the antinuclear Clamshell Alliance. A faculty member found to have used drugs with students was dismissed. Local police became weary of running squad cars up the hill to retrieve confiscated pot, and made an agreement with the deans that they could take the stuff into their offices, and deliver it to the station in batches themselves.

In February 1978, in the middle of a disciplinary hearing for several Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity members in the dean’s office, someone called to report a bomb had been placed in the building. Although the origin of the call was no great mystery, bomb scares were not taken lightly. When local police searched the vacated building they found several bags of marijuana in the bottom drawer of Dean Smith’s desk (along with a hypodermic syringe and several packages of illegal fireworks). The stuff had been collected for surrender to the police, and then forgotten. No charges were filed.

The “hard” drugs—amphetamines and, later, cocaine—were far less popular, but at Colby as elsewhere, they took some toll in tragic, ruined lives. Although there was always a spike of exotics when students returned from vacations, Colby’s location, away from the urban centers of high drug traffic, helped lessen the scourge. Students who found themselves badly hooked on drugs could not manage both their habit and the rigors of their classes, and flunked out or withdrew. As the sports program began to expand for both men and women, Colby also had the phenomenon of the body-conscious athlete, with growing numbers of students eschewing dangerous drugs. By the end of the decade, marijuana use had diminished, but it was never to end. Although it gained a permanent foothold, even at the height of its campus popularity it never seriously challenged beer, the undisputed champion student drug of choice.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

There was a time when “Watergate” meant a hotel and “Colby” might have conjured thoughts of cheese,31 but by the fall of 1972 Watergate was a burglary that

31. There is in fact a tie between Colby the college and Colby the cheese. When Gard- ner Colby retired as a wool merchant in 1870 he became president of what was to become the Wisconsin Central Railroad. Most of Wisconsin was a frontier, and it was no small
would bring down a government, and Colby, with a reputation worth protecting, was dealing with a theft of a different kind. New Hampshire’s Colby Junior College for Women was trying to swipe its name.

Joseph Colby and his son Anthony, later governor of New Hampshire, established an academy for women in New London in 1837. Anthony’s daughter Susan was its first principal. In 1878 the small school took the Colby name, and a half-century later became Colby Junior College for Women. By 1972 it had been awarding bachelors’ degrees for three decades and its enrollment of six hundred included five men. In October of that year trustees voted to change the name to Colby College–New Hampshire. Colby in Maine said, oh no.

Strider wrote his counterpart, Louis Vaccaro, in New Hampshire to say the name change would cause no end of confusion and asked if they would give it up. Vaccaro said no, and in April 1973 the Maine Colby asked the U.S. District Court in New Hampshire for help. In June Judge Hugh Bownes denied the temporary injunction saying he was not persuaded “that a prospective student who desires to go to Colby College in Waterville, Maine, will be misled for long enough to actually enter the defendant institution or even to seriously apply to it.” The new sign—Colby College–New Hampshire—went up. Undaunted, Maine’s Colby pressed for a permanent injunction “for the protection of its distinctive name and the good will that attaches.” On May 6, 1974, Judge Bownes denied the permanent injunction as well, noting in his ruling that while Colby in New Hampshire was “definitely inferior from an academic point of view,” that fact was not reason enough to make them give up their new name. President Vaccaro was pleased with the decision but called the judge’s observation on his school’s scholastic standing a “full-handed slap in the face.”

Three weeks later, Colby of Maine appealed Bownes’s decision to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston. Strider claimed that in the first year of similar names “instances of confusion have multiplied in number and severity . . . beyond the merely ludicrous to the potentially very serious.” Colby attorneys cited cases of mix-ups in applicants and of SAT scores mailed to the wrong college. Vaccaro countered that the confusion was minimal and that task to run new rails four hundred miles through the territory. When the job was done a small township on the border of Clark and Marathon counties was named to honor Colby. Ambrose and Susan Steiwand moved there in 1875 and in 1882 built a small cheese-making factory. A few years later their eldest son, Joseph, experimented with the development of a new cheese, milder than cheddar. He named it Colby.
Colby's anxiety about names had "tinges of snobbishness." Everett Ingalls, a plaintiff lawyer, said the problem was not the use of the Colby name, but the juxtaposition of "Colby" and "College." He said there was "no objection to their jumping into the four-year college market, but we do object to their jumping in with our name."

In an effort to help, Maine's Colby sent a couple of name suggestions: Colby, New Hampshire, College; and Susan Colby College after founder Anthony's daughter. Vaccaro said thank you just the same, but they didn't need any help. (The joke went around New Hampshire that perhaps Susan Colby College was a good name inasmuch as the other Colby had already provided a nickname: Sue Colby College.)

Students on neither campus were much interested in the name fight. They were fixed on a broader battleground. The Watergate hearings began in May 1973, and the newly reelected President Nixon, who had called student protestors "bums," now claimed he wasn't a crook. Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned in August (law students at George Washington University brought the suit that took him down), and when college opened in the fall, the Echo joined eighty-four other college newspapers in calling for Nixon's impeachment. "He is no longer a legitimate leader," the editorial said. "No amount of legal double-talk or political timidity can obscure this fact." In November, Averill Auditorium in Runnals Union was overfilled to hear Lovejoy Award-winner Katharine Graham rail against the "espionage and sabotage" of the recent Nixon campaign. The Washington Post publisher said the Watergate story her newspaper first broke "traces the whole affair to the doors of the Oval Office." Nixon resigned eight months later.

In January 1975, twenty months after the name battle began, the appeals court cited errors in Bowne's decision and said the name Colby College–New Hampshire could not stand. Senior Judge Bailey Aldrich rubbed salt in the wound. "Without intending invidious comparison," he wrote, "we note that plaintiff outdistances defendant in size, reputation, and achievement."

32. All along, the New Hampshire college had made the point that there were sixty-two colleges with identical names, including Saint Joseph and Notre Dame (six each); Union and Trinity (five); Loyola and Westminster (four); and even another Colby: Colby Community College in Kansas.
The fight was far from over. Within weeks trustees of the New Hampshire institution thought they had finally settled the matter when they put up another campus sign with their choice of a third name: Colby Women's College. From Waterville came the reply that this name wasn't going to work either. Not only did it deny the fact that there were fourteen men among the 686 women at the New London school, but also people would quickly be calling the place “Colby.” In February Maine’s Colby went back to Bownes’s court. Strider said he hated to do it, but the newly chosen name did not appear to abide by the findings of the court. Bownes, now tied to the opinion of the higher court, could only agree. At the same time he let off a little steam at having been overruled. It seems, he wrote, that Colby in Maine had veto over any name in which “Colby” would be the first word. “It disturbs me,” he went on, “that the Court of Appeals has found that colleges compete for students and money in the same manner as commercial enterprises compete for customers, and that the law imposes the standards on higher institutions of learning that apply to the marketplace.”

After only six weeks of display, the second new sign came down, and for a brief time the New Hampshire college had no name at all. The deadline for making commencement arrangements was fast approaching, and the place had no name to print on the diplomas. Switchboard operators answered the phone with a hesitant “hello.” The stalemate was broken by a simple hyphen. In mid-March trustees in New Hampshire agreed to change the name again, this time to honor H. Leslie Sawyer, a native of Madison, Maine, who had been their president from 1928 to 1955. Colby College went along. In the spring, up went the fourth campus sign in two years, this one announcing the new Colby-Sawyer College.

In reversing the lower court, Judge Aldrich had said that allowing the New London college to use the direct Colby name would be “an intrusion on the interest of the plaintiff in its own identity and good will, and the interest of the public in preserving the integrity of individual accomplishment and reputation.” If there had been wariness about Colby’s name recognition and comparative standing when the fight began, some of it was dispelled by the time the battle was over.

### A PLAN FOR COLBY

In the lull following the years of political protest Strider and the trustees felt it was time for a grand assessment of where the College stood and of what could be done to improve. A Committee to Study the Future of Colby (CSFC) broke itself into a dozen task forces to examine nearly every nook and cranny of the College.
Francis Parker was the perfect choice to lead. A senior teacher when he came to Colby in 1971, he had already posted a distinguished career as chair of philosophy at Haverford and Purdue. His junior colleagues saw him as an uncle. In June 1974, Parker's committee returned a ninety-page report, including sixteen recommendations dealing with educational programs and resources that combined "adherence to rather orthodox requirements with an openness to innovation and flexibility." They included opportunities for independent study and "academically sound" field experience. The committee affirmed both the size of the College (1,500 students, more or less) and the established calendar of a Jan Plan sandwiched between two semesters. It called for a shake-up and expanded facilities at the library.

The "future" committee also said it was time to think about having an annual computer budget. The first computer course had been offered in the fall of 1970 when William Taffe (physics) taught "Introduction to Computer Science" for two credits under the aegis of the Natural Sciences Division. The following year the College bought time on a PDP-10 computer at Bowdoin, tied to remote terminals in the Keyes and Lovejoy buildings. Elementary math students were taught BASIC computer language, and all students could receive instruction on "terminal use." The treasurer's office churned out its payroll on a finicky Burroughs E-4000, and a clanking Addressograph machine took care of alumni mailings. Registrar Coleman, unimpressed with the small market of administrative software systems, was renting time on the C. F. Hathaway computer ($65 an hour) and "bootstrapping" his own system. Within a year he had put together a student class registration program and was beginning to figure out a way to sort for conflicts, make class sections, and do grade reporting. In 1973 Colby joined the New England Library Information Network, and by the fall of 1976, the College would have its own PDP-11/50, overfilling (and overheating) the basement of Lovejoy. At the end of the decade, Strider said the day was coming "when every Colby graduate in whatever discipline will have learned something about what the computer can contribute to our understanding of the world we live in."

In its findings the CSFC noted that the admissions milieu was changed, that the train of baby boomers had passed through and the pool of qualified applicants was shrinking. Both the College and its prospective students were getting more selective at the same time. New students were shoppers. Reputation mattered. Thomas Morrione '65 (sociology) used his research methods

33. Of the 3,434 applicants for the class entering in 1973, exactly 815 were accepted. One in four enrolled.
class to take a measure of student satisfaction and found that 91 percent now liked their campus living arrangements. A narrow majority agreed Colby was providing them a good all-around education. It was time to reexamine student services, the committee said ("with due regard for the disappearance of the philosophy of in loco parentis") and for a new look at the role of athletics. The most exhaustive of the studies dealt with the physical plant, where the committee found there were "obvious and pressing" needs for a health center, science facilities, a theater, and a makeover of Roberts Union to create a student center. On top of it all, more money was needed for faculty salaries, financial aid, and the endowment, which stood at $32 million.

In 1969–70, even before the study began, the College had launched the Plan for Colby, beginning with a five-year capital effort to find $6.7 million. It hadn't been easy. The decade began in a recession, and while the economy had rebounded the student contretemps did not set well with many alumni donors. In the development shop, Ed Turner had but a single aide, All-American goalie Frank Stephenson '62. Alumni Secretary Ed Burke '60 completed the team.34 (Sid Farr '55 had moved on to manage the still-combined financial aid and career services office.) President Emeritus Bixler was the national campaign chairman. Trustees Jetté, Joseph Smith '24, Robert Sage '49, and Robert Lee '51 held leadership posts.

With the details of the Plan for Colby fleshed out by the CSFC, the College headed into the final year of the campaign. The biggest surprise came at the end. Connecticut schoolteacher David K. Arey '05 had received the Alumni Council's highest honor, the Colby Brick, at the 1963 commencement. On the return home he and his wife, Mary (Stafford), also a schoolteacher, agreed they would amend their wills to include a small gift for Colby. He died a few days later. She died in April 1974 at age ninety. At the reading of her will in June it was learned they had provided Colby a $25,000 trust fund for scholarships. Various nieces and nephews received similar amounts. The residue of the estate, the will stated, should go to Colby. What was left was more than $2 million, the largest single gift in the history of the College. A month later Strider announced that the Plan for Colby effort had brought in $10.5 million, nearly $4 million over the goal. The Arey gift was used to seed a second phase of the campaign, this one for an additional $4.5 million to strengthen the sciences, a need highlighted by the CSFC report. By mid-decade there were nearly 350 science majors pressing at the seams of the two science buildings, Keyes and Life—already thirty years old.

34. In 1975 the professional development staff mushroomed to five.
The science effort was finished in two years. In December 1975, a grant from the Seeley G. Mudd Fund of Los Angeles provided a new building for physics, geology, and mathematics. A year later both the Dana and Kresge foundations chipped in challenge grants, and the matches were made in less than two years. The old Life Science was renovated for biology and psychology and, in 1977, renamed for the Areys. A year later the newest science building for physics, geology, and mathematics was opened and named for Seeley G. Mudd.

For a moment the College had come close to satisfying the insatiable appetite of science teaching, with facilities and equipment to match a growing, talented faculty.

The College’s rapidly expanding real estate very nearly got reduced in July 1976 when a laboratory assistant, cleaning closets in the Keyes Building in advance of renovating crews, discovered two old cardboard boxes containing seven six-ounce vials of nitroglycerin. Buildings were evacuated while local police called for a bomb squad from the Brunswick Naval Air Station. Squad members made three slow trips gingerly carrying the vials to a nearby gravel pit off the County Road where they were detonated. The deafening explosions ricocheted off the surrounding hills, sending huge clouds of white smoke into the air.

Alumni-giving goals for the Plan for Colby campaigns had been set at three times the estimated maximum potential of alumni to give. It was a reach that few colleges dared to make, but Colby had already made a name for itself for its audacious fundraising. It had, after all, set out to build an entirely new campus with barely a nickel in sight.

35. The latest Dana grant raised the foundation’s total giving to Colby to more than $1 million. In addition to Dana Hall it had provided the major gift for the renovation of the athletic complex, endowment for the Dana Scholarships, and four named professorships.

36. Seeley G. Mudd’s father, Seeley W., made his fortune in the copper mines of Cyprus. Seelye G., a graduate of the Harvard Medical School, was a researcher of radiation and X-ray therapy. He taught at the California Institute of Technology and was later dean of the medical school at the University of Southern California. He died in 1968. His estate created the Seeley G. Mudd Fund, which provided funds for many college science buildings and facilities throughout the country.
EQUA L PL AY

As a replacement for the Maine State Series, the three-college CBB rivalry wasn’t enough. Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin went looking for a bigger league that would match both their educational philosophies and their athletic ambitions. They found it in fine company and in the awkward name of NESCAC—the New England Small College Athletic Conference. At the same time, improved and expanded playing schedules came just in time to handle an explosion in intercollegiate athletic programs that resulted from a federal law called Title IX.

The CBB conference was formed in 1966 when Colby was the last to abandon its football rivalry with the University of Maine. Although the State Series continued in other sports for eight more years, Bowdoin had begun looking for a new athletic home in 1955, when it joined a small league with Amherst, Wesleyan, and Williams. In 1971 the four signed on with NESCAC, organized “to link colleges of similar academic and athletic programs in the fight against increasing financial pressures and the burdens of extensive recruiting.” The new conference included the vaunted “Little Three” of Amherst, Wesleyan, and Williams, the three Maine colleges, and Hamilton, Middlebury, Trinity, Tufts, and Union.37

NESCAC prohibited athletic scholarships and off-campus recruiting by coaches, limited postseason play, and required the exchange of financial aid and admissions information. It also insisted athletic programs be “in harmony” with the educational purposes of the institutions, that all athletes be representative of their student bodies, and that the presidents control athletic policy. The conference framework was built with men’s sports in mind, but it leveled the playfields for women as well—and there were plenty of women on the way.

Colby’s first intercollegiate women’s competition was a ski meet in 1954, when no scores were kept lest it would seem too competitive. Five years later a women’s badminton squad went to Boston for a match, and in the early 1960s field hockey teams began to win round-robin tournaments with Bates and Bowdoin. Progress was excruciatingly slow, and in 1966 physical education instructor Marjorie Bither assembled a statewide committee to speed things up. The committee said there should be at least three competitive sports

37. From the beginning Union was uneasy with regulations limiting participation in postseason championship play (ECAC), and in 1977, following a violation of recruiting rules, withdrew from the Conference. Connecticut College joined in 1982.
for women, and students chose tennis, bowling, and badminton. The committee became the Maine Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, with Bither as its first president. In 1973, the College joined the newly formed Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, a counterpart to the male-centered NCAA.

Women's needs had not been part of the 1967 planning for the athletic complex renovations and additions. Their programs, including gymnastics and fencing, remained in Runnals Union until 1973. The first two teams—field hockey, then basketball—came in 1968, the year the new facility was opened. Tennis, long a club, was added the next year, and in 1970 the new pool brought swim teams for women and men. In the winter of 1971-72 skater Susan Yovic '73 teamed with alumni giving director Frank Stephenson to begin a women's ice hockey club. It played and lost three games but continued the next winter with JV (junior varsity) goalie Herrick Drake '75 as volunteer coach. In 1974-75 the schedule expanded to sixteen games and the twenty-five-member squad finished 8-8. The opening contest with Brown University was the nation's first intercollegiate women's ice hockey game.

Following the adoption of the federal Education Amendments of 1972, Title IX languished without enforcement for two years, waiting for the Office of Civil Rights to write regulations. The law said that on the basis of gender no one could be excluded "from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." It was as plain as these kinds of things ever get, but the nation's all-male athletic directors didn't believe the law was aimed at them. The regulations, saying that schools and colleges must provide equal financing, facilities, schedules, and sports for both men and women, were sent to President Nixon for approval in the spring of 1974.

Colby's athletic director, John Winkin, was president of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. Surrounded by the male leaders of many of the nation's athletic organizations, he held a press conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and read from a letter he was sending to Nixon. "We cannot exist with these burdens," he wrote. "Redistribution of budgets would force instant elimination of many if not all existing male sports." The Feds were unmoved, and on July 21, 1975, Title IX went into effect. Winkin had no more than entered the Title IX fray when he was lured away by the University of Maine at Orono, where baseball was a prince among sports and the flame of gender equity was slower to kindle. Dick McGee took his place, still coaching football while taking the role of athletic director in an all-new era.

Despite the foot-dragging, at Colby there were forces already at work to
secure the equal treatment of women. Physical education coordinator Bither told her male colleagues they were in denial, and worked to get ready for the coming explosion of women’s teams. Frank Stephenson was an ally, and his ice hockey club was an attention-getting example. Sandy Maisel (government) pressed for equity from the faculty side. He went to Strider who agreed that Colby should balance the scales whether or not it was required, and Maisel and others prepared “affirmative action” guidelines, put in place in advance of the new law.

Women’s ice hockey was the first new varsity team in the winter of 1975–76, but it would have moved up anyway. That spring, softball won ten of twelve games in its first season. Cross-country arrived a year later, and in 1978 women began intercollegiate schedules in lacrosse and indoor and outdoor track.38 In 1979 the boom continued with new teams in soccer, squash, and—parallel with the men—Alpine and Nordic skiing. Seduced by the magnet mountain of Sugarloaf, more than half of all students owned skis, cluttering dormitory hallways and causing the local fire marshal to complain. The nearby Mountain Farm ski slope was closed, and the College made a deal with Sugarloaf to take in the new teams for a fair price.

By the close of the decade the gender score was even: fourteen teams each for men and women,39 and Colby found itself a clear national leader in the speed and fullness of its Title IX compliance. Other colleges—especially universities—would work for the next thirty years to meet the letter of the law. The greatest struggles were on campuses where the participation numbers and costs of football programs kept statistical measures out of balance. Small colleges had the easiest time of it, but it wasn’t until the end of the century that the averages of the numbers of varsity sports and expenses among all Division III schools began to reach equity.

The gloomy predictions of the demise of intercollegiate athletics never came true. Instead, as was intended, Title IX advanced gender equality, not only in athletics but also along the full range of programs and policies, from grade schools to colleges.

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38. The women runners nicknamed themselves “The Striders.”
39. Golf, the twenty-ninth, was coed.
a meet with UMO but failed to place. Even so, he got hugs from teammates and wild applause from onlookers. He hung up his leotard after that one outing, claiming satisfaction at having proven “a man is capable of competing in this women’s sport.”

The explosion of new sports dramatically changed the way college athletics were viewed. Many of the new teams were more appealing to participants than to fans. Squad sizes often exceeded supporters, a phenomenon that alarmed the old guard, accustomed to crowded stands at venues of established men’s sports. And while new opportunities arrived in a rush, women were not so quick to show up to play. (An effort to form a women’s lacrosse team failed when five came to try out for a squad needing twelve or more.) By 1977, only 10 percent of 695 women were varsity athletes as compared to half of the eight hundred men. McGee wondered if the women were more interested in grade point averages than in sports, but that was not the case. There were many reasons for their ambivalence and wariness, not the least of which was that the athletic complex, long the bastion of male jocks, was off-putting in image and in fact.

Carl Nelson, director of the health center, worked to make things more inviting by opening the doors of the most exclusive male club of all, the training room (injured women athletes were accustomed to hobbling up to the second-floor Roberts Union infirmary) and both the budget for towels and the general tone of the place improved simultaneously.

Nelson had come to Colby as the only full-time athletic trainer in 1959, when trainers were armed with little more than kits filled with scissors and ankle tape. His career overlapped the rise of his profession, and together with a small handful of contemporaries, he led its growth. In 1966 he replaced Mike Loebs as director of the health center where he became the perfect foil for the affable but sometimes gruff college physician, Clarence “Doggie” Dore. Students adored Nelson for his kindness, patience, and skill. In most cases he could accelerate their healing; when it was slow, he manufactured devices to protect their injuries. His word was law, and aggressive new coaches soon learned that he was the lone arbiter of when an injured athlete could return to play. He freely gave care and advice to local high school athletes and others, and for nineteen summers directed the Pine Tree Camp for Handicapped

40. Susan Zagorski ’77 was the first woman student trainer.
Children on nearby North Pond. Nelson was named head athletic trainer for the U.S. Olympic teams at the 1972 winter games in Sapporo, Japan, and again in 1976 at the games in Innsbruck, Austria. In 1980 he supervised training clinics for the Olympic Organizing Committee for the games at Lake Placid, New York. The National Athletic Trainers Association inducted him into its Hall of Fame in 1986. In 1991, two years before his retirement, alumni contributions came easily to build an expansive new athletic center training facility bearing his name.

Title IX also applied to physical education programs where the College clung to requirements that made all but varsity athletes pass tests in swimming, leisure-time sports, fitness, and posture. Bither, who became one of the country’s first women senior athletic administrators when she was named director of the combined physical education programs in 1973, proceeded to make changes in the unpopular mandates. After two tries, she convinced the faculty to eliminate the swimming test, and in 1977, to jettison the loathed proficiency tests altogether.

Although sports headlines still focused heavily on men, women began to earn a bigger share, most noticeably in tennis. For six years in a row the Maine women’s singles championships devolved to Colby versus Colby. Carolyn Estes ’75 won the title four years running, three times facing teammate Janet McManama ’76 (also a founding player of ice hockey), who took the prize herself as a senior. Under professor-coach Guy Filosof (French) the men were near consistent winners of state titles as well.

When women’s ice hockey began, sportswriters were fixed on the notion of women playing a “men’s sport.” (The sports editor of the Bangor Daily News said the squad had “cute dimples” and that even with shin guards their legs were “slimmer than those of Brad Park.”) By the end of the decade Lee Johnson ’79 had proved the women’s game was not frivolous at all. Through the winter of 1978–79 she scored thirty-one goals and sixteen assists on the way to becoming the first Colby woman to have her game jersey retired.41 With more teams than available coaches, many women’s squads had male mentors who doubled on assignments. Gene DeLorenzo ’75 coached women’s basketball and softball, each one to winning seasons. After some lean years, the field hockey team, under Debbie Pluck, emerged in 1978 with a state championship.

In the men’s division, one of the era’s most remarkable teams was in the entrenched sport of football, where the loss of success and fan support had been

41. Curiously, the first woman to win a varsity letter was not varsity. Bernice Smith ’75 received a C Club jacket in 1972 as “distaff manager” of the men’s cross-country team.
most evident. After six losing seasons, the magic returned. Led by tailback Peter Gorniewicz '75, McGee's 1972 team posted a 7–1 record, the best since 1940 and the third best of all time, to win its first outright CBB title. Gorniewicz went on to gain 4,114 career yards, a New England college record. In 1974 he, like George Roden '60 before him, won the Boston Gridiron Club's Swede Nelson national award for sportsmanship.

Baseball dominated until Winkin left after the 1974 season, the year Bain Pollard '76 continued the string of All-Americans. In twenty years Winkin's teams had a win-loss record of 292–244. When he departed in midcareer he had established the College as a regional baseball power and himself as one of the nation's finest baseball scholars and coaches.

