which a friend once described as “reverential” in spirit: it was that quality, as well as his care and thoughtfulness, which made John’s bounty so deeply impressive.

He created, for example, a fund to improve undergraduate teaching. He provided critical support for associate professors in Arts and Sciences: faculty members who are just at the most difficult point in their academic careers, trying to press forward simultaneously with major research as well as with major teaching responsibilities. In addition, there were the gifts to create the Loeb Drama Center; a major professorship and research fund at the Medical School; basic “core” support at the School of Public Health; an innovative Fellows Program at the Graduate School of Design; the Frances Loeb Library, also at the School of Design; help for the American Repertory Theatre, for Harvard’s Villa I Tatti program, and, of course, for the Humanist Chaplain.

A full accounting of John’s gifts – made together with Peter, and with generous support from the entire family – would far surpass \$100 million. And all of these gifts have come with essentially no concern for public recognition: no monuments, and no monologues, however eloquent, from the donor, only more and more modesty throughout. And so it is that John has emerged, quietly and almost imperceptibly over the decades, as the greatest single benefactor in the history of Harvard University. That is the record, pure and simple.

He is missed, and he will be remembered, in more ways than we can imagine. For myself, the loss can be partly captured in the form of a mental image that continues to recur, and will undoubtedly recur long into the future. I am settled in my seat on

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the plane, traveling from Boston to New York, preparing for meetings and events that will take place over the next two or three days. Invariably, at some moment, I think of the lunch that is scheduled with John: the customary table; the plate of Spaghetti Loeb; John's eyes, with their reservoirs of kindness; the conversation without an agenda; the hour or two, suspended out of time, like an oasis; and finally, the sense of reassurance that one had a standing invitation, so to speak, to come and share the rarest of all forms of friendship.

## *A Lifetime of Service and Care*

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*Remarks in Memory of Joseph Pulitzer, Jr.*

*October 30, 1993*

IT IS MY PRIVILEGE to talk about the long association between Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., and Harvard University. You will immediately realize my limited qualifications for this assignment, if I mention that when Joe entered Harvard as a freshman in the fall of 1932, I was a minus 3 years old; and when, in 1949, Joe joined what was then called the Visiting Committee to Fine Arts and the Fogg Art Museum, I was an impressive fourteen years old.

In fact, Angelica and I knew Emmy long before we knew Joe. But fortunately, the compact richness of our decade of friendship with Joe made up for the many lost years that slipped away before we met him. Happily, I suspect that to have known Joe even for an abbreviated time was to know the essence of him, his fundamental human qualities and commitments, because these seem to have remained remarkably constant throughout his remarkable lifetime.

I will not try to describe in detail all of the many ways in which Joe served Harvard and contributed to the University's well-being, decade after decade. Some day, a complete *catalogue*

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*raisonné* might be in order. Very few of you may know, however, that Joe was a member of Harvard's Board of Overseers from 1976 to 1982, and served on four major committees, including not only Humanities and Arts, but the Institutional Policy Committee, the Honorary Degrees Committee, and even the Committee on Student Life.

Those years when Joe was on the Board were not easy years for universities. They were the years of what was inelegantly called "stagflation," a cheerless combination of general economic paralysis and double-digit inflation: the worst possible mixture, short of total economic depression and collapse, for universities. It was characteristic of Joe, I think, that he should have chosen to serve on the Overseers at just such a moment, rather than during a more heady "boom" period or an era of tranquility, when there was no heavy weather, no major challenge in sight.

His briefest association with the University was exactly one year of service, in 1951, on the Visiting Committee to the Harvard University Press. History does not record what unspeakable or unpardonable revelations at the Press were sufficient to shatter Joe's ordinary aplomb, and drive him from the field so swiftly. But I feel certain that it was not because the books being published at the time were too provocative or controversial, but rather because they proved to be either impenetrably academic, or simply dull, or both.

Overshadowing all of Joe's many services to Harvard, of course, was his unswerving commitment to our museums and art department. He became a member of the joint Visiting Committee in 1949, and even though the names and the configuration of the committees related to our art department and museums changed periodically, Joe survived all the vicissitudes of Harvard's nomenclature with equanimity, and remained at his post until 1993: a total of forty-five years' service interrupted only by occasional mandatory "rotations off" for a year at a time. I cannot swear to the fact that forty-five years constitutes a Harvard record, but it is

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hard for me to imagine that any other individual ever *has* done so much, or ever will do more.

Even President Eliot's tenure of forty years as president of Harvard begins to pale before Joe's long-distance sprint. And if we go back to 1932–33, when Joe's connection with art at Harvard really began, we have what is literally a sixty-year span of achievement and sustained relationship to contemplate.

Quite apart from his length of service, it is obviously the *quality* of Joe's total contribution that was so extraordinary, and that made such a very great difference.

The quality showed itself, first of all, in the range and scope of his interests, and in the actual gifts he made, year after year. He cared about the teaching of art history and the capacity of teachers to inspire students, as he himself had been inspired by Paul Sachs, Benjamin Rowland, Frederick Deknatel, and others. He supported exhibitions at the Fogg, and catalogues, as well as the conservation of the museum's collections. And he did not overlook the apparently incidental items that can make such a difference.

In 1987, for instance, he made a contribution to help fund the Fogg Museum's sixtieth anniversary ball; much earlier, he contributed generously to the costs of insurance which the museum could not then afford. And then there was simply a steady stream of generosity: gifts to the Director's Discretionary Fund, the Museum Stabilization Fund, the Agnes Mongan Center, the Building Fund of the early 1980s, and, of course, as a crowning symbolic act, the establishment of the Pulitzer Chair in Modern Art.

If this had been all, it would in itself have been munificent. But there was of course much more. Beginning in 1953 (forty years ago) Joe began making gifts of art to the Fogg: paintings, but also drawings, prints, and sculpture. In that first year, 1953, he gave a beautiful Feininger drawing, a Pissarro oil, and a Henry Moore watercolor.

Thereafter, into the 1980s, scarcely a year went by without some important object arriving, and usually more than one. In

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1954 and 1955 alone, there were paintings by Miró, Tamayo, Beckmann, Dufy, Vuillard, and Kokoschka. By the early 1960s, an important Monet; Picasso's *Woman in Blue*; Braque's *Mandolin*; and Cézanne's *Portrait of Jules Peyron* were all added. Later, when Emmy and Joe were giving together, we find, in addition to a Pissarro, a Rouault, and a major Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, drawings or paintings by Richard Serra, Sol Lewitt, Brice Marden, Frank Stella, Cy Twombly, and others.

