

Features

- 32 ***William & Mary in the 21st Century***
Undergraduates assist professor in quest for new knowledge about colonial Quito's art and architecture



- 40 ***Source of Leadership***
William & Mary joins fight to address childhood obesity



- 46 ***Lifelong Relationships***
Five alumni forever connected to William & Mary, making a difference in the world



WOULD THE REAL BUILDERS OF COLONIAL QUITO

PLEASE STAND UP?



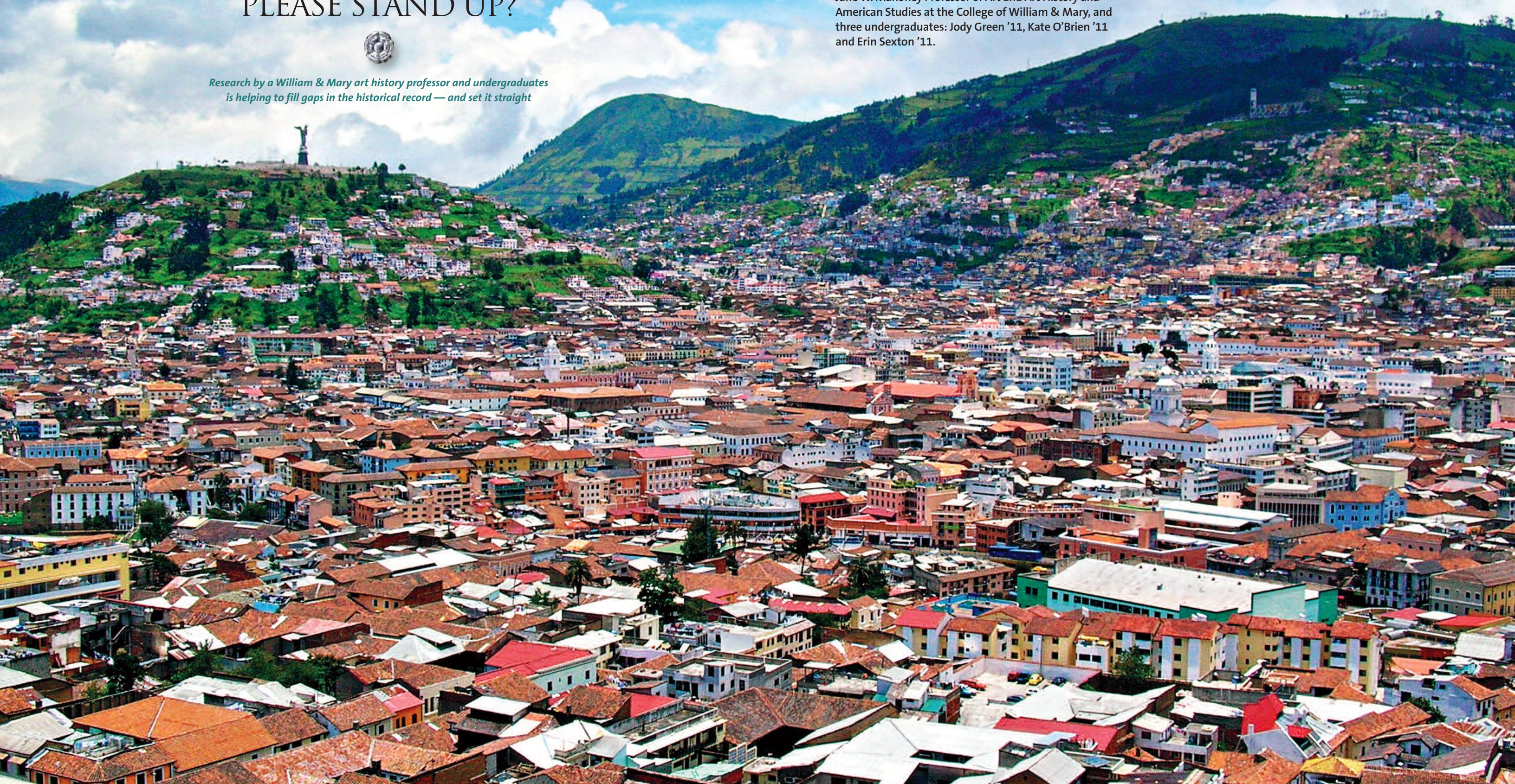
*Research by a William & Mary art history professor and undergraduates
is helping to fill gaps in the historical record — and set it straight*

THE MISSION: To go where few — or no — art historians have gone before.

THE CONTEXT: Quito, the capital of Ecuador, former center of a colonial *audiencia* (or kingdom), and the world's first city to be named a UNESCO¹ World Heritage Site due to its well-preserved art and architecture.

THE PARTICIPANTS (so far): Susan V. Webster, the Jane W. Mahoney Professor of Art and Art History and American Studies at the College of William & Mary, and three undergraduates: Jody Green '11, Kate O'Brien '11 and Erin Sexton '11.

NESTLED HIGH IN THE ANDEAN MOUNTAINS atop the ruins of an Incan city, Quito has long been extolled as one of South America's historical and cultural treasures — but only recently has its art, and that of Latin America as a whole, risen to the fore in both scholarship and public interest. A forerunner in the field, Webster is on a lifelong trek to uncover the true nature of those who



Opening spread: Modern-day Quito, Ecuador, is a mixture of the old and the new. Overlooking the city stands an aluminum statue of the Virgin Mary, erected in 1976 and based on a colonial sculpture of great local devotion, housed in the Monastery of San Francisco. HERNÁN L. NAVARRETE

built the city, and she handpicked three William & Mary students to join her in a segment of that journey this past summer.

