Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
Wangari Maathai
Receives the Elizabeth Blackwell Award
Pride and Progress

During the course of the summer months we have the chance to review the past academic year while finalizing our plans for the next one. We take stock of our initiatives and review our progress toward our goals while laying out ambitious plans for the year ahead. We have high aspirations for Hobart and William Smith Colleges – and a review of this past year gives us confidence in our ability to continue the momentum we have enjoyed in recent years.

Consider some of the achievements of the academic year just concluded:

- Our students continue to bring great honor to themselves and the Colleges with their success in winning prestigious national fellowships. In 2008, our students secured three Fulbright Scholarships, one Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and the Colleges’ first Morris K. Udall Scholarship. When you consider that in the past five years HWS students have won Rhodes and Gates Cambridge Scholarships as well as four Goldwaters and six Fulbrights, it says a great deal about the quality of our student body and the engagement of our faculty in preparing them for these competitive fellowships and scholarships.
- With an impressive ratio of one faculty member for every 11 HWS students, our faculty engage our students with a lively and challenging curriculum and opportunities for significant research. This past year was a productive one with scholarship, publications and research grants totaling $1.5 million in government revenue. We currently have nine active National Science Foundation Awards and five nationally prominent research grants which allow students extraordinary opportunities to assist faculty members in their research. This summer alone, 62 students stayed on campus to work with faculty members on research – an increase from 20 students five years ago. They gain significant research skills and add to their credentials for graduate study or work.
- Our strategic emphasis to establish the Salisbury Center for Career Services as a destination point for all students continues to show encouraging results. In the past year, 4,000 appointments were logged at Career Services for current students to meet with our professional staff – a staggering increase from 700 appointments four years ago.
- Our alumni, alumnae, parents and friends have been instrumental in the opportunities our students have to explore career choices with internship experiences. Across the various sectors of business, government and non-profits, our students have gained critical work experience in internships through the Salisbury Center. More than 600 internships were recorded this year – up from 200 four years ago.
- Hobart and William Smith athletics continue to energize our campus and develop students with leadership skills. Consider these statistics from this past academic year: students received more than 100 all academic awards; the Statesmen and Herons won five conference championships in field hockey, football, Hobart rowing, William Smith sailing and William Smith soccer; 12 HWS teams earned a trip to the postseason in NCAA or equivalent tournaments; and 10 HWS student athletes were named All-Americans.
- It was heartening to receive results of an independent survey of our graduating seniors that showed student satisfaction with their undergraduate experience a full 10 percent higher than our peer group of liberal arts colleges.

I could continue this listing for other areas of the institution – but the overall point is the same: Hobart and William Smith are excelling on many fronts. Our Board of Trustees provides thoughtful and committed leadership, our faculty and staff are dedicated, and our alumni, alumnae, parents and friends are supportive and engaged.

As we start the new academic year and welcome new classes selected from the largest applicant pool in our history (4,300 applications for 555 seats in the first year classes). We can feel the success of Campaign for the Colleges and the resources that boost the endowment and improve facilities. And we plan for the celebration of the William Smith Centennial on November 8th on campus with pride in our past and excitement for the future.

My fondest hope is that every alum return to campus in the next year to see our talented students and the extraordinary environment in which they study and live. We take seriously our charge to prepare students for lives of consequence. I am grateful for the many graduates who, in varied ways, assist us in that mission. We prepare for next year with pride in the progress accomplished to date and energized for the opportunities ahead.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Gearan
President
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Cover photo: Dr. Wangari Maathai P’94, P’96, Sc.D. ’94 at the podium at the Smith Opera House.

PHOTO BY KEVIN COLTON
There was something that every audience member of the standing-room-only President’s Forum felt on April 24 in the Smith Opera House. Like electricity but organic. Something magical but somehow humble. Human and humane. Moved by a film chronicling her life, engaged by a student dance performance in her native tradition and inspired by her words, the audience was in awe of one woman: 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Wangari Maathai P’94, P’96, Sc.D. ’94.

Maathai is the leader of the Green Belt Movement, a grassroots effort to conserve the environment and improve quality of life for African women. To date, Maathai’s organization has planted more than 40 million trees, established more than 6,000 village-based tree nurseries run entirely by women and created more than 100,000 jobs. In revitalizing the soil, the economy and the pride of Kenyans, she has also drawn a direct correlation between the democratization of resources and peace. “When people have equal access to food, water and shelter,” she has written, “they are less likely to participate in war.” The Nobel Committee agreed when they awarded her the Peace Prize in 2004.

“Tonight, we give Dr. Wangari Maathai the Elizabeth Blackwell Award,” said President Mark D. Gearan. “Dr. Maathai is a woman whose life reflects the ideals and achievements of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. These include a determination to break through stereotypes limiting talents and aspirations of women and the dedication of those talents for the betterment of humanity.”

