

Chapter Eleven

Independent Study Degree Program Alumni

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Some people just don't take "no" for an answer. They don't allow naysayers to extinguish the fire in their belly or turn their minds away from an insight that intrigues them. They refuse to be dissuaded from following their gut feelings and intuitions and instead stay focused on their ideals and dreams amidst the pushes and pulls of conventional wisdom. Passion drives them; it propels them forward; it keeps them on course.

These people are the adults who have a vision, with clarity that if only one thing—that *x* factor—is put in place, others will be helped somehow. Systems will run more effectively, and the world will be a better place because of the introduction of that something new or value-added way of doing things. Envisioning that possibility, that potential for change for the greater good, creates a stir within that pulls up what Annie Rogers (1993) calls "ordinary courage" (p. 265), connecting heart and mind in action.

Fortunately for this small group of adults, Lesley College provided a welcoming place, a beacon whose shine lit hope for achievement. The light source was a small, innovative program housed away from the mainstream, with a diverse group of traditionally trained faculty whose minds flourished in the midst of creative, even off beat, intersections of ideas.

This chapter is devoted to Lesley's vision and wisdom in promoting generative scholarship through The Independent Study Degree Program (INDS), a unique program structure that recognized graduate students as individual catalysts for change. While in some ways the instructional delivery system Americanized the Oxford University mentor-tutor model, INDS pedagogy went outside familiar structures and cloistered walls by encouraging students to go into the world to find the brightest minds, best practices, and highly respected founders and teachers in their fields, regardless of geography. By simultaneously promoting and scaffolding each INDS student's exploration of new ideas and ways of doing things, Lesley invested in the creative capital of learners who crafted plans of graduate study to delve deeply into critical analysis of academic literature, construct new models for ideas and practices, and explore innovative ways to enrich the lives of others.

While the chapter includes a brief historical review and presentation of the program model, the primary focus of this piece will be to show how INDS students and alumni influenced the creation of important methods and fields of study and, consequently, helped to shape Lesley's role in developing the context of higher education.

Recognizing the value of linking academic goals with personal and humanitarian significance, this program celebrated adults of the ilk that Ray and Anderson discussed in their book, *The Cultural Creatives* (2000), as people who value authenticity, plan with ideals in mind, act on behalf of the weak, marginalized, and/or exploited, and engage courageously in creating solutions to societal and global problems. While arguably many graduate programs share humanitarian visions and their students study toward similar aims, the difference here is that the unique, sometimes traditional with an unusual interdisciplinary bent or quirky, *n-of-one* students that beat their own drum learned outside

the collective, the common syllabus structure, and the “we” advantage of the cohort model. Their idiosyncratic vision differed enough from the mainstream to require different avenues of study.

These students frequently faced a difficult paradox. Studying independently tends to become isolating and can be lonesome, separating students from a natural collegiality afforded through class peers’ sharing common experiences and meaning of ideas. Not wanting to suffer ostracism from feeling like “the square peg in the round hole,” even independent students still enjoy and need the company of others. To mitigate anomie, Lesley faculty and staff worked hard to provide a supportive environment with different forms of effective communication. Over the years these ranged from in-person meetings, letters, and phone calls, to email and teleconferences.

Faculty embraced the social dimensions of their students’ learning experiences and helped students look at their learning holistically. They encouraged advisees to develop the quality of critical thinking required for not only scholarly work but also the social, emotional, and ethical learning that balances it (Noddings, 2006). Faculty further recognized the importance of helping students practice the type of thinking and reflection essential for situating themselves in their fields, to give themselves the grounding necessary for communicating their ideas effectively with others and putting them into action in a way that the intended audience could take them on.

The INDS Program expanded the mentor relationship from one core advisor to a team that included two experts in the fields of study. Students took on the challenge of fulfilling their Study Plans under the guidance of their team, engaging in thoughtful planning, hard work, and meaningful action. It is fair to say that, judging from alumni responses to surveys, few overestimated the intensity and depth of the INDS study commitment.

Incubating Graduate Degrees for Lesley

Lesley was not and, some would say, still is not easy to find. Back in the 1970s and early 1980s Lesley mostly was known as a small women’s college with a nascent graduate education program. If one even knew it existed, a cloistered setting across from Harvard Law School wasn’t a likely place to pursue nontraditional graduate study. For those motivated to look further though, Lesley did offer a small, alternative graduate education program for students interested in a new way of teaching based on an open, community-centered, and theme-oriented learning model.

