

Dore Ways

A forum for exchanging ideas

From the Editor

Historians Among Us

THREE INCIDENTS IN THE COURSE OF PRODUCING THIS ISSUE MADE me appreciate how alumni, regardless of their Vanderbilt major, serve as unofficial university historians.

A few months ago Danielle Throneberry, BA'05, phoned to suggest a story idea. Working on the *Vanderbilt Review* as a Vanderbilt student, she had gotten to know Alex Moffett, a Class of 1932 Medical School alumnus who wrote poetry. "When he was a student, he used to earn money ironing Chancellor Kirkland's pants," she told me.

"Chancellor Kirkland?" I said, thinking Danielle had her chancellors mixed up. James Kirkland had been chancellor of Vanderbilt beginning in the 1890s.

"Dr. Moffett is a hundred years old," Danielle told me. "And Chancellor Kirkland was here until the 1930s." That Vanderbilt still had any living alumnus who remembered Kirkland was reason enough to want the story; that one of Vanderbilt's youngest alumnae had uncovered this nugget made it irresistible. To read Danielle's essay, turn to page 64.

A few days after my conversation with Danielle, we received an e-mail from Alan Pierce, BS'77, who had read our Robert Penn Warren feature ("Corner of the Eye") in the Fall 2005 issue. Alan owned a history book that had belonged to Warren when he was at Vanderbilt, complete with handwritten notes. Would Vanderbilt have any interest in it? In short order, arrangements were made for the book to be added to the Heard Library's Robert Penn Warren holdings. "I have been sitting on the book for 20 years," Alan wrote us. "Had it not been for the article in *VANDERBILT MAGAZINE*, the book still would be in my bookcase where I would pull it out once a year and imagine what formative role it might have held for a young Robert Penn Warren."

As we were planning a feature about science, critical inquiry and religious belief (see page 36), Frye Gaillard, BA'68, e-mailed me with an article idea. "Back in 1970 when I was working for the Associated Press, I covered a speech at Peabody by John T. Scopes. I would have assumed he was long dead, but there he was, a vigorous man in his 70s talking about the important calling of being a good teacher," Frye wrote. "I think readers of the magazine might be intrigued by the oddity that Scopes came to our campus some 45 years after the Scopes Trial."

Frye and I did some digging and learned that the Peabody appearance had been Scopes' first return in 45 years to a Tennessee classroom, long after being driven out of his profession for teaching Darwinism to high-school biology students. Frye shares his recollection of this largely forgotten incident on page 40.

If you have ironed a chancellor's pants, keep a Pulitzer Prize winner's Vanderbilt textbook sitting on your bookshelf, or hold some other relic of university history in your memory, write and share it with other alumni.

GAYNELLE DOLL

From the Reader

Money Isn't Everything

WHEN I RECEIVED MY MASTER OF LIBRARY science degree from Peabody College in May 1975, we were told the job market was not good for librarians. I sent out blind letters to a number of Georgia public libraries simply stating that I wanted to work in the area. Although I had some family in Georgia, I knew no one at all in the county where I landed my first job by late June. I was shocked to read the letter from the "former librarian" in the Fall 2005 issue of *VANDERBILT MAGAZINE* [From the Reader, "Library Allegations," p. 5]. Now that I am 30 years into a wonderful career, I may have a few connections. But my first few positions were gained not by connection, but by persistence and maybe a good interview.

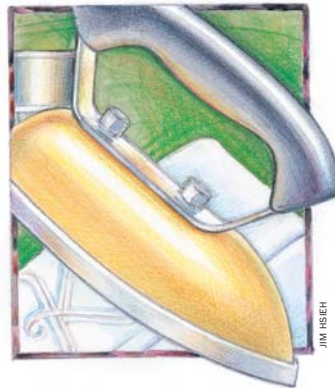
My career has not been financially rewarding. I still make far less than classroom teachers and librarians in the public schools, but I love my work. I deliberately chose to leave a good job in a college to go back to a public library. I like being in the thick of things, and academia was just not for me. As director of the county library system in one of the poorest counties in South Carolina, I know that I have made a difference and hope that will continue. Maybe I am deluding myself in that opinion, but I know that I am happy.

It is sad that the former librarian did not find work. I think he may have pursued the wrong degree. I do not know of any middle-aged librarians planning to leave the field. There are plenty of openings, especially in rural areas, for the motivated librarian who has goals other than making the big bucks.

NORRIS WOOTTON, MLS'75
Kingstree, S.C.

Conscience of the Campus

WHEN I WAS AN UNDERGRADUATE IN 1949, the Joint University Library was closed to blacks. However, the School of Religion, which



had its own library on the ground floor of the JUL, chose to allow blacks to use its facilities, and allowed them to check out books from the JUL through their desk and study in their room.

Founding members of the Vanderbilt Unitarian Fellowship (now First Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashville), including Ron Rouse (BA'50, PhD'58) and I, believed this was not right, so we took on the project of opening the JUL to black students. We got appointments with all the JUL board members and asked them to open the library to blacks. We were told in every case that the time was not right.

It is very rewarding to see that our goals have been met with the naming of James Lawson as the 2005 Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient, and that the School of Religion [now Vanderbilt Divinity School] is still at the forefront of race relations.

E. ALLAN BLAIR, BA'52
Flagstaff, Ariz.

Kent State Shootings Canceled Classes

I READ WITH INTEREST CLAIRE VERNON Suddath's article "I Heard a Rumor" in the Fall 2005 issue [p. 40]. I beg to differ, however, with Ms. Suddath's assertion that Vanderbilt has canceled classes only twice. In May 1970, Chancellor Heard canceled classes (at least for an afternoon) so that students could attend a campus memorial service for the shooting victims at Kent State University. Although I do not recall the specific date of the memorial service, the shootings occurred May 4, 1970.

