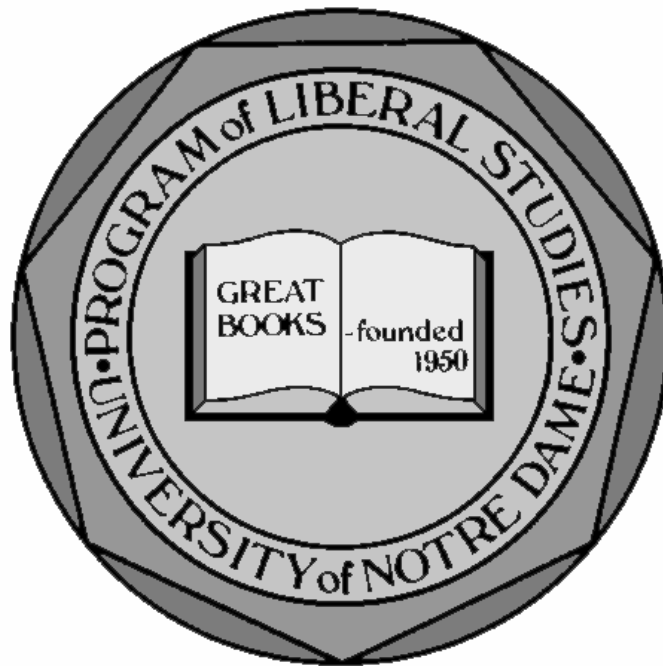


“WE CALLED IT  
THE PROGRAM OF  
LIBERAL STUDIES”



A Collection of Essays on  
The Practical Career Benefits  
Of a PLS Degree

# INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this, I am going to assume that you are either a Notre Dame freshman interested in the Program of Liberal Studies (“PLS”) or a parent of one such freshman. This collection of essays on the practical value of a PLS education has been compiled for you.

PLS graduates are uniquely enthusiastic about the way we were educated at Notre Dame. The essays herein are designed to provide you with a glimpse into the “world beyond PLS” as seen through the eyes of a small sampling of the Program’s graduates. We have tried to avoid generalizations and to present specific examples of how PLS was the foundation for success in our various careers. In this document you will find no quotations from the Great Books nor their authors—just heartfelt testimonials from professionals to the future benefits of a PLS education.

The majority of contributors to this work have two thematic pieces of advice for young students who may be deciding on a college major. First, do not choose your major for the purpose of finding post-graduate employment. Second, if you are considering PLS but fear that it may be “impractical,” you are sorely misinformed. All the contributors share a passionate belief that they are successful not in spite of, but *because of*, their time spent in the Program of Liberal Studies.

As I was compiling these essays, I was struck by commonality of the comments from people in professions as disparate as lawyer and underwater archaeologist, playwright and pediatrician, educator and entrepreneur. Through PLS, each claims to have found inspiration and the critical faculties with which to be successful, but most pursued different paths. What power the Program must have on its students to reflect to each his own specific vocation and provide essential professional guidance—all from the same texts and courses over 55 years! My conclusion is that PLS draws the best out of its students and puts them in a position to keep drawing the best out of themselves throughout the rest of their lives.

I present these essays to you grouped according to four major professional areas: Law, Science, Letters and Business. Understand that the sampling of PLS graduate contributors was, on the whole, random. The major criterion that each contributor satisfied was that I had access to their email address. But I sent out 24 emails to graduates and received 21 well-written, enthusiastic essays back in a few weeks’ time. I wonder if other departments in the University could do the same.

In a short while, all of these essays should be available on the PLS website, which also contains a cornucopia of additional information on the Program. If you are curious about PLS, I advise you to take advantage of this resource by going to [www.nd.edu/~pls/](http://www.nd.edu/~pls/).

Finally, a friend recently asked me how to “explain” PLS to outsiders. I told her that, beyond the normal description of the curriculum, you have to explain it by presenting metaphors of what the Program is through the students it has educated. I hope that these essays go some way to providing you with those metaphors.

- Kevin Becker, PLS 1988

“When people speculate  
about my undergraduate studies program,  
they presume I studied as an engineer, or in political science,  
or mathematics, or astronomy, or business or pre-law.  
In fact, they are all right.  
We just happened to call it the Program of Liberal Studies.”

—Thomas Schwietz, 1954

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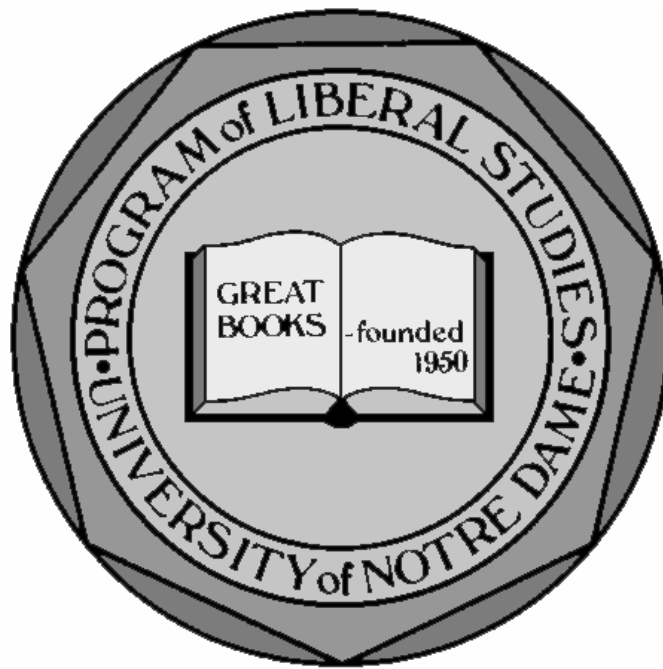
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“For someone who hopes  
to one day practice law,  
the practical benefits of  
an education in the  
Program of Liberal Studies  
are clear and manifold.”

—John Breen, 1985

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THE PROGRAM OF  
LIBERAL STUDIES  
AND



THE LAW

## JOHN BREEN, 1985

# THE PERFECT MAJOR

MR. BREEN DIRECTLY APPLIES HIS PLS EDUCATION TO THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF LAW.

For someone who hopes to one day practice law, the practical benefits of an education in the Program are clear and manifold. The practice of law demands that its practitioners be adept at reading and understanding large amounts of written materials, materials that are often lengthy, complex, obtuse and difficult to comprehend. In order to advance a client's interests, however, an attorney must not only know the law. He or she must also be able to understand its application to the situation at hand and to share that understanding with lawyers and non-lawyers alike in a way that is clear and logical. Moreover, this often requires the exercise of some creativity. Whether negotiating a transaction over the phone or litigating a case in court, lawyers must be well-versed in the myriad ways in which parties debate issues and exchange ideas through the spoken and written word.

Given these demands, it is difficult to imagine an undergraduate course of study to better prepare a person for the rigors of law school and legal practice than PLS. First, although the process of

studying the Great Books is deeply satisfying, the Program reading load is quite heavy and the works assigned are sometimes lengthy and often dense. Whether reading Herodotus' *Histories*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, or Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the Program demands that its students devote careful attention to the text of the day. This discipline provides excellent training for future lawyers whose careers will similarly require the careful reading of many kinds of texts including judicial opinions, statutes and contracts.

Second, by means of a seminar format and the use of an informal Socratic method, the Program teaches its graduates to speak clearly and effectively. This, of course, is an essential skill for anyone who hopes to practice law, regardless of his or her specific area of expertise. Through the dialectic of the classroom, students learn to fashion arguments and to think on their feet. This experience teaches them when it is appropriate to concede a point and when it is best to press on and demonstrate the inadequacies of an alternate

point-of-view. Moreover, students are encouraged not to be content to merely skim along the surface of an argument, but to insist upon a clear understanding of the first principles upon which the argument is founded.

Third, the heavy writing requirements of the Program, including a mandatory senior thesis, help students to develop their skills of exposition and argument in a more precise fashion. By regularly reflecting upon and writing about the great questions posed by the Great Books, students learn to structure complex arguments and to recognize and utilize to their advantage the subtleties of word and phrase. This experience is likewise invaluable for those who, as lawyers, will devote substantial amounts of time to drafting letters of opinion, wills, proxy statements and sales and license agreements as well as complaints, motions, briefs and other forms of written advocacy.

Without question, the Program provided and continues to provide an excellent education for those who hope to one day become members of the legal profession.

### REFLECT ON:

- *The direct parallels between PLS workload and that of a practicing lawyer.*
- *The importance of communication skills in law.*
- *The importance of learning to "think on your feet" through seminar training.*
- *The value of the writing skills derived from your time spent in PLS.*

"It is difficult to imagine an undergraduate course of study that would better prepare a person for the rigors of law school and legal practice than PLS."

FRANCIS D'ERAMO, 1982

# THE PLS ADVANTAGE

MR. D'ERAMO HAD A HEAD START ON HIS LEGAL TRAINING BECAUSE OF HIS EXPERIENCE IN PLS.

I am a 1982 graduate of the Program. I went directly from Notre Dame to the University of Pittsburgh School Of Law, from which I graduated in 1985. I have been a practicing civil attorney since then, and am currently a partner in one of the largest law firms in the United States Virgin Islands.

When I started law school, I immediately saw that I had certain advantages because of my experiences in the Program. Law professors, particularly in first year classes, teach by having the students read legal opinions and then by questioning them using the Socratic Method. This intimidated many of my classmates. Not me. I knew the Socratic Method well. Like all of the graduates of the Program, I'd learned it from Socrates, who was better at it than any law professor could ever hope to be.

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“I thought that, if I can read  
and even vaguely comprehend Hegel or Kant,  
I can handle  
Chief Justice John Marshall  
in *Marbury v. Madison*.”

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The legal opinions we read came from a variety of historical periods and jurisdictions, and so presented a sometimes confusing and often conflicting array of procedures and terminology. But this wasn't a problem for me. I thought that, if I can read and even vaguely comprehend Hegel or Kant, I can handle Chief Justice John Marshall in *Marbury v. Madison*.

At the end of my first year I had done well enough to be appointed, against my expectations, to the editorial staff of the University of Pittsburgh Law Review, whose members are chosen based upon academic achievement. I attribute this largely to the advantages that the Program had given me.

These advantages have persisted throughout my professional career. The analytical skills that the Program gave me have been of great assistance to my efforts to provide quality legal services to my clients. And the moral grounding that the Program gave me has helped me when I am confronted with issues of legal ethics, which—despite rumors to the contrary—lawyers actually worry about sometimes.

