

FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT DAVID L. PARKYN

FALL 2006

THIS IS A POTENT IMAGE

and a potent practice that hones the soul as surely as it hones and shapes the communion of which the soul is a member. It is still assumed today in both Judaism and Islam; in those faiths, the faithful stop and the faithful pray. . . . Fixed-hour prayer was assumed as part of Christian devotion for several centuries, in fact, until Rome fell.... Because of those long, dark centuries when only the clergy and the privileged had both prayer books and the literacy with which to use them, fixed-hour prayer ... came to be associated in the minds of the humble faithful as particular not to the Christian tradition itself, but to chanting monks and/or times of sequestered individual devotion. Nothing could have been, or could be, farther from the truth. And little could have been more detrimental, more enervating, to the whole body of Christ on earth than the loss of those diurnal rhythms of praise and thanksgiving by all believers."

- Phyllis Tickle

From her introduction to Dr. Scot McKnight's Praying with the Church, and quoted in her October 3, 2006 lecture on campus, this year's installment in the Kermit Zarley lecture series.

Dear Friends,

The past nine months have been an interesting and inspiring journey for Linda and me as we first heard of, then participated in, the search for a new president at North Park University. I still recall the first time I read the position profile, surprised that it so closely matched my own interests. I remember my first visits with the search consultants, early meetings with the search committee, and even a couple of clandestine visits to the campus.

Once our involvement in the search became public we responded to the many inquiries of campus personnel and friends of the University. This also involved talking with friends and colleagues with whom we had worked for many years in Pennsylvania. Finally there were visits with the University's Board of Trustees and attendance at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

We were intrigued by North Park University from our earliest contact, but we have become committed to this school over the past several months as we have met, and continue to meet, a growing number of people whose lives have been transformed by this institution. This truly is a special place to many people. Linda and I are honored to be part of this community of learning.

Since arriving in Chicago at the beginning of July we have hardly stopped to catch our breath. Our sense of place was confirmed as University personnel gathered to begin the new academic year and as new students moved into on-campus residences. This is, after all, very much a place of people; and it is through the people that one comes to know North Park.

For many years the University has held a Gathering Day which marks, for employees, the beginning of the new academic year. I had the privilege of presiding over this year's event. In my remarks to the faculty and staff who gathered that morning, I commented on a poem I had read recently. The poem is by Ken Hekman and is titled *The Art of Work*. I commented, in part, as follows:

Through a metaphor appropriate for the hot summer we've experienced, Hekman describes work as the opportunity to bring shade and coolness to the lives of others. He espouses that in our vocation we are artists, people who in our breath, our soul, our *ruach*, as the Hebrews would say, bring life to those around us. And his poem ends on a note quite familiar to us at North Park, where our mission is to "prepare students for lives of significance and service." All this, and more, is expressed in a few short lines.

The Art of Work

I give myself to this, to this...
A passing shadow, barely felt
though un-mistakenly sent
to darken this corner
for a moment, to cast a little
coolness, a little shade – for a change.
With breath as a brush, I stroke
and stoke and sculpt something
that wasn't there before,
leaving the world just a little better
than I found it.

Focus on the important

**NORTH PARK
UNIVERSITY**
CHICAGO

As I join the community of North Park University I wonder whether I'll leave this place "just a little better than I found it." And what of my new neighborhood, and the city of Chicago, and the church where I'll worship, and the organizations in which I'll volunteer? When I leave will these worlds be better than when we first met?

Such a question, of course, is not mine alone. Will each of us leave this university better than we found it? Will we, educators all of us, leave the students just a little better than when we first met them, as they entered our lives through the doors of our classrooms, residences halls, offices, and athletic fields? This is our collective task—"with breath as a brush, we stroke and stoke and sculpt something that wasn't there before, leaving [our students] just a little better than [we] found [them]."

Following the Gathering Day breakfast, new students moved into campus residence halls, bringing new life to the University and to all of us who work here. Later that afternoon, as we celebrated Opening Convocation, I noted for new students that North Park is a place that values learning. It is a place where people gather to learn; a place of discovery and adventure, challenge and fulfillment, questioning the old and testing the new. In this learning community our goal is to prepare students to live lives of significance and service. We have this as a goal because we truly believe they can make a difference in the world by becoming involved in God's work of restoration, renewal, and reconciliation.

This campus is now a richer place than ever before because each of those students is here. We pray that as our students bring to this place their varied talents and as they share in the richness of all those gathered with them, they will find our community to be a lively center of sound learning, a place of new discovery, and a venue for the pursuit of wisdom.

North Park is here for our students. We impact other parts of the world through our students, both in their present lives and their futures as parents and community leaders, church members and business people. We can achieve this transformational impact because the University is blessed with a cohort of wise, hard-working, and dedicated faculty and staff.

We also are able to achieve this transformational impact because of the generosity and commitment of friends of the University, especially those receiving this mailing. As the new president of North Park I thank you for your giving spirit and your dedication to providing resources that make it possible for students to be educated at this university.

PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

Over the weekend of November 10, 2006, the University community will gather for the Presidential Inauguration. More importantly, we will gather to celebrate the life and spirit of North Park. I hope you will be able to join us for at least part of this celebration.

The festivities will include an academic symposium led by members of the University faculty, discussing those ideals which are distinctive to North Park; a musical event featuring several of the University's student music ensembles; a gala dinner in downtown Chicago; and the inauguration ceremony, scheduled for Sunday, November 12, at 2:00 p.m.

Formal invitations were mailed in September. As you receive this information please consider the possibility of joining us for as many of the weekend's events as your calendar allows. If you have questions about any of these festivities please contact my office.