Through original, firsthand research, the students will unveil wholly new knowledge about Quiteñan art — new to scholars, the public, and even the people of Quito. With possible implications for other Latin American cities and multiethnic regions, their research advances Webster’s pioneering scholarship on indigenous master builders and artists — whose roles she and other scholars believe have been mischaracterized and under-recognized by most historians of the past century.

“Histories of colonial Latin American architecture [and art] frequently celebrate the essential role of indigenous construction workers,” Webster wrote in March 2009 for an article appearing in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. “However, characterizations of this process tend to present a starkly delimited image of native artisans laboring under the direction and control of Spanish or European masters.”

On the contrary, Webster says, a systematic examination of the archival evidence suggests that native artisans contributed at a strikingly high level to the planning and building of the colonial city, where they held a surprising “potential for upward economic and social mobility.”

“Given the overwhelming majority of native and *mestizo* [descended from mixed blood, including indigenous] artisans, their skill and tenacity,” Webster surmises, “one could justifiably state that they were responsible for the construction of colonial Quito — a legacy that continues in many ways today.”

According to William & Mary Professor of History Kris E. Lane, who specializes in Latin America and is editor of the interdisciplinary journal *Colonial Latin American Review*, Webster’s work is indeed playing a central role in

¹ UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. A specialized agency of the United Nations formed in 1945, UNESCO’s World Heritage List features more than 900 cultural and natural sites, including the city of Quito.

overturning long-held opinions about the character of an entire city.

“What Professor Webster is doing is showing us that Quito is not the Baroque ‘Spanish’ city that past art historians have long made it out to be, but rather a Baroque indigenous one — a hybrid city, whose identity was truly betwixt and between.”

SEARCHING AND RESEARCHING



Dubbed the “cloister of the Andes” because of its wide array of monasteries, churches and other religious centers, it is no wonder this city of approximately 1.4 million inhabitants — a large majority of whom have some indigenous blood in their family trees — is richly adorned with art and architecture. One author, writing more than half a century ago, singled out Quito for this very reason: “Without exaggeration, few South American cities can offer for contemplation and study colonial relics of such quantity and such quality as the City of San Francisco de Quito,” wrote Benjamín Gento Sanz for *The Americas* in an April 1946 article.

Indeed, Quito’s survival as the largest, most intact colonial town in the Americas is a prime reason for its special recognition from UNESCO.

Despite its reputation, the vast majority of Quito’s abundant works of art and architecture — and the secrets they hold about the pre-colonial, colonial and even modern-day periods — have never been researched in-depth, if at all.

“Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Andean cultures had no form of alphabetic writing,” Webster explains. “As a result, art and architecture were perhaps even more potent forms of communication.” These communication modes tell us much about the way the Andean and European cultures coexisted and interrelated — providing a microcosm that can inform other mixed-ethnicity countries.

“The inequities and inequalities that have characterized Ecuadorian society, particularly with respect to native people, are just as present in the United States,”



Webster says, noting that Ecuadorians constitute the ninth largest source of Hispanics living in the United States.

For the past 15 years, Webster has been traveling regularly to Quito to conduct research; in the process, she has published multiple books and articles on her findings. She has also amassed an enormous collection of digital photographs cataloguing the artistic works in the city yet to be fully explored or matched up with archival documentation. This collection, Webster says, is far too large for one person to research in a lifetime.

Enter: William & Mary students. By assigning each student an item in her trove, Webster hoped to make headway on the research — while giving students valuable hands-on experience.

“This project is an attempt to provide students with the experience of sustained engagement in humanistic research,” she explains. “Unlike the typical ‘term paper,’ which culminates with the end of a semester, this project is designed in five phases that build over the period of more than a year: a Spanish paleography course [to learn how to transcribe the archival documents, which are handwritten and in Old Spanish]; field research in Quito’s

Through its excessive use of gold, this ceiling of the Iglesia de San Francisco is representative of the Baroque influence on the city of Quito; however, the technique used in the ceiling, called artesonado, can be traced back to Spanish contact in Ecuador and, ultimately, to Islamic influence on the Iberian Peninsula. JODY GREEN¹¹

archives; library research using secondary sources; framing questions and writing up results; and textual refinement for submission to a national peer-reviewed undergraduate journal.”

Daunting? Just a little. But thrilling, too, according to the three students taking part.

“We’re researching completely untapped sources, so it’s both hard and intimidating,” O’Brien says, reflecting on the particular difficulty of tracking down information about her own object of study — an elaborately worked silver frontal in the Cathedral of Quito whose author is not definitely known. Even the suspected artist, O’Brien explains, is virtually unknown, and she has been hard-pressed to find references to him in the archival documents, much less published texts. Further complicating her research, once she got to the Cathedral, O’Brien found not one but many silver altar frontals —



and it wasn't immediately clear to which one her notarial contract refers.

Challenges such as these are inevitable when encountering primary sources for the first time, and that is one of the greatest benefits for students.

"The only way to find documents [about these specific works] is to actually look through the books in the National Archives [of Ecuador, located in Quito] in person," Sexton says, agreeing that "the firsthand experience of being there and seeing everything is impossible to recreate."

VALUABLE DISCOVERIES



According to Webster, the research she and students are conducting is not only helpful for filling in the historical record but may also benefit modern-day Quiteños.

"Many of my Ecuadorian friends complain that one of the country's greatest problems is that it has no sense of national identity," she says. "The legacy of the colonial period hangs over it like a black cloud. To valorize indigenous contributions in the colonial period brings some 65 percent of the population into the picture and locates them as active historical agents in their own country."

In addition, their research could be informative for countries sharing similar heritages of multiple ethnic groups — including the United States, as well as other areas of Latin America.

"The abundance and importance of native masters in Quito may not be unique among other colonial Latin American urban centers; however ... circumstances elsewhere remain to be investigated," Webster noted in her March 2009 article.

