

St. IGNATIUS

ST. IGNATIUS MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2006

Mellody Hobson '87: Short Road to the Top

Story by Tom Molony, Director of Communications at St. Ignatius College Prep, and photos courtesy of Mellody Hobson.

Read these accolades and see if you can figure out which of our distinguished alumni is being described... president of one of the largest African American-operated capital management firms in the world; member of the board of directors for the Chicago Public Education Fund, the Chicago Public Library, the Field Museum and Tellabs, Inc.; member of the board of trustees at Princeton University, and former trustee at St. Ignatius College Prep. In addition, this person regularly serves as a special financial correspondent to CNN, WGN and ABC's *Good Morning America*. All of this is just the tip of the iceberg! Need more hints? *Ebony* named this person one of the "30 Leaders of the Future" and *Crain's Chicago Business* has listed this person as one of its annual "40 Under 40." At the 2001 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, this alum was named a "Global Leader of Tomorrow." Give up yet?

Your answer: Mellody Hobson, Class of 1987. Surprised? Most are, since she has achieved all of these amazing things well before her 20th high school reunion.

Hobson grew up on Chicago's near north side as the youngest of six children. She attended the William B. Ogden Elementary School, a Chicago Public School, through eighth grade. Yet, it was the allure of the well-rounded education at St. Ignatius that brought her to 1076 W. Roosevelt Rd. instead of schools such as the University of Chicago Laboratory School, The Latin School of Chicago, Whitney Young Magnet High School and many other local schools that offer nationally-recognized educations.

"I'll never forget when I was in eighth grade and we had just left a tour of the building and I turned to my mother and said, 'this is where I am going to go to high school.' The immediate impact of that initial impression of the school made it clear to me that there was no other option but Ignatius. I knew it would give me the best opportunity to fulfill my goals, both professionally and personally," Hobson recalls.

"The way in which St. Ignatius develops you as a whole person – academically, spiritually and physically – was a very important part of my education. I don't know that I could have received such a well-balanced approach to developing me as a person anywhere else. Those values and ideals have stayed with me ever since I left there and have remained as a beacon for me."

St. Ignatius College Prep's president, **Fr. Brian Paulson, S.J.**, first met Hobson in the mid-1980s when she was a student and he was a Jesuit scholastic assigned to the school.

"I remember Mellody's senior year, when she was a leader on one of the school's first Kairos retreats. She was the rector of that particular retreat, and as Mellody was addressing the



room I remember thinking, 'this young lady is going to be running Chicago in 20 years.' I think it's safe to say that I wasn't far off," Fr. Paulson remembers.

"Mellody was bright, challenging and inquisitive with a smile that you cannot ever forget. I remember the year after she left for college that I was in such a habit of having her in the room that I would instinctively turn in the direction of where she used to sit in anticipation of her being there with her willingness to learn, to participate and to challenge ideas. She was an absolute joy to have in class and I missed having her there," said **Jim Wall '64**, former St. Ignatius English teacher and Hobson's favorite teacher because "he was so unconventional and such a non-conformist" in his approach to thinking and viewing the world with eyes wide open. He also taught her to appreciate diversity, which is a trait she still embraces today.

Hobson jump-started her career in finance while as a student at the Woodrow Wilson School of International Relations at Princeton University (where more than 10 Ignatius alumni currently attend school) to prepare herself for a career in the business world. While somewhat of an unlikely pairing in what her chosen profession would become, she returned home to Chicago in the summers and began as an intern at Ariel Capital Management (which also employs four other St. Ignatius College Prep alumni along with Hobson). She now serves as the President of Ariel Mutual Funds. Since her days as a college intern, the global landscape of economics and finance has been a very important issue to her on numerous levels.

"I can honestly say that a day does not go by without Mellody pushing the importance of saving and investing to an individual, a corporation, or the press," says **Peter Thompson '86**, Executive Vice President, Ariel Capital Management, LLC. "She is particularly driven to make the stock market 'dinner conversation' in every African-American household."

Not only has she focused much of her time on the relation between ethnicity and economics, but the relation between gender and finances, too. It has become very important to Hobson to educate females on the overwhelming importance of buying stock and growing their own finances.