Responding to one of three standing ovations, Maathai said, “I am extremely honored and humbled to receive this award and to be back at Hobart and William Smith.” Maathai, a parent of two HWS graduates – Wanjira graduated from William Smith in 1994 and Muta graduated from Hobart in 1996 – accepted the award in its 50th anniversary year.

“My journey was similar to Blackwell’s,” Maathai explained.
While on campus, Dr. Wangari Maathai continued her ground-breaking work, planting an Asian flowering Kousa Dogwood tree near the Quad in observance of Green Week, in honor of William Smith and in celebration of the William Smith Centennial.

I cannot compliment Hobart and William Smith enough on its efforts in environmental and climate change. You are teaching as you do, and other colleges will surely learn by your example.” – 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Wangari Maathai P '94, P '96, Sc.D. '94

“...I returned to Africa to earn my Ph.D. at the University of Nairobi, I was the first woman in East or Central Africa to hold a doctoral degree. Like Blackwell, I used this to fight for the rights of women and change people’s idea of what women are capable of doing.”

In the simple act of planting trees, Maathai has created an entirely new concept of peace making – one that relies on stewardship of the environment and sharing of resources. The Green Belt Movement is one of the most successful environmental and community economic development projects in the world and its leader – Dr. Wangari Maathai – has become a symbol of hope for her nation and the global community.

Maathai has said that she started out planting trees and instead found herself at the forefront of fighting for the restoration of democracy. “When I first started planting trees, I had no intention of starting a movement,” Maathai said at the Smith Opera House. “Along with learning how to plant trees, I also learned that it’s impossible to be at peace with each other as people if we don’t respect the diversity within every community on earth. We must manage our resources sustainably, transparently, equitably and accountably with the consideration that we are a passing cloud on this planet.

“I encourage the students of Hobart and William Smith to get involved, to develop your interest in community service,” Maathai said. “I am confident that you don’t truly know yourself until you become involved in serving others.”

The Elizabeth Blackwell Award is given in honor of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), the first woman in modern times to receive a Doctor of Medicine degree. In 1958, the first Elizabeth Blackwell Award was presented to Gwendolyn Grant Mellon, a medical missionary and the co-founder of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer in Haiti, at the 50th anniversary of William Smith College. The Hobart and William Smith community will celebrate the William Smith Centennial during a weekend of activities culminating in a gala reception on campus on November 8.

To watch video highlights of Maathai’s visit or to read Maathai’s Elizabeth Blackwell Award acceptance speech, go to www.hws.edu/experience/hwstv.aspx.

LEFT: Dr. Wangari Maathai, her daughter Wanjiru Maathai ’94 and President Mark D. Gearan walk through campus.
CENTER: Maathai at the podium after accepting the Elizabeth Blackwell Award.
RIGHT: Maathai signing books in the lobby of the Smith Opera House.
Under rain ponchos and umbrellas, brimming with pride and maybe even a few tears, more than 4,000 HWS community members gathered on May 18 on the Quad to celebrate the Classes of 2008. Hobart Dean Eugen Baer and William Smith Dean Debra DeMeis P’06 presented 183 Hobart seniors and 221 William Smith seniors with bachelors degrees. Provost Teresa Amott awarded eight Master of Arts in Teaching degrees.

Giving this year’s Commencement Address, CBS News Correspondent William T. Whitaker Jr. ’73, L.H.D. ’97 offered his wisdom and experiences to the graduates classes. “I have delivered news from around the world, reporting on Tiananmen Square, the Iraq War and Hurricane Katrina, and I can’t deny that it is a crazy, mixed-up world into which you go,” said Whitaker. “But I have also witnessed ordinary people doing extraordinary things. So, please, follow in all of these...
Felipe Estefan ’08 and Alyssa McDermott ’08 gave the Senior Speeches, each offering the graduates an important lesson. Estefan emphasized the strong sense of community at the Colleges, telling his fellow graduates that they are and forever will be, at their core, Hobart and William Smith. McDermott encouraged the Classes of 2008 to go out into the world without fear.

Honorary degrees were presented to William Smith Dean Debra K. DeMeis ’06, who has loyally served Hobart and William Smith for 31 years as both professor of psychology and, since 1995, as dean; Trustee Katherine D. Elliott ’66, whose passion and generosity has inspired countless HWS students; and Trustee Charles H. Salisbury Jr. ’63, P’94, whose tireless and enduring dedication to Hobart and William Smith has challenged and inspired the HWS community.

President Mark D. Gearan encouraged graduates to realize the power of their ideas. “Whether it is big and complex or deceptively simple—there is immense potential in the power of an idea’s effort and implementation,” Gearan said. “Listening to the ideas of Congressman John Lewis during this year’s Convocation and Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai’s ideas during her recent President’s Forum Lecture, we know how one person’s idea can become a project or a movement that impacts the world…. I encourage you all to take note of an idea’s power and to transform the world, or part of it, with a project, a movement, an idea of your own.”

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COMMENCEMENT

Senior Week

During Senior Week's Battle of the Colleges, a group of William Smith students pull valiantly on the rope during a heated tug-of-war competition.