#### REFLECT ON:

- *The advantage study in PLS provides in the first year of law school.*
- *The similarities between the study of law and the course of study in the Program of Liberal Studies.*
- *The chance to continue using your PLS studies to provide quality advice to your clients.*
- *The benefits of grounding yourself with an ethical education as you face issues throughout your career.*

## THOMAS SCHWIETZ, 1954

# WE CALLED IT PLS

A GRADUATE OF THE FIRST PLS CLASS, MR. SCHWIETZ HAS HAD A VARIED, STORIED CAREER.

As a 73-year-old graduate of the first PLS class, I can give you some answers to the questions: "What do you want out of life? What do you want out of a college education?" If you are looking for happiness, a secure life, a good family, the ability to adjust to an ever-changing world and meeting your life's goals, then PLS is for you. If you learn how to learn, learn how to question and learn how to adapt, you will be getting a great college education.

In high school, they tried to teach the answers. In college you need to find out what the questions are. The ultimate, never-changing question is, "What is it all about?"

Unlike you, I was not a top student in high school. I was admitted to Notre Dame after my graduation in July, 1950. I had not taken the qualifying ACT and SAT tests. But on entering Notre Dame, I opted to sign up for the Air Force ROTC program to keep me in college and out of the Korean War draft and was lucky enough to find myself enrolled in the PLS course of studies.

The most valuable things I learned in PLS—how to

learn, to question, to read, to write, to think, how to argue and how to speak my mind—defined my unique career path. These valuable lessons vaulted me to the top of my military peer group. I was first in my class at flying school, one of 22

Law school was OK! After two years of service as Assistant Commonwealth Attorney (in Kentucky), we established a private practice. The firm has enjoyed an unqualified success. Besides my law practice, I am an investor and options

Academy and Stanford University. They are passing on the love to their children, who are proving to be fine students of learning, too. It makes a Papa happy. In addition to all these gifts of life, my wife Janice and I live a very satisfying life on the 18<sup>th</sup> green of the number two ranked golf course in Kentucky at Persimmon Ridge, where I play three days a week.

When people speculate about my undergraduate studies program, they presume I studied as an engineer, or in political science, or mathematics, or astronomy, or business or pre-law. In fact, they are all right. We just happened to call it the Program of Liberal Studies.

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“What do you want out of life?

What do you want out of a college education?

If you learn how to learn, question and adapt, you will be getting a great college education.”

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distinguished graduates out of 945 students in Squadron Officer's School, distinguished graduate at Command and Staff College, admitted to the National War College in Washington, D.C., and awarded two masters degrees in International Relations and Public Administration. Following a 30-year career in the Air Force, wanting to seek further challenges, I applied to law school at the age of 55. From a roster of 750 applicants, 160 were accepted, 102 graduated, 97 took the bar and 72 of us passed it.

trader in the stock market, an AARP volunteer tax consultant and an avid golfer.

However, all this is meaningless without family. The dedication to learning has been as important in family life as it was in my career. My children have come to emulate my quest for learning. I am proud to say, I have five wonderful children. All are successful. Two are medical doctors. Three are professional pilots. They are graduates of William and Mary, the University of California, the Air Force

### REFLECT ON:

- *How PLS skills “vaulted” Mr. Schwietz to the top of the military.*
- *The focus on continuing education after graduating from PLS.*
- *How the flexibility of Mr. Schwietz's education continued with an inordinate amount of career flexibility.*
- *The idea that you can major in the Program of Liberal Studies but feel like you majored in any number of areas.*

## TIMOTHY BUCKLEY, 1986

# FROM PLS TO SUCCESS

MR. BUCKLEY HAS FOUND HIS PLS TRAINING INVALUABLE IN BUILDING HIS OWN LAW FIRM.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. When I was a freshman at Notre Dame, some of my classmates were a bit unsure whether the Program of Liberal Studies was something they could “use” to get a job. Looking at where my colleagues from PLS ‘86 have landed, they have been able to use their degrees quite well. Now serving in fields from corporate CEOs to nationally-recognized reporters, to doctors, lawyers, CFOs, priests, foreign service officers and professors, the one thing they have in common is a PLS major. I have yet to encounter a PLS graduate who bemoans their decision.

### REFLECT ON:

- *The list of professions enjoyed amongst Mr. Buckley’s PLS peer group.*
- *How a managing partner in a large law firm still draws on his PLS education.*
- *How the flexibility of PLS allows Mr. Buckley to be comfortable in many areas of expertise.*
- *The length of your professional career vs. your time at ND.*

What is more, I can trace with ease the path to success I have followed—professionally, spiritually and personally—to the introspection and study I experienced in the Program.

As the managing attorney of a sixteen-lawyer firm in Atlanta, I am daily required to wear the hat of a COO, CFO, industrial manager, HR director, spokesman, mediator, lawyer and mentor. I draw daily from the spring of knowledge that Notre Dame/PLS tapped for me more than twenty years ago. Likewise, in moving along the path that has led me to this position (one I have held since co-founding our firm in 1995), my PLS studies were a source of inspiring discussion in interviews, during meetings, at dinners and in the course of hearings before courts and juries in several states from coast to coast.

While I did not major in engineering or a science, the wide-ranging exposure to several fields and methods of logic and thought which began (and has yet to end) during my time in PLS has equipped me to handle cases involving patent interpretation, construction, engineering and design, medical issues and claims which cover the entire spectrum of constitutional issues. I have never felt under-equipped simply because I did not major in accounting or biology, etc. Likewise, the fact that my career has grown in soil rich in thought and contemplation has made me so audacious as to also serve as a professor of litigation courses at Emory Law School—ten years running; a certified trainer for two state agencies; and as chair of the pastoral council of my parish church.

Young folks should consider this: Your professional life is slated to be about ten to fifteen times as long as your college years. You should choose a major not based on the notion that you will have one skill to be employed repeatedly for 40 to 60 years. Consider, too, that applying a single skill over and over again can become a rather mundane way to spend the remainder of your earthly days. Rather, and this has made all the difference for me, a course of study, which sees a beautiful spectrum of opportunities ahead and which inspires thought, debate, and even meditation, will supply you with tools for a varied and exciting, personally-rewarding career and life.

I feel fortunate to have been guided to PLS by my professor of Russian language, Thomas G. Marullo, who emphasized that a PLS major would better equip me for the rough and varied professional road ahead than most any other major. He was right. “I chose the road less (obvious to travel by), and that has made all the difference.”

“You should choose a major not based on the notion that you will have one skill to be employed repeatedly for the next 40 to 60 years.”

## THOMAS DURKIN, 1968

# A GUIDE TO YOUR PASSION

MR. DURKIN COMMENTS ON "PLS, THE SOUTH SIDE AND THE LAW."

It turned out to be one of the deciding differences in my life, but I could only vaguely sense it at the time and it did little to appease my steelworker father that the money he was paying for the first one in our family to go to college was a very sound investment. Why I wasn't taking business courses instead of reading the Great Books was a long four-year argument when I would go home to the South Side of Chicago.

Instead of regurgitating answers with the memorization skills honed by the corporal punishment of the Irish Christian Brothers, all of a sudden I found myself in the fall of 1965 in seminars where thought processes were valued more than the answers. Where all of a sudden instead of answers there were only more

questions. What posed as an answer more often than not was the unfathomable "both/and" or "maybe this, maybe that"—an answer alien to the certainty I had brought to Notre Dame from twelve years of parochial education. After a freshman year that seemed easier than my senior year of high school, the first semester or two in PLS caused me to feel cut loose from my moor-

ings. I began to wonder whether I could compete in a program that valued only thinking, analysis and writing. For the first time in my academic life I was not one of the best. But if anything, looking back 40 years later, it was exactly this process—the thinking, the analysis, the writing, the both/ands—that has made all the difference today.

I'm a criminal trial lawyer, not a "litigator" as some big-firm law-

prostitutes, terrorists and white supremacists. Many of my cases these days end up on the front page of the newspaper and I am no stranger to national television.

And while I frequently joke that "I would rather be rich than famous, but you can't have everything," in many ways that's not true. I have instead a calling or a vocation, if you will, which means everything to me. It is a calling that started

way back in those early days in the General Program, a calling to find a passion to live one's life. It would be too corny and inaccurate to say that it started with reading the Greeks, but it had something to do with the passion professors like Willis Nutting, Fred Crosson, Bob Turley and Steven

Rogers brought to those works. It had something to do with their insistence that we think, that we analyze, that we write, that we dig deeper and not accept appearances over substance—to come to accept the disquieting grey of "both/and," to discriminate and begin to learn how to hold the tension of the opposites.

In a very grey legal world

"No college major will train you to do this.  
It takes a lifetime,  
as does anything else worthy of a calling.  
But if you can think, analyze and write,  
you have a chance to get there.

PLS can and will begin to train you to think,  
analyze and write. If you let it, it will also  
guide you to your passion. Find it!"

yers call themselves. I have been a law clerk to a federal judge and a federal prosecutor, but for most of my career I have defended people charged with criminal offenses, mostly in the federal courts. I try cases before juries. I have defended bank robbers, businessmen, stock brokers, futures traders, gang bangers, drug dealers, murderers, child molesters, pornographers, priests, politicians,

# THOMAS DURKIN, 1968

## CONTINUED

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### REFLECT ON:

- *Mr. Durkin's difficulty in explaining the value of PLS to his hardworking father.*
- *The sense of confusion felt when, all of a sudden, you are no longer the best in your class and the sense of accomplishment felt when you look back.*
- *The idea that you can discover a "calling" through your study in PLS rather than "getting a job."*
- *The importance of developing, over time, a reputation for judgment and the grounding that PLS provides you in this area.*

many would like to reduce to black and white, I have never once looked at what I do as work, even as hard as it often is. It is simply what I do; it is who I am. My wife is also my law partner—need I say more? Together we have also been able to make a reasonably decent living and find the time to raise four kids and send them to private schools. Our cases have taken me literally around the world, and we don't often worry about the price of food on a restaurant menu—not bad for doing something enjoyable and meaningful. Very few, if any, of our friends can say the same.

While we might often be better known for what we do in the courtroom, I think other lawyers send us clients because of our judgment which, in many ways, requires a combination of the skills required of a priest, rabbi, therapist, surgeon, and poker player. It is judgment that we get paid for—the judgment to choose to cooperate with a grand jury investigation or stand your ground against the enormous resources of the government; the judgment to counsel an 18-year-old to accept life without parole to avoid the risk of the death penalty. Complicated choices with serious consequences.

No college major will train you to do this. It takes a lifetime, as does anything else worthy of a calling. But if you can think, analyze and write, you have a chance to get there. PLS can and will begin to train you to think, analyze and write. If you let it, it will also guide you to your passion. Find it!

