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From the Editor

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I'm graduating, too.

After 20 years at Colby as a non-traditional student, I'm taking a last walk across Miller Library lawn, packing up my stuff, and leaving Mayflower Hill. It's that time of year.

At least that's the way I find myself thinking of it as retirement from Colby approaches. Yes, I had four years as a student back in the day. But a couple of decades later I returned and started what I think of as an outstanding graduate program. It was very multidisciplinary, with intensive one-on-one work with pretty much the professor and subject of my choice.

Extragalactic astronomy. Moral philosophy. 16th-century French poetry (I read it in translation). Genomics and honeybees. The Civil Rights Movement. The history of the tattoo. Marsden Hartley's life and art. (That one involved making a film. There were numerous field trips.)

And yes, there was a serious off-campus study component in my program. Off the very top of my head (and it's funny what comes up when you think back), I remember a visit with an idealistic alumna named Gwynelle Dismukes '73, who had fled the city for a legendary commune in Summertown, Tenn., where utopia was gray-haired but hanging in. A day in an elementary school in the Mississippi Delta, where alum Alex Quigley '99 was in the classroom for Teach for America and conditions at the nearly all-Black school were proof that segregation and discrimination were alive and well.

In New York, it was a downtown shoot with Alex Katz, for the aforementioned Marsden Hartley film. When the elevator door opened into the studio, Aida was waiting. (Director Milton Guillén '15 and I were a bit star-struck.) Uptown at the *New York Times*, it was a few hours with Investigations Editor Rebecca

Corbett '74 and her team, which blew the whistle on Harvey Weinstein and helped trigger the #MeToo movement. Pre-Pulitzer, *Colby Magazine* was at the epicenter of global social change.

So a 20-year tour that began with trying to capture the inimitable Professor Charlie Bassett in words and print ends with digital-first, artificial intelligence, and climate-change research. (I think Professor Bassett would say machine learning is best taught to people who have read J.D. Salinger.) The interim was a whirlwind: hanging out with Colby students in Khayelitsha, a township outside of Cape Town, and the next week with other students in Downeast Maine. Then back on campus, where, if I was having a down day, a chat with a student inevitably would lift me back up. Just one example off the top of my head: coming away from a conversation with a determined first-gen first-year named Marnay Avant '18 and thinking sometimes the world seems like it's on the ropes, but with students like this, we're going to be okay. And one more: Jeronimo Maradiaga '08, who was the embodiment of honesty and determination.

So as I leave Mayflower Hill for my next book group (the other members are ages 5, 4, 3, and almost 2), it's with the knowledge that the students who pass through this place really do make the world better, that their education here—courtesy of an amazing collection of professors—equips them to tackle all manner of challenges, including the formidable ones we face today. And that Colby is helping to transform the Waterville community in bold and much-needed ways.

Good stories, good people, and the world in good hands. And a wave of positive momentum. Final takeaways don't get any better than that. I thank you for all of it.

Gerry Boyle '78, P'06
 Managing Editor