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My Last Word

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My last word

After editing 59 issues of the former *Linfield College Bulletin* and 37 issues of *Linfield Magazine*, and after writing thousands of press releases and shooting thousands of photographs, this is my final issue and my farewell. I am retiring after 27 years as Linfield's director of communications.

My job has been to tell the Linfield story, in words and photos. Sometimes those stories were difficult and tragic, sometimes joyful and exciting. All of them reflected something essential about the nature of this institution.

Working for Linfield College has truly been an extraordinary experience. I have shot photos on the tops of mountains or while lying flat on my back in the street in front of Melrose Hall, sitting in mud, hanging off ladders and from tree branches, and standing on rooftops. I've traveled to Montana and Costa Rica to write stories on extraordinary alumni and students. I have had the privilege of meeting, interviewing and photographing amazing authors, government leaders and activists.

Some of the most exceptional people I've written about have been among my colleagues here.

Linfield is about people and each person has a story. Everyone on this campus has an impact on the students and on this college community. The Linfield experience is distinctive because all of our employees play an important role – from the groundskeepers and custodial staff to the administration and faculty. Those people, coupled with dedicated alumni who provide financial and volunteer support, make this a special community.

My tenure has coincided with an extraordinary period of growth and change – from the opening of the new athletic complex the year I came, to the doubling of the size of campus, and the remodeling and construction of a new library, art center, theatre and music facility.

I've been a part of this community through great excitement but also during times of tragedy. We have lost students, faculty, staff, trustees and alumni. Many times I was tasked with writing about them, and it was a journey of discovery. I gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for the impact each of them had on the college. Some of them were friends and colleagues; each one had a story and each one has a legacy at Linfield. I leave hoping that my work in some way has helped strengthen this remarkable place.

The Linfield community is full of dedicated and committed individuals. I have had the pleasure of working with amazing people – some of whose names most of you will never hear, but who may have touched your lives and who have been incredibly influential and important to the life of this college.

I know, from a deeply personal perspective, how much the Linfield community cares, how much this community embraces and protects its own. It's been an honor and a privilege to have been a part of this extraordinary place for nearly 27 years.

I look forward to seeing great things in the future.

About 18 months ago I wrote: "The character of a community is often revealed in the face of tragedy. ... In times of great sadness and in times of great joy, we are Linfield." That's what I will take with me.

To those who have been such an inspiration, who have always had my back, and who have given me strength and courage – you know who you are – my deepest thanks.

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." – A.A. Milne

– Mardi Mileham