All in all, by my count, twenty-six paintings (quite apart from the works on paper and the sculpture) entered our collections over the years. It is no exaggeration to say that it was Joe's vision and patronage, steady and clear, that enabled the Fogg's late nineteenth- and twentieth-century collections to take their rightful place among the museum's other great holdings.

That is at least a sketch of the record: a lifetime of service, of care, of faithful attendance, of gifts, of building collections. And everything was done almost imperceptibly, without visible public notice, and with scarcely any awareness except on the part of those closest to the scene. In this sense, Joe's immense contribution to Harvard was utterly consistent with so many other aspects of his life, because the person and the life had at their center a set of undeviating attachments, motivated by interest and affection, but also by strong conviction and an unselfconscious feeling of obligation.

His total commitment to his profession of journalism and to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*; to the civic and cultural life of St. Louis itself; to the art of his time; to Harvard; and of course to his radiant partnership with Emmy – all these were expressions of the single person who seemed to know, even as an undergraduate, that his life would be a life of constancies, of values that, once discovered, would only be deepened and strengthened as the years and decades unfolded.

Some time ago, John Coolidge said of Joe: "No other patron in the Fogg's history has contributed to the institution so faith-

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fully and in such a variety of ways, each of them unique, imaginative, and helpful.” Let me only add, in concluding, a few of Joe’s own words – words that he used to describe two works of art which he owned, but words that might well serve as miniature partial portraits of Joe himself. In the first passage, Joe characterized a particular painting for its

*assurance; craftsmanship . . . finesse rather than bravura in brushwork; exclusion of intrusive detail; restraint, contemplation, composure, rather than romantic or expressionist fervor.*

Elsewhere, in discussing a piece of sculpture, he said:

*As I live with this presence, I become more impressed daily with its . . . authority.*

It might disconcert some people, he added,

*but in time they will appreciate its displacement of space, its scale, . . . and its definition of the land it occupies.<sup>1</sup>*

Joe possessed a sense of assurance that was somehow as modest as it was assured, his brushwork was admirable for its finesse rather than any bravura, there was that welcome air of restraint, the quiet authority, an appreciation of scale; and most of all, his always engaging presence with its combination of poise and passion, which gave such unmistakable definition to whatever space he inhabited, or landscape he occupied.

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Painting, Drawing, & Sculpture, Collected by Louise and Joseph Pulitzer, Jr.* (Cambridge: Fogg Art Museum, 1971), III: 349, 442.

## *Her Own Poetics*

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*Judith Nisse Shklar Memorial Service*

*November 6, 1992*

IT WAS NOT my good fortune to know Judith Shklar well. Our few encounters were brief, but the darting, rapid exchanges, with all the intellectual and human intensity that Dita brought to them, always made up in height for whatever they may have lacked in length. A totally forgettable French eighteenth-century poet once sent what he believed to be his most brilliant epigrammatic couplet (two short lines) to the Comte de Rivarol. "Very nice," came the immediate reply from the Count, "but there are some dull stretches." Anyone who ever encountered Dita, for even the most fleeting of moments, knew that there were no dull stretches in any of her couplets. She was the inventor of her own poetics: powerful, vivacious, pointed, and inimitable.

I have been asked to say a few words about Dita's contribution to the University as a whole, as well as to her profession. She came to Harvard as a graduate student in 1950, and remained here throughout her entire career. This was not at all her original intention. As she said (in a wonderful talk given in 1989), she had expected to work in what she called "high-class literary journal-

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ism”; “I would have liked,” she said, “to be a literary editor of the *Atlantic* or some such publication.” Instead, she was taken by surprise by the offer of an instructorship in the Government Department, and she then surprised herself by accepting the offer.

The road, as she readily acknowledged, was far from easy. Women academics were not at all part of the Harvard scene at that time, and Dita was teaching, writing books, and raising a family simultaneously. “The crunch came,” as she put it, “when the matter of tenure finally came up. My department could not bring itself to say either yes or no. . . . [So] I went to the dean and asked him if I could have a half-time appointment with effective tenure and lecturer’s title. It was not exactly what I wanted, but it was what I decided to arrange for myself, rather than wait for others to tell me what I was worth.”

Without undue self-consciousness, but with that spontaneous habit of choosing freely and decisively to determine her own fate, Dita pioneered, making her own way, but also making the way smoother for women and many others who came later.

In 1971, President Derek Bok (only recently inaugurated) worked with the Government Department to see that Dita was soon awarded the tenured full professorship that she had long since earned.

Over the course of her decades at Harvard, she wrote eight books that were invariably singled out for honors and acclaim. In 1984, she won a MacArthur Fellowship, which enabled her to do the scholarship and writing that she relished so much, traveling, as she did, from Harvard to Oxford and Cambridge Universities. In 1989, she became president of the American Political Science Association, the first woman to serve in that capacity.

She was not, I think, what we would normally call a “committee person.” She was always ready to do her fair share and more, but if we were to sum up her contribution to the larger University community, it would surely be in terms of the way that she embodied the values – in all their distilled purity – of a great uni-

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versity: the example of independence matched with integrity, passion with analytic power, engagement balanced by a wise skepticism and detachment, a commitment to teaching but a primary driving desire to discover new ways and new ideas to help us understand reality.

Let me conclude with a passage in which Dita characterized herself and her role: “The reason why I teach political theory,” she said, “is not that I just like the company of young people, but that I love the subject unconditionally. . . . As I look at myself, I see that I have often been moved to oppose theories that did not only seem wrong to me, but also excessively fashionable. I do not simply reject, out of hand, the prevailing notions and doctrines, but complacency, metaphysical comforts, and the protection of either sheltered despair or cozy optimism drive me into intellectual action. I do not want to settle down with one of the available conventions.” It is hard to think of any better way to describe Dita Shklar’s contribution to Harvard than as a continuous example of “intellectual action” in the vibrant form of someone who refused to settle down in complacency or conformity.

## *Our Lean Galbraithian Hero*

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*Remarks on the Occasion of John Kenneth Galbraith's 90th Birthday*

*October 15, 1998*

KEN GALBRAITH and I, and Angelica and Kitty, met for the first time, and dined together as a quartet, in the autumn of 1991, soon after Angelica and I had returned to Harvard after a lapse of more than twenty years.