"The financial services industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the United States," said Hobson. "One of my dreams is that more minorities and more women will begin to see Wall Street

as a place for them. The options available to them are limitless and I hope that I can help to spread that word."

While still many years short of her 40th birthday, Hobson felt compelled to give back to the school that she feels gave her so much in her most formative years a short while ago when she set up a programmatic endowment as a part of *The Greater Glory Campaign* to enhance the current economic education curriculum that the school currently offers. As part of her professional background, she feels that it is important to reach people when they are young so that they become more comfortable with taking control of their own economic profile in both the short-term and the long-term.

"Economics is an area that has tremendous implications for our society because so much of a person's knowledge and ability to create wealth over their lifetime is really now being left to the them as we see the end of many pension plans and social security coming into jeopardy. I believe that a very sound economic education is going to become more critical than ever before and this endowment will help to give these students a head start on understanding how finances effects each and every one of us locally, globally,

politically and most of all personally," Hobson states.

In recent years, economics has become a required course for all students who attend St. Ignatius College Prep. This gift will help to continue to provide our students with the most cutting-edge courses and technology available while being taught by some of the most knowledgeable instructors with lengthy backgrounds and work experience in economics and finance.

To note, Hobson hasn't merely taken the approach of "throwing" money at a cause she believes in. She has also given much of her time back to the school. From numerous speaking engagements with students as well as Ignatian women's groups, spreading the word about finance and its importance in everyday life is a passion she wants to share with as many people as she can.

"It has long been very clear in my mind that St. Ignatius College Prep has been a major influence over the things that happened to me in my life," Hobson states. "The education that that I received there was exemplary and it placed me in a very strong position to attend an outstanding academic institution for college and then on to pursuing some of my career goals."

I think that it is important for me to give back to the next generation of students because I want kids to be equipped to deal with the world as it exists. I want them to have the tools to create financial independence and I feel that basic economics leads to that. If they can do that, they will be the next generation of philanthropists and have the opportunity to send their kids to St. Ignatius and whatever university they choose to attend. If I can help to give that opportunity to even one kid at Ignatius, then maybe they'll go and spread that word to two of their friends or family members and so on and so forth. It's about enriching as many lives in as many ways possible and that is one of the many things that I learned while I attended St. Ignatius."



school news

One Stage at a Time: *One-time child violinist next heads to elite music program*

As a 6-year-old immigrant, Yi Wei played violin with her grandfather for quarters and dollar bills, her nimble fingers plucking and strumming their way through Mozart and Pachelbel for hours at a time along Michigan Avenue.

In the years since, she has moved from the violin to percussion instruments, gained professional instruction and soloed on the marimba with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

On Saturday, Wei, now 18, gave the valedictory speech at St. Ignatius College Prep's graduation ceremony, urging students to mark their success with humanitarian work as well as academic achievement. After taking hold of her diploma, she turned her graduation cap tassel from left to right, marking the end of a successful high school career.

This fall, Wei will enter an elite, joint program of Harvard University and the New England Conservatory of Music, with expectations that she will be well on her way to becoming a professional percussionist in a major orchestra. Only five students were accepted into the program, and world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, a Harvard graduate, called Wei to congratulate her, sharing tips on how to balance school and music.

Wei's extraordinary path from sidewalks to concert stages began at age 4, when her mother died in a car crash and Wei wound up with her grandparents in Chinatown. Her grandfather taught her to play violin and, to help support the family, took her out on the streets to play.

The attention-grabbing pair would play in the winter until their fingers turned red before the cold chased them indoors. In the summer, they'd play by the lakefront or in the shade of a leafy tree.

Wei dreaded the street performances and three-hour concertos at O'Hare and Midway Airports. Now, though, she looks back on those early sessions and sees how they shaped her life, teaching her tenacity and independence.

"I didn't understand it," she said. "I didn't like it for a while. I would have to turn down birthday party invitations, or I couldn't stay after school to play, but after a while I got used to it."

"It's part of who I am, part of my culture, part of my family. I learned to embrace it, and I'm proud of it today."

Wei remembers when her grandfather insisted they play outside one Thanksgiving, not understanding that the holiday meant many families would be indoors.

"Part of the Chinese culture was to obey what your parents say," Wei said. "We stood there for about an hour. It was so cold I couldn't move my fingers anymore."