This silver frontal was commissioned for the Cathedral of Quito, where today it is on display in a ground-floor museum attributed to an anonymous artist. So far, in her research on the piece, Kate O'Brien '11 has used archival and physical evidence to hypothesize that its author was in fact a prominent silversmith of the time, Pedro de Adrián, who was paid an extremely high price for the project. HERNÁN L. NAVARRETE



Taking a break from their research, Erin Sexton '11 (front), Kate O'Brien '11, Jody Green '11, and William & Mary Professor Susan V. Webster visited the Mitad del Mundo, or Middle of the World Monument, which straddles the equator just north of Quito. HERNÁN L. NAVARRETE

Webster is not the only one to argue that individual indigenous artisans played a larger-than-believed role in building colonial Quito; however, Lane contends, she is unique for her insistence on exhausting the archives for tangible proof of the claim.

According to O'Brien, having a persistent, seasoned scholar like Webster overseeing their work was crucial to the success of the students' 10-day trip to Quito in June.

"She describes the archives as being like Christmas every day — you never know what you will find," O'Brien explains, reflecting on the importance of her professor's excitement, expertise and familiarity with the archives from past visits. Without Webster, O'Brien says she would not have known where to start with the voluminous



archival records — or where in the city to start trying to locate her altar frontal.

“This is so different than researching with secondary sources. With primary sources, you get your own sense of the topic. In this case, some writers weren’t as competent as others, so you have to judge if it’s reliable or not,” O’Brien adds.

As Green points out, this ability to sift through what’s important is essential to their research: “In the archives, details about everyday matters are interspersed with information about the art we are studying — and, in fact, way outnumber the relevant information. So you have to have unbelievable patience.”

By summer’s end, O’Brien, Sexton and Green had each drafted research papers but were still refining their theses; this spring, they plan to submit their findings to an undergraduate research journal published by the Johns Hopkins University Press.

“My hope is that the students not only engage more profoundly with their objects of study and with archival research,” Webster says, “but that through the extended research and writing process, they come to possess the sense of intellectual ‘ownership’ and mastery that accompanies serious humanistic inquiry.”

Webster, who received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to cover most of the students’ trip in addition to a separate grant and fellowship for one of three books she is writing, hopes that she will be able to lead more students in this type of research.

“Whatever their plans for the future,” she says, “my goal is to equip them with the intellectual and experiential tools and confidence to tackle anything that comes their way.”



This altarpiece in the Cathedral of Quito is the object of study for Jody Green ’11; key to her research are the sculptures, with the one appearing highest likely originating from two native master sculptors — Nicolas Pauca and Francisco Monga — based on a commission from 1693. JODY GREEN ’11



This modern-day sculpted image is one of many in a series depicting Ecuadorian history on display in the cloister of the Monastery of San Agustín in Quito. KATE O’BRIEN ’11

On the Cutting Edge

Original, undergraduate research on the art of colonial Quito, Ecuador — spearheaded by William & Mary Professor Susan V. Webster — reflects a broader, increasing interest in Latin American art as a whole.

“There have always been aficionados and serious scholars in the field [of colonial Latin American art],” William & Mary history professor and Latin America specialist Kris E. Lane concedes, “but the time has come for nationwide appreciation of Latin American art generally, and colonial material specifically, largely because of a generational embrace of Hispanic culture that has coincided with mass migration of Spanish speakers from many parts of Latin America into new regions of the U.S. In such an atmosphere of ‘Hispanophilia,’ it’s only natural that colonial art would finally get its due.”

As explained in a June article of *ARTnews*, the world’s oldest and most widely circulated art magazine, “The art made in Spain’s Latin American colonies used to be considered artistically minor and politically incorrect,” avers Executive Editor Robin Cembalest. That is changing, however, and now, “it’s on the cutting edge of art history — and the wish lists of top museums.”

The first ever pan-Latin American art exhibition that began touring in 2007 in Philadelphia is a prime example of Lane’s and Cembalest’s assertions, as is the increase in entire museum collections and academic concentrations in the area.

William & Mary is among the universities at the forefront of this burgeoning field. In addition to research opportunities like the one in Quito, the College offers robust curricula in both Latin American and Hispanic studies, addressing issues — including art and other material works — related to Spanish, Latin American, and U.S. Latino history and culture.



Let's Move!

William & Mary joins the fight to address childhood obesity

IN THE NATIONAL BATTLE AGAINST OBESITY, William & Mary's Schroeder Center for Health Policy is weighing in.

The center garnered headlines in May with the release of its study showing that the closer children live to fast food restaurants, the more likely they are to be overweight, even after adjusting for the family's socioeconomic status.

The study has added to the national debate as federal policymakers and local PTAs alike grapple with the issue of childhood obesity and its danger to health. Researchers say the problem has reached epidemic proportions, with young people consuming steady diets of video games and high-fat foods.

As President Barack Obama created the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity, First Lady Michelle Obama rolled out her "Let's Move!" campaign and engaged a group of youngsters to help plant a vegetable garden on the South Lawn of the White House.

In the Williamsburg area, the Schroeder Center and its director, Jennifer M. Mellor, who is also a professor of economics at William & Mary, joined forces in 2005 with the local school system and a nonprofit community health foundation to help evaluate a newly created wellness program within the Williamsburg-James City County Public School System.

The School Health Initiative Program, or SHIP, educates students, teachers and parents about healthy habits and lifestyles. With a broad reach and range of activities, SHIP is helping to change school culture by using everything from physical activity to teaching pupils about the phases of the moon to replacing every cafeteria's deep fryer with a convection oven.

