



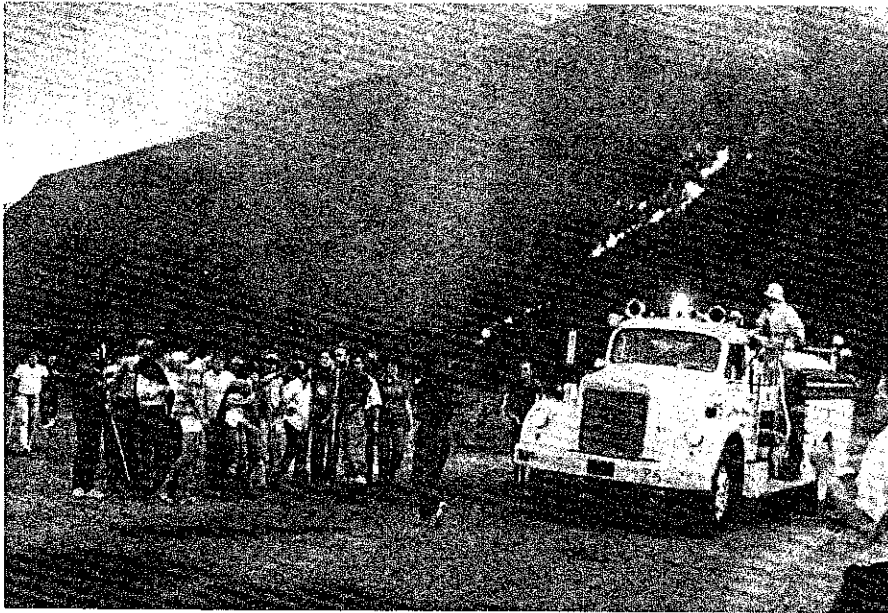
Thomas Aquinas College NEWSLETTER

Fall, 1985

10000 N. Ojai Rd., Santa Paula, California 93060



OCTOBER FIRE ENCIRCLES COLLEGE



The wildfire that ringed Thomas Aquinas College in October brought a temporary state of emergency to the campus: An electrical power outage lasted for seven hours on the night of October 14-15; telephone service was interrupted for four days; state highway authorities closed Ojai Road to all but emergency traffic on October 15. Smoke and falling ashes filled the air until October 17. But, despite these circumstances, classes were cancelled for just one day, October 15, and seminars were held on schedule that same evening. The Los Angeles metropolitan newspapers, radio, and television cooperated with the College in announcing that the students and campus were safe. In the photograph, above, Ventura County firemen instruct students on protective measures in the early evening of October 14 when the fire was in its initial stage.

Students Help Protect Campus

WILDFIRE LEAVES CAMPUS UNSCATHED

The worst and most widespread of 19 wildfires that raged across parts of Southern California in October completely encircled Thomas Aquinas College. The fire, which began late in the afternoon of October 14, 1985, burned for a week charring almost 46,000 acres of land around the College.

Except for one limited blaze which the students quickly extinguished, the fire hardly touched the campus. None of the College's students, faculty, and staff was injured and College property was not damaged.

The fire began about 4 p.m. on October 14, just off Ojai Road near the campus. Before it was brought under control on October 21, it caused an estimated \$5 million or more in damage to agriculture, \$1.2 million in damage to homes, plus damage to vehicles and roads in Ventura County.

Some 2,000 firefighters from throughout California and the U.S. fought the blaze which cost an estimated \$3.5 million to suppress. Before the fire was contained, the governor of California declared a state of emergency in Ventura County. Newspapers report arson as the cause of the fire.

On the night of October 14-15, when the blaze was most intense around the College, "sparks flew over the campus like snow," said sophomore Vann McCoy. Asst. Chaplain Vincent J. Young, O.M.V., said "the roar of the flames [on the mountains] was awesome." "The fire was like a torrent with flames 50 to 60 feet high," said buildings and grounds superintendent Lawrence Merry.

Throughout the night of October 14-15, students as well as faculty and staff members worked on firebreaks, disposed of dry brush and undergrowth, hosed buildings, and put out "hot spots" with shovels and wet blankets and sheets. Students used a portable pump, fire hose, and sprinklers to protect the campus.

President Ronald P. McArthur said the students were "magnificent": "Their conduct was exemplary and they were resourceful and adapted to every situation as it arose."

And they prayed: "I don't know if I can do much with a wet blanket but I can go on with my Hail Marys," one student said that night. Fr. Young adds: "As a priest, I noted the flames surrounded the campus but did not cross the property line except in a few small places. This strengthened the students' faith in the power of prayer."

