



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER TO PRESIDENT'S CLUB AND HERITAGE CIRCLE DONORS
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"All of North Park is a growing experience."

—Betty Nelson

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

In the spring of 1955, when I was two years old, my parents packed up our home in southwestern Wisconsin, loaded my brother and me into our car, and drove south to Texas. There we crossed the border, left behind our country and journeyed through Mexico to Guatemala.

We lived for a dozen years in two small villages. This was my childhood home. This is where I made my childhood friends. This is where I learned to speak, and eventually to read and write (all in Spanish, of course, because as children we all learn whatever language our friends are speaking).

When I was a teenager our family moved back to the United States. I finished high school, went to college and graduate school, and took on my first college teaching jobs. Soon I was back in Guatemala leading three-week study-tours each year for undergraduate students.

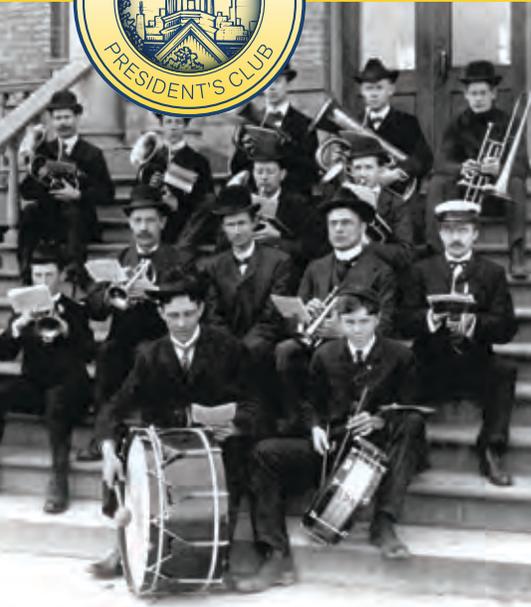
On these visits I returned home. I saw old friends, walked along familiar streets, worshipped in my "home" church, and enjoyed some great food. It was as though I had never left.

Yet, on these return visits I also noticed that so much was different. Improvements had been made to the village park. Some families had moved to adjacent villages. The town had a new marketplace which was now open two days each week rather than the single day of my childhood. A new political party was now in office.

It was good to be home, though it wasn't quite the same place where I had grown up. My first days in town were a bit restless, but by the end of my visit I realized that for the most part the differences simply reflected natural changes which usually had made the village a better place for my childhood friends and their families.

In this same spring of 1955, Betty Nelson was asked what it was like to return to North Park. This school had been her home a decade earlier when she was a student from 1942 to 1944. From here she went off to finish college and not long after came back to the campus.

She returned not as a student but as a teacher. And in returning she quickly realized that more than her role had changed. The name of the school was still the same. It was still at its same location along Foster Avenue. The faculty still included many of the same people. But so much had changed.



Here's how Betty described the change in a campus publication during the spring of 1955: "The fact that I now have my office where I used to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner is enough to make me realize that North Park is quite a bit different now than in [my student days]."

At first it was hard for Betty to get accustomed to all the "new" in this place. She had come back to teach at her alma mater, but was it really the same school as it had been when she was a student here? Could she still love it the way she had loved it as a student?

Sure enough, she could. Here's more of what Betty wrote in 1955: "Perhaps it's because so many times a person has to return to a place to discover what's been there all the time, that I have felt a change in my own feeling toward North Park during these years. All of North Park is a growing experience. It is a growth exemplified not just by numbers of students and buildings, but by a rich movement in the understanding of Christian education on the North Park campus!"

The same, yet different. The same, yet better.

Betty and I hold to a common philosophy of life—build on the past by embracing the future.

Some parts of the past ought never to change. We loved God in the past; we will love God in the future. We loved our neighbors in the past; we will love our neighbors in the future.

Yet, how we love God and how we love our neighbors tomorrow will be different from how we loved God and how we loved our neighbors yesterday. The same, yet also new.

So it is with North Park University, as Betty pointed out so well when I was two years old! In 1955 North Park was enough like it was in 1942 for Betty still to recognize it and love it for what it had been. Yet, in 1955 North Park was enough different from what it had been in 1942 for Betty to know it had moved forward in the intervening years.

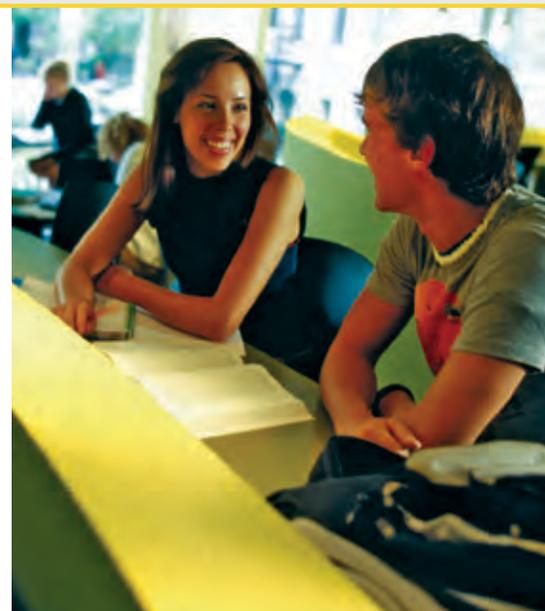
During my seven years as president at North Park I've discovered this is how we all feel about the University today.

North Park today is enough like it was when you studied here, or when your children were here, or when you first knew it, so you recognize it and love it for what it has always been.

And North Park is different enough today for you to know it has moved forward.

Here's what we also affirm: In 10 years our love for God and neighbor at North Park will be as strong and secure as it has always been, but we'll be expressing this in new ways. In fact, these will be better ways because they will faithfully support an exceptional education for our students.

At North Park we have faith in our future even as we honor our past.



TWO MAJOR MILESTONES

About a year ago in this newsletter I wrote about today's momentum at North Park. Using the image of a flywheel I described North Park as an institution that is turning and moving forward with increasing speed and effectiveness.

We measure this in many ways. In my last letter to you I described our momentum at North Park as it pertains to student learning. This is our priority responsibility at North Park; if we're not securing student learning in a faith-filled environment then little else matters. I also identified some of the findings from a national learning assessment project that affirm the good things happening in student learning at North Park.

In recent months we reached two other milestones that are helpful in describing momentum at North Park. And these aren't just any markers—these are really important ones.

The central focus of Campaign North Park is to raise funds for construction of the Johnson Center. We've reported often on our progress in this area. There are, however, three other components in the campaign: endowed scholarships, funding for academic initiatives, and annual giving to support the University's operating budget.

Here's the first milestone: **Total gift commitments for all components of Campaign North Park, during the past four years, have exceeded \$60 million!** Through your

deep generosity we have witnessed God's faithfulness at North Park.

Endowment funds at North Park are the primary source of scholarships awarded by the University. Throughout our school's history, faithful partners have provided gifts to the endowment which are wisely invested so a portion of the returns can be awarded each year to students as scholarship assistance.

Twenty-five years ago when Carl Balsam, our CFO, first came to North Park the University's endowment had just reached \$6 million. This provided for some financial aid to students but it was hardly sufficient. So over the years loving friends of North Park have provided additional endowed funds, often through estate provisions. Along with this, Carl and members of our Board of Trustees have been faithful stewards of these invested funds. As a result of both new gifts and careful investment of funds, our endowment has grown over the past two decades.

Here's the second milestone: **For the first time in our school's history, the North Park endowment has reached beyond \$70 million!** These funds, carefully invested by our trustees, each year provide a return that funds scholarship awards which make it possible for many students to study at North Park.

Your generosity makes a difference each day in each student's life.



BIG PLANS, BOLD WAYS

We Chicagoans are quite proud of our city's stunning lakefront of public parks, gardens, lagoons, marinas, and beaches. It's unique among the world's great cities. We owe it primarily to one man, architect Daniel Burnham. In his famous Chicago Plan of 1909 Burnham spoke with a prophetic voice that forever changed the face of this city.

In this plan for Chicago, Burnham dared to dream big dreams because the cause demanded only big dreams. "Make no little plans," Burnham said, "They have no magic to stir men's blood."

Those who were part of North Park in 1942—individuals who taught Betty Nelson when she was a student here, and friends who supported North Park with their gifts—were true Chicagoans: They made no little plans. And this tradition has continued to this day.

Now it's our turn. We too must make no little plans. We must commit to North Park in bold ways. We must be deeply loyal to our past, and we must generously embrace the future with the change it will bring. Our students deserve it. Our love for North Park inspires it. Our faith demands it.

Blessings to you,

David L. Parkyn
President