In 1976 men’s hockey fans were heartened when Jack Kelley resigned as general manager of the New England Whalers and returned to the Colby job, vacated by Ken Mukai ’68. Kelley stayed but a single season and returned to the Whalers. The switch, he said, had been a mistake. Mickey Goulet took his place and promptly took the team to its fourth ECAC postseason playoff (1977–78) of the decade.

Overall, gains in coaches outweighed losses, as the period saw the arrival of three of Colby's finest ever: Dick Whitmore in basketball (1970), Mark Serdjenian ’73 in soccer (1976), and Jim Wescott in track and field (1978). Whitmore, like McGee, came from the high school ranks (Morse High in Bath, Maine). He would become one of the nation's most successful college coaches, and with little dispute, one of Colby's most colorful. If his ranting was sometimes incoherent, his tone was abundantly clear, and his antics helped fill Wadsworth Gymnasium once again. Dressed in jacket, tie, shiny loafers, and garish plaid trousers, he removed almost everything but the trousers before the game was minutes old. His shoes sometimes ended up in the stands, and in a pique of emotion he once broke his foot while making a fleeting tour of the bleachers.

42. The 1972 team was compared to the 1914 state champion team, and Gorniewicz, to its captain, the legendary Paul “Ginger” Fraser. In 1914 Colby beat Bowdoin (48–0), Maine (14–0), and Bates (61–0) before losing its fourth and final game to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis (21–31).

43. Winkin did the same for the state university, where he took six teams into the College World Series. More than fifty of his players, at Colby and UMO, were drafted into the major leagues.

44. John “Swisher” Mitchell had been Ed Burke's basketball assistant for three years before Whitmore arrived, and continued into the next century as Whitmore's alter ego. A basketball star at Waterville High and the University of Rhode Island, locally “Swisher”
Series championships (1970–71, 1972–73), the first five CBB titles (1974–78), and entered the ECAC postseason tournament three times. In Whitmore’s first coaching season Doug Reinhardt ’71 took the career scoring record, and four years later another All-American, Brad Moore ’75, collected 1,935 points to take the scoring crown and eight other records. Soon enough, Paul Harvey ’78 moved the record up to 2,075 points, and was twice named to the All-American first team, joined in 1978 by teammate Mike McGee (later a successful coach at nearby Lawrence High), the College’s first sophomore All-American in any sport.

During the 1970s the athletic ranks filled with outstanding students, both men and women. Basketball captain and playmaker Matt Zweig ’72 was a premier example of a new breed of scholar athlete. Elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year, he was a senior scholar and principal violist in the orchestra. In 1972 he received national recognition from the NCAA, including a scholarship for postgraduate study. The previous year two Colby seniors, football star Ron Lupton and two-time state singles tennis champion Frank Apantaku, received the same NCAA recognition.

In the still-young sport of men’s soccer, Serdjenian quickly surpassed his coaching predecessors, and in 1978 his team won the ECAC Division II–III New England championships, setting many records including one for most wins (11). Serdjenian at first coupled his coaching assignment with teaching at a local grade school; in 1982, however, he began working full-time on the Hill, managing both the varsity soccer program and his new role as associate dean of students. As a coach, he established himself as one of the best in the burgeoning sport of soccer. As a dean he earned broad popularity among students, despite having chief responsibilities for discipline.

Track and cross-country coach Jim Wescott was among the last holdouts in a coaching profession fast filling with specialists. He understood athletics in the liberal arts, and his passion for physical education was equal to his zeal for coaching. All the while, he enjoyed the same measure of coaching successes, and when he retired in 2003 nearly every track and field record had been set under his watch.

The Committee to Study the Future of Colby had urged a close look at athletics, and it was getting hard for the faculty to get its arms around a program that had exploded in so many directions. It was again time to do some tuck-
It is axiomatic that the academic program . . . has the highest priority, but in athletics, Colby's intention is to achieve the same high standards of performance. With regard to intercollegiate athletics . . . the most important consideration . . . must always be the value of the competition to the student participants. We hope Colby teams can be competitive with other teams, but most of all we hope athletics will add a healthy dimension to a vigorous educational program.

NEW DIRECTIONS

The College and the city planned a joint observance of the nation's Bicentennial, and beyond the spirit of patriotism there were many reasons for each to celebrate. Waterville was comfortably weathering a sagging national economy and still growing. Driven by different forces, Colby was emerging from the years of raucous unrest to find its strength and reputation stronger than ever. As campus life returned to more customary chaos, the College's longest-serving president elected to take his leave.

By mid-decade the country was in its worst recession since the 1930s. Inflation rampaged and unemployment broached 10 percent. Waterville was faring better than most small cities, but there were already ominous hints of change in the patterns of trade and competition. Executive Airlines called it quits and Air New England filled in briefly then stopped coming as well. The two fiercely competitive allopathic hospitals—Thayer, the creation of Protestants, and Seton, established by Catholics—could no longer afford to go their separate ways, and officials met secretly with the monsignor to create a unified 349-bed Mid-Maine Medical Center. Although Seton's Chase Avenue plant was newer, Thayer had the political clout, and the new hospital centered services and improvements on North Street.

45. Strider had to put his foot down in 1978 when nearly every member of the baseball team signed up for a Jan Plan in Cuba. The objective of the trip was to give students a firsthand look at the economic, social, political, and cultural institutions of Cuba. Instead, it looked to Strider and Machemer very much like a boondoggle to get a jump-start on the baseball season. Strider called it off.
Some five thousand citizens still worked along the river. A thousand made paper plates at Keyes Fibre. At the city’s oldest factory, 750 people were stitching four million Hathaway shirts a year. Scott, with 1,300 workers, was building a $185-million pulp mill above Skowhegan, and the Wyandotte textile mill at Head of Falls, razed by urban renewal, moved to a modern plant on West River Road. Entire streets disappeared under the urban renewal wrecking ball, and families moved into neighborhoods away from the center of town. The A&P came to anchor a Kennedy Memorial Drive shopping center on the site of the old Meader horse farm, and a fire department substation opened on Western Avenue to protect the expanding population west of the Messalonskee. Mayor Carey experimented with a free municipal bus service, but as with the trains twenty years before, citizens preferred their cars. As the population inched up, the city built a new Brookside Elementary School (later named for Senator George Mitchell), and the old schools on Brook and Myrtle Streets were abandoned. Sacred Heart School was closed, and the replacement Waterville Catholic Consolidated School lasted only four years. A new Notre Dame Church, with two assigned priests, opened on Silver Street.

On Main Street, Woolworth closed and Central National Bank went into the abandoned space, joining a list of city banks that soon numbered a dozen. There were still fifty downtown merchants, each one with a wary eye on the outskirt plazas. The Jefferson Hotel near the old campus went bankrupt, but the city still had eight hotels and motels and more than two dozen thriving restaurants. In 1979 the newest was a “fast food” place called McDonalds.

Bob Kany, a historian and Strider’s assistant before becoming director of Special Programs, led the Bicentennial committee. Ernest Marriner, who two years before had made his national record one thousandth WTVL radio broadcast of Little Talks on Common Things, was honorary chair. Celebrations began in May 1976 with a communitywide convocation. Dartmouth president John Kemeny spoke. He said he’d had a nightmare in which an “evil genius” set out to ruin higher education by creating a recession, double-digit inflation, a Dow Jones tumble from 1,000 to 600, and quadrupled oil prices. He woke up, he said, to find it was all true.

46. There are no local monuments to buses, but there is one to trains. In 1970 Maine Central Railroad bequeathed its last steam locomotive, no. 470, to the city. First run between Portland and Bangor in 1924, it made its final trip through Waterville on June 13, 1954. Sixteen years later former Mayor Donald Marden, who had led the effort to preserve it, rode in the cab for the last few yards to its resting place near the railroad shops on College Avenue.
Colby had a hand in three days of July 4 celebrations in Waterville; throughout the following year the campus was host to some twenty public events, each with a national history theme. A December symposium, sponsored by the Colby chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, featured scientist Linus Pauling, economist Robert Heilbroner, architect Paolo Soleri, and actress Ellen Burstyn.

Douglas Nannig '77, a high-ranking chemistry major, was given the honor of driving Pauling and his wife to a postsymposium luncheon. Days before, moments after he locked his Toyota Corolla in the Delta Upsilon parking lot, he watched in horror as it slid out of gear and rolled backward across the road, broke through thin ice, and floated out on Johnson Pond. Nannig followed the car into the cold water and pushed it to the shore. Anxious not to miss his chance to escort the Paulings, he let the car run around the clock with its heater on for the next several days. It was still damp and musty when the time came to chauffeur the two-time Nobel Laureate and his wife, who rode to the Dana Hall lunch on layers of towels draped over the back seat.

In the spring, Conservation Commission chair Helen Strider and Mayor Carey dedicated a new Bicentennial Trail and Park, north of the old Wyandotte mill site, one of three commission projects that included Arnold Park, west of the failing Two-Cent Bridge; and Ticonic Park, an observation site east of Castonguay Square.

A central attraction of the birthday celebration was the exhibition *Maine Forms of American Architecture*, a largely photographic display assembled by historian Earle Shettleworth '70. Hugh Gourley, the museum's first full-time director (1966), was the catalyst for many new acquisitions with barely space to show or store them. In 1971 the College acquired a full collection of the work of internationally known Maine artist John Marin. Two years later the museum received forty-eight works by Charles Hovey Pepper '89, son of Colby’s ninth president, George Dana Boardman Pepper, who painted in the picturesque northern Maine village of Attean.47 That same year, Russian-born American expressionist sculptor Louise Nevelson gave thirty-six of her early works.

47. The Marin works were given by his son and his son’s wife, John Jr. and Norma, and their daughter, Lisa. The Pepper paintings came from his children, Stephen Coburn Pepper and his sister, Mrs. Frederic (Eunice) Langenbach.
Other gifts included the Lee Fernandez '55 collection of Winslow Homer graphics and a fine print collection from A.A. D’Amico ’28. The tiny facility was bursting at the seams by 1973 when the Jettés gave a new 6,500 square-foot double-storied wing. Two years later the couple made their third major gift, a priceless collection of ninety-eight American Impressionist paintings. Their exhibition was launched with a nineteenth-century garden party (guests came wearing boaters and carrying parasols); when the show closed, the collection began a three-year tour of national museums.

In his centennial convocation remarks, Kemeny said he worried American colleges had overexpanded and predicted many would now have to fight for survival. He was right. Most colleges struggled. Some were forced to close. Colby did not escape the economic strife (many graduates had a hard time finding jobs, and annual budgets were tighter than usual), but by mid-decade the College was in the midst of the largest building project since early construction on the Hill. The centerpiece, headed for completion in the spring of 1978, was the unified science complex, expanded by the Seeley G. Mudd building, and improved with the renovation of Life Science (cum Arey) and a new second story “greenhouse” bridge tying Keyes and Arey together.

Science building renovations brought the first sign that the “new” campus wasn’t still new, a shocking revelation to alumni and others whose image of a fresh, young Mayflower Hill was frozen in time. Now some $5 million was earmarked for tearing out and rebuilding. Runnals and Roberts Unions had already seen thirty years of hard use when $1 million was assigned to transform the old women’s union into a theater and another $900,000 to make the men’s building an all-student union. All of the building and rebuilding brought lively discussion and controversy, but none more than the planning for a new infirmary where naysayers could be found all the way from the dormitories to the board of trustees.

The existing infirmary, shoehorned onto two floors of the east wing of Roberts Union, was inadequate. Students were climbing the stairs to find medical help at the astonishing rate of more than nine thousand a year, and in early spring, when influenza was raging, there were never enough beds. Strider argued a freestanding infirmary was a logical step in the domino game of expansion planning; besides, it made no sense to keep sick students in a building being retrofitted for loud parties. The “future” committee had urged improved health services, and the board had approved the development of

48. Previous gifts were the American Heritage Collection in 1956 and American eighteenth- and nineteenth-century portraits through the 1960s.
building plans. In January 1975 it was time for a final trustee blessing. Strider was unable to attend the meeting where a few trustees, including chairman Al Palmer, convinced the others to table the project. They said the plans were too grand (twenty-four beds), too expensive (almost $1 million), and the proposed site in the middle of the campus too precious for anything as ancillary as a health center. Maybe, they said, a modern infirmary could still be made to fit in Roberts, or if there must be a new building, then it could be smaller, and put elsewhere. Perhaps, with Thayer Hospital a half-mile away, it wasn't needed at all.

Strider fired a letter off to Palmer saying he was “deeply troubled” by the turn of events and asking for a special trustee meeting to get things back on track. Inflation had already increased the earliest building estimates by $300,000, and any savings from further trimming would only be eaten up by the delay. Besides, the president lectured, “Colby does not wish to engage in any second-rate enterprises.” The infirmary had to get out of Roberts because the College wasn't going to build a new student union, he said.

When the board reconvened in February, trustees took their medicine, and the project got a green light, but troubles didn’t end there. Students had gotten wind of the fray and gleefully joined in. At a groundbreaking event in May, Student Government president Robert Anderson ’76 declined to turn the ceremonial shovel. Some two hundred onlookers cheered when he said the building wasn’t necessary. (It was not the customary student demonstration. Spencer Aitel ’77 said the “conservative”-spirited Student Association planned “none of that sign-carrying stuff students pushed in the 1960s.”) The new building opened in the fall of 1976.49

It was time to make Roberts a bustling student union, but it never bustled. Off the beaten track, the place could not shake its male image. An improved coed dining room appealed mostly to the men on Frat Row. Centralizing the post office didn’t help, as women came at noon to pick up their mail, and then made their way back up Frat Row to the south campus. The feature designed to be the most appealing, turned out to be the most controversial. The Josephs—John and Pete—opened the first beer-selling Spa pub in 1975, covering the windows on the first floor of the west wing of Roberts Union, once the

49. The building was named for Fay B. Garrison and a former trustee, Alfred D. Foster. Garrison, general sales manager of the A. J. Tower Company of Roxbury, Massachusetts, died in 1955. Through his friendship with Foster (a trust officer of the Merchants National Bank of Boston), he named Colby as recipient of $475,000, the residual assets of his estate.
place of the independent hangout called The Paper Wall. Three years later the Spa was moved to new underground space at the front of renovated Roberts. Although the Josephs took the familiar stained brown plastic coffee cups and a new beer license with them, business plummeted by half. Not even the familiar, chirpy voice of waitress “Dot” Hurd could bring them back. The underground architectural feature was more blight than blessing, and monitoring the legal drinking age was a nightmare for the easygoing owners.

Some renovations resulted in new names for old places. The first-floor north-wing library room, once the office of the president, was named in honor of emeritus professor Alfred King Chapman. In 1977 the only original structure left standing on the Hill, the farmhouse once occupied by building and grounds superintendents, became the Hill Family Guest House, honoring three generations of Hills.50

The makeover of Runnals Union into a performing arts center was more successful than that of its counterpart across campus. The second floor became a springy-floored dance studio and Averill Gymnasium, a theater. Some wished it were larger, but as a workshop for the thespians, homeless since the Little Theater burned eight years before, it was welcome. In 1977 the new theater was fittingly named in honor of the Striders. The following spring the president announced he would retire at the end of the next school year.

Strider had been at Colby as dean and president for twenty-one years, and like his twentieth-century predecessors, he was leaving the place far better than he found it. Facilities on the Hill had matured—some were saying the campus was finally complete—and the first round of building renewal was nearly over. In two decades the physical plant had almost doubled. The College had grown from regional to national appeal, and with the admissions bar being raised every year, alumni had begun to complain that their children, some with academic profiles better than their own, were being turned down. The performance of men had risen from the doldrums and now closely matched the achievement of women. The College was among the nation’s leaders in enrolling students with advance placement (AP) courses, and as one of the few elite invited into the fellowship program of the Thomas J. Watson Foundation, began to garner a disproportionate list of impressive recipients.51

50. James “J. F.,” instrumental in the move itself; Frederick Thayer “F.T.”’10, a founder of Thayer Hospital and a trustee and leader in the development of summer medical programs; his brother Howard ’19; and Howard’s adopted son Kevin ’50, a trustee who founded the summer postgraduate course in ophthalmology, later named for him.

51. Thomas J. Watson, the son and heir of IBM, received an honorary degree at Col-
In 1977 English major Jennifer Barber ’78 was named one of thirty-two national Rhodes Scholars, the first at Colby since 1938.

Through the 1970s the faculty examined nearly every inch of the academic program, including the often-scrutinized Jan Plan. Although many colleges succumbed to pressures to jettison traditional requirements, Strider and the faculty had resisted wholesale changes. While the catalogue listing of courses nearly doubled (from 300 to 590), new offerings had not come at the expense of the core curriculum. In the end, student work got harder. In 1975 the door was opened for students to create their own independent majors, but the old distribution requirements, including English and foreign languages, were reaffirmed. In 1977, despite yelps from students, the option of taking courses pass or fail was limited, but as a salve to ever-increasing student grade anxiety, in 1978 the faculty agreed to weigh plusses and minuses in the calculation of grade point averages.

Since 1960 enrollment had grown (from 1,200 to 1,600), while the size and quality of the faculty kept pace. The number of faculty increased (from 86 to 136) as did the percentage of them who held terminal degrees. There had been only modest growth in the number of women teachers (twenty-two in 1979), but they became a disproportionate source of strength in the new wave of exceptional teachers who came and stayed, defining the Colby experience for students through the 1980s and beyond.

By the end of the 1970s, transition had already begun in the senior administrative staff and would continue in the early years of the next presidency. Faculty dean Paul Jenson and admissions dean Harry Carroll remained in place. Robert Pullen, administrative vice president since 1973, delayed his retirement as a courtesy to the new president. After leading the College’s development effort for a quarter-century, Ed Turner retired and the versatile Sid Farr, director of financial aid and career counseling since 1971, replaced him as vice president. Bill Wyman, dean of students through the rocky years, left in 1975 to become headmaster at the swanky Thacher School, under the pink clouds of California’s Ojai Valley. Earl Smith took his place. Smith, who had joined the staff as a publicist in 1962, was the first director of student activities in 1968. He later served as an associate dean (1970–74), and then for a year as assistant to the president. His appointment to replace Wyman was delayed while he completed a stint as director of communications for the science campaign. Popular Jim Gillespie was dean in the interim.

mencement in 1991. During the proceedings he took a shred of paper from his pocket and made a note: “More Watsons for Colby.”
Trustees began looking for a new president in the summer of 1978. Robert Anthony '38, vice chair and a twenty-year veteran of the board, led the search committee. Anthony was counted among Colby's most distinguished alumni. A Navy lieutenant commander during World War II, he taught for more than forty years until his 1983 retirement as the Ross Graham Walker Professor of Management Controls at Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration. He was the author of twenty-seven accounting textbooks including the most widely used programmed text on the subject. From 1965 to 1968 he was assistant secretary of defense under Robert McNamara. In 1996 he and his wife Katherine gave the lead gift for a dormitory that bears their name.

As the search began, it was a time for reflection and transition, and for honoring the Striders for their long service. Both on and off the campus, he had earned prominence as an educational innovator and as a public servant. At Colby, the new theater had already been named for the Striders, and alumni raised money to endow an annual Strider Concert.

Not everyone was sorry to see the veteran president leave. Through the many fractious moments over two decades, he had assembled a full share of detractors, divided among those who felt changes had come too fast, those who thought they had not come fast enough, and those who preferred no change at all. The majority, including those who watched most closely, felt he had charted a course through the roughest of waters to bring the College to a place of prominence in the matter of good teaching and learning. For these many admirers, the most poignant final salute came from the members of the Class of 1979 who asked him to be their speaker at commencement. Although his legacy would least be measured by tenure, it is nonetheless remarkable that he served longer than any other Colby president, and that the man who so treasured orderliness and reason had endured, even triumphed, through the single most turbulent period in the history of American higher education.

52. He had been a leader of the Association of American Colleges, which he chaired in 1973. In 1979 the Maine Bar Association presented him with a Distinguished Service Award for his work as chair of a select commission that made recommendations to the state Supreme Court on governance of the bar and its ethical responsibilities.

53. Waterville joined in honoring the Striders as well, but no permanent tribute was made until the turn of the century when, in the process of tidying up for an enhanced 911 emergency system, the city found it had two streets honoring Franklin Johnson: Johnson Heights and Johnson Avenue. The avenue south off Mayflower Hill, just below a street named for President Roberts, was renamed Strider Avenue. Concurrently, campus roads serving their eponymous buildings were named for Seelye Bixler and William Cotter.
Many posses were sent to look for a new president: a search committee charged with bringing in finalists for the trustees to pick from, a campus advisory committee to help the search committee, the faculty educational policy committee and the executive committee of the Alumni Council to scrutinize the final suspects, and the executive committee of the board to watch over the whole roundup. For good measure, a broadside was sent to alumni and parents, asking them to keep a sharp eye for anybody who might have slipped through the fences. The process began with a good deal of soul-searching and rumination over the qualifications the new president should possess. When the long lists were finally made, the groups found solid agreement on only two items for their “Wanted” poster: the person had to have a Ph.D., and needed to have had some solid experience at a small liberal arts college. William R. “Bill” Cotter had neither.

Robert Anthony, about to be chair of the board, was the search director. In the summer of 1978, soon after Strider announced his impending retirement, Anthony put together the principal search committee, appropriately lopsided with seven trustees and including two faculty members, two students, and the chair of the Alumni Council. Deans Harry Carroll and Earl Smith wrote Anthony to complain there were too few faculty and students and that the administrative contingent had been left out altogether. Anthony responded by creating a Campus Advisory Committee of seven faculty members, two administrators, and two students. Now there were two posses in the hunt, each one amply filled with egos. The double-barreled approach might have gone wrong had the two groups, in the end, not agreed.

Despite the official searchers, it was a parent who found the new president. Sol Hurwitz and Bill Cotter were Harvard schoolmates and friends. The two
were playing squash at the New York Harvard Club one afternoon in the late fall of 1978 when Hurwitz suggested to Cotter that he consider the Colby job. Hurwitz's daughter, Linda, a talented violinist, was a satisfied freshman, and her father, a strong Colby supporter. Cotter wasn't looking for new work, but he let Hurwitz put his name in the hat and figured that would be the end of it.¹

By the time the committees had seen Cotter's résumé, the list of two hundred candidates had already been carved to twenty. By January there were only five survivors. Cotter was one of them. Each candidate and his spouse came for a two-day campus visit. When it was over, the searching groups found broad consensus on a first choice. No one agreed on a runner-up. It wasn't necessary. At a special meeting on February 25 the trustees unanimously elected Cotter as Colby's eighteenth president.

Cotter's background, while impressive, did not follow the track of most college presidents. In presenting his name to the trustees Anthony acknowledged the president-elect had never been a faculty member or an administrator of a liberal arts college, did not have a Ph.D., and was not, in the conventional meaning, a scholar. "None of this," Anthony said, "bothers us in the slightest."

Born in Detroit, Cotter was eleven when he moved with his family to Tarrytown, New York, where his father, Fred, was director of industrial relations at General Motors.² After graduating from Washington Irving High School, Cotter went on to Harvard for both his undergraduate (1958) and law (1961) degrees. As a young attorney he served for a year as clerk for U.S. Federal Judge Lloyd McMahon in New York (Southern District) and in 1963 began a long association with the affairs of Africa when he was chosen as an MIT Fellow and assigned as assistant attorney general of Northern Nigeria. He returned to the United States and worked briefly for a New York law firm before being selected for the prestigious White House Fellows Program in 1964–65, where he was assigned as special assistant to Secretary of Commerce John T. Connor. He then spent four years as a Ford Foundation representative for Colombia and Venezuela before joining the African-American Institute (AAI), the country's largest private organization concerned with African development and African-American relations. He had been president of AAI for nine years when Hurwitz turned him toward Colby.

¹. Cotter was forty-two, the same age Strider had been when he became president. Cotter's mother, Esther, ever delightfully candid, questioned whether he should even take the job, telling him he was "much too young to retire."

