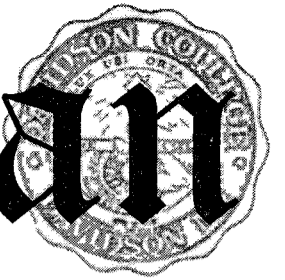


The Davidsonian

A L E N D A L U X U B I O R T A L I B E R T A S



DAVIDSON COLLEGE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1999

VOLUME 90, NUMBER 17

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Foremost College Weekly
ESTABLISHED 1914

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Distinguished alumnus creates new postgraduate scholarship

CARLOS-ANDRÉS LACAYO
Staff Writer

During the first week of February, the top 10% of this year's graduating class received a letter of invitation from Dr. Louis Ortmayer, Chairman of the College's Graduate Scholarship Committee, to apply for the inaugural W. Thomas Smith scholarship.

The Smith scholarship, established by a \$1 million gift from distinguished alumnus Tom Smith '48, will be awarded to a graduating senior in recognition of outstanding academic achievement, demonstrated leadership, and service to the community. The scholarship, which



◆ W. Thomas Smith Photo provided by Alumni Office

is open to all majors, is similar to other prestigious postgraduate awards, such as the Rhodes Scholarship, and will provide for the required expenses for two consecutive semesters of study at

a major university outside the United States. Seniors applying for the award are required to submit a written proposal discussing their study and career aspirations and their reason for studying at a major international university. Also required is a transcript, three recommendations (of which at least two must be from faculty), and an interview with the Smith Scholarship Selection Committee. Ortmayer said, "the Smith Scholarship permits us to

allow one of our best students to pursue a dream, academic in nature, but also inclusive of experiences that would help toward that student's long term professional goals."

W. Thomas Smith, a member of the class of '48, graduated with a degree in economics. He was a former editor of the campus yearbook, Quips & Cranks, a drum major in the ROTC band, and a member of Beta Theta Pi. A 1997 recipient of the Davidson Alumni Service Award, Smith has been a lifetime member

of the college's Board of Visitors, was instrumental in the planning and fundraising for the Visual Arts Center, and has managed grants of over \$2 million to the college.

Smith shared his views about this gift for his Alma Mater, saying that the idea originated from his admiration and respect for Rhodes Scholars. He also recognized that while Davidson did have a good many scholarships for undergraduate study, it did not have many for postgraduate study at international universities.

Smith stated that, "Fifty years ago, when the class of '48 was graduating to go join family business or go on to graduate school, we would have never entertained the possibility of accumulating \$1 million, \$1 million to give away.

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have accumulated enough money to make a \$1 million grant to form a scholarship for postgraduate study at a foreign university. It pleases me to be in a position to make this gesture at a time when income tax laws are favorable to this kind of

generosity, and it is my desire that other graduates follow my lead at this time. "When asked about how he made his idea a reality, Smith stated that he mentioned it to President Vagt when the President visited him at his home in Greenville, South Carolina. "I

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told him (Vagt) about my desire to have something similar to the Rhodes Scholarship at Davidson. I assumed it would require more than \$1 million to set up such a scholarship." According to Smith, Vagt responded by indicating that this amount would be enough to satisfy the financial requirements to establish the postgraduate gift. This was three weeks before the reunion of the class of '48. "At this moment," adds Smith, "I felt sure that there was not enough time to work out the details before the reunion." However, Smith said that Vagt assured him that there was plenty of time: "As soon as he returned to Davidson the next day, work began on the details, and it was in order

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Dr. Wendy Steiner speaks about the necessity of pornography

BY ASHLEY E. KING
News Editor

In the 900 Room of the College Union on Wednesday, February 10, Dr. Wendy Steiner, head of the English department at the University of Pennsylvania, delivered a controversial speech entitled "The Necessity of Pornography." Introduced as "one of the foremost critics in word and image studies," Steiner has written several books in her career as a professor, including *The Colors of Rhetoric and The Scandal of Pleasure*. In her speech, Steiner attempted to prove that pornography is an essential aspect of artistic expression. "My argument is going to be that pornography is necessary to art," Steiner said at the beginning of her discourse. She later added, "In many cases, pornography and high art are mere images of each other." She then delved into how several different forms of pornography are related to more accepted forms of "high art," asserting that pornography is necessary to understanding the entire spectrum of art.

Steiner first compared romantic literature to literary pornography. According to Steiner, the romance is linked to the values of a feudalistic society while pornography is associated with the values of Western capitalistic society. "Pornography is deeply entrenched in the notion of Republicanism," Steiner said. She supported this claim by saying that pornography explores the "notion of interchangeable value." She explained that just as one in today's American society would buy many different sweaters, wearing one on a certain day and another on the next, so do the main characters in pornography go from one partner to the next. In contrast, the romance examines the "question of transcendent value" where the setting up of an ideal is the focus. Steiner believes that the popularity of pornography has spread as a result of 20th century society "when the notion of

absolute values has had a hard time."

The next portion of Steiner's speech included a series of visual images that were meant to challenge the audience to think about how societies define pornography. "What we call pornography is terrifically culturally determined," Steiner said as she flashed famous works of art across the screen. All of these now respected works of art had once been denounced as indecent and pornographic. Pointing to the distinction that many in the art world make "between the nude and the naked in painting," Steiner argued that many representations accepted in art museums would not be acceptable to people in other settings. "People are worried about certain kinds of representation," she said. To further demonstrate her point, Steiner quoted Mark Twain who once said of a nude painting of Venus, "It is a trifle too strong for any place but a public art gallery." Steiner felt that Twain's ironic comment revealed how pornography is defined by culture and not by the actual content of the visual image.

Continuing with the concept that the obscene is not a concrete concept but rather an abstract construction, Steiner referenced many past conceptions of the vulgar that seem ridiculous today.

"A change in norms makes the objects that are called obscene seem foolish," Steiner said. For example, the chair skirts of the Victorian age were invented to cover the legs of the chair and thus protect the viewer from such an inappropriate sight. She also alluded to an art show that took place in Nazi Germany called "the degenerate art exhibition."

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◆ Steiner speaks with Emily Setina '99

Anna Judy

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