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“I'm a criminal trial lawyer, not a 'litigator'  
as some big-firm lawyers call themselves.

I have defended bank robbers, businessmen,  
stock brokers, futures traders, gang bangers, drug dealers,  
murderers, child molesters, pornographers, priests,  
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Many of my cases these days end up on the front page  
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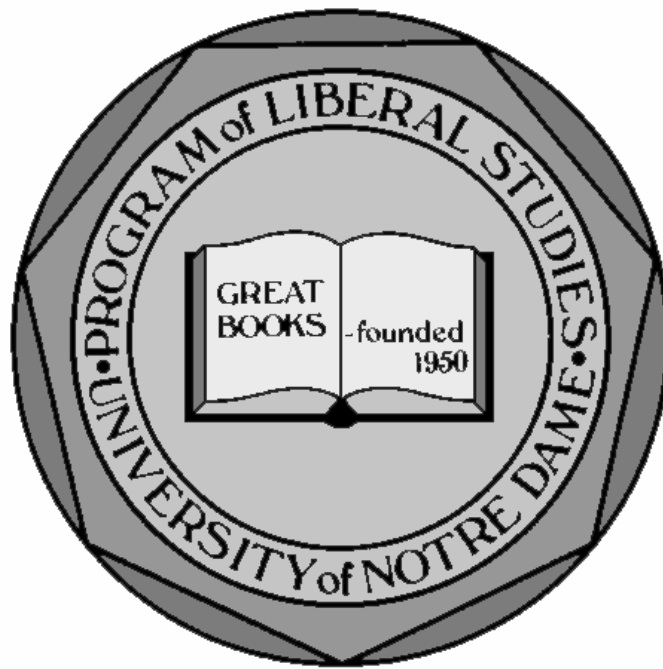
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“I know that in many respects, PLS helped me get into medical school because my education was unique. In the ten minutes of a med school interview, I could convince my interviewers that I have thought about important moral and ethical questions and have arrived at my own conclusions.”

—James Carolan, 1996

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THE PROGRAM OF  
LIBERAL STUDIES  
AND



SCIENCE

JAMES CAROLAN, 1996

# BE TRUE TO YOURSELF

DR. CAROLAN EXPLAINS HOW PLS WILL HELP YOU DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF ON THE ROAD TO BEING A PHYSICIAN.

## ***PLS and getting into medical school***

In college, there is extraordinary pressure as a pre-med to do everything possible to ensure admission to medical school. This means taking all the requisite classes, taking electives that would guarantee an “easy A,” and competing with your classmates. When a person does all these things perfectly, that person is virtually indistinguishable from every other pre-med applicant in the country: all medical school applicants have stellar grades, fantastic MCAT scores, and a community service record that makes Mother Teresa appear lazy.

“PLS provides a far deeper emotional training than any other major.”

I know that, in many respects, PLS helped me get into medical school because my education was unique. In the ten minutes of an interview, I could convince my interviewers that I have thought about important moral and ethical questions and have arrived at my own conclusions. The best advice I could give you is do not pick your major based on what advisors or other students tell you to think or what you believe will give you the best chances of getting into medical school. Imagine yourself eleven years from now, finished with your medical training, and ask yourself what is it you would have wanted out of your years at Notre Dame. If your answer is the simple vocational training to prepare you for medical school, then realize that

you are squandering your precious time at Notre Dame: pre-medical electives such as genetics and biochemistry, covered over a semester at Notre Dame, will be covered in less than a week in medical school. Spend your time at Notre Dame on the more enriching pursuits and you will have no regrets eleven years from now.

## ***Medical school, residency, and fellowship training***

You will have a privilege that few other people have: to care for complete strangers in their darkest times with your compassion and technical knowledge. Frequently during your training, you will face the cruel and wanton nature of illness, the dark side of human nature, the fragility of life, the sorrow of death, and the injustice of our healthcare system. PLS provides something to its graduates that nearly all pre-medical students lack: emotional maturity. This is a point that I cannot emphasize enough. You develop and mature intellectually and spiritually by grappling with the questions raised and the conclusions reached in those influential books written by thinkers far more intelligent than you or I. When you are alone and have to explain to a family what just happened to their loved one under your care, you had better possess the sensitivity and emotional maturity that the situation demands. I promise you that PLS provides a far greater and deeper emotional training than any other major you could take at Notre Dame.

## ***As a practicing physician***

Even when you have finished medical school and residency, you are just getting started. Your precious time and energy will be spent subjugating your needs and desires for the needs of other people. You will be required to decide what you will define as happiness, success and a good life, and for that may I recommend Aristotle. You will need to decide how Protestant you want to be in your work ethic, and for that may I recommend Max Weber. You will need to care for people whose decisions contradict your medical judgment, and for that may I recommend J.S. Mill. Sources ranging from Madison Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue to the Vatican will try to tell you how and what to think, but ultimately you are responsible for deciding these things for yourself. PLS is designed to help you liberate your mind by asking you the important questions. Be true to yourself.

### REFLECT ON:

- How you can distinguish yourself amongst all the other great students applying to medical school.
- How semester-long courses at ND will be covered in a week in medical school.
- The emotional maturity gained in PLS and how that assists you in your medical practice.

# I'VE DONE THIS BEFORE

MS. CASSIDY HIGHLIGHTS THE SENSE OF PREPAREDNESS GARNERED FROM PLS.

I remember my first day of graduate school. I had just moved into my apartment the day before, after driving for hours from Chicago to Philadelphia. I sat down in the classroom at the University of Pennsylvania to attend my first Masters' class in psychological services. Worried about the uncertainty of my new life—Where is the grocery store? Which bank should I choose? Where is the library on this campus?—I began my life as a graduate student. Feeling unsure and scared, I sat down for my first class and took a deep breath.

Then, suddenly, my anxiety started to fade. The professor gave his first-class "intimidation" speech, which is intended to scare students into working hard so that they do the work required of them. He spoke of large amounts of reading, challenging writing assignments, intense evaluative feedback from instructors, and small-group discussions and presentations. As he put forth his greatest effort to intimidate his troops, I became increasingly more confident. I can do this, I told myself. I've done it before.

I must have felt comfortable as a graduate student at Penn because I stayed there for nine years! I not only received my masters degree from Penn, but also my doctorate in School, Community and Child-Clinical Psychology. Since graduating from Notre Dame in 1993, I have spoken of how my experience in the Program of Liberal Studies prepared me for my graduate life. Nothing that was required of me as a graduate student was entirely new. I was accustomed to reading

large volumes of work and being required to think critically about them. I enjoyed writing papers and sharing my thoughts on challenging issues. I was used to being succinct in my writing style. And I felt able to speak my mind in small group settings. I firmly believe that the practice I received performing these tasks in PLS directly correlated with the success I experienced at Penn and beyond.

#### REFLECT ON:

- *The sense of confidence gained from PLS even when facing an "intimidation speech" at the outset of graduate school.*
- *The comfort gained speaking in small groups after a career in PLS.*
- *The value of the oral examinations in PLS vis-à-vis the job interview process.*
- *How after PLS, "nothing was new..."*
- *How when given the chance to teach, Ms. Cassidy recreated her PLS experience for her students.*

But perhaps the most important PLS exercise that has prepared me for future steps was the oral exam experience required of all seminar students in that program. I recall spending long hours studying for that exam, reading and re-reading books, in hopes that I'd be able to answer the questions of the two professors who would drill me during that 60-minute exam each semester. Although the oral exam experience was preceded by great anxiety, it was often followed by a huge sense of accomplishment after it was finished. Since college, whenever I prepare for a job inter-

view, I recall the feelings—both anxiety and pride—I had before and after those exams. Each time I prepare to walk into someone's office and sit down for such interviews, I take a deep breath and tell myself, I can do this. I've done it before. I did it in PLS each semester, over three years, and I am grateful for that.

I now have a job working as a Program Officer at a large philanthropy. I love my job, and I welcome the challenges that come with it. I have also held different academic positions, during which I taught and advised undergraduate and graduate students in psychology. As an instructor, it seemed natural for me to teach classes in seminar style, just like my PLS instructors did. I relished opportunities to engage students in small-group discussions, provide them feedback on their writing, and support them in their willingness to question what they learned. In fact, I think one of my greatest gifts was having the opportunity to share with my students the aspects of PLS that I so cherished and appreciated during my own college experience.

Now, each time I think about the next steps in my career—What will I be doing? Will I be prepared?—I take a deep breath and remind myself that, whatever it is, I can do it. By honing my skills, PLS gave me the confidence to take on such challenges, and it provided me with a foundation that has proven to be consistently helpful to me in my professional journey.

KELLY GLEASON, 1998

# DEEP UNDERSTANDING

MS. GLEASON MAKES THE TRANSITION FROM SOCRATES TO SHIPWRECKS.

When I tell people that I am an underwater archaeologist, the first question I usually get is, "What does that mean?" and the second question is usually something along the lines of, "How did you ever get into that? I didn't even know that was a profession!" While I did not formally begin studying underwater archaeology until graduate school, I think that the greatest preparation for my unconventional career began as a PLS student at the University of Notre Dame.

As an underwater archaeologist, my job consists of research, exploration, discovery and interpretation. My office is not only in front of the computer, but in archives and libraries, on ships and on the seafloor mapping shipwrecks. There is no better major to prepare yourself for a job like this than PLS. I begin most of my shipwreck expeditions with a thorough study of primary sources. Ship's logs, historic maps and oral histories are still the most valuable resources that we have to understand and locate historic shipwreck sites. As a PLS major, you

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“Whether sitting around a table with eight peers  
or forty feet beneath the surface at a shipwreck site,  
the ability and courage to analyze are critical.  
I learned to interpret and analyze while in PLS  
and I continue to use these skills in my work.”

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must sit down face to face with the philosophers', scientists' and poets' own works on a daily basis. Understanding what these ancient voices are talking about while living in the midst of a modern society is challenging. Part of the PLS journey is to understand the relevance of these works hundreds of years after they were written. The same is true in my profession.

Interpreting the shipwreck sites that we discover and document takes critical thought, creativity and historical knowledge that I learned in my seminar courses in the PLS Program. Whether sitting around a table with eight peers or forty feet beneath the surface at a shipwreck site, the ability and courage to analyze are critical. I learned to interpret and analyze while in PLS and I continue to use these skills in my work.

Underwater archaeology, much like PLS, is unconventional in a world where most majors and professions require little explanation. There is nothing simple about PLS, and you'll often get the question, "What are you going to do with that major?" I know for a fact that you can do whatever you want with it. It will give you the courage and creativity to pursue the kind of career that most people don't even know exists.

