

Celebrating the Year of the Arts

BY DALE ROGERS MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

Because I grew up in Washington, D.C., my career as a political scientist might seem like the most natural of choices. But that is merely hindsight. I can remember quite vividly struggling to decide, as an undergraduate, whether to major in government or to immerse myself in the arts and humanities. That's why this year, in which the entire Wheaton community celebrates the arts, has been such a joy for me, as I know it has been for so many others.

The most persuasive testimony to the Wheaton community's love for the arts is the enthusiastic and generous response with which alumnae/i and friends of the college have greeted Wheaton's plan to expand and enhance its arts facilities. In barely a year's time, more than \$15 million has been contributed to the arts project, excluding a \$1 million challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation. When the \$18 million project is complete, Wheaton students and faculty will work together in a stunning new studio arts building connected to Meneely Hall as well as a completely renovated Watson Fine Arts Center.

The arts project, the largest building effort in the college's history and the first creation of new teaching spaces in nearly 30 years, serves as a wonderful capstone for the success of the Campaign for Wheaton. More importantly, it has inspired the entire college community to take a fresh look at the arts and celebrate all that they mean to us. In events throughout the country, I have joined with alumnae/i, students, staff and faculty in reaffirming our commitment to the central role that the arts play in the liberal arts. They speak to the universe of human experience and develop creativity, critical thinking and communication skills.

Off campus, the celebration began last summer with Art Works, an exhibition of more than 50 alumnae/i artists living and working in New England, which was held at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Boston. In other off-campus celebrations:

- Author Barbara Frelinghuysen Israel '67 showed us the beauty of the antique garden ornaments that inspired her best-selling book *Antique Garden Ornament: Two Centuries of American Taste*, at a special exhibition for Wheaton alumnae/i at the Carlyle Hotel in New York.



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- Members of Wheaton's arts faculty discussed with alumnae/i in Florida and California how they teach the arts today, the importance of the arts in the college's curriculum, and the accomplishments of recent graduates in the arts.

- Anne-Imelda Radice '69, former acting director of the National Endowment for the Arts, gave fellow graduates and parents an insider's policy recommendations about what the federal government must do to enhance the vitality of the arts in America.

This enthusiasm for the arts infused on-campus programs as well. Actor Tony Randall set the stage at AutumnFest with his own highly personal reminiscence of the ways in which America's postwar patronage of the arts enriched the nation. Visitors such as Paula Vogel, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, Robert Brustein, the director of the American Repertory Theater, and Caroline Worthington, the internationally acclaimed cellist, added to the excitement.

Wheaton students have invested the celebration with their own creativity:

- *Impressions, The Art of the Print*: Fifteen students curated this exhibition under the guidance of Associate Professor of Art Evelyn Lane, creating an overview of the history of printmaking, publishing a wonderful 140-page catalog to accompany the show and displaying the richness of the college's permanent art collection.

- *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*: The music and theatre departments teamed up to mount a resourceful and very entertaining production of this classic musical farce.

- The Wheaton Chorale, joined by Boston's well-known Seraphim Singers, gave a rare performance of Thomas Tallis' stunning *Spem in alium*, an antiphonal motet for eight five-voice choruses.

All of this has made for a wonderful year of arts celebration, and bodes well for the future of the arts at Wheaton as well as for our students, who must decide their own paths. The celebration has not only been wonderful for Wheaton, but also for me personally. To paraphrase Robert Frost, I chose the road most traveled; in this year of celebration, all of us have a chance to try the other road.