Because of SHIP, students are learning yoga and healthy cooking techniques in after-school clubs, teachers are incorporating movement in daily lessons, and parents are substituting cupcake parties in classrooms with celebrations featuring yogurt smoothies and carrot sticks with low-fat dip.

Since the start of this collaborative effort between the local school system and the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation, the Schroeder Center has helped evaluate this program that touches the lives of 10,000-plus public school students. In 2006, the center released a lengthy report on baseline health and wellness surveys conducted prior to SHIP's implementation. Earlier this year, the center conducted a study on the amount of physical activity SHIP is introducing into the classroom through newly adopted teaching techniques. And starting this fall, the Schroeder Center assumed an increased role in the evaluation of SHIP's effectiveness under a year-long contract with the Health Foundation.

The goal of evaluation activities, which include survey design and analysis, is to track how well the program is working.

"Are students participating in more healthy behaviors?"

ILLUSTRATIONS: ROBERT MEGANCK, COMMUNICATION DESIGN INC.

Do they have increased health knowledge and awareness? Are they healthier? These are the questions that our studies can answer,” Mellor says. “The answers are critical because the school district and the foundation need to know if they’re using their limited resources in productive ways.”

As part of this year’s contract, William & Mary faculty will supervise a team of undergraduates and public policy graduate students. Together, the group will design and field surveys of parents and children and analyze survey data along with other outcome measures.

“It’s very exciting for William & Mary students and the College’s Schroeder Center to be involved with SHIP,” Mellor says. “We have a lot to offer and our students have a lot to gain.”

The center’s work with SHIP not only gives greater visibility to the College but also provides hands-on research opportunities for William & Mary graduate and undergraduate students and serves as a vehicle to further faculty research.



“The center is very skillful with analysis of data, and that’s important with such a major [program] investment,” says Williamsburg Community Health Foundation President Jeanne Zeidler M.A.Ed. ’76, who also served as Williamsburg’s first female mayor from 1998 to 2010. The foundation has put up more than \$4 million to initiate and run SHIP. “Certainly, to tell if you’re being effective, you must have a skilled and independent evaluator to provide feedback. So we’re really pleased to have the College of William & Mary, through the work of the Schroeder Center, as partners in the SHIP program.”

Influencing Health Policy



Tucked along a main corridor of Morton Hall within the College’s Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy, the Schroeder Center supports interdisciplinary research in health policy, and the faculty, students and community organizations engaged in such research. Faculty members affiliated with the center have strengths and expertise in economics, government and public policy, among other fields. Past and current studies have focused on health care spending, including Medicare program utilization and the impact of economic differences on people’s health.

The *International Journal of Pediatric Obesity* is poised to publish the Schroeder Center’s May 2010 study showing that the link between proximity to fast food restaurants and obesity is unrelated to income. And *Health Economics* is slated to publish a Schroeder Center study showing a link between increases in state cigarette taxes and body mass index (BMI) — a measure of body fat — of children whose mothers smoke. The link shows that childhood obesity is affected not just by genetics, but also by the environment in which children grow up. This study provides evidence that the environmental factors that have an impact on parents’ health behaviors can ultimately affect the health and health behaviors of their children.

Mellor, who holds a doctorate in economics from the University of Maryland at College Park, has conducted numerous studies on how environmental factors such as community socioeconomic status and social capital

influence health. Because of her expertise, the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation officials sought her out for the steering committee that initiated SHIP. The relationship has blossomed, with the Schroeder Center and William & Mary students involved in pivotal aspects of the program’s setup and evaluation along the way.

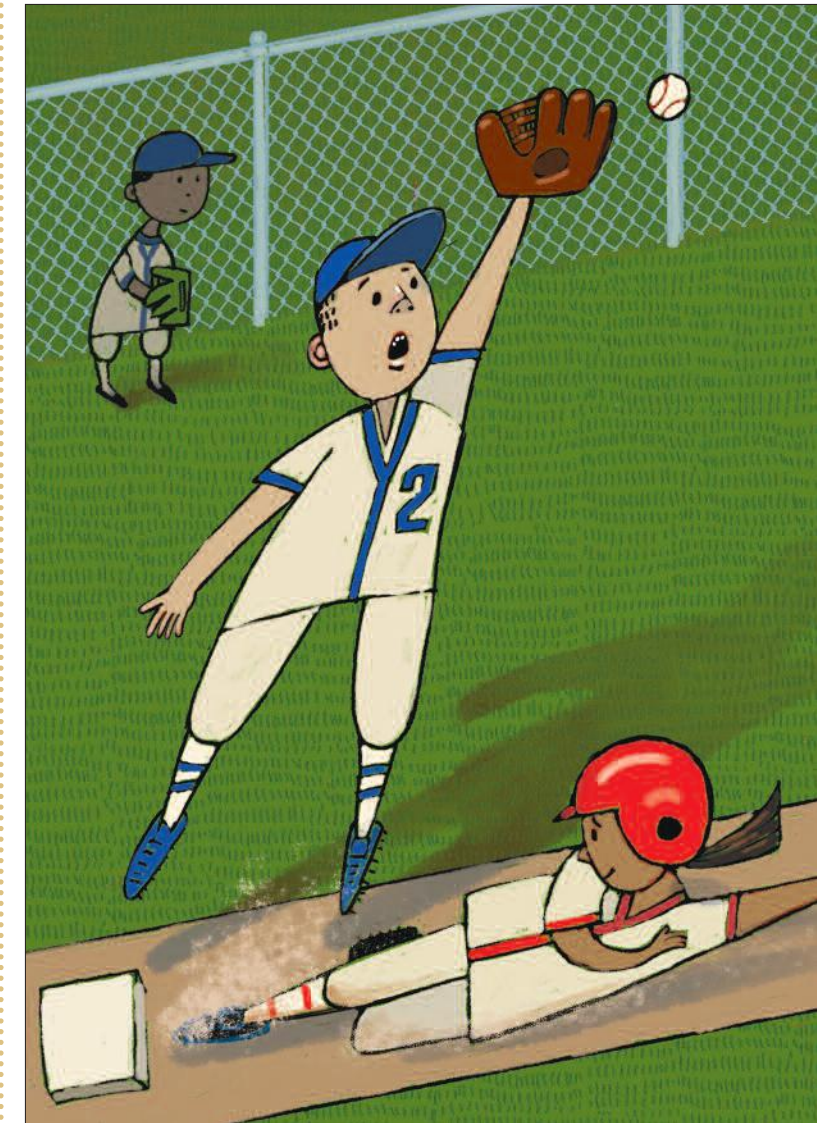
“When a lot of the numbers about the rise in childhood obesity were just coming out, many school districts were scrambling to create wellness programs,” Mellor says. This was around 2005, just after Congress mandated that all school districts receiving national school lunch program funds develop “school wellness policies,” or locally based plans to promote better nutrition and more physical activity through schools.

