



## THE TALENTS ENTRUSTED TO OUR CARE

*The Campaign for Muhlenberg College*



Dear Fellow Alumni,

I've been thinking a great deal about the idea of *legacy* these days...political legacies, environmental legacies, family legacies, personal legacies, collective legacies...legacies that a community leaves for those who follow.

As I acknowledge the 25 years that have passed since I was an undergraduate, I am challenged by this idea of legacy. Think back to your time as a Muhlenberg student. You were once a daily part of this community, a part of a group of people who shared common experiences, living spaces, jokes and code words, friends, adult mentors and perhaps even some common dreams. Was your experience at Muhlenberg perfect or without disappointments? Is your current job perfect? Does your community always make decisions that perfectly align with your views and values? Do your children, friends and partners always behave as you would have them behave? Would that they did! Muhlenberg wasn't perfect then and it isn't perfect now. It's a living, breathing community

that is continually shaped and reshaped by the lives, experiences and hopes of the people who fill it at any given time. What have we attempted to leave behind for the men and women who sleep in the same bunk beds, study in the same classrooms and play Frisbee golf on the same green lawns?

I've had the privilege of reconnecting with my class recently as we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion. What I've learned from my conversations with classmates is that many of us have conflicting memories about our time at Muhlenberg. One thing we can all agree about, however, is that while at Muhlenberg, most of us were largely free to worry only about ourselves...our needs...our academic pursuits...our dreams...our relationships...our future jobs. It was all about us. Then we grew up. We came to realize that the universe really isn't about us. It is about how we use our gifts and talents and resources to make each place we've been, each person we've touched, each child we've raised somehow better, stronger or happier for having interacted with us. Most of us didn't become successful adults by ourselves; we were lifted, challenged and encouraged by others who went before us. They provided the shoulders for us to stand on so we could see our dreams more clearly. It was a big, life-changing insight, wasn't it?

So now it's time to apply this insight to our Muhlenberg experience, to create a real legacy as part of *The Talents Entrusted to Our Care: The Campaign for Muhlenberg College*, one that

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Muhlenberg's most dedicated  
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expresses our gratitude for the shoulders we stood on and our support for the young men and women who stand on our shoulders today. The College is full of students who are creating their own legacies of service, leadership and scholarship in local, national and international contexts. They are developing the capacity and the intellect to be informed, articulate, passionate world citizens whose concerns transcend the bounds of culture, race, faith, identity and nation. I am not “pitching you” with these words. Indeed, I have had the privilege of serving on the Muhlenberg College Board of Trustees for the last 12 years and I can tell you that I am continually humbled and inspired by the Muhlenberg students who report to my committee and attend the board meetings. They are the kind of people we hoped to be! They are capable of becoming the leaders our world so desperately needs right now. You should be proud to share your Muhlenberg identity with them.



Think of it this way...our legacy as alumni can serve to fuel the legacies of all those young men and women of different races, cultures, identities, faith traditions and socio-economic groups who are following us through the Red Doors. Our legacy can far outlive us.

### How can you help?

The Muhlenberg Fund supports the operating budget of the College. As an under-endowed institution that is playing endowment catch-up with our closest competitors (Bucknell, Lehigh, Franklin and Marshall, Dickinson, Skidmore, Lafayette and Gettysburg), we still rely on tuition to provide 85 percent of our annual operating revenues, including student financial aid. Any business person or not-for-profit executive knows that the *general operating budget is the backbone of an institution*, but the hardest money to raise. Who wants to give to an operating budget? It's not sexy and it's certainly not splashy. But at Muhlenberg, for every dollar of tuition we receive, we send out \$.30 of financial aid (this is referred to as an institution's "discount rate"). Financial aid dollars come directly from our general operating budget, which is balanced and supported by The Muhlenberg Fund. Our annual gifts make it possible for Muhlenberg students to receive the financial aid they need every year. This was the case when we were students as well. Someone else's gift made it possible for us to be at Muhlenberg for another year. (The shoulders we stand on...)

I want to invite you – encourage you – even plead with you – to consider making a gift to The Muhlenberg Fund this year, and every year. There is something at stake here that's larger than our individual contributions and larger than the “institution” of Muhlenberg. It's the impact we can make when we come back together as a community to give something not to the “institution,” but to the people who create the institution: the students themselves.

Let's step up to the plate and make *The Talents Entrusted to Our Care* a pivotal moment in Muhlenberg's history. Thank you.

Warmest regards,

Tammy Bormann '83  
Campaign Co-Chair

*If you have questions  
or need more information,  
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