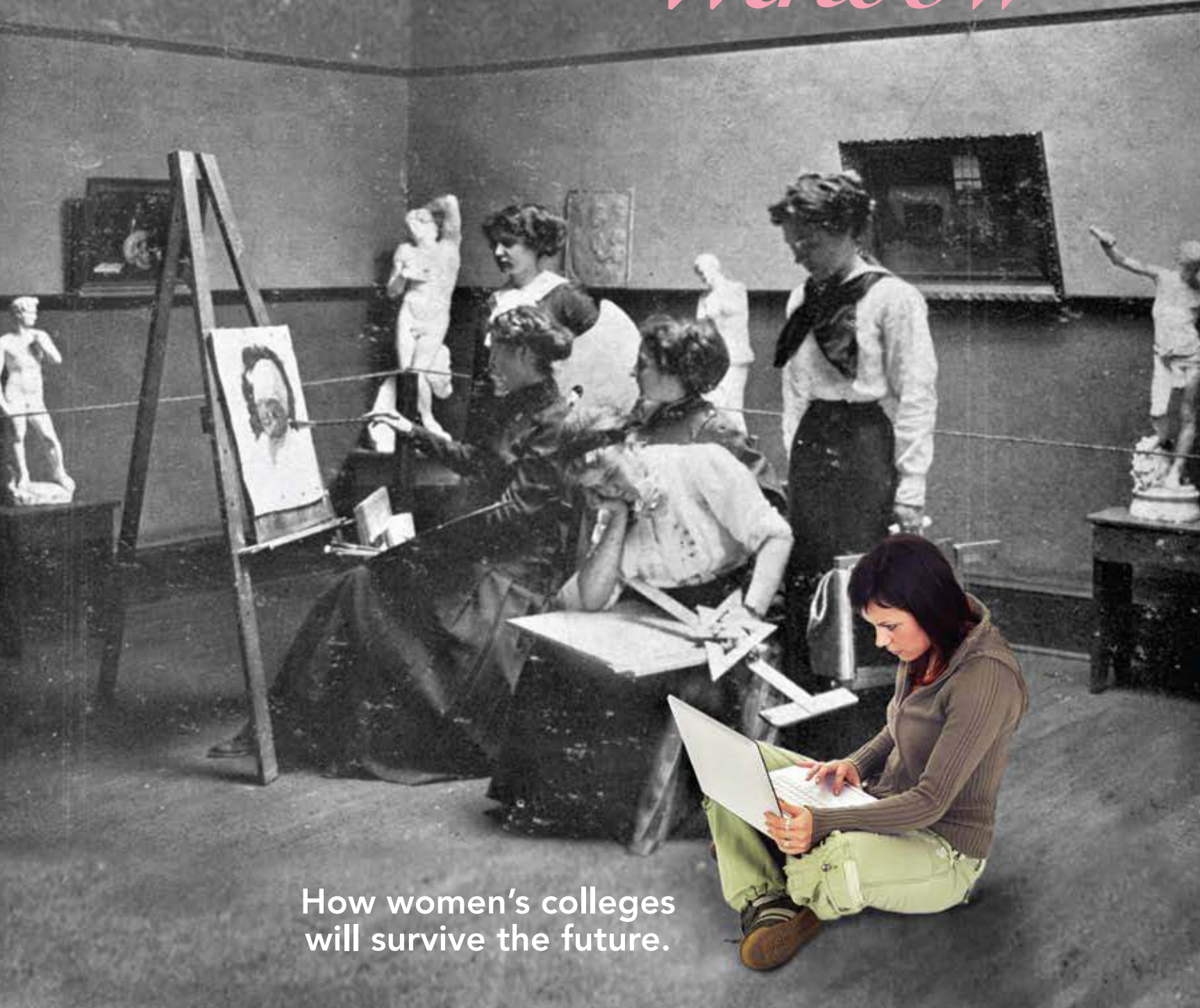


BRENAU

FALL 2007

Window



How women's colleges
will survive the future.

also inside:

Annual Report of Donors



Small World; Big Tent

Concordia University, Wisconsin President Patrick Ferry must be very proud. Two professors at the small liberal arts college made national news because they're running for Congress.

On the surface, that may not seem to be a big deal. We need look no farther than former faculty members from Young Harris College or the University of West Georgia to unearth the names Zell Miller and Newt Gingrich. What makes this story more compelling is the fact that these gentlemen are from different political parties; they're known on campus for arguing passionately over issues where they differ; and they're running against one another.

