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Anatomy Of An Alumnus

by Judge Harold R. Medina

What is it that binds us so closely to our alma mater? Why do we respond so warmly? Why do we do so much in a myriad of ways to demonstrate our love for the institution that brought us to maturity and helped us to develop our latent talents and capacities and our sense of human values, to appreciate the beauties, and the harmonies of art and literature, and to strengthen and broaden our intellectual faculties? I respectfully submit that there are three reasons for this. Doubtless there are others, but I stress these three above all others. I shall discuss them in what I think is the inverse order of their importance, but I realize others may have different views on the subject.

First, there is the psychological urge to be identified as a member of the group, the notion of "belonging." This enhances one's individual ego and produces a perfectly human feeling of pleasure and security. People like to get on the band wagon if given a reasonable opportunity to do so. It is the opposite of a feeling that one is on the outside, more or less regarded as different from the others. Class spirit and class unity inevitably foster this idea of "belonging." After the lapse of a few years not a single member of the class thinks he is being left out in the cold.

Second, there is that spark of fire between the teacher and the pupil, between the institution of learning and the student, that continues with us through life and never ceases to engender a reciprocal feeling of warmth and affection and gratitude. As the ripples go out endlessly when one throws a pebble into a pond, the effect goes on and on until we join our loved ones in the great beyond. Some of us may perversely seek to extinguish this spark of fire, while others nurse and foster it with loving care; but, in either event, and no matter what may happen to us, the spark is never extinguished.

The third reason is not so widely understood. I shall try to work around it on the bias, my favorite approach. When I was a boy at prep school I simply could not understand why Cicero kept harping on his desire to establish a reputation that would continue down through the ages. Think of the millions of books that were thought to be bringing imperishable glory to their authors, but now lie buried away in some library and forgotten or wholly destroyed and lost in oblivion. A person does not have to be so very bright to realize that nothing he can do will be sure to construct an image of himself that will be perceptible to anyone in another fifty or one hundred years. Yes, the deeds of men and women as well as those of their friends and relatives and all that is dear to them will pass into the mist and be no more, as Horace so often reminds us. But the college or university stands out as almost the only really solid, permanent fact. It is something we can cling to throughout life,

and thus become a part of its very permanency and stability through the ages. We may leave our mark upon it, perhaps our very name, in a more or less conspicuous way. Even the annals of the college or the university and its archives with their references to the records of the students and the benefactions of the alumni run back to the time when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, as the lawyers say.

So I think it is the most natural and the most human thing in the world for our alumnus to act as he does. And as he comes back to warm himself in the sun of the campus and opens his coffers and bestows of his substance to the various drives for Annual Giving and for the Capital Needs of his alma mater, and for the establishment of professorships and scholarships and what not else, we may rest assured that he is well repaid not only in the happiness he enjoys with his classmates and with the alumni of other classes, but also by the satisfaction one always feels in responding to an inner urge and a subconscious motivation.

*President's Corner (Continued From Page 9.)

rhetoric unless every faculty member takes this set of principles seriously and applies it daily in the classroom. The faculty is on the front line, not the president.

We have a serious group of students who want to learn and be challenged. Above all, they want to be proud of this college and proud of their degrees. Whether they are proud depends on how the faculty does in the classroom and in other activities they participate in on campus. I am not doing my job, as president of this college if I—along with my administrative colleagues—do not provide the faculty with the resources they need to do their jobs in the classrooms.

I welcome the fresh vitality on the campus and among the alumni and friends. We are a much better college than many realize or dare to think. We are making progress towards developing at Gardner-Webb an inner perception of greater pride in what each of us does on a daily basis.

I am realistic enough to know that at Gardner-Webb College, as at most independent liberal arts colleges, resources—both financial and personnel—are always going to be limited; the issue for us will always be allocation.

On the other hand, I am an admirer of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and I agree with him when he says, "The only rich who owns the day." Our institutional audits may never reflect the assets of some privately endowed institutions, but with the support and energies of alumni and friends, we can be rich in owning "the day." It is our time in history. Let us claim it.

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Bill Baucum.....Executive Secretary
Alumni Association
Debbie B. Putnam.....Editor
Gardner-Webb College
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AN OE

G-W Grad School

The Board of Trustees and faculty have given unanimous approval to the administration concerning steps for G-W's graduate studies. The intentions are to initiate a Master of Arts degree program in the 1980 Summer for concentrations in K-3, Middle School and Physical Education.

Complete details soon.