## REFLECT ON:

- *The courage it must take to pursue a career well off the beaten path. Where does Ms. Gleason's intellectual strength and courage come from?*
- *How you can take your analytical skills from PLS and apply them to almost anything of which you can think or dream.*
- *The creativity and imagination necessary in underwater archaeology. Can you imagine yourself being that creative?*

## RICHARD SPANGLER, 1977

# DEVELOPING UNIQUE GIFTS

DR. SPANGLER DOESN'T DISCUSS *WAR AND PEACE* WITH PATIENTS, BUT HE DOES COMMUNICATE WITH THEM.

I am very grateful that I chose the University of Notre Dame for my undergraduate education. An important part of my Notre Dame experience was the three years of study in what is now called the Program of Liberal

Studies. It was a time of great intellectual growth for me.

Reading and discussing some of the important books of the Western and Eastern traditions was challenging.

I was a pre-professional major and the science courses were a good complement to the PLS curriculum. After graduation I continued my studies at the University of Illinois College of Medicine and finished with a residency in Pediatrics.

The important question is: How has a PLS education helped me in my career? Certainly, an exceptional liberal arts education is not

vocational training. Instead, my reading, writing and communication skills have been enhanced by my PLS experience. No, I don't discuss *War and Peace* with the toddlers I see every day. However, I need to communicate with parents, patients, staff and peers. I

have to actively listen to better understand their perspective in order to diagnose and help solve problems. What better training for this than spending time in seminar working through these important texts?

The seminar process is unique. Students develop positions, defend their positions and learn to understand the perspectives of others. Critical thinking, active listening, and effective communication are all skills improved by a PLS education. These are skills I use every day in my work as a physician. My classmates have also used these skills in their vocations such as technical writing, pastoral work and law. These skills are not only marketable in the workplace, but also improve many aspects of one's life.

When I was a senior, Dr. Stephen Rogers spoke at a recruitment meeting for freshmen. He told a story—a myth, I believe—about gifts. Each student has unique gifts and PLS is a special program that can help one discover and develop their unique gifts. I don't know how many of those students became PLS majors, but when he finished many of the students were captivated by his presentation. Dr. Rogers primarily taught English in the Program and was also a former graduate of PLS.

Many of the graduates (like Dr. Rogers) are passionate about the benefits of the PLS education. We have experienced intellectual growth and the development of important skills which can be adapted to many vocations.

### REFLECT ON:

- *Taking the opportunity to open yourself up to intellectual growth at Notre Dame.*
- *The complementary nature of pre-professional studies and PLS.*
- *How Dr. Spangler uses what he learned in PLS to communicate with his patients, their parents and his peers.*
- *What sort of doctor you want at your bedside? Or that of your child? Therefore, what sort of doctor do you want to be?*
- *How PLS is not only "marketable" but life-improving and adaptable.*

"I need to communicate with parents, patients, staff and peers.

I have to actively listen to better understand their perspective in order to diagnose and help solve problems.

What better training for this than spending time in seminar working through these important texts?"

## CHARLES TITUS BOUDREAU, 1986

# MIND, SOUL AND RESUME

DR. BOUDREAU HAS TAUGHT MANY STUDENTS LIKE YOU AND FINDS INFINITE VALUE IN THE PLS EDUCATION.

As a counseling psychologist at a university counseling center, one of my delights is to teach "Career Choice" to freshmen and sophomores. A question that always comes up is the "wicked whammy": WCIDWAMI, or "What Can I Do With A Major In \_\_\_\_\_?"

Having taught Career Choice a dozen times, I'm in a unique position to let you know that selecting the Program of Liberal Studies is not only good for your mind and soul, but your resume!

My decision to become a psychologist was directly influenced by PLS. What better way to study human relationships, past and present?

The Great Books themselves were a treasure trove of how human beings ought to live, from the sayings of Lao Tzu to the timeless study of human emotion in Shakespeare's works. I was exposed to Moral Development theory in one of Dr. Clark Power's courses; I was also fortunate to see Lawrence Kohlberg himself, the man who articulated the theory of moral development, courtesy of a PLS-sponsored guest lec-

ture. But the contents of the Great Books were only a part of my decision to pursue psychology. As or more important was the process of three years' worth of intimate interactions with my classmates and professors.

Participating in these intense, intellectually-charged discussions taught me a lot about listening, respect for opinions different from my own, and how to advance a point clearly without needing to step on somebody else. I came away from the experience believing that life was more gray than black-and-white, and I could best address the complexity and the pain of human experience as a psychologist.

PLS is unique. It's no mousy eight-class major: You commit to PLS, early on, for three years. Can't decide what to major in? In a way, you take many majors when you enroll in PLS: from astronomy to theology, from poetry to Plato, from history and politics to fine arts.

In the Program of Liberal Studies, you do read a lot. But you do more than read: you read for

depth, you read to be challenged by viewpoints different from your own, you read to meld all these perspectives into your own beliefs. You write, and write, and write—and eventually you write articulately, engagingly.

In seminars, you speak—and listen—in a small group of very bright people. You learn to communicate, and to respect others' communication regarding topics that are bound to stir strong feelings.

These skills—clear communication, reading and writing, critical inquiry, having one's own cogent point of view, respect and tolerance for others—just happen to be the core transferable skills of being a good friend, a faithful life partner, and an extremely marketable employee.

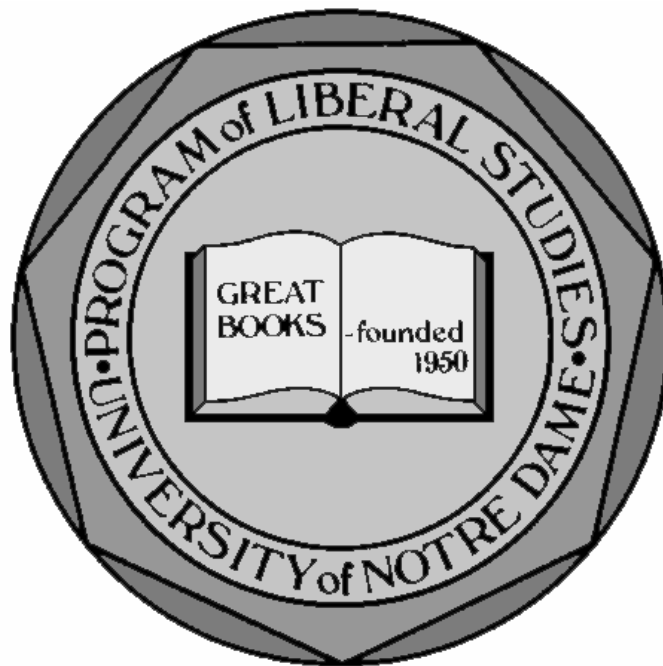
Yes, some professions are closely linked to a specific major—actuarial science, for example. But many professions have more general requirements: smart, curious, well-rounded, socially-mature people. I encourage you to develop into such a person through the rare, rich opportunity of PLS.

### REFLECT ON:

- *The study of human relationships in PLS and their importance to psychology.*
- *Finding inspiration in an extra-curricular event sponsored by PLS.*
- *The depth and value of reading in PLS.*
- *The training in writing that one receives in PLS.*

“Having taught Career Choice a dozen times, I'm in a unique position to let you know that selecting the Program of Liberal Studies is not only good for your mind and soul, but your resume!”

THE PROGRAM OF  
LIBERAL STUDIES  
AND



THE LETTERS

## MICHAEL CROWE, 1958

# A WONDERFUL ADVENTURE

DR. CROWE ENJOYED PLS SO MUCH THAT HE NEVER LEFT.

“The most engaging aspect of PLS for me is that it has brought together for 55 years some of Notre Dame’s most interested and educationally committed students with some professors who are passionate about both learning and teaching.”

In 1950, the Program of Liberal Studies began at Notre Dame. Three years later I arrived as a first year student, quite unsure about what major and what career to follow. PLS solved both problems for me in a quite extraordinary way! What follows is an account of that extraordinary way.

In 1958, I graduated from Notre Dame with a B.A. from PLS and a B.S. from the science college (chiefly math). Moreover, I had decided on the career I hoped to pursue. Problem was that my plan was quite unrealistic. I expressed it on the dedication page of my senior essay: It said something like, “To the faculty of the Program of Liberal Studies, with whom I hope some day to teach.”

Three years later, by which time I had completed most of my doctoral studies, PLS offered me a position! It was the only job I ever applied for and the only regular employment I’ve ever had. I held it for 41 years, at which time I retired, though I continue to do some teaching and writing.

Seems to me this counts as evidence of the high regard I have for PLS and its curriculum. But the explanation of this enthusiasm could be misunderstood. The key factor in it was not just the PLS curriculum (rich and rewarding as it is), or the PLS teaching methods (challenging as they are), but rather the persons, students and faculty, who have made up PLS.

I’m writing this on November 2, 2005, after a very moving PLS experience—our annual All Souls Mass in which the names of all deceased PLS students and faculty are read—perhaps 50 names, about 45 of whom I knew personally and still remember. The most engaging aspect of PLS for me is that it has brought together for 55 years some of Notre Dame’s most interested and educationally-committed students with some professors who are passionate about both learning and teaching. These students and faculty have engaged in a great conversation based on readings from some of the most insightful, original, sensitive, bold, and influential thinkers who have ever put pen on paper. I feel extraordinarily fortunate and very privileged to have had a chance to learn with such dedicated colleagues and to teach students nearly all of whom have been deeply excited about learning and who have shown an openness to many, many areas of liberal learning.

PLS has been a wonderful adventure for me. I heartily recommend it to students who, although possibly uncertain about many issues, are not confused about whether they have a love for learning, a commitment to growth, and a readiness to explore a wide array of ideas with other lovers of learning.

### REFLECT ON:

- How PLS “solved” both an educational and career problem.
- The courage to articulate a goal and follow it through to its resolution.
- How a PLS professor considers himself to have been in “conversation” with and “learning from” his students.
- The emphasis on a community of interested students and professors throughout the Program’s 55-year history.

ERIN FLYNN, 2001

# COMPASSIONATE CURIOSITY

MS. FLYNN'S WORK HAS TAKEN HER MANY PLACES, BUT NEVER FAR FROM WHAT SHE LEARNED IN PLS.

I recently accepted a position as a Web Editor for the College of Arts and Letters. The job description calls for me to bridge the highly technical Web industry with the concerted academic environment of Arts and Letters.

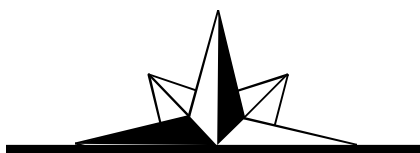
I'm generally quick to point out that I'm not a techie. I don't write html or know how to use CSS, and in fact, early in my time with Arts and Letters, I unplugged a server that housed several Web pages and a database (proving, I jokingly claimed, that I was indeed a PLS major.)