Evidence of the power of prayer on the night of October 14-15 is moving, as Fr. Young reports: "I removed the Blessed Sacrament from the Hacienda chapel for safekeeping, and coming up to the Commons chapel, I blessed the hillside with the Sacrament in the ciborium. Within minutes, the flames turned in another direction and veered away from the College property."

"Write of Passage"

A TUTOR'S THOUGHTS ON THE SENIOR THESIS

By Richard D. Ferrier

Commencement is perhaps the largest and most inclusive meeting of the College community and its friends. Each spring, we gather to witness and effect the graduation of the senior class, recalling and certifying their accomplishments, and pronouncing them well launched on their lives of learning, reflection, and contemplation.

These solemn rites look outward and upward to the American republic and the City of God as the larger orders within which our small but cherished community is protected and nourished. They also look back, remembering what has happened here, and this in two ways: What always happens is recited in the president's charge to the class, or when the dean declares to the president that the students have done what was required of them and are fit to be graduates.

Now all those who know the College, as alumni or as parents, as donors or as tutors or

staff, know that Thomas Aquinas is nearly alone among American colleges in proposing a uniform curriculum, without a single elective course. The commemoration of what each student has studied can be made in a set speech with great aptness because of this character of the College.

The other recollection is unspoken: It sits in one's lap, in small print, in the program, under each student's name. It is the title of his senior thesis.

Perhaps you recall, if you are a graduate or hold one dear, how beside each graduate's name and that of his hometown in the program is listed the title of his senior thesis. Why do we do this? And what exactly stands behind these titles? I will try to answer these questions, taking the second first.

The senior thesis is the last and largest paper that a student writes at the College, and it must

(Continued on p4)

1985-1986 Lecture Schedule

1985

October 18 Prof. George Tennyson
University of California
Los Angeles
*Tennyson on Tennyson: A Reading from
The Idylls of the King*

October 25 Dr. Michael Waldstein
The Divinity School
Harvard University
*Foundations of Bultmann's
Criticism of Scripture*

December 6 Christmas Concert

1986

January 7 Bihari & Hambro
Classical Guitar Duo
Concert

February 7 Mr. Gerard Wegemer
University of Notre Dame
*Julius Caesar as an
Aristotelian Tragedy*

1986

February 21 President's Day Lecture
Mr. Edward Littlejohn
University of California
Santa Barbara
*Capitalism and American
Principles*

March 7 St. Thomas Day Lecture
(To be announced)

March 21 Dr. Daniel Sloughter
Santa Clara University
Mathematical Knowledge

April 18 Prof. Steven Cortwright
St. Mary's College of
California
*Neoplatonic Criticism of
Aristotelian Logic*

May 2 Dr. Henry B. Veatch
Georgetown University
Aristotle's Logic

This schedule is subject to possible change.

Please telephone the College office, (805) 525-4417, to verify lecture dates.

MEMORIAL MASS OFFERED FOR NORMAN DE SILVA

In his homily at the memorial Mass offered in the College Chapel on October 1 for the repose of the soul of Dr. Norman Peter De Silva, Assistant Chaplain Fr. Vincent J. Young, O.M.V., said:



Dr. De Silva

"Norman was conformed in a unique way to Christ. He had offered himself — all that he was — to Almighty God.

"Norman's life in union with Our Blessed Lady was a life of sacrifice and surrender. He offered his suffering to Our Lord with total abandonment in Our Blessed Lady. He offered his life for the Pope, the Church, and the College. He was wedded to Carmel which is synonymous with Our Lady."

The October first Mass was offered as well to ask God's deepest blessings on Dr. De Silva's wife, Maureen, and their children. Fr. Gerard G. Steckler, S.J., assistant chaplain, was the principal celebrant.

Dr. De Silva, a tutor at the College since 1979, died in Ojai, Calif., on July 1, 1985, after suffering with brain cancer for more than 18 months. Following the Mass of Christian Burial at St. Thomas Aquinas parish church in Ojai on July 3, he was buried at Santa Clara Cemetery in Oxnard.

Born in Los Angeles in 1951, Dr. De Silva received his B.A. degree from Thomas Aquinas College in 1975. He was a member of the College's first graduating class. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Laval University (Quebec) and taught at Champlain Regional College (Quebec) before joining the Thomas Aquinas College faculty.