Headed skyward, HWS students take advantage of the great views offered by a new Senior Week event: hot air balloon rides.

Geneva's Trinity Church played host to a special Baccalaureate Service.

During Senior Week's Battle of the Colleges, a group of William Smith students pulls valiantly on the rope during a heated tug-of-war competition.

Supporting one of their own, the Nester Hose Company stands in dress blues with Timothy Horstman '08, a volunteer firefighter with Nester during his four years at Hobart.

Now that's a legacy! The Genovese family (from left): Carmen '70, Lisa '03, Tracy '05, Meghan '01, Coach Pat and Rob '08 pose for a group photo.

Students adjust their caps before marching to the Quad.

Geneva's Trinity Church played host to a special Baccalaureate Service.
The culmination of Senior Dinner, the President’s Garage Band – made of faculty and staff – takes to the stage in the Sunken Gardens amid raucous cheers from seniors. You can watch a video of the Band at www.hws.edu/news/commencement2008.aspx.

Beloved Saga employee Joseph “Showtime Joe” Hatfield was inducted as an honorary member of the Class of 2008 during the Hobart Launch at Bozzuto Boathouse, soliciting huge applause.

Professor of Sociology Jack Harris jumps on his backyard trampoline one last time with students from his Senior Research Practicum in Sociology.

William Smith graduates gather outside Comstock Dining Room for the 31st annual Senior Brunch welcoming them into the Alumnae Association.

Beloved Saga employee Joseph “Showtime Joe” Hatfield was inducted as an honorary member of the Class of 2008 during the Hobart Launch at Bozzuto Boathouse, soliciting huge applause.

Dean of Hobart College Eugen Baer and Dean of William Smith College Debra DeMets P’06 lead the Classes of 2008 to the Senior Dinner held on the Houghton House grounds.

The winners of the Charles H. Salisbury Summer International Internship Stipend, David Fisher ’10, Kathryn Klutts ’09 and Joshua Parks ’09, stand with Charles Salisbury Jr. ’63, P’94 and his wife Bunny Salisbury P’94 on the porch at the President’s Home.

The culmination of Senior Dinner, the President’s Garage Band – made of faculty and staff – takes to the stage in the Sunken Gardens amid raucous cheers from seniors. You can watch a video of the Band at www.hws.edu/news/commencement2008.aspx.

During the Academic Awards Ceremony, Provost Teresa Amott congratulates Amanda Bartlett ’08 on her honors project in Writing and Rhetoric as she confers upon her the magna cum laude medal.
ONE PERCENT

Joining the ranks of 17 former U.S. Presidents and seven of the nine current U.S. Supreme Court Justices, 24 HWS students are inducted into Phi Beta Kappa

by Melissa Sue Sorrells ’05

One of the oldest undergraduate honors organizations in the country, the Phi Beta Kappa Society (PBK) recognizes high academic excellence, encourages the pursuit of wisdom and promotes a true love of learning. Membership in the Society is exclusive: each year, about one percent of students graduating from colleges and universities nationwide are invited to join. Since 1776, when five students at the College of William and Mary founded PBK, just more than half a million members have been inducted from chapters at 276 liberal arts colleges and universities across the country.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., PBK is widely recognized as the first society to have a Greek-letter name and originated many of the common tropes associated with Greek societies, including the secret handshake and the elaborate initiation ceremony. Above all, its founding members valued freedom of inquiry and intellectual pursuit, and those standards have remained the hallmarks of the organization for more than two centuries.

Alpha, Beta ... Zeta

Zeta of New York, the Hobart and William Smith Chapter of PBK, was established in 1871, making it older than 90 percent of all of the chapters in the nation, and it’s got a long and storied history to match.

The most popular Zeta legend includes one of the most influential figures in American history. In 1929, then-New York Governor and future American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, L.H.D. ’29 was elected into Zeta as an honorary member after offering the Commencement address on campus. His signature—like the signature of every member inducted into PBK—is listed in the chapter rolls.

“We gave him a key and everything, and he wore it often in photos during his time in the White House,” recalls Honorary Trustee Barbara L. Springstead ’57, L.H.D. ’90.

“Toady may have been elected to PBK in his own right, but FDR wore his key everywhere!”

Adding their names below FDR on the chapter roll are faculty and staff PBK members, no matter where or when they were inducted. In 2007-2008, there were 28 faculty and staff members, like Associate Professor of Biology Sigrid Carle ’84, in the chapter as well as several emeriti faculty, alums and local community members, like alumna and Genevan Springstead.

“Our chapter is and always has been very nice,” she says. “We’re a bit feisty, and we’re very proud of our historical traditions. Our induction ceremony has been handed down for years. Our younger members take pride in the fact that it has come down to them after being performed for so many years.”