Doug Waddell, a percussionist with the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Grant Park Symphony, has been working with Wei for nine years, since she started with the symphony's percussion scholarship group.

"I'm quite sure I will never have another student like her again," Waddell said. "She's that exceptional. She has a flawless technique, a spectacular, natural music ability like I've never seen in anyone ever before. You show her something, and she does it. She can just do this stuff."

"She's way ahead of getting to her goal. Most grad students aren't where Yi is now. All she needs is a little time."

If Wei's early venues were unconventional, her musical lineage was strong.

Her grandfather was sent as a young man to the Hubei Conservatory, China's finest musical school. Upon graduating, he was appointed cultural minister for an entire province, but after expressing his doubts publicly about Chairman Mao Tse-tung, he was reassigned to work as a cook.

At her graduation ceremony, for which Wei wore her mother's green necklace, her grandfather, Ying Wei, was overjoyed at the thought of her taking her musical talents further than he was allowed.

"This is the happiest day of my life," he said through a translator. "I hoped for a day like this."

As for her departure to the East Coast, Ying Wei said, "She is a bird who needs to fly away."

Wei said that after her mother, Liu Ying, died and her father, Yuan Wei, couldn't care for her, it was her grandparents—their emotional and financial support, encouragement and love—that brought her this close to her dreams.

She invited her grandfather to St. Ignatius last year to play violin while she sang traditional Chinese songs and danced beside him.

"It was mesmerizing," social studies teacher Diane Haleas Hines said. "Just to see her interaction with her grandfather, that was pretty amazing. They really connect musically."

Wei was born in Guiyang, in central China, and lived there for 2 1/2 years before leaving for the United States with her grandparents; her parents already had settled in Michigan.

Her father had come over in 1988, the year she was born, with a full scholarship to study music at Michigan State University. He soon got a job with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

On the night Wei's mother died, the baby girl was supposed to be in the car, too, riding from Nashville back to Michigan. Instead, the family had decided she would stay with her father in Nashville. Wei thinks her mother, also a violinist, fell asleep at the wheel on an icy road.

"My dad tried to take care of me for a while, but because of the symphony hours during the evenings and weekends, he wasn't able to support me by himself," she said. "He took me back to Chicago, which is where my grandparents had ended up."

"They've basically become my parents," she said. "They're my role models for life."

Wei's grandmother, Rui E Liu, worked as a professional in a factory in China, but when she came to the United States, she went to work as a babysitter. Neither grandparent speaks English.

"They've basically sacrificed their entire lives for their sons and for myself, and they've never complained," Wei said.

On Saturday, her grandmother thanked Wei's teachers, those who gave her scholarship money and the family's adopted country for Wei's success.



Yi Wei '06, valedictorian for the Class of 2006. Her cumulative grade point average was 4.41. This fall, Yi plans to enter an elite, joint program of Harvard University and the New England Conservatory of Music.

"When Yi lost her mother, we were very poor," she said through a translator. "It was a low point in our lives. So many people came to help. They treated Yi like their own kid over the years."

But Wei throws the credit back to her grandparents, how they waited patiently for her first notes on the violin to turn into something more melodic.

As a little girl, Wei's fingers were perfect: thin but plump at the tips, ideal for pushing down on the neck of the child-sized, wooden instrument.

She and her grandfather played together every day, taking half-hour breaks. They brought in between \$30 and \$100 per day, on the higher end near the holidays.

When they played outside Water Tower Place, Wei would go in and roam around. When they performed outside Borders, she'd spend her break checking out the children's books.

"That's where I learned to be independent and to think for myself," she said.

Despite the hard work, Wei insists that she was spoiled with love. She laughed as she talked about having no chores and no job; her only task is to succeed at school.

"As long as I get good grades and do well, they're happy with that," she said.

St. Ignatius Principal Catherine Karl said that Wei has been successful in subjects as diverse as Latin, physics and English, that she's confident and not afraid to try new things. At graduation, her grade-point average was 4.41.

"She has straight A-pluses. Her lowest grade is an A-minus in macroeconomics," Karl said.

