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## A COURAGEOUS CALL

I was recently online doing a search on Terri Jendusa Nicolai and noticed that Lawrence had her on campus in October as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I wanted to extend my appreciation to the university for bringing awareness to this incredibly important issue. As the executive director of the Dane County domestic violence program in Madison, I can tell you that many institutions of higher learning do not provide their students with opportunities to learn about this (unfortunately) common experience in our communities. I am proud that my alma mater has the courage to be at the forefront of bringing attention to this extremely important issue. Please extend my appreciation to those at Lawrence who were responsible for bringing Ms. Nicolai to campus.

— Shannon Barry '96, Madison, Wis.

## "GET OUT THE VOTE" THEME A DISTRACTION

The lead article in the Winter *Lawrence Today* caught my attention: In red, white and blue — "Educating citizens, supporting students' political engagement, and getting out the (as a lapel pin) VOTE." The intro informed me it was President Beck's welcoming address to students in September and also "...a call to action for Lawrence alumni and the entire Lawrence University community." Reading on: her "call to action" is prompted by her alarm about the "lack of political participation among many college students...by no means restricted to Lawrence, but (which) appears to be a national phenomenon...participation among the general public (having) dropped as well." My immediate impression was that it was a rather narrow and unusual theme for a year-opening presidential address. It was quickly followed by this sentence: "The education of citizens is both a founding tradition and a recent concern in higher education." Recent? I must say that although I accepted the combination of "political engagement", "getting out the vote" and "education" as possibly legitimate, I found it difficult to find much clarity in the mix as the address presented it. With respect, President Beck, you ask "How do we fit the education of citizens into our programs?" I must ask "When was the education of citizens NOT at the vibrant heart of our traditional Lawrence liberal arts curriculum?" Frankly, I think your "end the apathy, back to civics, and get out the vote" theme is at best "trendy" and at worst a distraction from meaningful liberal arts instruction.

— Ted Beranis '57, Bonita Springs, Fla.

## SAY "YES" TO POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

As a government major at Lawrence University I was pleased to hear President Beck's call for student engagement during her matriculation convocation and as I read her remarks reprinted in the winter issue of *Lawrence Today*. With the upcoming presidential election, student involvement and participation in the political process is as important as ever. Lawrence students are faced with the same questions that each American citizen must address before casting his or her vote: What do I believe in and why? What issues are important to me? Which candidate do I support? While these are not easily answered questions a student with a background in the liberal arts possesses the skills required to answer these difficult questions and arrive at the answers that will enable a well-informed vote.

As responsible citizens, Lawrence students acknowledge that it is our individual responsibility to investigate and research the numerous issues that exist and to look at the positions of each candidate. In order to make a well-informed decision we must seek out sources of information that delve deeper than the nightly newscast or the latest polls. After research comes engagement, whether it is through an informal discussion about the candidates and issues; by attending debates sponsored by student groups; or by volunteering for a candidate's campaign. The final step of a well-informed Lawrentian is of course, voting. In November, Lawrence students will have an opportunity to put our liberal arts education to use in a way that directly influences and determines the future of our society.

— Nathan Litt '08, Senior Class President

## FRENCH PROFESSOR FONDLY REMEMBERED

I learned with great sadness of the passing of Gervais Reed, professor emeritus of French. Taking a class with Professor Reed fall quarter of my freshman year started my journey toward becoming a French major at Lawrence. As the chaperone for our group of undergraduates turned loose in Europe for the first time he struck the right tone — giving us space to have our own experiences while also sharing with us his enthusiasm for French culture, language, history, and food. "I know you'll be tempted to eat lunch at a pizzeria, or go to one of the fast food restaurants just because it's familiar," he said. Instead he encouraged us to pick out a little family-run restaurant and frequent it at lunchtime. Not only would the "prix fixe" menu be of better quality and value than a hamburger from "le fast food," but we would also be building a relationship with the owners, practicing our language skills, and learning something about French life. Gervais Reed played a significant role in my Lawrence experience, and I believe my continued interest in all things French or francophone is largely attributable to his influence. His passing is a great loss to the Lawrence community, and I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family.

— Rebecca Shereikis '88, Evanston, Ill.