

## Another reason to celebrate

Commencement 2004 is like no other in my six years at Wheaton. We'll cheer as a much-beloved college president crosses the dais for the last time, applaud as a respected former Irish president speaks of human rights, and look with hope to an incoming president who will help write Wheaton's future. Set upon the backdrop of bricks and ivy, smiling faces and academic regalia, the scene is right out of Central Casting. Commencement rocks.

But this year's celebration is extraordinary for another, less obvious reason—Posse.

I was introduced to the Posse Scholar program in fall 2000 by Kate Boylan '04. A student in my English 101 class, Kate had (and still has) an infectious enthusiasm for her work, and I found that the more I challenged her, the more she challenged me. It was no small feat in a class filled with future Wheaton leaders. This brassy kid from Staten Island invited me into a new world and made me a better teacher and a better person.

The Posse Scholar program recruits student leaders from public high schools to form multicultural support teams called "Posses," according to the Posse Foundation. They matriculate at the nation's top colleges and universities, not only to pursue their academic interests but also to help promote cross-cultural communication on campus. After four years and 40 Posse Scholars, few areas of Wheaton life remain untouched by these students. They've given new life to long-dormant clubs and created new ones; worked in our offices; and raised their voices in class, student government and campus media. And they've invited us to raise our voices, too, by joining them.

At annual retreats, invited fellow students, faculty and staff join the fold and become "Posse Plus" members. My turn came in 2001, and I don't think it's hyperbolic to say the experience was life-changing; it was. During an idyllic February weekend on Cape Cod, I met extraordinary people. Together, we revealed our stories, our fears, our hopes, and in those brief hours, we glimpsed a world where open hearts and minds prevailed over pretense. I heard the poetry of Juvie Gonzalez '04 for the first time, learned that Diana Noriega '04 has a talent for writing, and even debated with Winston Benjamin '04. It was magical, and I remember wanting to tell everyone about this great group of kids.

On May 22, the Posse 1 Scholars leave Wheaton to Posses 2, 3, 4 and 5. They and the many other extraordinary members of the Class of 2004 leave it a much better place. 📍



At a fall 2003 retreat, Posse Scholars played "Diversity Bingo" to break the ice and learn about each other.

## ▶ LETTERS



### The Jersey Connection

We three Heath Village Wheaton alumnae were thrilled to "be at Wheaton" on March 30 to watch the welcome ceremony for Dr. Ronald Crutcher. The Heath Village Computer Club set up its equipment for our viewing of the Webcast from Cole Chapel. The sound system performed with clarity and we really felt part of the excitement!

Heath Village is a retirement community in northwest New Jersey and, as you can imagine, we are only partly retired.

We think we are most fortunate to have Dr. Crutcher, and are sure he will enjoy life at Wheaton. Good luck to all.

—Elizabeth Stettler Gurney '40,  
Muriel Sargent North '25, and  
Ruth MacCubbin Harrison '38

### Correction

The spring issue of the *Quarterly* identified Courtney Wall '07 as a studio art major, which is inaccurate; she intends to apply to the major.

**Letters to the editor:** The *Quarterly* welcomes letters to the editor on topics you've read in these pages or on other topics concerning the Wheaton community. Please address your letters to:

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