Among the many much-beloved PBK traditions is the Zeta chapter song itself: De Brevitate Vitae from Brahms’ Academic Festival Overture in the original Latin. Throughout the years, several faculty members have had some fun with the song and Zeta, much to the other members’ amusement.
“One of my favorite PBK memories is the delightful parsing of our chapter song by the late Professor Emeritus of Modern Languages Eugene Murphy,” says Associate Professor of Economics Judith Record McKinney. “At the induction banquet, we always close by singing the chapter song, and over the years, this has been preceded by Gene’s stand-up comic-grammarian routine and later by a really terrific updated ‘PC’ translation of the song by Professor Emeritus of Classics Paula Sage.”

Though deeply rooted in tradition, the chapter is also constantly changing. Springstead remembers a time when not even family members could attend the super secret Zeta induction ceremony, but nowadays, family members who are PBK themselves and faculty members who’ve made a significant impact on each new inductee’s life are invited to attend.

“It’s a great way for students to thank their professors, and, since these professors are often the ones who best know the students’ academic work, their insights make the celebration that much more meaningful,” says Assistant Professor of Russian Area Studies and Zeta Chapter President Kristen Welsh.

**Alum Alums**

More than 850 Hobart and William Smith alums are also PBK alums, and many faculty PBKs, like recent Distinguished Faculty Award recipients Valerie C. Saiving and William G. Hosking ’47, P’74, have left their mark on campus, encouraging countless students to embrace their love of learning and perpetuating the cycle of PBKs on campus.

Many alums have found that having PBK on a resume provides a competitive edge in the marketplace, allowing HWS graduates to pursue their passions whether in the Peace Corps., graduate school or a full-time job.

“When I was inducted, a friend and a fellow-PB Kappa told me that it would make a big difference, and I’ve found that to be very true,” says Elisabeth Millspaugh Schroeder ’78, P’11. “My induction served as a wonderful launch into my career and professional life.”

Phi Beta Kappa graduate Dr. Priscilla Schaffer ’04, Sc.D. ’94, who has devoted her career to health care, agrees. “The education I received at William Smith is the cornerstone of my life as a scientist and professor,” says the recent Blackwell awardee and former Chief of the Laboratory of Molecular Virology at Harvard Medical School. “Having been given every opportunity to succeed in my chosen profession, I am both grateful and proud to be a graduate of William Smith College.”

Some of the Colleges’ most notable alums, including President of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Reynold Levy ’66, Executive Editor of The New Yorker Dorothy Wickenden ’76 and financial planner and vice-board chair Maureen Collins Zupan ’72, are also PBK recipients.

“Thinking about my experiences as a PBK has made me realize how grateful I am to have it on my resume,” says noted children’s author Alice “Robin” Robinson Pulver ’67. “My journalism training led, by a long a circuitous route, to my rewarding career as an author of children’s books, and it’s very possible that all of it can be traced even further back to my time as a PBK.”

Pulver, Schaffer and many other HWS alums are in good company, with 17 former U.S. Presidents, including Clinton and Bush Sr., and seven of the nine current U.S. Supreme Court Justices claiming membership to PBK. Other well-known members include actor Glenn Close, screenwriter Frances Ford Coppola, footballer Peyton Manning, composer Stephen Sondheim and feminist Gloria Steinem, L.H.D. ’98.

**Phi Beta Student**

In addition to the many faculty, staff and alum members who serve as the core of Zeta are – of course – the students. Those PBKs lucky enough to be elected to Zeta during their junior year serve as vice-president of the chapter during their senior year, a rare and illuminating opportunity.

This year’s co-vice presidents, Ashley Snyder ’08, Christie Police ’08 and Keith Datz ’08, were able to bring noted Copenhagen Kierkegaard scholar Brian Soderquist to campus, enriching the intellectual climate and honoring recently retired Professor Emeritus of Philosophy Benjamin Daise.

“We suggested that they put together a reading group or sponsor a small lecture, but they were much more ambitious,” says Welsh, clearly impressed by the event. “They found the funding, made the travel arrangements, hosted the speaker and inspired our next crop of senior PBKs. They’re already working on big plans for next semester’s lecture.”

“Being elected as a junior allowed me an incredible opportunity to invite an international speaker to campus and execute the event,” says Snyder. “I learned a lot from coordinating with different offices to make PBK more visible on campus.”

The trio also had an opportunity to work alongside Zeta’s core members to elect other academically-inclined campus leaders from the Classes of 2008. After careful consideration, they welcomed 24 classmates into the fold.

“Each of these students excelled academically, engaged in intellectual inquiry outside of their discipline and displayed a pervasive love of learning,” says Welsh.

Each of the 27 members of the Classes of 2008 inducted into PBK are excited, honored and looking forward to reaping all of the benefits that come with membership into this elite society of passionate and engaged college graduates.

“Phi Beta Kappa is a family that unites Hobart and William Smith students with other Phi Beta Kappas nationwide,” says Abigail Slowick ’08, a masters student in clinical psychology at Loyola University. “Being inducted in front of the faculty members and peers who helped me grow into a driven and successful student really made me appreciate going to a small, liberal arts college where students are encouraged to pursue a wide range of interests and are celebrated and recognized for being individuals.”

