

# V a r i e d

*Creating Harmony from Our Differences*

R O N A L D S A S I N E

A

s it strives to capture and reflect the intricacies of modern American society, the study of law must necessarily grapple

with the disparate histories and experiences of our immigrant nation. Similarly, growing cross-border interaction has created new demands for international and multicultural legal skills. The J. Reuben Clark Law School, with its Faculty and Student Diversity committees, seeks to provide a legal education grounded in understanding and accepting the differences that surround each of us and their effects on the formation, enforcement, and practice of law. Recent events highlight the Law School's goal: the initiation of an

□ P H O T O G R A P H Y B Y J O H N S N Y D E R

*I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear.*

—WALT WHITMAN

# C a r o l s



exchange with Howard University Law School, a historically black college in Washington, D C; the creation of a Master of Comparative Law Program and its rapid acceptance and growth; and the inauguration of a Celebration of Diversity, an event dedicated to discovering the unique perspectives brought to the Law School community by its members

Accepting differences in others can be difficult; often it is easier to use them as a barrier than as an opening. But those who strive to understand the uniqueness and contribution of each individual are better able to remove the restraints that can otherwise prevent them from fulfilling their role for their clients, their constituents, or the law itself. As students, faculty, and administrators of the Law School work to better understand the nation's social fabric, they come to better understand the law based on it.

Wherever we may be and whatever we may do, differences form the historical foundation we act on.

Even as the revolutionaries plotted succession from the crown in Philadelphia, Father Escalante surveyed Utah Valley and sent word to the viceroy in Mexico City. While most of the American frontier was still an educational wasteland, Warren Dusenberry petitioned Brigham Young for a grant to begin a local school in Provo. Viewed in context, it becomes clear that the sum contribution of individuals, whether small or great, has been our nation's most important shaping force. It is with the intent of understanding better these contributions that the Law School moves forward embracing diversity.

#### THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the pressing need for educational opportunities among the freed slaves was nowhere more apparent than in the District of Columbia. One-third of the district's citizens were African-Americans, making the urban black population in Washington the world's largest. Elementary schools were established almost immediately by various philanthropic organizations, but access to higher levels of education remained elusive. Clearly, avenues of higher education for members of the black community would need to be opened to train future leaders and teachers.

In 1867 a charter was granted by the U S Congress to the trustees of Howard University. Within two months of its incorporation, five students began classes in Howard's preparatory and normal schools. Under the guidance of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, the university began to grow and develop, and enrollment in the university's four departments reached 172 in 1869, with

"twenty-one promising young men" taking courses in the law school alone. By 1872 the student body stood at 567.

The superintendent of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau reported in 1869: "Howard University is in, but does not belong to, my department; this is a central institution, founded on a broad basis, and when in full operation [will] be an ornament and honor to this national capital." Howard's continued excellence and distinguished alumni, faculty, and students attest to the superintendent's foresight.

The prospects for an academic exchange between Howard



**Kristine Keala Meredith  
shares her  
Howard University  
exchange  
experiences at the  
Law School's  
Celebration of Diversity.**

University and the J Reuben Clark Law School arose out of a conversation between Howard Law School's Dean Clay Smith and Dean J Clifton Fleming. While visiting Washington, Fleming met with Smith to discuss business of the Board of Visitors. Dean Fleming suggested the idea of an exchange, and both men agreed to discuss the possibilities with their respective administrations. Soon a program was under consideration, and a faculty member was needed to initiate the exchange.

Professor Lynn Wardle spent the 1989-90 academic year working at the Department of Justice in Washington, D C. Before leaving for Washington, Wardle was informed of the efforts underway to establish the program with Howard. He began to grow interested in being the first exchange professor, and he expressed his desire to both administrations. Although the administrative details took quite a long time, both schools supported his efforts. According to Wardle, "the administration at Howard was very positive, especially Interim Dean Alice Gresham Bullock."

It was decided that Wardle would teach at Howard for both semesters of the 1990-91 school year, as an exchange professor in fall and as a visiting professor in winter. The Howard faculty warmly welcomed him and included him in all of the regular faculty meetings and activities. Several special events stand out as highlights. Virginia Governor L Douglas Wilder, a graduate of Howard Law School and the first elected black state governor in U S. history, was honored by the law school for his accomplishments and his contributions to African-American political life. The class of 1991 honored another Howard graduate, U S Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, with a commissioned bust placed in the law library. "The unveiling ceremony was a very moving occasion," according to Wardle. "Justice Marshall, as well as five of his Supreme Court colleagues attended; that's more

Supreme Court justices in the same place at the same time than I have ever seen outside the Court itself."