“Williamsburg–James City County was ahead of the curve,” Mellor continues. “In addition to well-thought-out programs and policies, they directed significant financial and personnel resources to tackle the problem — something most school districts around the nation have been unable to do.”

How serious is childhood obesity? According to a May 2010 report issued by the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity, one in every three youngsters in the United States ages 2 to 19 is overweight or obese. That trend is mirrored both within Virginia and within the Williamsburg area, data have shown. The 2007 National Survey of Children’s Health found that 31 percent of Virginia’s youth ages 10 to 17 were overweight or obese. And in Williamsburg, 2006 data compiled in part by the Schroeder Center as a baseline measure for SHIP showed more than a third of students were overweight.

“That’s a huge percentage,” remarks Denise Corbett, SHIP’s coordinator. The finding also underscored the critical need for such a program locally, she says. School nurses were becoming alarmed by the number of students with serious health problems such as asthma and diabetes, according to Corbett. “They were seeing kids at the third-grade level who were morbidly obese,” she says.

Obesity generally is defined as a person having excess weight for his or her height, as measured by BMI. In children, tables formulated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that compare BMI among children of the same age and gender are used to obtain



a percentile ranking. A child is considered overweight if he or she ranks between the 85th and 95th percentile and obese if ranking above the 95th percentile.

“The rise of childhood obesity is pretty striking,” Mellor says. “It has more than tripled in the past 30 years. That’s the concern that everybody’s motivated by, because childhood obesity is linked to diabetes among kids, asthma, possibly to cardiovascular problems, lost school days, additional health care spending, and obesity in adulthood.

“You are more likely to be obese as an adult if you were obese as a child,” Mellor continues. “So kids who are obese today potentially are looking at a whole lifetime of health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, and adult onset diabetes.”

Encouraging Healthy Behaviors



An early progress report on SHIP's first two years suggests that obesity rates among middle school students are declining, a finding that bodes well for the program's impact and future.

Already, SHIP has received national recognition. It was one of the featured programs at a CDC conference on "best practices" for childhood obesity prevention programs. And the National School Boards Association included SHIP in its Magna Best Practices Database, which annually highlights a select number of school programs it deems exemplary.

Most importantly, SHIP's influence is credited with helping to change behaviors of students and families for the better.

"I think I was healthy before, but I would snack unhealthy," says Alison Hummel, a physically active senior from Lafayette High School (Williamsburg). The 17-year-old lifeguards during the summer and is involved in three different sports during the school year. "I would come home and pig out on a lot of junk food."

SHIP "made me aware of what I was eating," she explains. "Now, I go home and tend to have fruit or carrots or something healthy. I drink water and juice over soda."

Alison joined her high school's Student Health Advisory Council, or SHAC, which is dedicated to reinforcing the message of healthy choices to the students. The group's seminars are taught by the school nurse and William & Mary students.

SHAC hosted a "Smoothie Day" at the school during which members gave out free samples of low-sugar, fat-free yogurt-and-berry smoothies from a local shop. "We gave the samples to show what they could have for

breakfast that's healthy. A lot of kids don't have breakfast in the morning, which is unhealthy. So they had these smoothies and that gave a kick to their day."

Alison's mother, Julie Hummel, says SHIP helped change the mindset of parents, many of whom were sending "sweets, candy treats, cakes and cupcakes to school for their child's birthday," or holding ice cream sundae parties for the class. "They're not realizing that there are 25 kids in the class, and there are 25 parents doing the same thing, so it all adds up. It's not good for our kids."

Instead of high-calorie sweets, parents now bring pretzels, fruit, and veggies and dip, Hummel says. "The kids were grumbling at first, but then they got used to it. It was a good decision."

The Schroeder Center's involvement with SHIP has also had an enormous benefit for William & Mary students.

"Our students come here looking for opportunities to discover new things and to work closely with faculty and share ideas. This project helps give them that," Mellor states.

For some students, working on SHIP research has helped them define and refine their career choices.

"I had read plenty of research in academic papers before this," says Travis Triggs, a sophomore from Arlington, Va., who spent several weeks in third- and fourth-grade classrooms observing and recording the level of students' physical activities for a Schroeder Center

assessment for SHIP during spring 2010. "This experience allowed me to learn about social science research firsthand. It has made me consider a career in this field."

Triggs says he was drawn to the study after taking Economics of Bad Behavior, a freshman seminar taught by Mellor that addressed how economics can help explain how individuals make choices, including seemingly poor choices such as smoking and abusing drugs. A portion

"Instead of high-calorie sweets, parents now bring pretzels, fruit, and veggies and dip."