In 1929, then-New York Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt, L.H.D. ’29 was elected into Zeta (the Hobart and William Smith Chapter of PBK) as an honorary member after offering the Commencement address at HWS.
From working as a professional foodie to healing with dance, these nine PBKs are putting their passion for learning into job satisfaction.

Bridging Passions and Cityscapes
by Joshua Unikel ’07

As children, most of us draw stick figures living in cartoon landscapes of smiling suns and puffy trees. But when Elisabeth Millspaugh Schroeder ’78, P’11 was a girl, she drew structures - always structures. “From a very early age, I started on a path toward architecture and architectural design, even in my childhood doodles,” explains Schroeder.

Since graduating from William Smith and earning an M.S. and a William Kinne fellowship from Columbia University School of Architecture, Schroeder has been pursuing her passion for revitalizing cities by re-conceptualizing urban areas across the eastern seaboard.

“I’ve had the good fortune of falling into situations that allow me to tackle urban problems,” says Schroeder. “The main challenge of my career has been to fill in and restore various cities’ environments while adding to their amenities.”

Schroeder is currently focusing her efforts on Pittsburgh as executive director of the Riverlife Task Force.

“I spend a lot of my time fashioning the plans involved in the Three Rivers Park Project and forming a web of people and resources to facilitate it,” she says. “Our master plan for the Three Rivers Park Project is simple: connect 13 miles of riverfront with a ribbon of green park space so that ultimately everyone can find their way across the city.”

Schroeder is also connecting the things she loves in life with her career. “I love relationships, conversations and contact with people,” says Schroeder. “I also have a great love of learning. But my family is what I love most in life. All of these are at play on a daily and momentary basis in my professional life. My career focus is simple: to make the best possible urban environment for my family and for future generations.”

Food for Thought
by Jessie Meyers ’10

Inspiration hit Becky Selengut ’92 while she was working at The Herbfarm, a Seattle-area restaurant that grows its own produce. “I started asking myself questions like, ‘When does rhubarb start growing? When do morel mushrooms go out of season?’” she says.

With the help of 20 farmers, fisherman, foragers and fellow chefs, Selengut began cataloguing the seasonal lives of more than 290 foods commonly grown in the Pacific Northwest, which she put online as a public service. And so, in 2006, www.SeasonalCornucopia.com was born.

To date, the Web site has received about 150,000 searches, sponsorships from local farms and businesses, and even a grant from environmentally-friendly clothing company Patagonia. And Selengut just keeps adding to her plate.

Selengut, the recipient of the Outstanding Culinarian of the Year Award, has translated her success into work as a freelance writer for Seattle Homes and Lifestyles and a career as a private chef and cooking teacher. She’s also the co-author of The Washington Local and Seasonal Cookbook.

And, when she’s not working, Selengut volunteers her time, raising money for organizations such as Sustainable Ballard, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center, Shoreline High School’s Culinary Arts Program and the Cascade Harvest Coalition.

What’s her recipe for success? “Follow your heart and follow your passion.”

Career Hop
by Abigail Slowik ’08

Doug Edlin ’88 left a successful career as an attorney to become a Professor of Political Science at Dickinson College where he shares his passion for law and policy in a liberal arts environment.

Q: What do you remember most about the Colleges?
A: When I think back on my time at Hobart, three things immediately come to mind: my friends, the faculty and the campus. I have maintained connections with my friends from Hobart and they are the closest friends I have ever had. The effect my relationships with faculty had on me was the biggest surprise. They simply changed the way I looked at myself. The campus is so striking and it stays with you. I felt fortunate for the opportunity to be in that beautiful place with those extraordinary people at that important time in my life.

Q: How did HWS prepare you for your career?
A: HWS gave me the chance to attend
and a job I liked very much as an unnerving leaving behind a firm A:

**Q:** Was it scary to leave your job?  
A: Yes, it was definitely a little unnerving leaving behind a firm and a job I liked very much as an attorney. I was fortunate in my legal career, and I’ll always miss going to court, but I know this was the right decision for me.

Q: What was it like to live and study in England?  
A: Oxford was wonderful. I couldn’t believe how lucky I was to live and learn in such a breathtaking place. My research and dissertation focused on comparing the constitutional systems of the US and the UK. Oxford has arguably the strongest law faculty in Britain and almost certainly the strongest legal philosophy faculty in the world. I also had the chance to teach legal philosophy to Oxford students in two colleges, New and St. Edmund Hall.

Q: You won Dickinson College’s Ganoe Award for Inspirational Teaching. What do you think makes an inspirational teacher?  
A: The Ganoe Award is voted on by the senior class, and it’s announced as a surprise at the graduation ceremony. I still feel overwhelmed and enormously honored by it. I think what makes an inspiring teacher is the ability to convey to students not just what you know but how and why the subject you teach matters to you personally. I hope to impart some of my own interest and enthusiasm for the subjects I teach, to demonstrate their importance and to leave students asking questions that might continue to challenge them after they have left my class.