The INDS Program grew out of the Open Education movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This movement broke down walls, figuratively and literally, in public and private K -12 schools. The opening of innovative undergraduate programs, like Hampshire College’s that did away with distribution requirements in favor of innovative portfolio and narrative student evaluations, paved the way for INDS. The connection was also rooted in administrative delegation. Before she became the first director of INDS, Cynthia Cole led Lesley’s Open Education master’s degree program.

As the teachers and teachers-to-be who shunned barricades and did not see the value of literal or metaphoric walls in schools, adult learners who sought INDS did so because they wanted to permeate boundaries of disciplines and engage in unconventional learning activities. Though sympathetic to the Viet Nam War protests and anti-

establishment challenges against institutions and corporate conglomerates in the late 1960s and 1970s, these adults were more inclined to follow enlightened humanitarian leaders and to favor working developmentally and relationally, with people rather than profit at the center of their work. Eschewing radical or revolutionary actions for which degrees were inconsequential, they recognized the merits of collaboration to build bridges between factions, to shore up dysfunctional systems or come up with a formula to build new ones instead. Turning away from experimental communes and psychedelic culture, they became information “junkies,” seeking interesting ways to marry theory and research offerings from different disciplines to form foundations for new theories and ways of doing things. Believing it helpful to earn a graduate degree to gain access to a system in order to change it, they sought institutions where they could develop plans of study in pursuit of their own learning goals, thus pushing and crossing boundaries of traditional American higher education.

INDS students ranged from 22-75 years of age. Whether beatnik or classic, liberal or conservative, extraordinarily wealthy or pulling themselves up from bootstraps, these students wanted to meld the intellectual with the personal to accomplish something new and meaningful, and they wanted all that Lesley had to offer them. More bridge builders than rabble rousers, they sought independence along with the safety of a structure to bounce off of and check in with, for the exhilaration of exploring uncharted territory and the rapprochement in return. They wanted freedom to learn, but with access to libraries, faculty, and institutional resources to support them.

Lesley College’s INDS Program was such a place. While other successful innovative programs required students’ presence in a campus environment for stretches of time, for example a residential model of learning in community (like Lesley’s own Interdisciplinary Studies Program or Goddard College’s Low Residency Model in Vermont), INDS chose not to do so. While others used a course-based arrangement (like the University of Oklahoma’s Special, Interdisciplinary Master’s Degree), the INDS educational model afforded students the opportunity to benefit from the resources of a conventional college with the freedom to study elsewhere.

INDS opened up the learning process to welcome and support uniquely individualized plans of study tailored to a particular student’s academic focus rather than to specific institutional degree offerings. It took a student who did not want certification or licensure (INDS offered neither) but was attracted to “the Lesley way” and helped that individual stay at Lesley to earn a degree through constructing a viable degree plan. INDS was also a program that took in occasional students dissatisfied or disgruntled by their realization that their original degree program was not personally appropriate, or individuals whose geographies or health changed midstream through a program, and helped them integrate their newfound ideas and goals into more suitable degree plans.

Two of Lesley College’s top academic administrators in the program’s nascent years, Dean Bill Perry and Vice President Dick Wylie, realized the institutional benefit and potential of the INDS Program. When the Open Education program morphed into a more formal education degree program, Bill Perry tapped Cynthia Cole to begin an “official” program for independent study. During the 1970s and 80s he was joined by others who recognized that the climate was ripe for new program development. Recalling his role in mounting exciting collaborative initiatives at Lesley, Dick Wylie commented recently that,

Lesley gave me the opportunity to develop an environment where faculty were encouraged to be innovative and creative. I saw my role as helping others achieve their dreams. The faculty showed that an entrepreneurial spirit and quality academics could survive and prosper together. (personal communication, April 3, 2009)

This quotation not only captures a model of insightful leadership but also reflects the spirit, process, and academic core of INDS, in which faculty dedicated themselves toward helping bright, entrepreneurial students achieve their academic and professional dreams. In short, the INDS Program became a microcosmic exemplar and instigator of Lesley's own growth and development.

The Independent Degree Study (INDS) Process

Distinguishing its academic offerings within a scholar/practitioner model that embraces multiple dimensions of learning, Lesley's INDS Program earned its status in the handful of top US independent academic programs through its focus on scholarly mastery, personal integrity, and a carefully honed system of academic checks and balances.