². Cotter drove mostly Chevys during the time he was at Colby.
Linda Kester of Brooklyn was every inch his match. The two met when she was at Wellesley. Still too young to vote, in 1956 she headed the Massachusetts student committee for Adlai Stevenson’s last, futile presidential campaign. Along the way she called upon the head of the Harvard Democratic Club, Bill Cotter, for help. They both graduated in 1958, each with honors, each with majors in political science, and each with acceptance to Harvard Law School. Linda eschewed law school and instead took a prestigious graduate fellowship at Columbia University. Following Bill’s first year in law school, the couple married. Living in Cambridge while teaching school in Lexington, Massachusetts, she earned a master’s degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

In the fashion of many women who came of age in the 1950s, she gave up her own career opportunities to raise a family and follow her husband. When the call came from Colby, she left work as a foundation official and in the summer of 1979 moved from the Cotter home in Oyster Bay, New York, into the President’s House on Mayflower Hill. David, thirteen, was a high school freshman. Deborah was eleven, Elizabeth, seven. It was a long way from Oyster Bay—a distance measured in many more ways than miles—and there was no primer for spouses of college presidents, certainly not for the end of the twentieth century. Linda Cotter wrote her own script, juggling roles as wife, mother, volunteer, and professional, and as a behind-the-scenes assistant to the president with an unfailing antenna for the needs of the broader Colby family and the details of public and private presidential events.

Local reaction to Cotter’s appointment was wide-ranging. Early on, rumors circulated in town that the new president was black. The whispers were based upon readings of his résumé and had the tinge of racism. Quoting Strider’s assertion that the trustees had chosen the new president wisely, a Sentinel editorial wryly observed that only time would tell whether they had been wise or not. A well-known local Republican politician, discouraged that the College had once again selected a left-wing Democrat president, curtly refused Cotter’s invitation to get acquainted over lunch. On the campus the

3. The rift came in the summer before the inauguration, when Cotter spoke to the local Rotary Club and defended Andrew Young, whose behind-the-scenes meeting with the Palestine Liberation Front prompted President Carter to dismiss him as U.N. ambassador. Cotter, who had worked with Young, said Young was being unfairly depicted as a “radical” and was not given credit for his work to shift Third World alliances from the Soviet Union to the West. The Rotary Club was not just then the perfect setting for finding agreement with Cotter’s view.
new president was greeted warmly, if quizzically. There was the customary
transitional phenomenon of pent-up private agendas being pressed from
every quarter, and a scramble for football bleacher seats near where Cotter
chose to sit. The Echo opined that one of his first acts should be “to clean the
dead wood out of Eustis [administrative office building].”

Despite the many other adjustments, there were no sudden religious con-
versions. Unlike all the times before, in the recent search the matter of religion
had not come up at all. Bixler, who had broken the string of Baptist presidents,
raised enrollment at the local Congregational church. Strider had improved
the lot of Episcopalians. Cotter was brought up Catholic but had let his mem-
bership lapse.

Inauguration ceremonies were held in late September 1979. Some three
thousand filled the gymnasium to watch the parade of 150 delegates from col-
leges, universities, and the learned societies, arranged in order of their found-
ing from Harvard (1636) to the Maine Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
Academy (1972). Harvard’s delegate, President Derek Bok, gave the principal
address, observing it was “an inescapable sign of advancing age and decrepi-
tude when you start installing your favorite students as presidents of colleges.”

The platform held the customary trappings. The new board chairman, An-
thony, gave the oath of office on Hannibal Hamlin’s Bible, but Cotter declined
to use the old, high-back President’s Chair (he was barely 5’10” and it would
have dwarfed him), and it sat as an empty ornament on the stage. Bixler
spoke, calling Cotter “a young man with the courage of an innovator, a sensi-
tive conscience, with concerns that are intercontinental.” Maine Governor
Joseph Brennan brought greetings, as did Waterville mayor Paul LaVerdiere
’59, Morgan State University President Andrew Billingsley, Professor Lucille
Zukowski ’37, and Student Government president Scot Lehigh ’80.

In his address, Cotter spoke of his ambitions for Colby, many of which
would ring out as themes for the next twenty years. He emphasized a “clear
preference for the teacher-scholar over those publisher-scholars who neglect
students.” He said there must be more women and minorities on the teaching
staff, and more racial, ethnic, and geographical diversity in the student body.
He announced he had formed a new scholarship program named in honor of
the late Ralph Bunche (LL.D. ’52), with Ralph Bunche Jr. ’65 as honorary chair.
He said he would establish regular overseer visiting committees to academic

4. The chair was a gift to President Roberts from Leslie Cornish ’74, classmate of Mary
Low, Maine Supreme Court justice, and chairman of the Colby board. It was first used
at the rededication of the chapel on the old campus in November 1924.
and administrative departments; increase cooperation with Maine sister colleges; and lay the groundwork for a new capital campaign, to include either a rebuilding or a remodeling of Miller Library. He also proclaimed—ever so delicately—that he would reexamine Colby's officially sponsored church services "to ensure they meet the needs of students and faculty." (He had chosen both A. H. Freedman, former rabbi at Beth Israel in Bangor, and Edward O'Leary, Catholic bishop of Portland, to offer benedictions.)

Toward the end he said he was "not sure that women, although equal in numbers at Colby for some time, have been fully equal in rights," and went on to warn: "We must be self-conscious about attitudes that connote second-class citizenship." His determination in that regard was symbolically made manifest at the conclusion of the ceremony with the singing of the alma mater, "Hail, Colby, Hail!" He had changed the words. For a half-century, the song, set to the tune of "O Canada" and written by mathematics professor Karl Kennison '06, began with the line: "Hail, Colby, hail, thy sons from far and near." "It is time to recognize that we have had daughters for 108 years," Cotter said. The new line, printed in the inaugural program, read: "Hail, Colby, hail, thy people far and near." The new words seemed strange at the first singing, but the crowd loved it, especially the field hockey team, which Cotter had been following as a fan and whose members arrived in game uniform.

By the spring of 1980, Cotter had examined every corner of the College. As part of an ongoing curriculum review, he ordered a survey of alumni and students, and in his first baccalaureate address was able to announce a broad consensus that Colby was on the right track. A whopping 88 percent of alumni (2,500 responded) and 70 percent of students thought graduation requirements should be left alone, or perhaps expanded. Both groups believed Colby's greatest strengths were in the "quality of teaching" and "student-faculty interaction."

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Cotter also offered seniors some advice that faculty would hear him give at baccalaureate exercises again and again over the next twenty years. When you leave here, he told the seniors, go directly to the nearest public library and take out a card. Second, take a good book with you whenever you travel. "I continue to be disappointed," he said, "when I fly from Boston to Waterville and encounter unprepared Colby students thumbing aimlessly through Air New England Magazine."
The alumni-student affirmation and the faculty's own sense of things prompted the Educational Policy Committee to recommend only minor changes in requirements (distribution courses in the sciences should include a laboratory experience, and courses in the humanities and social sciences should stress methodology and include "hands-on" work). The 120-hour graduation requirement of 105 basic credits in traditionally graded courses plus 15 credits in regular courses, pass-fail courses, or field experience was let stand. The biggest change was in the often-criticized Jan Plan. Both students and faculty liked the twenty-year-old program, but fully 90 percent of alumni said students were not working hard enough during the month (many were in a good position to know). The faculty voted to drop the required number of Jan Plans from four to three and to allow students to substitute independent plans with regular credit courses.

While campus affairs seemed for the moment to be tucked in, there were mounting outside pressures threatening all colleges. Bixler had begun his tenure in the face of a world war. Strider had endured a cultural revolution and Vietnam. Cotter faced external battles of a different sort. Rampaging inflation had driven college costs up while the numbers of eighteen-year-olds, whose stretched parents had to pay the bills, were headed down. To make matters worse the twin crises warmed up the endlessly simmering debate over the value of the liberal arts.

In March 1980, not yet a year in office, Cotter wrote a New York Times op-ed piece in which he said "faculty salaries have slipped dangerously behind the cost of living and competitive salaries outside the academy." He said he feared that both inflation and rising energy bills would force a radical change in the kind of education colleges could offer. To press his point, he explained that while average family incomes had risen 20 percent in the 1970s, faculty salaries had fallen behind by almost the same amount; and endowment income, which had once produced more than 20 percent of educational costs, was now covering less than 10 percent. A month later he sent his first annual

5. Colby changed from a 40-course (five a semester) requirement to 120 credit hours (216 quality points) in 1968. Varying credits (two to five) were assigned to courses according to rigor and time in class. At the end of that year the faculty began to phase in new rules, dropping the requirement to 105 credits (while requiring eight semesters of full-timestudy) on the premise that the lower number would be treated as a floor, rather than a goal, leaving students the flexibility to take extra courses without risk. It did not work. Too many seniors were graduating with the bare minimum of credits. In 1972 the requirement was again moved up to 120 credits, of which at least 105 had to be in conventionally graded courses.
letter to parents and students announcing the largest increase in fees in history. Trustees approved a $1,120 jump for 1980–81 ($6,510 to $7,590), a whopping 16 percent hike.

The cost crisis was deepened by the demographic reality that the number of college-age students was plummeting. The baby boomers had passed through, and a 22 percent decrease in high school graduates was predicted over the next fifteen years. The heaviest decline was going to be in the Northeast, from which Colby was drawing 70 percent of its students. The struggle to find both new money and new students was set against the backdrop of a trend toward vocational training and the concomitant assault on the liberal arts. President Bok had warned of it in his inauguration remarks. Liberal arts colleges had always been in a precarious position, he said, and now they were “moving to a strange and disquieting contrapuntal melody.” He pointed to the rash of books and articles “on the growing irrelevance of liberal arts to the practical problems of daily life.”

History was repeating itself. In 1981 the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation issued a startling report claiming the liberal arts were dead, and calling for the creation of “the new liberal arts” with the inclusion of applied math, technological literacy, and the computer. In November, soon after the Sloan Report set the college world abuzz, Colby launched its own defense. For the first time ever, three Colby presidents were together on the same stage. At an alumni gathering in Dedham, Massachusetts, Bixler, Strider, and Cotter sat for a discussion of both the past and the future of Colby.6 Strider called the Sloan Report “astute,” but said the debate was not about the nature of the liberal arts but about “the avenues toward fuller understanding of man’s role in the universe.” Bixler had no quarrel with technological literacy, but said it ought to be taught in the secondary schools, and “if we teach computer, mathematics, or science in college, let’s teach it in a liberal way rather than in a vocational way.” Cotter said the report made the error of “assuming the liberal arts are somehow disconnected from the real world.” A look at the Colby catalogue, he said, would show that sciences had already become an important part of the curriculum.

As many colleges retrenched—curtailing building, reducing faculty and programs—Colby trustees agreed with the new president’s plan to go in the opposite direction, to take a calculated risk and forge ahead. The prize, they knew, would go to those colleges that could attract and keep the strongest fac-

6. Peter Vogt ’63 made a film of the three presidents event that became a centerpiece of Cotter’s first round of alumni club meetings.
ulty and bring the very best students from a diminishing pool. The decade had barely begun when the College embarked on the quiet phase of a new $20 million—plus capital campaign to meet critical physical plant needs of renovation and new construction, and to rebuild the contribution of endowment earnings for faculty support and scholarship aid. In the meantime, before any money came in, ground was broken for an expansion to double the size of the library, and construction began on a modern new dormitory.

A new dorm was certainly needed. Each new school year students were arriving in vans, sometimes with U-Haul trailers, bulging with ski equipment, bicycles, microwave ovens, television sets, and (soon) computers. It was an annual fall miracle to watch as it all disappeared into rooms built for a time when students came to college on a train, with a single trunk. Now there was never enough room. Students rejected standard-issue furniture in favor of the things they’d brought with them. They built precarious sleeping lofts of 2 × 4s and plagued the buildings and grounds department (and the local fire marshal) by piling beds, desks, and dressers in the corridors. By the fall of 1979 the student body had overflowed again. Nearly one hundred students were temporarily housed at the health center, in dormitory lounges, and at a local motel.

The newest dorm had no major donor and was built on borrowed money ($3.6 million). Named for its place above the chapel, the hundred-bed Heights was designed by Philip M. Chu, and boasted spacious rooms—singles, doubles, four-person suites—a faculty apartment, and ample lounges. It was equipped with alarms and sprinklers for safety; for energy efficiency its double- and triple-pane windows faced mostly to the south and east. Computer-operated oil burners were convertible to coal, and it had a stand-by generator and wood-burning boiler. With Cotter exhorting contractors and checking every detail of the construction, the building went up in a record 410 days. When it opened in the fall of 1981 it took the standard of dormitory living up another notch.

STAR SEARCH

Hippies dressed up and became Yuppies. Hip-hop was their music; Rubik’s Cubes, their worry beads. They cared about the same things the aging activists had fought for—peace, and the causes of minorities, women, and the environment—

7. The Thompson dormitories, although individually named, were still being called the “new dorms” when people began to call the Chu building the “new, new dorm.” In the summer of 1981, with students about to move in, Deans Seitzinger and Smith met and, without benefit of committee, unilaterally named Thompson’s dorms “Hillside” and the Chu building “The Heights.”
but they pressed their battles in quieter ways. If the Me Generation deserved to be called selfish it was in some measure because they worried about finding work. The economy was in the tank, and inflation had two digits. All the while the College was reshaping its top leadership, moving ahead against the tide, and struggling to find the best students in a shriveling pool of candidates. Everybody was looking for stars.

The thinning ranks of antiwar activists hitched their cause to a star in their own backyard. The Soviet army had invaded Afghanistan, and by the spring of 1980 President Jimmy Carter was worried that more help might be needed by the Muslim guerillas in their jihad against the communists. He asked Congress to renew the law, abandoned since 1975, requiring all eighteen-year-old males to register for the military draft. Just as the Senate considered the bill it was also preparing confirmation hearings for Senator Edmund Muskie, nominated to be secretary of state. Students thought a tie to Muskie might turn a national spotlight on their opposition to the draft. They were right.

On Monday, May 5, some fifteen students staged a sit-in at Muskie's Main Street Waterville offices. The senator's field representative, Beverly Bustin, sent out for coffee and doughnuts and explained that Muskie was in a delicate spot and would not be getting into the fray. Outside on the sidewalk, draft supporters marched with American flags. When a few protestors left the next day, one of them took the food, and the sit-in became a hunger strike. Eight vowed to stick it out. On the campus several hundred held a sympathy rally and chanted: "No draft, no war, no way!" On Thursday, with the media in rapt attention, students were told the cops were coming, and the three-day occupation abruptly ended.8 Benjamin Barlow '81 said he and the others gave up "to avoid any kind of a senseless martyrdom." Muskie was confirmed secretary of state that night, and soon Waterville's George Mitchell left the U.S. District Court bench to take his Senate seat.9

On the campus, officialdom was looking for some of the spotlight as well and at the same time trying to get over an inferiority complex. The lingering self-consciousness stemmed from the long struggle to build everything at once and from years of looking over the shoulder at other fine old places that

8. A similar protest in the offices of Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy had ended the day before when U.S. marshals hauled the protestors off to jail.
9. Congress approved the draft registration requirement and required colleges to certify that their students had signed up. The colleges balked, but complied. The certification requirement was dropped within a year, but the registration law continued.
had been better longer and steeped in traditions unbroken by not having to move their entire roots. Since the early 1960s, when the Ford Foundation affirmed Colby as a center of some excellence, frustration had grown over the gap between the reality of that quality and the stubborn perception that the College was somehow only average. Nobody was more determined to close that gap and move to a higher constellation among the best colleges than Bill Cotter. In pursuit of that goal, in January 1982 he marched himself into the offices of the New York Times and demanded an extra star.

In the competitive marketplace for students, guidebooks had a special niche. Publishers and parents gobbled them up. Bookstores gave them separate sections. Whenever a new one came out, admissions officers winced. Most guides included straight facts (which were often misleading), but editors also insisted on including essays and ratings based on little else but whimsy. The newest guidebook, The New York Times Selective Guide to Colleges, written by education editor Edward Fiske, was set for the newsstands. An advance copy was sent to the College. Colby’s entry began: “On a mountaintop in picturesque Waterville—only an hour’s drive from Sugarloaf Mountain—Colby College offers much more than a playground for rugged preppies.” It went on to say students were “more interested in their skis and their books than in any activity that smacks of the real world, including job-hunting.” The cute and breezy text wasn’t the problem. Every college got a taste of that. The problem was that in rating the quality of the academic program, Fiske gave Colby only three stars, a mark he declared average. Bowdoin had four. A handful of the most elite places had five.

The book and its star rating system brought loud yelps from presidents across the country (especially at places with three stars or fewer), but before the full, angry storm hit Fiske’s office, Cotter went to see the editor face-to-face. In advance of their meeting he sent a seven-page letter with multiple supporting attachments in which he made the case that Colby ought to have gotten five stars, four at the very least. He told Fiske flat-out that the College had been “damaged” (a startling word when a lawyer uses it) and was entitled to a letter acknowledging the mistake and a higher rating in the next edition.

Fiske had no wiggle room. Within a week of the meeting Times Books sent Cotter a telegram: THIS IS TO CONFIRM THAT A LETTER REGARDING THE REVISION OF ACADEMIC RATING FOR COLBY, DISCUSSED WITH TED FISKE, IS IN THE WORKS AND WILL BE SENT TO YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. The follow-up letter from Fiske said Colby would receive four stars in the next edition. Cotter was only a bit happier, and steamed that the Times was “more careful when they review restaurants or plays than they are when they rank colleges.”
told a reporter that the newspaper’s name gave “a special credibility that this particular book doesn’t deserve.” He also fretted that there were still nine thousand copies of the three-star version in bookstores across the country.

Fiske went on NBC-TV’s *Today Show* to defend himself, claiming the Colby change (Colby’s was the only concession he had given) was made necessary because College officials had not returned the original questionnaires. In fact they had, but it didn’t matter. The fight was over. In March, buried in complaints about errors of fact and judgment in the Fiske guide, *Times* publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger said future editions would not carry the imprimatur of the venerable Gray Lady.

Significance of the star war was not simply in setting the record straight, or even in protecting Colby’s attractiveness to all prospective students. There was no need for that. Some three thousand applications were coming in every year, with fewer than 450 slots to fill. The quest for a fourth star was all about the importance of being properly placed in the market for the very best of stars in the shrinking galaxy of students. Inch up the quality of the student body was going to be difficult enough without having misinformation in guidebooks.

Not long after, *U.S. News & World Report* published its first rankings of the nation’s top twenty-five liberal arts colleges. Colby was slighted again. The choices were based solely on a poll of five hundred college presidents (Cotter had thrown his out). Once again, the president launched a protest, and wrote to suggest the magazine couple the popularity poll with some objective indicators. The magazine changed its rating scheme, included objective criteria, and in the next year Colby was on the list to stay.\(^\text{10}\)

Never mind counting stars; Fiske’s claim that students cared more about skiing and books than finding jobs was also dead wrong. Against the background of general student contentment were persistent grumbling noises about whether all the money they were spending was worth it, and whether they were going to be able to find useful work. Cotter had by then established a new board of overseers, an advisory body comprising of alumni, parents,

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10. Lisa Birnbach, author of the popular *Preppie Handbook*, released its most infamous edition in 1984. Everybody felt the sting, and the section on Colby included references that exaggerated both the remoteness of the College and the drinking habits of its students. Taking a cue from Cotter, the president and vice president of Student Government, Tom Claytor and Cory Humphreys, traveled to catch Birnbach at an appearance at Boston College and protest the Colby references. They offered to pay her way to Waterville so she might see for herself. She didn’t come, and subsequent editions of her book were nearly as slanderous.
and other friends of the College. The board swiftly became a principal source of candidates for the governing board of trustees, and its members were chiefly engaged as participants on the new departmental visiting committees. It was not by chance that the first-ever round of overseer visiting committees (in 1980) included the office of career planning. In the time when many seniors could pick among several jobs, it had been called a “placement” office. When Sid Farr took over in 1971 the name was modified to “career counseling,” reflecting a changed focus from sorting jobs to finding them. Even then the office continued to include the management of financial aid. The twin functions were not split until 1978, when Farr left to become development vice president.

By the time the visiting committee took a close look, both students and parents were complaining loudly. After the visit, James McIntyre (German) took leave from the faculty to head the department. Renamed Career Services, it was a place where the emerging uses of computers had broad application. McIntyre took full advantage. His task required a realignment of expectations and a scouring of the world to find new opportunities to match with graduates. He made progress in both directions. In 1982 Linda Cotter volunteered as coordinator of the Jan Plan internships sponsored by alumni and parents and, two years later, signed on as a paid part-timer. Summer and January internships often led to job offers and careers, and she set out to find more of them. Some 1,800 alumni responded to her plea for help, and it wasn’t long before Colby had a menu of internship opportunities that rivaled the “old boy” networks of the Ivies.

Anxiety about finding jobs included fretting about the College’s advising system. Parents, especially, wanted to know about what kind of advice their students were getting (if they weren’t listening to them, who were they listening to?); the College responded by tinkering with an advising system that stubbornly defied full repair. In order to get personal attention up and the individual workload down, one solution was to require every faculty member to advise students. It was a scheme that worked better in form than function. Then, as always, students persisted in taking important advice from those in whom they had the most comfort and trust: mostly other students, sometimes faculty members (whether they were assigned as advisers or not), and occasionally custodians or even deans.

The change of presidents led to the inevitable realignment of top leadership, and time and circumstance soon had Cotter searching for stars for an almost entirely new senior administrative team. The shuffle began at the very top,
even before Cotter arrived. As chairman of the board, Al Palmer '30 let his great passion for Colby get mixed up in the chain of command and had taken to making late-night telephone calls to senior administrative people, sometime plotting against Strider. Trustees agreed to make the next president the gift of a new board chair, and just as Cotter's term was about to begin, arranged for Palmer to step down in favor of Robert Anthony '38. Anthony led the board until 1983 when he retired from teaching at Harvard.

Anthony was replaced by H. Ridgely Bullock '55, a Renaissance man and unlike any other in the long line of board chairs. An entrepreneur and attorney, he was a partner (with Richard Nixon and John Mitchell) in the New York City law firm of Mudge Rose Guthrie Alexander & Ferdon. He was CEO of UniDynamics Corporation, a manufacturing company in Stamford, Connecticut, and was later chief executive officer of Montchanin Management Corporation, an investment bank and consulting firm. He became expert in rescuing enterprises on the verge of collapse (for example, Bank of New England), and his varied special interests took him from producing Broadway plays to making wines in California. Bullock was no more loath to take a hands-on role at the College than was Palmer (especially in the matter of fundraising), but there was a difference. He was firmly in Cotter's corner.

The exodus of senior administrative leaders began quickly. In 1980, Paul Jenson, dean of faculty for nearly a decade, resigned to become the second president of nearby Thomas College.11 A national search found his replacement, Paul Dorain, chair of the chemistry department at Brandeis, who stayed less than two years before taking a research position at Yale. Sonya Rose (sociology) minded the store as acting dean before Cotter turned inside and tapped Douglas Archibald, a scholar in Anglo-Irish history and culture and a specialist in the poetry of W. B. Yeats, as vice president and dean. As chair of the large and often fractious English department, Archibald came into his new job already seasoned. Having a colleague and an insider in the front faculty office suited the members, and it suited Cotter as well. Archibald’s natural instincts and good humor enabled him to coalesce the faculty around prickly issues and to heal bruised egos after the frays. Under his watch student foreign study opportunities exploded and the curriculum at home was strengthened. He partnered with Cotter in the fight to improve salaries even as the size of the overall faculty grew, and in the process began to balance gender scales and make small inroads in the hiring of faculty of color.

11. The first president of Thomas College was John L. Thomas Jr. (Colby ’42), son of the founder of its predecessor business college. The younger Thomas died in April 1980.
Robert “Bob” Pullen ’41, administrative vice president since 1973, stayed with Cotter for a year before retiring in 1981. He had given Colby thirty-six years of yeoman service ranging from economics teacher and department chair to, for eight years, vice president. His replacement was the first in the half-centurylong line of vice presidents without a Colby pedigree. Stanley Nicholson earned his undergraduate degree in his home state, at the University of Montana. His doctorate was from Duke. He had been at the U.S. International Communications Agency, where he was director of the office of academic programs. His résumé also included stints with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Ford Foundation, where as an economist with the Harvard Development Advisory Service he had worked with Cotter in Colombia and later served as the foundation’s representative in Brazil. He came to Colby from the prestigious Brookings Institution, where he had been administrative director. Bright, easygoing, and creative, Nicholson was a perfect match for Cotter who, unlike his immediate predecessors, was fascinated with figures and read budgets with the same facility and eagerness as he went over the college guides. Douglas Reinhardt ’71 helped watch the money, stepping up to become treasurer while keeping his role as controller.