But, wait. There is more. Political Science Professor Jeffery Walz and History Professor James Burkee are literally best friends. Their campaigns share the same headquarters, yard signs and speaking engagements. If the Federal Election Commission approves, they'll divvy up contributions as well. That approach swings refreshingly away from the divisive, rancorous politics we've all endured in recent years and harkens to the days of Lincoln and Douglas. Despite rancorous, divisive politics of their day, and despite their having both courted the woman Lincoln eventually married, the two remained steadfast in their friendship until their deaths – all the while expounding on, examining and proposing very different ideas on critical issues for the nation.

The Burkee-Walz campaign also sets up a great paradigm for what “the university” ought to be about: intellectual curiosity, testing principles, pushing ideas to their limits – all in a forum conducive to exploring ideas from every possible point of view and talking openly and candidly about important things.

Those of us involved with small liberal arts institutions often harbor a conceit that we are part of an intimate cadre of intellectual colleagues so comfortable in our relationships that no subject is taboo, no point of view stifled. Truth is, usually the opposite is the case in these institutions for a

variety of reasons - from plain old politeness to the creeping epidemic of political correctness that threatens academic freedom on even the largest campuses.

We can't let that happen at Brenau. I'm not suggesting that we abandon good manners and good taste, but we must openly and honestly engage one another over bold ideas, examine issues from every possible point of view and, yes, intellectually test our principles and beliefs – or risk becoming intellectually stale. More importantly, we have a responsibility to ensure that intellectually active and competent, expressive people with open minds lead our students into a world that grows smaller each day, a world those students must engage with open minds and boldly articulated ideas. Future Brenau alumni must have total access to this ever-morphing and instantly communicating world. The university must prepare them to communicate and do business with peoples from the opposite side of the globe with ease and intelligence.

This fall term presents us with opportunities to put this into practice. We will immediately encounter two topics that raise people's hackles by our mere mention of the words: terrorism and abortion. Both present themselves not in forums for political or religious debate, but through art exhibits designed to do nothing more than get people thinking about these extremely polarizing subjects in a neutral setting – in a university art gallery – and talking about their true feelings. Likewise, this fall many Brenau stakeholders and others in our community will engage in discourse over whether the university should consider launching a medical school or other entrepreneurial health care program. At this point, we have only commissioned a feasibility study that will not be completed until early 2008. Critically, two major components of that study must be thorough, open discussions considering the practical, educational and philosophical aspects of this unique new opportunity.

Debate need not only divide. It can heal, too. Let's talk.

Ed Schrader, Ph.D.
eschrader@brenau.edu



WILL
SUCCESS
SPOIL
SINGLE-GENDER
EDUCATION
AT
BRENAU?

Women's College enrollments increased 50 percent in four years, counter to the national trends of declining enrollments of other single-gender institutions, many of which are 'going coed' or shutting down altogether. Once marketed as nurturing, safe havens for young women, many institutions are 're-inventing' themselves to deal with real-world imperatives. by David Morrison

first
woman to receive
Scientific Achievement
Award for cancer research.
Roslyn Wallace,
Brenau University

first
woman to become a
tenured full professor of
neurosurgery in the U. S.,
Frances K. Conley,
Bryn Mawr

first
environmentalist
who awakened public
consciousness through
her book, *Silent Spring*
in 1961.
Rachel Carson, Chatham

first
woman and only the
third person to complete
a 2,700 mile run
around Australia.
Sarah Fulcher, Salem

first
woman to win the Nobel
Prize in literature.
Pearl S. Buck,
Randolph-Macon
Women's College

When Helen Ray made plans to leave her Tulsa, Okla., high school, she wanted to go to a women's college. "That was where all the smartest, cleverest women went," says the Brenau University provost and vice president of academic affairs. "I wanted to be one of them."

She picked Randolph-Macon in Lynchburg, Va., from more than 300 Women's College choices. This fall, only 58 all-female higher education institutions in the United States opened for business. Ray's alma mater was not among them. It is now Randolph College, and the 115-year-old institution admitted about 100 males.

"It just... just... agghhh!... irritates me," the usually unruffled Ray says. "I am really concerned about this trend we're seeing across the nation."