**Healing Dance**

by Cindy McVey

**Susan Alger’s ’89 parents wanted the best for her – including a college education that would prepare her for a viable career. Susan wanted to dance.**  

**Professor of Dance Cynthia Williams was highly influential and really helped me believe in myself, learn to love to perform and have confidence that I could perform well,** says Alger: “She encouraged me to follow my dream to dance—to follow my passion. She’s also the one who told me I could be successful at it.”

While at HWS, Alger took a master class with Tony Award-winning choreographer Garth Fagan in her hometown of Rochester. Because she was a fan of his earlier work, Fagan suggested that she dance in his footsteps by studying in his former hometown in Jamaica.

She hopped a plane and spent a semester with the National Dance Theater Company at the Cultural Training Institute. There, she discovered a new purpose for dance and a new career interest. “I was very interested in how the Jamaican people had integrated dance into their culture as a healing art form,” she says.

She returned to HWS and graduated with majors in dance and English. She promptly grabbed a return ticket to Jamaica and danced with the National Dance Theater Company for almost two years.

Her next move was back to the U.S. and Rochester, where she earned her credentials as a dance therapist, even studying in Greece for some of her requirements.

After several years and a masters in social work from Syracuse University, Alger has finally made it to the performance of her lifetime. Today, she runs private practice dance therapy programs in Oregon, “healing from the inside out through movement.”

For the past nine years, she was the director of the social work program at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center. She changed jobs in June of this year and, in addition to her private practice, works with the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, providing counseling, educational programs and support groups for patients and their families.

“What I like most about my job is that every day I get to make a difference,” she explains. “I need to know that my work has meaning and that with my last breath I’ll know I made a difference.”

**Susan Alger ’89**

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**HWS: The Video Game**

by Joshua Unkel ’07

It’s common for your typical Phi Beta Kappa to upload passions from high school and college days and translate them into a career. But it’s not quite as common for those passions to be programmed into video games sold to millions of button-mashing gamers worldwide.

But keeping gamers on the cutting edge is just another day at the office for Hiroki Kobayashi ’96, a software development lead at Microsoft. “I manage some projects in Xbox LIVE,” Kobayashi explains, referring to his company’s online gaming system. “This involves making technical decisions, planning for the future and working with other teams. I also manage a group of software engineers who write our server software.”

Before he started managing people, Kobayashi wrote a piece of code known as a ‘software library’ for the Xbox games Jade Empire and Forza. “Later, it was used to support new Xbox 360 titles, including Forza 2 and Viva Pinata,” he says. “While deadlines were a bit crazy, I had fun with it, and it’s always nice to see your work being produced so that the end product is displayed on a store shelf.”

As if this weren’t enough to make any gamer jealous, he modestly adds, “I also had an opportunity to help with some Halo series games,” mentioning one of the most groundbreaking and influential video game series of all time.

What led this alum into the gaming world? “When I was in high school, I casually took a programming class where I learned how much I love it,” he explains. “I discovered my passion for mathematics in college. I spent long hours learning about both of them, and I’m still using those skills every day.”

So the next time you or one of your family members just can’t stop playing that hot new video game sweeping the nation, it may very well be thanks to our very own Kobayashi.

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**The Kobayashis**

Graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania and law school at Cornell University. That led to my time as a practicing lawyer. I ultimately decided to return to school to pursue my Ph.D. at Oxford’s Linacre College because I always thought that teaching was what I most wanted to do, primarily because of my experience at HWS. My professors taught me how to think critically, to write clearly and to see how a liberal arts education is meant to help people to be more fully human.

Q: Was it scary to leave your career in law to pursue teaching?  
A: Yes, it was definitely a little unnerving leaving behind a firm and a job I liked very much as an attorney. I was fortunate in my legal career, and I’ll always miss going to court, but I know this was the right decision for me.

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**Susan Alger’s ’89 parents wanted the best for her – including a college education that would prepare her for a viable career. Susan wanted to dance.**

**Professor of Dance Cynthia Williams was highly influential and really helped me believe in myself, learn to love to perform and have confidence that I could perform well,** says Alger: “She encouraged me to follow my dream to dance—to follow my passion. She’s also the one who told me I could be successful at it.”

While at HWS, Alger took a master class with Tony Award-winning choreographer Garth Fagan in her hometown of Rochester. Because she was a fan of his earlier work, Fagan suggested that she dance in his footsteps by studying in his former hometown in Jamaica.

She hopped a plane and spent a semester with the National Dance Theater Company at the Cultural Training Institute. There, she discovered a new purpose for dance and a new career interest. “I was very interested in how the Jamaican people had integrated dance into their culture as a healing art form,” she says.

She returned to HWS and graduated with majors in dance and English. She promptly grabbed a return ticket to Jamaica and danced with the National Dance Theater Company for almost two years.

Her next move was back to the U.S. and Rochester, where she earned her credentials as a dance therapist, even studying in Greece for some of her requirements.