The 1981 semireirement of Dick Dyer, assistant to three presidents, led Cotter to invent a new senior post for Earl Smith, dean of students since 1976, who became dean of the college with oversight of an eclectic assembly of services reflecting his Colby experience: the dean of students office, public affairs and publications, safety and security, the health center, and (for courage) the College chaplains. The new dean of students was Janice Seitzinger, who would keep the post into the next century, becoming the College’s longest-serving dean of any sort. Already a seven-year veteran as associate dean, Seitzinger took the lead position just as the elite colleges moved into the buyer’s market for students. If deans were once disciplinarians whose largesse was principally forgiveness, they were now agents for all kinds of new and appealing services. The ancient concept of in loco parentis, squelched in the 1960s when students demanded new freedoms, slowly crept back into vogue; while student rights remained protected, their expectations of what deans might do for them knew no bounds.

Seitzinger’s small physical stature belied a giant inner force (a colleague once referred to her as “General Patton in drag”). Eyeball-to-belt buckle, she could wither the spirit of the biggest miscreant, but she just as quickly stood up against the world in support of one of her students. She was at the jail when they were arrested and at the hospital when they were hurt. Her hands-on style and natural penchant to supervise everything within her reach worked
well in the new era of dean ing. Within five years of her appointment the Car­negie Foundation cited the College for having “an exemplary residential life system,” and a nationwide survey of some fifty chief student affairs officers ranked Colby, Grinnell, and Oberlin as having the best small-college student services in the country. Other colleges began to copy.

The tragic death of Harry Carroll in the summer of 1982 prompted Cotter to turn inward again. There was neither time nor need to look far for a re­placement, and he asked Robert McArthur to leave his teaching post in phi­losophy and religion and lead the newly invigorated admissions effort. He consulted experts for a crash course in admissions marketing, and in a short time embarked on a flutter of new initiatives with pamphlets, posters, strate­gic visits to high schools outside Colby’s customary cache, and close oversight of those pesky college guides.

Capitalizing on Colby’s two chief attractions—quality and location—McArthur ordered up a giant poster with a photograph of the majestic moose at a remote pond. Its tag line said “Excellence in Maine.” The off­beat poster became an irresistible adornment in high school placement offices around the country and for a time provided a backdrop on the news set of one of Maine’s TV stations. Some said the poster wasn’t ac­ademic enough. McArthur tried drawing in eyeglasses and a book.

Sid Farr, who once made the third man in the combined alumni and de­velopment shop, soldiered on as vice president and began to gear up for the eleventh capital fund drive in the College’s long history. A growing staff was anchored by a Colby cast including David Roberts ’55, on deck since 1977 as director of the then new planned giving effort; Charles “Penn” Williamson ’63, a designated hitter who became director of development in 1983; Sue Conant (Cook) ’75, in alumni relations; and Eric Rolfson ’73, a campaign specialist.

The Colby 2000 Campaign (a name some later wished had been saved for the next one) began in April 1982, with goals of $20 million plus another $5 million in the coming five Annual Fund appeals. Bullock, soon to lead the board, was the chair. Twelve million dollars were earmarked for new endowed funds (principally for faculty salaries and financial aid), and another $8 million for new construction, most of it ($6.7 million) for doubling the size of Miller Library, a project already near completion. The library project was finished by the fall of 1983. At groundbreaking ceremonies two years before,
the new president had misjudged even his own ambitions for Colby when he declared the structure would make the new campus “finally complete.” The finished building, still with forty-nine faculty offices, had study places for 620 students and space for a half-million volumes. That summer, with the economy creeping out of the cellar, the College had forged ahead with the first of the dormitory renovations (Averill and Johnson) that would continue for more than a decade.12

By 1983, the planets were aligned to face the most contentious debate since 1929, when the question was first raised as to whether Colby dared to move itself to a new campus.

OMEGA

The Cotters came to visit in March 1979, shortly before he took office. He spoke to curious students in Given Auditorium, and then invited questions. (“Do you have a nickname?” “Call me Bill. If it’s going to be anything else, please ask me first.”) At the end a student asked what he thought of fraternities. He explained that where he had gone to college there weren’t any, and that he’d reserve judgment. The entire audience applauded, and he was mystified. What he did not know was that some in the crowd—including a string in the front row wearing Greek emblems—were cheering his promise to wait and see. The rest were warmed by the thought of a college without fraternities. Within five years he would be criticized (and credited) for presiding over the ending of fraternities, but in truth there were clouds hanging over Colby’s secret societies well before he was even born.

In the 1930s, when time came to move up the hill, there was a moment when trustees considered leaving the six fraternities behind.13 There were philosophical objections to the exclusive societies, but in the end the decision was driven by more practical considerations. The College did not have money to build residences for men, and fraternity alumni did. A committee studied the question and voted (19 to 2) to recommend letting the fraternities come along.12, 13

12. With all the planning and construction, much of it supervised by the College itself, the name of the old Buildings and Grounds Department (B & G) no longer applied. In 1982 it was renamed the Department of Physical Plant.

13. Delta Kappa Upsilon was founded in 1848. Zeta Psi began as Alpha Omega in 1850, Delta Upsilon as Equitable Fraternity in 1952, Phi Delta Theta as Logania in 1882, Alpha Tau Omega as Beta Upsilon in 1881, Lambda Chi Alpha as the Colby Commons Club in 1912, Kappa Delta Rho in 1818, Tau Delta Phi as Gamma Phi Epsilon in 1932, and Pi Lambda Phi as Beta Chi in 1957.
Trustees agreed, but they were determined to keep them on a tight leash. The College would lend each of the corporations half the building costs, but the houses would be built on College land, with deeds that gave the College ownership if they should cease to exist. The seemingly harmless caveat simplified matters when the day came that they all closed at once.

A second condition was not benign at all. On most campuses fraternity members dine together. Sharing meals is at the center of the bonding experience, and bonding is at the core of fraternities. Delta Kappa Upsilon (DKE), Phi Delta Theta (PDT), and Kappa Delta Rho (KDR) had dining rooms in their houses in town. The rest ate at local boardinghouses. The new houses, trustees said, would have no kitchens. Members would eat at the common trough, in Roberts Union. The decision made the Hill fraternities different from the very beginning.

Fraternity house construction had to wait for the war. In the pause there were further doubts. At the 1943 Commencement meeting of the board, Dr. F. T. Hill inquired into “the possible desirability of eliminating these [fraternity] organizations.”14 Another committee was formed, and after a daylong meeting at the Eastland Hotel in Portland that October, the conclusion and conditions were the same as before. Although the estimated cost of building a house had risen through the war from $45,000 to $100,000, by 1948 Fraternity Row had begun. Eight houses were built between 1948 (DKE and ATO) and 1967 (KDR), and for hundreds of men in that period, fraternity life was at the center of their Colby experience. There was value in the growth and development that came from fraternal membership, and many lives and careers were improved by the leadership skills they acquired. Fond college memories and long friendships were created by the intimacy and support of the brotherhood. Despite the good, fraternities could not shake the ageless, nagging issues of discrimination, exclusivity, and sexism, all part of the very epoxy that held the fraternal orders together. As society and cultural values changed, the Greeks could not keep up. Even through the glory decades brothers often had to circle the wagons to fend off mounting critics, including fellow students.

At Colby, there was never any systematic fraternity discrimination on the basis of race or religion. There were few minorities in the first place, and when time came to fight the racist policies of national organizations, local chapters joined the fray against them. With the student body centered in urban Massa-

14. The proximity of Hill’s College Avenue home (later the Salvation Army headquarters) may have diminished his affection for fraternities, but more likely his opposition was philosophical.
chusetts, it made no sense to discriminate against Catholics, and after World War I, when the national hierarchy called for the exclusion of Jews, the Colby chapters ignored them. (When Jewish students formed Tau Delta Phi in 1918, the faculty ruled its members could not be chosen “on religious or racial lines.”)

Fraternities and sororities did, however, discriminate in more general ways. Members were chosen in secret, with selections based on little more than the whimsy. For freshmen looking in from the outside, the exercise of inclusion and exclusion had nothing to do with any known criteria and everything to do with whether or not someone liked you. On a small campus where Greeks dominated social life, the pain of rejection was magnified. Making matters worse, fraternities had squatters’ rights on prime real estate, the likes of which were not available to the rejected men—or to any women at all. Sororities, with fewer members and no houses, had a lower profile. Some said the sisters were tossed out with the bathwater when the Greek system was abandoned. It wasn’t true. They too were single sex, and controlled by national organizations whose charters were often at odds with local principles of decisionmaking. And in the matter of exclusivity their behavior was the same. Each annual pledge season reaped a full share of women who suffered at being turned down. Deans and faculty members, unable to make things right, could only hand out tissues and fend off angry parents.

Most early fraternities had been founded as literary societies. Teachers drilled students in classes by day, and students gathered to read papers by themselves at night. Teaching methods changed, and the literary societies evolved into social clubs and bastions of after-class parties. In his “Certain Proposals” paper, fodder for the 1966 Colby Congress, Strider urged stronger ties between a “rather barren” social life and the intellectual pursuits of students. He predicted fraternities had a “limited future” unless they helped make the connection. Students began to speak out as well. At a 1968 Alumni Weekend seminar, Robert French ’70 called the fraternity system “alien” to the intellectual life of the College and recommended that “serious thought” be given “to executing a change in the social structure of the College.” As SAT scores rose, the indictment of being anti-intellectual was getting louder. By 1970 Strider was publicly asking “if the time-honored exclusiveness” of the fraternities and sororities was any longer “a relevant part of college life.”

With some radical adjustment, fraternities might have survived, but by the end of the 1960s chapters began to devour themselves. The slide began with the antiestablishment fervor that swept campuses during the Vietnam War, when nothing (except perhaps the evil administration) was more entrenched and established than the craggy old fraternities. New crops of entering fresh-
men began to see Greek membership as an alternative, no longer a single, almighty goal, and students began making rooming choices based upon lifestyle preferences. Housing on the Hill had always been eclectic—big and small, old and new, near and far—and when twenty-four-hour dormitory visiting privileges were granted in 1970, fraternity houses were no longer the only places with relaxed rules. Two years later true coed living multiplied the opportunities for social life. The dormitories, including the roomy new Hillside dorms, began to look better than the aging houses, where membership losses had begun to translate into deferred maintenance and shabbiness.

As fraternity beds began to empty, the cost was borne not solely by the corporations but by other students as well. Unlike most colleges where fraternities border the campus and are autonomous, at Colby they were an essential part of the housing stock. Annual budgets relied on every bed being filled. College officials met a half-dozen times with fraternity members and their alumni prudential committees to try to stem the exodus. The honored tradition of strict rushing and pledging rules was abandoned. New members could be recruited at any time. Fraternity leaders were supplied lists of new freshmen in the summer. In most cases, if men wanted to join all they had to do was ask. Brothers who wanted to live outside the houses were required to get written permission from the fraternity, and in 1971 the dean of students agreed to assign transfer students to fill the empty fraternity beds. 15

Nothing seemed to work, and in 1972 the Alumni Council formed an all-fraternity committee. Its recommendation, approved by the board, said each house would have to achieve 80 percent of its housing capacity. Missing the target would bring probation, and a second year of failure would result in the building's being taken for dormitory use. The capacity of the eight houses was 260. 16 In 1972–73 occupancy was 218 (171 members, 47 nonmembers). To make up the difference the College rented off-campus facilities for forty nonfraternity men. The next year fraternities opened with 206 residents, the lowest occupancy since all the houses had been open.

Through the period, alumni support dwindled. The cultural sea change of the 1960s had turned away many of them. They would return for Homecoming with memories of standing around the fireplaces with crew cuts and in

15. The agreement was rescinded the following year. The hapless transfer men were not generally welcomed. One was assaulted.

16. The ninth fraternity, Pi Lambda Phi, had no house of its own. Its members resided in Chaplin Hall where vacancies in their assigned space were automatically filled by the housing office.
sport coats, singing college songs and drinking beer. Now they discovered long hair, tie-dyed T-shirts, acid rock, and pot. The only thing that hadn’t changed was the beer. When time came to convene the prudential committees to plan a resurrection, several chapters had to scurry around to find alumni volunteers. The Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC), founded as a governing body in 1938, had been dead since 1970, when it met only once, and then without a quorum. The abandonment of rushing and pledging rules, the relaxing of regulations, and the broadening of the social scene left the council with little to do. Its successor, the Presidents’ Council, fared no better. The national organizations were no help at all. The bulwark fraternities were in the south, still strong and traditional. Agents coming north found themselves in a strange land. Their pleadings seemed like Greek to most members, who treated the traveling secretaries as annoying bill collectors.17

By 1977 empty beds were costing the College $200,000 in annual lost revenue, and qualified admissions applicants were being turned down for lack of a place to put them. The eight fraternities had accrued an annual operating deficit of $56,000, and their collective debt to the College was broaching a half-million. Nervous trustees asked Strider for a full review, and he asked the dean of students, Earl Smith, to prepare it. The report was gloomy. Over the previous four years there had been an average of thirty-eight empty fraternity beds. Five houses had bounced on and off membership probation. Alpha Tau Omega (ATO) was going under. With only nine members and a minimum requirement of twenty-one, ATO had become the first Colby fraternity to accept women. Three occupied the deserted housemother’s suite in 1976-77. The next year the entire third floor was to be given over to women, and eleven had signed up. The prudential committee despaired and asked the College to run the place through 1977-78. Since 1973 the College had required the houses to meet state fire codes with alarm systems, emergency lighting, and stairwell enclosures. None had complied. Regular deferred maintenance—wiring, roofs, woodwork, chimneys, and bricks—was piling up.

Social misconduct was always at the top of the public list of fraternity indictments, but on the campus authorities knew there would be plenty of mischief in any population of eighteen to twenty-one-year-olds, fraternities or not. The root of disruptive behavior was alcohol. Even so, the majority of Student Judicial Board cases involved fraternity men. Hazing, the unique province of the Greeks, continued despite state laws and prohibiting College rules.

17. Ten members of Lambda Chi Alpha (LCA) were thrown out of the chapter house following the assault of a traveling secretary in 1978.
At the end of his report Smith recommended that “all fraternities at Colby be abolished.” With Smith’s unsolicited advice removed, Strider forwarded the report to the trustees. The board was not far distant, in time or temper, from the one that had voted to reject the Nunez Proposal, which dealt merely with discriminatory practices. Its membership was still filled with fraternity supporters who would have been apoplectic at the idea of abolishing them. Instead, they fumed about the safety deficiencies and promptly advanced the houses $75,000 each to make improvements. (Two months later ten women died in a dormitory fire at Providence College.)

When Cotter arrived in the fall of 1979, PDT and Delta Upsilon (DU) had failed to reach minimum capacity for two years running but were allowed to continue. Smith had launched three task forces to consider the overall residential life and the advising programs. As part of his “wait and see” promise, the president called for the development of fraternity guidelines. How could the organizations live up to expectations, he reasoned, if they didn’t know what the expectations were? Trustee Kevin Hill ’50 (Zeta Psi), nephew of F. T. Hill, who had questioned the need for Colby fraternities thirty-five years before, chaired a committee that worked eighteen months putting them together.

The renewed fraternity discussion brought the general student population into the fray. In the fall of 1980, on the eve of homecoming weekend, an Echo commentary blistered the fraternity system as “discriminatory and elitist,” and called on the College to make their houses available to all students. The authors, seniors Jane Eklund and Whit Symmes, began a “Ban Frat Row” campaign. That spring, the Student Affairs Committee of the College, acting on a recommendation of the residential life task force, proposed a statement of philosophy blithely calling for equal access to all housing, regardless of race or sex. Race once again wasn’t an issue, but sexual integration was another matter. Beleaguered IFC president Douglas Terp ’84 said the problem was not the principle of women in fraternities, but in getting everybody to buy in. Few women were interested in joining fraternities, and few men were eager to have them. Cotter appointed a Select Committee on Housing to figure things out. Robert McArthur (philosophy) was chair until he became dean of admissions and trustee Hill took over.

The guidelines went into effect in June 1981. Standards were set for membership numbers, academic performance, financial health, social service, building

18. Strider was right. A dean of students should not offend an important segment of the student body, least of all that segment that brought him the most daily business.
maintenance, safety, and housekeeping. There would be inspections and report cards. Everybody signed off: the barely breathing IFC, the prudential committees, the student affairs committees of the College and the board, and the board itself. That fall, the president and others met with each house president and its prudential committee to explain things. A budget workshop was held for the chapter house treasurers.

At the end of 1982, new dean of students Janice Seitzinger wrote a report on how the fraternities were faring under the guidelines. Her inch-thick report card showed that while some houses had improved (the revival of ATO was a marvel), on balance things remained bleak. There were still empty beds (fifty), and four of the houses were on probation for falling below the minimum occupancy requirement. The all-fraternity GPA average (2.6) was only a bit below the all-student average (2.8), but KDR and DKE were in serious academic trouble. Some inroads had been made in catching up with budget deficits and maintenance, but most were still in the hole. McArthur, now in the admissions business, wrote a piece for Seitzinger's report and cited the findings of a recent visiting committee to the admissions office, which said consideration should be given to "admitting women to fraternities, as a minimum, and abolishing the fraternity system as the other extreme."19

In April 1983, with KDR suspended, DKE on probation for guideline deficiencies, and TDP in deep trouble for a well-publicized incident of sexual misconduct, Hill's Select Committee on Housing made its report. By a vote of 6 to 2 it affirmed the right of every student to have access to all types of housing, and recommended fraternity members be evicted so houses could be turned into dorms. Six people weren't nearly enough to steer the fate of the long-established fraternities, and in June board chair Bullock named a seventeen-member trustee commission to make "a comprehensive inquiry into residential and social life."20 He acknowledged the timing was driven by the "burning issues" surrounding fraternities, expressed in the charge itself, which called for

19. McArthur cited instances of campus tours where "prospective applicants and their parents had been yelled at from the windows of fraternity houses, including phrases such as, 'Go to Bowdoin' and worse."

20. Members were President Cotter; trustees Ridgely Bullock '55, board chair; Lawrence Pugh '56 (DKE), commission chair; Anne Bondy '46 (Sigma Kappa), Levin Campbell, Kevin Hill '56 (ZP), Wilson Piper '39 (DU), and Richard Schmaltz '62 (DU); Alumni Council members David Marson '48 (TDP) and Josiah Drummond Jr. '64 (DKE); faculty members Arthur Champlin (ZP), Jane Hunter, L. Sandy Maisel, and Robert Reuman; parent Sylvia Sullivan '53 (Delta Delta Delta); and students Sheila Ryan '84, Patricia Shelton '84, Douglas Terp '84 (TDP and IFC president), and Gregory Walsh '84.
an inquiry into “whether fraternities and sororities are still appropriate for the College.” Greeks were well represented on the commission. Eleven were fraternity or sorority members.

Lawrence Pugh ’56 (DKE) took the bold assignment as chair. Already an iconic Colby success story, Pugh had worked his way to the presidency of Samsonite Luggage and was now chair and CEO of the V. F. Corporation, the world’s largest apparel firm, which he would soon lead into the ranks of the Fortune 500 companies. A stout Colby supporter and deft consensus builder, he was the perfect choice, but for him and other alumni members the assignment carried the risk of losing long friendships. Student members flirted with campus recriminations.

There were 254 fraternity members in the student body when the commission began its work that fall; 182 lived in the houses, the rest (including nineteen members of Pi Lambda Phi) in the dorms or in town. Of the five sororities that had come to the Hill, only two were left: Sigma Kappa and Chi Omega. Membership names and numbers were private, but by now the Greeks represented less than 15 percent of the student body.

Sworn to keep their minds open and their thoughts to themselves, commissioners set out in three directions for the most comprehensive inquiry the College had ever made. Subcommittees conducted a general alumni survey, held public hearings, and visited other campuses in quest of information and ideas. Separate fall polls of faculty and students affirmed a split that had been there all along. Three-quarters of the faculty wanted fraternities abolished; three-quarters of the students wanted to keep them. Although the results were not surprising, fraternity support from women students was at least curious. Leaving aside the exclusion of women from the fraternities and their prize housing, the bill of particulars in the case against fraternities also included charges of harassing treatment of women in the context of social events and in their passage along Frat Row. (A most notorious incident involved a woman captured in a net thrown from a second-floor fraternity porch.) Although individual women spoke against fraternities, the collective Women’s Group—otherwise never loath to cry out for important changes for women—remained silent.

At the end of their work, the three subcommittees filed lengthy reports with recommendations that equivocated on the central question of whether fraternities should stay or go but included suggestions for improving residential life. Threaded throughout were calls for more social space away from the fraternity houses, stronger ties between the intellectual and social lives of students, reforms of the confused student judicial system, and improvements in dining services.
The surveys subcommittee, chaired by Hill, sent a questionnaire to 3,800 students, faculty, staff, and a sample of alumni. Nearly one thousand replied. Members also conducted personal interviews with key campus and alumni figures, and read some ninety letters that came over the transom (90 percent from men, 90 percent of them in favor of keeping the fraternities). Trustee Anne Bondy led a subcommittee on visits to ten other campuses, and trustee Wilson Piper chaired the group that held open hearings in five cities and, for two days, on the campus.¹¹

Fraternities had been on their best behavior since the close scrutiny began, but as the investigation drew to a close, members sensed the mood swinging against them. At the eleventh hour, only days before the commission report was to be issued, Lambda Chi Alpha rediscovered its roots, and put up posters advertising the creation of a new literary society and plans to provide the place “where the community can meet in an intellectual yet casual atmosphere.” The suggested reading for the first meeting was George Orwell’s 1984. Alas, senior members may have forgotten that the work had already been assigned and discussed as their freshman book of the year.

Cotter did not tip his hand until the commission’s penultimate meeting in November, and then his advocacy was more for a new system of residential commons than for the necessarily coupled step of abolishing fraternities. He knew and liked the house system at Harvard, and the commons plan was largely his invention. All but one commissioner agreed it was time to replace fraternities with the broader scheme.²²

Trustee and parent Levin Campbell (Eleanor ’81) wrote the final report. As chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, he knew the ingredients of a persuasive brief, and his skill shone through the document that would be, for most alumni and others, the only thorough explanation of the


²². The outlier, David Marson, wrote a “concurring opinion” in which he said he would like to give the guidelines more time, but as chair of the Alumni Council he went on to urge those who shared his view “to actively support and serve the College.”
decision they would ever read. The punch line was on the first page: “After thorough appraisal . . . we recommend, sadly, but with great conviction, that Colby withdraw recognition from its fraternities and sororities.” The report went on to outline the skeleton of a new residential commons plan, and discuss the commission’s analysis of the fraternity question. It described several options that had been considered and why they were rejected.23

Lost in the shadows and unrelated to either the fraternities or the anticipated Commons were recommendations having to do with institutional values and traditions, diversity, the orientation of new students, greater faculty involvement, the student judicial system, health services, the College chaplain program, and programs to stem the abuse of alcohol.

When trustees met in Boston for a final vote on Saturday, January 14, 1984, the commission’s recommendations were discussed for more than two hours before being unanimously approved by secret ballot. Fraternities and sororities would close at the end of the coming spring term. Members could continue their affiliations, but no new members could join. The new Residential Commons Plan would be put into place, and the trustees would pony up for a new student union that students would help design.

The report was mailed to all alumni, and on Sunday morning Cotter, Pugh, and Bullock met with fraternity officers to give them the news. That afternoon, as the three entered the Chapel for an all-campus meeting, they were greeted with hisses, catcalls, and a shower of confetti made from hastily shredded copies of the report. “Look what you’ve done,” someone yelled from the balcony. “Our fraternities were like a tree, nurtured and fed for years, and as soon as a few branches begin to die, you cut it down.” Of course, that is exactly what had happened. Not everyone was angry. Some braved the heat of the moment to praise the new plan, and to ask questions. Cotter urged everyone to help make it work. Toward evening, as Bullock’s private jet circled the campus on its way south, the campus was abuzz. Spontaneous small parties of celebration were held in the south side dormitories, and in the north a bonfire was started in the middle of Frat Row. A crowd began to gather. The fire, fueled by wooden shutters, beds (presumably the ones that were empty) and other furniture, including a piano from Zeta Psi, began to grow. The fire department was called. So were the deans. When Smith and Seitzinger arrived they en-

23. Other considerations were: press for coeducation (as with Trinity, Bowdoin, and Amherst), take some of the houses and make them College-run coeducational dormitories, acquire all of the houses and let fraternities and sororities go on as special interest groups, and allow the Greek organizations to exist simply as extracurricular clubs.
couraged the firemen to let the bonfire burn itself out. Fewer trips to the dump would be needed in the spring.

