

Brown President is the first black person to lead Ivy League campus

by Linda Borg
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PROVIDENCE, R.I. - Ruth Simmons' journey from sharecropper's daughter to the president of Brown University began the moment she walked into her first classroom.

"That first day of school was very magical," she said Thursday. "Something terrific happened. I had books to read. I had paper and pencils. That was the beginning of my odyssey."

Fifty years later, that former young child in hand-me-down clothes found herself speaking to a standing-room-only crowd at Sayles Hall, where she was surrounded by the portraits of former Brown presidents, all of them white men.

Simmons, the current president of Smith College, became the 18th president of Brown University on Thursday. In the process, both she and Brown made history.

She is the first black person to head an Ivy League institution, and she also is the first woman to head Brown, the second to lead an Ivy school.

Her election marks the end of a nine-month search that began shortly after E. Gordon Gee announced last winter that he was leaving for Vanderbilt University, a move that stunned the Brown community.

"It's not only magnificent for Brown but also for the Ivies and all of higher education," said Stanley Ikenberry, president of the American Council on Education. "Yes, it is a bold move in some respects, but in others it is delightfully predictable. She has all of the strengths one would expect to find in a college president."

Simmons seemed a bit taken aback by the lovefest that greeted her in Sayles Hall, where she received four standing ovations from a crowd of 500 faculty, students and staff.

"It is impossible for me to stand before you without remembering that I have arrived at this place through the brutally hard and sometimes demeaning labor of humble parents," said Simmons, who was born into rural poverty in Grapeland, Texas, the youngest of 12 children.

Simmons, 55, also said she has succeeded thanks to the kindness of strangers, those donors who enabled her to afford a first-rate college education.

"They helped me understand that poverty is not a state of mind nor a definition of one's character but merely the condition of one's purse," she told the Brown assembly.

Then, Simmons delivered the kicker: Universities, she said, exist not to amass wealth but to amass knowledge.

"I hope that Brown will play a lead-

ership role in insisting that elite universities remain steadfastly and resolutely the province of excellent minds and not fat purses."

Simmons didn't pull any punches Thursday.

She acknowledged that the university has been grappling with the contentious issue of diversity, from how to make Brown more affordable to all students to how to make the campus more welcoming to minorities.

This is an area about which Simmons feels especially passionate, and she promised to play a direct role in how the university implements the report of the visiting committee on diversity.

During an interview later in the day, Simmons was frank about how race

was a professor who hated me," she said. "I think he hated me because I was the best student in his class. He refused to speak to me. That's what people like me faced all the time."

Simmons tells her students that they have to sort out pure human meanness from classic bigotry. Then, she tells them, you have to learn not to expect more from people than they can realistically give.

Brown had to persuade Simmons to leave Smith, an elite women's college in Northampton, Mass., where she had a big impact, doubling the endowment, increasing minority applications and creating the first engineering department in a women's college.

"I didn't think it could get any better than Smith," she said at a news con-

ference. "College presidents and their universities are not always happy affairs. At Smith, I loved them and they loved me."

Simmons said there was no question about the desirability of the Brown presidency: "The important piece was whether I could make a difference at Brown. I was persuaded that I could."

Simmons dismissed the notion that she might have trouble moving from a small women's college to a large research university, noting that she has worked at Princeton University, another Ivy institution, as well as Spelman College, a historically black

happy."

During her ascension through the ranks of higher education, a number of people told Simmons that she had the makings of a college president. But one mentor said she would never become president of an Ivy League school.

Not Ida Mae Henderson, her kindergarten teacher in Texas.

"Never, in her vision, did she say, 'You can't do this but you can do that,'" Simmons said. "If I'm here today, it's because I grew up believing that I could do it."

The Macky address and Boulder visit were part of an event put on by the Robert H. and Beverly A. Deming Center for Entrepreneurship at CU.

The Deming Center awarded Bezos its annual Entrepreneur of the Year Award, and co-hosted his

public speech Tuesday night with corporate sponsor Ernst & Young.

Though Amazon had sales of \$1.64 billion in 1999 -- a 169 percent increase over 1998 -- it posted a \$720 million loss. It has never posted a profit, a fact Bezos both jokes about and defends.

"At first, we wanted to build a small, profitable company. Instead, we built a large, unprofitable company," he said.

But he also argues that the company should be considered in segments: There was a \$25 million gain in Amazon's original business of books, music and videos. The segments racking up losses -- electronics, kitchen, international networks and others -- are still in the investment stage, Bezos argues.