The trend began in the 1960s when institutions like all-male Yale and all-female Vassar "went coed." Although at least partially rooted in the politics of the day, that "visible" reason for the changeover masked the realities that still dog women's colleges in 2007: tough financial issues that compel heart-wrenching decisions. It's the same for men's colleges, too. Only four all-male liberal arts institutions remain.

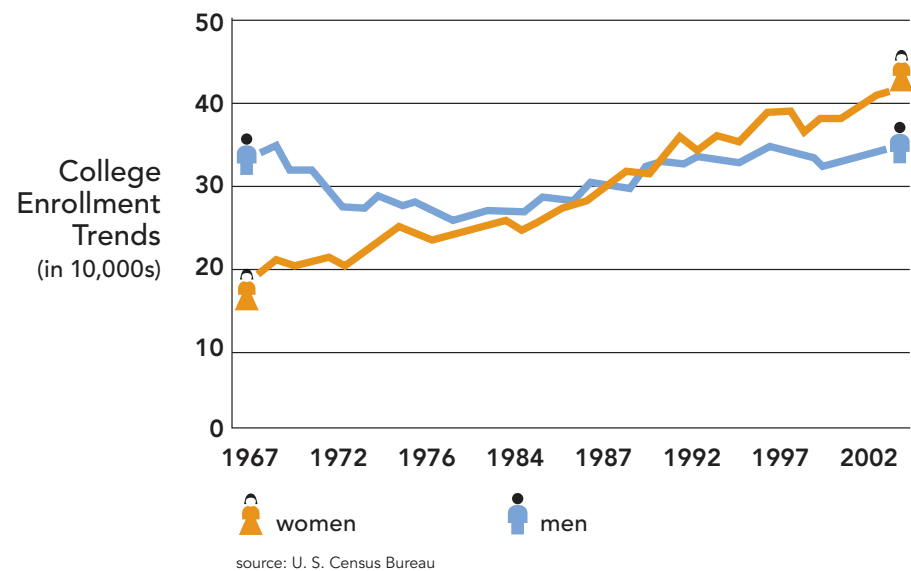
Just as a company must sell the products it makes to stay in business, colleges and universities survive by providing education stu-

dents and parents are willing to pay for. That is particularly true of private institutions because they so heavily rely on tuition, fees and room and board revenues to pay the bills. For single-gender institutions it means students have to enroll and graduate in consistent, adequate numbers and that's the major problem. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, total enrollments for all women's colleges in the United States totaled 93,430 in the fall of 2001 but dropped 13 percent to 81,208 two academic years later. By 2005, the last year for which data is available, enrollments rose slightly to 84,977 for a net decrease of 9 percent in a five-year period.

Brenau Women's College, however, hears no such warning knell. After some low-point enrollments a few years ago, the Women's College braced for close to 930 students for the 2007-08 academic year, a 50 percent increase in four years. The all-time high introduced some women's college students to a fact of college life they'd never encountered: roommates. Residence halls are at near capacity.

"So far as we are able, we are committed to long-term growth, strength and vitality of the Women's College," says President Ed Schrader. "It is the core of Brenau University."

Keeping that commitment won't be an easy job. First, there's still plenty of competition. Not only is there the allure of larger coed



Senior nursing students in the new Brenau nursing facility. Technically part of the Women's College, the nursing program is open to male students but remains largely populated by women.

institutions like Georgia Tech and Emory, where numbers of women in the student body increase annually, but there are also many attractive options in all-female institutions. Although, Vassar went coed, other prestigious "Seven Sisters" institutions did not, including Bryn Mawr and institutions Brenau aspires to be mentioned in the same breath with. According to *Newsweek* magazine, schools like Mary Baldwin, Sweet Briar College and Hollins University are reinventing themselves and aggressively recruiting students in high-cost, sometimes academically radical, initiatives.

Sweet Briar College, for example, played against the "pink is for girls" stereotype in its expensive, ironic, pink-tinted "Think is for Girls" campaign that's credited with boosting its first-year enrollments 40 percent in three years. The old recruitment campaign failed, says Sweet Briar President Elisabeth Muhlenfeld, because it relied on nostalgic images of a nurturing institution that didn't make a lot of sense to a generation of young women "who didn't feel they need nurturing." The school also created a special program for older women to finish degrees, a summer "boot camp" for high school girls and a successful summer writer's conference that lead to the addition of MFA degree programs in children's literature and screen writing.