Professor Wardle kept very busy with his teaching and writing while at Howard. He taught courses in Family Law and Conflict of Laws during fall semester and an additional section of Conflict of Laws in the winter. He addressed a faculty forum, and the international students in the master of comparative jurisprudence program asked him to speak to their group as well. Wardle was also able to conduct research at the Howard law library, the American University, and the Library of Congress, and during his tenure at Howard he published two pieces, an article in the *Brigham Young University Law Review* and a chapter in a forthcoming book on international family law issues. He was even asked to help judge the school's moot court competition.

Despite the superficial differences that may exist between the Howard University Law School and the J. Reuben Clark Law School, "no two schools are more similar," Wardle argues. "Both law schools are identified with strong subcultures and possess a clear vision of their unique identity. As a result, both schools have had to deal with internal and external disputes over their mission and ideals." Because of the schools' strong identification with a narrow sector of society, lack of understanding can be a problem for the institutions, and both are seeking to respond positively to the challenges of diversity.

At the 1990 meetings of the Law School Board of Visitors, there was interest in expanding the exchange program to include students. Kristine Keala Meredith, an officer in the Minority Law Students Association and a member of the Student Diversity Committee, attended a roundtable discussion where diversity was addressed. The prospect of exchanging law faculty with Howard was discussed by several members of the board, including Howard Dean Clay Smith, and one of the members of the board suggested including students in the program. Kristine immediately began considering the possibilities and explored the idea with other Law School students, faculty, and administrators. She envisioned a program that would allow students to experience the diversity of studying at Howard, gain a new perspective on law from its legal professors and scholars, and associate with its African-American students.

Kristine was encouraged by Professor Wardle's plans to visit Howard. She presented a proposal to Dean Hansen requesting the Law School initiate contact with Howard to suggest a student exchange, and although personal affairs and increased expenses presented her with difficult obstacles, Kristine was determined to carry out her program, though final approval came only two weeks before the start of classes.

While Kristine's Asian/Pacific Islander background sets her apart at the Law School, at Howard she was considered "just white" by some students. "Early in my residency at Howard I realized that the Howard students were surprised by the presence of a female, apparently white, third-year student from Brigham Young University." In response to more antagonistic students who doubted her motives for attending Howard, Kristine explained her intentions and commitment

to educational diversity. "I wanted to learn from black professors; I wanted to study with black students. I wanted a broader legal education and a broader view of the world."

Like any group with shared similarities, at times the Howard community presented Kristine with difficulties. Howard administrators warned her that stereotypes and racism did exist at Howard and that she would not be exempt from their effects. Although isolated instances occurred, Kristine found most of the students pleasant. She highly values the increased experience she gained within the black community, and she most enjoyed those classes that gave her a chance to share in the thoughts and values of her African-American classmates.

Both Kristine and Professor Wardle participated in the meetings of the Howard Christian Fellowship Organization. Their participation offered the chance to associate with others there in a religious setting while affirming their own beliefs and testimonies. "I knew that many students had never had contact with Mormons and that they were curious about my beliefs and standards," says Kristine. "At the first meeting I felt I was a source of antagonism. I was troubled and wondered if I were really welcome. But as we prayed together, I felt that I was where I needed to be." For both Kristine and Professor Wardle, the group meetings became a source of support and strength during their stay. As time progressed, they were more openly accepted and developed a feeling of unity and friendship with the other members.

Kristine and Professor Wardle have high hopes for the future of the exchange. Wardle knows of several Howard professors interested in participating, and he expects at least one to come within the next two years. In addition, many more students applied for the exchange this year than last, an indication of growing interest in this innovative program.

"Howard and BYU need to stand together," according to Wardle. "As society becomes more centrifugal—with small and large groups spinning away from each other—pressures for isolation, separation, and antagonism increase, and the chance for conflict between subcultures intensifies. The experience and goodwill created by the exchange program can reduce these pressures as we look beyond the apparent to the real and find common ground."