The angry scene was surreal, the blaze at once a vent for disappointment and anger and at the same time a defiant last gasp of the dinosaur the grand old fraternities had become. The next morning photographs of the bonfire appeared in the nation's newspapers alongside the story of the first fraternity closings since Williams had abolished them twenty years before.24

COMMON SENSE

Many had predicted ruin for the College if the Greeks were disbanded. (A few prayed for it.) They said students would become divided and troublesome, admissions applications would drop, and alumni support would wither. The skeptics and the ill-wishers were wrong. They had miscalculated the resilience and optimism of undergraduates, the preferences of coming crops of new students, and the unshakable devotion of alumni, even of those who hated to see the fraternities go.

The commission had already named the new Commons for the founding president Jeremiah Chaplin, the martyr Elijah Lovejoy, the first woman student Mary Low, and the “father of Mayflower Hill” Franklin Johnson. Residence halls were geographically grouped in the Commons, each with some four hundred students and a dining hall. More than 160 students signed up to serve on the Residential Commons Advisory Board (RCAB) and its seven committees that worked through the spring, creating a new student-faculty Judicial Board, rewriting the Student Government constitution to make room for Commons governing boards, and engaging students in the management of the dining halls.25

Two key elements of the envisioned system fell apart in an instant. The architects wanted sophomores to choose a Commons and stay put until graduation. They also wanted students to take evening and weekend meals in their own dining halls. RCAB wanted none of it. The choice of campus housing was too varied to have anyone saddled to a single building for three years, and students had come to like grazing among the dining halls. Cotter and the deans acceded.

24. Trustees at Amherst College followed suit a month later.
25. Other committees delved into the arcane system of student room selection, overall social life, faculty-student interaction, class and College identification, and orientation programs.

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Much attention was focused on the new student center. Some thought the construction could be tacked onto Roberts Union (perhaps a “bubble” on the backside) but Roberts had already failed as a gathering place. It was not in the center, and furthermore, it abutted the well-stereotyped Frat Row. It was agreed the new building would go in the middle of campus, east of the chapel, across the McCann Road from the Lovejoy Building. Jefferson Riley of the Essex, Connecticut, firm of Moore, Grover & Harper (later Centerbrook), was principal architect. The patient and clever Riley moved his office onto the campus and worked with students through the days and nights until Commencement, preparing plans for the new $3.5 million facility. Construction began that fall.

Enthusiasm was not universal. Labeling the commission’s work a “witch hunt,” the campus Coalition for Fraternities organized to fight the decision, but its call for a student boycott of the Commons planning was not contagious. (More than thirty members of the Greek societies were on RCAB.) In February an alumni group, including a handful from other colleges, formed the Committee on New England Campus Life. Using chapter mailing lists, it sent a letter to all fraternity and sorority alumni expressing “shock, anger and frustration” at the abolition decision. The harsh broadside placed the blame on Cotter, claiming he had made fraternities a “scapegoat” for campus problems of vandalism and alcohol abuse, and asked alumni to send money to mount a fight. Some recipients forwarded their letters to the College, warning of trouble. The committee also wrote board chair Bullock, urging him to have the trustees reconsider. Bullock obliged, and in April wrote back to say the board had voted again and was “firmly and unanimously committed to the January decision,” and there was “no possibility” that fraternities or sororities would be retained.

The College proceeded to press the fraternity corporations to fulfill the terms of their original contracts. The near uniform agreements said if any chapter ceased to exist, the fair market value of the buildings, less any debt, would be put into an endowed fund for College purposes (most were scholarships) honoring the fraternity. All of the national organizations except Zeta Psi respected the trustee decision. Local chapters of DKE and ATO quickly signed final agreements. In May, days before Commencement, Zeta Psi, on behalf of all of the others except DKE, asked Superior Court Justice Robert Browne for a preliminary injunction to keep the College from following

26. Outside appraisers placed values on the “row” houses ranging from $191,300 (DU) to $200,000 (Phi Delt). The newer KDR house was appraised at $607,000.

THE 1980s
through on the closings. The motion was denied. Browne said it wasn’t an urgent matter and that the College had “good reason” for its action. LCA, TDP, PDT, and DU pressed on for the permanent injunction.

Most of the stuffing went out of the fraternities’ legal case that same month when, in an odd coincidence, the Maine Supreme Court found in favor of the Greeks in their four-year-old property tax fight against the city. The fraternities had been paying taxes under protest since 1980 when the city claimed their buildings were privately owned and not protected under the College’s general tax exemption. The Superior Court agreed with the city; on appeal, however, the Supreme Court overturned the ruling saying that the College owned the fraternity buildings and had “an absolute option to turn these buildings at any time into dormitories.” The Court wrote: “The integration of the fraternity houses geographically, structurally, architecturally, and historically into the development scheme of the College and its campus is strong indication of Colby’s ownership status respecting these buildings.” The tax money would have to be returned. In the confusion over the status of fraternities, City Solicitor Bill Lee didn’t know where to send the $84,404 refund. Superior Court Justice Donald Alexander ruled that although the tax bills had been paid by the College, the money belonged to the fraternities. It all came out in the wash.

In its tax decision the Supreme Court had all but ruled on the new fraternity closing case (Chi Realty Corp. v Colby) where the plaintiffs’ principal hope rested on turning the tax case finding on its head. Where fraternities wanted to say they were part of the College in order to share the tax exemption, soon the fraternity plaintiffs would try to claim the College had no ownership at all. In Superior Court, Justice Alexander denied the permanent injunction on the closings, and on its own, Zeta Psi appealed to the Maine Supreme Court. Two years later (August 15, 1986) in a 4 to 1 ruling in favor of the College, the high court said that the Colby decision “to more fully integrate the housing units into the academic program of the college was one way in which the president and trustees discharged their duty to evaluate the policies and to change them from time to time to achieve the educational goals of the college.”

27. The College’s annual budget for legal services was getting bigger by leaps and bounds. Early in his tenure Cotter scoured the state for a College attorney. With the help of John Cornell ’65, chair of the Alumni Council and later a trustee, he found Hugh G. E. MacMahon, a specialist in higher education law, of the Portland firm of Drummond Woodsum and MacMahon. MacMahon was the lead attorney in the fraternity cases and, with his colleague, Jerrol Crouter ’78, continued to provide legal counsel for the College.
Justice Alexander, who in 1998 was named to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, presided over several of the Superior Court fraternity cases. As a student at Bowdoin in the early 1960s, he had for a time been a fraternity man. It was then ten years before Bowdoin became coeducational, and 90 percent of the student body belonged to fraternities. Uncomfortable with the "Animal House" atmosphere and other issues, Alexander resigned his fraternity membership in his junior year and become a maverick independent.

By the summer of 1984 plans for the Commons were mostly finished, and work began converting the fraternity houses into dormitories. In a final act of defiance, some houses were left in sambles. Truckloads of books went back to the library, and cartons of catalogued old exams were carted to the dump. Electricians removed pennies from the fuse boxes (and a few bags of marijuana from behind the light switches at ATO), and the buildings were rewired, repainted, and refurnished. When the buildings were spruced up that fall the only clue as to their former life came on damp days when the places gave up the unmistakable odor of stale beer.

The rest of the campus was tidied up as well. Cotter, his reputation for tidiness already legendary, was behind it. Broken windowpanes and empty beer cans in the bushes annoyed him. The grounds crew took to making early morning patrols, picking up trash before he could see it. Budget-tender Nicholson liked to joke that any one of the Cotters’ frequent evening campus strolls could cost the College $10,000 in improvements. When the Student Center was finished and the McCann Road repaved, Cotter thought the bright yellow curbs were offensive. He ordered them painted over, in gray. No one could tell parking wasn’t allowed. Alan Lewis, a Mainer through and through, came on as director of the physical plant department in 1984. Like his predecessors, George Whalon and Ansel Grindall, he was popular with those who worked for him, and they did twice the work of an ordinary crew. The College soon had no deferred maintenance at all.

That fall the College opened without crowding for the first time in years.


29. The following year a whopping entering class of 480 freshmen overfilled campus beds by forty.
All 1,558 beds were full; 138 lived off campus. Half the faculty had signed on as faculty advisers to the Commons, and some two hundred students applied for positions on the dormitory staff. More than a thousand students voted in campuswide elections, choosing the 38 members of the new Board of Governors (there were 105 candidates), and a string of officers for each of the dorms. Nearly half of all students ran for one office or another. The election of women to leadership posts was sudden and never again remarkable.

The following spring, on Alumni Weekend (June 8, 1985), the eight fraternity houses were renamed and rededicated in a two-hour series of ceremonies at KDR and up and down old Frat Row. The names were taken from recommendations of the corporations of the several fraternities and sororities:

Drummond (Delta Kappa Upsilon)
Josiah Hayden Drummond ’46 (LL.D, 1871) was founder of the DKE chapter, Colby’s first fraternity. Attorney general of Maine (1856–64), he was a Colby trustee and chairman of the board. His family held the record for having the most Colby alumni. (His namesake, Josiah Drummond ’64 was a member of the trustee commission.)

Goddard-Hodgkins (Alpha Tau Omega)
Cecil Goddard ’29, a retired local insurance executive, was Colby’s first alumni secretary and founder of the Alumni Council. Theodore Hodgkins ’25, a former trustee and benefactor, had been president of Forster Manufacturing Company in Wilton.

Grossman (Tau Delta Phi)
A former trustee and a charter overseer, Nissie Grossman ’32 was CEO of the building supply company that bore his name. In 1976 he established the Grossman Professorship of Economics.

Perkins-Wilson (Phi Delta Theta)
Norman “Cy” Perkins ’32, a stellar athlete as an undergraduate, was a beloved ten-year coach of men’s cross-country and track teams. C. Malcolm Wilson ’33, also a standout athlete, was a longtime fraternity adviser and member of the Alumni Council. Each had received the prestigious Condon Medal at his graduation.

Pierce (Zeta Psi)
A former trustee, T. Raymond Pierce, 1898, was the largest benefactor of the ZP house.

Piper (Delta Upsilon)
A trustee, Wilson C. Piper ’39 (LL.D. ’75) was founder and longtime president of the Boston Colby Alumni Club. He had taken a major
role in every capital fund campaign since his graduation and was a recipient of the Ernest C. Marriner Distinguished Service Award.

Treworgy (Lambda Chi Alpha)
As president of his fraternity, Charles Treworgy '22, a native of Surry, Maine, died in a vain attempt to save four of his fraternity brothers who died in a fraternity house fire on the North Campus in December 1922.

Williams (Kappa Delta Rho)
Long-serving professor and administrative vice president (and later a trustee) Ralph S. Williams '35 was instrumental in arranging for the construction and financing of the KDR house, the last fraternity building on the Hill.

Many public rooms in the fraternity houses were named to honor distinguished alumni brothers as well. In Runnals Union the marching dignitaries dedicated the Chi Omega sorority room to Mary Rollins Millett '30, widow of the beloved alumni secretary, Ellsworth "Bill" Millett; and the Sigma Kappa room to the late Frances Mann Hall, 1877, who with Mary Low, Louise Coburn, Ida Fuller, and Elizabeth Houg founded the alpha chapter at Colby in 1874. A plaque was installed at the union entrance, marking these two chapters as well as Delta Delta Delta and Alpha Delta Phi, which once occupied rooms in the building. Additionally, the main lounge of Chaplin Hall was named in honor of Thomas Gordon '73 and in memory of Kenneth Thompson '63 and John Bernier '61 for their service to the Pi Lambda Phi fraternity chapter, which was never able to build a house on the Hill.

The Colby 2000 Campaign stood at $17 million when the fraternities were closed, and the goal of $25.5 million was increased another $3 million to pay for the Student Center and cover the Commons plan extras. Trustees passed the hat to post a $1 million one-for-two challenge to meet the added needs. Although trustees feared bitterness over the fraternity decision would impede fundraising, there was a glimmer of optimism. The national economy began to improve, and there was evidence that alumni, writ large, were not going to punish the College for making the change. Worries over alumni reaction and the needs of the ongoing campaign had prompted an all-out effort to improve giving. The popular Sid Farr returned to his former post as alumni secretary, and Penn Williamson became director of development until Calvin Mackenzie left the government department to become vice president in 1985.

Mackenzie's organizational skills and his appeal as an academic broadened...
outside support. Annual gifts the year before the fraternity decision were $2.6 million, of which $615,000 was from alumni. By 1986, annual giving had nearly doubled ($4.6 million), including $717,000 from alumni. The participation numbers took a brief dip, but the amount given went up. Many wrote to say they first gave or gave more to compensate for those who were disgruntled and didn’t give at all. The Class of 1985 began a tradition of making a senior class gift to the annual fund and nearly half the members pitched in. In 1988 alumni giving topped a million for the first time and increased every year thereafter.

Worries that Colby’s popularity with prospective students would diminish without fraternities proved unfounded as well. Robert McArthur, standing in as admissions dean, said quality of life was an issue of growing importance to high school students and that their counselors saw the change “as an indication of Colby’s commitment to improving residential life.” In 1985, the first full admissions cycle after the decision, application numbers went up by nearly one hundred (to 3,174) over the previous year, and they continued to climb steadily until 1989 when they totaled 3,547 before the full impact of the declining college-age population hit. While there were undoubtedly students who wanted fraternities and did not apply, of those who applied and entered, many said their choice was based in part on the College’s new, fraternity-free system of residential life. SAT scores went up, geographic diversity broadened, and student retention improved. Volunteerism and attendance at campus events increased as well. A student survey showed that 63 percent felt that with continuing adjustments the Commons system was going to work.

In 1985 McArthur returned to full-time teaching and Parker Beverage took his place. An Augusta, Maine, native, Beverage was a Dartmouth graduate and former associate admissions dean at Stanford University. Despite a growing staff of aides and increasing numbers of applicants, he read every admissions file, and years later could remember the names of and details about almost every Colby student he ever admitted.

The new Student Center opened in December 1985. It had been built in 437 days, a pace that pleased Cotter. Architecture Magazine called it “one of the most engaging and delightful new buildings in New England” and “one of the best—and one of the most student sensitive—buildings of its kind anywhere.” It won one of two architectural prizes in a competition of some one hundred entries sponsored by the American School and University Magazine.30

30. The building generated so much foot traffic that for safety reasons the city and the College agreed to close the McCann Road as a throughway in 1987.
In the spring, more than 750 filled the large Page Commons Room to hear the distinguished Holocaust survivor and writer Elie Wiesel, who that same year won the Nobel Peace Prize.

For many whose Colby experiences were enriched by ties to the fraternal groups, memories of the older system would remain bright and positive; still, after the closings most accepted the decision and moved on. Yet there were some who refused to give up. Underground groups calling themselves fraternities plagued the College into the next decade.

Long before they were closed, several of the established fraternities had evolved into dormitories for athletic teams: DKE, hockey; Lambda Chi, football; Zeta Psi, basketball. The postclosing imitations had few of the virtues of the originals and almost all of their vices: exclusivity, coercion, initiations, and hazing. Parents wrote anonymous letters, complaining their sons were being pressured to join the underground groups. The College advertised itself as being fraternity-free, they said, and the College had better keep its promise.

In 1986, during a routine dormitory inspection, officials discovered a pledge list marked LCA and a dues book for Zeta Psi. They were in plain sight, but when the dean's office set out to investigate, students on all sides yelped that their privacy rights had been abridged. (One filed a police report, charging the College with theft.) The students had a point. The deans backed off and pledged a review of search and seizure rules. The next year the newest Zeta dues payers, mostly basketball players, were caught stealing Christmas decorations in town. It was initiation hazing. They paid the piper in district court. On campus, amnesty was offered in return for a pledge to sever fraternity ties, once and for all. The formal surrender came at a hastily arranged ceremony in the basement coffee room of the Eustis Building. The solemnity of the occasion was the students' idea. Cotter was there, with a color guard of deans. As colleagues bit their lips and stared hard at their loafers, Dean McArthur gave a longish talk on the ancient origin of secret societies. When it was over, the students filed by an open, coffinlike trunk, depositing remnants of the chapter archives, bound for the national headquarters.

Thereafter, coaches made team members sign pledges swearing they would not perpetuate or join fraternities, and the next edition of the Student Handbook contained the caveat that anyone caught participating in fraternity activity would be subject to automatic suspension. There were some who weren't paying attention.

THE 1980s
The old cash register–maker IBM introduced the first personal computer in 1981. A good deal bigger than a breadbox, it ran on an operating system created by Bill Gates and a company with the funny name of Microsoft. Learning MS-DOS required instruction, and most folks clung to their familiar calculators and typewriters. Three years later when Apple Computer made the Macintosh, a friendly, magical mouse took center stage in the panoply of new technologies, seducing even the most timid and creating new academic opportunities that sent the College scurrying for money. In the span of a single decade, the campus was introduced to new and faster communication, easier methods to record and to create, and intriguing new ways to study the old subjects.

Welcoming the new age first required being open for business. Bill Cotter had been in the corner office only a few weeks when he inquired of a colleague where everyone went at noontime. They were off to lunch he was told, although in Maine some still called it “dinner.” Everything closed from noon to one or so, including the College switchboard, recently converted from spaghetti cord plug-ins to actual switches. Do you suppose, Cotter gently asked, people might be willing to stagger lunch times in order to keep the offices open, just in case someone called? It was a citified idea; but it made sense, and it was done.

When the decade turned and Ted Turner’s all-news, all-the-time CNN went on the air, Colby owned fourteen shared computer terminals. Sandy Maisel (government) was chair of a new ad hoc computer committee, charged with sorting out the growing demand for more. Long-range planning was impossible—even looking ahead two years was a stretch—but the committee was able to recommend that the goals for the Colby 2000 Campaign include a half-million dollars for computers. It wasn’t nearly enough, but it was a start. Going forward, the insatiable demands of new technology would eat a frightening, ever larger share of annual budgets.

As computers came into more common use some worried they would, Godzilla-like, rise up and devour the academic program. A task force of the Educational Policy Committee planned the defense, bravely setting a goal of “universal computer literacy” but insisting that computers would be only the

31. The switchboard had been covered by a succession of all-Maine women who answered the phone in the same clipped twang: “Kobe Kalige.” Callers from away often thought they’d gotten a wrong number.
means, not the ends, of learning. “Our approach,” Cotter underscored, “is to integrate computers into the liberal arts curriculum.” The College was not about to “bolt on” a separate computer science program, disconnected from the core mission. In fact, use of computers as an aid to instruction had already begun. By the mid-1970s, computers were being used in the natural sciences, and students in introductory psychology courses were marking test answers on IBM cards that could be sorted and scored within a day or two. Computer application beyond the sciences came, of all places, in philosophy and religion. Biblical scholar Thomas Longstaff and Thomas College mathematician Elizabeth Tipper began work on Colby’s first computer-produced book in 1975, created on the balky PDP 11 and published in 1978. For most others, the introduction of computers began with the expanding ability to store typed material on magnetic media—memory typewriters—and word processing. Although few were interested in learning how to operate the noisy machines, lots of people wanted the speedy, clean results. Faculty members and others queued up to get their words processed onto eight-inch floppy discs by overworked experts at a half-dozen sites around campus. Administrative Services Director Ken Gagnon offered a crash course on word processing but cautioned that the new machines would never replace typewriters, the machine of choice for making memos, letters, and short reports. Gradually, as personal computers were assigned according to painfully constructed priority lists, folks began to process their own words. Only then did typewriters, in vogue for more than a century, slowly become obsolete. Although computer neophytes at first kept the old machines close by—a hedge against both personal and equipment lapses—typewriters were soon relegated to the far corners of offices, and then to the dump.

In 1982 the College replaced the two PDP 11 minicomputers with a new PDP 11/44, using the original operating system designed around the inflexible BASIC language. More complex programs were developed on the still new and six times bigger VAX 11/780. Printing terminals could make 180 characters a second. That fall faculty members began receiving computer-generated student papers, the usual errors now cleverly hidden in the flawless, handsome type. That fall, the Lovejoy Fellow, West Virginia publisher William Chilton, predicted newspapers would be subsumed by television and its computerized offspring.

Electronic mail arrived on the Hill in the fall of 1983, barely ten years after


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its invention. Everyone got a colby.edu address whether they wanted it or not. The informality and ease of the new messaging did nothing to improve the use of the language, but it sped up the discussion and saved postage.\textsuperscript{34} Using e-mail had a learning curve. Novice users got confused, sometimes hitting the “send” button without first checking the “to” line. The subject of a slanderous message was occasionally also the unintended recipient, and the retelling of the mishap would bring gales of laughter to coffee rooms around campus. It wasn’t long before a Computer Ethics Subcommittee was making policy to safeguard the integrity of the network and promising banishment for anyone copying software, invading files, or sending obscene or threatening messages.

Oddly enough, e-mail arrived before the offices had their own telephone numbers. Direct Inward Dialing came in 1984, and with the soon-to-follow voice mail feature (Audix), also required lessons. The first FAX machine was not installed until 1988, and then only at the urging of board chair Bullock. After several campus huddles, it was agreed that a single machine would suffice. It was placed at the Eustis basement switchboard with Allen LaPan, one of the few who knew how to make it work.

When Apple set loose the mouse, Computer Center director Jonathan Allen worried that without some purchasing discipline the proliferation of incompatible machines would swamp both the budget and his five-person staff. (The multiple brands were also creating vast, unwieldy libraries of floppy discs.) He said the day was coming when there would be microcomputers on every desk and in every dorm room and the machines ought to match up. After testing the options (Apple, IBM, and AT & T’s entries, Data General and Tandy), in 1985 the committee chose the Mac as the single Colby platform. Those who wanted anything else would have to maintain it themselves.\textsuperscript{35}

Over that summer Seaverns Bookstore advertised 512K Macs and an Imagewriter for $2,392.20. Ninety students bought the package before school opened. A year later there were six hundred PCs on the campus. Students owned more than half of them. Bill Pottle, a one-man sales and service department at the bookstore, was relieved that two out of three purchasers actually knew how to use them. Students were in fact the fastest learners. In a short while, office staffs and faculty members were calling on student workers to solve their computer mysteries, and the College began to pay a premium

\textsuperscript{34} E-mail helped undermine the U.S. Postal Service. By 1985 the price of a first-class stamp rose to 22¢.

\textsuperscript{35} By 1998 the growing popularity of Windows machines forced a change of policy. Thereafter, computer services bought and supported both machines.
hourly wage for the most skilled among them. By the end of the decade, most entering students were computer savvy before they arrived.

The inner records of the College itself were trusted to the newest technology in 1987, when personnel and payroll data got plugged into the College Administrative and Records System (CARS). The earlier Wheaton Information System for Education (WISE), written in BASIC, was no longer being developed by its parent, Digital Equipment Corporation, and the PDP 11/44 was running day and night to keep it going. The new database management system, operating on UNIX, provided only the tools of a new system. Construction had to be done at home. Registrar George Coleman, who had been building his own student record system all along, worked with Beth Hallstrom (later Schiller), tweaking and tacking on features to make CARS do things it was never designed to do.

That same year the library began taking its ancient card catalogue system redundant and obsolete. Since 1976 librarians at Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin had allowed reciprocal book borrowing among faculty and students; in 1980 they began working with the University of Maine to develop a statewide library network. Ohio libraries had been automating and linking catalogues since the late 1960s; by the mid-1970s regional consortia, including one in New England, had formed a national network. Now the Maine college librarians were out looking for $1.5 million to install a computer-automated system that before decade’s end would double the number of titles immediately accessible on all of the campuses.

Aside from the growing number of technology firms, colleges constituted the fastest-growing segment of computer users in the country. In 1987 the Chronicle of Higher Education listed seventeen colleges where microcomputers were required or even supplied and seven other places, including Colby, where they were “strongly recommended.” Some of these colleges worried they had gone overboard and began to retreat. Students were using computers mainly for word processing, and as technology costs began to rise they were reluctant to require students to own “expensive typewriters.” There was concern at Colby as well, but by the end of the decade computers were being used in more than half of all courses, and a growing number of them required computer skills beyond the making of words. There was no turning back, even though technology expansion on the Hill carried the extra expense of putting the infrastructure underground. The College bought a mechanical trench-digger and plowed ahead, making intricate subsurface cobwebs of endless miles of conduit and wires. The sods barely healed before they were sliced up to make replacements: from twisted pair, to coaxial cable, and then to fiber
optics. (Only in the next decade, when most of the latest wiring was safely planted, was there talk of going wireless.)