I cannot, therefore, speak with firsthand knowledge about anything that happened during the first eighty-three years of Ken's several lives and careers. I know, for instance, only from secondary-source materials, that Ken managed his shift from youth to official manhood brilliantly: it coincided perfectly with the most spectacular of the many seismic, tectonic events of 1929.

On October 15, 1929, Ken's twenty-first birthday, there was a spontaneous celebratory chorus of public good cheer from major figures in the financial world, despite several previous months of acute distress signals. Charles E. Mitchell and Professor Irving Fisher declared that the United States economy was more or less indestructible, and that the stock market was poised once again to rise euphorically.

Within one hundred hours of Ken's twenty-first, when the

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last traces of icing on his birthday cake had scarcely had time to deliquesce, the United States Secretary of Commerce said that he was having difficulty “finding the \$100,000 in public funds that would be required to pay for the upkeep of the yacht *Corsair*, which J.P.Morgan had just given” to the nation. Within another couple of hundred hours, the New York Stock Exchange had essentially disappeared into a black hole, plummeting through its worst day in recorded history.

Ken’s market timing has, of course, always been faultless. And so it was that our lean Galbraithian hero, barely moments after attaining his majority, toppled the House and capsized the Yacht of Morgan; blasted the money changers from the temple; and cleansed what little remained in the Augean stables at the heart of lower Manhattan’s stock and bond yards.

This long-ago battle with the madness of the markets has been on my mind, not only because I recently reread Ken’s marvelous book, *The Great Crash* – in fact, the specific references and quotations I just borrowed are all from his volume – but also because two of Ken’s most recent works, both written *this* October, on the brink of *this* birthday, happen to be on the very same great-crashing subject.

The first of these pieces was his elegant *New York Times* op-ed essay, just a few days ago. The second is an unpublished letter to me. It arrived about two hundred hours ago, and it had to do with our modest university endowment, as viewed in the light of recent market disturbances. Our institutional net worth, Ken seemed to be suggesting, might just possibly be mutable, and it was not necessarily predestined to be always upwardly mobile.

But what struck me most about the letter was the fact that, while the theme was certainly a familiar one, the style was anything but Ken’s public Enlightenment voice, a voice in the approximate range of a twentieth-century Voltaire. Instead, there was something more comradely, and almost solicitous, about the tone: a sort of “Watch out! Don’t let yourself be hedged!” This compan-

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ionable message, this uncondescending solicitousness, this real concern for the institution and the people who comprise it – all of these nuances and inflections, as well as others, seemed suddenly to epitomize what Angelica and I have been fortunate enough to experience in our friendship with Ken and Kitty these past few years. And we have felt immeasurably enriched, as well as buoyed, by what they have given us.

When I see Ken striding toward Widener Library or the Faculty Club, his head above the treetops, I feel reassured that the spirit of the University is happily abroad in the Yard: the sanity and the great good sense; the irony and wit; the edge, the clarity, the skepticism and the conviction, as well as the sense of affectionate identity with Harvard. I feel reassured that all these qualities and relationships are still vital and present, embodied, kinetically, in this remarkable person who is celebrating not only his birthday, but also his fiftieth anniversary as a tenured member of the Harvard faculty, our Paul M. Warburg Professor of Economics, Emeritus.

To Ken, a toast:

*To your constancy – whether to friends, to Harvard, or to Houghton Mifflin;*

*To your persistent vision, and your unwillingness to forget those in our society who are, for whatever reason, disenfranchised and disinherited;*

*To this evening, which finds you surrounded by so many who care so much about you and about Kitty;*

*On the eve of your 90th, let me simply say this:*

*The shrewdest eye discerns no sign  
You are no longer eighty-nine.*

## *Thou Art a Wonder Gome*

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*Celebration of the Reverend Peter Gomes'  
Twenty-five Years in the Ministry of Memorial Church  
Adolphus Busch Hall, October 14, 1995*

SOME TIME AGO, in 1982, Peter Gomes was delivering one of his Commencement-morning utterances to the graduating senior class. He said that he realized the seniors were probably quite surprised to find themselves in Memorial Church at such a time.

Indeed, they might well feel they were well past the point where prayer could be of any assistance to them. Nonetheless, said Peter, they should try to do their best. Besides, chapel (like the glass flowers) should be visited at least once.

People generally do visit Memorial Church, not only once but rather more. And often, they do so because of Peter. He is our own perpetual multiplier effect: our pastoral exponent, as well as our elegantly worldly host, our Crimson cicerone, our Master of Loaves, Fishes, and Chandon Brut champagne.

I know that Peter's surname Gomes probably relates to Gomez, via his Portuguese ancestry. But I prefer to think of it as the plural of "gome," because I assume that (in his ubiquity) there must cer-

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tainly be more than one Peter. Everywhere I stray, in different parts of the campus, I see gomes galore in different roles fulfilling different functions.

It occurred to me that I ought to know more precisely what a gome actually is. As I'm sure you know, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (there is, alas, no *Emmanuel College Cambridge Dictionary*) tells us that "gome" derives from the Anglo-Saxon *guma*, found as early as *Beowulf*. *Guma* meant literally *man*, and is connected to our own *human*. In *Beowulf*, of course, a gome tended to be a warrior type, a heroic battler: the sort of person who went galloping after Grendels.

Later, in the medieval period, a gome became rather more refined, Arthurian, and chivalric. There's a charming fourteenth-century poem, in which, at one point, the narrator salutes a stranger riding toward him in shining armor. The image seems to me the very picture of our young Peter:

*"Christian knight," quoth Ferumbras,  
"thou art a wonder gome."*<sup>1</sup>

Finally, from ancient to recent times, in different languages, "gome" has referred to several important qualities associated with people who carry responsibilities and who are likely to be spiritual as well as secular leaders. It means heed, or attention, or care; and it also has meant good sense, wit, tact. Whether we think of Peter as a singular gome, or as many plural gomes, he is our *guma*, our man; our heedful hero; our Christian knight whose real armor is in fact his care for others, his good sense, his wit, and his tact.

+ + +

The special capacity for human and spiritual interlocution is what I most associate with Peter: his ability to transform the modest everyday experiences and events of life into so much more than they might otherwise become.