The admissions process required construction of a Study Plan that demonstrated prospects' capability and clarity requisite for engaging in a substantial two to three year course of study. Prospects presented: autobiographical statements; degree goals; evidence of preparedness, and a proposed schedule of learning activities, resources, and multiple methods of documentation to demonstrate achievement; and, a conceptual paragraph that pitched an idea for a culminating master's level substantial thesis/book/final project. This document was used to determine whether or not an individual had the vision, clarity, background, and access to resources necessary to muster and engage in an independent learning endeavor. At its best, the process of Study Plan review also involved observation of essential aspects intricately woven into INDS pedagogy: the ability to receive and apply feedback, to engage in dialogue and stretch into a wider context around ideas, a willingness to embrace diversity, and the ability to work to high standards, including willingness to complete multiple drafts to polish academic work products. From a program perspective, speed was not an issue, as some prospects worked over the course of a year to get their Study Plan into shape. Once complete, those efforts paid off, because that well-worked Study Plan became the roadmap for the graduate journey.

The Team Structure, Process, and Alumni Effect

Once admitted and immersed in their individually-designed studies, INDS students did not travel alone but rather with the benefit of a team carefully chosen to support and monitor their progression through the Study Plan. Rather than a hierarchical structure with a power dynamic of faculty as knower and student as receiver of that knowledge, the INDS program espoused a pedagogical model that assigned each student one dedicated faculty advisor who guided the student from inception through completion of graduate studies. Additionally, because no one faculty member can be all knowledgeable and resourceful about any given interdisciplinary or novel topic, students selected two additional faculty to

join their instructional team. These individuals, called team faculty, typically came from the richly endowed New England region and brought expertise in the student's fields, a host of resources, networking potential, and evaluation skills to the INDS process.

Team faculty became indispensable assets to the Lesley College community and expanded Lesley's reach and reputation. Though paid only modest honoraria, team faculty signed on to engage with INDS students because they found them creative, thoughtful, deep, energetic, and productive. And, sometimes when the process revved up to its full power and the student's entrepreneurial spirit, vision, mission, and passion built off a team expert's own work, team faculty gained insights, themselves, to venture beyond their current conceptual and professional boundaries.

INDS students had four team meetings, one at the beginning, two mid program, and one at the end before graduation. Students sent team members documentation packets—including academic papers and other work products such as DVDs of performances, curriculum plans, research findings—two weeks before their meeting for team faculty review and evaluation of graduate study accomplishments. Team meetings focused on reviewing student work to make sure that the Study Plan goals were met, and that the student's mastery was increasing.

At their best, team meeting synergistic dialogues springing from a student's documentation led to a new insight, a different perspective, or level of realization of an idea or practice. Two examples of students' applications from one team member's vision come to mind. Author, philosopher, and classical musician Tom Moore's Imaginal Institute work rooted in archetypal psychology and Jungian theory inspired students to extend theoretical applications into the arts and, in one case, astrology—that being INDS alumna Jean Lall, a Fulbright scholar who later helped to found and organize the Washington, D.C., Jung Institute Library. Sarah Jackson was one of Tom's INDS students who effectively integrated theory and artistic expression into personally meaningful work. Sarah exhibited her art in several galleries and shows in New York and the Berkshires. Because the Jungian rooted imaginal work inspired her so deeply, she decided to develop her knowledge to pass that gift on to others. To that end, Sarah enrolled in the Jungian Analytic training program in New York City to become a Jungian analyst and fulfill her vision and mission.

Bonnie LaMothe is another team member whose mentorship has influenced INDS alumni. As founding director of the New England Montessori Teacher Education Center (NEMTEC), sometimes referred to as the "Harvard of Montessori Programs," her work has influenced tens of INDS students over 25 years and produced alumni who have changed dimensions and practices of the Montessori field. For example, INDS alumna Erin Galvin Gutierrez, Montessori teacher and administrator, expanded teaching of science by making science instruction more accessible to early childhood teachers who may not have advanced science knowledge. Coming into INDS as a geologist with the US Geological Services in Woods Hole who had discovered an affinity for teaching, Erin developed a user-friendly early childhood science curriculum congruent with State standards and curriculum frameworks, *Science for Everyday: A Montessori Based Science Curriculum* (2001), now used by non-Montessori teachers as well. Her career path included helping a large urban school system integrate Montessori philosophy into public education.