JULIE HUMMEL
Parent of Williamsburg-
James City County high schooler



Challenged to Improve Our Nation's Health

Schroeder's personal interest led to center addressing national health care policies

Established in 2003, the Schroeder Center for Health Policy represents the tangible and generous commitment of L. Clifford Schroeder Sr. (Honorary Alumnus '08) and his wife, Lois.

Schroeder, a successful businessman and philanthropist, had focused much of his attention on environmental issues, including restoring sanctuary oyster reefs and seagrass beds along Virginia's coastal waters. But when his wife became ill about 10 years ago, Schroeder said he found himself immersed in the health care system and had a sudden education about national health policy.

"That's how the idea started," Schroeder says, explaining the genesis of the center that now bears his name.

Schroeder approached the College about creating a center on health policy at William & Mary during his first tenure on its Board of Visitors 2000–2004. (Virginia Gov. Robert F. McDonnell LL.D. '10 reappointed Schroeder to the Board in 2010.)

"I just thought that, in some way, as citizens, we should aim toward making all of this [health care and policy] information more available to people," Schroeder explains. "I had no way at the time of predicting this tremendous wave of medical interest and medical investment that has come down the pike."

Indeed, the increasingly central issues of health care policy and spending have heightened the relevance and urgency of the Schroeder Center's work.

of the course dealt with newly emerging studies on the economics of obesity, exploring the causes, consequences and proposed solutions to problems like overeating and limited physical activity.

Public policy graduate student Amy Haldeman '07, of Greencastle, Pa., helped compile the data and assisted Mellor with portions of the final report last spring. The experience, she says, reaffirmed her career direction.

"It confirmed my interest in childhood and maternal health, as well as community health issues," says Haldeman, who majored in theatre as a William & Mary undergraduate and is on track to receive her master's degree in December. She is also completing a postbac-

William & Mary Professor of Economics Jennifer M. Mellor has led the center since fall 2009, capitalizing on the College's strengths in policy analysis and quantitative research to promote health policy research.

Under her leadership, the center has sought grants and contracts to support faculty and student research and developed conferences and summer fellowship opportunities for students. Mellor also networks with local organizations to identify possible partnerships and future collaborations for the Schroeder Center.

"In one series of projects, we are examining how economic downturns affect health care utilization and spending among Medicare beneficiaries, possibly through physician and provider responses to income reductions created by recessions," Mellor notes. "In another series, we are studying the role that Medicare's use of an outpatient prospective payment system has on outpatient volume in hospitals."

Mellor says plans are also under way for a Schroeder Center research publication that would be aimed at general audiences and policymakers and include analyses by center staff on specific, timely topics.

"With all the debates surrounding the passage of health care reform during the last two years, we've all become very familiar with some of the challenges facing policymakers — challenges to improve our nation's health, to expand access to health care, and to control health care spending," Mellor says.

"I would like to see the Schroeder Center and William & Mary students making important contributions to these research and policy questions," she says. "Many of the answers can be found in sound policy and empirical analysis, two assets of the William & Mary faculty and students of the Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy," in which the Schroeder Center is based.

calaureate, premedical curriculum and plans to pursue a medical degree after working in the health policy field for a few years.

"As an educator, I've seen firsthand how students benefit from being exposed to research," Mellor concludes. "The research process helps you ask good questions. It helps you develop problem-solving skills, because research designs aren't always nice and clean. You don't always have access to the data you want. So you may have to be creative when you run into a problem. Those are great skills for anyone to learn in a very supervised environment." ■

Forever Connected

Five William & Mary alumni share their life journeys and how the College has helped them along the way

The moment students set foot on the historic William & Mary campus, their lives begin to change forever. Their experiences at the College help shape who they become — instilling in them a spirit of service and cultivating leadership qualities that allow them to contribute in vital ways to society. In return, alumni's lifelong relationships with their alma mater likewise shape and enrich William & Mary today. On the following pages are the stories of five alumni of the College who embody this symbiotic, lifelong relationship — who, though possessing different backgrounds and career paths, represent the varied ways in which graduates of William & Mary both reflect and enhance the College's collective strength.



JOY ROU

CONVERGING PATHS

Nekisa R. Cooper '99

As an independent film producer, Nekisa Cooper '99 strives to tell stories that are not typically seen or heard.

"I believe film can change hearts and minds one popcorn bucket at a time. I'm inspired by images that aren't mainstream," she says. In fact, the mission statement for her independent company, Northstar Pictures Inc., named for Frederick Douglass' abolitionist newspaper, states in part: "Northstar Pictures ... seeks to give voice to the disenfranchised and provide an alternative point of view on society."

Cooper didn't set out for a career in film, but each

step she took in a seemingly different direction helped prepare her for it.

"My time at William & Mary, especially the time I spent in collegiate athletics, gave me the critical thinking skills that have helped make my career dreams a reality," says Cooper, who played varsity basketball for the Tribe. "William & Mary taught me to be strategic — that's a foundation for how I live my life."

After graduation, Cooper spent a brief time coaching college basketball before going to Clark Atlanta University to earn a Master of Business Administration in marketing. She planned to become an athletic director, but ended up in brand management, working for companies like Colgate-Palmolive, L'Oreal and General Electric.

While at Colgate, a friend left the business to attend film school. "When she told me about a film she was working on, I said I'd love to help with logistics and organizing — skills I had from my job," she recalls. Cooper co-produced that film — and was hooked.

Cooper sees many parallels between filmmaking and managing brands. "Putting together a film is a lot like running a business, and my former career taught me how to do that," she says. "I love using those skills to pursue my passion."

