

The Rosemont Experience: Connections and Bridges from Then to Now to Tomorrow

A Speech for Academic Honors Day, March 31, 2007

By Frank D. Quattrone

President Sharon Hirsch, // Vice President Debra Klinman, // Dr. Mary Sortino, // Program Directors Rebecca Mays and Liz Corcoran, // fellow speaker Joan Wilder, // distinguished guests, faculty, family and friends // and // — most of all — // the graduate and undergraduate students of Rosemont College, // without whose talent, ambition, and dreams // we wouldn't even be here today — // thank you all for allowing me to share the stage // on this magical day.

By reflecting on my own personal journey to Rosemont // and how I perceive my place in this academic community, // I hope to illuminate // the connections and bridges / from then to now // that bring us to several related tomorrows.

As a passionate and committed writer // and the editor of Ticket, // the weekly arts and entertainment section / of Montgomery Newspapers, // I interact daily, // through face-to-face and telephone interviews, // with all manner of celebrated authors, artists and performers // — from the already luminous — // like Willie Nelson, / Leonard Nimoy, / Gregg Allman, / Michael Flatley, / Arlo Guthrie, / Cokie Roberts, and Larry Kane // — to the rising stars of the **next** generation, // people whose names you'll hear tomorrow.

Every day I deal with public relations professionals, // volunteers for church and theater groups, / and various members of the arts community, // all of whom want something I can help them achieve // — a moment / in the sunshine / of the public eye.

I also work with a host of freelance writers — // professionals, // those who aspire to be, // and wonderful English, creative writing and journalism students / from my classes at Penn State Abington and here at Rosemont. // Together we create an award-winning publication // that serves our modest community // and that often serves as a springboard // to even more serious career moves.

And we're all connected in strange and wonderful ways.

I learned about the graduate program in English & Publishing // from Celeste Morello, // a successful historian and author // on whom I've written several articles // and who will be a guest speaker in my very next class.

When I contacted the then-director of the program, // I discovered it was Ken Bingham, / who had been one of the best teachers I ever had working for me / at Spring Garden College, / when I was chairman of the Arts & Sciences Department.

So began a fruitful relationship with the college.

To this day, // my students are frequent contributors to Ticket. // In fact, // three of my current students — // Suzanne Wentzel, // Lauren Hurston // and Sarah Lemore — // will have articles in next week's Ticket. // Several, like Colleen McLaughlin and Sarah Granlund, // are writing for local magazines // or serving as acquisitions editors at local publishing houses. // Others have gone on to equally productive careers / in the field.

My good friend Richard Bank, // whom I met through our mutual association / on the board of the Philadelphia Writers Conference, // is now teaching in this program. // I'm pleased / that my recommendation / bore fruit.

Earlier this month, // I received a brief but most welcome e-mail // from one of my former students, Becky Mayer. // It reads: //

“Hi Frank! // I had a layover in Chicago this week / during a business trip to Cleveland. // I met a nice woman from Philadelphia / when we had to run to our gate to make a flight // (we did not make it). // We got to talking and learned that / not only did we have similar career paths, // but [And this part's a little embarrassing. // But I didn't write it. // **She** did.] we both know / the great Frank Quattrone! // Jaimi Gordon // — // she said she does PR / for some of the events that you write about. // Isn't that too funny? //

Just thought you'd enjoy that little story. // Hope you and Eve / are doing well!

All my best, // Becky Mayer”

Jaimi Gordon is one of the most effective public relations specialists I work with. // Becky is now working as an associate editor / for a magazine at Merion Press, // where several of my other former students are **also** employed. // Eve, / of course, / is my dear wife, // my muse, // my best friend, // and my companion / during most of the classes I teach here at the college.

My point? // It's simply this: // Rosemont's English & Publishing program / is a **bridge** to the publishing world. // Like my colleagues here — // all dedicated professionals / who serve our students well / with a keen blend of nurturing and know-how // — I am a small part of that bridge / from the classrooms and corridors of the college // to the **real world** of publishing. //

We solve problems together, // we create, // we network, // we pour ourselves into academic theses / and capstone projects . . . // from deep and wrenching memoirs, / heartfelt poetry and art, / exciting book proposals and editing experiences, // to brilliantly conceived and expertly written magazines, // most of which are publishable // and will one day **make** it into print, // where others may enjoy and be edified / by their creative offspring.

All of us here today // are integral parts of that bridge, // a span that connects the worlds of imagination, research and theory, // practical writing and design, // with the world of communication / just beyond. // It's a magical kind of synergy, // fueled by the unbeatable amalgam / of hard work / and dreams.

On this occasion, // as we continue **celebrating** the 20th anniversary / of this innovative program, // we have much to be proud of // — and it's **YOU**, sitting here quietly **today**, // but ready to prove once again, // tomorrow / and tomorrow, // the inimitable power / and superiority of the pen, // or the keyboard // — or the imagination — // to communicate, // to inform, // to analyze, // to entertain, // and to heal / all that's wrong with the world.

Thank you for letting me share / this **larger** stage // with all of you.