Second-year masters of business administration student Adam Moise particularly liked Bezos' answer-anything style.

"He is so candid and laid back, and he was never defensive about his company's path," Moise said.

Moise, incidentally, still plans on launching his own business after graduation, despite what Bezos had to say.

Bezos also answered questions about the dot-com shakeup this year. Business partner Pets.com shut earlier Tuesday -- students wanted to know how that made Amazon workers feel.

"They're glad they're not working for Pets.com," Bezos said.

Susanna Peters, an MBA student who attended the student session, said she found the talk interesting, but largely predictable.

"I liked how he discussed his philosophy on keeping good people," Peters said.

Before the talk, Bezos also addressed how he gets good people.

"I actually talk to young people quite a bit -- this is my twelfth time this year," he said. "I like the questions they ask, whether it's about Amazon, e-commerce, or if they want advice on how to start their own business."

"And for us, this is a great recruiting tool. It's an opportunity for us to tell the brightest and the best to come work for us," Bezos said.

CEO of Amazon.com meets with students, addresses Boulder, Colo., audience

by Erika Stutzman
Knight-Ridder Tribune
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Esposing such old-economy advice as "follow your passion" and "work for a best-practices company," Internet retailing pioneer Jeff Bezos met with a handful of Boulder students Tuesday.

The meeting between the chief executive and founder of Amazon.com and about 20 University of Colorado students preceded a public address at Macky Auditorium.

Undergraduate engineering and graduate business students peppered Bezos with questions about business and his company in a very informal round-table discussion. Bezos offered frank-yet-optimistic talk about some of the controversy dogging his firm, and a surprising take on working for startups and dot-coms.

"It is too risky to start a company straight out of school," Bezos advised.

Presenting himself more as a "granddaddy" of e-commerce than the dot-com entrepreneur he was, Bezos said the odds of a startup succeeding are "very low, even in the best of circumstances."

Students' best bet, according to Bezos: "You should try to work for a best-practices company. Your first job out of school should be 90 percent a learning experience."

When budding entrepreneurs are ready to launch their own companies, Bezos says they should avoid the "hot flavor of the month."

"Do something that you have a passion for, and something that will fulfill a real need. If you're trying to ride a hot wave, you're going to fail. To catch that wave before it's past, you have to have passion," he said.

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Chancellor Stephen Robert hugs Brown's new president Dr. Ruth J. Simmons at the start of a news conference at Maddock Alumni Center on Thursday, November 9, 2000. Simmons came to Brown from Smith College in Massachusetts.

and racism have shadowed her childhood and her career.

"I grew up under Jim Crow segregation," she said. "The result was that I know how to deal with bigotry."

Young people today have not grown up with that. It's a shattering experience for them. It was never a shattering experience for me."

Racism was a fact of life in rural Texas and in Houston, where Simmons moved when she was 7. It continued when she went to Harvard, where she received both her master's and her doctorate degrees in Romance languages.

"When I first went to Harvard, I had

updates when I'm aroused," he laughs. "To go to work everyday aroused. I think that's cool."

Mike's buddy, Debbie Perez, 19, understands. With Mike's help, Debbie runs girlypictures.com, a collection of -- what else -- girly pictures.

Debbie, a Cal State-Fullerton student and part-time exotic dancer says that she became interested in her own Web site after surfing the Web and seeing the large number of opportunities. She calls it destiny. Debbie also says that her site, which has pictures of herself and her friends, lets her explore her uninhibited sexual side. "I guess I've been somewhat of an exhibitionist for a long time (laughs). And I get to meet a lot of interesting people."

Art, schmart. What about the cash? It's no secret that Web jobs, sex related and otherwise can be quite lucrative.

she says.

What works for Abby, doesn't for other college students. Many don't have the courage to be seen in compromising positions on the Internet. Ironically, both Abby and Debbie plan on careers in the childcare field -- Abby a social worker and Debbie an elementary school teacher, but neither one see their sexy jobs as affecting their plans.

Mike, who's been the object of stalkers, knows that being on the Internet has its risks.

"I've had people email me back and describe my car, describe my home, where I live with my parents -- the whole nine yards. Obviously they had been following me," Mike said. "One guy from Chicago followed me all the way to Los Angeles, where I live. He started renting hotel rooms, which were very close to my home, and he started writing emails from his laptop. Everyday, he would describe something different about what I was doing." Still wanna be a Web/porn star? Despite this scary episode and others like it, Mike said that he would keep doing the site.

"When the threats started to arrive three months into the (creation of the Web site) it would not have been fair to just disband the Web site for the many members who had signed up. I just took other precautions and started listing my addresses different."

