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## **A View from Melrose**

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# Our greatest strength is our community



Shouts and laughter filtered into the President's House one evening during new student orientation. I looked out to see hundreds of first-year students racing back and forth, throwing Frisbees and chasing each other through the Oak Grove. They were claiming Linfield's sacred space as their own,

joining generations of students who have run and played, dreamed and studied, worked and rested under the oaks.

As I watched the students, I couldn't help but think about what they might learn and experience during the next four years. I thought about the professors and staff who will influence them and provide direction and mentoring. I wondered where their passion for learning and service will lead them.

I thought too about the Linfield alumni I have met since becoming president 17 months ago. Individuals whose passion led them to become physicians, teachers and entrepreneurs. They too once played in the Oak Grove.

The alumni I have met deliver a consistent message. It isn't about athletics, the buildings or the Old Oak. It's about the faculty and the staff at Linfield – the professor, administrator, coach, staff member or resident advisor who became a friend or a mentor. Those are the people who changed the lives of our alumni. Those are the people whose influence and impact continue to this day. Throughout our history, our greatest resource has been our people – they are our foundation.

As we celebrate Linfield's first 150 years, we must

build on that foundation. How will we identify students who will benefit most from a Linfield education? How will we find students who will add to the richness of the Linfield Experience by participating in the classroom, lab and studio, on the playing field and in the performance hall? How will we assure these students access to a Linfield education? We have always been an egalitarian community, a place where family wealth or social class

does not determine your place or status. We are a college where you are judged by your character, not your wallet. We owe it to our founders and we owe it to our students to acquire the gifts and endowments that will allow us to achieve this vision.

Similarly, who are the faculty who will teach students today and tomorrow? How can we ensure that current and future teacher-scholars will advise and mentor and guide students the way generations of Linfield faculty have done? Endowments to support new and continuing faculty will guarantee that the quality of a Linfield education remains available to students who will grow and thrive.

Every fall we experience a kind of rebirth at Linfield with the arrival of new students, faculty and staff,

joining those of us who already love this place and care about its future. Our founders gave us the principles upon which to build. For a century and a half, those values have shaped and guided thousands of students. Countless examples can be found in the accomplishments of our students, faculty, staff and alumni. With your help, we can secure an even brighter future for Linfield College and, more importantly, for many more generations of students whose journey will begin in the Oak Grove.

*“Our founders gave us the principles upon which to build. For a century and a half, those values have shaped and guided thousands of students.”*

– Thomas L. Hellie