Yet I am called to participate in conversations that involve phrases such as this: "How should we build this application—Flash or JavaScript?" "Should this content be managed statically or in a database?" "Do you have the RSS feed from the blog evaluating AJAX's longevity?"

Six months ago, I would have been able to define crooked lines more effectively than to explain any of

those concepts. Yet, as I reflect on the four years since graduation, I find that the principles of compassion and curiosity I learned in PLS have made it possible for me, a bookworm, to move from social worker to admissions counselor to

authors, or obstinate classmates has informed every position I've held. Whether counseling a homeless survivor of sexual assault in Anchorage, comforting the parent of a student denied admission to his first-choice college, or assessing the Web site needs of a particular department, I first try to understand, to empathize, to create an environment in which collaboration leads to resolution.



"I learned in PLS  
that the practice of  
humility dovetails  
with that of  
curiosity."

I learned in PLS that the practice of humility dovetails with that of curiosity; curiosity requires that I be able to say, "I don't know" and to enjoy learning enough to risk exploration and vulnerability in the journey to find answers. Curiosity also requires the ability to find the point where I cease to understand and to be able to articulate my difficulty clearly.

My supervisors have never expected me to know, for example, how to clean a spider bite, how to make an admission decision, or how to use a particular program, but they have expected me to think critically about a problem, to ask for help when I am unsure, and in so doing, to express passion for the process of learning.

We often hear that PLS nurtures a love for the give and take of ideas, a passion for process, a willingness to grow in understanding. Yes, it's a general set of skills but also a rare one. How else could a woman who spent her senior year with Dante be asked to explore Web communication and project management just a few years later?

## REFLECT ON:

- *A willingness to jump into a new professional field without fear of failure.*
- *How important macro truths learned in PLS follow you in whatever direction you take post-graduation.*
- *The sense of humility derived from studying and analyzing the Great Books.*
- *The rarity of the skill set derived from the Program of Liberal Studies.*

Web communicator with nearly seamless transitions.

In my first philosophy tutorial, my professor urged us to practice what I call "the principle of compassionate reading." She asked us to focus on understanding the author's argument before criticizing it—to, in fact, approach the work with humility. The principle of practicing compassion and humility when confronting foreign ideas, difficult

## JEFFREY SPEAKS, 1997

# MORE THAN A DIVERSION

MR. SPEAKS EXPLAINS THE VALUE OF AN OPEN APPROACH TO PROBLEMS VS. SPECIALIZATION.

The most surprising success stories involving a PLS education often involve careers which are, at least superficially, quite distant from the

democratic might be surprised to learn that study of the Great Books in PLS was more than an amusing diversion en route to serious academic study, but

comes in thinking that it is a sufficient condition—that philosophy just is the application of certain techniques to already given problems. A result of the increasing specialization of academic disciplines like philosophy is that there is more need, not less, for people who are practiced in the art of drawing connections between apparently disparate topics and who are willing to think through a problem without the assumptions which have become standard for approaching it.

have these virtues, I owe them very largely to the three years that I spent in PLS.

“A result of the increasing specialization of academic disciplines like philosophy is that there is more need, not less, for people who are practiced in the art of drawing connections between apparently disparate topics ...

issues discussed in the Great Books Seminars. Since I've ended up as a professor of philosophy, the connection in my case might seem less noteworthy—big surprise that three years of working through the history of philosophy was a good preparation for teaching philosophy!

In fact, though, it is surprising—or at least would seem surprising to many professional philosophers. Just as an investment banker's boss might be surprised to hear that her employee's undergraduate study of the Great Books was more than a source of cocktail party conversation, but was actually an aid in understanding markets, so a fellow aca-

actually an aid in doing serious philosophy.

The reason for this is that academic fields, no less than medical or business fields, have become increasingly specialized. It is thought that, just as the key to becoming a successful doctor involves mastery of the latest medical technologies, so the key to becoming a successful philosopher involves mastery of the latest “philosophical technologies” relevant to one's subfield.

There is a lot to be said for this view—mastering specialized knowledge is a necessary condition for good work in philosophy, as in other academic fields. The mistake

It is frustratingly common for debates to become more complicated without becoming deeper—and, in the worst cases, the disputants can lose sight of what was supposed to be interesting about the issue in the first place. Both skills—drawing connections between disparate topics rather than treating them as the objects of separate research programs, and being willing to approach problems without the assumptions customarily used to treat those problems—are ones which being a student in PLS can help you to develop.

In my own case, I know that to the extent that I

### REFLECT ON:

- *The idea that general philosophical studies might be considered a “diversion” for budding philosophers.*
- *The danger of myopic specialization and the disadvantages that presents to open debate.*
- *The apparent need for more people with the skills to draw conclusions from disparate sets of data.*
- *Another set of essential skills developed by PLS.*

... and who are willing to think through a problem without the assumptions which have become standard for approaching it.”

JOHN ZYGMUNT, 1977

# IN SILENCE, YOUR VOICE

MR. ZYGMUNT PROVIDES INVALUABLE ADVICE FOR THE ASPIRING WRITER.

Why would an ambitious young writer—and that’s the only kind who has a chance to succeed—choose PLS? Certainly, the English department has been the unquestioned citadel of emerging American writers for almost a century.

But hidden in that “truism” of the English department career track is the very rationale for choosing the Program of Liberal Studies to launch your writing career.

For any writer whose work has resonance throughout his society—and time beyond—will have no part of certainty. And the unquestioned mindset is never one of a great writer. Brilliant writers are brilliant not for having the answers, but for having the questions: the provocative questions that define both their age and our humanity.

In my field, the great playwrights from Aeschylus to Ayckbourn don’t tell us so much how to live as what it is to live. Various premises of what human behavior could and should be are presented onstage, but the conclusions

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“In my field,  
the great playwrights  
from Aeschylus to Ayckbourn  
don’t tell us so much how to live as what it is to live.”

---

are left to the audience. “To be or not to be...?” asks Hamlet. But when Hamlet leaves us he says only, “The rest is silence.”

Let me assure you, PLS seminars have their silences, too. The questions men like Pascal, Nietzsche, David Hume, and Socrates ask will often stun a class into an uncomfortable silence. However, in that silence you will eventually be forced to discover your own voice. And no writer can ever really succeed until he or she learns to do just that.

So, the well-worn path of the English department will be there for the many, but I advise you to look again at the reading list and the teaching style of PLS. At first glance, it might seem to suggest a philosophy/history emphasis and a classroom environment concerned not with aesthetics, but with the Socratic Method.

I would then remind you that, if you are any good, you will learn from your own explorations of literature to forge your personal aesthetic. But what good is an aesthetic, however refined, if you don’t know the questions?

## REFLECT ON:

- *The challenge that PLS presents to the aspiring writer who may be thinking of following a traditional English department track.*
- *How brilliant writers have questions and not answers.*
- *Being stunned into silence by the questions raised in seminar and, in that silence, being forced to discover your own voice.*
- *How the inevitable process of discovering your own aesthetic should follow your exploration of “the questions.”*

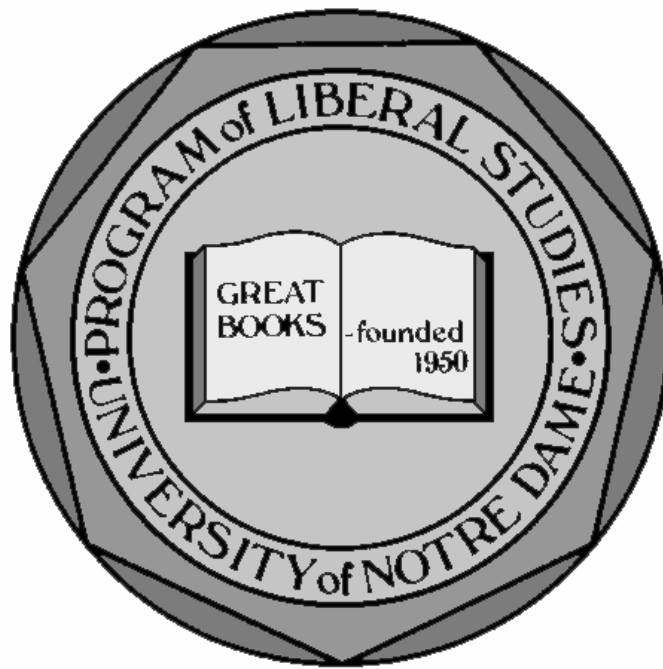
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“I can guarantee you that I would not have been as prepared to orchestrate all the moving parts in my company, nor communicate with the dozens of people involved, had it not been for the intellectual development demanded by the Great Books.”

—Joe Bellavance, 1989

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THE PROGRAM OF  
LIBERAL STUDIES  
AND



BUSINESS

CONI RICH, 1989

# THE SOCRATIC MANAGER

MS. RICH LAYS OUT THE CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN BUSINESS AND THEIR GROUNDING IN PLS.

The job market in the summer of 1989 was not good. If you were an engineer or an accountant, you could be reasonably sure that you would find gainful employment within months of graduating. A Program of Liberal Studies major? Forget it.

At least that's what "they" all said.

I was gainfully employed exactly 27 days after graduating from Notre Dame. My experience during the interview process was not at all negative, but rather an opportunity to share with others my love for a rigorous program and to show off my new brain. I also had the luxury of casting a very wide net into the market, since I was not locked into any one particular profession. Marketing? Finance? Management? Teaching? Over the road trucking? I am pretty sure that I applied for any position that struck my fancy. There were no such things as specific skills. I had 'em all.

I wasn't concerned that I didn't have a "practical" major—I had something better. PLS taught me to think, to read, to consider, and to respect others in a way that has been critical to my professional success. Forget the comment that I had a "plethora of useless information only appropriate at cocktail parties." I could hold my own with any corporate executive or human resources guy in the area.

Following are some thoughts on a few of the specific skills that I developed in PLS that now figure most prominently in my day-to-day work. I am currently the Vice President of Special Markets for BAS. We are an importer in the Advertising Specialty industry specializing in writing instruments (pens) for the pharmaceutical industry.

## ***We sure read a lot of books***

Good, clean, sharp, targeted communication in the business world is perhaps the most underrated skill. In my particular position, I interact daily with my colleagues in the Far East, so the ability to speak and write well is crucial. I need to be clear, I need to be concise, and I need to know at least seven different ways I can get a point across. Arguing a point or defending a position in the Great Books seminars gave me the experience to do just that. You can't argue anything unless you've had a careful reading of it first, whether it's an actual text, or you're called upon to read a situation or concept.