*Thou Art a Wonder Gome*

In the 1982 Commencement sermon that I mentioned earlier, Peter told the seniors that they should expect virtue and other important moral or spiritual qualities to be

*demonstrated in the ... unexciting ... side of life. Tempting as it may be to perform virtue at a cosmic moment in world affairs, ... more often than not the test of your character will come ... in the ordinary circumstances of living, being, and doing.*

So, he said, try to make as much as possible of your daily, mundane existence, by turning it into something “civil, gracious, and humane.”

There are many occasions, of course, when Peter lifts us, with the gift of his eloquence, far above the mundane. But I like to think that his other gift is equally great: the gift of somehow blessing and giving significance to all the incidentals of our experience. He reminds us that in the many mansions of our Father’s house, there are rooms where Gilbert and Sullivan as well as Mozart, Josquin des Prés – and even Elgar – are played; rooms where butternut squash, baby carrots, and even cranberries, as well as *crème anglaise* and Chardonnay, are served; where Emmanuel College, Tuskegee Institute, Bates College, and Harvard University all convivially coexist; and where all of these are as holy as they are worldly.

Peter has been Minister of the Memorial Church a full twenty-five years; and he has not long ago passed his fiftieth birthday. I would like to conclude these remarks with a brief lyric by William Butler Yeats. It is a poem that is set in England – a place Peter loves. The poet is about fifty, and that seems appropriate. The subject has to do with moments of grace and how they can come unexpectedly, illuminating and transfiguring the most ordinary particulars of our life. This is not so much a poem about a person, as it is about the ways in which mundane life can, at moments, be experienced intensely, when we have a gome to remind us of what is possible:

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*My fiftieth year had come and gone,  
I sat, a solitary man,  
In a crowded London shop,  
An open book and empty cup  
On the marble table-top.*

*While on the shop and street I gazed  
My body of a sudden blazed;  
And twenty minutes more or less  
It seemed, so great my happiness,  
That I was blessèd and could bless.<sup>2</sup>*

Thank you, Peter, for what you have done at Harvard, these twenty-five years, to bless the life that surrounds us.

<sup>1</sup> "Sir Ferumbras," in *Ashmole MS. 33* circa 1380, ed. Sidney J. Herrtage (London: Early English Text Society, 1879), 14. (Modernized spelling added.)

<sup>2</sup> W. B. Yeats, "Vacillation" IV, in *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, rev. 2nd ed., ed. Richard J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 1996), 255.

## *This Singular Place*

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*Mid-Campaign Speech*

*October 25, 1997*

WELCOME BACK to Sanders Theatre, now restored and burnished, but no less familiar than when many of us met here more than three years ago, to begin the first University-wide campaign in Harvard's history.

The campaign has gone remarkably well by any conceivable standard. And our endowment has been bounding through a period of uninhibited robustness, especially since 1994. As a result, we might well be tempted to relax our campaign efforts, on the theory that we can comfortably coast the rest of the way home. Or we might well ask whether Harvard actually has a compelling need for any more resources at this point.

I take these considerations very seriously, but I admit that I have no real doubt about my own conclusions. I would like to start with a backward glance, if only to recall where we began, and how quickly, as well as unpredictably, so many things have changed in the brief time since we set out together.

In 1992, I had read far less of the history of Harvard than I would have wished. But even from my modest store of knowl-

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edge, I remembered one (among many) of President Conant's most authoritative utterances: uncompromising words, portentous and ominous, that haunted me with all the wit and charm of a Greek tragic chorus: "Decentralization in fund-raising," said President Conant nearly fifty years ago, "is essential here at Harvard. Tentative proposals . . . to emphasize this point are now under consideration." And, President Conant stressed, it will be "extremely difficult to present an adequate picture of what we plan and hope to the alumni as a body, or even to the Board of Overseers."

For weeks on end, Mr. Conant's declamation echoed in the chambers of my mind. Could we possibly succeed with a full-fledged, collaborative, University-wide campaign? Could we conceivably create a plan that would be even faintly intelligible to alumni and friends, or to the Overseers and Corporation, or even to ourselves – those of us inside Harvard? Moreover, President Conant's words seemed all the more sobering because of the difficult economic conditions that prevailed in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

We may have forgotten that the entire nation was then in a state of considerable recession: severe downsizing; massive job losses; a burgeoning federal deficit; pervasive uncertainty about the future: about Social Security, social services, and health care; and, perhaps most of all, there were serious worries about America's ability to compete effectively in the new global economy.

Let us also remember not just the national scene, but Harvard's own predicament. It was far from encouraging. In 1991, several of our schools, institutes, and other units were showing negative financial results. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences had an annual operating deficit of about \$12 million. The total University-wide deficit was about \$42 million. We began our own regime of downsizing and economies, which has finally, during the last two years, produced a balanced budget.

Then too, the financial markets were inscrutable at best – not

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at all obviously bullish – back in 1991. Harvard wrote off \$200 million in endowment losses that year, and we had a total return of exactly 1.1 percent. Nor was that single year a fluke: the University's average total return for the four years from 1988 through 1991 was 6.6 percent per year, a level which, if it had continued, would have quickly led to a steady erosion of our endowment's actual purchasing power. It was not so very long afterward that I (speaking to many of you) paraphrased Marshal Foch's spirited staccato telegraphic communiqué, which he dispatched during the most somber hours of the Second Battle of the Marne in 1918: Our center is giving way, our right is in retreat; situation excellent; we are attacking.

What can we learn from the tale of these past several years? At least one or two useful home truths.

First, we should never expect any existing situation, whether gloomy or glittery, to last indefinitely, or even for very long. This seems self-evident. But our collective memory is often short-lived, and we have to keep reminding ourselves that today's economic euphoria tends to anaesthetize any trace of yesterday's lugubriousness. Also, vice versa. Certain kinds of institutions (and especially universities) cannot exist or thrive if they allow themselves to ride too closely the ups and downs of every minor or major boom and bust. They simply have to plan and operate in terms of the long run, and they have to take the long view. They need to be sensibly prudent in heady times, just as they must be seaworthy and steady when the going gets rough. That means setting a course that can be maintained with real consistency through any number of vicissitudes: "Calm rising," as our hymn has it, "through change and through storm."

From this perspective, it makes no more sense to allow our expectations (or plans) concerning Harvard's extended future to be based on the surreal, favorable financial circumstances of the last three to four years, than it would have been sensible to base them on the totally different (and far more discouraging) condi-

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tions of 1991 or 1992. *Harv-ars longa, fortuna breva, pecunia fugienta*, which, roughly translated (inside out), means “Fortune is fickle, the markets will falter, but Harvard must be here forever.”