The full force of the Internet did not come until the next decade, but its promise had been evident since 1985 when Steve Case unveiled the service America Online. In 1989 Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web while working at CERN, the European particle physics laboratory. Four years later Longstaff, by now chair of a permanent computer committee, worked with the computer center staff to create Colby’s first Internet pages to support his archaeological research.36 Anestes Fotiades ’89 soon became the College’s “Webmaster,” and by 1998 Colby’s Web site exceeded 30,000 pages served to a worldwide audience.

In ten years, the College budget for computers, related equipment, and salaries had jumped from $80,450 (1979–80) to $1,261,465 (1989–90). The support staff had grown from two to thirteen, and director Ray Phillips was able to report that almost every faculty member and fully a third of students had their own microcomputers—more than a thousand. Each one of the small machines had the same power as the mainframe computer that had served all members of the campus a mere eight years before.

**WORLDVIEW**

“Globalization” was a word in vogue. The end of the cold war and the rush of new technology brought an era of unmatched political and economic interdependence among nations; at home expanding minority populations were making the world seem smaller still. New college graduates were entering neighborhoods and workplaces vastly different from those their parents had known. Educators adjusted policies and programs to make them ready. Lessons were offered both in and out of class. The campus stood with the president to fight racism halfway around the globe, and foreign study opportunities were expanded to satisfy a growing student hunger to see the world. On the campus, a vow was made to make the racial and ethnic enrollment of entering classes more closely mirror the changing population of the country. It was an uphill struggle.

Colby was not immune to the prejudice that had triggered unrest and embarrassment on college campuses for years. On the weekend of Bill Cotter’s inau-

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36. John Beaulieu ’89 is believed to be the first to offer a computer bulletin board in Maine. In 1988 he began using a telephone modem to connect his Mac-based system with other computers.
guration someone scrawled “KKK” on a wall of the library. The ugly sign may even have been directed at him. His well-studied résumé was replete with evidence of his work for social justice, and his public pronouncements made clear his commitment to broader campus diversity.

Even when students behaved themselves, the general climate did not favor more diversity. The national battle for equality had long been out of the headlines, and there was a vacuum of leadership at the top. President Ronald Reagan, first elected in 1980, opposed the Equal Rights Amendment and turned a deaf ear to the demands of civil rights proponents. Local support was thin as well. As the admissions bar kept rising, the number of enrolled area students went down. Although it wasn’t true, many thought that accepting more minorities would result in lost places for others. In fact, the minority community hadn’t yet taken many places at all. Ten years had passed since black students occupied the chapel demanding that their numbers increase. When the 1980s began, Colby’s ALANA enrollment stood at an anemic forty-nine in a student body of 1,660 (only 2.9 percent). The newest freshman class had no black Americans at all. Only eight were in the upper classes.

The renewed commitment was not driven by guilt. Colby had never discriminated. Instead, Cotter said colleges had a “national obligation to help empower minority youth” and “a strong self-interest in providing each student the wonderfully enriching encounters . . . with those whose backgrounds are different from our own.” The effort was also driven by simple reality. By the end of the decade minorities were set to dominate the nation’s largest public high schools (72 percent in Boston) and to keep growing. Through the 1980s the U.S. population would grow by 72 million. Whites would constitute barely 6 percent of the increase. The greatest jump would be among Asians (107 percent), followed by Hispanics (53 percent), and African Americans (13 percent). Standing still on the admissions front would amount to falling behind.

The board led the way, setting admissions goals that would match the student body with the racial mix of the nation’s new college-going population. Most on the campus agreed, but the work to create a more inclusive and inviting campus climate was still plagued by displays of racism. The hateful incidents (always the work of one or two; never a group) would invariably be followed by reinvigorated efforts to educate, although most of the preaching was to the choir. One generation of students would no more than complete their

37. Maine students constituted barely 10 percent of the class that entered in 1980, the lowest percentage ever.
38. African American, Latin American, Asian American, Native American.
tolerance lessons when a new class of freshmen, nearly a third of the resident population, would arrive with their baggage of ignorance and racism.

The academic year 1983–84 was devoted to “Celebrating Diversity and Confronting Intolerance.” Academic departments and student groups mounted lectures and programs centered on the theme. Seelye Bixler’s beloved book of the year program, dormant for a decade, had been resurrected the year before with Garry Wills’s The Kennedy Imprisonment. The next theme-year book, assigned to entering freshmen and encouraged reading for everyone, was Hunger of Memory, the autobiographical account of Richard Rodriguez’s childhood in an immigrant home. Thereafter, the annual book became a device for enlightenment on the broad topic of minority issues. The choice of each book included the caveat that the author had to come to the campus and speak. Although generally successful, the scheme closed options on much of the world’s great literature whose authors had not only chosen different topics but were also decidedly dead.

Rodriguez was but one of a number of the year’s lecturers that included Roots author Alex Haley; former chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and newly elected Washington, D.C., congressional delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton; and well-known black activist Angela Davis. The Davis appearance brought howls from those who thought the College had jumped the limits of free speech. An avowed revolutionary, Davis was at the time the Communist Party candidate for vice president. The author of Women, Race, and Class told an overflowing audience that the women’s movement and the fight for civil rights were often tied together. She called for Reagan’s defeat in the fall elections. Davis was not the only campus speaker to cause a stir. The Watergate ex-con G. Gordon Liddy spoke in 1984. Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, founders of the radical 1960s Youth International Party, debated in 1985. Hoffman was still a Yippie. Rubin, no longer antiestablishment, brandished his American Express Card. A year later Timothy Leary, the former director of the Psychedelic Research Project at Harvard and an LSD advocate, gave what most found an uninspired lecture. Students thought perhaps he was still on drugs.

The decade marked the beginning of the celebrated national clash between free speech and multiculturalism, when the new pejorative “politically correct” (PC) first began to appear. The ensuing war over words was prompted by many new initiatives, most of them prominent on the college campuses: affirmative action in employment and admissions, multiculturalism in the class-
room, and the changing vocabulary used to define minority groups. Colby tested on every front. Even the matter of selecting a name for the yearlong diversity and tolerance theme was contentious. The meaning of “diversity” applied along the full range of race, class, religion, and gender. It wasn’t always clear what group was being talked about. A special Mayflower Hill Scholars financial aid program, established in 1981, recognized the minority status of some Maine students, who were by now culturally as far from home as black students from the Bronx. The word “tolerance,” with its minimalist inference, was inadequate for those who preferred something more ambitious, like “embrace.”

Even the attempt to change the erroneous name of the College magazine raised the specter of PC. When the magazine was first published in 1911, editor and librarian Charles Chipman had named it the Alumnus, the Latin word for a male graduate. He ought to have known better. The alumni body was already filled with women. If any of them objected, there is no record of it, and a succession of later feminist fighters had bigger fish to fry. It was a man who finally complained. In 1986 Perley Leighton ’43 wrote the editor, Lane Fisher, wondering why there had been no “alumnae uprising.” Former editor Ian Robertson ’51 wrote a letter for the next issue, saying he was embarrassed and urging the name be changed “right off.”

Leighton should not have been surprised. The name had set in, and moreover, the campus had not been brushed up on its Latin since the days of the Old Roman, Judy Taylor. Not so fast. A handful of alumni leaders, including a few trustees, balked, claiming the editor was caving in to political correctness. The Alumnus name had been good enough for seventy-five years, and besides, there had been enough changes (fraternities) to the old place already. A 1987 survey of magazine readers showed that most didn’t care about the name. Only five percent said to change it. Never mind. It wasn’t “political” correctness so much as it was simple correctness. With the approval of the development committee of the board, editor Robert Gillespie brought out the Colby magazine in the spring of 1988. The word alumnus was not in sight, and that fall, the board amended the College by-laws to eliminate all gender-specific (he, him, his) language.

In 1986 Cotter greeted the incoming freshmen by spelling out where the College stood:

we stand today for diversity, without which we become parochial; for tolerance of varied lifestyles and beliefs, without which we become mean spirited; and for the protection of every individual against discrimination
on account of race, ethnic origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, physical handicap, or political belief.

His mantra (thereafter included in the annual catalogue and Student Handbook), coupled with the closing of fraternities and the accompanying new standard of opening all opportunities to all students, emboldened even the most reticent. Colby’s gay and lesbian students had a small organization as early as 1974 when seniors Nancy Snow Littlefield and Barbara Badger (later Euan Bear) formed The Bridge. In 1988, with its acceptance slowly growing, The Bridge sponsored the first BGLAD\(^{39}\) Awareness Week. The bravest students wore yellow ribbons in support. Among the handful of faculty and staff whom the students could adopt as models, none was more popular than the far-out-of-the-closet gay manager of the switchboard and student post office, Allen LaPan. In the 1980s he had only just begun a sideline career of service, using wisdom and warmth (and outrageous humor) to reassure the uncertain and cure the homophobes.

Although numbers were only part of the equation, by the end of the decade there were forty-two minority freshmen (including ten African Americans) in the entering class. New minor courses of study had been launched in both African American and women’s studies. Still, exhibits of prejudice, diversity’s hateful alter ego, often accompanied the gains. In January 1988 someone burned a cross near the Arey Building, marring the Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance; the following winter the campus was horrified when racial epithets were shouted in the heat of a home men’s basketball game. That spring Cotter launched a task force on racism that, among other things, quickly arranged a week of “racial awareness days” that included a rally, a march of some eight hundred faculty and students to an all-campus convocation, and roundtable dinner discussions.

All the talk of human rights and the importance of diversity slowly raised the general level of awareness and concern. Students began to say the campus was in a protected “bubble,” insulated from a world where the struggle for justice carried life-or-death consequences. By 1985, nowhere on earth was the fight for racial justice more apparent than in the Republic of South Africa. Objections to the apartheid policies of the white Afrikaner government had been fermenting for a long time. Many believed the only peaceful weapon against the repression of the majority blacks was the almighty American dollar.

In 1977, the Reverend Leon Sullivan, a black member of the General Motors board of directors, had developed the “Sullivan Principles,” calling on American multinational corporations to train and pay whites and nonwhites equally and insisting on a climate of racial tolerance in the workplace. In his final year at Colby, Strider had created the Committee on Investment Responsibility of faculty, students, and administrators; on the committee’s recommendation the College became one of the first to subscribe to Sullivan’s principles. In September 1980 the College divested more than $750,000 in stock owned by noncompliant companies. Broadening participation in the principles brought positive changes: by 1982 black workers had organized and work conditions had improved. Yet despite the gains the overarching system of oppression by the white government was barely affected.

The new Colby president was a recognized expert on African politics, and anti-apartheid activism remained in his portfolio when he came to Waterville. Cotter continued as a member of the board of the Africa American Institute, and served on the National Council of the South African Education Project. He wrote and spoke frequently about African politics and the crisis in South Africa, always with the caveat that his views were personal and separate from either Colby or the AAI. Speaking in Pennsylvania in 1982 at a Yale University-sponsored conference attended by executives of some sixty U.S. corporations, Cotter faulted the U.S. government, not only for “doing nothing” to help fight apartheid, but also perhaps even working against reform. The Reagan administration had relaxed export controls, and Cotter feared the arms being shipped to South Africa would be turned on black protestors. “Change is inevitable,” he said, “whether through violent revolution or peaceful negotiations. The question is, will change occur fast enough to avoid a holocaust?”

The long-serving chair of Colby’s Investment Responsibility Committee was Thomas Tietenberg (economics), who knew a thing or two about the power of economic investment in shaping public policy. Trustees followed the lead of his committee in making divestment decisions, and by 1985 Colby had sold shares worth nearly $3 million in nine companies that had failed the Sullivan test. Fifty more companies were on a watch list. Although the number of participating colleges grew, South African authorities remained intransigent, and violence continued. In the fall of 1985 Tietenberg’s committee called for

40. The project had by then brought nearly three hundred black South Africans to study in the United States, including three to Colby.

41. At the time Peace Corps alumnus Robert Gelbard ’64, (honorary L.L.D. 2002) was the U.S. State Department’s director of southern African affairs.
an open campus meeting to discuss next steps. Cotter announced the meeting at the opening assembly for freshmen and said the time had come to consider whether partial divestment was an adequate response. In October, in a near unanimous vote, the faculty called on trustees to immediately divest all of the College’s assets in corporations and banks with holdings in South Africa.

An anti-apartheid rally held in the week before the trustee meetings drew more than four hundred people who stood for nearly two hours to hear dozens of speakers. Veteran observers of campus rallies and protests were amused to see the president of the College standing on the library steps beneath a banner proclaiming “Power to the People,” and making a lawyerly, measured case for social change. The crowd loved it.

Cotter was not so much tempting an uprising as he was risking some of the goodwill he had built. Most faculty and students agreed with him on the divestment question, but there were others, including members of the board, who were not inclined to include social causes in the formula for making investment decisions. The College’s endowment stood at just over $40 million, some 15 percent of which was at stake in the apartheid discussions. Colby’s portfolio was small in comparison to its elite competitors and, to a greater extent than most, endowment earnings were needed to moderate tuition charges. Faced with a divestment decision, fiscal conservatives worried about the “slippery slope.” If they divested in South Africa, what was next? Tobacco companies? Environmental polluters? (A 1971 Student Government request to divest General Motors stock had been rejected out of hand.)

Cotter said the precedent had already been set with the 1978 signing of the principles. Moreover, internal U.S. social ills could be addressed in other ways. The problem in South Africa was unique and urgent. Divestment might be the only way to avoid a revolution. Trustees held open hearings before they voted. More than sixty people testified, most of them in favor of immediate, full divestment. In the end, the board voted 20 to 0, with two abstaining, to take a more moderate course. It set a divestment deadline for spring 1987, a time frame recommended by the Reverend Sullivan and the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, Desmond Tutu. If the dismantling of apartheid did not begin by then, trustees said, the College would fully divest. In the meantime, decisions would be made on a company-by-company basis.

Following the trustee decision, Cotter joined fifteen other American educators and African scholars in calling on the giant retirement fund firm TIAA to join the boycott and “help end our unwilling support of apartheid.” Two weeks later TIAA said it would file shareholder resolutions in favor of the principles at the annual meetings of targeted portfolio companies. By 1986,
eighty-one American colleges and universities had divested more than $315 million. A year later, on the Sullivan-Tutu deadline, Colby trustees determined that insufficient progress had been made toward ending apartheid. Unanimously and without debate it resolved to get rid of all South African holdings, worth some $6.5 million, by December 31. The divestment strategy eventually worked. There was never wholesale bloodshed and no coup d'état. Free elections were first held in 1994, and South Africa quickly became one of the most stable democracies on the continent.42

Even as students on the Hill were learning about international affairs, increasing numbers were getting to see the world for themselves. It was all part of the plan. Cotter privately wished for a mandatory national Peace Corps–like program requiring a year of foreign or domestic public service between high school and college. It would, he said, provide much needed social work around the world and at the same time elevate the general maturity level of the campuses. He settled instead for pressing his dream that the experience of every Colby student would include foreign study.43

Small numbers of students had been hitching rides on other colleges’ study abroad programs for years. By 1980 there were students joining the Associated Kyoto Program at Doshisha University in Japan and at Manchester College in Oxford, England. Colby’s first full junior year program of its own had begun in 1970 when Jean Bundy (French) took thirty students aboard the S.S. France to study at the Université de Caen, near Normandy. The program withered and was restructured and renewed in 1980 under Arthur Greenspan (French), in a collaborative effort with Washington University in Saint Louis. It was a success. Students returned with tales of worthy experiences and high adventure, and the demand for foreign study opportunities increased. Two more JYA offerings were added in 1985, when Francisco Cauz (Spanish) joined Colby with Washington University to begin a satellite school at the University of Salamanca in Spain and Dan Cohen ’75 (philosophy) led a new program at

42. In October 1993, Colby was among the first to respond to a plea to investors from African National Congress president Nelson Mandela “to remove immediately all South Africa related constraints in the investment choices by portfolio managers.”

43. Michael Metcalf ’68 was at the time bent on seeing the entire world at once. The former Air Force pilot was a schoolteacher at Hazen Union High School in Hardwick, Vermont. In 1985 he became one of ten finalists among eleven thousand teachers who applied to fly in the Challenger as the first civilian in space. In the final days of the selection process his stomach objected to the flight simulator and he was eliminated. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) chose Concord, New Hampshire, teacher Christa McAuliffe instead.

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University College in Cork, Ireland. New half-year programs included a London program offering exposure to British theater.

By decade's end, there were additional programs designed especially for students, including entering freshmen, wanting or needing intense language instruction. Henry Holland (Spanish) had opened a school in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in 1982, and quickly forged close ties with the affiliate Center for Bilingual Multicultural Studies. In 1985 the Cotters traveled to Cuernavaca to help dedicate a new library building, honoring Holland and named for Colby. That same year Bundy began a French program in Dijon and Hubert Kueter (German), one in Lübeck. A year later Charles Ferguson (Italian) opened a Colby program in Florence. Students were given a semester's credit and certified as having completed their foreign language requirement. Many who thought total immersion would be an expedient way to be rid of the onerous requirement found themselves eagerly enrolling in advanced language courses when they returned.

Yet Colby-sponsored offerings only scratched the surface. By now the College was inviting students to sign on with the Council on International Educational Exchange in the People's Republic of China, the Intercollegiate Sri Lanka Education Consortium, and a cooperative program in the Soviet Union. Arrangements were in place for student enrollment at most British universities, and the College had blessed programs operated by other American colleges in Austria, Germany, Italy, and Canada. For scientists, Colby joined the West Indies Laboratory College Association, the Williams College Mystic Seaport Program, and Boston University's Sea Semester. Harold Pestana conducted a geological Jan Plan in Bermuda. Study in Washington, D.C., was available through Colby's own program and various Washington Semester offerings organized by American University. (Certainly not foreign study, although it may have seemed like it.)

Student concern about the world wasn't all focused on distant shores. The so-called Me Generation was serious about giving to others. Perrin Boyd '86 was the first to coordinate a comprehensive volunteer effort, spending her 1986 Jan Plan identifying groups of greater Waterville agencies needing help. Hundreds took assignments from a new Colby Volunteer Center. Some stayed on campus during vacation breaks to work. Beneficiaries included the full range of local help enterprises, from the soup kitchen at Sacred Heart Church to the Child Care Center at the Congregational Church, and from the Rape Crisis Center to the Salvation Army.
The balance between foreign students on the Hill—thirty-nine from eight countries in 1989—and Colby students studying abroad quickly became lopsided. At the turn of the decade fully 20 percent of Colby graduates were having some sort of foreign study experience. The large numbers brought both surprises and challenges. Faculty program directors found themselves training on the job as deans on the satellite campuses, handling student housing, counseling, advising, discipline, and security as well as teaching. News of the Mexico earthquakes in September 1985 caused concern for the safety of Holland and his troop of forty-four. In the third round of calls to anxious parents, the home dean’s office was able to report that Cuernavaca had escaped damage. A year later terrorist threats to Americans in Paris prompted Greenspan to move his thirty charges out of the city and back to the program’s base in the Normandy countryside.

There were curious adjustments on the Hill as well. Each fall brought new wonder at where the junior class had gone. Members who went away were not available for the leadership positions in clubs, organizations, and athletics that they had once dominated. Underclass students ruled. Moreover, when students who had seen the “real world” returned to the Hill they were often disinclined to live in the sophomoric dormitories. The comings and goings of students wreaked havoc in the matter of counting beds on the Hill. The true annual enrollment outdistanced the campus population by the number of those who were earning credit elsewhere. In making study plans, students dithered as students do: too many choices, too much paperwork, and too little time. Deadlines helped a little. Otherwise, it was left to housing dean Paul Johnston to keep the campus beds filled. His system used little of the new technology. He called up each of the ditherers and then hand-counted every Colby student, name by name.

**FITNESS CRAZY**

The nation was nuts about sports. Credit or blame—depending on who got asked on a weekend afternoon—belonged to television. Colby students were not just watching. Half of them were varsity athletes and most of the rest were working to stay in shape. A nationwide fitness craze had delivered waves of weight-conscious calorie-counters who bought running shoes and Gore-Tex clothing at L.L. Bean, turned nearby roads into congested jogging loops, and demanded more salads in the dining halls.

44. Within ten years the number of students studying abroad would jump to 80 percent, one of the highest foreign study participation rates in the country.
Aerobics were in. Male athletes, once sole proprietors of the scant exercise equipment at the gym, were asked to share, and still there wasn’t enough. Board chair Ridge Bullock gave a set of Nautilus machines to the nonathletes and joked about his rotund figure at the 1987 dedication at Mary Low. Intercollegiate athletes and fans were now scattered in twenty-seven team directions, and there were more stellar individual performers than ever before. The decade produced thirty-two first-team All-Americans.\textsuperscript{45} Beyond the teams there were nine athletic clubs, an intramural program with more than one thousand participants, all those pesky PE classes, and abundant recreational activities, including a booming outing club and its marvelous coed woods-men’s division.

The fitness obsession helped settle some old health concerns and raised new ones. Anorexia and bulimia, long-hidden diseases on the campuses, were finally exposed, but the cure-defying illnesses were already epidemic. Other things stayed the same. Alcohol abuse, the most public of the campus health problems, only appeared worse. In order to keep federal highway funds, Maine raised the legal drinking age to twenty-one in 1985, making scofflaws of those who had been drinking all along and doing little to stem the tide of beer flowing up the Hill. The state cracked down, increasing its staff of inspectors from three to seventeen, and assigning one of them to the troublesome local area full-time. Students enjoyed playing cat and mouse with her, but she did a brisk business handing out citations, making a dozen or so arrests during a notorious Winter Carnival weekend in 1987.

On the never-legal side, there was marijuana aplenty, and even more exotic things. For those who went looking, the amphetamine Ecstasy and hallucinogenic “mushrooms” were most popular. Despite a national rise in illegal drug use, Colby went in the other direction. Fitness and drugs did not mix. Whether they paid attention to Nancy Reagan or not, most just said no. When the president declared his war on drugs, Secretary of Education William Bennett asked college presidents to help enforce the ban. Cotter replied tartly that he was not a cop. “Students are told what the laws are, and they are expected to abide by them,” he said. “Parents don’t arrest their children and put them in

jail, and we don’t either.” Even so, he asked the deans to step up alcohol and drug education programs.

The booze battle had been going on since the beginning. It brought down the first president, straitlaced Jeremiah Chaplin, and in 1887 President George Dana Boardman Pepper had to deal with a prolonged incident as reported in the *Echo*: “Cider has been just as free as water this fall. It only required a stolen wagon, a hired horse and a dark night for the sophomores to import a 43-gallon cask of the apple juice. It was sampled on the afternoon of the freshman-sophomore ball game, and was found to be potent. Certain seniors showed that they know how to drink cider, even if they are members of the Good Templars. Cider drunks and Indian war dances were in order for a number of nights, till at last the cask ran dry and consumed itself in a bonfire.”

The most remarkable intercollegiate teams of the decade were among the oldest. Near homeless track and cross-country squads took several strides forward in 1980 with the opening of a campus cross-country trail system, the gift of trustee Levin H. Campbell and his wife, Eleanor, parents of Eleanor ’81. Two miles of paths in the Perkins Arboretum on the east side of campus provided regulation courses for cross-country running (3.1 miles for women, 5 miles for men) and cross-country skiing (7.5K for women, 15K for men). In 1988 Harold and Bibby (’38) Alfond improved the lot of runners by replacing the crumbling forty-year-old cinder oval at Seaverns Field with an eight-lane all-weather synthetic track, the first in Maine. The trails and track were instant hits, not only with student athletes but also with folks from town who, by the hundreds, were up in the early morning to their turns as walkers.

The Campbell trails had barely opened when a trio of All-Americans set them ablaze. The cross-country team won the NESCAC title in 1981, when Kelly Dodge ’83 became Colby’s first All-American runner. Robert Edson was the second a year later, and Todd Coffin ’83 joined them in his senior year after winning the 3,000-meter steeplechase to become Colby’s first modern-day individual national champion in any sport. Coffin was Maine cross-country and

46. Dodge joined the development staff in 1999 and became director of annual giving. Coffin replaced his mentor Wescott as coach of men’s cross-country and track and field in 2004.

*THE 1980s*
The team was a conference champion again in 1987. Under Rick Bell, women's track won three NESCAC titles before 1984, when it went 11 for 1, taking both NESCAC and ECAC crowns. Debbie Aitkin became the first woman coach in 1985 and quickly gave the women a tradition as rich as the men's. Her 1986 cross-country squad was one of the nation's best, taking first in the NCAA New England championships; the 1989–90 team won the New England title when runner Jill Vollweiler '90 became the team's first All-American, taking the honor twice more in track.