The second potential problem is some

unsettling demographic trends in higher education in general. Close to 60 percent of all college and university applicants today are women. Since 1982, women have outpaced men in college graduation rates. In 2004, women received 58 percent of all bachelor's degrees in the United States, compared to only 35 percent in 1960. Experts predict that by 2009 only 42 percent of all baccalaureate degrees awarded in the United States will be given to men and by the 2013-14 academic year, women receiving degrees will outnumber men by more than 300,000.

Although that fact pretty much establishes that women have overcome the prejudice that existed in their access to and acceptance in higher education, there is a downside: it's also making quality higher education for women more competitive that, in a sense, has the unintended consequence of limiting their choices.

Finally, there's the issue of how society will finance higher education in the future. Some traditional resources are drying up altogether. Baby boomers' parents and grandparents, regarded as the most generous generation of Americans, are dying off. Their statistical progeny not only fall short of the philanthropic example, they're also not even socking away enough money to pay of their children's educations. With sometimes unexpected opportunities,

first
Asian American woman
appointed to a president's
cabinet in U. S. history,
Secretary of Labor, 2001.
Elaine L. Chao,
Mount Holyoke

first
female judge in the South.
Mary Kerr Morehead
Harris, Peace

first
woman secretary of the
Democratic National Party.
Dorothy Vredenburg Bush,
Mississippi University
for Women

first
woman to command a
naval base and highest
ranking woman in the
U. S. Navy.
Rear Admiral Louise
Wilmot, College of
St. Elizabeth

first
woman manager in
nuclear engineering.
Martha Christinziano,
Georgian Court

first

American woman to climb three of the world's tallest peaks.
Charlotte Fox, Hollins

first

woman founder of a PBS station (in D. C.) in 1961.
Elizabeth Pfohl Cambell, Salem

first

woman to be named Secretary of State in the U. S., appointed in 1997.
Madeleine Albright, Wellesley

first

woman to be elected Speaker of the House of Representatives making her the highest-ranking woman in the history of the U.S. Government.
Nancy Pelosi, Trinity D. C.

first

woman general of the U. S. Army.
Brigadier General Elizabeth P. Hoisington, (retired), College of Notre Dame of Maryland

higher education institutions like Brenau will need new revenue sources.

Could those “new revenue sources” mean “more men?”

Economically, Brenau’s business plan ensures some sanctity of the Women’s College because the university has well-established, thriving Evening and Weekend and Online components, both of which grew about 10 percent in the current academic year. “Without that diversified revenue source,” says Schrader, “it might be a much different story.”

Brenau, he says, is relatively close to its ideal playing weight of about 1,000 students in the Women’s College. And at about 2,700 students altogether this year, it is fast approaching the “logical target” of 3,000 across all units. Although some gender crossing of traditional divisional boundaries may be imminent to keep students flowing through undergraduate studies on a roughly four-year cycle, Schrader calls it “compartmentalized diversity,” and says the emphasis will be to get more Women’s College students to take classes online and in the Evening and Weekend College rather than the other way around.

Provost Helen Ray asserts that, unlike other women’s institutions recently to elect alternatives for staying open, Brenau made its “radical departure from being solely a single-gender institution” early, rather than waiting to fall victim to the “slippery slope” of male encroachment. “The door has always been open a little bit” to recruiting men into Women’s College programs like nursing, dance and theater. “While it does seem that we are blurring the lines, we strongly maintain our commitment to the Women’s College.”

Still, even with the well-documented financial dilemma for women’s colleges, females – statistically speaking – are less apt to support their alma maters than males. To that, Brenau’s gender studies director Heather Casey utters what amounts to an academic, “Duh!” In spite of their gains in education, she points out that women remain less financially able to be as philanthropic as men.

U.S. Labor Department data indicates average take-home pay for females in the workplace is about 30 percent less than males. Other statistics show that women lag way behind men in corporate managerial positions tracking to corner office jobs. Women fill only 2 percent of CEO positions and 14.7 percent of board seats at Fortune 500 companies; 21 percent of college and university presidencies; 14 percent of senators and 16 percent of members of the House. Forget that two women’s college graduates, Democratic Presidential candidate and U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, are two of the nation’s most visible political leaders. The United States ranks 69th out of 187 countries in terms of women’s representation in national legislative bodies and women hold only about 25 percent of the seats in state legislatures around the nation.