So if we are asked whether we can coast through the rest of the campaign, with \$500 million still to raise, or whether we can rest, soporifically tranquilized, on our endowment laurels, then our reply, I feel certain, must be that we dare not.

Not only should we expect our share of down times ahead, but we also need to keep in mind that several major campaign priorities are still lagging. These include resources for Widener Library and other parts of our extraordinary library system; endowments for important new professorships in several fields, especially to strengthen the College and undergraduate teaching; support for our most hard-pressed professional schools, such as Education and Divinity; funds to maintain our momentum in information technology and international studies; plus financial aid – at the graduate and professional school level, as well as for undergraduates.

In other words, we will not really have succeeded if we achieve our overall “dollar goal,” formidable as that is, but fail to complete some of the most significant projects that we identified, at the very beginning of this campaign, as essential to Harvard’s future.

This is not the moment to talk about the case for each of those specific projects. But I do want to suggest that these (and other) priorities clearly relate, in their scale and variety and reach, to the purposes of a national and international university, as well as those of a great undergraduate college. They also signal to me (and this is something that I want to stress today) that higher education has now entered what is really a new era, with new and difficult conditions as well as stimulating but imposing challenges.

Navigating the new global, intergalactic spaces, and interpreting our unfolding genomic future (so that we make the right judgments, and take the right actions), is the most important task we face as we enter the final phases of the campaign and begin to think about the landscape that lies beyond.

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Let me elaborate a little about what I mean when I say we are now in a new era. If we scan the history of American higher education, it is clear that there have been two major periods of great transformation and expansion.

The first began in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and continued into the early part of the twentieth. This was our heroic, Homeric, epic age. At the heart of this ancient saga was the struggle (led by Harvard) to turn miniature colleges into emergent universities. Graduate studies were created on the Germanic model, and advanced students, in growing numbers, soon began to undertake their winding and often dolorous, Dantesque sojourn in pursuit of the Ph.D.

Professional school education, meanwhile, was reinvented. Serious research began to be respected, although it was in many quarters still highly suspect. Undergraduates were suddenly placed in direct contact with major scholars. Teaching began to be more a matter of asking questions than transmitting prefabricated answers. Dozens of new fields of knowledge were opened up.

In short, another age of discovery – a sort of academic Magellan-like efflorescence – had begun.

There was a more or less unstoppable urge on the part of compulsive tycoons, middle-class classicists, pecunious as well as impecunious botanists, insatiable bibliophiles, and indomitable entomologists and archaeologists to travel, search, unearth, possess, organize, display, study, and, in effect, conquer everything in sight, by amassing collections of every conceivable kind of artifact, manuscript, glacial pebble, rare or well-done book, organic specimen, art object, anatomical revelation, astronomical observation, and countless other phenomena. At Harvard, the Peabody Museum, the art museum, the Warren Museum at the Medical School, the new observatory, and the Museum of Comparative Zoology were only a few of the tangible structures created by this powerful surge of sustained inquiry and acquisition.

If we wanted to generalize, succinctly, about this entire era,

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when so many Giants walked our Earth, we might well say that aspirations grew, knowledge grew, the curriculum grew, buildings grew, and the budget grew. In addition, at least one penetrating fundamental financial insight remained as a significant legacy, well into the future.

That insight appears simple in retrospect but was less obvious at the time and has turned out to be crucial. It was the recognition that the only way to create a major university (with major museums, libraries, research institutes, and fields of learning that were important but not necessarily populous) was to endow, as far as possible, every new activity. In that way, the total educational program – and total intellectual capacity – of the University could be vastly enriched and intensified without requiring student tuition and fees to bear more than a fraction of the cost.

As we ponder why fund-raising campaigns are important, and why large endowments are essential, it is helpful to remember that it is precisely these endowments, together with unrestricted gifts, that undergird (just as one example) the resources of the entire Harvard library system: ninety-two libraries of thirteen million volumes, with on-line access to the total catalogue as well as to a great deal of text, constituting the greatest university library in the world. All of this is available to our students, with only a small fraction of the cost being charged to tuition.

I want to shift now to that second major transformation (and expansion) of American higher education, which I mentioned earlier. This came right after World War II. At the risk of great oversimplification, I believe we can say that the war demonstrated, as never before, that brains – motivated, marshaled, and focused – matter infinitely more than brawn. Human commitment and great courage were certainly indispensable. But the war showed us that a very great concentration of intelligence – in advanced cryptography, in the invention and refinement of radar, in the skill that can manage complex organizations (including the difficult process of collaborative strategic decision making), or in the discovery of nuclear fission and fusion – concentrated

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intelligence at work in all these and other areas mattered decisively, and made it possible for our own nation and others to move forward from a state of almost complete unpreparedness to the point where talent and determination, with enough raw materials and production capacity, could finally prevail.

By 1945, many people realized that what worked in war could also work in peace. So it was not surprising that education and research were at the top of our national agenda by the late 1940s. Probably the most crucial turning point here, reached by 1950, was the decision to rely primarily on our already existing major universities for America's basic research effort, rather than to build a separate government system of research institutes (on the model of some European and other countries). Since the universities represented high-quality assets-in-being, the United States had, almost immediately, a powerful, competitive, and immensely successful research enterprise under way, operating at full tilt. The program included many disciplines and fields of knowledge. It soon began to produce an unprecedented number of discoveries and new insights. In fact, by far the largest number of significant breakthroughs since World War II – from the elucidation of DNA, in all its intricacy and brilliant simplicity, to the creation of high-speed computer networks, to the dramatic unmasking (not so long ago) of the Top Quark, in the deep obscurity of its remote hideaway – all of these had their origin in university-based research projects, supported mainly by our federal government.

But research alone was not, of course, enough. However much we needed ideas, we certainly did not need them disembodied. As a result, the government (together with the major private foundations and individual universities) began a program during the 1950s to expand graduate and professional education so that there would be a steady flow of well-educated and trained people who were prepared to take up, throughout our society, the increasing number of positions that required new kinds of talent and leadership ability.

Therefore, when we utter the word “research,” we ought to

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link it immediately to the word “education,” at least when we are talking about a major university. The two activities, at their best, have always been linked together. The fact that they reinforce one another, at all levels, from the undergraduate college through to our executive education programs, is exactly what has made the American model of a university – and certainly Harvard – so distinctive, and so effective.