In her relatively young film career, Cooper has produced many critically acclaimed projects, including a feature documentary on Liberia, *Eventual Salvation*, which received a 2007 Sundance Documentary Fund Grant and premiered on the Sundance Channel in October 2009. Other projects include the narrative short *Pariah*, a coming-of-age story about a lesbian teenager, which will premiere as a full-length feature film early next year, and the award-winning *La Muñeca Fea (The Ugly Doll)*, which is currently in post-production.

Though her career has taken several shifts, Cooper doesn't see many significant changes in her future. "I feel like I've found my place," she says. "It was a weird journey — basketball layered with coaching and business school and a branding career got me here. But I'm very comfortable." ■

IN PURSUIT OF THE "GREAT EQUALIZER"

Matt L. Taylor '08

Soon after completing a two-year term with Teach for America, Matt Taylor '08 received a phone call he'll never forget.

"I got a call from a student who had started the previous year not believing in himself," recalls Taylor, who taught eighth-grade English to kids four to eight years behind their age levels in a New Orleans alternative middle school. "By the end of the year, he had become co-captain of the basketball team I helped coach and had the self-confidence he needed to be successful."

Taylor guided that young man through the process of applying to a new charter high school in New Orleans, where he was subsequently accepted. "He was beaming on the other end of the phone when he called from orientation, telling me he felt like he belonged there," Taylor recalls. "I know I'll never forget that student."

After completing his two years of teaching in New Orleans, Taylor calls the experience both extraordinarily challenging and gratifying. "I feel like I gave students a new look on education," he says. "I made it my goal to expose them to high school and encouraged them to work toward finishing school."

Taylor says William & Mary impressed a strong spirit of service upon him — a spirit that guided him in his work with Teach for America. "William & Mary does a great job of instilling a sense of community and collaboration in students," says Taylor. "The College opened my eyes to the realities of the world. It gave me the skills to combat injustice, to focus on service and to give back."

Taylor is obviously not the only one who heard this calling at his undergraduate alma mater. For three consecutive years, William & Mary has ranked among the top contributors to Teach for America, and the student population's instinct to serve is reflected in the College's top ranking for service in *Washington Monthly's* 2010 annual college guide.

Currently, Taylor is working as a Teach for America recruiter. He knows more education is in his future — perhaps a master's in public policy or law school. Whatever path he follows, he is certain of one thing:

"I know I'll be fighting for equality and against injustice," he says. That's what drew him to Teach for America in the first place.

"In my mind, education is the great equalizer," says Taylor. "Not everyone has access to equal educational opportunities, though." He believes that's a serious problem — a problem he plans to help solve, thanks in part to the inspiration he received at William & Mary. ■



BECK GULIVER

ALL ROADS LEAD BACK HOME

Jean Kumiko Takeuchi M.A. '76

When Jean Kumiko Takeuchi M.A. '76 came to the United States, she had barely enough money to stay for a year. She stayed much longer — earning multiple advanced degrees, becoming an American citizen, and retiring from Eli Lilly & Co. after a 20-year career as a research scientist.

A major influence in her life has been her faith — a faith so strong that it's led her to pursue another degree — a doctorate in Old Testament theology from Cambridge University in England, where she began attending in fall 2010.

"I became a Christian at William & Mary," Takeuchi says. "I have learned that God will provide for me, and he has."

In her native Japan, Takeuchi worked as a chemist. She also took evening courses in conversational English,

and her instructor encouraged her to study in the States.

Takeuchi was interested in attending a Southern school based on her English instructor's experiences in Alabama. She found William & Mary in a book. "When I saw 1693 as the founding year, I thought it was a typo," she recalls, laughing. "I thought it should be 1963!"

Thinking she may not qualify for an American graduate program, Takeuchi applied as a third-year undergraduate. "When I arrived, they told me I had the credits to be a graduate student, but they were concerned about my English," she says. "They told me I had to pass two courses: quantitative analysis and physical chemistry — known as the 'chemistry killer.'" She passed and ultimately earned her master's in chemistry from the College, as well as a master's in theology and a doctorate in chemistry at other universities.

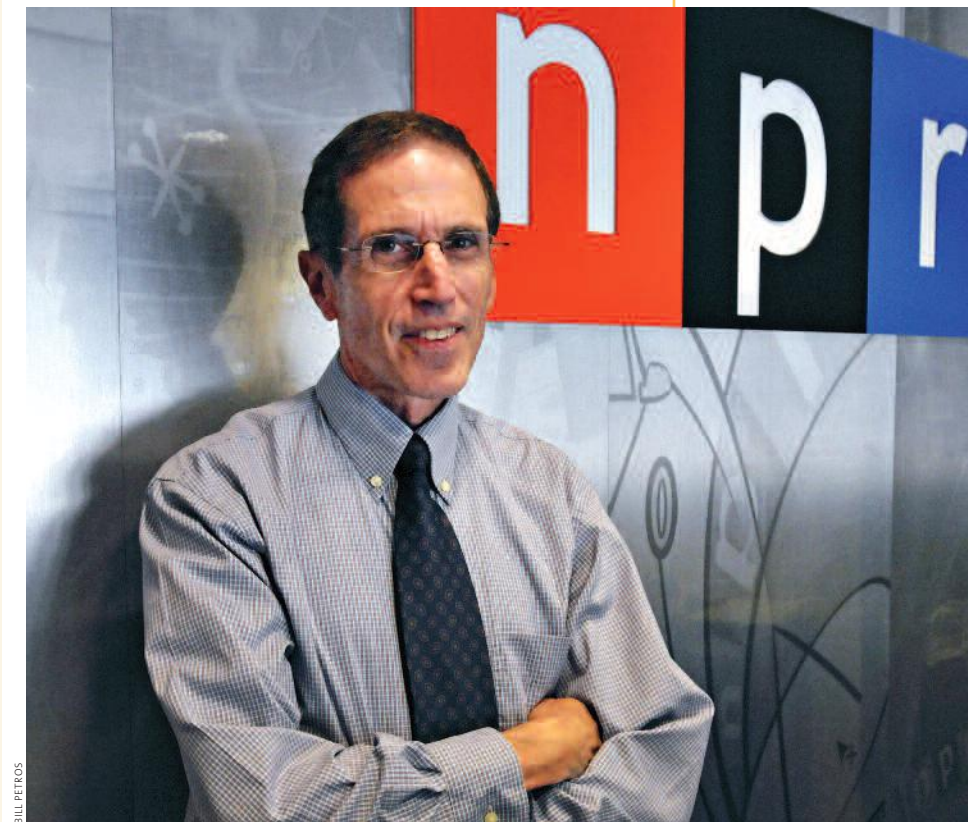
Takeuchi retired from her career as a research scientist at Eli Lilly in 2008. "I worked in the very beginning of drug discovery efforts," she says. "I designed and synthesized new molecules so biologists could test them.

