dominantly but not exclusively women—who have been swept aside as marginal, disdained, enslaved, made invisible both in slavery and in our resistance to it, objectified and perceived as Other by a mainstream which is predominantly male and white, which drones its own secrets as it dreads the power residing in those it has defined as unfit, inappetible, weak, sick, untrustworthy, and in need of control. And because language itself—labels—have been used to keep our power, integrity, sometimes our very existence, unknown to us and to each other, we may well have reason to dread labels. All of us—women in general, people of color (but again, especially women of color), people who are materially poor and in cultures which value material wealth, (and again, throughout the world women are materially the poorest group), the low-ranked, the deviant, those who do not satisfy a certain physical image of beauty, youth, skin-color and fitness—we have been labeled enough by others and we know that their labels have led and are leading to genocide, to genocide, to the ancient remorse of “blaming the victim” for the crime—indeed, of defining us as “natural” victims.

Yet, I believe profoundly in the efficacy and necessity of self-naming. I believe in it not only as a method of placing ourselves in relation to our public statements and acts, but as part of a long process of privateclamation of our identities, a process which I believe to be the very root and soil of our work. For none of us has one name only, though our reducers and objectifiers would have us think so, in order to keep us boxed-in, fragmented from each other, ignorant of our wholeness and connectedness.

I speak as the daughter of a Jew who had deeply internalized anti-Semitism and an Anglo-Saxon Protestant who had deeply internalized misogyny. I grew up in a white, middle-class, predominantly Protestant world, well-educated but also ignorant as to the power of words. The climate of societal and personal rejection into which I was brought has changed little in that world since the 1930s and 1940s, when instead of naming it “rational” white people murmured about “the Negro problem” and cartoons in the newspapers stereoted Eleanor Roosevelt as a “Negro-lover”. It was also a climate of polite anti-Semitism in which the word “Jew” was virtually whispered, and in which my parents hoped for me to “pass” as Christian and marry Anglo-Saxon. My childhood coincided with the Depression and with the Holocaust in Europe. There was nothing in my expensive private education to encourage me to examine these events. At home, I was encouraged to read widely and to think of myself as a poet, but when I brought a volume of Eleanor Roosevelt’s memoirs home from
To Everything There Is a Season

by Michael Huber '80

President, Dean Dabel, members of the Board of Trustees, members of the Alumni Association, faculty, dear friends, dear loved ones:

Saying goodbye to the Baccalaureate is perhaps the hardest task we humans are ever called upon to do. On occasions such as this, the echoes of this rise of passage — we are reminded of the endless cycle of celebrations and mourning, of hellos and good-byes, that is our common human destiny. For all the times in life that we say good-bye — either to places we have known or to people we have loved — I am not sure that it ever gets easier. Each time we pass through life, over time, our good-byes become richer and they become richer because we pause — however briefly — to consider the meaning of what has been.

I find myself in the perennial starting place, that is, how to speak to what this experience means for us, for our individual lives and for the collective purposes and what it has meant to us as a group of people who have become a community over these many months. What was it that each of us brought to this gathering and how did it come to affect the community at large? How did the personal and collective realities inform each other? How did the two realities, we have been moved and changed.

In attempting to answer these questions, I am reminded of a very lovely idea of Don Zaccard. He once wrote about life choices and said that a person's work is beginning to play a larger role in helping us to recover the great and simple images that first gained access to the heart. I like to think that each of us brought our own great and simple images to this experience: images born of our early lives, covered and washed over in the course that has brought us here. The images are rich and varied and blended, for each of you has brought images of social justice, of belief in

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These job descriptions are used by the Class of 1981 and, during the fall and spring, are forwarded to alumni seeking career change opportunities.