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## **A View from Melrose**

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# 364 years of service



Earlier this spring, we held a reception to recognize the Linfield employees retiring this academic year. Eight were the senior faculty profiled in this issue of *Linfield Magazine*. It's a remarkable group of professors who have educated and inspired thousands of Linfield students and alumni over the last three decades or more. We do our best to replace retirees with outstanding young teacher-scholars, and we usually succeed. But these professors have done great things, and we will miss them dearly.

At the reception, we also recognized retiring housekeepers, a college painter, a business manager, a lab director, and others. For all, the protocol was the same: a spokesperson would comment on the service and tenure of the individual, and the retiree was then invited to reflect on his or her time at Linfield.

Afterward, a member of the audience commented on the shared commitment of all who had been recognized. Each retiree talked about the students. Everyone took pride in helping our students grow and flourish; sometimes in the classroom, sometimes in a campus job. Everyone talked about relationships; sometimes through faculty-student research, sometimes in the summer paint-crew. Thus we celebrated the “graduation” of our retirees, but we also found ourselves thinking of the graduation of our students and the mission of the college.

One of those recognized was Mardi Mileham, Linfield's Director of Communications, who retires this summer. Mardi never likes calling attention to herself, but anyone who works at Linfield knows that Mardi bleeds purple and cardinal; she has dedicated her life and career to the college. When I first arrived as college president, she instructed me that if there was good news, I should talk to the press; if it was bad news, the job was hers. It was she who talked to the reporters when we had a bomb scare, she who dealt with the local newspaper when it misreported an issue, she who set up the news conference and ran interference when one of our students was killed.

Mardi also launched and edits the *Linfield Magazine*. (She hates that I'm using my column to write about her.) She crafts countless press releases and takes college photographs. She organizes and stage-manages Baccalaureate and Commencement. She provides institutional memory and shrewd advice to the leaders of the college. In a recent email, Professor Tom Love asked, “Who in the world can begin to fill your shoes, Mardi?”

It seems appropriate to recognize her in this magazine. If and when you see her, please thank Mardi Mileham for all she's done for us. Thanks to her – and to everyone else who is retiring this year – Linfield is a great college. 🍷

– Thomas L. Hellie, President