From over 1600 team faculty during the program's almost 40-year span, there are many examples of talented team experts in the fields of education, arts, research, and organizational development. We are grateful to these extraordinary scholars, practitioners,

educators, and performer team faculty who have served INDS, and thus Lesley, by expanding Lesley's faculty expertise and contributing generously to student's idea development and alumni professional development.

Some of those team relationships continued to develop after students' graduation, and INDS alumni sometimes performed what with team mentors or became teaching colleagues. For example, Montessori students have been assisted by Bonnie LaMothe in networking into professional positions and also encouraged by her to present at regional and national conferences. Erin Galvin Gutierrez exemplifies this connection, and after graduation was hired as science faculty for NEMTEC. Recent NEMTEC Montessori alumna Meiko Nevels completed a progressive music curriculum supported by academic rationale, while Kimberly Paquette, an early childhood and yoga teacher who is now a Montessori program director, recently published her guidebook *Lessons to Inspire Peace in the Early Childhood Classroom* (2009), NEMTEC-INDS alumni accomplishments are extensive and, more importantly, have changed the lives of children through enhancing their early childhood educational and life experiences.

Sometimes team faculty recognize that their students' ideas merit further development and encourage students to pursue advanced degrees in order to gain credibility to teach in higher education or be recognized formally in their fields of practice. Because they demonstrate mastery by completing a thesis or scholarly integrative academic project during the final semester of graduate study, INDS students have a written presentation of their ability to include with doctoral applications. Familiar with presenting, discussing, and sometimes defending their work in the four team meetings, students have oral presentation experience that helps them to stand out in interviews. Ultimately, at the end of their program, students construct a two page Summary of Work, which is a synopsis of their impressive accomplishments completed over the entire course of study that reveals the breadth and depth of their graduate experiences.

The INDS Program Spawns Lesley Fields and Degree Programs

Some might say that the INDS Program was the catalyst for Lesley's conversion from Lesley College to Lesley University. INDS students' accomplishments coupled with the power of the team model offered an institutional vision for development and expansion of Lesley's offerings. When George Hein—organic chemist by training and educator, museum studies professional, and educational evaluator by profession—directed INDS after Cynthia Cole left to re-join the Peace Corps, he forged an important additional connection between the INDS Program and the Program Evaluation and Research Group, or PERG as it came to be known. Under Dick Wylie's leadership, these units were merged into the Division of Advanced Graduate Study and Research, thus recognizing organizationally the work in advanced graduate study that commenced in 1976.

Since its earliest days in the 1970s, from time to time INDS faculty and students have moved out administratively to form other programs. For example, after the practitioner-oriented Open Education program shifted to the Education Division, Cynthia Cole saw faculty colleague Professor Shaun McNiff direct his energies toward founding the Institute for Arts and Human Development, where his vision and leadership became instrumental in creating and building the nascent field of Expressive Therapies.

In addition to program faculty, INDS alumni also extended the INDS Program's effect through creating new programs. Alumna Diana Becker expanded the concept of traveling to locations to learn about the intersections of nature, culture, community, and government through founding the Trailside Country School, a school in Vermont specializing in educating through the environment. Later, she co-founded the Audubon Expedition Institute, which over 30 years has helped students gain understanding of ecology and environmental issues through participation in field-based programs that feature multidisciplinary and multicultural inquiry.

Nancy Langstaff, another early INDS alumna whose reputation as an educator, musician, and performer earned her a position on Lesley's faculty, was frustrated by the lack of recognition of the arts in schools beyond adjunctive curriculum. Disappointed by the marginalization of arts as "frills," Nancy's vision of integrating the arts fully into the learning process became her mission as an early leader of Lesley's Creative Arts in Learning (CAL) Program (affiliated with the previously mentioned Institute for the Arts and Human Development). Seeing a large group of INDS students with common vision and mission, Nancy and her close colleagues united in CAL to embrace active, multi-dimensional learning by integrating the visual, musical, movement, and dramatic arts directly into curriculum – not just extending learning experiences through the arts, but actually teaching subjects through arts integration.