After several years and a masters in social work from Syracuse University, Alger has finally made it to the performance of her lifetime. Today, she runs private practice dance therapy programs in Oregon, “healing from the inside out through movement.”

For the past nine years, she was the director of the social work program at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center. She changed jobs in June of this year and, in addition to her private practice, works with the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, providing counseling, educational programs and support groups for patients and their families.

“What I like most about my job is that every day I get to make a difference,” she explains. “I need to know that my work has meaning and that with my last breath I’ll know I made a difference.”

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**Susan Alger ’89**

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**Healing Dance**

by Cindy McVey

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**Susan Alger ’89**
Unplanned Discovery
by Heidi Beach ’02

Dr. Robert Asher ’91 is on a quest to understand how modern mammals evolved. A lecturer and researcher in the zoology department at Cambridge University, his journey began when he discovered socio-biology at HWS. Though he initially had reservations about the theory that human behaviors are rooted in biology, his resistance soon grew into a passion to learn more about humanity’s place in nature.

Today, Asher is one of the major players in the field of mammalian evolutionary biology and is an editor of the Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology. His work is focused on the evolutionary history of common African mammals, evidence of the first occurrence of modern mammals, and the ways in which the form or shape of an organism can inform evolutionary relationships.

Q: What experiences at HWS sparked your interest in the research you do today?
A: My honors thesis advisor, Associate Professor of Anthropology Ilene Nicholas, introduced me to the biological basis of human behavior, leading eventually to the controversy surrounding sociobiology. At the time, my interests were more political, and I recall lots of very rewarding discussions plus equally stimulating courses with Professor of Public Policy Studies and Political Science Craig Rimmerman.

Q: What is one specific question you’ve focused on recently?
A: An early species of rabbit-like mammal called Gomphos elkema from the Eocene period represents a “missing link,” combining features of related modern lineages of mammals—in this case rodents and lagomorphs. Gomphos elkema is exactly what one would expect to find based on the theory of evolution by natural selection. It had the teeth and tail of a squirrel, and the skull and ankle of a rabbit.

Q: Are there questions you would love to answer in your lifetime?
A: The nature of asking questions is that one never knows what will emerge. For example, while reading literature from the 19th century and examining some of my own data, I discovered a connection between African golden moles and elephants. Both of these groups show relatively late eruption of the permanent dentition, like our own “wisdom teeth.” Anatomical similarities between an elephant and golden mole are not easy to spot, but they exist. Results such as these cannot be anticipated. You generally cannot plan discovery.

Politics and Religion
by Heidi Beach ’02

As the saying goes, one should never discuss politics or religion in polite company. And, as one of the cornerstones of the American Constitution demands, politics and religion should never mix.

But Rabbi Joshua Chasan ’66 believes that the two concepts are inextricably linked. And though he came to his spiritual path and social activism later in life, he has made religion and politics the central influences in his life.

It was at Hobart that Chasan first began to engage in social activism, writing a regular political column for The Herald and organizing a sympathy picket during the civil rights protests in Birmingham, Alabama.

Though organized religion was not a day-to-day part of his childhood, Chasan also came to appreciate religion as an important part of his life while at HWS. “Western Civilization opened me up to an understanding of theology as an honest to goodness intellectual pursuit,” Chasen explains. “Those courses created an intellectual foundation for what would soon become an existential experience of religion as a force in my life.”

Later, working on his Ph.D. in American history at the University of Pittsburgh, he discovered traditional Judaism while studying 19th century American Christianity. For Chasan, it was like a light bulb went off over his head, and he eventually continued his studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, where he was ordained in 1987.

In 1991, Chasan and his family settled in Burlington, Vermont, where he serves as the rabbi of Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, Vermont’s oldest and largest Jewish congregation. As a spiritual leader, Chasan emphasizes tolerance and mutual respect. He feels that his continued activism flows naturally from this role.

“People come to me because I have a reputation as someone who’s willing to speak out. I’m frequently called upon to respond to issues,” says Chasan, who serves on the boards of several national activist organizations, including Kids for Peace USA.

Several years ago, he also helped found Burlington’s Vermont Interfaith Action, which blends his spirituality and activism by bringing together congregations of numerous faiths to address local issues like housing and health care.

Author of the book Judaism Inside Out: Reclaiming the Promise of Israel, Chasan believes that there’s no separating political from religious, especially for people of the Jewish faith. “Judaism is about liberation on a social and political level, going back to our experience in Egypt,” he says. “Each of us lives with the paradox of our particularity and universality. You are part of the spiritual people of Israel but also respond to a universal message of justice and peace.”

Story Telling from San Francisco
by Annie Lindenhovius ’09

“The nice thing about being a journalist is that you learn something new every day,” says Laura Sydell ’83, Arts & Technology Correspondent for National Public Radio.