#### FORGING FRIENDSHIPS:

#### THE MASTER OF COMPARATIVE LAW PROGRAM

*Christine F. Byrd*

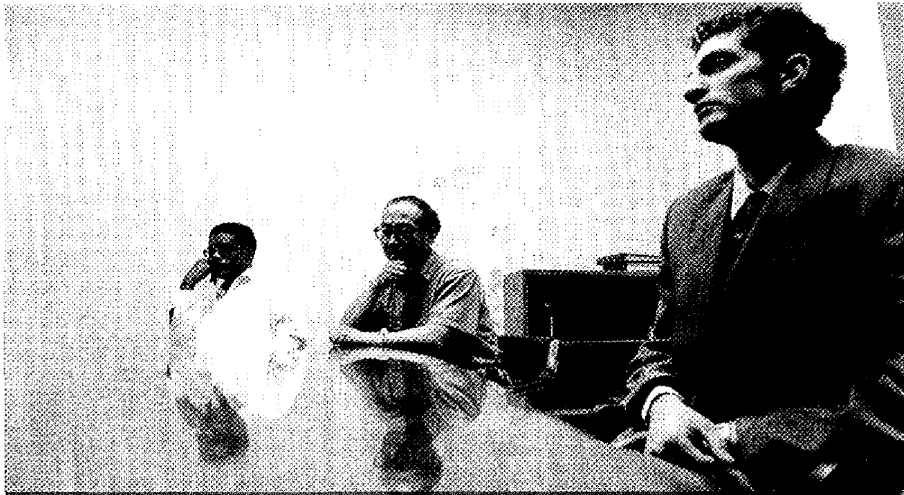
**T**he phenomenal growth in international transactions has greatly increased the need for lawyers trained to handle them. American lawyers working abroad are often required to understand and apply legal requirements of both their home and host countries. For both American and foreign firms and organizations, foreign lawyers who have been trained in American law are a great asset in deciphering what can often be a linguistic and semantic tangle.

As Church legal counsel in Europe, Professor James H. Backman often worked with European lawyers who held comparative law degrees to resolve difficult situations. "These

graduates enjoyed a distinct advantage," according to Backman. "Their knowledge of American laws made negotiations smoother and more economical." He returned to BYU in 1984 convinced that a master of comparative law program would be a natural addition to the Law School. He was supported by the findings of the American Bar Association inspection team, which was impressed by the number of BYU law students who spoke foreign languages and had lived abroad. "The members of the ABA team thought BYU was in a better position to offer an MCL program than any other school in the United States, and they were surprised it took us so long to get the idea."

Since it began in 1988, the program has matriculated students from Cameroon, Haiti, Japan, Peru, Canada, and the

cies and orphanages. While at BYU to research international adoption procedures, she visited a local law firm with other students and met a Provo attorney with clients interested in adopting children from Peru. As they became better acquainted, they discussed the possibilities of working together. She explored the problem further and eventually invited a friend, a practicing attorney in Peru, to meet with the Utah attorney. Together the two lawyers set up a program where Americans can visit Peru, arrange an adoption, complete the paper work, and then return to the United States, where the adoption becomes final. Upon completing her studies, Vicuna-Rios went to St. Louis, where she hoped to gain a position in an adoption agency that places Peruvian children.



**Master of  
comparative law  
students visit  
various legal  
services offices  
as part of  
their training.**

People's Republic of China. "We limit enrollment to no more than eight students per year," according to Backman. "This way we can ensure that participants receive the individual attention this new educational experience requires."

The MCL program is designed specifically for foreign lawyers who have earned a law degree or its equivalent in their own country and who wish to become more familiar with the American legal system. Despite language barriers, these well-prepared students have some advantages over ordinary J.D. students. They are generally older, and many have had considerable legal experience before coming to BYU. To earn an MCL degree, each student must complete 24 credit hours. Candidates can choose from any of the courses offered at the Law School, and they must complete two prerequisites. One of these courses is Introduction to American Law, offered only to them, in which they visit various law firms, court offices, legal services, and other government offices. "They find these field trips most interesting, especially divorce court," says Professor Backman. "They gain a first-hand exposure to the American legal system, visiting with and questioning various attorneys and court officials."

