

April 1999

Larry Pugh Hits Term Limit, Jim Crawford on Deck

Stephen Collins
Colby College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine>

Recommended Citation

Collins, Stephen (1999) "Larry Pugh Hits Term Limit, Jim Crawford on Deck," *Colby Magazine*: Vol. 88 : Iss. 2 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine/vol88/iss2/10>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by the College Archives: Colbiana Collection at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Magazine by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.

Larry Pugh Hits Term Limit, Jim Crawford on Dec

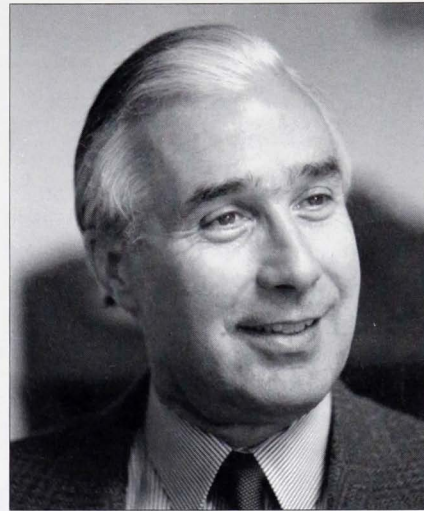
by Stephen Collins '74



Larry Pugh and Bill Cotter

After eight extraordinarily productive years as chair of Colby's Board of Trustees, Larry Pugh '56 runs up against the term limit at the end of June. He will continue to serve on the board but will pass the gavel to Jim Crawford '64, who takes over as chair July 1.

Asked to sum up Pugh's major accomplishments in a brief quote, President Bill Cotter, who is not a loquacious man, talked until three notebook pages were filled. The success of two capital campaigns, the strength of Colby's Board of Trustees, more than 20 faculty chairs endowed on Pugh's watch, the collegial relationship between the trustees and the faculty, and physical improvements on campus in the past decade—all can be traced to Pugh's leadership, Cotter says.



Crawford (right) sees Pugh as a terrific role model. He says he will try to emulate Pugh's style, which he characterized as "inclusive, cooperative and based on consensus building."

"Larry is an extremely efficient person," said Cotter. "He understands complex issues readily and he makes good decisions quickly." As chair he has been intricately engaged in college affairs. "He's on every committee and he goes to all the meetings; he's enormously conscientious about that." Despite having been chair and CEO of a \$5 billion a year corporation during most of his term, Pugh (now retired from the VF Corporation) was always accessible. "If I had a question, I would always get a call back, almost always the same day, even when he was abroad on business," Cotter said.

Both Cotter and Crawford praised Pugh's considerable ability as a consensus builder, which he first demonstrated as chair of the special commission that studied residential life in 1983. He built near-unanimous support for the transition from fraternities to Colby's residential commons system and carried that momentum through a period of reconciliation before being named board chair in 1991.

In the capital campaign, Pugh led by example. "He set

the standard for giving in the beginning of the campaign (endowing the Pugh Family Professorship in Economics in 1992) and then redoubled his gift to support scholarships during the victory phase," Cotter said. "It's a tribute to Larry that this campaign will be at least thirty percent over its original goal."

But those gifts don't include his most visible contribution—funds to build the multicultural center that bears his name. If there is a hallmark for Larry Pugh's innumerable contributions to Colby, The Pugh Center is it. Physically at the center of the campus and conceptually at the center of Colby's efforts to be inclusive, The Pugh Center is a distinctive Colby solution to a challenge felt throughout higher education—how to honor the diversity of people who make up the College with a facility that is inclusive rather than exclusive. The center was conceived after Pugh commissioned an ad hoc group to solve that challenge, and the facility was built in 1996 after Pugh pledged the naming gift and buttonholed fellow trustees into stretching their own pledges to help build

the center. Recalling the dedication ceremony, when students of all backgrounds and colors told what the building meant to them, Pugh said, "That was a very emotional day, not just for me and my family but for everybody in that room."

Asked if he had any advice for his successor, Jim Crawford, Pugh said: "Make sure he gets a good president like Bill Cotter."

Crawford, who has served eight years on the board, says he sees Pugh as a terrific role model. He says he will try to emulate Pugh's style, which he characterized as "inclusive, cooperative and based on consensus building."

The obvious priority for the board during Crawford's first year at the helm will be the selection of a successor to Bill Cotter, and Crawford said the College has grown so strong under Pugh's and Cotter's leadership that he is optimistic that outstanding candidates will come forward. A related initiative is development of a new long-range plan for the College, a process that is underway. That plan will serve as a blueprint for the transition from the Cotter years into

the next president's term, Crawford says. Among other goals for the College, Crawford lists increasing alumni annual giving participation to 50 percent, continuing to increase the diversity of Colby's student body and faculty and strengthening financial aid and scholarship programs.

Originally from Connecticut, Crawford is the chairman and CEO of the James River Coal Company in Richmond, Va. While a term limit of eight years in Colby's corporate bylaws prevents Pugh from continuing as chair, there will be consistency in leadership as Crawford, who has been vice-chair, brings many similar strengths to the position. Both Crawford and Pugh are successful executives of major corporations, both love Maine and have houses on the coast, and both are good listeners with leadership styles that emphasize wide-open consultation rather than autocratic decision making, Cotter says. Both men are Colby graduates and both are married to Colby grads—Jean VanCuran Pugh '55 and Linda Johnson Crawford '64—who are active in Colby affairs.