“Somebody else still controls the check book,” says Casey.

That deficit of women in American leadership roles becomes one of the most compelling arguments to justify institutions like Brenau. “[Women’s college] graduates are more able to see gender-repression when they encounter it and to distinguish between personal and systemic barriers to success,” Mount Holyoke President Joanne V. Creighton wrote recently in an essay in the *Boston Globe*. “Women’s colleges are not about separating women from the world but about encouraging them to be active agents within it. Although the colleges educate a tiny percentage of women students, their graduates are overrepresented in positions of influence.” Only 2 percent of all women who attended a U.S. college or university in the past 30 years were graduates of women’s colleges, she explained, yet they constitute 20 percent of women in Congress and nearly 20 percent of the *Fortune* magazine’s “50 Most Powerful Women in Business.”

Women’s college graduates, says Brenau’s Casey, will play important societal roles in “gender mainstreaming,” seamless integration of gender perspective in all aspects of an organization’s decision making from forming

first
scientist to identify the
Hong Kong flu virus.
Earla Biekert, Wesleyan

first
female Rhodes Scholar,
Georgia.
Ila Burdett, Agnes Scott

first
African American
woman to pass the bar in
the state of Mississippi.
Marian Wright Edelman,
Spelman

first
woman to receive the
Nobel Peace Prize (1946).
Emily Green Balch,
Bryn Mawr

first
woman to hold a key
diplomatic reporting
post with the U. S.
Foreign Service in the
Middle East.
April Glaspie, Mills

source: womenscolleges.org

corporate strategies to making sure feminine hygiene products are available in rest rooms.

Brenau also may have ridden out the storm only to catch a sweet ride on a new wave. Following eased government restrictions on school financing, there's a fast-growing trend to establish more single-gender K-12 public schools throughout the nation. The city of Atlanta's plan to open some single-gender public schools this fall was widely applauded as were similar programs around the nation. Three U.S. school districts had single-gender operations in 1995; there are 262 this year. Since about 20 percent of all-girl Brenau Academy graduates enroll in the university, it is a safe bet that soon thousands of other high school graduates will enter the higher education pipeline already sold on single-gender education.

But what's the real bottom line? What's in it for Brenau students while they're on campus? For 24 years as headmaster at Brenau Academy, Frank Booth served as a sort of one-man focus group collecting all sorts of anecdotal information about why students thrived in the single-gender environment and, in some cases, why they did not. "It's not an environment for everyone," says the soft-spoken Booth, who continues teaching English while serving as special assistant to Schrader consulting on issues like student retention in the Women's College. "At Brenau," he says, "they can simply be themselves and become who they want to become." His successor, new Headmaster Tim Daniel, says the Academy's small classes, 60-member student body and plans to cap enrollment at about 100 ensures what he calls "The Cheers phenomenon – the place 'where everybody knows your name.' Our students have direct contact with adults every day. You can't fly under the radar at a school like this. You are going to get a lot of attention." And, he adds, "We know all our leaders are going to be girls."

Sophomore mass communications major Brittany Long of Duluth, Ga., the current Miss Brenau, is the second generation in her family to enroll in the Women's College – but not by much. Her mother, Laurie Britt Long, just completed her own degree in music at the Women's

College in 2005. When the single mom Laurie, who delayed her college education until her daughter reached high school, started dragging the coed high schooler to Gainesville classes, Brittany confesses to thinking, "An all-girls school for me? Ewww. No way. But by the time my senior year rolled around, boys in class were driving me crazy, and I decided I didn't want to deal with that in college. Brenau's nice. It's an amazing education in a small class setting. You can't beat that."

For the record, Brittany has a boyfriend – a junior at the Air Force Academy. She also has a 4.0 grade-point average, a private pilot's license and an active extracurricular life with Alpha Delta Pi, *The Alchemist* and other campus initiatives.

The Indiana University Center for Post-secondary Research surveyed more than 42,000 students, including students at 26 women's colleges, in a study published in July. It learned that students from women's colleges reported that they have greater satisfaction with their college experience, greater support for their success, far more interaction with faculty members, more integrative learning experiences, better-developed quantitative analysis skills, and far more opportunities to develop leadership skills.

