

# Provost Evaluates Her First Two Years

By Jan Travers

Dr. Ruth Leventhal became provost and dean at Penn State, Harrisburg on July 1, 1984. In April of the same year, Tony Perry, a former Capital Times reporter, interviewed her about her plans for the school upon assuming office three months later. In an attempt to see how she has measured up, we asked her to reflect on changes made during her short tenure as provost.

**Q.** In 1984 you stated concern with the low percentage of minorities and women faculty and students. How have you addressed this?

Ruth Leventhal: First, we laid the groundwork for our future, including identifying the cause of the problem. Dealing with the low percentage of blacks, we hired a minority recruiter, Kevin Brown, and an assistant graduate recruiter. The Black Cultural Arts Center has been refurbished, we've expanded Black History Month, and we've tried to develop a stronger supportive environment. In addition, Frank Swetz was appointed to head a task force on international students.

Retention wise, we have created a conducive environment to attracting the serious black student. We are making headway, with the number of

minorities going up, but the percentage is not reflecting the increase because of the overall rise in general enrollment.

For women, an office for non-traditional students has been created, under the direction of Dave Doaty, in an attempt to address their particular needs. In addition, Kay Towns has many projects in operation.

**Q.** Does this study of non-traditional students include the possibility of a child play center on campus?

RL. We have been studying this for a year and a half, including the cost, interest, etc. I also included it in the planning request for strategic funds. But is it an expensive venture for a relatively small student segment, especially with the liability insurance crisis going on now. However, in renovating the meeting house in the Heights, the plans included changes needed by government regulation in the event this goes through. We are looking into the possibility of finding a private benefactor to sponsor it.

In an attempt to assist people who need this service now, we have a list of reliable area child centers available through Kay Towns, PROBE.

**Q.** You wanted to "build a real campus feeling" through campus beautification. How have you approached this?

RL. We stretch every dollar so it does the maximum good. For instance, the bushes planted along the Fruehauf border will not only make the campus look nice, but will provide a barrier between the two properties. Also, trees and flowers have been planted with the land around the dorms, admissions, and continuing education being improved.

Beginning this year, the goal will be on inner beautification, including coat racks in classrooms, a better system for classroom repairs and relocating the blackboard into the center of the forward walls to form one big board.

**Q.** It was your concern in 1984 that not enough was being done to include commuters in campus activities. How have you dealt with this?

RL. First, I met with commuter students to discuss their needs. This led to a Commuter News Letter through Dave Doaty's office. Then the Cultural Affairs Committee was charged to tailor programs to attract both on-campus residents and commuters. This is why many programs are now held during the day.

**Q.** You want to establish the capital college as a

cultural center in this area?

RL. This is an area I take a personal interest in. A lot of education is outside of the classroom. The arts are very important to economic development. We must make the Harrisburg area a place where people want to live. Our programs at Penn State are geared to get people in touch with the arts. Only then will community see us as a major university.

**Q.** How have you increased outreach to the community?

RL. In addition to the cultural program, we have enlarged our continuing education, and we give credit/non-credit classes throughout the region. Personally, I speak to as many area clubs and organizations as possible. Also, we have enlarged our Community Relations Office, increasing our news coverage. The board of advisors was expanded to 36 members, consisting of outstanding community leaders. This helps increase our visibility. From October through December we will be conducting "Inter-View breaks". This includes bringing community leaders to the campus to show them our programs.

**Q.** You wanted continuing growth in educational programs. Has this been achieved?

RL. We have developed a carefully targeted program for improvement of all areas in our strategic plans. It is our plan to make this a nationally competitive institution.

**Q.** It appears that everything you set out to do in 1984 has been accomplished, is this true?

RL. If I agreed with that, my job here would be through. There is still a lot to be done. We want to continue to bring increasing resources to a school which both needs it and deserves

it. We want to see the institution increase their successes, especially with women and minorities. The promotion and tenure policies must be refined. We must improve the feeling of community on the campus. We hear concerns long after we should. Students many times feel they don't know enough to question policy.

**Q.** Your advice to the student?

RL. If you have a problem or concern go to the administration for answers. Don't be shy.

## "Illiteracy Subverts the Free Choice of Work"

By Denise Reinas

What would you do if you suddenly became illiterate? Let's say you were injured in an accident and when you recovered you realized you could no longer read or write. How would this affect your job, your family life, or your schooling?

Many people in the United States are illiterate. "There are

over 20 million adult Americans—one in five—who are unable to read a street sign, find a name and number in a telephone book, or complete a written job application. Twenty million more are marginally literate since they read at less than an 8th grade level," said Nan Cavanaugh, the executive director of the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council, Inc. The Pennsylvania Department of Education estimates that there are 10,000

adults in Harrisburg City alone who could derive advantage from tutoring and literacy programs.

Literacy expert, Carmen St. John Hunter said, "What is needed more than literacy projects are programs oriented toward the specific needs of a community, programs that spark a desire for literacy." In 1983 President Reagan announced the Initiative on Adult Literacy. Since then many programs have been developed. "The programs that succeed are those that approach people around what deeply concerns them, and that allow them to use their own

experience to improve their communities," Hunter said. People must decide on their own that they want to learn to read and write and through such programs this can be possible.

The factors which influence literacy are the home, the educational institution, and the person himself. Some people learn to read with little or no formal instruction unlike others, who to them reading is a slow and toiling process.

Those who are illiterate sometimes get cheated or discriminated against by the general public. "Illiteracy

subverts the free choice of work, for example. If you couldn't read and write, the range of jobs open to you would be limited to the most degrading and exhausting forms of menial labour," said Arthur Gillette, author of Youth and Literacy.

There are many programs available to help the illiterate and there are people willing to put forth the time. If those who are illiterate could recognize that they would benefit by involving themselves in literacy programs and then seek help, then discrimination might no longer take place.

## Common Cause Wants to Limit Campaign Contributions

By Jean Meitz

On Thursday, September 18, Thomas DeWall addressed the members and guests of Delta Tau Kappa in the BCAC Lounge.

DeWall is executive director of Common Cause/Pennsylvania, which is a national citizen's lobby working for openness and accountability in government at all levels. Statewide, the affiliate focuses on campaign finance reform, open meetings legislation, ethics laws, disclosure of lobbyists'

expenses, and other government reform issues.

DeWall gave a brief history of Common Cause from its founding at the national level in 1970 as well as the start of the state chapter in 1974.

Campaign financing and ethics legislation are issues of concern both at the national and state levels. The recent passage of the Sunshine Law in Pennsylvania is the result of nine years of constant effort by Common Cause as well as other civic minded groups.

The current issue that Common

Cause is actively supporting is campaign financing. DeWall had three charts showing where candidates for governor and the Supreme Court of Pa get their campaign money. These charts show the tremendous growth of contributions over \$250 each that comes from PAC's (political activists committees). Common Cause is trying to change this, according to DeWall, so that candidates will no longer be financially obligated to pressure groups.

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