To further honor his memory, the Norman Peter De Silva Memorial Student Loan Fund has been established at Thomas Aquinas College.

KEVIN KOLBECK: "IT IS A DELIGHT TO TEACH HERE"

"The students at Thomas Aquinas see their time at college as a time for learning. They want to learn, to understand what the truth is, and that desire makes it a delight to teach here.

"The students really want to know and they find the joy and satisfaction that comes with knowing and that in turn gives the teacher satisfaction."

These are among the assessments of teaching at Thomas Aquinas that Kevin D. Kolbeck made recently as he began his second year as a tutor at the College. "Here," he added, "the faculty are truly concerned that the students understand their readings. There is always that challenge for the teacher: Do the students understand?"

Mr. Kolbeck joined the Thomas Aquinas faculty in September, 1984. A Ph.D. candidate in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, he holds the Master of Medieval Studies degree from Notre Dame and the Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell College (Iowa).

Mr. Kolbeck's doctoral dissertation at Notre Dame examines St. Thomas Aquinas' first proof for the existence of God (that change in the universe requires an ultimate, unchanging First Cause) and its relationship to the principles of modern science.

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT IS LARGEST EVER: 41 FRESHMEN BEGIN STUDIES AT THOMAS AQUINAS

Thomas Aquinas College entered its 15th academic year in September, 1985, with the largest enrollment since the school was founded. The 134 students on campus this year come from 22 states and 3 Canadian provinces. Thirty-nine percent of the students are from California; more than 12 percent are from Canada. Fifty-four percent are men, 46 percent are women.

The 41-member freshman class is one of the largest first-year classes in the College's history. In keeping with tradition at Thomas Aquinas, 46 percent of this year's freshmen have had previous college studies. The average S.A.T. score for this year's freshmen is 1135; the average S.A.T. score for all students enrolled this fall is 1146.

DR. BROWNE AND MR. LITTLEJOHN JOIN BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Harry G. Browne, M.D., director of International Clinical Laboratories, Inc., Dublin, Calif., and Edward Littlejohn, of Santa Barbara, Calif., a member of the Corporate Advisory Council of Pfizer, Inc., have been elected to the Board of Governors of Thomas Aquinas College. Each began a three-year term of office on the board last January.

Dr. Browne, a member of the President's Council of Thomas Aquinas College, is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Francis E. Browne, honored benefactors of the College. Mrs. Francis E. Browne was a member of the Board of Governors from 1974 to 1983. She was named governor emeritus of the College in 1984.

Mr. Littlejohn is the former vice president for public affairs/government relations for Pfizer, Inc. Prior to joining Pfizer, he was associated with the Burroughs Corporation and the Exxon Corporation.

In 1984, Mr. Littlejohn was a member of the Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy.

In announcing these appointments, board chairman Thomas P. Sullivan said: "I am very happy that Dr. Browne and Mr. Littlejohn have agreed to come on our board. Each in his own way will contribute substantially to our efforts."

BEQUEST IS 3RD LARGEST SINGLE GIFT TO THOMAS AQUINAS

A bequest of almost \$350,000 from the estate of Mrs. Anita M. Dumovich is the third largest single gift that the College has received since it was founded.

Mrs. Dumovich, who died in Los Angeles in January, 1985, learned of Thomas Aquinas College from her attorney, Vincent G. Arnerich, and came to regard the College as a worthy recipient of a portion of her estate. Mr. Arnerich, assisted by his partner, Bernard J. del Valle, made the arrangements for the gift with Mrs. Dumovich.

In announcing the bequest, President Ronald P. McArthur said: "We are most grateful to Mrs. Dumovich and will keep her always in our prayers. We extend our deepest appreciation to Mr. Arnerich and Mr. del Valle for their friendship and for having introduced the College to Mrs. Dumovich."

The College has recently received two other major bequests. Miss Theresa M. Crem, who had great respect for the school and who died in San Francisco in November, 1984, named Thomas Aquinas as the beneficiary of a gift of nearly \$38,000. Capt. Harold F. Haynes (USN ret.), a member of the President's Council and a benefactor of the library, left a legacy of \$20,000 to the College. He died in Los Angeles in October.

LOAN FUNDS HAVE BENEFITED MORE THAN 200 STUDENTS

In the last decade, more than 200 students have received assistance from the memorial student loan funds which play an important role in the College's financial aid program. Together with Service Scholarships and grants, the loan funds ensure that no qualified student is denied a Thomas Aquinas College education because he and his family cannot meet the entire cost of his education.