Brenau Women's College evidences all of these traits, and more, says Schrader, one of the few male presidents of a women's higher education institution. In addition to an open environment that encourages coed activities on campus and proximity to coed institutions like Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia, Brenau's "centrist" positioning embraces both conservative and liberal views of students and faculty, he says. "Some [single-gender institutions] are extremely liberal while others are so conservative that they're perceived to be not far removed from finishing schools."

"We are not a women's college that pretends men do not exist," he says. "We're a college that empowers young women to be what they want to be."

Take the boys.



“You have to learn to work it out with people who have strange eating habits and bizarre smells.”

Jody Milks cracks the code of single-gender education.

Comedian, actor and writer Jodie Milks has been cracking wise since her school days. Former Brenau Academy Headmaster Frank Booth recalls in his early years on the job that she quickly became “one of my favorites. She was bright and hilarious, even back then.” After graduating in 1989, Milks abandoned the all-female institution for the coeducational University of Georgia, where she did her first comedy showcase—filling in for a friend who was too panicked to take the stage. Since then, she moved to California and has worked with stand-up greats like Ellen DeGeneres, Drew Carey and Brett Butler. She’s also acted in various TV shows and movies (including Milos Forman’s film *Man on the Moon*), published a novel called *novel*, and just had a baby boy named Waylon, after country singer Waylon Jennings. She and husband, Todd Miller, a post production manager in charge of color correction, editing and sound

Please.

for TV’s *Deal or No Deal*, are big fans of the late Mr. Jennings. In fact, his 1974 hit, *Amanda*, was their wedding song. From her home in Pasadena, Calif., Milks reports that the family’s hectic pace continues, and “the only one who seems well-rested is the baby, which is unfortunate, since he’s the only one here who doesn’t have a job. We’re sitting down with him to discuss that this evening.” Since we’re focusing on single-gender education in this issue, we thought Milks might have an interesting take on the subject.

Q: How’d you wind up at Brenau?

A: I transferred in as a sophomore. Before that, I was a booksy girl at a redneck high school, which is just as much fun as it sounds. Cherry bombs going down the toilet at lunch hour, that kind of thing.

Q: How’d you like Brenau?

A: It was a great experience. The academic standards were a lot higher than my previous school. Basically, I started going to college in high school.

Q: What did you think about going to an all-girl school?

A: I found it a tremendous relief to be taken out of the cliques. In co-ed high schools, it’s all about impressing the boys—and the mean girls. But an all-girl school changes that. You can’t shun people you share a bathroom with.

Q: Didn’t you miss boys?

A: Not really. Instead of forever pining over one unattainable boy or another, Brenau helped me focus on school. Not that I have anything against males: I married one.

Q: So all in all, you’d say single-gender education worked out pretty well for you?

A: Yes. I didn’t develop any bad habits until college.

Q: You wound up at a co-ed college, the University of Georgia. Why the switch?

A: Well, after a while, you have to go into a co-ed world. But my experience at Brenau really helped. I was already living in a dorm, and I understood the importance of getting along with people. I mean, that’s how you succeed: You have to learn to work it out with people who have strange eating habits and bizarre smells.

Q: Later on in life, you again found yourself working in a predominantly female environment, writing for the Olsen twins’ sit-com, *So Little Time*. Tell us a bit about that.

A: They were 15-year-old girls, and they were executive producers. It was crazy: They were tethered to their poor assistant by hot pink Barbie cell phones. They insisted on \$60,000 renovations to their dressing rooms before they’d begin working; meanwhile, we writers were making next to nothing. I found myself shamed by 15-year-olds with dressing rooms bigger than my apartment. Not a high point in my career.

Q: Let’s talk about a more recent gig, working on MTV2’s fashion dos-and-don’ts show *Not a Good Look*. Did you apply sartorial lessons picked up at Brenau?

A: If I had, I would have been advising everyone to wear pajamas. That’s what we did when I was at school there. We weren’t supposed to wear pajamas, but we’d claim they were sweat pants. That reminds me of another great thing about an all-girls school: you don’t dress up. It saves about an hour a day, since you’re not primping for the opposite sex.

— Maria Behan



Tom Askew

Sara Diosdado juggles being a pre-med student with working virtually a full-time job at a Northeast Georgia Medical Center clinic, serving as a teaching assistant, being mother of a 3-year-old, and this summer traveling from Gainesville to Emory University in Atlanta four days a week to study for the MCATs, the taxing medical school admissions test that she plans to take this fall.