In winter, men's basketball regained center stage. Fans who had shifted to the ice in the era of hockey dominance returned to the warm gym to watch coach Dick Whitmore and a succession of outstanding teams. All-American Harland Storey '85 led the 1984–85 squad to a 22–3 season, finishing second in the nation, the highest-ranked Colby team ever. The 1988 team went all the way to the ECAC championship game before losing to Amherst in the final. Another All-American, Matt Hancock '90, obliterated the career-scoring mark with 2,678 points on the way to becoming the country's highest scorer and national player of the year in his final season. Whitmore's son Kevin '91 joined Hancock and the All-American team in 1989–90, when for the first time the Mules were ECAC champs.

Patricia Valavanis '80 brought women's basketball to prominence in a hurry, collecting a dozen team records while becoming the first 1,000-point scorer. A follow-up star, Kaye Cross '84, led coach Gene DeLorenzo's team to a 23–4 season in 1981–82, the best ever. From 1983 to 1985 the team won back-to-back conference titles. Cross, a sophomore and junior Academic All-American, bumped the career scoring mark to 1,452. Despite their successes, the women did not play for packed houses. Cross said that for some the concept of excellence in women's athletics was still startling. It was true. Many viewed women's athletics as merely meeting the obligations of Title IX.

With half the students playing so many sports, there were fewer left to sit and watch. Although athletic interests were more intense, the focus of fans was...
shifting, most noticeably in the fall, when soccer routinely outdrew football. Neither soccer team won a championship, but spectators still flocked to watch the exciting play. Mark Serdjenian’s men’s team had the best player Colby had ever seen, three-time All-American Mark Burke ’86.

As players on the newer teams graduated, the athletic focus of the alumni body spread to the full gamut of sports. Cotter began to carry team summaries when traveling to meetings across the country. Even so, for every alumni inquiry about field hockey, squash, or tennis, there were many more that zeroed in on the fall fate of football. Dick McGee had dropped his coaching assignment in 1979 to devote full time to directing the department. Tom Kopp, who had come from Dartmouth as McGee’s assistant the year before, took the job for four seasons before moving on to the admissions department. His replacement, Harold “Chris” Raymond stayed three years and left ignominiously after a 0–8 season in 1985. Catching heat for the recent grim showings, Cotter said he was “committed to a competitive football program” and took the lead in finding a new coach. That same month Lou Holtz left the University of Minnesota. Cotter, who rarely thought anything was impossible, called Holtz in Saint Paul to ask if he might be interested in the Colby job. Holtz po-

New athletic interests extended even to the matter of the mascot. Some began to agitate to replace the white mule with the majestic moose. In 1983 Echo coeditors Rick Manley ’83 and Carla Thompson ’85 editorialized for the switch, calling the native moose both “intelligent and self-procreating.” The Save-the-Mule federation called it nonsense. That summer, omenlike, a cow moose visited the lawn of the President’s House. In the fall Maine voted to have an open season on the animal. (The hardest part of shooting one was getting a license.) There was some name-calling. Moose pushers called mules “stupid.” The College physician, Clarence Dore ’39, said moose weren’t all that bright either, as he had shot one and eight others stood around to watch him clean it. The next year a fitness moose joined student joggers on the three-mile loop. The moose campaign continued through the decade. In early 1990 the Echo and editor M. F. “Chip” Gavin ’90 made a last-ditch effort to send the mule packing, but in 1993 the Class of 1943 settled the matter by presenting the College a mule statue and installing it near the athletic center. Moose people applied makeshift antlers once or twice, then surrendered.
likely said he would think about it, but called back three days later to say thanks just the same, but he'd decided to go to Notre Dame.

Colby did better in hiring Tom Austin from nearby Bridgton Academy. Austin and his staff worked nonstop on recruiting, and to compensate for the thin ranks introduced multiple formations on both sides of the line. In 1988, teams began a nine-year stint of winning or sharing (with Bowdoin in 1993) the CBB title.

There were bright moments elsewhere, and more individual stars. The women’s tennis team, coached by just-graduated player Beverly Nalbandian ’80 (later Beverly Madden, a trustee), took the state title in 1980, the same year women’s hockey under coach Bob Elwell ’71 had goaltender Stephanie Vrattos ’81 to help assemble an eleven-game winning streak. Sara Bunnell ’81 led Deborah Pluck’s new varsity teams of lacrosse and field hockey to rapid prominence. The women’s Nordic and Alpine ski team won the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association titles in 1986–87 with coach Jeff Meserve, in 1987–88 with Richard Tonge ’78, and again in 1988–89 with Jeff Clark, when both the women and the men were NCAA Division II champs. Gene De Lorenzo made CBB champs of the softball team in 1985 and 1986 and took the baseball team to the finals of the Division III playoffs in 1987. Coach Sid Farr’s golf team was one of New England’s best in 1989, taking the Maine title.

Many alumni were engaged in the burgeoning sports industry as well. Jan Volk ’68 was general manager of the Boston Celtics. Tom Whidden ’70 was tactician and crewmember for Stars and Stripes, the winning U.S. entry in the 1986 America’s Cup races. Ken Nigró ’60 was director of public relations for the New York Yankees.

Multisport athletes were mostly a thing of the past at the universities. Small colleges still had a few.49 Valavanis led in softball as she did in basketball, finishing her career with a 35–4 pitching record and becoming the first Colby athlete, man or woman, to be named scholar-athlete of the year by the Maine Sports Hall of Fame. Bunnell earned a dozen varsity letters as captain of lacrosse, field hockey, and ice hockey. Paul Belanger ’81 made eleven in football, basketball, and baseball. James “Jamie” Arsenault ’88 was a team captain in the same three sports.

The mushrooming sports culture brought with it the age of specialization.

49. The book The Game of Life reported that among all athletic participants, multisport male athletes in liberal arts colleges declined from 37 percent in 1951 to 20 percent in 1989. Women remained the same at 27 percent. At Colby the multisport numbers for both men and women slid below the norm.
Coaches, who had always haunted admissions officers for players, were now looking for position players, and there were twenty-seven rosters to fill. Although it wasn’t stated, when academic qualifications were met, the elite colleges were giving an admissions edge to accomplished athletes, and hopeful candidates knew they could no longer afford to present themselves as general athletes. Parents caught on. To be noticed, their students needed to stand out in a single sport. From an early age, youngsters began to play the same sport year-round. Sports camps flourished. Little Leaguers got batting coaches. Soccer moms proliferated. Grandfathers got disgusted.

At Colby the craziness pressed the limits of both budgets and patience. Whitmore took over as athletic director in 1987 (even then an anomaly as department head and coach of a major sport) in time to preside over fusses about NESCAC’s tough stand on postseason championship play and the skyrocketing cost of athletics. From 1980 to 1990 the athletic budget rose from $384,000 to $1,130,000. Students were demanding more and there was little more to give. The expensive sport of crew, begun as a club in 1984, was beating its oars for varsity status. Volleyball wanted in, too.

Rugby was a different matter. A men’s club had been formed in 1975. Women began in 1980. Neither had any interest in varsity status or the restrictions that went with it. The relaxed rugby culture, which included its own form of postgame entertainment, was by the end of the decade attracting more than one hundred students. College physician Clarence Dore was appalled at the lack of training and safety regulations. Maine college presidents cancelled the spring 1986 season to borrow time to insert some rules.

Cotter announced plainly that “the constant expansion of the number of varsity sports and the athletic budget cannot continue,” and he appointed a twenty-three-member committee to examine things. Sandy Maisel, perennial chair of the Athletics Advisory Committee, led the group that worked through the spring of 1989 and returned seventeen recommendations. They reaffirmed the College’s support of the NESCAC philosophy and rules and set additional, Colby-only, limits. The new rules, approved by the faculty, harnessed the time commitment of athletes (two hours of practice a day, six days a week), and made tests for club teams wanting varsity status. Crew was turned down and volleyball was made to wait as well. Because underground clubs had infested one or two major men’s teams, athletes were required to make written promises to their coaches that they would not participate in fraternitylike activities. The committee also called for more women coaches of the women’s sports, and recognized the general student thirst for health and fitness by urging invigorated intramurals and a revised physical education program centered on wellness.
In 1988 the College was 175 years old, and Waterville had been a city for a century. The two celebrated birthdays together. Over time the flourishing city had often propped up the struggling college. Now, roles were reversing. Foreign competition was gnawing at Waterville’s manufacturing base, and the city was feeling an economic chill. At the same time Colby was winning in the stiff competition for the best students in a diminishing national pool. Application numbers soared and the education world was calling the place “hot.”

As Colby’s fortunes improved, city leaders were struggling to hang on to what they had. The great industries, wounded in the 1950s by competition from southern states, were being threatened anew, this time by economic forces from abroad. A national tide of bankruptcies, takeovers, buyouts, and mega-mergers had begun. The century-old Wyandotte Worsted mill, which had drawn and sustained hundreds of immigrant families, was already closed, and the giant Kimberly Clark had its eye on Scott Paper, the biggest sustainer of them all. Up the road, officials at the molded pulp-maker Keyes Fibre warned that electricity costs were driving them out of business.

The outlook wasn’t any brighter along Main Street. Sterns Department Store, the anchor at the center, closed its doors and empty storefronts multiplied. The post office moved into modern quarters on College Avenue, and the classical old building, once the proud greeter at the top of Main Street, was sold for $112,000 and went mostly vacant. Waterville was becoming a service center, with colleges, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and all those banks. On weekdays the city’s population could quadruple, hiking demands for services even as tax revenues went down. An influx of subsidized housing made it worse. In each budgetmaking season a few licked their chops at all the tax-exempt property. The decline wasn’t good for anybody. Colby and Waterville were tied together in more ways than by good feelings and proud histories. The College relied upon a healthy and vital community to entice students and encourage the best teachers to come and make a home.

In 1981 Waterville elected its first woman mayor. Ann G. “Nancy” Hill took office during the worst recession in forty years. Unemployment and interest rates were skyrocketing. (The United States would go from being the world’s largest creditor to the biggest debtor in that single decade.) Bright and aggressive, she was well suited to break the gender barrier in a city still deeply political. Hill managed the city through three terms (1982–86) and declined to run again. Thomas Nale, an energetic Republican, took over for 1986–87.
The economy began to improve, and Waterville was building again. There were five hundred new jobs in town, and more housing starts than ever. The electoral pendulum swung back to the Democrats before decade’s end, and Waterville elected its second woman mayor, a colorful and hardworking state and local politician, Judy Kany, who served in 1988–89.\footnote{The economy began to improve, and Waterville was building again. There were five hundred new jobs in town, and more housing starts than ever. The electoral pendulum swung back to the Democrats before decade’s end, and Waterville elected its second woman mayor, a colorful and hardworking state and local politician, Judy Kany, who served in 1988–89.\footnote{Hill’s husband, Kevin, was a local physician and Colby trustee who led the fight for equal housing leading up to the disassociation with fraternities. Her son, Michael, was graduated in 1986. Kany’s husband, Robert, was Colby’s director of summer and special programs.}}

During Nale’s term, on April Fool’s Day 1987, the Kennebec River left its banks in the worst flooding in a half-century. Damages exceeded $63 million. Many Colby students came back from spring break early to help families and local authorities clean up. Alan Lewis loaned College trucks to the beleaguered Salvation Army. The 233-year-old Fort Halifax, the last wooden blockhouse of its kind, was washed down the river. Stanley Mathieu and Donald Carter, 1957 Colby classmates, were put in charge of the restoration.

In the year of the birthdays, \textit{U.S. News & World Report} used some of the objective measurements urged by Bill Cotter, and Colby finished twenty-first among the nation’s best colleges. All such rankings were suspect, but they nevertheless suggested a growing reputation. Behind the headlines, there were more valid affirmations. The ten-year reaccreditation report of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges said the place was “competently managed,” and that there was “a sense of pride and pleasure in the school . . . a sense that the College is on the move.”

The moving had been going on for some time. The College had first drawn prospective students with its movie-set campus and its place in the middle of the Maine outdoors, and then with the distinctive offerings of independent study and the Jan Plan. Now students were also coming for the international study opportunities, the new residential life program, and leadership in the use of computers. Trumping it all was the appeal of an ever more prominent faculty, and the clear testimony of students who said Colby’s very best feature was the supportive friendships of their teachers. Part of the charm was also in the balance between independent study and the old core curriculum. The Jan
Plan first included mini-courses for regular credit in 1982, and while the change diminished independent study adventures, there were many more student-faculty research partnerships, most notably in the sciences but in the other divisions as well. The one-on-one projects, begun in the 1970s, now multiplied and inspired students to follow their interests into graduate schools.51

Beyond their teaching, faculty members were gaining more public notice than ever before. In 1982 Susan Kenney (English) won the prestigious O. Henry Award for her story "Facing Front." Kenney, Peter Harris, and Ira Sadoff were pioneers of what soon became a distinctive creative writing wing of the English department. Students clamored to get in. The arrival of James Boylan in 1988 increased offerings but made the demand even greater.52

Students were also queued up for classes in the economics department, cited by Change magazine as one of the best among the undergraduate institutions, comparing it with Dartmouth, Amherst, Wellesley, and Williams for "exceptional dedication to teaching." James Meehan was chair. Members included Jan Hogendorn, winner of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1986; Henry "Hank" Gemery, who would win the Jonathan Hughes Prize for excellence in teaching economic history; and Thomas Tietenberg, already a renowned expert on regulatory reform, including emissions trading in air pollution control. (His book Environmental and Natural Resource Economics remained a standard for students in economics and environmental policy.) As president of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, he was a frequent government consultant and a source for reporters seeking to translate the arcane theories into popular understanding.

Government department chair Sandy Maisel had lost in the race for the Democratic nomination for Congress in 1978,53 but the experience and his subsequent books, From Obscurity to Oblivion and Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process, gave him credibility as an expert on congres-

51. A 1986 study conducted by Franklin and Marshall ranked Colby seventy-eighth among the country's 839 four-year private colleges in the number of graduates receiving doctorates, and seventieth in science doctorates.

52. In 2002 Boylan, a successful author and popular teacher, came out as transgendered and took the name Jennifer. The change was a bit of a sensation off the Hill, but faculty colleagues and students were mainly supportive, even nonchalant. Her memoir, She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders, was the first best-selling work by a transgendered American. It drew attention to Colby as a place supportive of diversity.

53. Of his congressional bid, Maisel wrote: "If I could honestly think that a young, liberal, Jewish college professor from Buffalo could win a primary and then beat a popular incumbent (David Emery) in Downeast Maine, any level of delusion is possible."
sional elections. His insightful commentary made him a favorite source, and his signature bow tie (and later a fine Stetson hat) added pizzazz. The department also boasted Lee Feigon, a much-quoted China expert, and Cal Mackenzie, whose specialty in public personnel management and the American presidency put him in quadrennial demand as a consultant to presidential staffs and congressional committees. Through the 1970s Mackenzie worked with several commissions, studying the organization and workings of Congress. Now he led a special project on presidential appointments for the National Academy of Public Administration. Senators were seen carrying copies of his book *The Politics of Presidential Appointments* during the contentious confirmation hearings of John Tower as secretary of defense in 1989. Anthony Corrado, a scholar of political campaign financing, joined the department in 1986 and gathered as much ink and airtime as the rest. In 1989 the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) named Maisel Maine's first Professor of the Year. Tietenberg took the prize the following year.

Trustees guarded the faculty well, sometimes against their wishes. In 1980, when the board voted to retain the merit pay system, the faculty noisily objected. It didn’t matter. Most members were given the regular merit pay anyway, and the result, together with an infusion of new money, helped double the overall average salary from $13,900 to $27,500, in ten years. Trustees scrutinized the tenure policy in 1982, but declined to assign a quota. Who got tenure was more important than how many. As quid pro quo, the faculty took hold of the promotion and tenure process and made it both fair and rigorous.

Faculty Dean Douglas Archibald monitored every new search, pressing for diversity. Nearly half of the decade's new teachers were women. Several were minorities, three were African American. The talent piled up, in quality and in number, and the tenured and tenure-track faculty increased from 112 to 128 in the decade, taking the student-to-faculty ratio down from 12:1 to 10:1.

The effort to improve the number of women faculty got a lift in 1988 when Colby was named as one of fourteen institutions to participate in the Clare Boothe Luce Fund, created under the terms of Luce's will “to encourage women to enter, study, graduate, and teach” in scientific and technological fields where they were historically underrepresented. Colby got $3 million. Luce's only tie to the College was her honorary doctor of letters degree, re-

54. There were alumni making headlines in the political arena as well. Class of 1964 classmates, the presidential biographer and commentator Doris (Kearns) Goodwin and the public opinion pollster Peter D. Hart, were always in the news.

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**THE 1980s**
ceived in 1941. Many of the 1980s' newcomers, men and women, shaped the face of the faculty for generations of coming students:

Seelye Bixler died in 1985, the day before his ninety-first birthday, but he had lived long enough to see the expansion of student interest and the matching addition of splendid new teachers in his beloved fine arts. The music faculty added four places all at once in 1986 when Cotter twisted arms and scraped for money in order to make the Portland String Quartet affiliate members. An agreement was made for the musicians; Cotter called them a "Maine treasure." Bixler's friend Jeré Abbott, the first associate director of New York's Museum of Modern Art and former museum director at Smith College, left in his estate a $1.8 million endowment for museum acquisitions in 1982. Plans were soon underway for a $3.1 million renovation and expansion of Bixler's building.

By decade's end the catalogue bulged with more than seven hundred courses, a new division of interdisciplinary studies, and several new area concentrations (not quite minors). Although the faculty had expanded, it was hard for members to keep up with all those courses and monitor off-campus and independent study, advise freshmen and majors, and stay apace in their disciplines. In 1986 the annual teaching load was reduced from six courses to five and the student standard of five courses per semester was dropped to four, with the caveat that the scope and intensity of courses would be bolstered to keep the rigor. Although the liberal heart of things did not change, the foreign language requirement was reduced from a four-course series to three. English composition remained, but as a requirement the English literature introductory course was jettisoned.

Many of the adjustments were made to make room for a pilot freshman seminar program, first opened to half of the Class of 1990. Students could

55. Many of those who joined the faculty in the 1980s were later chosen by students as recipients of an annual distinguished teaching award established by the Class of 1993 and named in honor of the never retiring Charles Bassett, the first recipient. They were Cedric Bryant (1994), Robert Weisbrot (1995), David Findlay (1995), Paul Greenwood (1997), James Boylan (2000), Tony Corrado with Dasan Thamattoor (2002), and David Simon (2005). Other recipients were Robert LaFleur (1998), Laurie Osborne (1999), Margaret McFadden (2001), Jeffrey Kasser (2003), and Jonathan White (2004).

56. Teaching facilities for the growing faculty were magnified a bit in 1988 with the construction of the Collins Observatory with its 400-power 14-inch Celestron telescope, the gift of Anthony Cramer '62 in memory of his classmate, Lawrence Walker Collins III. The observatory would become the domain of Murray Campbell, an astrophysicist who began working with students on infrared astronomy in 1981.
choose among four course “clusters,” each centered on an interdisciplinary theme and taught by a team of five. Cobbling together grants from the Pew and Mellon foundations and the National Endowment for the Humanities, Archibald made it a worthy experiment, but it was also expensive. In four years the money ran out and the seminars ended.57

The mostly conservative students adored their mostly liberal teachers, but in 1987 some on both sides had a falling-out over whether the Central Intelligence Agency should use the offices of the College to recruit seniors. The faculty said no, resolving that “as a result of its illegal incursions into Nicaragua, its role in illegal arms sales, its illegal investigations into the lives of private citizens,” the CIA should be banned from campus. Most students took the opposite view, and the division was not surprising. Students were toddlers during the Vietnam War when the CIA was first accused of violating its own charter at home and human rights abroad. Many of the faculty had protested the war, and their disdain for the CIA had not waned.

The confrontation began in October with a “die in” staged during a recruiting visit, followed by a faculty vote calling for a ban of the agency from the offices of career services. The Student Board of Governors promptly adopted a counterresolution that underscored students’ concern for freedom of choice. (They were also worried about getting jobs.) The debate lasted until April 1988 when trustees came for their regular meetings a day early in order to attend an open forum and a debate between John Stockwell, a former CIA agent who later criticized the agency, and Admiral Stansfield Turner, CIA director under President Jimmy Carter. The ensuing discussion lasted long into the night, and in the morning the trustees approved a two-page statement that said they had “weighed the very real concerns regarding the CIA against Colby’s historic commitment to free speech and freedom of choice for its students” and had concluded, “the latter considerations must prevail.” Guidelines accompanying the decision said that any campus group of twenty-five could petition to require a prospective recruiter to hold an open information session prior to conducting interviews.

The nationwide publicity of the Colby-CIA flap prompted Secretary of Education William Bennett to put Colby on a short list of colleges he considered

57 In 1997, with grants from the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation, a similar semesterlong program in integrated studies was offered to all classes. Students investigate a single era or an aspect of world civilization from the perspective of multiple disciplines.

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By 1988 Archibald had led the faculty for two four-year terms, and he returned to full-time teaching. Robert McArthur, a logic professor who eighteen years before had ridden into town in a Volkswagen minibus sporting a "Question Authority" bumper sticker, was put in charge of herding the faculty cats. He had already handled questions of his authority as a stand-in admissions dean following the death of Harry Carroll, and as Archibald's sabbatical replacement in 1985–86. While filling in for Archibald he had rallied the faculty to support the adjustment of teaching and student course loads, and now he wanted to get members to agree on a description of the principal elements of a Colby education. It was no simple task. The assembled faculty—any faculty—can rarely agree on the wording of a single sentence (entire meetings are joyfully spent debating a word or two), and McArthur wanted the endorsement of a full document reflecting the temptingly debatable educational principles of the institution. It worked. In the spring of 1989 the faculty adopted the Colby Plan, a list of ten precepts meant to serve as a guide for students in making course selections and measuring their four-year educational development. It was also expected that the tenets would help graduates frame their postcollege continuing education.

The Colby 2000 Campaign ended in January 1987. Like all the ones before, it was the most ambitious ever. First set at $25 million and hiked to $28.5 million to pay for the new commons plan, at the end it topped $30 million. The endowment, which began the 1980s at $23 million, reached $74 million by decade's end. Board members, many of them dipping twice into their own pockets, gave nearly $5 million of the total. Cotter planted trees near the south steps of the library to honor campaign cochairs Bullock and Pugh.

Cal Mackenzie, who led the drive during the final, hectic year, also returned to the classroom and was replaced in 1988 by Peyton "Randy" Helm, a Yale graduate who came to Colby via the University of Pennsylvania where he had
been director of development at the School of Arts and Sciences. Helm took over a staff of a dozen fundraisers, a number soon to burgeon and press on the walls of the Eustis administration building from the basement to the attic. Fundraising on the Hill had once relied mainly on charm and a special ability to call forth institutional loyalty. The presidents, together with Alan Lightner, Ed Turner, Bill Millett, and Sid Farr, were successive stars. Now, development work was big business with most colleges fielding full squads of players, each one a position specialist. Helm, with strategic plans and spreadsheets, was the prodding and cheering manager. Cotter, the essential presence, was the closer.

The Portland String Quartet played at a gala campaign victory in Boston, although there was little time for celebration. Helm had no sooner arrived than trustees approved a series of mini-campaigns, beginning with a two-year, $15 million drive to find money for professorships, programs, scholarships, and unrestricted endowment.

The period between campaigns was a time for Cotter to consider his own future. He was fifty-two and it might have been his last chance to consider a career change. Although he hadn't tested the waters, he had many options. His friend Derek Bok had presided over Harvard for eighteen years, and was talking of retirement. With his success at Colby and his Harvard pedigree, Cotter might easily have been in the inner ring among candidates for the job. Trustees wasted no time in getting his agreement to stay and then voted him a well-earned sabbatical leave. The Cotters spent from November 1989 through March 1990 in London, where he pursued his passion for the law, doing research related to the course he taught in government.

The city's centennial observance was subdued, not like the exuberant birthdays of the past. Colby's 175th anniversary was quiet as well. The grandest moment came January 22, 1988, on the precise anniversary of the granting of

58. All through the decade, Colby wrestled with names: the delicate renaming of the fraternity houses, the premature naming of the Colby 2000 Campaign (which ended a decade before the new millennium), the fuss over politically correct labels in the arena of diversity, and the controversy over renaming of the College magazine. A committee planning the 175th anniversary invited suggestions for its name. Sue Conant Cook '75, director of alumni relations, suggested "Semisemisemiseptcentennial." It was called the 175th.

