

the students. As the class spent a fall semester wrestling with abortion, inheritance, Plato, and the war in Iraq, their frequent tendency was to try to gauge what Big Al, the compact seer in the front of the room, thought. But after nearly 40 years of undergraduate teaching, Wertheimer is wily about concealing his personal views behind a Socratic screen when it suits his pedagogical purposes.

First-year honors student Kevin Ohashi, an electric-haired computer jock who spent his last two years of high school in Kathmandu, says that sphinx-like quality drove some of his classmates nuts. "Professor Wertheimer loves to play the devil's advocate," Ohashi says. "In class he would take the side that most people weren't on and propose a hypothetical situation that started tilting things his way, and then he might switch again. I thought it was great."

Ohashi says that the result of all those hours of discussion, at least for him, wasn't a messenger bag full of new ideas or a changed sense of moral purpose. Instead, in conversations with friends from the honors floor and elsewhere, he has over time found himself defending his old ideas with more confidence and care. Ohashi's experience echoes a theme common in letters from Wertheimer's former students: They often say things like "I never knew what it meant to think through a problem before."

INTELLECTUAL ATMOSPHERE

The professor got involved with creating the inaugural honors seminar (hardly a relaxed way to spend one's last year before retirement) because his experiences on the UVM faculty and as a UVM parent left him convinced that the campus needed a more intellectual culture.

If we're successful, we'll have created an intellectual environment," he says. "We toyed with the idea of having some variation in content between sections of the first-year seminars, but we dropped that, precisely so that people can engage in a common experience."

Honors students live together, study together, and play together. But the honors experience operates in quieter, more personal ways as well. Rahul Mudannayake, a first-year pre-med honors student from Sri Lanka, says that some of the class readings and discussions have haunted him, especially a particular essay by the famous Princeton philosopher Peter Singer. In the essay, "Rich and Poor," Singer outlines the vast discrepancies between wealth and poverty in the world, and insists that the wealthy have an obligation to assist. (Singer also visited campus to speak and meet with students in the class.) After the end of the fall semester, Mudannayake went home to Sri Lanka, just before the tsunami struck and devastated the country's coastal areas. The student did what he could, helping to ferry food and medicine to affected regions in the days after the tragedy, but the calamity made the ethical arguments he heard in the seminar, especially Singer's, immediate.

"The class has stayed with me in my life," Mudannayake says. "Spending a \$1.50 here on a bottle of soda is difficult, considering what I read, what I saw in Sri Lanka. The way I spend my money now is totally different, and Wertheimer and Singer are part of that."

And here is where Al Wertheimer's questions finally end with an answer: A student thinking through the issues and making a personal choice, arrived at with rigor.

SIDEBAR 1

Your Honor

Students at the University's newest college live and learn together and, proponents

of the program say, their debates, excitement and activities will enrich the entire academic atmosphere of campus.

It works like this: The campus-wide Honors College accepts about 100 of the most gifted first-year students enrolling at the University, regardless of major, and throws them together for an intense program of social events, a two-semester in-depth seminar class (for now, the ethics course developed by Wertheimer and Loeb), special lectures from big-name intellectuals and, in most cases, living on an all-honors floor at Harris/Millis.

By 2007, as successive classes enroll, the program will grow to encompass about 700 students (sophomores can apply for admission; college organizers wanted to give students who don't catch fire academically until they reach UVM a chance to participate in the program, which includes perks like priority class scheduling), supporting and extending existing college-level honors programs. Down the line, honors students will live in the new \$60 million University Heights Student Residential Learning Complex, creating a Harvard or Oxford-style "residential college."

SIDEBAR 2

A Teacher's Tribute

On April 15, a daylong symposium in Old Mill will celebrate Alan Wertheimer's intellectual life in a manner befitting the man. Instead of gold watches and encomiums, judges, politicians and scholars will gather for a program on ethics in public life. The event will feature former Vermont Gov. Madeleine Kunin; Vermont Supreme Court Associate Justice John Dooley; and Harvard University's Arthur Applebaum, Dennis Thompson, and Nancy Rosenbaum. The discussion will range from Iraq to judicial activism and gay relationships to presidential campaign ethics. All events are free and open to the public; and, of course, Professor Wertheimer will be there doing what he does, asking questions, listening closely, weighing arguments, thoughtfully negotiating the tricky philosophical waters of politics and life.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE COLLEGE OF ST. CATHERINE

• Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to offer my heartfelt congratulations to the College of St. Catherine, in St. Paul, MN, on the celebration of its centennial year. St. Catherine is our country's largest Catholic college for women. Its numerous academic achievements would be impressive for a college of any size, but for an institution with fewer than 5,000 students, such accomplishments are downright spectacular.

Since its founding 100 years ago, the College of St. Catherine has expanded its student body from high school and lower division college students to include associate, bachelor's and graduate degree candidates in more than 60 fields. In 1937, St. Catherine became the first Catholic college to be awarded a chapter of the national honor society, Phi Beta Kappa.

Today, the College of St. Catherine continues to distinguish itself as a leading institution for women's education. Its "Women of Substance" series features lectures and performances of theatre, music, and dance by female

speakers and artists from around the world. In the classroom, the college's new "Centers for Excellence" focus on the role of women in such diverse fields as public policy, spirituality, and health.

Annually, the College of St. Catherine graduates more nurses than any other college or university in Minnesota. It is second only to the much larger University of Minnesota in the number of public school teachers it has educated and placed in the State's capital city of St. Paul.

Along with all of the Minnesotans whose lives have benefited from the talents, professionalism, and leadership of St. Catherine's outstanding graduates, I would like to say thank you. The College of St. Catherine's commitment to the highest standards of academic excellence and social responsibility have enriched the lives of its students and its State's citizens for a century. I congratulate the faculty, staff, alumnae, and students of the College of St. Catherine on their 100 years of excellence. I know that they will continue their great tradition for the next 100 years.●

IN HONOR OF THE MIRACLE LEAGUE

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize the Miracle League, an organization dedicated to providing opportunities for all children to play baseball, regardless of their abilities.

In 1997, Coach Eddie Bagwell of the Rockdale Youth Baseball Association in Atlanta, GA, noticed a young boy in a wheelchair on the sidelines at all of the youth baseball team's practices and games. The enthusiasm and excitement that this boy had for baseball was inspiring and it was then that Coach Eddie realized that youth with disabilities ought to have the same opportunities as others to play ball.

In 1988, Coach Bagwell formed the Miracle League, a youth baseball league designed to allow children of all abilities to participate in our Nation's favorite pastime—baseball. The league started with 35 children. The following year, the number more than doubled, with 80 children clamoring to join a team. Since the Miracle League was breaking new ground, it came up with five rules to play by: every player bats once each inning; all base runners are safe; every player scores a run before the inning is over (last one up gets a home run); community volunteers serve as "buddies" to assist the players; and each team and each player wins every game.

As word spread quickly, Miracle League baseball teams were started across the country. In my home State of California, there are now four Miracle League teams: in Belmont, Westminster, Ventura County, and Visalia. Nationwide, there are more than 50 Miracle League teams.

I commend the Miracle League for its philosophy that "Every Child Deserves