No more flipping burgers: College kids cash in on internet porn

by William Lee
TMS Campus
Campus Correspondent
Western Illinois University
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Twenty-year-old Mike Alexander leads a pretty full life. He's a full-time college student at Golden West College in Huntington Beach, Calif. He works with his dad at a warehouse, which he owns. But that's just his day job.

Mike owns and operates several Web sites -- sex Web sites. He serves as a webmaster for www.surfboys.com, gypiczone.com and girlypictures.com.

Mike is just one of the many college students who have taken to the World Wide Web not just to make money in the sex field, but also for self expression, which is the case with "Abby." She's the subject of AbbyTV.com, a site devised with the purpose of showing real-life via a Web cam.

College Web cams -- that is, Web cams featuring the home lives of real college students -- are becoming increasingly popular and are bringing Internet voyeurism to the mainstream. So what would webheads see as a part of Abby's real life?

"Probably at least half [of AbbyTV subscribers] watch hoping to see me take a bath, and that's okay, too. Whatever brightens people's days, I suppose," the 20-year-old California State social work major said.

Web cams are stationed strategically throughout Abby's apartment: The living room couch, the bedroom (focused on the bed) and yes, the bathtub. Some of the spicier scenes Abby has given her audience are Abby having sex with her boyfriend in her bedroom, taking a long explorative bath, or having fun with her vibrator on her living room couch. So what's Abby's angle? Is she satisfying her exhibitionist side? Perhaps, but Abby says there's a deeper meaning behind what she does.

"I don't do it to get people off or anything," Abby said. "We show real life. When you watch TV you see all of these perfect, happy people and happy families and people feel bad about themselves because they're like, 'Oh! I'm not that thin,' or 'I'm not that happy with my husband,' ... we're just trying to show that real people don't live like that -- real life is messy, you have bad hair days."

She adds that she's not an exhibitionist at all.

But for Mike, his Web sites are not just for lucrative business, but also a way for him to explore his sexuality in the most public setting.

"It's not just to make the money, but it was a way to sexually please myself by putting pictures of nice-looking guys on a Web site that I sort of lusted for myself and who are my friends. We just have fun doing it. It peaked my sexual arousal. In fact, I do my best

updates when I'm aroused," he laughs. "To go to work everyday aroused. I think that's cool."

Mike's buddy, Debbie Perez, 19, understands. With Mike's help, Debbie runs girlypictures.com, a collection of -- what else -- girly pictures.

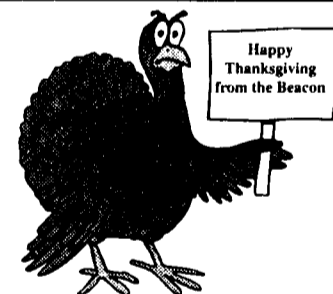
Debbie, a Cal State-Fullerton stu-

We just have fun doing it. It peaked my sexual arousal. In fact, I do my best updates when I'm aroused," he laughs. "To go to work everyday aroused, I think that's cool."

-Twenty-year-old Mike Alexander, webmaster for www.surfboys.com, gypiczone.com and girlypictures.com.

"Waitressing just doesn't pay very well, and I am making fairly good money from the Web site," Abby said. "I'm not getting rich or anything, but I'm living a lot more comfortably now than I was before."

For Debbie, the need was direr. "I was running low on funds to go to college, books ... just everything that was needed, so I got into the exotic dancing and the Web site is just kind of part of that." Despite the success of Girlypictures.com, Debbie continues to dance, but primarily for private parties,



California court upholds damage award in college's reverse-discrimination case

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A state appeals court upheld a \$1.9 million damage award to a white San Francisco State University lecturer who claimed he was a victim of racial discrimination.

Howard McNier, 52, a lecturer at the university's College of Business, sued California State University trustees in 1997 after he was denied a tenure-track position in the college's hospitality management department and had his teaching load cut back.

McNier, who had received excellent evaluations from students and fellow teachers, claimed he was discriminated against because he was white. An Asian immigrant eventually won the teaching position.

A San Francisco Superior Court jury originally awarded McNier \$2.7 million in compensation last year. But the trial judge reduced the amount to \$1.9 million, including \$645,116 for lost pay through age 70 and \$1.3 million for physical and psychological injury.

The university contested the award, but a three-judge panel of the state Court of Appeal unanimously upheld the judgment, citing "substantial evidence that the university caused McNier to suffer serious and ongoing physical and psychological injuries."