One MCL student, Martha Vicuna-Rios, particularly benefitted from this experience. A Peruvian native, Vicuna-Rios had worked with a law firm dealing with adoption agen-

Professor Stephen Wood took over from Professor Backman as coordinator of the MCL program in fall 1991, and he emphasizes its pragmatic objectives: "We need to give these students a positive experience while helping them understand American law. This way, when they return to their native countries they will have accurate perceptions of the American legal system." Professor Wood hopes the program will produce personal relationships that will provide beneficial foreign contacts for BYU students.

Professor Wood cites other reciprocal advantages of the MCL program. "Most law students are egocentric. Having foreign students in their classroom opens up possibilities they don't usually see." When a question was recently raised in a contracts class, the solution was unanimous and obvious to everyone, except a Chinese MCL student. He produced an answer that was for him equally obvious but conflicted with the first answer. "What students are discovering," says Professor Wood, "is that although legal systems have problems in common, the resolutions can be different."

Professor Wood discovered exactly how different legal approaches can be while working closely with Chong Liu, a Chinese MCL student and graduate of Beijing University, on a translation of the Chinese Administrative Procedure Law that was included in an article they published together.

"Chong translated the law literally and then we worked together to make the translation meaningful," says Professor Wood "We went through the translation laboriously, sometimes taking as much as fifteen minutes to discuss one sentence, what it meant, and how the Chinese legal system worked to produce that one sentence. Because of the process, I gained an appreciation for the Chinese legal system I never had before. And it was mutually rewarding; Chong gained greater understanding of the American system."

The MCL program has produced other unique opportunities for the law faculty. Last May, Weidong Wang, a recent MCL graduate, invited Professor Backman and President Lee to participate on a prestigious advisory committee that will aid the translation of many American law cases into Chinese. Wang's monumental enterprise, a projected five volumes, has received backing from the vice president of the Chinese Supreme Court.

An MCL student with a particularly unique view of the world is Alexander Paul, a Haitian diplomat who has served at the United Nations, in the Bahamas, in London, and in Florida. He credits his experiences at the U.N. with enlarging his appreciation for diversity. "You cannot find two similar flowers or trees," he says. "If we look around us we all will see diversity everywhere; problems arise in our attitudes toward the differences."

While working at the U.N., Paul began studying at St. John's University for a master's degree in government and politics. His studies were interrupted by an opportunity to serve as consul general in the Bahamas, where he and his wife joined the Church.

Paul became interested in studying American law following his diplomatic tour in London, and he wanted to come to BYU. (At their wedding, Paul's wife, Helen, had vowed to love, honor, and follow him to the ends of the earth—never considering she and their four children might end up in Provo, Utah!)

Paul has a deep respect for American courts, "where judges can perform their duties with authority." According to Paul, the situation in Haiti is quite different. "When the Ministry of Justice can fire judges, it is difficult for them to be independent."

Paul sees many other differences between the American legal system and that of his country, the biggest of which is the Constitution. Paul admires the American Constitution as a solid monument that guarantees individual rights. In Haiti, where the political situation has been highly unstable, the constitution changes to ensure the rights of those in power. "In my lifetime, I have seen five constitutions," says Paul. "That is why I am still studying. Someone, sometime, must tell my people that if we keep changing the constitution, we will never get democracy."

After his studies, Paul plans to return to Haiti and enter private practice, working with American corporations there. "Knowing American law and the law in Haiti will put me in a better position to advise my clients and make them understand what is possible and what is not."

Improved international understanding can help reduce tensions. But according to Professor Wood, "it requires good-

will and a great deal of patience. No matter how sincere our intentions, each of us brings to the process cultural baggage that colors how we react, what we say, and what we hear."

Professor Wood says the MCL program has produced some surprises. When the program started, it was anticipated that many of the students would come from Western Europe, Canada, and Japan. To date there have been no participants from Western Europe, but each year the program includes at least one student from the People's Republic of China.

Another surprise is that some students enjoy their experience here so much that they stay on to get a J.D. degree from BYU or another American law school. This is especially true of the Chinese students like Chong Liu and Weidong Wang. "They are young enough," says Professor Backman, "to wait until the political situation settles down in their country; then they can go home and make a difference."