A few that I discovered have advanced to human clinical trials."

When she left Lilly, she knew she had much more to do with her life. "My faith is very important to me," she says. "I knew I wanted to teach religious courses, but for that I needed a Ph.D."

For the past year and a half, Takeuchi has studied four more languages — biblical Hebrew and Greek, German and French — requirements to enroll in Cambridge's doctoral program. After completing the program at Cambridge, Takeuchi wants to teach in Central Europe or Central Asia through the International Institute of Christian Studies, changing the world for others the way her world changed at William & Mary.

When she finally retires, Takeuchi hopes to return "home" — to Virginia. "Maybe I'll teach at William & Mary," she muses. ■



BILL PETROS

A VOICE THAT LISTENS

R. Craig Windham '71

Early each weekday morning, Craig Windham '71 arrives at the National Public Radio (NPR) studio in Washington, D.C., and immerses himself in world news. From 6 to 11 a.m. he tells those stories — complete with his signature use of unique sounds — during top-of-the-hour newscasts on *Morning Edition*.

Before NPR, Windham, whose award-winning career started with William & Mary Radio, was a national correspondent for the RKO/Unistar Radio Networks, covering everything from politics to natural disasters.

"I love being in the field," he says, noting that he's a storyteller by nature. His most memorable reporting experiences have come during natural disasters. "I love seeing how people come together for the better to help one another. It shows the resilience in people," he explains.

When RKO merged with another network in the mid-1990s, Windham was given a year of severance pay — and a chance to try new things. He took on what was initially only a part-time job with NPR "just to keep my

foot in radio," he explains. He also wrote a book, *Reggie Lewis: Quiet Grace*, which tells the story of the life and controversial death of the Boston Celtics star.

"I was also ready for a new challenge," Windham says. "I decided to take one counseling course at George Washington University. I went to talk to the department head and ended up signing up for the entire program before I left." He earned a master's and doctorate in counseling.

In addition to his journalism career, Windham has joined a private counseling practice and teaches graduate courses in school counseling at George Washington. He also mentors teenagers in his church youth group and accompanies them on mission trips. "I most enjoy that one-on-one time with them," he says, noting that he may even nudge some of them to attend William & Mary.

Counseling kids inspired Windham's doctoral dissertation topic: adolescent social messaging and online communication. "My research shows that social messaging is just another healthy form of communication for most kids as long as they don't overdo it," he says. "They tend to adapt and use it wisely."

Although his two careers are very different, Windham sees one similarity: "I like the unpredictability — not knowing what will happen each day." He enjoys how both jobs allow him to examine human nature up close, making small changes in society each day as he tells the world's stories — and listens to them, too. ■



A.J. MASST

INCULCATING LIFE SKILLS

Anne Humphries Arseneau '89, M.Ed. '92

Anne Arseneau '89, M.Ed. '92 didn't go far to put her two William & Mary degrees to use: as the associate director of Student Activities at the College, she helps shape the lives of students every day.

"There's nothing more motivating than helping your own home community," says Arseneau, who works with the College's strong and diverse Greek organizations and manages the Student Activities office's leadership development programs.

Arseneau's career in higher education started just after graduation. The English major spent a year as a leadership consultant for the women's fraternity Kappa Alpha Theta (often referred to as Theta), an organization she was an active undergraduate member of at William & Mary. The position required her to travel to campuses and work with members and advisers of other Theta chapters.

"When I was an undergraduate, William & Mary didn't have an 'Anne Arseneau' on staff for the Greek community," she notes. "I didn't know this was something I could do until I started traveling for Kappa Alpha Theta."

After that year, Arseneau came back to campus, this time to earn a master's degree in secondary education. She also became head resident for Sorority Court. "During my second year Vice President Sam Sadler [then the longtime vice president for Student Affairs] suggested I consider a career in student affairs," she recalls. After graduation, she spent two years working in residence life at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind., and then worked for LeaderShape, a nonprofit organization that provides ethics-based leadership development programs.

Arseneau returned to William & Mary for a third time in 1997 after Sadler '64, M.Ed. '71 called to say the College was creating

the Greek advising position the two had long talked about.

With 13 years of Greek advising under her belt, Arseneau says she's among the more seasoned professionals in the field. "Young professionals usually last about three to four years in these positions," she says. "I plan to stick with this as long as my voice is valuable."

The Greek community inspires her. "When we are doing everything right, there is no other student organization that offers the civic, academic, social, service and community experiences all wrapped into one the way we do," she says.

The students also inspire her. "What keeps me engaged is the notion that our men and women are learning how to navigate as a group the things they are passionate about," she says. "This is a life skill they'll use in their careers and their personal lives after they graduate." ■



STEPHEN SAURKAS