THE RUBY 1986

Ursinus College
Collegeville, Pennsylvania
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Everyone at Ursinus College knows that Richard P. Richter is the President of the College and that he was also a student as well as an English professor at Ursinus. But how did he accomplish all of these things?

President Richter graduated from Ursinus College in 1953 and began his career in the business world. But in 1965 he saw a new area of endeavor — an opening to become an educator at Ursinus. Although there was less financial security and a less clear future for him, he thought well of the college and was familiar with its idealistic objectives. That year, 1965, was one of great vitality and social change, with protests against Vietnam and the reassessment of young people.

While teaching English, Mr. Richter became the Alumni Secretary, then the Assistant to the President. In 1969 he took the role of Vice President of Administrative Affairs, and in 1976 he was elected President of the College. He attributes this accomplishment to a combination of chance and of a purposeful decision with the unselfish guidance and support of Dr. D.L. Hellferich, then President.

Since his years as a student, the President has seen many changes at Ursinus. He believes that it has fundamentally improved in its general resources — those that were once limited have now become deeper and richer. This improvement shows through a better curriculum, better faculty facilities, and the new physical plant. Despite all of these changes, though, there has been and still is "an informal, caring kind of faculty, a bonding of student and teacher." This tie is not simply educational in nature; it also is social, and often lasts a lifetime. President Richter admits that there is a community sense between himself and many on the staff who were once his teachers and advisors (for instance, Professors Davis, Parsons, Dolman, Jones, and Symons all taught him and he feels that they are proud to have helped him get to where he is now).

When asked about what is so special about Ursinus College that other colleges lack, President Richter points out two characteristics. The first is what he calls "the mission" — that is, administering to undergraduates a liberal education. This has always been the objective, with an emphasis on teaching.
The student has a sense of being the center of attention, and student-teacher ties are a serious matter and are seen as important for advancement. The second topic is that of climate. Ursinus College is well-known for its friendly climate, and this is a reputation that has been maintained for years. Another part of this climate is the development of compulsive workers — that is, students become adept in time-management.

Using the phrase, "If you're not going forward, you're going backward," President Richter aims to move Ursinus toward a more visible place of leadership among liberal arts colleges. He believes leadership should also be a top priority for Ursinus students. "They should be more aware of their future role as leaders of the world coming on." America, he feels, has become so consumed with specialization that most people seem to have forgotten the whole. Ursinus students at twenty years of age, he says, must think of themselves as those who will be running the world thirty years from now — and they should be able to deal with the whole thing. They should round out their education as much as possible while at Ursinus and prepare to use all of their talents.

1986 is President Richter's tenth anniversary as President of Ursinus College. In these ten years, he has advocated many changes, but he feels he has made two significant accomplishments. First, he has reaffirmed the faculty as the central focus of the college through an improvement in tangible resources for the faculty. Second, he has successfully sustained a helping and caring relationship among faculty and students. He feels "the rigorous pursuit of liberal learning takes place best within a community atmosphere such as ours."

Congratulations, President Richter, on your continuing success: this 1986 Ruby is dedicated to you!
"Time goes by turns, and chances change by course,
From foul to fair, from better hap to worse."
— Robert Southwell
"everything changes but change."
— Zangwill
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