Mike Kennelly, senior managing director at Huron Consulting Group, the company that provided Wei with a partial scholarship to attend St. Ignatius, called her unusually intelligent with a persistence that seems to run in the family.

Wei said it will be hard for her grandparents to let her go, but they'd rather see her move to another part of the country than limit her potential.

As for Wei, she is now ready to move on, having delivered that 8-minute speech, urging her classmates to "be the change they want to see in the world."

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HOLY FAMILY LITURGIES

Fr. Brian Paulson, S.J. reminds the Ignatius community that Masses are held at 5:00 p.m. every Sunday evening at Holy Family Church. All are invited to attend!

JOE GENTILE '42 DAY AT WRIGLEY FIELD

Thursday, May 18 was proclaimed "St. Ignatius Day" at Wrigley Field. This marked an annual pilgrimage to the ballpark by members of the St. Ignatius band and seniors from the Class of 2006. The day's events were courtesy of Carol and Joe Gentile '42.

"Graduating from St. Ignatius is an accomplishment to be proud of and we're delighted to welcome our newest alumni with this special day at the park," remarked Gentile prior to the game.

The Gentiles have been sponsoring St. Ignatius Day since the 1980s. Prior to the game, St. Ignatius music teacher, Don Rescigno, conducted the band in a splendid rendition of the National Anthem and Joe Gentile threw out the first pitch.

Fr. Paulson was also very delighted to meet and talk with Ernie Banks, who was at the game for another celebration.

A great time was had by all, and the Gentiles are thanked for their generosity to our students and our school. Stay tuned for more on Gentile's annual golf classic for St. Ignatius, to be held on July 17 at Silver Lake Country Club and golf course in Orland Park. For more information, visit www.ignatius.org.



LUKE PACOLD '07 ACES ACT

St. Ignatius College Prep junior, Luke Pacold, became one of only 67 students in the U.S. and 25 in Illinois to score a perfect 36 on his ACT exams. 36 is the highest possible composite score awarded on the test. More than 427,000 students nationwide and 30,000 students statewide completed the exam on April 8, 2006.

According to ACT, the company that develops and administers the test, the ACT consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science. Each test is scored on a scale of 1-36 and a student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. The average composite score for the national high school graduating class of 2005 was 20.9.

ACT scores are accepted by nearly every university and college in the United States. Luke is the sixth Pacold child to attend St. Ignatius College Prep, following in the footsteps of his sisters Martha '95, Christine '97 and Mary '00 and brothers Michael '95 and Joseph '04.



2006-07 WOLFPACK VARSITY FOOTBALL

This season, the Wolfpack varsity football team will play all of their home games at St. Rita of Cascia High School (formerly Quigley Preparatory South) on Chicago's south side. The school and the field are located at 7740 S. Western Ave. in the Ashburn neighborhood. For more information on directions, parking or admission to games, contact the St. Ignatius College Prep Athletics offices at (312) 432-8421.

Friday, August 18 - time TBD
Maroon and Gold Scrimmage

Saturday, August 26 at 7:30 p.m.
SICP vs. Payton College Prep

Friday, September 1 at 7:30 p.m.
SICP @ St. Rita of Cascia

Friday, September 8 at 7:30 p.m.
SICP vs. St. Laurence

Saturday, September 16 at 7:30 p.m.
SICP vs. Guerin Prep

Friday, September 22 at 7:30 p.m.
SICP @ Gordon Tech*

*Game played at North Park University: 3225 W. Foster, Chicago

Saturday, September 30 at 7:30 p.m.
SICP vs. Hales Franciscan

Saturday, October 7 at 3:00 p.m.
SICP @ Leo*

*Game played at Rockne Stadium:
1117 S. Central Ave., Chicago

Saturday, October 14 at 1:00 p.m.
SICP vs. DeLaSalle - Senior Day

Friday, October 20 @ 7:30 p.m.
SICP @ Bishop McNamara
550 West Brookmont, Kankakee, IL

Girls' Water Polo Team Earns State Runner-Up Title Coach Cashman also named IHSA "Coach of the Year"

Led by **Mike Cashman**, the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) "Coach of the Year" in girls' water polo, the St. Ignatius College Prep team was crowned the 2006 IHSA State Runner-up on Saturday, May 13, at Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire.