#### A CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY

*If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling?*

*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him*

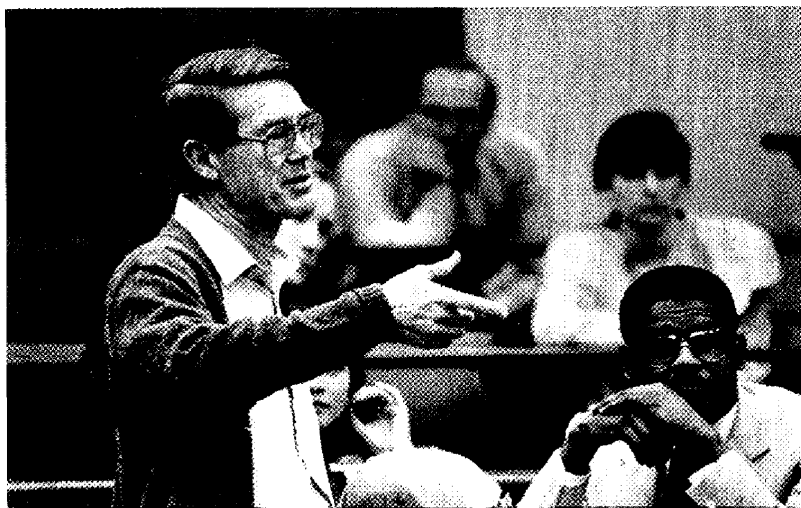
*But now are they many members, yet but one body*

—I Corinthians 12: 17–18, 20

Paul's injunction is as pertinent today for the J. Reuben Clark Law School as it was for the early saints of Corinth. Embracing diversity requires understanding, accepting, and celebrating the differences that surround us. It is a recognition that each individual plays a role and brings unique abilities and valuable experiences to the whole.

Diversity does not come naturally to the Law School. Located in a small community and sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, from its creation the Law School has attracted primarily white, Mormon men. Although the backgrounds and experiences of these majority students are varied and wide ranging, an image of conformity has long accompanied the Law School in the eyes of outside observers. Increased awareness of the differences that exist among students and faculty, minority and majority, enriches the educational atmosphere and fosters greater understanding of the cosmopolitan world many students will find themselves in after graduation.

With the goal of establishing a framework where multicultural differences could be more openly considered and discussed, the Law School Diversity Committee was formed in the fall of 1989. The committee members wrestled with defining their objectives, often wondering exactly what diversity should mean and how it should be promoted. They hoped to sensitize members of the Law School community to appreciate the values and experiences of others. Associate Dean Constance Lundberg, committee co-chair, described the committee's objective as a challenge to promote respect for others' perspectives without drawing lines, building walls, or



**Celebration of  
Diversity provided  
a richness  
of perspective  
to faculty  
and students.**

reducing communication. "Different backgrounds bring a richness of perspective," according to Dean Lundberg "What we are doing—valuing individuals—is unique; it requires both self-knowledge and appreciation of others "

By the fall of 1990, many members of the committee began to look forward to a more active outreach to the rest of the Law School. It seemed as though great progress was being made within their small group, but truly harnessing the value of the different perspectives present at the Law School required a broader effort. This desire prompted the planning of a Celebration of Diversity, an event to "learn all that we can from each other, harnessing the value of different perspectives and emphasizing diversity in its full meaning," said Associate Professor David Dominguez.

According to Professor Dominguez, ideologues in American society often argue for less than full meanings of diversity, with extremists dominating the dialogue and inflammatory labels being used by all sides. Under these circumstances, diversity has become a politically charged issue, with often unwarranted attention paid to vitriol and rhetoric. Balance is the key to full diversity, which requires collaboration and consensus. The committee hoped to organize an event where members of the Law School community would be encouraged to transcend the barriers that otherwise hinder the discussion of disparate perceptions, discovering within themselves and others the fruits of diversity.

A Celebration of Diversity was designed to highlight the positive nature of the differences that surround the Law School. According to Professor Ed Kimball, the committee

hoped that "the festive atmosphere would emphasize the benefits of diversity rather than address it as some unwanted duty." As a result, events were scheduled to highlight the ways human diversity makes life more interesting and exciting and to explore the richness in others. An elaborate food sampling table featured international foods prepared by law students and faculty, including Greek, Chinese, Mexican, and

Italian. At a meeting held in the Moot Court Room, participants shared with each other their own backgrounds and experiences with diversity. In addition, Kristine Keala Meredith spoke to the group about her semester at Howard University, and Alexander Paul shared insights into human interaction gained through his diplomatic experiences.