All of this may sound as if the postwar system were somehow invincible. But we know of course that it was not. To understand why, we simply have to remember the long rainy monsoon season (or was it a drought?) from about 1969 to 1982. Either way, there were far too many economic phenomena of one kind, and far too few of another, producing more than a decade of what we poetically dubbed “stagflation.”

Those were the years when many colleges and universities posted almost daily deficits. Physical plant maintenance was often deferred. Institutions watched endowments erode and saw faculty and staff salaries shrink steadily in the face of a double-digitizing CPI. That was also the era when need-blind admissions and need-based student financial aid first began to falter, and when major foundation support for graduate student fellowships literally plummeted from one year to the next (and it has never really rebounded). State universities and colleges had some of their first seismic shocks; over the years since then, circumstances have become worse for them, rather than better.

These changes (and others) were really structural, not transient, in nature: that is, we were not just watching blips on a screen, but were experiencing much deeper tectonic shifts in the economics of higher education, compared with the period between 1950 and 1970. Of course, there have been fluctuations since then, some ups and some downs. But the basic underlying situation has not changed. For some time now there have been fewer flexible federal and state revenues available, and there are many more claimants (some of them with very urgent needs) for government

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as well as foundation dollars. All of this represents an absolutely major change. In the new era that we have entered, there will continue to be less external financial support, in “real” terms, from several key sources, just at a moment when the need and the demand for education (as well as for new ideas and discoveries in research) are at their maximum. That is the essence of our current situation.

So the question for all of us, and certainly for Harvard, is how we move ahead, keeping our impetus and our edge, to meet the challenges that are surely there, and do so under conditions that will probably be more difficult, not less.

We certainly can not allow ourselves to suffer the fate of Lord Rosebery, whom Bernard Shaw characterized as “someone who never missed an occasion to let slip an opportunity.”

Our challenges, and opportunities, are real, and they have to be seen in relation to long-term changes already taking place in society. In this way, the larger pattern of events may become more clear to us and may help us to chart our own directions with more certainty.

For instance, the strong forces that have recently made our world so thoroughly interconnected are unlikely to be reversed. The Internet, instantaneous worldwide satellite connections, and rapid transportation systems are here to stay. Similar developments have produced fluid global financial markets, and have led to many more open, penetrable societies that can no longer be shielded behind iron curtains. Porous boundaries permit the quick movement of people, ideas, goods, economic capital, particles of culture (or particles of sulfur dioxide) from country to country. More societies are less authoritarian and more democratic than even half a decade ago. One possible result of all these changes is greater cooperation among peoples and nations. But another might be a growing number of close encounters that are as likely to end in collision and conflict as in collaboration.

We also know that over the next quarter century to half cen-

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tury, there will be major demographic changes in our own country, and throughout the world. There will almost certainly be, over time, more major centers of power, certainly in Asia, and perhaps elsewhere. Some “minority” groups will become majorities. Women will play a greater and greater role in public life, even, I believe, in those societies that now seem to be moving in quite the opposite direction. All in all, it will be essential for people to be able to work effectively, on an almost daily basis, with a widening range of fellow human beings from different national and other backgrounds.

This will not be easy. The history of our species does not suggest that we have often managed to get on so very swimmingly together, in the same little pond, over the centuries. When he was President of France, Charles de Gaulle (not always impeccably patient in the face of contrary views) once asked in exasperation: “How can you [possibly] govern a country which has 246 varieties of cheese?” Well, our little planet is now much farther along the path toward an infinite number of anthropoid specimens, and we need to learn how to cope with that.

If the future turns out to be anything like this rough sketch, what are the implications concerning an educational agenda for Harvard – not only through the end of this campaign, but also well beyond? What steps should we be taking to make certain that the University stays abreast: to ensure that those who follow us will feel that we have done as much for them as our predecessors did for us?

First, it means that we have no choice but to keep up our momentum in the field of international studies. If the world will be a more crowded and interdependent place, then our students and our faculty must have better opportunities to travel, explore, and learn about what is “out there.” And we also need to keep up the flow of students, scholars, and professionals who come to Cambridge from abroad to study at Harvard and learn about the United States.

Let’s not forget that since the end of the Cold War, vast

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archives that had been closed for generations have now become accessible, and hundreds of thousands of people, in countries around the globe, are for the first time able and willing to speak freely about their own histories, their societies, and their experiences. This situation represents a prodigious opportunity, and an immense challenge, for our scholars and students. The historical record (and the living presence) of dozens of nations and cultures can now be examined, and is already in the process of being reassessed, reinterpreted, and rewritten.

Therefore, we need research, travel, and fellowship funds, as well as endowed faculty positions, to carry this major project forward. We also need to complete the funding for, and then create, our projected new Center for International Studies. Sidney Knafel has given us an exceptional lead gift, but there is a substantial distance still to go. This complex of buildings will bring together, in improved and expanded space, most of our regional and international institutes. It will take us far toward achieving a greater level of integration in all our international programs. It will, in fact, represent the first significant visible presence in Harvard's history of our commitment to international studies, conceived on a world-wide scale.

I believe this is also the moment for Harvard to consider locating a limited number of outposts overseas, the main purpose of which would be to facilitate research and study by the many Harvard faculty and students who now undertake fieldwork in countries around the world. We need to be able to sustain their projects over time, to build longer-term relationships with people and nations abroad, and to place ourselves more directly in touch with the societies that we study. In other words, we need to extend our wings – tentatively, carefully, but with some sense of real excitement.

A second major priority is the further development of our modern information systems. It is hard to make this enterprise sound poetic. Even so, the new networks make a difference to every part of education, because they open up limitless sources

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of information and knowledge, and unlike other media, such as television or radio or film, these technologies could scarcely be more versatile or interactive.

They are already creating the equivalent of an enormous electronic research library whose volumes are on line rather than on shelves. They virtually force users to take a position of command, the driver's seat, compelling them to search, to seek, to find, and not to yield. In this way, they not only provide us with data, images, and information, but they also help to transform our pedagogy, placing the emphasis on the process of framing questions and looking for relevant evidence in order to test ideas: a form of what President Lowell called "self-education under guidance," and what President Conant referred to as "education by self-directed study."

If we are interested in advancing the cause of excellent teaching and learning in Harvard College and throughout the University, then the new technologies, properly used, are very much on our side. They also remind us of the ideal I mentioned earlier: the goal of integrating research, exploration, teaching, discovering, and learning in a way that dissolves the lines between them, bringing faculty and students together in what is really a common pursuit.