A history major and member of the Little Theater, Sydell’s time at HWS offered her insight into her future career, though she didn’t realize it at the time. “I didn’t really think about journalism while I was at William Smith,” she says. “I did a lot of theatre and majored in Russian Cultural History. Writing and current events always interested me but not necessarily as a career.”

She earned her J.D. from Yeshiva University, but her heart wasn’t in law. “I really wanted to write,” she explains. “I had a professor who suggested public radio. It made sense given my theatrical experience.”

After working for a variety of stations...
Making Animals Happy
by Catherine Williams

When New York City born and bred Dr. James Fingeroth ’78 came to Hobart in 1974, he brought determination, an inquisitive nature and, well, a horse.

“I had known for some time that I wanted to be a vet so when I was 15, my parents, who were always supportive, let me have a horse,” Fingeroth says, chuckling. “They also let me become a pilot. I think they were happy to oblige my interests because I wasn’t getting into trouble.”

The summer before his matriculation, Fingeroth and his father came to Geneva to find boarding for his horse and decided to stop at the Colleges to meet some faculty. “When I told the pre-med advisor what I was interested in doing, he said, ‘Fingeroth, forget about it.’ Apparently, no Hobart student had gotten into vet school in 10 years. Based on that and my grades, he said I didn’t have a chance. That gave me the motivation to succeed; I was just determined.”

Fortunately, Fingeroth’s cousin Stewart Greisman ’70, now an emergency physician in Colorado, was able to give him some direction. “Stewie was friends with Professor Emeritus of Chemistry Ken Carle, P’82 P’84, P’90, who was nothing but encouraging. There was a sense of community at Hobart. I can remember going to the Carle home and, as an undergrad, having Dr. Carle family over to our apartment for dinner.”

With Carle’s assistance, Fingeroth made it through a tough first trimester of biology and chemistry with excellent grades. “It was a positive feedback loop; I worked hard to get good grades and that initial success resulted in more.”

He spent summers interning with veterinarians to get experience in different kinds of specialties and, despite the long-ago admonitions of one now red-faced pre-med advisor, Fingeroth did get into vet school. Immediately after graduating from Hobart, Fingeroth – and his horse – headed to Cornell University, arguably the best vet school in the country.

After Cornell, two years at a vet hospital in NYC and another four years working on his surgical residency and as an adjunct professor at Ohio State University, he helped establish a specialty practice attached to a large general practice in Rochester, N.Y. “The idea was that we would only take referral cases,” Fingeroth says. “Twenty years later, we have a large, free-standing practice made up of specialists who once could only be found at teaching hospitals – surgeons, ophthalmologists, cardiologists, dermatologists, neurologists and internists.”

Veterinary Specialists of Rochester, which also operates a 24 hour emergency service, is the place where the most pressing and severe cases go – car accident injuries, cancer, joint replacements. “We offer services that are comparable and sometimes even exceed those at a university teaching hospital,” Fingeroth explains. “We are using cutting edge technology and even have an in-house MRI unit. We brought joint replacement to the Rochester area. And we did it all by offering a high level of service with an emphasis on quality patient care and communication with clients.”

The work itself has been gratifying to Fingeroth. “Sometimes, I get a card or a note from someone saying that I’ve made a difference in their life,” he says. “By making their animals happier, we make people happier. I’ve been fortunate in my career to have a clientele who cares enough to do extraordinary things for their animals.”

A Celebration of Education
by Abigail Slavik ’08

The Colleges’ Education Program proved to be one of the keys to success for recent inductees of the HWS chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. More than 25 percent of newly inducted Phi Beta Kappa members have fulfilled the requirements of the demanding teacher certification program.

Offered through the education department, the teacher certification program is a highly demanding series of seminars and fieldwork experiences that future teachers must complete above and beyond their academic major and minor.

“Given the shortage of highly qualified teachers in our country, I am excited to have so many of our most talented students commit to the teaching profession,” says Assistant Professor of Education Paul Kehle. “They are scholars as well as teachers, and I expect these students not only to become outstanding teachers, but to become leaders of change and innovation in education.”

The six Phi Beta Kappa inductees and teacher certification program members from the Classes of 2008 were recognized alongside their peers during a special ceremony this May. They include Kristen Henick-Kling, Andrew Meunier, Christie Police, Ashley Snyder, Sarah Vandenberg and Kusi Welch.

Accompanied by a favorite professor, all of the inductees were treated to dinner and a special welcome by Phi Beta Kappa faculty and alumni. During the ceremony, Kristen Welsh, assistant professor of Russian area studies and president of the Zeta Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, commented on the strong showing of education students.

“Hobart and William Smith Colleges are sending some of their very best students into the classroom to educate the next generation, an outcome very much in keeping with the Colleges’ emphasis on service,” Welsh said. “Having this many graduates earn their teaching credentials and be elected to Phi Beta Kappa says very good things about the kind of student who chooses to come to HWS.”

Professor of Education Pat Collins agrees. “These students have excelled not only in their majors, but also have excelled in this program. Having people who are able to integrate their course work with their work in the classroom really bodes well for the profession.”