Perhaps the most revelatory part of the day-long event was the public display of *Building on Diversity: A Perspective on Our Roots*. The display was composed of individual, voluntary contributions addressing the life experiences and personal views of students, faculty, and administrators. The submissions included autobiographical sketches, poetry, artwork, and other expressions of creativity and individuality. They were posted on a large bulletin board outside the Moot Court Room where the entire Law School community could view them. These works were thoughtful, probing approaches to the diverse backgrounds of the participants and generated discussion and reflection from those who viewed them.

The idea for the display grew out of the committee's desire to highlight the differences among individuals within the Law School. A newsletter format was rejected because it would have placed too much editorial control in the hands of a few

who would be forced to evaluate the submissions. By choosing a “free-commentary” format for the display, people were free to contribute whatever they chose to contribute, without fear of interference or rejection. The format also seemed to heighten the interest of the readers, who were free to read about and discuss the wide range of topics and issues treated by the contributors.

The type of sincere analysis of differences put forward by the Diversity Committee serves both important pedagogical and professional purposes. Professor Kimball points first to the gospel principle of tolerance, which embodies the acceptance of the many irrelevant differences that tend to divide people. Understanding that divisions hinder greater understanding of our roles as brothers and sisters is the first step to surpassing those divisions. Associate Dean Lundberg argues that “the fundamental gospel principles of love, kindness, charity, and brotherhood should rule in this Law School—not externally imposed values.” As attention is given to the higher law of “love thy neighbor,” superficial obstacles placed between neighbors wither.

Diversity is important to the study of law for additional, more earthly reasons. Through interchange with people of different backgrounds, the experiential base of all the participants is expanded. If the law is to be understood as a response to human needs, exposure to a wider cross-section of human experience increases our ability to grasp its foundations and practical applications. The law student confronted by these issues while in the academic arena has an advantage over the

lawyer who deals with them only after beginning practice. Although some sectors of society may have been underrepresented in the past, the world has changed sufficiently to require greater participation. These newer voices have begun to join the chorus, and they must be welcomed by those already singing.

Professional considerations also highlight the value of exploring diversity. “Lawyers benefit from knowing everything they can that relates to their clientele,” according to Professor Kimball. “A greater knowledge of peoples and their problems will help job performance” throughout the legal profession. Associate Dean and Director of Career Services Kathy Pullins points out that deepened understanding comes from the reciprocal exchange of experiences among students. “At the end of three years, students must learn to represent a wide range of clients. If students don’t have the chance to broaden their base of experience, they are less able to apply the law to nontraditional circumstances.”

A Celebration of Diversity began a process of serious reflection and consideration on the uniqueness and individuality that all bring to the table. Discovering diversity without fueling divisiveness can be a challenge, but the needs of the law and of modern society require this type of introspection and analysis. The value of diversity is slowly being added to the traditional legal concepts of ethics, duty to the bar, and pro bono service, and it will continue to play an important role in the way the law is taught, studied, and practiced for years to come.

*As part of the Celebration of Diversity, faculty and students wishing to express their feelings about diversity made contributions, sharing their experiences through poetry, prose, and photography. The Clark Memorandum is pleased to include several excerpts.*

#### EXPOSING THE HEART

Edward L. Kimball

In my teens I read Somerset Maugham’s *Of Human Bondage*. His description of the feelings of a handicapped young man rang true to me. I told my mother, “Maugham explains the way I feel,” so she read the book and said, “Surely you don’t feel *that* way!” But I did. My bout with polio as I was turning three left both physical and psychic marks. Nine scars from childhood operations total nearly four feet in length. The psychic scars don’t show, but they are nonetheless real.

In the exchange with my mother I became aware that the person who, of all the world, knew me best did not know all my feelings. We think we know one another, yet unless there is willingness to expose the heart there cannot be a fullness of understanding. Some people are so transparent that they seem to have their thoughts displayed on their forehead, like the stock market quotations running across a screen. I like such open people, without pretense; my wife is one of them. I’m not like that. I sometimes hide behind a screen, unable to accept the vulnerability that comes with openness.