In the mid 1970s, Professor and INDS Director George Hein observed that some of the most talented Lesley INDS alumni craved continuation of the individual learning model into advanced study. Consequently, the Graduate School received authority to award the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in 1976, and George gathered a small group to begin discussing doctoral study in 1978, which formalized when the Lesley College Board of Trustees approved development of a doctoral degree plan in 1984. The small group of division heads, which included Professors McNiff and Knill, swung into action with the submission of a petition to the Massachusetts Board of Regents for Lesley to grant the Ph.D. degree in the fall of that year. While three doctoral programs were vetted, two were put forward, Educational Studies and Expressive Therapies. Following two years of State and trustee review, during which George simultaneously led a public internal planning process, the first Lesley College doctoral program was mounted in Educational Studies.

The doctoral program committee decided to back first the idea of a doctorate that was based directly on the success of the INDS Program model. Bringing Drs. Frank Davis, faculty and PERG research and evaluation expert, and Marion Nesbit, INDS faculty, onto the committee, George created an expanded team to formalize plans for a student-oriented, individually designed program that modeled INDS' structure and pedagogy and followed Lesley's humanitarian mission. The program adapted INDS core ideas to the doctoral level, including matching entering doctoral students with senior faculty advisors to guide them through the first phase of graduate study and often through dissertation completion and degree conferral, thus creating a seamless advisement process. A second notable adaptation of the INDS Program is the requirement for students to develop a Doctoral Study Plan, an individual road map of doctoral study that is reviewed by a faculty committee. And, a third similarity is that the PhD in Educational Studies embraced the idea of connecting Lesley students with outside experts and organizations through collaborative action and opportunities to take two courses at other doctoral institutions. The details of the program were hammered out by a college-wide Advanced Graduate Council, comprised mainly of

founding committee members, validating the intention that the program be embraced as belonging to the college as a whole, with shared ownership and responsibility for its success.

Though the Division of Advanced Graduate Study and Research was later disbanded and split among academic divisions, the special INDS, PERG, and doctoral program connections continue today. Lesley University's current director of PERG is Dr. Debra Smith, alumna of both INDS and the Educational Studies Doctoral Programs. Before returning to Lesley as PERG Director, Debra was instrumental in creating a program at the University of Southern Maine in collaborative inquiry and development that contributed to professional development of Maine teachers. At PERG, Debra spearheads grant writing and research and evaluation initiatives on diverse educational, science, and museum topics with a team of research associates. INDS and Lesley College alumna Dr. Donna Buonopane also works for PERG. Donna earned a doctorate in higher education at Boston College and spends the majority of her time now working out of her DMB Consulting group. Donna's research shows that principals' leadership practices are influenced both by their knowledge of mathematics and their instructional leadership style (Buonopane, 2009, para.3). And, before he left Lesley to assume the Presidency of TERC, Frank Davis extended his faculty role and research connection with the Algebra Project by serving as Director of the Educational Studies Ph.D. Program for 22 years.

Before ending this section, it is important to point out two important, related institutional developments. First, the Expressive Therapies Doctoral Program was mounted successfully with the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences, under the leadership of Dr. Julia Byers, EXTH Division Director, and division colleagues in 2000. Thus, the vision of George Hein and the committee with whom he worked in the 1970s of Lesley's gaining status as a university was realized. Second, the INDS Program became a grandparent. The Educational Studies Doctoral Program now has three program divisions: Leadership, Adult Learning, and Individualized Studies. Each has a unique model of instructional delivery, with Individualized Studies most closely following the original format rooted in INDS.

Alumni Contributions to Lesley, Education, and Humanity

Successes of INDS alumni are vast and diverse. While only a few representative alumni are featured here, it must be said that others equally deserve recognition. Examples that follow were selected to illustrate the reach and impact of the program.

Trailblazing INDS alumni pursued their passion to open up mathematics education to all learners. After earning his doctorate at MIT and working in the private sector, Dr. Ricky Carter currently serves as faculty in Lesley's Technology in Education Program and works to make learning math relational and enjoyable through creating unique assignments and organizing web and in-person conversations about math experiences. Similarly, INDS alumna Dr. Sue Friel's mission to make math accessible to students and teachers spurred her to complete a doctorate in mathematics education. While serving Lesley as faculty and later as administrator, Sue was instrumental in laying the groundwork for Lesley's development of a center for mathematics education. Now Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Sue continues to follow her

passion. Reckoning with individuals with math anxiety and insecurities, her mission is “to empower others to make sense of mathematics” (2009, para. 1).