## ***So what makes them Great?***

The wide exposure to the world through the very basic texts of philosophy, theology, science, poetry and literature opened my mind to a thought process that is quite creative. I have to look at a product or situation from various perspectives to get the best result in promoting that product or idea. The "what ifs" of open and rigorous review freed me from feeling constrained by logical, traditional, or even predictable outcomes. Creativity flows when you realize that the universe of thought is indeed endless.

## ***The Socratic Method***

This openness of thought has also made me a very good manager. To be truly receptive to all ideas you have to have a certain amount of simple respect for your fellow human beings. I don't know what it means to be dismissive of someone—their perspective of a situation just might teach me something or offer a solution that is not within my own personal experience. You cannot have a small closed mind in the Program no matter how

"PLS taught me to think, to read, to consider, and to respect others in a way that has been critical to my professional success."

# CONI RICH, 1989

## CONTINUED

### REFLECT ON:

- *The quick location of employment as soon as it was desired, despite what “they” said.*
- *The emphasis on communication skills in business.*
- *A take on the value of being prepared to listen and discuss business with an open mind.*
- *The capacity for leadership derived from a PLS education.*
- *How PLS forces you to come to grips with yourself and your values.*
- *The dedication to hiring employees, not from a specific major, but with an ability to think, adapt and fit into an ethical organization.*

hard you try. There is always a passage, a professor, a peer or even an outsider who says, “What if?” or “Why?”

### **Smug Superiority**

Leadership involves confidence and the ability to express that confidence outwardly without intimidating. I’m a good leader because I know that my education was the best it could be. I was exposed to and learned things to which no other major could expose me. My PLS world was all-encompassing and yet very intimate. It made me come to grips with who I am, how I think, what I can accomplish and what my values are. I stand firm in some of my beliefs and am not afraid to challenge others. I know that my PLS world was one of the safest and most dangerous places I could be at such a tender age. I go back to that world when I revisit the texts or thoughts or ideas from so long ago. I’m not afraid to ask the big questions and I’m not afraid to look like an egghead for suggesting Plato to my local book club. Others see me as intelligent and the owner of a very big library of obscure books. I see me as a person who spent her PLS years opening small cracks in very large windows so that my life could grow.

I’ve hired a lot of staff in my career and I can honestly say that their college major was the last thing on my priority list. Could they carry on a conversation? Were they adaptable? Could I teach them new ideas and learn from them also? Most importantly, did they have a value system and work ethic that would compel them to try? These were the things that mattered. These were the things that would really predict success.

It’s been 16 years since I completed my Senior Essay and took my last oral exam. I have no regrets for my choice of major. I feel very privileged to have had the experience and I’m thankful that I have that big collection of obscure books to look at every now and then. When I am feeling particularly brave, I revisit those old friends and foes and never cease to be amazed by the new things they teach me.

“Leadership involves confidence  
and the ability to express that confidence outwardly  
without intimidating.  
I’m a good leader because I know that my education was  
the best it could be.”

## JOE BELLAVANCE, 1989

# STAYS WITH YOU FOREVER

MR. BELLAVANCE MAINTAINS THAT STARTING HIS BUSINESS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT HIS PLS EXPERIENCE.

I'm taking time out from an ambitious project to write this essay for you.

### REFLECT ON:

- *The fearless entry into a new business area with a new technology and new product.*
- *The broad array of entrepreneurial tasks that could not be accomplished without a PLS foundation.*
- *The assurance that specific skills can and will be derived from specific experience once you begin your career post-PLS.*

The project entails starting a \$35 million manufacturing plant for a new product in a new industry.

Not sure what that means? It means researching the opportunity till your head spins, identifying your competitors

and finding their weak spots, forming a company with partners you can live with, identifying prospective sites, selling potential suppliers on your team and concept, selling potential customers even harder, probing state and federal governments for funding assistance, evaluating multiple technologies, managing the lawyers, accountants and bankers, writing a business plan that impresses and influences potential investors, raising millions of dollars in equity, sourcing millions more in debt, placing your bets and riding your horse around the track.

My company is now the top candidate to form a joint venture with the hottest technology provider in my industry. Together, we may build the biggest plant of its type in the world.

I did all that.

In five months.

I can tell you unequivocally that I would not have been able to take the project from standing start to full sprint so quickly without the education I received in the Program of Liberal Studies. I can guarantee you that I would not have been as prepared to orchestrate all the moving parts in the project, nor communicate with the dozens of people involved, had it not been for the intellectual development demanded by the Great Books.

Sure, I might have crunched some numbers more efficiently if I'd majored in Accounting. I might have structured the deal differently if I'd majored in Finance. Perhaps I could program the processing technology myself if I'd majored in MIS. That stuff has its place in the world. In

graduate school or in the School of Hard Knocks.

Your undergraduate years are a time for education—not technical training. Be sure you understand the difference between those two modes of learning, and then ask yourself which one will ultimately serve you better over the course of your career.

Ironically, I was wearing a PLS t-shirt when I was asked to write this essay. How many Marketing majors are wearing departmental attire 16 years post-baccalaureate? How many Management majors return to Notre Dame each summer to revisit some of the texts they read as undergraduates?

PLS stays with you forever. And that, my friend, is a damned good thing. Because your career just may depend on it.

“Your undergraduate years are a time for education—not technical training. Be sure you understand the difference between those two modes of learning and then ask yourself which one will ultimately serve you better over the course of your career.”

## KEVIN BECKER, 1988

# ON THE CONTRARY

MR. BECKER HONED HIS SKILLS AS A CONTRARIAN INVESTOR IN PLS.

“The most persuasive fact for me was that the majority of career-minded students were flocking to the business school. It struck me as odd that, if you want to be successful and financially independent, you would follow a herd into what I saw as a path to the middle. Safer? Sure. But just so damn boring.”

As the old saying goes, “*pecuniam radix malorum est.*” But say of money what you will, I knew, as a major college-loan debtor, that I wanted to have enough of it at some point in my life. Because of this desire, one of my goals in college was to choose a major that could prepare me for a career in which I could make a lot of money. I looked around at all the choices that I had before me and chose PLS. “This,” I thought, “is the way to make money *and* to get educated.”

Getting an education, as opposed to specific training, in college was absolutely critical to me. I wanted to study something that I could take with me and improve upon for the rest of my life. PLS surely filled that bill. And I also was concerned with being grounded in ethics before I entered the business world—I knew that the pursuit of money (a.k.a. greed) was often the

downfall of many men. So from PLS I was relatively certain that I could be launched into a business world of great temptation with little fear.

I wanted a major where I knew I was going to have to work hard. The way I figured it, a guy with nothing who wants to get something better be more intellectually flexible and a harder worker than his competitors. Another checked box for PLS. But, in choosing PLS as my major, the most persuasive fact for me was that the majority of career-minded students were flocking to the business school. It struck me as odd that, if you truly want to be successful and financially independent, you would follow a herd into what I saw as a path to the middle. Safer? Sure. But just so damn boring.

By the time I was a senior in PLS and had to start thinking about a job, I stopped worrying about the “money” part of my career and started thinking about what career would be “fun.” I realized that I was better prepared to make money than almost anyone else at Notre Dame. So what I did became more important than what it paid. In my 17 years since graduating, I have dedicated myself to having fun with my work. And guess what? I made money, too. Did I fall on my face sometimes? Absolutely. But, on balance, I accomplished my goals and “retired” at 38. And how did I do that? By thinking outside the box, by “coppering the public,” by watching the herd run and taking contrary positions.

That contrarianism was something I brought with me, in crude form, to PLS. But in the Program, I got a chance to test myself and the limits to my contrary thought process. I was allowed to come up with “new” ideas and challenge my teachers and fellow students. (I once spent an entire seminar arguing that Homer was a monotheist.) And when I ultimately ended up in the hedge fund industry, by way of a winding path laced equally with success and failure, I had a chance to make money doing what I loved to do in PLS. I bet against the crowd and I won more than I lost. All through my career, my grounding was my PLS education—I read hundreds of business books with a critical eye and a determination to apply the best business practices to my career. I came back to the summer PLS symposia. I kept reading the classics and benchmarking myself against their universal truths. And, now that I have “enough” money, I’m concentrating on getting richer as a person. And guess what? I’m pretty well prepared for that, too.

### REFLECT ON:

- How, if PLS seems “impractical” to most, it can be invaluable to the few.
- How choosing PLS is not a direct means to making money; it prepares you to make money. But it prepares you well.
- The importance of immersing yourself in an ethical education if you are intent on pursuing business goals.
- The ability to continue training yourself as a contrarian if that is your bent when entering PLS.

## ROBERT MCNEILL, 1963

# KEY STAGE DIFFERENCE

MR. MCNEILL APPLIES HIS PLS EXPERIENCE TO THE SIX MAJOR STAGES AND ASPECTS OF HIS LIFE.

How has my PLS education served me since graduation? How did it change my life? Let me highlight some of the most important ways, and I'll do this by going through key stages in my life and indicating how the education I received made a decisive difference.

First of all, it was crucial in my winning a Rhodes Scholarship. For a Math major from New Trier High School who wrote a novel for his Notre Dame senior thesis to be able to analyze Aquinas, quote Shakespeare, defend Newman and confront Marx in a quick response interview session definitely made *the* (not just a) difference. I would not have won without PLS.

Second, while being a Rhodes Scholar got me into Oxford, the education I received at Notre Dame was essential in helping me as a graduate student to compete with distinction. Since the method of education at Oxford is a one-on-one tutorial system, the connected sequences of tutorial courses which have always been a central part of PLS provided me with an ideal foundation for this new educational endeavor. By way of contrast, while many of my fellow Rhodes Scholars from institutions like Harvard, Stanford and Princeton had mastered specific disciplines to levels well beyond my capabilities, no one was better prepared to take advantage of the overall educational experience offered at Oxford than I felt I was.

Third, it's also been a big help in my career. In my position as an investment counselor for 34 years, my job has been to work with clients to determine their goals and then to design a customized financial plan to best achieve each client's individual needs and performance requirements. The skills which have allowed me to serve and excel in that role can all be traced back to my learning experience in PLS and how it taught me to think and communicate clearly, productively and efficiently. Three specific examples of the kinds of abilities that originated for me in PLS which have been unusually beneficial in advancing and enhancing my career are the following: how to be a good listener, how to be a perceptive psychologist and how to draw lessons from the past to provide guidance for the future.