I experience continuing tension between trying to ignore my physical handicap and acknowledging it. I don’t want to admit that I am significantly different from others, but I also know I cannot compete in all the same ways. I probably have compensated by shifting efforts from what I cannot do to things I can. I can’t run or jump, but I used to be good at table tennis, where I did not have to move far or fast. I liked canoeing, arm wrestling, and other activities that took upper body strength. I could not dance, but I could sing.

I might have liked benefits sometimes offered to the handicapped, but I was too proud to admit the need. A handicapped parking sticker? Not me. I have been more than vaguely annoyed at other handicapped people. Far from having special empathy, I wanted to be distinguished from them, not identified with them.

The most disabling consequence of my handicap is very real shyness. Meeting new people is one of the most difficult tasks for me. You would think that, after 35 years of teaching,



a new semester would pose no problems, but the first few classes of a new semester always produce a high level of anxiety, not from the subject matter, but from confronting a new group of students.

Over a lifetime I have learned to greet and talk with people pleasantly enough, engaging in chatter with strangers. But it is rarely with pleasure, nearly always with inward resistance. A cocktail-type party is the worst of times, where one flits from one stranger to another, making small talk.

In a conversation I am almost always the questioner. Do I take the initiative to protect myself somehow? Do I feel I have little to offer, so I draw others out?

At the intellectual level I know that I am an acceptable person, but at the feeling level there is a persistent sense of inadequacy. When I stop to think about it, I realize that nearly everyone has some sense of inadequacy and that my

physical handicap may be among the least important of problems I might have and that I have strengths to compensate for some of my weaknesses. But that realization still does not make the feelings go away.

Since I ordinarily do not see myself walking and since walking is *not* painful, I can sometimes almost forget my handicap. Then when I see myself in a mirror, walking, I am shocked at the terrible awkward gait. I hate it; I am angered by it. Are not other people offended every minute by what they see?

Perhaps I am guilty of overdramatization. I have so much. Why dwell on the little I lack? Physical strength is of small importance overall. Yet it is this one characteristic that makes me significantly different from most of those around me. It gives me reason to empathize with others who are different in other ways.

**A FIELD GUIDE TO  
UNMARRIED WOMEN NO LONGER YOUNG**

*Constance K. Lundberg*

In the fourth tier of Symphony Hall,  
In the coarse old days called nigger heaven,  
Congregate unmarried women, no longer young

Forest green carpet, elegant last season, little worn  
By the sensible shoes, stuffed, shapeless pockets of  
Leather hanging over stacked heels, well worn.

The small front hall entry,  
Crossed by pairs and trios of women,  
Quietly talking, migrating to their seats,  
Herded by occasional men, too thin for shiny suits,  
Being good about the friends of their comfortable mates

A mother and daughter (past her prime),  
Perpetually wrapped in long cloth coats  
Covering flower print dresses draped over ample bosoms,  
Read, side by side, ankles crossed,  
Until the last bell calls  
Whispering, chattering ladies settle in,  
Listen to composers of the Classic era  
Spiced with Brahms and Ginastera

Medium-aged women, suited and hatted,  
Stride to their booths,  
Lunching in well-lighted chic—  
Rose walls, deferential young waiters with cute buns—  
Laughing, teasing over improbable possibilities,  
Toying with salads and dried slivers  
Of old loves, remembered quirks,

Not remembering long waits  
With warm Brie and cold gin,  
Smiling welcome,  
Not presuming to reproach,

Empty beds, drained of passion,  
And hugging cold pillows for comfort  
In the hour before dawn

The warm, smoky semi-dark bar,  
A hissing undercurrent of languid conversation  
Swept by an occasional wave of high spirits,  
Good fun. Friends coalescing into pairs,  
Ready to go home at the end of the day

Entice them to stay with hors d'oeuvres  
And dry wit, the fullness of eating and drinking too much  
A shadow of hoped-for-feared fertility,  
Washed away later, alone,  
By the deep, ever present, wells of  
Self-loathing in the secrecy of one's apartment.

Weekends are the empty time.  
An unmarried woman slides into the comfort  
Of sheets and quilts, burrows into mounds of pillows  
With books and Bach. Her conversation  
The humorless heroism of Asimov,  
The brittle order of Austen.

Paralyzed in the closeness of air breathed too long,  
Food of a bland, convenient sameness  
Providing sustenance but no impetus to move.  
Did the Israelites spend forty years in the wilderness  
Sapped of will to move by manna?

