

August 26, 2011

Ed Benton
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Denver, Colorado 80206

A DEBT WE OWE TO COLORADO COLLEGE

Dear President Tiefenthaler:

I am an 85 year old alumnus of Colorado College, Class of 1950. I am on the campus today with my daughter, son-in-law, and grandson, Malcolm Barnes. Malcolm is a member of the Class of 2015, and we will attend the week-end activities.

Particularly, because we haven't met, it is presumptuous of me to impose upon you, in your extraordinarily busy life, an account of the many crucial events which took place in the relationship which my wife Stephanie and I had with CC, which gave rise to our indebtedness to the College. Without Colorado College, our lives would have been totally different.

I was born in Colorado Springs on July 12, 1926, and at the age of 18 months I became an orphan. My mother died of an embolism, and my father died six months later from tuberculosis which he contracted in the Army during WW I. I was then handed over to my father's 55 year old mother. She was illiterate, and had no money. Later, she received a small monthly sum from the Veteran's Administration as an Orphan's Allowance.

I spent my last year of High School and my four years at CC living with my grandmother in a one room shed on the back of a lot of one of my father's sisters. The shed had a cement floor, no insulation, and no indoor toilet or plumbing, except a cold water tap. There were no books in the house except for one-half of a battered copy of The World Book Encyclopedia --A through L. It was primitive living to be sure.

During World War II, while at Colorado Springs High School (now Palmer High School) I worked several summers at Fort Carson as a "parts chaser", the parts to be used in the repair of damaged military vehicles for the European Theater. As a high school student I had three helpers who were German POWs. I later was promoted to be a mechanic's helper, and I came to learn a great deal about the repair of motor vehicles. After I graduated from High School in 1944, I worked at Fort Carson until the war ended in 1945. Then I needed another job. This is when CC entered the stage.

Because of my knowledge of motor vehicle repairs, I responded to an ad for a Yellow Cab mechanic placed in the Colorado Springs Gazette by the State Employment Office. The Clerk at the Employment Office reviewed my application and inquired about me and my family. He asked about my automotive experience, and then began to ask seemingly irrelevant questions. He asked if I had any money. I told him I had very little. He asked if anyone in my family had any money. I gave him the same answer. Then, he asked if I had graduated from High School, and what my grades were. I told him that I had graduated, and that I thought my grades were O.K. Next, he asked if I had a Transcript and I said: No. Then this Clerk who, in 1946, was earning a pittance, gave me \$10 and told me to get a Transcript and bring it to him. I did so.

After a careful examination of the Transcript, he asked additional questions. He asked if anyone in my family had gone to College. My answer was; No. Then came the key question. He wanted to know if I knew anything about Colorado College. I told him that I thought it was further up on Nevada Avenue, but that I didn't know anything about it. To that he responded by saying: "I don't think you should be a Yellow Cab mechanic, I think you should go to College."

He left the room telling me to stay where I was, and that he was going to make a phone call. He returned shortly and handed me a sketch of the CC campus with an X at Cutler Hall. On the sketch he had written the name Henry Mathias. He told me that Mr. Mathias would see me and that I should go promptly up Nevada Avenue to the CC campus. I did so. The conversation with Henry Mathias, the Dean of Admissions, in the summer of 1946, resulted in my enrollment in the Class of 1950.

Also in 1946, a new member of the CC faculty came to the campus. Her name was Stephanie Jakimowitz. She was the daughter of uneducated Ukranian immigrants living in Manhattan. Stephanie graduated from Hunter College High School and Hunter College, majoring in Classics. At the age of 23, and with the support of a grant from The American Council of Learned Societies, Stephanie received her M.A. and PhD in Classics from Cornell University. After Cornell, she spent a year at the Institute For Advanced Study in Princeton as an Assistant to a famous Latin scholar. Her office was near that of Albert Einstein, with whom she had numerous conversations.

In early 1946, the then President of CC, Thurston Davies, an alumnus of Princeton, was on the Princeton campus in connection with alumni affairs, and placed a small card on the bulletin board of Fuld Hall where the Institute was located. The card stated that President Davies would like to talk to anyone who might be interested in going to CC to re-instate the Classics program, which had been suspended during the war. By chance, Stephanie saw the card; met with President Davies, which resulted in her joining the CC faculty in the fall of 1946. Stephanie and I were then both on the CC campus, We were later to meet.

Near the end of my Junior year, fortuity again entered my life. My faculty advisor

in Political Science was Douglas Mertz. He suggested to me that I was too narrowly focused in Political Science, and that I should "branch out". He went on to say that there was a new member of the faculty (Stephanie Jakimowitz) on campus about whom he had heard very positive comments, and that she taught Classics. Professor Mertz urged me "to check it out". Dutifully, I did so, and in my Senior year I took three of Stephanie's courses: Greek Literature In Translation; Greek History and Roman History. I think I got A's. Again, another element of our increasing indebtedness to CC presented itself. Professor Mertz, an alumnus of Yale Law School, encouraged and advised me to apply to several law schools. His understandable preference was Yale. I chose Yale, not only because of his urging, but also because of its more generous financial aid.

As the relationship between Stephanie and me developed, we decided that Stephanie would teach her final year at CC, ending in June, 1951, and that I would complete my first year at Yale Law School. We would then be married on June 8, 1951, in Colorado Springs, and so we were. We then went to New Haven. When Stephanie died last November, we had been married almost 61 years.

CC continued to play a significant role in my life when I came to Denver in the Spring of 1953, when I was seeking employment with a law firm. At that time, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Colorado College was William S. Jackson, Chief Justice of The Colorado Supreme Court, who had a life long interest in Latin. When the Trustees had any meeting at the College in which faculty were included, Justice Jackson always arranged to discuss Latin with Stephanie. I had met Justice Jackson only once before my arrival in Denver, but somewhat brazenly I called his Chamber to ask if he would see me. All I really had to do was to mention that I was Stephanie's husband. That secured the appointment.

In talking with Justice Jackson, he reviewed my Transcript (this time I had it with me) and asked several questions. He then said that he had an idea. He told me that one of his co-Trustees at CC was Harold Roberts (CC 1908) who was a Senior Partner at the Law Firm of Holme Roberts & Owen. With no prompting from me, he picked up the phone and called Mr. Roberts, telling him, in effect that he should give me a job. It can't get better than that. I joined the firm in July, 1953, and I'm still there- - 57 years later. Indeed it couldn't have been better than that, all due to Colorado College.

So, if I haven't exhausted your endurance, and assuming that you are still with me, I will be quite specific in describing my effort to retire a small portion of the debt Stephanie and I owe to Colorado College. After Stephanie's death, I began to think seriously about what might be done that would be an appropriate recognition of what Colorado College has meant for us.

You are aware that for some time I have had conversations with representatives of the Development Office, primarily with Ron Rubin, about a gift to the College which would be matched by the Walton Family Foundation. I found the awarding

criteria of the Foundation to be particularly compelling. If Stephanie or I, or both, had applied for enrollment at CC, and had the Walton program been then in effect, both of us would have met the two awarding criteria. The documentation of my \$500,000 grant is almost complete, and I contemplate that the initial payment will be made prior to year- end. If it were financially feasible for me fully to recognize what Colorado College has meant to Stephanie and me and to my entire family, there would have been another zero or two added to the grant.

I'm looking forward to meeting you this week-end.

Sincerely,

Ed Benton