Fourth, it's also made a significant difference in terms

of my family: in my role as a husband for 37 years, as a father of five children and as a grandfather of six grandchildren. In PLS, I learned the importance of honesty, character and integrity and the need to honor personal commitments and responsibilities. These lessons have served the McNeill family well and motivated me to adopt the rule: family comes first.

Fifth, it has had a significant impact on my religion, the way I worship and in my personal relationship to God. PLS has helped me to listen to and learn from theologians like John Donne and Henry Neumann.

Last, next to my family and my faith, the most valuable assets I have are my friends. With friendship being so important for me, PLS provided an unexpected and wonderful windfall which would only become apparent some 25 years after graduation. It turns out many of my 1963 classmates have now become my best friends! Approximately ten of us gather together once a year. Wherever we are or whatever we are discussing, the one thing that never changes is our desire to take advantage of any opportunity available to us to gather again for a "new" seminar session—each time creating another unique experience which we all recognize has been so crucial in deepening our friendship and enriching our lives.

In conclusion, let me shift from the past to the future. Without knowing exactly when I will retire or what I will be doing in the years ahead, the one thing I'm confident of is that my education has liberated me to strive for activities which will assist my abiding aspiration to grow and learn, feel challenged and stretched, be passionate and engaged, and make time to serve the community.

### REFLECT ON:

- *Winning a Rhodes Scholarship because of your PLS education and the differentiation it provides you in the process.*
- *The preparation to take advantage of an experience beyond what specialists may bring to the table.*
- *The ease with which PLS-derived skills can be applied to investment management.*
- *The difference PLS can make in one's total life experience.*

## MARGARET RADDATZ, 1990

# SKILLS+HABITS=PREPARATION

MS. RADDATZ FINDS HERSELF THRIVING AMONGST THE UNCERTAINTIES OF BUSINESS BECAUSE OF HER PLS TRAINING.

When you're in your twenties, people who don't know you tend to start conversations by

“Some people choose their major with ease...

I was not one of those people.”

asking you what you majored in at college. For me, this question sparked a twenty-minute conversation, where I explained the foundations of the Program and what I had gotten out of the experience. The universal response was along the lines of, “What a great learning experience!” and “What kind of job can you get with that degree?”

Some people choose their major with ease—they know (or think that they know) that they want to be a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, a

professor or a business tycoon. I was not one of those people. I couldn't see myself in science or engineering, and the idea of a business degree left me disinterested. I had enjoyed my liberal arts classes, and I was attracted to the small class sizes and multi-discipline approach of the Program.

My parents had mixed feelings about my choice—they had high expectations for my career and it was hard for them to see a direct connection to a good job. I honestly didn't know what I would do after graduation—I mentioned that many PLS graduates went to law school and that bought me some time. Looking back, my parents were enormously supportive of my decision and its consequences.

What I know now is that the skills and habits I learned in PLS prepared me for any career that I could have chosen. In a lot of universities these days it is enough for students to absorb and comprehend the work of those that have preceded them. What is different about PLS is that we were required to go beyond comprehension, to criticize the Great Books, and to accept or

reject their premises for ourselves. This habit of critical evaluation is extremely valuable in the workplace.

What I learned was how to learn, and how to engage other people in that learning process. As a consequence, as I grew in my career, I was valued for my ability to take on a task or business with no precedents, create a successful model or process, and implement it quickly. I thrived on uncertainty and was able to quickly absorb the needs of new clients and new businesses. I knew how to have a respectful discussion with my peers and managers and how to communicate my ideas persuasively.

Now that I'm in my thirties, work colleagues who don't know me start conversations by asking me where I got my MBA, which is funny, because I'm still working on that degree. Once you get a few years into your career, what you've accomplished at work is much more important than your college major. I have never regretted my decision to pursue the Program, and while I have forgotten freshman chemistry, I use what I learned in PLS every single day.

### REFLECT ON:

- *Parents' mixed feelings about a liberal education.*
- *The requirement that PLS students go beyond normal university-level comprehension.*
- *How time in PLS allows a student to thrive on uncertainty in professional situations.*
- *How your work experience will quickly become more important than “what was your major.”*

“My parents had mixed feelings about my choice to study in PLS. They had high expectations for my career and it was hard for them to see a direct connection to a good job.”

MICHAEL SCHIERL, 1984

# VENTURE CAPITAL GUIDE

MR. SCHIERL TAKES HIS PLS STUDIES AND USES THEM TO MAKE KEY FINANCIAL DECISIONS IN VENTURE CAPITAL.

I think that a lot of this concern about whether PLS or the Great Books Program is practical or useful in the real world is a bunch of hogwash. I think it's one of the most practical and useful things that anyone can do, and I would have a hard time believing, if someone really understood what the Program was about, that they'd do anything else.

What I think PLS allows people to take away is a strong framework for making life decisions. A feel for what paradigms are and the ability to compare ideas and make decisions about companies they're going to join, companies they're going to found, companies they're going to fund. Just organizations they want to become a part of. Where to send their kids to school.

To bring this down to practical terms of what I learned and how I used some of my education, in PLS I found myself gravitating to two areas. One was the sciences. The second area was epistemology—or the study of how we come to know things.

Regarding the sciences, I kind of fell in love with the men of science and their stories and

how they were able to create ideas that ended up changing the world. Here is the practical, life-changing thing I learned in this area of study: When you're trying to make a decision about which ideas to believe and you don't have a lot of evidence—there are three rules that you should follow. And I'll also show you that these three rules are the identical rules that a venture capitalist uses to pick which business ideas to fund. In fact,



**“We might say to those that are interested in business: PLS is great study on the world's most successful entrepreneurs through the ages. To those who want to change the world in the area of social policy: Here's a practical handbook and guide for people who want to use ideas to change the world.”**

you should use these three rules whenever you are making a major decision without the benefit of tangible evidence.

The first rule is this: You should always pick the simple idea over the complex. It's a common rule among venture capitalists: If an entrepreneur can't clearly explain his business idea in a one-page executive summary, then he doesn't have

it figured out himself. The second rule is this: If the idea is really true, if it is an important idea, if it's really a home run, then the idea should somehow change the way people see the world. It should involve some kind of a paradigm shift. But what makes a big idea a great idea is rule number three: When you start to think in terms of a paradigm, you can start to do things by making it predictive. You can say, “Well if that's true, then certain

things should happen and certain things should not happen.” It directs you to where you should look next. And that was fundamental to me. In the business world, predicting the practical implications of the big ideas is where the real money is made.

The three rules I described above relate to the nature of the idea itself. Another method of testing the truth of an idea is to look at how deeply the scientist or entrepreneur himself believes the idea. This is where epistemology comes into play. As most venture capitalists know, there are lots of intelligent ideas and business plans that never get funded because the entrepreneur himself doesn't seem to believe in his own idea strongly enough. This notion

# MICHAEL SCHIERL, 1984

## CONTINUED

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### REFLECT ON:

- *Direct parallels between the study of the world's great scientists and the study of entrepreneurial activity.*
- *The similarity between the essential ingredients for a scientific paradigm and the criteria of a venture capitalist.*
- *The use of the Great Books to make decisions about which entrepreneurs to finance and which to ignore.*
- *The value of being prepared to make "life decisions" rather than to ground yourself too quickly in specific knowledge.*

has a strong basis in the teaching of Cardinal Newman. In his *Grammar of Assent*, Newman teaches that the most true and most solid knowledge that we can gain is something called real assent. And that book was a book that changed my life. I encourage everyone to read it.

Now if you take these ideas together and you go back and look at the men of science—it may seem funny, but these guys were the greatest entrepreneurs ever in the history of the world. Of course, they were scientists whose ideas were simple, paradigm-shifting and predictive. But if you look at their lives, the unique thing about them is how they personally had so much *faith* in their ideas being true. And if you look at these guys, they all fit the mold of what I call founders or entrepreneurs—they all had passionate, sometimes unrealistic belief in their ideas. And in some cases—think of Darwin—they spent their whole life working on a single premise. Imagine that: Copernicus says, “I believe the earth goes around the sun. I’m going to spend the rest of my life working on that idea.”

So I encourage everyone not to disparage a PLS education as not being practical. It’s the most practical thing you can do. Making life decisions well is what we should strive for as our top priority. And practical learning about specifics? You’ll figure that out when the decisions come to face you. Go out and get experience. Trust your heart. And then follow your heart, and you’ll find out that you’ll end up where you should be.

“What I think PLS allows people to take away is a strong framework for making life decisions.

A feel for what paradigms are  
and the ability to compare ideas  
and make decisions about  
companies they’re going to join,  
companies they’re going to found,  
and companies they’re going to fund.”

## GINGER ZUMAETA, 1990

# IT STARTS WITH PLS

MS. ZUMAETA HAS LEVERAGED HER PLS EXPERIENCE INTO A RAPID ASCENT IN TELEVISION ADVERTISING.

Every now and then I am asked how I got to be where I am today... or to what I attribute my success. It's a story that I love to tell and it invariably starts with the story of the Program of Liberal Studies. Bottom line, PLS gave me an edge over other folks in my field at almost every turn in my career. It ended up being the most practical thing I could have done to get ahead (with the bonus of not limiting me to one thing).

Today, I am the Vice President of Advertising and Promotion for the three NBC-Universal owned television stations in Los Angeles. What does the title mean? In the simplest terms, it means that I lead our in-house ad agency. We handle all of the brand strategy, creative, promotion, media planning, community relations and PR for the three stations. My team is composed of primarily writer-producers, editors, graphic artists and publicity. Basically we do anything and everything we can to get the viewer to watch our stations. We produce television promotion, radio, billboards, etc. and we do virtually 100 percent of it in-house. It's a very cool job.

“Bottom line, PLS gave me an edge over other folks in my field at almost every turn in my career. It ended up being the most practical thing I could have done to get ahead.”

If you had asked me while I had my nose buried in the *Iliad* during my first year of PLS if I ever thought I would have a job like the one I have now I probably would have said “no way.” But believe it or not, it really came pretty easily. Sure, you have to work hard and be a self-starter, but that's really just the price of entry into the game. What separates the leaders from the pack really comes down to smarts and differentiation in my experience. I got both of those from PLS. There was a saying that went around back when I was a PLS student: “PLS prepares you for nothing and everything.” I would amend that. It prepares you for everything. Period. How? Because PLS teaches you how to think. In PLS you learn the foundations of

thought and its evolution. You learn to understand thought, culture, art, politics and science in their proper context and you come to understand that they are all interrelated. Once you've comprehended all of this . . . taken it in and let it simmer—you will be leaps and bounds ahead of most people you find yourself competing with for a job or position, regardless of the discipline you pursue. I believe this to my very core.