"It was such an amazing feeling," said Cashman. "I am still having some trouble believing we were in that game, but it was an incredible feeling to be there and the girls earned every bit of that trophy."

Carrying a 21-7 record into the state tournament, the Wolfpack knocked off conference rivals and sister Jesuit school, Loyola Academy of Wilmette, in the state quarter-finals, 9-5. For their semi-final match-up, the Wolfpack were paired against Mother McAuley High School, who they trounced 10-3 to advance to the school's first-ever state finals appearance in a girls' sport. In the finals match, the Wolfpack lost a tough 13-5 decision to the two-time defending state champion Fenwick Friars, who brought a 91-1-1 record during the past three seasons into the final match. The St. Ignatius team came into the season ranked fifth in the state by the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

The Wolfpack were led by All-State and All-American junior **Nora Kennelly** (utility and team captain) who tallied 96 goals and 21 assists on the season. There were three more All-State players, including senior All-American **Yadi Leon** (driver) and juniors **Ali Durkin** (driver) and **Megan Hybinette** (goal keeper). Each of the four All-State nominees will return to next season's team.

The Wolfpack girls' water polo team became a school-sponsored sport in 2001, the same year that the IHSA began sponsoring it. They are the first girls' team in school history to place in a state finals

tournament and the second team overall to do so (boys' cross country, 1982- state runner-up based on accumulated points). Previously, no St. Ignatius College Prep athletics team has ever moved beyond the quarter finals of a state tournament. They are also the second girls' team in school history to win three straight sectional titles, matching volleyball, who pulled off the feat from 2003 to 2005. As a result of those three sectional championships, this also was the team's third consecutive appearance in the IHSA state tournament.

Even with earning all of these accolades and receiving the high rankings from the local sports prognosticators, the Wolfpack weren't "supposed" to make noise at the state tournament until the 2007 season, according to many critics.

"Every year we have gradually improved and you could watch the strides the girls had taken from season to season and I knew that we were going to be one of the best in the state this season thanks in part to the strength of our junior class and the depth of our team," Cashman says. "My goal coming into this season was to finish higher than we did last season and be in the top four [teams in the state]. The girls even said from the very first day of practice that their goal as a team was to be in the championship game in May

[2006]. I knew that they were lofty goals, but knowing these kids and believing that if all the pieces fell into place at all the right times, that they could do it. I think they really showed everyone just how hard they worked to get there and how strong a team they truly are."

Cashman, in his first year as the girls' water polo coach after spending three years as the head assistant, is both elated and awed by his team's finish and the award he received from the state. At 25, Cashman is the youngest coach to receive the distinguished award from the IHSA.

"It's such an honor to receive this award," said Cashman. "Really, this is a reflection of all of the hard work and effort that this group of girls put into this season, so this award is as much for them as it is for me." The Wolfpack girls' water polo team finished the 2006 season at 23-8. With that, Cashman is quick to point out that 19 of the 20 members of this state runner-up team will return for the 2007 season looking to bring home the state title. In order to do that they will be playing at some of the nation's top tournaments this summer and traveling throughout the Midwest working on the skills they need to improve upon to win the state championships next May.

"It's only going to become more difficult next year because Loyola Academy graduates one player, Mother McAuley graduates zero players and Fenwick graduates four players," Cashman said. "We certainly will not and cannot overlook any of those teams, but next year's goal for us is to focus on improving on what we did this year. That means coming home with the state title in 2007."



With gratitude for recent gifts and services of \$5,000 or more given to St. Ignatius College Prep between March 1 and June 30, 2006:

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DONORS PLANT A SEED IN NAPLES, FLORIDA

Members of the Development Office team from St. Ignatius College Prep recently traveled to Naples, Florida, for their annual visit with alums, donors and friends who live there. It proved to be the most successful of the Naples visits to date. All are thanked for supporting the school and its staff, especially John Karnick '51 who, with other members of his class, helped to make many phone calls and was instrumental in making the event possible.