As these technologies develop, faculty and students will participate more frequently in discussion groups and joint classes on-line with students and faculty at other institutions – even in other countries. Harvard will be invisibly but significantly connected to all parts of the world through this filament-like network, where time and space are immediately collapsed. Here and elsewhere we can sense the obvious parallels with the revolution in international studies that I discussed a minute ago.

The next agenda topic concerns the question of diversity in its largest terms: how we manage to live our lives in some reasonable state of national and international harmony, given all the factors that I have already described – including the coming demographic changes – as well as the possibilities for conflict as the world shrinks and the pace of life continues to quicken.

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Here I want only to say again, as I have before, that unless we are willing to continue our commitment to diversity in our colleges and universities, bringing together students from different backgrounds – from many geographic regions, from a variety of religious, ethnic, and racial groups representing a wide span of interests and talents – unless we can create the conditions in college that will allow our students to learn directly from one another, to discuss and test their different beliefs and points of view, outside the classroom as well as inside, then we will not have educated them fully, or prepared them to take on the role of leaders, either in our own diverse democratic society or in the larger, complicated, international arena.

From a financial point of view, the key to ensuring diversity in all its dimensions is the very same one that allows us to enroll, year after year, the best entering classes in the nation: need-blind admissions and need-based financial aid. This offers the most direct way to bring down the actual cost of college to students and parents alike. Nearly half of our undergraduates are awarded scholarships which average (on a sliding scale) about \$13,500 per student this year, for a total of almost \$40 million in undergraduate student aid alone. The system is equitable. It means that we have enough tuition income to help protect the quality of our programs, but it is also cost-effective institutionally. Most of all, it keeps Harvard well in the lead in the drive to attract the very best talent.

Let me also add at this moment a word about Harvard's commitment to the education and advancement of women. Recently, the Kennedy School inaugurated a new initiative in the field of "Women and Public Policy." The Women's Studies program in Arts and Sciences continues to grow, increasing its range of subjects and disciplines. Last spring, Professor Shirley Williams organized a major international conference on "Women and Leadership," including an ambitious research agenda which has already begun to develop. Meanwhile, during the past six years, the rate at which women are being appointed to tenure positions

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in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences has increased by more than 50 percent.

Collaborative work with Radcliffe has helped Harvard to make progress in several of these areas. There is still much to be done, but the signals are pointing in the right direction. I am also happy to report that we have, during the past year and a half, received a number of campaign commitments, amounting to more than \$5 million, that are specifically intended to support some of the Harvard initiatives I have just described, as well as others that may evolve. This is a real boost, and points the way forward.

So our unfolding University agenda is ambitious, the needs are real, and we must keep pressing.

In closing, let me mention a few of the things that lie at the very heart of what we are and what we do. It matters that we are a residential college and university. The energy we feel in the air; the excitement and intensity that are the essence of our life here; the visible history present in our buildings, and our walkways; the friendships that have grown from the days and years spent together in this singular place: these depend deeply on the fact that we are rooted here, that we are a residential community whose values still echo the independent and questing spirit of our founders – their determination to build an institution that would last, that would have a far-reaching effect on learning, on education, and on the life of its society.

Consequently, as we think about a future in which Harvard will be more extended in time and space (electronically as well as tangibly), in which there will be more complexity, more networks and worldwide webs (some of our own making), it is important to remember that we are strongly grounded, right here, as well as being far-flung and international. And the challenges, great as they are, are not new for this institution. In fact, every major stride forward in our history has left us with a surprised sense of how much had been accomplished, and how much more still remained to be done.

As he contemplated the occasion of Harvard's three hundredth

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anniversary, in 1936, President Conant wondered about the fate of Harvard – and other private universities – during the coming century:

*As compared with even one hundred years ago, our universities are [now] startlingly large and complex; their buildings and equipment are great beyond the imagination of our ancestors; their faculties and students alike have facilities never before at the disposal of any body of scholars. What will be the fate of these institutions thus suddenly developed to such dimensions? Can they escape the curse which has so often plagued large human enterprises well established by a significant history, – the curse of complacent mediocrity? What will be written and said about the role of the university ... [particularly Harvard], when the four hundredth celebration draws near?*<sup>1</sup>

Well, the four hundredth anniversary has drawn a good deal closer since 1936, and, so far at least, I do not see signs of “complacent mediocrity.” For that, we owe thanks to many who have preceded us. But today I want most of all to express my debt – Harvard’s debt – to all of you.

These last years have achieved much of what we hoped. They have drawn us together, have created fast friendships among us, and have already set standards beyond what we imagined when we first began. The time has not been always easy. We have lost – sadly, sometimes tragically – wonderful partners along the way: Tom and Virginia Cabot, John and Peter Loeb, and others who have made such a great difference in spirit to us. “Complacent mediocrity” was certainly not their style, and it cannot be ours. So as we conclude, and look to tomorrow, let us remember that we are, for this generation, the trustees of this very great university, and we need to reach as far and as high as we can – through calm, through change, and even through storm.

1 James B. Conant, *Report of the President to the Board of Overseers 1934–35*, 6.

## *A Class By Itself*

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*Remarks to the Harvard College Class of 1949 50th Reunion*

*June 7, 1999*

ALL HARVARD REUNIONS are, of course, equal. But some are more equal than others, and the fiftieth is a class that is in a class by itself.

The tenth reunion is always astonished to find that it has just passed the age of thirty, and can no longer be trusted. The twenty-fifth seems solemnly preoccupied with start-ups and productivity gains – their motto this year is “Sleep faster, we need the pillows.” The thirty-fifth is neither fish nor fowl. But you, the fiftieth, are splendidly philosophical. You care deeply about Harvard, but you were not necessarily sure – before opening your programs – whether you would be addressed by President Pusey or Lowell, or Dean Rosovsky or Bundy.

No matter, it is refreshing to arrive under an assumed name, more or less incognito, footloose and even garrulously free – happy to talk about the University as if it were a sort of remote, shimmering Platonic Idea, rather than that perpetual seething cauldron of daily campus life – whose stew is constantly stirred, whose fire never goes out, and whose lid must always be on.

I would like to say a few words about Radcliffe. I am enthusi-

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astic about – and deeply committed to – our merger and our joint creation of the new Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. But as you must know, there have been any number of storms along the way since Radcliffe was created a century ago – and many slings and arrows that Radcliffe has had to bear.