Other INDS alumni have contributed to Lesley as faculty and administrators. Lesley CAL Program’s core faculty are notable examples. In addition to alumna Nancy Langstaff, three INDS alumnae helped Nancy and Dr. Vivien Marcow-Speiser, CAL’s former co-director, build the program’s reputation regionally and nationally: Dr. Priscilla (Prilly) Sanville and Dr. Kate Austin, both of whom currently serve as CAL faculty, and Dr. Lee-Ellen Marvin. Prilly coordinates the Community Arts Program and holds specializations in multicultural education and drama as a medium for learning. She is well known for her work on diversity initiatives and was one of the national experts invited into Columbine to help that community deal with the terror and painful loss following the school shootings. Kate’s talents focus on the value of integration of the arts in learning in early childhood education, and the value of movement in education and life. Like Prilly, she is also a proponent of using the arts to address cultural misunderstandings and issues of diversity in the schools and society. The third catalyst was INDS alumna Lee-Ellen Marvin, a well-known story teller who performed with the New England story telling community and who, at Dick Wylie’s instigation, was instrumental in bringing the New England Storytelling Center to Lesley and in developing CAL’s former storytelling specialization. Lee-Ellen left to earn her doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania in folklore and currently is an avid performer, human service program director, and instructor in upstate New York. Along with other INDS alumni who have taught for CAL over the years, these four remarkable women all shared a common vision and passion to channel the power of the arts into mainstream education to enhance students’ learning and enrich their lives, and into communities to seek artful expressions, facilitate peaceful resolutions, and build bold initiatives.

INDS alumni have also made an impact as teachers. Dr. Thomas Newcomb recently retired with 35 years of public service after winning numerous teaching awards including Trumbull County Teacher of the Year, The Class Act Award, and The A+ Teacher Award (twice). His ecological leanings led him to learn and write about the Amish and Mennonites as sustainable communities and, later in the 1990’s, he pursued his passion for nature by participating in the reintroduction of gray wolves into Yellowstone National Park.

Teachers of the arts have also benefited from earning their master’s degree through the INDS structure. Gary Moore was a successful classical ballet dancer turned teacher when he entered INDS to combine memoir with cross-disciplinary study. Co-director of dance at the Booker T. Washington Magnet High School (AL), Gary has received the Disney Teacher of the Year Award and the Star Fellowship Award for his exceptional teaching of dance, choreography, and production. Gary was recently named the first recipient of the Alabama Power Educator Award for outstanding teachers who make significant contributions in the classroom. Also a writer, Gary has inspired disadvantaged students and other teachers toward disciplined, polished performance and artistic achievement as avenues toward succeeding in life.

Another talented INDS alumna and teacher who returned to serve as team member, Katherine Gasper teaches at the Saltonstall Elementary School in Salem, MA. As a teacher in a school that applies Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory, Katherine’s INDS studies fostered by team member leaders in the MI community led to an opportunity to teach at Harvard’s summer Project Zero institute for teachers and to put her research on the value of

applying multiple intelligence theory to formation of classroom communities into practice. She has also written articles for teacher audiences since graduation.

An alumnus with shared interest though who preceded Katherine by 30 years, Dr. Thomas Armstrong is one of the most prolific INDS authors and speakers, with over a million copies of his books¹ in print (in 24 languages) and with 800 keynotes and presentations across the US and internationally. Most recently publishing *Neurodiversity: Discovering the extraordinary gifts of autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other brain differences* (2010), his publications on the importance of linking human development with education, looking at students with learning differences in a more humane way, and attending to multiple intelligences and ways of knowing have influenced countless teachers, administrators, and parents over the past three decades. His placement of value on each child and adult learner as uniquely endowed and his intersections of different educational theories and creative challenges regarding educational practice are consonant with the INDS program's unique orientation to an education that buttresses the talents and interests of each student.

And, perhaps best known by Lesley of all INDS education alumni is Edes Gilbert, former Corporator and President of Lesley's Board of Trustees from 1999-2003 and recipient of the Sally Lenhardt Professional Leadership Award.² Well known for building the Spence School into a high quality selective girls' school in New York City, she currently is President of Resource Group 175, a consulting firm rooted in her considerable expertise and experiences in leadership and governance of independent schools. Yet, that is not all that distinguishes her. Possibly her most special contribution in addition to her board presidency is the gift of her daughter, who followed in her mother's footsteps to become an INDS alumna. Sarah Wilson, prolific author along with her husband Brian Kilcommons around the topic of pets (e.g., *Metropets* published in 2002 and *Good Owners Great Dogs* in 1999), is an award-winning international speaker, website builder, columnist, and featured TV and print media personality.

