

# FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT DAVID L. PARKYN

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER TO LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY DONORS  
SPRING 2009 / VOLUME 10 / NUMBER 3

*“It takes many  
years before  
we see the  
full impact of  
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in each  
student’s life.”*

## THREE YEARS AND COUNTING

With this spring semester Linda and I approach our third anniversary at North Park. We enjoyed our first year, felt more at home during our second year, and increasingly love North Park in our third year! Thank you for opening your arms so wide to welcome us into this community.

As this school year opened in late August we greeted the largest student body ever to gather at North Park University. Preparing for this took some hard work on the part of many people. Our admissions office brought them here, and staff from student life and from many other departments helped introduce the record group of students to campus life. Meanwhile our faculty in every discipline have pressed hard from the first day of class to open student minds in every chair of every classroom.

Of course this year has also brought a unique set of challenges. In September the North Branch of the Chicago River overflowed its banks, damaging some of our buildings and issuing an unexpected draw on our limited financial resources. Additionally, the decline in the investment markets has affected the University’s endowment; the State of Illinois cut financial assistance to private colleges and universities; and students from many families are facing difficult decisions regarding college attendance and the financial burden this brings to them.

In the midst of all these things, why do I still love being president of this University? It’s the people—those who study here and go on to lead lives of significance and service. They are why I love North Park.

The most significant joy—and the most pressing challenge—of being president of North Park University is the pleasure and responsibility of watching over the intellectual, social, and spiritual development of students. I’ve given a lot of attention this year to financial matters. But the students are whom I think about most often. How will their lives be significant? Where will they live in service?

- What of Becca, Marie, and Angela, who visited me in my office last semester to tell me they are “hungry for God?”
- What of Mikhail, who emigrated from Russia 15 years ago, opened several tennis clinics in Chicago, and then came to North Park to prepare for a career in health care administration?

- What of Deborah, a current student who grew up poor in Brazil but has now opened a music clinic for needy children from the streets of Chicago?
- What of Kelli, a recent graduate who during her years at North Park was the principal organizer of urban service activities for hundreds of students from this campus?
- What of Suzana, who fled war-torn Kozovo when she was 13 and was exposed to the world of investigative reporting during her junior-year internship with a CBS affiliate?
- What of Trisha, who was awarded the Ahnfeldt medallion by the seminary and has recently begun to pastor a growing Spanish-speaking congregation here in Chicago?
- What of Dan, who this summer transitioned into teaching a bilingual first grade class next door to our campus at the Hibbard School and will soon be on his way to teach in Uganda?
- What of Alonzo, who struggled with finances for school through every semester at North Park, but was the first person in his extended family to attend and to graduate from college?

Why do I come to work each day? To make sure the budget is balanced? Certainly not—although I must care for this. Rather, I come to work each day to walk with Becca, Alonzo, Suzana, Dan and others on their journey.

Why do you give so generously to North Park University? To make sure our budget is balanced? No—though I'm pleased you are with us in that. Rather, you give so generously so that you too can walk with Marie, Angela, Mikhail, Deborah, Trisha, and the rest of the North Park student body.

At the end of each day on my way home I ask myself, "How are we doing?" There is great mystery here, because the evidence of our work rests not in the lives of students while they are with us at North Park. Rather, the proof of our work is evident only in years to come. To be part of a university community is to walk by faith, to dedicate one's life fully to the lives of students, knowing that it takes many years before we see the full impact of their education.

We walk by faith.

## KEEPING GOOD COMPANY

North Park University has been named to the 2008 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll by the Corporation for National and Community Service. This is the first year North Park has been named to the Honor Roll. This program, launched in 2006, "recognizes colleges and universities nationwide that support innovative and effective community service and service-learning programs." The Honor Roll is sponsored at the federal level by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, and the U.S. Departments of Education and Housing and Urban Development.

## SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

A number of individuals from our University community merit special mention in this newsletter.

Among our students. . .

- Senior Kelly Thoës has received the 2008 Student Laureate Award from The Lincoln Academy of Illinois.
- Phil Bloss and Travis Moore have been selected for scholarship awards through the American Humanics Next Generation Nonprofit Leaders Program.
- The Brandel Library presently hosts the premiere of “60625,” a photography exhibit organized by three students. Photographer Eric Staswick and his assistants, Bethany Crino Staswick and Lucas Larson, named the project after our neighborhood zip code. The exhibit includes photographs of individuals wearing American clothing as well as clothing from their home countries.

Among our trustees. . .

- Jimmie Alford has been selected to receive the Chair’s Award for Outstanding Service from the Association of Fundraising Professionals.
- Ann Alvarez received the “Beacon of Light” Award from the Latino Advisory Committee at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. A few months ago Ann and her work at Casa Central were the subject of a feature article in the alumni magazine of the School of Social Services Administration at the University of Chicago.
- Owen Youngman was recently appointed as Knight Professor of Digital Media Strategy for the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

Among our faculty. . .

- Angelyn Balodimas-Bartolomei (education) published *Footsteps Through Athinia: A Traveler’s Guide to Greece*.
- Paul De Neui (seminary) edited a collection of essays published as *Communicating Christ in Asian Cities: Urban Issues in Buddhist Contexts*.
- Brent Laytham (seminary) edited the essays in *God Does Not . . . Entertain, Play Matchmaker, Hurry, Demand Blood, Cure Every Illness*.
- Scot McKnight (biblical and theological studies) wrote *Fasting* (from the *Ancient Practices* series edited by Phyllis Tickle and published by Thomas Nelson).
- Kurt W. Peterson (history) wrote *Lincoln’s Land: The History of Abraham Lincoln’s Coles County Farm*.

In addition, the book *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*, published this past year by Klyne Snodgrass (seminary), was recognized with 2009 Book of the Year honors in the biblical studies category by *Christianity Today*.

## THANK YOU FOR GIVING TO NORTH PARK

In my newsletter to you in December I noted a special appeal for funds to assist the University in covering extraordinary expenses we have faced in recovering from the flooding of the campus river in September. More than 300 people responded to this request, providing us with just more than \$120,000 toward this special need.

Most satisfying, however, was the response from individuals for whom this was their first gift to North Park. We received gifts for the flood appeal from more than 100 first-time donors, with an average gift in excess of \$250.

Please know of our sincere appreciation for your generous giving. The flood represented a short-lived disruption to campus life. What we want to be sure of, however, is that the longer-term implications of facing this expense do not interfere with the attention we must give to our central mission—“preparing students for lives of significance and service.”

The river waters rose, did some damage, and then fell. But learning persists and your gifts help to assure that student lives continue to be transformed at North Park.

Thank you for your partnership with us,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "David L. Parkyn", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

David L. Parkyn  
President, North Park University