

## Millennial Milestones

BY DALE ROGERS MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

When it comes to drama and excitement, Commencement/ Reunion Weekend tops every other event. This year was particularly joyous and momentous. We celebrated the millennial Class of 2000's graduation, welcomed two graduates back for a 75th Reunion, and marked a major milestone for the college as well.

The excitement showed. During the weekend, members of this year's Reunion classes told me over and over how proud they are of the college and that the college has never been stronger. There are many reasons to be proud—not the least of them is the graduates themselves, students like Deshawnda Williams, national track champion and a student leader. The first person in her family to graduate from college, Deshawnda is taking her Wheaton degree to Tulane, where she received a full scholarship to the university's graduate school of social work. She will certainly be remembered as one of the college's greatest athletes, but I am most moved by her achievements as a scholar-athlete.

And there are the many other members of the Class of 2000 who will be continuing their education next fall, among them Fulbright Scholarship winners Skye Paine and Gregory Bates. A political science and Hispanic studies major, Greg will examine international law and commerce in Uruguay, taking classes at the national university in Montevideo and working for an international think tank. Skye, who majored in French and art history at Wheaton, will teach English in a rural section of France as a prelude to becoming a teacher in the U.S.

We are also proud that:

- This year, applications for admission to Wheaton's Class of 2004 hit an all-time high of more than 3,100, representing a 29 percent increase.
- The Campaign for Wheaton, which closed on June 30, raised more than \$90 million, roughly \$25 million beyond our initial target and more than three and a half times greater than the last campaign.

I have no doubt that the impact of these milestones will



WHEATON'S FUTURE LOOKS PROMISING, INDEED, DUE IN NO SMALL MEASURE TO THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALUMNAE/I, FRIENDS, STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF.

only grow in the years ahead. It is wonderful to start the new century with such momentum because it sets the stage for greater things to come. The faculty's growing diversity is a case in point. In a feature story on the subject, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* put it this way: "In the highly competitive race to hire black faculty members, a small liberal arts college in Massachusetts is out front this year... Wheaton College has managed to sign up more black professors this spring than Harvard." I am convinced that

our strength in student recruitment and the success of the Campaign were major factors in this achievement.

Now, looking toward the future, we are completing Vision: Wheaton 2005, the college's new strategic plan for building on all the successes of the past decade. Honoring old ideals and new horizons, as President Cole once said, we are engaged in a comprehensive curricular review with an emphasis on enhancing academic excellence, the quality of campus life and the facilities integral to our mission.

The Alumnae/i Association is also engaged in a planning effort to enhance connections with alumnae/i. I am particularly interested in having candid conversations with graduates of the classes of the '70s and '80s on the issues they feel most passionately about. For example, I want to address the sense of betrayal about the timing of the coed decision that some still feel and reaffirm our shared commitment to gender equality. These more recent graduates will become the new leaders of Wheaton, ensuring that the best of our traditions are passed on to future generations of women and men.

Wheaton's future looks promising, indeed, due in no small measure to the contributions of alumnae/i, friends, students, faculty and staff. Over the next year we will take the time to celebrate the accomplishments that have given Wheaton such wonderful momentum to begin the new century. I hope you will join us to share our excitement in the college's success and be inspired by the possibilities for the future.