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the College charter by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. To the fanfare of trumpets, the 1813 charter presentation was reenacted in the chamber of the old Boston State House. Descendants of Jeremiah Chaplin, Gardner Colby, and Mary Low Carver were there. Massachusetts Representative Peter Forman '80 read a Commonwealth proclamation. Kany read one from Maine. Back on the Hill, when the time came to light the candles on Colby's birthday cake the place seemed quite hot enough without them.
6. THE 1990S

STRAWBERRY RHUBARB

As the 1990s emerged Americans began to take notice that they were not mostly white; and colleges, always the vanguard of social change, worked to build populations that were microcosms of the mixed country at large. Although there was no general agreement on what diversity meant, or even how to talk about it, almost everyone agreed Colby was beginning to have some of it and wanted more. The adjustments were often uncomfortable, and there was always more work to do. First, there was the business of dispatching a troublesome ghost, lingering since the 1980s.

An entire student generation had passed through since fraternities were abolished. Left over were a few clandestine make-believe groups, centered on sports teams. Although the basketball Zeta Psi pretenders had taken amnesty and dissolved in the wake of the 1987 hazing incident, similar groups continued in football (Lambda Chi), hockey (Deke), and soccer (Phi Delta Theta). They had the worst features of the organizations they replaced—hazing and hell-raising—and none of the virtues. Worse, the underground groups were sometimes perpetuated by pressuring fellow athletes whose decisions to join were more often driven by a desire to be accepted as teammates than as brothers. Elsewhere, the self-selection in admissions had produced a majority population that had no use for fraternities at all.

Throughout 1989–90 students trickled into the dean’s office complaining of fraternity activity, including late-night marauding in the dormitories. Parents wrote to say the College was violating its “fraternity-free” promise. The faculty urged that the administration “take whatever steps necessary” to uphold the complete fraternity ban, and deans and others had tried, back and front door, to convince athletes of suspect teams that they were on a collision
The athletic department required team members to sign “no fraternity” pledges, and in early 1989 Dean Earl Smith wrote the football coach, Tom Austin, to say it was “only a matter of time” before the LCAs (Lambda Chi Alphas) were caught, and to warn that there could be no forgiving.¹

That fall, in addition to making agreements with the athletic department, football and soccer players signed pledges for their coaches as well. The promises were mostly ignored. At the end of the football season the LCA underground group pledged seventeen new members. The undoing came during “hell week,” in March 1990. LCA members rented Cambridge Valley Grange 582 in nearby Somerset County, and blindfolded pledges were taken there on two occasions, first for a “vigil” and, on March 17, for an initiation. Grange hall neighbors, accustomed to little more noise than the oohs and aahs of a fine potluck supper, were irritated by the raucous proceedings and called the cops. The responding state police sergeant thought he had come upon a satanic cult. Candles lighted the hall and a cow’s head hung on each end of the small stage where several men stood around in their underwear. On the main floor were forty-five or so onlookers. Two mortified chickens scurried among kegs of beer. “Lambda Chi Alpha” was scrawled on the wall. The students politely told the officer it was a fraternity initiation. Relieved that he had not stumbled into the netherworld, he told them to pack up and leave. They returned to Waterville and a local establishment called The Plaza to conclude the initiation with the ritualistic decapitation of the birds.

The next morning the College security director drove to Cambridge and met grange leader, Clara Watson, who was perturbed at being duped by “those polite and well-mannered kids.” She offered up a muddy five-page document that had been dropped in the grange parking lot in the hasty retreat the night before. It contained a sophomoric account of the year’s fraternity activities and signatures of all seventeen pledges.

It took two weeks to sort things out, and in the meantime the campus screamed for retribution. “If this frat is allowed to go free,” the Echo fumed, “the student body will have been punished more than the guys who are actually in the damn things.” The newspaper said to “throw the book” at them. Dozens of students wrote President Cotter, urging punishment. In the end, on the advice of an ad hoc faculty-student advisory group, twenty-nine sophomores and juniors were suspended for the coming fall term. Seventeen were football players. A full nine played baseball. Nineteen seniors were barred

¹. Janice Seitzinger was on sabbatical leave in 1989–90. Smith, her predecessor as dean of students, filled in for the year.
from Commencement. Freshmen were put on probation and assigned public service. Within a week, word spread that the soccer and hockey groups had quietly dissolved.²

Lawsuits were never far behind any of the College actions against fraternities, and first in the parade of new plaintiffs were several seniors barred from Commencement. The case went to none other than Superior Court Justice Donald Alexander, by then a veteran adjudicator of fraternity cases. He promptly rejected a request for a temporary restraining order, ruling that the student conduct had “direct and significant” campus impact “detrimental to the College” and that the penalties were nothing more than traditional college discipline, not an issue of civil rights.

The plaintiffs realigned. Represented by the Maine Civil Liberties Union, nineteen students pressed for trial in the more distant Cumberland County Superior Court to permanently enjoin the College from carrying out the discipline. The venue would have escaped the consistent Justice Alexander, but the suspended students asked for an expedited decision; to their chagrin, the case was shifted to Alexander’s Androscoggin County court in Lewiston. The August case was brought principally under the Maine Civil Rights Act, asserting Colby had denied students their First Amendment right of free association and expression. The argument might have held water at a public institution, but Alexander ruled that “limiting the right of a private college to impose standards of civility, decorum or participation” would be a “radical departure” from the current law and not suggested anywhere in the short history of Maine’s Civil Rights Act. Moreover, he wrote in his denying order, many students had chosen Colby because it did not have fraternities. For the court to authorize fraternity activity at Colby, he said, would “violate the rights of these students to associate with each other and gain an education in a fraternity-free environment.”

The squelching of the underground fraternities rekindled the hard feelings of those still bitter about the initial abolition. Robert Livingston (R-Louisiana), chairman of the powerful U.S. House Appropriations Committee and a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon since his undergraduate days at Tulane, wrote

². The Cambridge Valley Grange had not been painted for thirty years, and the $35 rental fees were accumulating in a fund to do the job. In mid-May, Jeffrey Cox ’90 led a group of some twenty students who set out to repair both the hall and Colby’s damaged reputation in the town of Cambridge (population five hundred). With College-donated equipment and materials, the students spent two days scraping, painting, and sprucing up.
the presidents of Colby, Bowdoin, and Middlebury, saying they were in violation of Title IX and hinting they were risking the federal funds his committee handed out. “Limiting free speech and freedom of association on your campus with a federal taxpayer subsidy should be avoided at all cost,” the letter said. Middlebury president John McCardell Jr. fired back, saying that Middlebury did not discriminate (by requiring fraternities to admit women), and challenging Livingston to make his free speech charge public. “If ... you choose to involve the Congress ... in the affairs of a private institution that has existed longer than the state you represent, I for one am prepared to let the public decide, at the ballot box, the merits of the case.” Cotter’s reply was a single paragraph: “as the first male college in New England to admit women, we are strong supporters of equal opportunity and we share your concern that some organizations (perhaps, including many national fraternities) may violate the spirit of Title IX by their exclusion of women.”

The renewed fraternity debate also gave fuel to a growing fire of critics who claimed colleges everywhere were preaching a new orthodoxy and were absorbed with political correctness. When a student at Brown University was expelled for yelling insults at minority students, the right wing cried foul. President George Bush (the forty-first) attacked the “new intolerance” on the campuses, and in 1991 Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Illinois) introduced the Collegiate Speech Protection Act that would have withheld federal funds from colleges that forbade racial and sexual harassment. Cotter was president-elect of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), and he joined others in a meeting with Hyde, arguing that regulations aimed at stopping harassment would not stifle the free exchange of ideas. The bill withered and died.

Cotter, like many college presidents, took the position that the right of free speech stopped short of directed hatefulness. “People who use words as weapons against others,” he said, “should find no shelter at our colleges and universities.” Political correctness (PC), he said, was like cholesterol. There were two kinds: good and bad. “If one advocates that members of minority groups be treated equally and with respect,” he said, one should wear the PC attack “as a badge of honor.” Bad PC comes, he said, “when anyone engages in actions that abridge free speech.”

A 1990 report of a Task Force on Women and Gender was a target of the PC

3. Cotter was succeeded as NAICU president by Widener University president Robert Bruce ’59.
police. Its very first recommendation said “freshmen” should thereafter be called “first-years.” Cotter called it bad PC and continued to call them freshmen. The PC debate aside, the report’s sixty-eight recommendations included many that broadened the feminist perspectives in the curriculum and improved the safety, classroom climate, and health care for women. Within two years special programs director Joan Sanzenbacher (who already had the extra assignment as equal opportunity employer compliance officer), added the job of director of women’s services to her repertoire.

While others jeered at what to them seemed liberalism gone bonkers, many on the campuses said it was simply the newest arm of social change for the better. Cal Mackenzie (government), director of the College’s new Public Policy Program, said the “grinding noise” was “nothing more than the awkward way colleges change and progress.” In 1953 Cotter debated Robert Peck, legislative counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union, and agreed with Peck that some codes were too broad, but argued that carefully drawn codes that protected individuals from words used to injure in fact broadened the opportunity for free speech and inquiry.4

Sensitivity antennas were up everywhere. In 1990, when veteran protestor Ann R. Kist came to speak, males were excluded from the audience. They howled in a protest of their own. What was good for the goose was good for the gander. College authorities agreed and the word went out that everything must be open to everybody.

Critics of the new orthodoxy were wrong in assuming college faculties were as one in their quest to change the world, and wrong as well in believing students were puppets on the strings of those who wanted change. Although

4. Colby’s free speech regulation, unchanged since 1991, reads: “The right of free speech and the open exchange of ideas and views is essential, especially in a learning environment, and Colby vigorously upholds these freedoms. Similarly, the College is committed to maintaining a community in which persons of all ethnic groups, religious affiliations, and nationalities are welcome. The College will not tolerate racism, harassment, including sexual harassment, or intimidation of any kind; any student found guilty of such actions or of interfering with these goals will be subject to civil prosecution as well as suspension or expulsion from Colby.”

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a new international studies major (1990) led by Kenneth Rodman (government) was far less controversial than had been the introduction of non-Western studies, in 1991 the faculty debated long and hard before fiddling with graduation requirements and adding one in the broad arena of diversity. It said students must take at least one course related to issues involving two or more subjects including race, class, gender, and non-European cultures. Opponents argued that students were already taking these courses (90 percent were) and that, however noble the notion, delivering these subjects to students ought not to be done by requirement.\footnote{Effective with the Class of ’95, students needed to meet the new diversity requirement, the continuing requirements in English and foreign language, and take one course each in the areas of arts, historical studies, literature, and quantitative reasoning, and two, including a laboratory course, in natural sciences.} Dealing with curricular diversity in the more or less civil milieu of faculty discourse was one thing. Managing diversity in the after-class student environment was quite another. Here, a tiny number of students who posted hateful signs or hurled demeaning insults could disrupt the entire campus for days.

Solutions seemed to go in opposite directions. The discourse had to be increased, and at the same time the talk had to soften. The conversation spread to many new venues. In 1990 a campus student chapter of the national Society Organized Against Racism (SOAR) was formed and quickly had one hundred members. Two years later a faculty and staff chapter was added with Pat and Ruth Brancaccio (English) as cochairs. In 1991 Cotter formed and chaired the ad hoc Campus Community Committee, a monthly breakfast lightning rod for discussions with campus leaders and student and faculty representatives from all of the ethnic, racial, and religious groups. The Marson Club Room (gift of Dorothy and David Marson) in the Student Center was reincarnated as the Marson Common Ground, where students could gather to learn about other cultures and share their own. After a year of ruminating, the faculty approved a revision of the class schedule to open a weekday morning slot for community Spotlight Lectures. The resurrection of Bixler’s academic convocations featured speakers and performances of general interest.

Even with the new opportunities for dialogue, students said there wasn’t enough. In April 1992 some two hundred clogged the lobby and stairwell of Roberts Union leading to upstairs meetings of the board of trustees. A leader explained they were demonstrating frustration and concern about student voices not being heard and things not getting done. Cotter, ever eager for the facts, leaned over the railing and called for an example. Someone from down
below yelled that despite repeated student complaints the Roberts Dining Hall had been out of strawberry jam for a week.

There was more to it than strawberry jam. Since the inception of the Residential Commons, student leadership had become so broad and decentralized that lines of student power were blurred, and the work of the many committees was not being effectively communicated to the general student body.

In the aftermath of the Los Angeles jury verdict in the Rodney King case, and as the student power movement simmered, a poster depicting the beating of King appeared as an advertisement for the annual Senior Art Show. It was intended as a statement of outrage over injustice, but it provoked outrage itself and brought what Cotter called “a storm of revulsion and hurt.” Two days later a second poster appeared, this one purposefully using racial and ethnic slurs to test the right of free speech. Even as the campus was absorbing all of this, a faculty victim of sexual harassment, speaking at a rally in support of women’s issues, told of her attack and revealed the name of her attacker, a faculty member who had admitted his guilt and was gone from the College. Before the year ended, the president issued an eighteen-point plan designed to “redouble our efforts to build an inclusive and supportive campus community.” It expanded the freshman reading assignment to include the whole campus, incorporated material on racism, sexism, and harassment into new faculty orientation, and increased programs on multicultural issues in the dormitories.

The end of the academic year, at least, brought good humor. Comedian Bill Cosby was the speaker at what was at once the coldest (40 degrees) and warmest (Cosby shook the hands of all 462 graduates) Commencement ever. His invitation was bolstered by his friendship with the late civil rights leader Whitney Young, whose grandson, Mark Boles, was a senior.

The Cosby invitation languished for a long time—a very long time for Cotter—without an answer. Cotter moved on and invited Georgetown University Professor Madeleine Albright, poised to be the U.S. United Nations ambassador, later President Bill Clinton’s secretary of state. Two days later Cosby volunteered. For a moment the College had the potential of two Commencement speakers. Albright graciously understood

6. Angela Toms was recognized as Colby’s 20,000th graduate in the College’s 175-year history.
and withdrew. She was offered an honorary degree in 1993, but when senior class president Jeff Baron got Senator Robert Dole (R-Kansas) as speaker, Albright wasn’t inclined to be upstaged by the country’s leading Republican and withdrew. Dole was met with polite protest. Some students and faculty wore pins with a pineapple and a red slash (no Dole), and others wore various ribbons: purple for pro-choice, pink for lesbian and gay rights, green for the environment, blue for laborers, and rainbows for racial tolerance.

By the fall of 1992, diversity conversations had moved into the delicate arena of religion. For a long time Colby had been fully secular. Now, the founding Baptist influence had disappeared and the only official religious trappings were ecumenical. Although the fraternity decision had taken the headlines from the report of the Trustee Commission on Campus Life, the report also included the recommendation that the College have a tripart chaplaincy, with leadership for Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. It was Cotter’s idea, and he made it clear that he expected the chaplains to support all world religions on the campus.

Episcopal priest Roland Thorwaldsen was the first non-Baptist College chaplain; after 1980 he was followed by two other Episcopal priests, professor and preacher Thomas Longstaff (philosophy) and, in 1981, the Reverend John Ineson. By 1978 the College had an unofficial Catholic chaplain, the Reverend Paul Coté, assigned and supported by the Diocese of Portland and residing on campus. With the adoption of the commission report, the College appointed three chaplains, the Reverend Ron Morrell of the China Baptist Church, Father Coté, and Rabbi Raymond Krinsky of Beth Israel Synagogue in Waterville. Coté was reassigned and replaced first by the Reverend John Skeehan (1985) and then by the Reverend John Marquis (1989) who with Morrell and Krinsky provided both religious services and counseling, sharing time and space in Lorimer Chapel.

It all went swimmingly until the Commons Presidents Council, in a well-intended gesture, called for cancellation of classes on Yom Kippur. Cotter expressed his approval of the sensitivity, but explained Colby had traditionally maintained neutrality with regard to holidays. Students and faculty could absent themselves from College obligations on their holidays, but classes and activities would not be cancelled. The Student Association jumped into the fray and sent a letter to faculty suggesting exams and papers scheduled due on Yom Kippur be postponed. Most obliged. Some didn’t.
Since the 1980s the College had been displaying menorahs along with Christmas decorations and serving matzo during Passover. Beginning in 1993, a dormitory room was left empty to make space for Muslim students to hold Friday prayers. Someone removed the menorah from its place next to a Christmas tree on the library steps; in response a sign was left by the tree, deploring the emphasis on Christianity. One thing led to another, and before long the suggestion was made that the cross come down from the chapel tower. Although the chapel was by turns religious for services and secular for public events, its six hundred seats provided the only midsize venue for major programs and for the new Spotlight Lectures. A few Jewish students and faculty said they were uncomfortable attending these events under the cross of Jesus. It was a good moment to pause, and Cotter formed a multifaith committee to explore the matter of religious symbols. At the same time he asked members to “find a way to honor our historical traditions.” In the end, the committee agreed: “Because the cross reflects the recent architectural history of the Mayflower Hill campus and is for many an important symbol, it should not be removed.”

Through all the diversity contretemps, Bill Higgins ’92 and Karyn Rimas ’93, president and vice president of the Student Association, worked to keep lines of communication open and civil. They felt it was about time to get together for something other than demonstrations and debate, and planned a giant outdoor party for Colby’s 180th birthday. On February 27, 1993, the granite steps of the library were cleared of snow and ice. Students and faculty gathered shivering in the night, laughing, singing, watching fireworks, and eating frozen cake.

OH, SO HAPPY

Despite the tensions of campus life, students were happy. In fact, it was claimed that they were the happiest in all the land. Maybe they were. After all, they liked their teachers, after-class activities were booming, living spaces were moving upscale, and strawberry jam was back in the dining halls. And all the while, planners were at work setting a course for more improvements and, to pay for them, a fundraising drive with a goal that topped all previous campaigns combined.

7. Someone suggested that the problem could be solved by installing a retractable cross, with folding arms.
8. The chapel bells, installed in 1947, relied on antiquated vacuum tubes for the amplification system that had not worked for several years. John (’52) and Carol Briggs gave new state-of-the-art carillon bells in honor of former dean of men George Nickerson and his wife, Ruth. They soon began to ring Westminster Chimes on the hour, together with recorded music of the alma mater and a selection of songs of many faiths—as well as of the Beatles.

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Ridgely Bullock stepped down as chair of the board in 1990, the result of his own urging that bylaws be changed and trustees and board chairs have limited terms. Lawrence Pugh became the twenty-third in line as chair. Pugh, like Bullock, was a perfect fit with Cotter. The two shared a lofty vision for Colby, and each was aggressively committed to seeing it met. When it came to raising money, it was hard to say no to either of them.

There was only a bit of juggling of Cotter’s senior team. Vice president Stanley Nicholson, who called himself the “dean of stuff,” resigned that year to return home to Montana. Beyond his creative leadership in making budgets fit the aggressive growth, he and his wife, Colleen, had been an integral part of the community, leading orientation trips and, as faculty residents of Goddard-Hodgkins dormitory, advising and entertaining students. Nicholson’s successor was a poet and a businessman. Arnold Yasinski held both an English Ph.D. and an M.B.A. and came to Colby from the E. I. Du Pont de Nemours Company. The fifth and longest-serving of the College’s administrative vice presidents, he oversaw the construction of more new and renovated College buildings than any of his predecessors.

Among Yasinski’s first tasks was to improve the food. Eating had always been first or second on the continuum of strongest student urges and cafeteria food shared a similarly lofty place among their complaints. Following the notion that one way to student contentment was through the stomach, Yasinski teamed with a succession of talented local managers of Seiler’s food service (later Sodexho) to improve service and tweak the menus. Students were invited to bring recipes from home and Dana Hall began to offer “fast food.” By 1992 a student poll showed a dining service approval rating of 93 percent.

The remaining senior officers stayed in place. By 1993 Bob McArthur had completed two four-year terms as dean of faculty; when local search results failed to please Cotter or the full search committee, McArthur signed on for four more. The only other senior change was in name only. In 1993 Dean of Students Janice Seitzinger married local physician Lawrence Kassman ’69, and took his name.

After the Gulf War of 1991 (students tied a yellow ribbon around the library tower), the political focus of after-class activities shifted to the home front. Of
the sixty various student clubs and organizations, many were focused on public service. Jennifer Alfond '92 began the first campuswide recycling effort, gathering volunteers to collect waste paper in the offices and dormitories. The College was soon saving $7,000 a month on dumping fees as tons of paper were trucked to Scott Paper Company's recycling facility in Winslow. In 1992 Tara Estra '94 held a variety show at the local Opera House to raise money for Maine AIDS support organizations. That same year Heather Vultee '93 was recognized by President Bush as the 958th in his 1000 Points of Light program for her work with the Colby Friends program, begun in 1988, matching students with local youngsters in need of mentors.9

Concern for community needs covered the broad front and the campus diversity debate surfaced again in March 1994, when members of a new group called Students of Color United for Change overwhelmed a breakfast meeting of the Campus Community Committee and asked that a dormitory be set aside where students could live and support multicultural education. Trustees, still wary of special interest housing in the aftermath of fraternities, charged a committee to have another look at the Commons system "to see how well it supports the increasing diversity of our community." Trustee James Crawford '64 led the investigation. The committee had barely begun its work when Nazi swastikas appeared on walls in several of the buildings, and once again the campus roiled in protest and disgust. More than six hundred students rallied on the library steps. The College subsidized ticket prices for a special showing of the film Schindler's List. The hateful incidents detracted from the useful business of creating an improved climate for minority students.

Still and all, things were more sunny than cloudy. In 1994 the Princeton Review book, The Student Access Guide to the Best Colleges, declared Colby had the happiest students in the entire country. Although deans said it couldn't be proven by the traffic through their offices, the declaration tended to make things even happier. Perception became reality. Even the grumpiest students were warmed at the thought. Happiness was everywhere. "They love their beautiful, secluded campus," the book said. "They love outdoor sports even during the 'frozen tundra' winter months in Maine, and they love their classes." Else-

9. Bush left office in 1993 and the following year gave the Colby commencement address as the first presidential guest of the College since Herbert Hoover had spoken at the 1937 Lovejoy Centennial. Kathy McKiernan '90, Cassie O'Neill '91, and David Leavy '92 worked on the campaign of Bush's successor, Bill Clinton, and all three landed jobs at the White House.
where, Colby’s name appeared near the top of short lists for having a “beautiful campus,” for a faculty that “brings material to life,” and for a “great library.” In fact, the happiness was measurable. Admissions applications went up on one end and the graduation rate went up on the other. In a single year, proud and happy students bought nine thousand Colby baseball caps from the bookstore.

Although Colby had met the most formidable challenges of the 1980s, victories and happiness were not without cost, nor were future challenges less daunting. Competition for the best teachers had stiffened, and the new technology increased demands on tight budgets. Always lurking was the need to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure of a growing physical plant. The gravest need was for student financial aid. Although the decline in the number of the nation’s eighteen-year-olds had bottomed out by 1992, the steady sharp rises in tuition charges in the midst of a faltering economy put a strain on the middle class and multiplied the need for financial aid. Two-thirds of all Colby students now qualified for full or partial grant aid. The concern was high on Cotter’s agenda during his term as president of the NAICU (1992–93), and as the private college representative on a nine-member federal Commission on Financing Higher Education. He talked about his worry almost everywhere he went.

Preparring for the challenges of the new millennium began at a retreat of trustees and key administrators in 1990 where the stage was set for a close look at five key areas: curriculum, diversity, student life, facilities, and financial resources. Across the campus and beyond, more than one hundred students, faculty, and others worked a full year to map the way into the next century. Even before the plan was adopted in May 1991 trustees gave the green light to $5 million in new campus construction. Included was a four-story addition to the Lovejoy classroom building, a new building for admissions and financial aid, and a central steam plant.

Planning for the hungry sciences had begun long before. In the late 1980s Dean McArthur launched an internal study to figure out how the College

10. Some measure of extra happiness could be attributed to the new “wellness” graduation requirement, adopted in 1994 and mandated for the Class of 1998. The old “phys-ed” requirement was modified to include required attendance at a series of ten evening lectures on “mental, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual fitness,” which met half of the new requirement. The rest came by joining in any of eight lifetime sports activities. The wellness aspect was directed by Melanie Thompson, M.D., the College’s first woman director of the health center.