### REFLECT ON:

- How PLS can give you an edge in any field at almost every turn in your career.
- How you will probably have no idea where your career will take you while you are studying at Notre Dame.
- How PLS teaches you how to think and how you can use that to your advantage.

My job chronology goes basically like this. I started as a sales assistant at a cable company. Next I talked a TV station into hiring me as their Research Director. This was an amazing feat considering that when I got asked the final interview question, “What is a rating point?” I had to admit that I had *no idea*. Still, I convinced him that I hadn't run across anything that eluded my powers of comprehension so far, so it was pretty safe to bet that once I learned what a rating point was I would be just fine. The Notre Dame degree and my ability to hold up my end of the conversation regardless of what he wanted to talk about didn't hurt. Thanks, PLS! I went on to start a research department at the local NBC affiliate, and then convinced my GM that what I really should be doing was marketing because my educational background paired with my research experience made me some sort of cultural anthropologist. Thanks again, PLS. He bought it, and that got me into my current field. I was later recruited by NBC to lead the marketing in Philadelphia, then Chicago, and now in Los Angeles where I've added the Spanish-language component since we bought Telemundo. It's been a wild, fun ride so far.... And I sincerely do credit PLS with much of what got me here.

## KEVIN BECKER, 1988

# ON FAILURE

MR. BECKER COMMENTS ON THE VIRTUES OF PLS AS A PREPARATION FOR OVERCOMING FAILURES.

I thought it would be fitting to end our discussion with a topic that is often overlooked. Most

**“Through your failures, you will develop your grit, your integrity and, ultimately, your character. These things will determine if you indeed have been a success.”**

people do not intentionally set out to fail in any aspect of life. But failure does occur, and usually when least expected.

Having done many things in my career, I have experienced both the exhilaration of success and the disorienting disappointment of failure. Most people learn how to deal with positive emotions. But, at those times when you are lying awake at two o'clock in the morning, staring at the ceiling in utter disbelief at your bad turn of fortune, you had better have a sound intellectual

and emotional grounding to be able to coax yourself out of bed when the alarm clock rings.

PLS will prepare you, in small doses, to handle the minor day-to-day failures that, if not handled well, can accumulate into a frustrating business experience. As an equity trader, there were days when I just couldn't believe how much money I had lost; as a salesman, a contract I was sure I was going to sign fell apart; as a manager, the employee of whose loyalty I felt certain walked out the door. You may not be able to see this now, but the analogous situations in PLS will be the paper that you just couldn't get quite right; the point you just couldn't seem to make; the idea that you just couldn't seem to grasp, no matter how certain you were of your thoughts.

These experiences can be had in almost any major. But as you advance in your career, your failures will move beyond the garden variety frustrations that plague the mass of “men lead(ing) lives of quiet desperation.” If you are good at what you do, you will take chances. And sometimes, those chances, no matter how

“sure” you were of success at the outset, are going to go against you.

And for those times, we have the great texts—philosophical, scientific and literary—to help us deal with failure. In the end, Socrates was murdered by the very people he wished to educate. Galileo was forced to recant his discoveries. Milton's Satan thought he could win his fight against God and ended up on his back in hell. In our times of exasperation, we empathize with these heroic figures—and we learn from them.

The true measure of a person's character is not how often they fail but how they react to failure. The beauty of PLS is that it allows you to experience all the emotions of failure, both in person and in history, in a nurturing environment.

If you are serious about a career in business (or any field, for that matter), you have to be serious about your preparation for failure. Through your failures, you will develop your grit, your integrity and, ultimately, your character. These things will determine, when you review your life, if you indeed have been a success.

### REFLECT ON:

- *The fact that you will encounter failure, on some level, in your career.*
- *How PLS can prepare you for the minor frustrations of business directly.*
- *How PLS can prepare you better than any other major when it comes to dealing with the major setbacks.*
- *Making sure that you have a solid foundation on which to fall back when times get rough for you. This will allow you to “fail well” and ultimately succeed.*

**“The true measure of the a person's character is not how often they fail but how they react to failure. The beauty of PLS is that it allows you to experience all the emotions of failure, both in person and in history.”**

“WE CALLED IT THE PROGRAM OF LIBERAL STUDIES”

# CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

In Order of Their Essay's Appearance in this Document

**John Breen, 1985**, attended Harvard Law School and practiced at Sidley & Austin in Chicago, specializing in commercial litigation. He now teaches at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. His contribution is an excerpt from a speech he gave to the Program of Liberal Studies in 2002, as are the essays of Mr. Schierl and Mr. McNeill. The full text of these speeches can be found at <http://www.nd.edu/~pls/programma/conference/>.

**Francis D'Eramo, 1982**, moved to St. Croix, US Virgin Islands after graduating from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. He is a shareholder in the firm of Nichols Newman Logan D'Eramo & Grey.

**Tom Schwietz, 1954**, entered the Air Force in 1955, commissioned through the ROTC, and was a command pilot with over 4300 hours. He served in many positions throughout his military career including Commander and Professor of Aerospace Studies at Air Force ROTC, University of Louisville. After retiring from the military, he founded and runs a successful law firm.

**Timothy Buckley, 1986**, graduated from the University of Georgia School of Law and now practices exclusively in the litigation and trial areas. Tim also serves as a Special Assistant Attorney General for the State of Georgia and has taught litigation courses at the Emory University School of Law for over ten years.

**Thomas Durkin, 1968**, is a criminal defense lawyer in Chicago. He received his law degree from the University of San Francisco in 1973 and is the senior partner in the firm of Durkin & Roberts.

**James Carolan, 1996**, graduated from the St. Louis University Medical School in 2000 and underwent his residency in Ophthalmology at the University of California and is now in private practice in San Rafael, California.

**Elaine Cassidy, 1993**, received her doctorate in School, Community and Child-Clinical Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania and now serves as the Program Officer, Research and Evaluation, for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Princeton, New Jersey.

**Kelly Gleason, 1998**, received her MLitt in Maritime History and Underwater Archaeology from St. Andrews University, St. Andrews, Scotland in 2002 and her doctorate in Coastal Resources Management from East Carolina University. She is currently a maritime archaeologist with N.O.A.A. Pacific Islands Regional Office of the National Marine Sanctuary Program, Honolulu, Hawaii.

**Richard Spangler, 1977**, graduated from the University of Illinois College of Medicine in 1982. He completed a residency in Pediatrics at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois in 1986. Currently, he is Chairman of Pediatrics at St. Joseph Hospital in Chicago, Illinois.

“WE CALLED IT THE PROGRAM OF LIBERAL STUDIES”

# CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

*CONTINUED*

*In Order of Their Essay's Appearance in this Document*

**Charles Titus Boudreaux, 1986**, received his Master of Arts in 1996 and his doctorate in Counseling and Student Personnel Psychology from the University of Minnesota in 2001. He currently serves as a Staff Counselor for Student Counseling Services at Illinois State University.

**Michael Crowe, 1958**, besides teaching in the Program of Liberal Studies for 41 years, served as chair of the department from 1967 to 1973. The author of six books, he was named the John Cavanaugh Professor in the Humanities in PLS in 2000.

**Erin Flynn, 2001**, served as a Social Services Assistant in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Alaska, after which she became an Admissions Counselor at the University of Notre Dame. She is currently a Web Editor, College of Arts and Letters, for the Notre Dame Web Group.

**Jeffrey Speaks, 1997**, spent a year bartending in London before beginning studies for his PhD in Philosophy at Princeton University, which he completed in 2003. Since then, he has been an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at McGill University in Montreal.

**John Zygmunt, 1977**, since returning to play writing in 1997, has had fifteen productions of his plays in nine states across the United States.

**Coni J. Rich, 1989**, has been a marketing professional since graduation from Notre Dame. She is currently Vice President, Special Markets Division with BAS, a Linwood, New Jersey company.

**Joe Bellavance, 1989**, has founded and managed several companies since graduation and is currently the Chief Executive Officer of NuFuels, LLC, based in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

**Kevin Becker, 1988**, began his career as an investment banker at Morgan Stanley, became the CFO of a Missouri pig farm in 1994 and moved into the hedge fund industry in 1996, from which he retired in 2005. He now consults with and invests in start-up and established businesses.

**Robert McNeill, 1963**, graduated as the Valedictorian of his University class and was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. From 1967 to date, he has been with Stein Roe & Farnham, where he serves as Executive Vice President.

**Margaret Raddatz, 1990**, began her career in call center management. She joined OnStar in 2001 and is currently on assignment in Canada as supplier performance manager.

**Michael Schierl, 1984**, who describes himself as a “serial entrepreneur,” received his J.D from Harvard in 1988; practiced law with Dewey Ballantine; founded and ran a private equity firm; founded, built and sold an internet company and is a Senior Partner with a fund-raising consultancy.

**Ginger Zumaeta, 1990**, began her career as a sales assistant at a cable company, moved into television research and then onto marketing. She now leads marketing for all the NBC affiliates in Los Angeles.

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“There was a saying that went around back when I was a PLS student: ‘PLS prepares you for nothing and everything.’ I would amend that. It prepares you for everything. Period. “

—Ginger Zumaeta, 1990

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## AFTERWORD

You have to make a decision on your course of studies for the next three years. You have gathered all the information you could get and considered your choices from every angle, but there seems to be almost too much info.

Giving good counsel is not easy, but sometimes I can at least offer an insightful moment from one of my own perplexities, a moment that perhaps contains an image that is more decisive than all the calculations and argument.

In September of 1958 and again in 1959, Otto Bird, then leader of the General Program, the fore-runner of PLS, gave an opening charge to all the students of the Program by reading from *The Sword in the Stone*, the first novel of *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White. This first book is about the education of Wart (King Arthur), accomplished through Merlin's magical transformations of Wart into a communistic ant and a boundary-less goose, for examples, that culminates in Merlin's insisting that Wart hear the doctoral thesis of the stodgy Badger.

The Badger relates that, at one time, all the embryos of the preternatural animals had been called before God to be asked what specializations they would like to have, what parts of their bodies they would exchange for tools. And so, spades for the forearms of the mole, spears for the teeth of the saber-toothed tiger, and so on. But one embryo hesitates before the Almighty; when questioned, he responds that he trusts to the Lord's judgment that he is as he should be in the divine wisdom. Calling all the other decided embryos, the Creator tells them to behold Man, who had figured it out, and who will be an eternally potential creature.

Just as one could consider the choice of each embryo as instances of specialization reiterated in the curricula of the University, so one could consider human technologies and social strategies as extensions of man's anatomy, his mental and physical faculties. But where is the choice of Man that addresses his essential, yet to be activated potential? Perhaps in the Program of Liberal Studies.

*Michael Ehrenreich, 1960*

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