Helping her help others.

The logical question seems to be what the heck she does for leisure. “Drive-through at Starbucks,” the 25-year-old Brenau student says without missing a beat. If hers is a stressful existence, it doesn’t show.

“It’s like she walks on water,” says biology Professor Randy May with unabashed admiration for the TA and president-elect of the Brenau chapter of the Medical Students Association of America. “I don’t know how she does everything. She’s an excellent student; I think she carried an 18-hour course load in the spring. She’s got a good mind. She’ll make a fine doctor.”

Diosdado maintains a 3.73 grade point average at Brenau and last year was recipient of the Augusta and William E. Schrage Endowed Scholarship in science, set up by Brenau Trustee Lorry Schrage and his wife, Sherri, to help deserving students.

Diosdado concedes she might be a bit of a workaholic. But, as she explains it, that’s pretty much the way she’s always been. She grew up the fifth child in a well-to-do household in Washington state. Unlike many stereotypical children of privilege, she was determined not to let any of that go to waste. In her pre-adolescent days, with lots of horses and other animals around, she fancied herself a budding veterinarian. By the time she graduated from high school at age 16, however, fueled in part by dramatic changes in her life, she replaced her passion for animals with a passion for people and started a pre-med program at Pierce College, a two-year program she’d finished by time she was 19.

By then her parents had split, siblings scattered and family fortunes reversed. Diosdado said she took a break

to attend a Bible school in Oklahoma. But she subsequently married, moved to North Carolina and enlisted in the Air Force to get training as an operating room tech and to set aside money to finish her education. When her induction date rolled around, she was pregnant with her daughter, Faith. The Air Force let her out of her enlistment contract, but encouraged her to renew it – if she stuck with her plans to become a doctor and wanted the Air Force to pay for her medical education in exchange for a long-term service commitment.

First, Diosdado has to finish undergraduate work. She has a few courses left to complete her minor in mathematics. And because of Brenau’s liberal arts curriculum that encourages students into broader-based academic programs, she planned to enroll in an elective arts class, like dance. “I think it’s good that the university has that fine arts requirement,” she says. “Otherwise I’d never do it. I’m kind of narrow-minded. If it is something I can use in my job, I’m there. But scoping out something new really pushes me.”

Diosdado says she’d never heard of Brenau until she relocated to the Gainesville area. She applied for a job at Brenau’s child care facility – hoping to take advantage of tuition breaks for employees at the university. Although she did not get the job, when Faith was six months old, Diosdado decided to finish her undergraduate studies. The Schrage scholarship and other aid programs have helped her do it.

“Brenau has been an absolute blessing,” she says. “I’ve been able to be a

mother, work full time and still have an opportunity for an awesome education. The professors I’ve encountered have been phenomenal – Dr. May and Dr. [Louise] Bauck, and my chemistry professor, Carolyn Giberson. I joke that she ought to be teaching at Harvard because she is so good. She teaches the hardest courses in the easiest way.”

Diosdado’s Brenau professors are not the only ones impressed with her. Dr. Antonio Rios, an internist at Northeast Georgia Medical Center, says when he first met her, “she struck me as a very professional, hard-working nurse.” But after she started working in his clinic, he said his first impression probably gave Diosdado the short shrift.

“She is extremely smart, a very

“I find my comfort in taking care of people. If it were not for my daughter, I’d live at the hospital.”

hard worker and an excellent people person” he says. “She is passionate about medicine and knowledge. She makes very significant suggestions about patient care. She will make an excellent physician.”

So is there a pill you can take to help you imitate Diosdado’s drive and accomplishments?

“When my daughter was born,” she says, “I asked myself, ‘is [having a child] going to maim my life?’ I know other women have had children and gone on with careers. You’ve just got to have the backbone to do it. There’s no failure in trying. The failure is in giving up.”

– David Morrison

LaQ beats rap for positive messages.

About 3 a.m. one morning Mary LaCue Booker woke suddenly. With a vision in her head, she spit out words, rapping and rhyming. She didn't know it, but that tripping moment put her on track to change her life and quite possibly to change the lives of potentially troubled – and troublesome – youngsters.