Approximately 125 people attended the gathering, which was held at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club. Guests traveled far distances to support the school. Even grandparents of current students and spouses of deceased alums were in attendance. All heard the compelling story of Mr. Jack Jiganti '58, who, with his wife, Dorothy, recently gave a generous gift to the school in support of the current *Greater Glory Campaign*. Jack, a tax lawyer and partner at Madden, Jiganti, Moore & Sinars in Chicago, established a \$100,000 endowment in honor of his brother, the Honorable Mel R. Jiganti '50. Mel was a Judge of the Circuit and Appellate Courts for over thirty years and is now retired. As youngsters, the brothers traveled quite a distance to get to St. Ignatius College Prep from their home on the southwest side. They were determined to get the best education possible, and that dedication to St. Ignatius led both of them to successful careers in the field of law.

"My brother and I both agree that after our parents, St. Ignatius was the greatest positive influence in our lives. It prepared us for a lifetime of learning. Going to school with motivated and talented students proved to us that we could compete at the highest level. Not inconsequently. It also provided us with lifetime friendships. My brother was an outstanding Judge and is an even better person. I am extremely pleased that his name will be associated with an important program for future generations of students," said Jack about his experiences at St. Ignatius. (Below: Fr. Paulson with Mel and Mary Ann Jiganti and Jack and Dorothy Jiganti.)

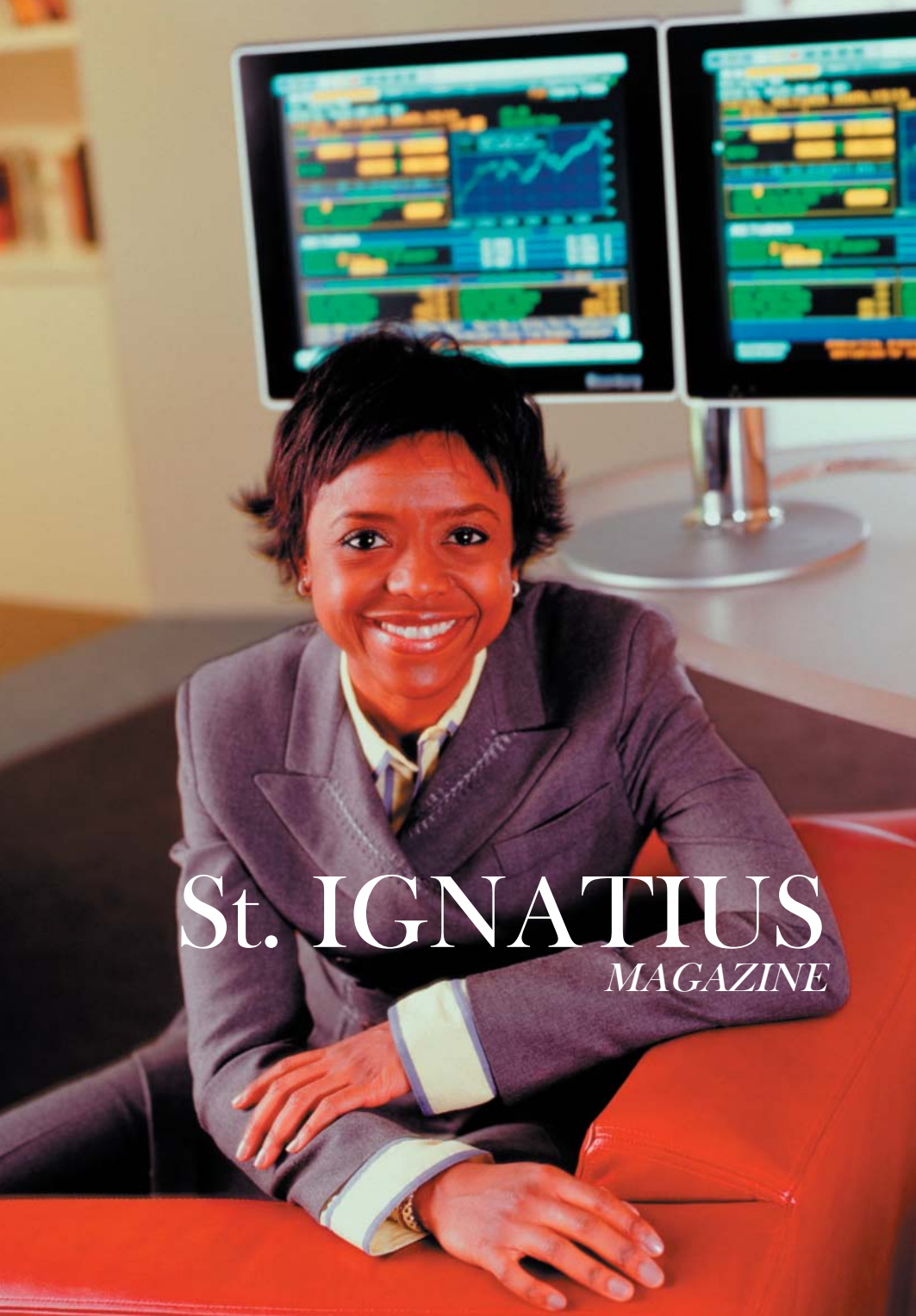
In order to give back to the school that meant so much to him and his family, Jack and his wife established their endowment to enhance the teaching of constitutional law within the social studies curriculum at St. Ignatius. It will be called the Honorable Mel R. Jiganti '50 Endowment for Constitutional Law Studies.

