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From the President

David Greene
david.greene@colby.edu

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

In October we honored the brilliant journalist and author Katherine Boo with the Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award for courageous journalism. Many are familiar with her through her stunning and celebrated work of nonfiction, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, which tells the stories of families living in a Mumbai undercity. She immersed herself in their world for three and a half years to be able to report with great authenticity on their struggles and occasional triumphs. When one of our students asked how she built trust with the subjects of her research, she replied, “My greatest tool is time.” Her commitment to her craft and to discovering the truth is admirable and a wonderful lesson for our students.

Ms. Boo visited Colby in the same week that the latest Nobel Prizes were being announced. I have been fortunate to work with several Nobel laureates, and what has always struck me is that, like Katherine Boo, they have a depth of commitment to their work that is almost unmatched.

It is wonderful to celebrate talent and brilliance in its many forms, but I am reminded when I see great success that it is largely the result of plain old hard work. Of course, the combination of real talent and industry is unbeatable, and this might be where Colby has a distinctive advantage.

This came to mind recently while I was meeting with Paul Josephson, professor of history. The author of a dozen important books with more about to be released, his wide-ranging work on Russia, environmental issues, and science and technology has made major scholarly contributions and is emblematic of the intellectual depth and breadth of our faculty. To keep this pace of scholarly productivity while being an outstanding teacher and running more than 100 marathons (he is heading for 200!), he wakes before 4 a.m. to write. And he writes every day. Discipline and diligence help him maximize his considerable talent.

Those same attributes come to life in Brittany Chin '16, a computer science and mathematics double major who also serves as vice president of the Student Government Association and is a star on the women's lacrosse team (and a member of the NESCAC all-academic team). Brittany was telling me recently about her experience this summer working for a data science consulting company developing predictive models. I see in Brittany what I see in many of our students—this wonderful mix of drive and smarts with great values and a commitment to lifting all those around her. It is inspiring (and our faithful readers should be looking to hire her and other great Colby graduates!).

One member of the Colby family you can't hire—because we simply won't let her get away—is Sheila Ratte. Sheila has worked in food services at Colby for more than a half century, and many of you know her well. No task is too large or small for Sheila, who, in the midst of her tasks, is quick to offer a wry smile, a clever comeback. She seems to work every event we host, and she does it with grace and humor. My day is lightened when I see Sheila (as is everyone's burden who works with her—she never leaves a task undone). She reminds me that hard work is virtuous and an obligation of those of us lucky enough to make Colby our professional home.

Leading a complex organization like Colby requires a good eye for talent. But when I see the notable successes of those in our community (and beyond), I recognize that talent is only a starting point. There is no substitute for committing to a job done well and the hard work it takes to accomplish that goal. That's an attribute of Colby of which we can be justifiably proud.

David A. Greene