

# Colby



## Colby Magazine

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Volume 87  
Issue 3 *Fall 1998*

Article 4

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October 1998

## Fourth Floor Eustis

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### Recommended Citation

(1998) "Fourth Floor Eustis," *Colby Magazine*: Vol. 87 : Iss. 3 , Article 4.

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## Diamonds in the Rough

Twenty-four years ago a stocky 10-year-old kid named Mark McGwire began hitting balls over the fence in California Little League games. It was the start of something big.

That same summer, on the opposite coast, 12-year-old Grace Reef '83 was making headlines with some fence busting of her own. Reef grabbed the spotlight with her tenacity and charm during a court fight that led to the elimination of youth baseball's boys-only rule. The first girl in the world to play in a sanctioned Little League program, Reef became a symbol of children's rights.

Skip to 1998. Mark McGwire has hit a few more home runs, including enough this season to eclipse Roger Maris's 37-year-old Major League record. And he gave a million bucks to help abused children.

Grace Reef? She's still swinging for the fences, too. As an influential advocate for the Children's Defense Fund, she puts into practice every day the beliefs most of us hold about caring for kids. The roots of her conviction, she says, took hold during that summer long ago when a group of narrow adults told her she wasn't welcome.

The use of baseball as a metaphor for American life may be overdone, but in this year of record-breaking home runs the game seems an appropriate platform from which to honor the achievements of Grace Reef, a power hitter with heart.

Maybe the saying is true. Diamonds really are a girl's best friend.



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