Like the College's other forms of financial aid, loans are made only on the basis of demonstrated need to students who have already been accepted into the College.

College loans are advantageous to students because repayment and interest do not begin until after the recipient ceases to be a full-time student.

Many donors find contributing to a student loan fund desirable because their gifts are used to help many students: As the loans are repaid, the money is used again. Thus far, the College's graduates have a good record in repaying their loans. A donor may establish a loan fund with a minimum \$5,000 gift or contribute any amount to an existing fund.

Since 1975, six student loan funds with assets totaling nearly \$200,000 have been established. These funds have been set up in memory of Marcellus L. Joslyn, the father of a friend of the College; Major General Elias C. Townsend, who was a member of the Board of Governors; Reverend James P. Donahue, a member of the President's Council; Mme. Simone Bouvet, a friend of the College; and in memory of Reverend Thomas A. McGovern, S.J., and Dr. Norman P. De Silva, faculty members who died in 1985. Many alumni are contributing to the last two funds.

The College requires about \$60,000 in loan funds each year. About \$20,000 comes from student loan repayments, leaving \$40,000 that must be sought yearly in new gifts.

FR. VINCENT YOUNG ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN FOR 1985-86

To meet the spiritual needs of a growing student body, Rev. Vincent J. Young, O.M.V., has been appointed assistant chaplain at the College for the 1985-1986 academic year.

During his appointment, Fr. Young will assist the College chaplain, Rev. Msgr. John F. Gallagher, and Rev. Gerard G. Steckler, S.J., assistant chaplain, in the sacramental life of the College and in spiritual counseling.

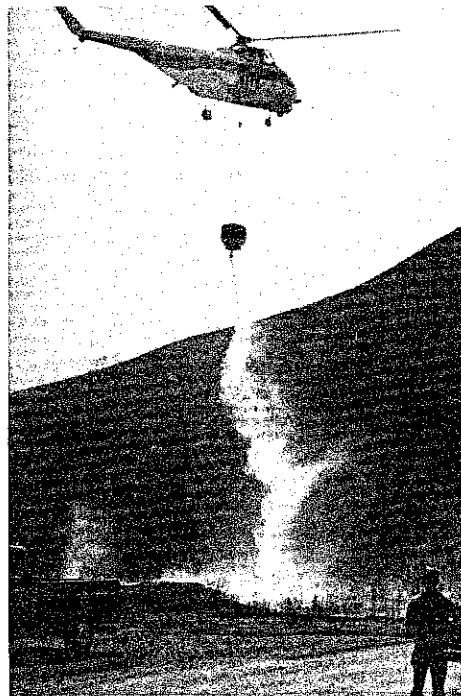
While at Thomas Aquinas, Fr. Young will prepare the first English translation of the rule of the lay affiliates of his congregation, the Oblates of the Virgin Mary. The rule was written by the Oblates' founder, the Venerable Bruno Lanteri, who died in 1830.

Fr. Young entered his congregation in 1972 and was ordained at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, San Vittorino Romano, near Rome, in 1978. He received the S.T.B. degree from the Angelicum, Rome, in 1978, and is now a candidate for the licentiate degree in spirituality at the Angelicum. He also holds the Bachelor of Science in Education from Western Connecticut State University.

"EVERYONE HAD TO WORK TOGETHER"



During the October wildfire, "there was a good spirit among the students," noted senior Phil Moreau. "Everyone had to work together," observed another student. Here, students are shown orienting Ventura County firefighters to the campus early Monday evening, October 14.



The U.S. Forest Service used the College athletic field as a heliport during the wildfire. A helicopter, left, drops 150 gallons of water on a blaze at the edge of the campus on October 15. Students, right, prepare to move their cars to safety on October 14.

PETER DeLUCA HEADS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Peter L. DeLuca III has been appointed vice president for development by Pres. Ronald P. McArthur. He is responsible for directing a comprehensive development program approved by the Board of Governors in September. The program's goals are to increase contributions for operations, scholarships, and student loans and to provide funds for building construction and an endowment.

The plan to meet these goals includes expanding the College's public information program, increasing the number of donors, and establishing a planned giving program.

Mr. DeLuca, one of the founders of the College, is a member of the Board of Governors. He has been a member of the faculty since 1971.

REV. WINFREE SMITH VISITING TUTOR

Thomas Aquinas College continues to benefit from a 1984-85 faculty exchange with St. John's College (Annapolis) as the Rev. J. Winfree Smith, Jr., Ph.D., tutor at St. John's, has remained to teach at Thomas Aquinas for the 1985-86 academic year.

