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Gifts & Grants

Stephen Collins
Colby College

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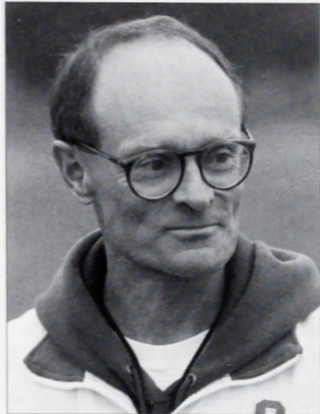
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A Running Theme

Wescott Scholarship Fund recognizes coach's deft mentoring

By Stephen Collins '74



Jim Wescott

Wescott says having a role in that kind of improvement is more gratifying than seeing an even more gifted athlete break the four-minute barrier.

Jim Wescott (physical education), who coaches crosscountry and track and field, recalls with clarity the names and personalities of students he has coached in 21 years at Colby, particularly those in a remarkable group from the mid-1980s. They were close-knit and driven to succeed, both on and off the track, he says. There were three All-Americans and a couple of Phi Beta Kappa members on the team. There was a relay team that went to the Intercollegiate Amateur Athletic Association relays at Princeton University.

One of the runners, who wishes to remain anonymous, hasn't forgotten Wescott either. Trustees learned this spring that \$300,000 was given to the College to establish the James B. Wescott Scholarship Fund to honor the man who has coached runners at Colby since 1978.

Wescott came to Colby after 12 years at North Carolina State University, most of those years as head coach. There he elevated the Division I program to the point that several NC State teams ranked as high as second in the Atlantic Coast Conference before he left. Having attended a small college, however, he was eager to return to those roots and to spend less time "on the road, recruiting all the time." Division III, he said, "is just as much fun from a coaching standpoint, and they [Colby athletes] seem to do it for a more pure reason—for the love of the game."

The clarity of Wescott's memory of former students ex-

tends even to race times. He recalls Tom Pickering '85, whose high school best time in the mile was 4:24. While at Colby and under Wescott's tutelage, Pickering reduced his time to 4:06, a Colby record that still stands. Wescott says having a role in that kind of improvement is more gratifying than seeing an even more gifted athlete break the four-minute barrier.

The donor of the Wescott scholarship remembers the critical role that achievement played

in the development of Pickering's confidence and character. "He blossomed; it was a tremendous transformation of a person," he said. "Without Jim Wescott's perseverance it never would have happened." Hence, the Wescott Scholarship.

"It's quite an honor, that's for sure," said Wescott, who emphasized the role of athletics as a co-curricular component—a partnership—in the overall development of students in college. ♦

No April Fool

Colby got a surprise on April Fool's Day, but it was no joke. President Bill Cotter received a letter that Colby was to receive a \$1.41-million bequest from a man who died in 1960 and who had no obvious ties to the College.

Fairfield native Harry L. Holmes (1869-1960) had apparently named Colby in his will at the casual request of his attorney, James Boyle of Waterville, after Boyle suggested Holmes "might well leave the residue of his estate to some institutions."

Holmes worked at Keyes Fibre, now Chinnet, as general manager and treasurer until his retirement in 1931. His wife had passed away in 1930 and they had no children. His only sister died at the age of 5. When Holmes died 39 years ago he had no close surviving relatives.

Holmes left \$150 per month for life or until marriage to his faithful housekeeper, M. Ann Callahan, and the remainder of his assets were left in a trust. When Callahan died recently Colby and the Good Will-Hinckley School became eligible to split the balance of Holmes's estate.

Holmes stipulated in his will that the money "shall be applied or allocated to some worthy fund or purpose or to some distinct improvement for the general good of the institution."

For Museum and Libraries

Stephen Tilton '43, who already had established the Stephen Tilton Fund at Colby for the support of the Museum of Art and the College's libraries, recently added a \$500,000 gift annuity to the fund. Tilton, who said he has a long-standing interest in both art and libraries, began his career in 1950 with *The Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*, where he still works.