



VIEWPOINT



CHERYL DALTON CARON

Judy Harvey assumed the new position of director of multicultural education at Guilford this year, working in support of the Anti-racism Initiative. She was director of community learning the last nine years, developing the community service program for students. A birthright Quaker and Indiana native, she earned her bachelor's degree from Guilford and master's from Indiana University. Contact Judy by e-mailing jharvey@guilford.edu.

Guilford has the opportunity to be on the cutting edge of one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century — building a healthy multicultural society. Our very survival as a nation depends on it. Our survival as an institution may depend on it as well.

By Judy Harvey '73

My decision to attend Guilford College 500 miles away from home did not sit well with my family. I was convinced that Guilford was the place I needed to be, even though I had never been away from home and had never been one for daring action. I arrived in the fall of 1969 terrified to be on my own, away from my family for the first time and missing the cornfields of Indiana before my father even waved goodbye. Of course, my Quaker family knew Guilford was a good school, but did I have to go 500 miles away?

Now, as a staff member for nine years, I can't imagine life without Guilford. The college has contributed to my growth and development in so many ways, but perhaps the most profound result of my Guilford education is the joy I take in learning. My performance in high school was driven by my desire to please my teachers and to earn high grades. My classes at Guilford taught me to value learning as a way to explore life's big questions. Repeatedly, as a student I was pushed to the edge of what I comfortably knew and asked to

tread on the edge of my understanding of the world. I became addicted to this exhilarating, although often terrifying process, and I value it beyond measure. I can attribute much of my success as a professional and mother of six to my eagerness to learn and my willingness to question my assumptions and rethink my beliefs and actions in the face of new information.

That first year at Guilford I discovered that the world was more complex and harsh than it had looked in rural, small-town Indiana. The topic that quickly drove me to the edge of what I comfortably knew was the issue of race. Before I even left the safety of home, I received my summer reading in the mail from Guilford College. "Manchild in the Promised Land" by Claude Brown exposed me to a harsh reality of which I had no personal awareness. No African Americans lived in the small, rural town where I grew up. Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement were abstract news headlines that I had no personal experience to understand. Reading that disturbing book all by myself that summer made me want to learn more, and I enrolled in Beth Keiser's Black

Literature course as my freshman English class. Over my four years at Guilford, I took numerous classes and attended countless presentations, discussions and special events that helped me learn to care about issues of race. Guilford seemed to me to be on the cutting edge when it came to understanding racism, appreciating differences and committing to change.

Imagine my surprise 20 years later when a first-year African American student walked into my office and told me that Guilford was a hard place to be for people of color. Disbelief was my first response, but I wanted to understand how that could be so. How was it possible that the place that had pushed me to the limits of my understanding about racism would not be a comfortable place for students of color? I remain grateful to **Rashida McKinzie '99**, who found the courage to be the first to tell me the truth about how students of color experience racism at Guilford and set me on the path of the next stage of my learning.

Since that first conversation with Rashida, there have been numerous campus discussions on the topic. Our colleagues and students who are people of color tell us that Guilford is a difficult place for people of color to thrive. Our rich Quaker history of dedication to racial justice and Guilford's written vision of ourselves as a diverse and inclusive community create the expectation that we will be a different sort of institution. Our inability to live up to that vision creates a great deal of pain and frustration for all of us. Periodic cycles of race-related crises on campus remind us that this major problem survives in spite of our best efforts to teach it away or respond to whatever the current crisis might be.

Over the past 30 years Guilford has endorsed the initiative of hundreds of courses, speakers, workshops, arts events and consultancies to help our community understand the dynamics of racism and to help us become a more inclusive institution. If racism were capable of being eliminated through

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teaching, these continued efforts certainly would have done so. These initiatives represent the best thinking and hard work of our talented faculty, staff and students who long for an institution that truly values the worth of each person. An ongoing dialogue about issues of race is crucial to any institution of higher education, and these efforts certainly must continue. These efforts, however, have done little to move Guilford towards being a healthy multi-cultural community. We need a strategic long-range plan to disrupt the forces of institutional racism that survive in spite of our best intentions.

Over the past five years more than 100 Guilford faculty, staff and students have attended anti-racism workshops with Crossroads Ministry and the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. These sister organizations share a common analysis of racism in the United States. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond developed the analysis of racism in this country from the perspective of people of color and trains participants to organize against systemic racism at the grassroots level. Crossroads Ministry, an interfaith ministry for racial justice, works with teams within institutions to analyze systemic

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Readership Survey

Keep profiling alumni and tell us more about Quakerism. Those were two apparent themes from the 104 responses to the readership survey in the summer issue of Guilford College Magazine.

Some response numbers:

- 72 from alumni, representing 40 different classes from 1929 to 2002.
- 17 from current students and 15 from friends and parents.
- 72 by mail, 32 through Guilford's Web site.

Stories about alumni and student life and work were selected as favorites, followed by academics, historical focus and faculty accomplishments.

Many respondents shared ideas for future stories, including admission issues, the effect of computers on teaching and learning and a variety of topics related to the college's Quaker life and heritage.

One respondent asked that we include "stories about current students and departments that reflect what is really going on," adding, "the magazine does not seem to be a very real reflection of student life but rather a glossy and cleaned-up version."

It's true that we try to include the best and brightest stories about Guilford's alumni, students and faculty. But we also attempt to report candidly on all aspects of the college community.

The content of the magazine should be interesting to a broad base of the readership. As long as you continue to offer your feedback, we'll produce a magazine that tries very hard to reflect your interests.

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters to the editor on topics relevant to the college that are important to you.

When you submit a letter for publication, please sign (unless you are using e-mail or computer fax) and include your address and daytime telephone number. If you are submitting a written letter, please print your name as you wish it to appear. If you are an alumnus of Guilford, please indicate your year of graduation.

Letters should typically address a single idea and not exceed 150 words. We reserve the right to edit for brevity, grammar and clarity.

The deadline for letters for the Winter 2003 issue is November 30, 2002. Send letters by e-mail to rbuckner@guilford.edu, fax to 336-316-2939; or mail to Guilford College Magazine, Office of College Relations, Guilford College, 5800 W. Friendly Avenue, Greensboro, N.C. 27410.