Dr. Smith, a man of considerable wisdom in the matters studied at Thomas Aquinas, has been a member of the St. John's faculty since 1941. He is one of the principal animators of the great books curriculum in the U.S. and has made valuable contributions here in faculty discussions of the Thomas Aquinas curriculum.

In the 1984-85 exchange, Dr. Richard Ferrier of Thomas Aquinas taught at St. John's. He returned to Thomas Aquinas in September.

A Tutor's Thoughts on the Senior Thesis

(Continued from p. 1)

be written and defended successfully before the student may graduate. In it, he proposes and defends a thesis — a position — on a question among or akin to those he has studied in his classes. He is guided in this inquiry and in his composition by a faculty member, the *thesis tutor*, but the student is more completely independent in the direction and execution of this work than he has been in tutorial or seminar.

The student acts somewhat like an apprentice executing the kind of work that will make him no longer an apprentice. Such a work is of such quality, not necessarily to compete with the best of his master's and his peers', but at least worthy to be exhibited before the community. So is the senior's work in his thesis.

Like the apprentice, the senior has observed and judged the work of others, and taken small parts of that work in hand. Now he is called upon to execute such work himself. This means that he must manifest a grasp of the liberal arts as really his by showing them at work in him, aiding his investigation into a question worth answering, and ordering the results he finds in a coherent composition.

Now I, who write these words, am a tutor, and as I reflect on what I have just written, it occurs to me that I am seeing things from that vantage point. I imagine what I expect and demand and what I might say to a student to encourage him to produce it. But most of you who read this are more closely allied to the student. How must things seem to him?

Imagine that you are a freshman returning from Christmas vacation. You have grown used to the daily and weekly rhythm of tutorials and seminars. You have learned to prepare and present Euclidean demonstrations and translations from the Latin. Your tutors have discussed your classwork and diagnosed your weaknesses and strengths in the first Don Rags. Perhaps you were surprised to find their assessment of your work a bit more positive and promising than your own.

You have completed your first paper, on a topic set by the faculty, and you are working on the second. You are settled into the College, and your fears that you may not be up to the challenge are mostly gone. You go to class with confidence and pleasure. Exams, to be sure, are coming soon, but you have done your work — most of it — and the upperclassmen tell you that the questions are usually fair and frank. You are beginning to be sure that you are capable of college life.

Some of those reassuring seniors, however, are not quite as accessible as they were before Christmas. They have been mulling over their theses. You wonder what it might be like to have such a care yourself. But that is three years away, and you have more pressing matters right now: this reading in Scripture, that figure of the syllogism, a redrafting of your own paper on Odysseus' homecoming, and so you turn your thought to other things.

A few years pass, and it is the summer between your junior and senior years. Now you have that concern more deeply: What should I write on? What do I know enough about, and yet still wish to know better, that could develop into a 20- or 30-page essay that really proposes and holds a position, a thesis?

Did I really see the nucleus of the social contract theory in Locke and Rousseau? Am I sure of the relation between the notion of nature in Aristotle and St. Thomas and the powerful and beauti-

ful theorems in Newton's *Principia*? Can I grasp more fully the grounding of a sacrament in Holy Scripture?

Which of these questions could I write about, would I like to live with over the coming months, sharing my question with friends and tutors? And which tutor should I ask to be my thesis tutor?

October comes and I have chosen something. I have submitted my proposal, a sketch of my question and my plan for answering it. Perhaps I am rereading *Genesis* or the *Republic* or the *Geometry*, or I have taken out of the library a treatise of St. Thomas, not read in tutorial, on my question.

Although I know much now that I did not know when I was a freshman, I feel some of that same anxiety that I did then. Can I meet this challenge, conduct this inquiry without the aid of daily classes and close supervision by the tutor? And will I be able to find and state something that is

YOUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED

Please pray for the repose of the souls of **Rev. Thomas A. McGovern, S.J.**, tutor and member of the Board of Governors, Thomas Aquinas College, **Dr. Norman Peter De Silva**, tutor, Thomas Aquinas College, and for the repose of the souls of these friends and benefactors of the College: **Mr. Thomas H. Armstrong**, Los Angeles, Calif.; **Rev. Hubert A. Bohne, C.P.**, Chicago, Ill.; **Rev. Martin Brown, O.S.B.**, Portsmouth, R.I.; **His Excellency, Most Rev. L. Abel Caillouet**, retired auxiliary bishop of New Orleans and rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, New Orleans, La.; **Mr. William P. Clark, Sr.**, Camarillo, Calif.; **Mr. Joseph A. Cox**, New York, N.Y.; **Miss Theresa Crem**, San Francisco, Calif.; **Mr. W. Moore Devin**, San Francisco, Calif., who, with Mrs. Devin, was a member of the President's Council; **Mrs. Anita M. Dumovich**, Los Angeles, Calif.; **Mr. William C. Horgan**, Alhambra, Calif.; **Rev. Msgr. Benjamin G. Hawkes**, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Los Angeles; **Capt. Harold F. Haynes (USN ret.)**, Los Angeles, Calif., member of the President's Council and friend of the College library; **Mr. William Houben**, Fort Thomas, Ky.; **Mr. Joseph Hughes**, Glendale, Calif.; **Mr. Boyd Kern**, Alhambra, Calif., father of **Joseph P. D. Kern, Esq.**, legal counsel for the College; **Mrs. Margaret Laird**, Los Angeles, Calif.; **Rev. T. Liggett, O.S.B.**, Portsmouth, R.I.; **Rev. Hilary Martin, O.S.B.**, Portsmouth, R.I.; **Brother W. Matthew, F.S.C.**, Moraga, Calif.; **Mr. Paul Montgomery**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Francis J. Montgomery, Beverly Hills, Calif. (Mr. Francis Montgomery is a member of the Board of Governors); **Mrs. Don Morrison**, Blooming Prairie, Minn.; **Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Brien**, Oakland, Calif.; **Rev. Owen Quigley**, Huntington Beach, Calif.; **Mrs. L. F. Richdorf**, Minneapolis, Minn.; **Mrs. Gerald F. Roberts**, San Diego and Ojai, Calif., mother of **Mrs. Peter L. DeLuca III**; **Mrs. William Rosecrans III**, Los Angeles, Calif.; **Mr. Gilbert Williams**, Camarillo, Calif., husband of **Anastasia ("Babe") Williams**, Supervisor of Food Services at the College.

true — and defend it, too, before a committee of tutors?

My topic was approved and I have begun to write. My tutor and I meet to look over my work in progress. He seems to like it, though he makes suggestions and sometimes tells me to redo some things from scratch. The deadline for the draft is near, but I think I will make it, with one or two long nights of writing, some coffee and long walks, and a sympathetic friend who listens to me as I read the growing number of pages in my manuscript.

The day has come for me to defend the thesis. There are 30 or so students and several tutors seated at one end of the familiar classroom, now rearranged for a thesis defense. My examiners and I enter the room and sit at opposite ends of the long table. My thesis tutor asks me for a precis of my paper, which I have set down in front of me to read, since I am too nervous to trust myself to ad-lib a summary. I read the precis, going over the points I labored to establish in the paper. They seem true and worthy to me, and I begin to speak more confidently.

Now the first question comes, and I answer it, showing how the matter raised is central to my claims in the paper, to my thesis. An objection comes up; I think a bit and propose a distinction. It is something I had considered in composing the paper.

The next question is a surprise, but I see how it qualifies, clarifies, my claim. And so passes the shortest half-hour in my life. We have finished and the thesis tutor says something kind — I do not remember what. My friends congratulate me. My mind is buzzing with things to say, to change, to add to my paper, but I am finished. I have passed my oral defense.

This is what lies behind the thesis, as it is recalled in that brief, bold title in the Commencement program. The senior has not written a research paper on some arcane sector of the advancing front of a special science, knowable and of concern only to himself and a handful of others; rather, he has shown that the arts and sciences proposed by the College as central to liberal education are his own active possession, by having exercised them on a matter of common human interest, proposing a position and defending it before an audience of the College community.

Since this is a small sample of the kind of activity that the education the student has received is contrived to foster, it is peculiarly appropriate that his having carried it out be recognized at the Commencement, the boundary between his years at the College and those to come. The College itself is happy to allow its guests and friends at that ceremony to see — albeit in the briefest glimpse — what the students have chosen to write, inasmuch as these titles suggest the unity of knowledge and the articulation of the liberal arts at work in genuine inquiry.

One can form a fair first impression of what is done here and why from those titles and so we honor the student and proclaim the enterprise of the College by making them public.

Richard D. Ferrier, a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College, received his B.A. degree from St. John's College (Annapolis) and his Ph.D. from Indiana University. He has been a member of the Thomas Aquinas College faculty since 1978.