HOMECOMING 2006: "SWEET HOME CHICAGO," SEPTEMBER 21-24

The Blues Brothers, a film released in 1980, is a classic comedic work that has generated a life of its own, thriving even to the present—especially in the city that is the film's centerpiece, Chicago. Borrowing from this and other Chicago distinctives, including some unique to North Park, this year's Homecoming Weekend included both new and reconfigured activities, as well as those that have become favorite traditions during the annual event. Our intent was to provide a unique experience that drew alumni and family members of all ages, spanning many decades of class years from the 1930s to the present.

This year's Homecoming weekend boasted many firsts for our guests: my arrival as "the new guy in the President's office," new student residences, new faculty, and last but not least, our wonderful new Helwig Recreation Center. New Homecoming activities like a block party, a two-mile run, a bus tour of Chicago, and the Windy City Jazz and Blues concert gave everyone many opportunities to enjoy the campus.

Saturday evening's Homecoming Banquet featured Distinguished Alumna Kathy (Bowman) Holmgren C'69 and Up & Coming Young Alumna Michele Thomas C'97. North Park is proud to be associated with these fine individuals who exemplify our mission to encourage lives of significance and service.

If you were able to attend the weekend of activities, I hope you were impressed by what your friendship to North Park means to us. A large portion of our strength resides in a community of alumni, parents, churches, and friends that spans the country and the world, and it was our pleasure to host this event in our home—"Sweet Home Chicago"—this fall.

DEDICATION OF THE HELWIG RECREATION CENTER, SEPTEMBER 15-16

It was a proud and historic moment for North Park University as lead donors Nancy (Sandberg) and David Helwig C'78 cut the ribbon and the pep band led the crowd in the University fight song to signify the official dedication of the Helwig Recreation Center in a ceremony on Friday, September 15.

In addition to the Helwigs and their family and friends, current students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends gathered to hear remarks from key leaders of the University and the building project, and by Margaret Laurino, Alderman of the 39th Ward of the City of Chicago, who read a resolution passed by the City Council congratulating the University on this achievement.

The festivities continued on Saturday with the First Annual North Park 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, which was followed by the dedication of the Dan McCarrell and Bosko Djurickovic Courts in the Helwig Recreation Center, named in honor of North Park's two NCAA championship coaches. Both coaches were present and took part in cutting the ceremonial ribbon.

Those in attendance throughout the weekend expressed many a "wow" as they entered this new, impressive building. The state-of-the-art, 68,000-square-foot facility is located on the southwest corner of Kedzie and Carmen avenues, helping to blend the park-like interior campus with the surrounding industrial city. The facility is now open for use by all current students, faculty, and staff. For a detailed exploration of the building be sure to read the next issue of the *North Parker*, coming to your mailbox in December.

MUSICAL, CULTURAL AND ACADEMIC VENUES

Like most institutions of higher education, North Park hosts a wide range of events on campus which our students, the local community, and University friends are encouraged to attend. North Park's website provides the schedule and information for most of these. By logging on to www.northpark.edu, clicking on "campus community calendar," and using the arrow to move from month to month, you can get a full picture of the kinds of offerings available.

We are particularly proud of our musical and fine arts offerings, and would like to share with you a brief look at what you can expect:

October 29, Jazz Ensemble concert

November 4, Gospel Choir concert

November 10, Inaugural weekend concert featuring new works by Rollo Dilworth, director of choral programs at North Park, and orchestra performance of Sergey Prokofiev's *Peter & the Wolf* with President Parkyn as guest narrator

November 15 - 19, Performances of the Theatre Department's fall play, *Full Circle*, by Charles L. Lee

November 19, University Concert Band concert

December 2 & 3, Rejoice! concert

the December 2 concert will be preceded by a special meal for members of the President's Club and the Nyvall Society

The intellectual life of our students is important to us. For this reason, each semester the University hosts a number of special lectures and other forums through which students, faculty, and campus guests can engage in a variety of topics. Among the events scheduled for this fall is a series of lectures sponsored by the Campus Theme program, examining the question, “What is Truth?,” and featuring the following speakers in November:

Wednesday, November 8, 7:30 p.m. in Anderson Chapel
The Truth About Business Ethics, *David Batstone*
Friday, November 17, 7:00 p.m. in Hamming Hall
Confronting the Truth: Lessons from Lived Experience, *Gustavo Gutierrez*

Information on these and other lectures is available on the University website, and all of these events are open to the public. As you have occasion to be near the campus, please join us for any and all of these lectures and forums which may be of interest to you.

The events and lectures listed above are only a sampling of the rich cultural and academic environment we are able to create on campus. How are we able to provide events like this to enhance the intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual lives of our students? Only through your generous spirit and support. Thank you for making an education at North Park possible.

AN INVITATION

One day each month my calendar is reserved as an “open-door” day for employees; another day each month is reserved as an “open-door” day for students. On these days the community is invited to informally drop by my office for brief conversation of whatever topics they bring. They come individually, with friends, or with interested colleagues. No appointments are necessary, and we even provide cookies!

In like manner, I want to invite you to visit my office when you are near the campus. Or, as an alternative, write a brief email message to me, drop me a letter, or dial me up on the phone. I’m always open and ready to hear from you. And, of course, there will be times when I take the initiative and travel to your home area to visit with you and other friends of the University.

In both venues Linda and I hope to meet you and learn of your love for North Park. By telling us your story we’ll learn something about North Park’s past; by sharing your vision for North Park with us, together we’ll have opportunity to shape the future of this fine school.

Blessings to you,



David L. Parkyn
President