She yearns for the melons of Egypt, sharp, wet,  
Sour/sweet, cool on the tongue, slipping down the throat,  
Stirring the still, stale blood. Easing down  
Beneath the covers, reaching for another book,  
She contemplates escape from her soft self

## GRANDFATHER QUEST

Susan Polizzoto

When the opportunity came to study in Rome last summer, I seized it. Comparative law interested me, but thoughts of my grandfather's boyhood home in Sicily drove my ambition. I planned to find Polizzi Generosa, 900 meters up in Sicily's volcanic mountains, as soon as school was out. In anticipation, I gathered what threads of information I had: a copy of my grandfather's birth certificate, sent years ago by a priest in Polizzi; a 30-year-old map of Italy, showing Polizzi as a small dot in central Sicily; and several postcards covered with Italian script, indecipherable except for my grandfather's name and an address—38 Garibaldi, Polizzi Generosa.

Once in Polizzi, luck greeted me in the form of a woman named Lina who heard about my quest and invited me over to the small grocery store she owned. Her mother's maiden name was Polizzotto, and she remembered an American relative, her mother's cousin, who had visited about 30 years ago when she was a young woman. "He was bald and his ears stuck out like this," she said, cupping her hands behind her ears and bending them slightly forward.

"Yes!" I replied, amused and astonished at the accuracy of her description. "That just might have been my grandfather." Browsing through her store, I noticed piled on a shelf bags of S-shaped biscuits—one of my father's favorite treats. Grandpa probably ate these, then Dad acquired a taste for them without even knowing why he likes them. Lina noticed me staring at the biscuits and offered me some. Then she invited me over to her mother's house the next day.

The whole family had convened to meet me. Lina handed me an old black and white photograph of three men standing on some steps and asked me if I recognized anyone. The man in the middle had large ears, a bald pate, and a warm, broad smile.

"Sì, nonno mio." I would have recognized Grandpa anywhere from that photo and others I had seen, looking just the way Lina described him to me in her store the day before.

The family was overjoyed at my mysterious appearance from America. We talked and hugged and laughed for several hours. Questions and answers flew back and forth. When the excitement died down, the men drifted back to their strolling and sunbathing, and the women returned to their ceaseless chatter.

Around noon the next day I walked to the cathedral to celebrate mass with my relatives. The sermon that day was on the parable of the merchant, who, when he found the pearl of great price, sold all that he had to buy it—"Il regno di Dio è simile ad una perla, che un mercante acquista vendendo tutti i suoi averi." After the discourse, which was somehow more uplifting for having been in a language I didn't understand, I rose and walked to the front of the church, took the eucharist from Padre Forti, and walked slowly back. I did not sit down, but knelt for a long time on the hard wooden plank in front of my seat, thanked God for my dream, thanked God for my quest, and thanked God for the friends who had helped me. I felt like a humble soldier, alive and home from the crusade.

The quest for Polizzi taught me many things. I learned to live out a dream, to pursue it fearlessly wherever it took me. I learned that the best experiences in life often come unsought. In my mind, there was no rationale for my dream; I only desired to go to Polizzi. And so I went in search of a town on a map and found a community of people. I sought my dead grandfather and found living relatives and friends. I followed a dream and discovered myself. Inadvertently, I had found a pearl worth selling all for.

## PRAYER AT TEOTIHUACAN

Paco Guajardo

I sit upon the steps  
of a forgotten tombstone  
leading to the sun  
wondering .

Where are its builders?  
Its noble warriors?  
Where have they gone?  
Is this ruined legacy they've left behind  
a warning  
of what we might become?

Yesterday  
our fathers ran up these steps  
to offer their god  
a bleeding,  
palpitating,  
heart,

But,  
He remained silent  
Ignored their cry  
And now,  
they are gone,  
conquered by those who came later  
wielding a sword  
and  
a cross

Today the call of war is heard  
raging  
in southern lands  
*Libertad!*  
*Democracia!*  
*Equidad!*

I too,  
like those of old,  
offer a heart.  
But it's my heart,  
God.  
Pleading for peace.  
That no more blood  
will ever stain these steps  
And your children become one

Will you listen this time?

I sit upon the steps  
of a forgotten tombstone  
leading to the sun  
In the once mighty city of the gods,  
Teotihuacan.