Said Vice President of Development, John Chandler, "Jack and Dorothy certainly inspired and planted a seed in folks who were in Naples. Their creative gift is just one example of how donors can make gifts that are as meaningful, personally, as they are meaningful to the school. It is also important for people to know that their continual involvement is essential as we try to reach the goals of our campaign. By reaching those goals, we can continue to provide the best education possible for young people at St. Ignatius."



with gratitude

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JULY

17: Joe Gentile Golf Classic for St. Ignatius College Prep

31: Mass for the Feast of St. Ignatius, celebrated by Fr. Brian Paulson, S.J., President. Parents, alumni and friends are invited to attend a Mass for the Feast of St. Ignatius, to be held at 8:00 a.m. on July 31 in the school's Cuneo Chapel with a small reception following. RSVP to Jeanne Wall at (312) 432-8406 if you would like to attend.

AUGUST

17: Black Organization of Students Alumni Gathering Starts at 6:00 p.m., contact Joan Kistner at (312) 432-8348.

23: Freshman Orientation

24: First Day of Classes for All Students

SEPTEMBER

21: 8th Annual Women's Council Dinner. This year's dinner will feature guest speaker Sr. Rosemary Connelly, CEO of Misericordia Heart of Mercy. Cost will be \$65, with proceeds to benefit SICP's Hurtado Center language lab. You can help by attending, bringing at least one friend, providing a raffle gift that would appeal to women (restaurant certificates, spa treatments, jewelry, etc.), or becoming a member of the council's Philanthropic Circle for a gift of \$250 or more. Invitations to be mailed in late summer, and at that time, all transactions can also be made online at www.ignatius.org. Call Terri Connor Brankin at (312) 432-8346 with questions.

22-23: 50th Reunion for Class of 1956

OCTOBER

7: President's Dinner

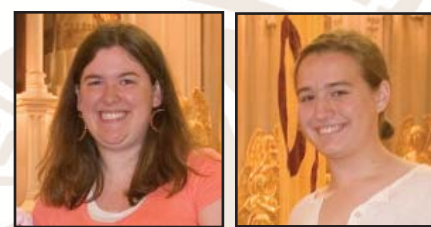
14: Homecoming - Football Tailgate. See full football schedule on page 3 of this newsletter. Go Wolfpack!

28: Reunions for Classes of 1961, 1966, 1971 and 1976

NOVEMBER

12: Annual Benefit. SICP's annual benefit has been announced. Get ready for the world premiere of "The Pirate Queen" in Chicago! Invitations to be mailed in September.

At the end of the year, one student from each class was selected by St. Ignatius faculty and staff to be recognized for their hard work and dedication as Ignatius students.



Congratulations to (clockwise) Catherine M. Fetzer, Carmen Pintozzi Award for Juniors; Margaret M. Hlosek, Ronald Jemiola Award for Sophomores; and Liam L. Hession, Florian Zimecki, S.J. Award for Freshmen.

ON THE MAILING PANEL:

Ebony named Melody Hobson '87 one of the "30 Leaders of the Future" and Crain's Chicago Business listed her as one of its annual "40 Under 40." Find out in this issue how her success suits her, and how she's taken the short road straight to the top.

upcoming events