The product of her vision came out like this: *I want ya to live I don't want ya to die ~ And I'm gonna tell you exactly why ~ Cause every day statistics get high ~ Some from drinkin some from livin a lie*

The 1995 Brenau University Women's College graduate, a psychology major, taught science in the DeKalb County, Ga., school system for eight years. She currently teaches at Renaissance Middle School south of Atlanta. Becoming a rapper was not in the career plans for the Millen, Ga., native.

But with rap and hip-hop well established as the *lingua franca* of the younger set, Booker saw the cadence, rhythmic art form as a means of communicating with kids, re-enforcing positive behavior among those who needed it most, particularly middle school-aged children. Having studied dance and theater even before her days at Brenau, and dabbling in acting school in Los Angeles, Booker says she's always had a touch of the entertainer in her. She and five men from Central Africa currently perform as FungAfrica, a dance group that appears regularly in churches and schools. So, adopting the very rap-like moniker "LaQ," Booker took her late-night

vision on the road.

She began rapping five years ago on a regular basis and tested lyrics on her now 17-year-old son, Justin, and her students. With positive reviews, she tried them out on a producer. That led to development of her first single, "School Rules." Currently she's performing at schools all over Georgia, from the rap and hip-hop Mecca, Atlanta, to the more conservative hallways of suburbia. Her most recent single, "D.U.I.," was written for the Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program in Kennesaw, Ga., under the aegis of the Cobb County State Court. She's gaining traction and attention in the big-time entertainment world, hobnobbing with celebrities like Snoop Dogg, Dick Gregory and John Singleton, putting together a full album and harboring hopes to go national. In September she appeared at a Wichita, Kan., fair. And you can read more about her at www.lacue.com.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think my face would be on the cover of a CD in a music store," she says. "I first want to be a positive role model for youth. I want to teach them not to give up on their dreams, to persevere, and to pass the test of time."

– Linda Pittman



If it looks like a duck and sounds like a duck, it could be Patty.

In more than 30 years as screen actor, Patricia Parris Shibley, WC '72, has portrayed characters ranging from Mae West to Daisy Duck.

Shibley's resume grows more impressive when you factor in some of her other roles – the Greek goddess Hera, Winnie the Pooh's bouncy sidekick Kanga, Christopher Robin's mom, Fievel's Aunt Sophie, the Flintstones' bizarre neighbor Oblivia Frankstone and a couple of stray Smurfs. She also had some bits in box office and TV hits like *Wolfen*, *Look Who's Talking Now* and *Knots Landing*. Yet she has done all these big and little-screen roles without being on the screen.

Known professionally as Patty Parris, the 1972 Brenau graduate is one of those behind-the-scenes Hollywood mainstays – the voice actor. Once dominated by insider superstars like Mel Blanc of Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck fame and members of the Screen Actors Guild who worked under fake names, voice acting now has Oscar winners fighting it out to read the part of a rat, a toy cowboy or a sloth.

Shibley doesn't hide where she found her voice. Or voices. Her trademark as an actress—her uncanny knack for accents and impersonation—emerged during her Brenau Women's College years when she'd introduce her show on the school radio station with her ever-expanding repertoire of expressive intonations. She'd also got hooked acting while majoring in drama, English and secondary education, and directing and performing in plays like *My Fair Lady* and *The Children's Hour*.

"There were two compelling reasons I chose Brenau," she says fondly of the col-



©The Walt Disney Company

lege that started her unusual career path. "The first was that I never had a sister, so I thought it'd be fun to go to a girl's school. And I was right: people liked and were proud of each other."

The second reason, she confesses, was a bit less lofty: avoiding math. "At the time I enrolled, you could take science instead of math. I jumped at that chance, since God left a hole where my math brain should be."

Brenau didn't just help hone her skills as an actress and mimic, it gave Patty her first Hollywood contact. She met one of TV's best-known on-screen personalities from the 1950s into the '70s – Brenau Academy alumna Amanda Blake, who appeared in TV's longest running series, *Gunslinger*, as the sultry saloon keeper Miss Kitty. Shibley so impressed the star that Blake encouraged her to consider an acting career. Once Patty graduated, she headed to Hollywood, where one of her first stops was the *Gunslinger* set.

"There was great camaraderie on the set," Patty says, "and it showed." That helped firm up her career choice.

She and her husband, Bill, live in Long Beach, Calif. She's focused now on launching her son, Patrick, into college, with some radio work thrown in. Patty plans to start working more once he leaves home.

"I've had a wonderful career," she says, "and I'm looking forward to more."

– Maria Behan