DONALD B. DORWART, BA'71
St. Louis

What Gives with Clyde Lee?

THE PAGE 20 SIDEBAR ABOUT CLYDE LEE [Fall 2005 issue, Sports, "Where Are They Now?"] said he was Class of 1970. If so, it took him at least four years to get his degree after his regular graduating class. He starred on the hard court in the mid-'60s for the 'Dores, including a thrilling loss in the NCAA regional finals to Michigan and Cazzie Russell in 1964, I think.

RICHARD F. RANSOM, BA'71
Mountain View, Calif.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Lee began his Vanderbilt career with the Class of 1966, but because he went pro before graduating, he did not complete his degree until 1970.]

A Piece of Red's Past

I HAVE IN MY POSSESSION A BOOK ON ENGLISH history that was apparently owned by Robert

Penn Warren while he was a student at Vanderbilt. I say that because on the inside cover is written in script, "Robert Penn Warren, History IV, Vanderbilt University, Nashville Tennessee."

The book is not in pristine condition, but it does have a lot of underlining and a few sonnet fragments on the back piece. I have just finished reading the fall VANDERBILT MAGAZINE and realized that some Warren scholar might like to have the book. Or Vanderbilt might like it as well.

If you have some interest in assisting me get this book to a suitable recipient, please let me know. The title of the book itself is *An Advanced History of Great Britain* by T.F. Tout, published in 1920.

ALAN PIERCE, BS'77
Apalachicola, Fla.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to Mr. Pierce, this part of Robert Penn Warren's past will now reside in the Special Collections and University Archives Department of Vanderbilt's Jean and Alexander Heard Library.]

More Sports, Please

I WEAR MY VANDY SHIRTS TO MY LAW CLASSES often, especially during football season. My alumni sticker is on my car, I send donations when I can to various Vanderbilt fund drives, and I keep the latest issue of this magazine on my coffee table. I chose a small law school in Texas, and the first time I wore a Vandy t-shirt to class, a few students looked at me with fear, as if I had suddenly become smarter in their eyes. If only they knew we all strug-

continued on page 81

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From the Reader *continued from page 6*

gled equally during that first year.

I'm writing to encourage the magazine to include an article on the football team. Seeing pictures of happy fans and players on the day the 'Dores beat the Vols was priceless, and I hope it's the start of building a new kind of school spirit at Vandy. I don't want to read about Jay Cutler; I want to read about our prospects for next year. How does quarterback Chris Nickson expect to fill Cutler's shoes? Can Earl Bennett keep producing for next season? What is the team looking like for the future? I'm tempted to fly up to Nashville, interview these guys, and write the piece myself.

As a side note regarding the magazine: (1) I'd love to see Ms. Suddath continue with more myths dispelled [Fall 2005 issue, "I Heard a Rumor," p. 40]. As a former tour guide, I have helped perpetuate many myths. (2) Quarterly is nice, and more would be wonderful, but I realize it comes down to money, staff and articles. (3) The sports section should be larger. After all, we added sailing and a women's bowling team this year. Has anyone thought about a separate sports magazine? (4) With the residential college system attempting to come full swing, I'd like to see how that's going. (5) Keep up the great work.

ANNE WILKERSON, BS'04
Fort Worth, Texas

Encouraging Words

[THE FALL 2005] ISSUE WAS SIMPLY THE BEST. From cover to cover, it entertained, informed and caused reflection. Excellent job by all involved.

A note regarding an alumnus: Daniel W. Muehlman, BE'73, died in October of 2004. Many will remember him as the recipient of a standing ovation at his graduation. It was an amazing feat for a man who never liked the "rules" of academia.

HEATH GUNN, BA'71
Langley, Wash.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS ON AN OUTSTANDING issue. The article on Robert Penn Warren [Fall 2005 issue, "Corner of the Eye," p. 44] sent me back to the old *Vanderbilt Miscellany*. (Alas, that did not contain "Blackberry Sum-

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mer.") The Roy Blount piece ["Take the Side Road," p. 54] was all new to me, and funny. And, of course, "Thando's Journey" [p. 30] was both heartbreaking and inspiring. This is just what an issue of an alumni magazine should be—and very few are. (We get several at our house, so I have some basis for comparison.) Keep up the good work.

LEE E. PRESTON, BA'51
Professor emeritus, University of Maryland
College Park, Md.

THE AVERAGE AGE OF RESIDENTS IN OUR assisted-living unit is 90 years. My friend (whose granddaughter is a freshman at Vanderbilt) and I thoroughly liked all of the Fall 2005 magazine. We especially enjoyed the life and work of Robert Penn Warren, Roy Blount's glimpses, "Thando's Journey," and the article about Vanderbilt legends. We're looking forward to the next issue.

PRISCILLA BARRETT, BS'57
Covington, La.

BUSY AS I AM, I COULDN'T JUST TOSS THE FALL 2005 issue. So I decided to sample a little of it, and then more and more. As always, reading from back to front, I at last came to your request for feedback.

I want you to know I haven't always been so proud of being an alumna as I am today. I want you to know that, and I thank God for you.

MARTHA GRAVES DEBARDELEBEN, BA'47
Princeton, N.J.

Letters are always welcome

in response to contents of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit for length, style and clarity. Send signed letters to the Editor, VANDERBILT MAGAZINE, VU Station B 357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703, or e-mail vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu.