

# FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT DAVID L. PARKYN

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*“I found it all at  
North Park in  
Chicago.”*

*-Rebecca Miller  
C’2007,  
recipient of a  
2008 Fulbright  
Award*

## WHAT SHALL I DO WITH MY LIFE?

At the University’s annual Baccalaureate Service in early May, I began my address to the graduating class with a short story taken from the history of North Park. It is a good story for students to hear, but it has much to teach each of us as well at any point in our life. The essence of the story is true—so far as I can tell—though I’ve used a bit of poetic license in setting the context.

Seventy-five years ago, in the spring of 1933, a short conversation took place between two men at the corner of Foster and Kedzie Avenues.

The elder of the two men was David Nyvall. He was 70 years old on this spring day, and he had been retired for a decade from his life as the first president of North Park College and Seminary. David Nyvall was widely recognized as an elder statesman—a wise man—and he looked the part. By this time in life his hair and a full beard had not only grayed but turned completely white. He wore narrow wire-rimmed glasses and carried himself in such a way that you knew you should listen when he spoke.

The younger of the two men was Karl Olsson. He was 20 years old, and he was ready that spring to graduate from North Park College. He was a very capable young man. Some decades later he would complete a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago and return to teach English at North Park and then eventually become the fifth president of this college. But on this spring day, Karl Olsson was just like you. He was young and restless. He was full of adventure, but uncertain about where his life would take him or where he should take his life.

On this spring commencement weekend in 1933 Karl Olsson sought out David Nyvall. Karl was graduating from college and he had an important question: What shall I do with my life? He had studied hard; he had taken full advantage of all that college offered; he was interested in his own career, but he also wanted to serve others, to find a way, through his life, to make this world a better place. Yet how to get there was oh so unclear.

So Karl Olsson sought out David Nyvall on the corner of Foster and Kedzie Avenues. Young Karl asked, “What shall I do with my life?” And the aging President Nyvall responded with a single, carefully chosen word: “Proceed.”

Careful planning is helpful, indeed necessary. Reflection on the past and a commitment to a mission are both very important. Expertise in the field is required for success. Yet all of this is worthless unless we take the first step. This holds true in our personal lives, and it is certainly the case in our professional responsibilities. We move forward, one step at a time; we proceed.

## STUDENT RECOGNITION

During the spring semester we received the exciting news that Rebecca Miller, a senior during 2007–2008, was named as the recipient of a prestigious Fulbright award. This highly recognized award, presented annually to a select number of college and university graduates nationally, will permit her to teach English in Indonesia and to study Bahasa Indonesian over a ten-month period beginning in August 2008. Rebecca is the first student in the history of North Park University to receive this award.

In her application essay Rebecca wrote these words:

My two loves are multicultural youth and music. I transferred to North Park University because I wanted to live and learn in an urban center. I wanted to play my music with people from around the world; I wanted to study in a department that was open to music outside the western classical paradigm. I wanted to learn from this neighborhood and to know other students and traditions from around the world.

I found it all at North Park in Chicago. And I found much, much more. I have experienced the arts and shared friendships from all across the world. Moreover, I found people who needed me. They needed my music and they needed to learn English. As I began to intertwine these two central parts of my life, my whole outlook was transformed. I am learning to give back to this city that has taught me so much in a way that brings together all my passions and inspires me creatively.

There is little doubt that, in her first year after graduating from the University, Rebecca will live a “life of significance and service.”

## SUMMER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The summer months offer a good time each year to address facility improvement projects. We have already initiated some of these, while others will take place in the coming weeks. The one most North Parkers will be especially interested in is the renovation of Burgh Hall. This project will involve substantial improvement to this aging facility including new flooring in the residence rooms; replacement of all furniture; painting throughout; substantial renovation of the building's common areas; new ceilings, carpeting, and lighting in the hallways; upgraded electrical service; wiring for cable; and installation of a fire sprinkler system. Previous work in this building has provided complete renovation of the rest rooms.

Completing all this work during the summer months is a major task. We began as quickly as we could. On the Monday immediately following commencement weekend contractors began by removing all the furniture from the building—the same furniture students used the first day this building was opened so many years ago!

## FACULTY RETIREMENTS

Each spring we bid farewell to a group of people who have been part of North Park for a good number of years. This year our list of retiring faculty includes several individuals who have been at the University for many decades. These individuals are:

- Haddon Klingberg, professor of psychology
- Larry Knipp, professor of biology
- Charles Olson, director of career planning services
- Virginia Schelbert, assistant professor of nursing, and
- Warren Wade, professor of political science

Each of these individuals has contributed in important ways to the education provided to students at North Park. Our deepest thanks are extended to each of them.

## SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

In mid-summer we are making two changes in the portfolio of responsibilities on the University's senior administrative team.

Mary Surridge will serve as Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs. In this capacity she will oversee all work in this area, including major gifts and planned giving, alumni affairs and annual fund, corporate and foundation relations, development administrative services, and University events.

Mary is well-known in the North Park community through her very active involvement in University life for the past decade. What many of us don't know about Mary, however, is her previous work as a development officer and fund raiser. At Northwestern University she worked under the leadership of Jon Heintzelman (one of the North Park's current Board members). As Associate Director of Planned and Major Gifts at Northwestern, Mary was active in three significant fund raising campaigns: *The Campaign for Athletic Excellence* (with a goal of \$20 million the total raised was \$37 million), the *Campaign for Scholarships*, and *Campaign Northwestern* (with a goal of \$1.0 billion the total raised was \$1.5 billion). Previously she worked in student development at Concordia University Wisconsin. Mary holds a B.S. from Northwestern University and M.S. from Concordia University. With her family she is active at North Park Covenant Church.

Also effective July 1, Dan Tepke, Senior Vice President, will assume responsibility for strategic initiatives and Chicagoland activities. He will do so while maintaining his present responsibilities for athletics, enrollment management, and external relations. He will no longer be responsible for the development office. This change will allow Dan to maintain many of his present responsibilities while he also leads the University's engagement with the city of Chicago and assists departments across the campus in developing new initiatives.

## TRANSFORMING STUDENT LIVES

As I travel across the country visiting friends of North Park University, I'm often asked about recent changes to our campus. People are always delighted with improvements in our facilities. This is a campus which has undergone very significant change and development over the past decade. It is a good story to tell, and a good story to hear.

More recently, however, I've added a very important part to my telling of this story.

Changes to our facilities and campus, our financial base and academic programs, are important, but only to the extent that they provide a means to achieve our people-centered mission. We exist not to have an attractive campus but to transform lives—to prepare students for lives of significance and service.

We exist to transform student lives. Through learning at North Park University the lives of our students are transformed by what is distinctive to our specific learning community. We believe that graduates of the University—from all our programs—will be:

- people who discovered North Park to be a place of Christian faith and ecumenical dialogue, and who have individually advanced a thoughtful and reflective personal faith commitment;
- people who have learned from, understand, and are prepared to contribute to the city as a dynamic place of commerce, faith, culture, learning, and healing; and
- people who understand others, respect difference, and are prepared to promote, contribute to, and participate in social structures and communities which cross cultural boundaries where diversity and inclusion are embraced and nurtured.

It is to this end that we are called by God. It is to this end that we invite others to join us.

I know this is why you care about North Park. We're pleased to hear news of our campus development. We want to know that the University has a firm and stable financial base. But much more than this, we care about students. We care that student lives continue to be transformed. It is to this end that I lead. And it is to this end that you pray for and support us so faithfully.



David L. Parkyn  
President, North Park University