When the idea of educating women undergraduates first came up in the late 1860s, you may remember that President Eliot said:

*The Corporation will not receive women as students into the College proper, nor into [any of Harvard's schools] . . . that requires residence near the school. The difficulties involved in a common residence of hundreds of young men and women of immature character and marriageable age are very grave. The necessary police regulations [would be] exceedingly burdensome.<sup>1</sup>*

Thus it was that Radcliffe College came to be established as a chartered, coordinate, residential institution on its own – linked closely to Harvard, but definitely possessing its own distinct, distant dormitories and its own eloquent police regulations.

During your years at Harvard, because of overcrowding and other unnamed contingencies, some Radcliffe and some Harvard students were actually allowed to take a few courses together. In addition, in the fall of 1945, two women teaching fellows were reported (by the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*) to have “invaded” the History Department. There was such a large enrollment in History 1 that more instructors had to be dragooned, or perhaps merely conscripted, to lead small-group discussion classes. The coming of these women, said the *Bulletin*, “was accepted philosophically by a freshman class heavily weighted by returned veterans.”

In addition, during your senior year, the first women ever (twelve of them) graduated from Harvard Medical School – whether as a result of overcrowding or not, the *Alumni Bulletin* fails to record.

All of you should take pride in the fact that, because of the sheer power of your flood-tide numbers, Harvard had its first

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serious beginnings of coeducation – if only in miniature – vigorously thrust upon it.

The creation of the new Radcliffe Institute carries to fulfillment the long, hundred-year process of bringing Radcliffe and Harvard to the point where they are to be formally and legally merged. The Institute will be an integral part of the University, attracting the very best visiting fellows and scholars from this country and abroad, and advancing research across all fields of learning, in the arts and sciences as well as in the professions.

In addition, an important part of the Institute's work will focus on the study of women, gender, and society – from an international, as well as a national, perspective.

The Radcliffe Institute will provide a flow of superb annual visitors, bringing fresh impetus to subjects that are already on the University's broad agenda. Meanwhile, Harvard's various Schools and Faculties will in turn contribute substantially to the intellectual vitality of the Institute and to its important work.

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The very large size of your class, together with your inventiveness and restless energy, had in addition to mini-coeducation, several other presumably unintended consequences.

You begat, for example, a housing crisis of unprecedented proportions, as well as a traffic crisis, and an academic degree crisis. In the fall of 1945, when you arrived, the city manager of Cambridge concluded wearily that “no permanent solution [to Harvard Square congestion] is possible” – at least not without drastic measures that seemed to lie well beyond the scope of everyone's collective ken.

As for housing, essentially everything imaginable was tried. Some ideas were rather conventional: Harvard took a three-year lease on the Hotel Brunswick, located in Boston on Boylston Street. “Among [other] possible dwellings,” reported the *Alumni Bulletin*, “are counted two country clubs and one sanatorium.”

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Then, as a special concession, the Federal Public Housing Authority assigned four hundred family units – to create what was called a “Harvard colony” – at the U.S. Army base, Fort Devens, conveniently located just thirty-two miles from Cambridge. Finally, “at the height of the tumult,” the *Crimson* reported, one freshman “sailed his twenty-three-foot sloop from Nahant to the Charles River, and then proceeded to make his home” right there on board.

Academically, you also flooded the market. In your senior year, 3,064 degrees – a record-breaking number beyond anyone’s nightmares – were awarded at Commencement. Your class walked away with 1,054 of them, and it is not at all clear who got the remaining 2,010 – or even in what subjects this riotous horde of extra degrees were awarded.

Moreover, 35 percent of your class graduated with honors – a percentage considerably higher than any previous known figure in Harvard’s history. Therefore, we are now finally in a position to state precisely when grade inflation started – and by whom.

On the other hand, it may well have been the case – and I suspect it was – that you were in fact brighter, more talented, and more honorific than all the classes that had ever preceded you. And you were obviously more brilliant than our slower-witted, lackluster, but wonderfully good-natured undergraduates of today who, like Ferdinand, browse gently among the flowers in the Yard, undisturbed and imperturbable.

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You came to Harvard at a moment of great historical significance: higher education in this country was about to expand exponentially – and many of you were in the GI vanguard. Federally funded research was really just beginning – in fact, the National Science Foundation was in the midst of being created when you were enrolled. Standardized tests were beginning to be used on a much larger scale. The library contained about 5 million books, but was

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about to grow in the next few decades to the 13 million volumes we now possess.

And despite all the hurly-burly, yours were great vintage years for teaching, learning, and research at Harvard. The new General Education curriculum was in its beginnings, and among the extraordinary Harvard faculty members who were given tenure in your last two years were: Walter Jackson Bate, Sam Beer, Jerry Bruner, Helen Maud Cam, John Fairbank, Sidney Farber, Ken Galbraith, Oscar Handlin, Harry Levin, Archibald MacLeish, Agnes Mongan, Frederick Mosteller, and Willard Quine.

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I have told you very little about the Harvard of today. But I can say with real conviction that your University remains invigorating, stimulating, robust, and as committed as ever to the view that we should settle for nothing less than the best in choosing our faculty and students and in making certain that they have the academic and other resources that they need – whether scientific labs and equipment, archives and libraries, computers and networks, museums and creative arts facilities – whatever is necessary for them to do their work at the highest possible level of quality.

Because *that* is our only mission and justification: to educate broadly, deeply, and well; to be as certain as possible that the leaders who graduate from these courtyards will be resilient, inquiring, skillful, articulate individuals and citizens who – in the words of President Conant – have been “inoculated” with “the virus of a self-perpetuating liberal education.” “It seems to me,” he wrote,

*a hopeless task to provide a complete and finished liberal education suitable to this century [with just] four years of college work. The only worth-while liberal education today is one which is a continuing process going on throughout life. . . . Has the smattering acquired in college worn thinner and thinner with each succeeding year? . . .*

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*Or has it provided a basis for continued intellectual and spiritual growth?*<sup>2</sup>

My own sense is that Harvard then and Harvard now is in fact offering its students the kind of education that has its eye, so to speak, on the long run, enabling its graduates to grow intellectually and spiritually, throughout their lives.

<sup>1</sup> *Inaugural Address of Charles William Eliot as President of Harvard College*, October 19, 1869, 17.

<sup>2</sup> James B. Conant, *Report of the President to the Board of Overseers*, 1935–36, 10.