Inspirational Dissatisfaction

Perhaps one of the most interesting groups of INDS alumni falls into those spurred by what the perennial optimist William Clement Stone (1962) called "inspirational dissatisfaction." These are the people driven by personal knowledge that there is something missing or wrong and, in fact, there is "a better way" to do things, for which they have "the answer." Motivated by success of institutional challenges in the 1970s, these INDS students analyzed institutional practices and found holes and disconnections. Rather than go in fighting, though, they chose to build trusting alliances and work with those in power to create change. And, in some cases they did so successfully. INDS alumna Dr. Mary Louise O'Connor comes to mind. ML, as she was known, recognized the void in her own cancer treatment and found happiness as well as solace in creating art through

¹ Among Dr. Armstrong's other books are: *7 (Seven) kinds of smart; In their own way; You're smarter than you think: A kid's guide to multiple intelligences; The best schools: How human development research should inform educational practice; The human odyssey: Navigating the twelve stages of life; and Multiple intelligences in the classroom.*

² It should be noted that the late Sally Lenhardt, former Lesley Dean, was also an INDS alumna.

poetry and painting. Passionately driven to share her experiences with others, she forged an administrative partnership, notably with Susan DeCristofaro who was then Director of Patient and Family Education at the internationally renowned Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, to pioneer the idea of creative arts as companion therapy in cancer treatment. ML vehemently, though most always with irresistible grace, dismissed the idea that art-making was just a “nice thing” for wealthy women to do outside the hospital; rather, she devoted her final years to creating space for any patient or family member to express untold emotions and ideas through the arts. Her story is recounted in an article by Nesbit and DeCristofaro (1999).

Another indefatigable alumna is Dr. Vicki Sartorio, who was passionate in her belief that speech impaired, multiply disabled children’s potential should not be overlooked or shuffled to remote corners or basements of school buildings. Observing that children who could not communicate in typical ways with teachers or age peers were set off physically and socially as well as educationally from others, Vicki constructed a study plan to search for alternative methods and new technology to assist these children in the learning process. Long before the internet came into existence, Vicki wrote to companies to learn about new adaptive, instructional products and conducted research to identify ways they were effective with her own student population. Vicki’s Lesley success was achieved through the students’ publication of their thoughts, experiences, and ideas in a school newsletter, created through the use of head pointers, touch or light talkers, and other assistive devices. Needless to say, her advocacy, initiative taking, and the resulting students’ accomplishments were mind-shifting for previously perplexed and disbelieving educators. Her INDS master’s work indicated that children’s minds were spinning with ideas behind their own inability to express them. These previously marginalized children inspired Vicki and propelled her to extend her work into doctoral studies and, eventually, to become a chief Learning Resource Specialist in her state.

Coming from a different geography, background, and worldview, The Venerable Praghya Lok Bhikkhu, known to INDS as Bhante Pannaloka, dedicated his studies toward helping children in Nepal not only thrive but also continue and complete their education programs. As founding President of the Karunamaya Human Development Foundation, the Venerable Pannaloka created and fostered the structure to help the 30 poorest children in a Nepalese orphanage to continue their education without any interruption.

ML O’Connor, Vicki Sartorio, and The Venerable Pannaloka capture the power of the *n*-of-one fired by the nexus of vision, mission, and passion as a force to be valued and emulated.

Embracing the Natural World

Learning for INDS alumni went beyond human development implications into the natural world. On occasion, an INDS student broke out of the traditional classroom in favor of learning in the field, sometimes quite literally, and preserving natural resources. Long before Howard Gardner (2000) coined the term “naturalistic intelligence” these students blazed trails in the fields of eco-psychology, created wilderness vision quests, studied the multiple benefits of farming organically in community, taught nature education for pre-K-12 students to supplement clean-handed book learning, and engaged in interdisciplinary

study using nature as a focal point. Others similarly interested in the natural world worried about diminishment of global resources. Some, like Maureen Wild, dedicated themselves to building sustainable communities through developing farming cooperatives and green building projects. Alumna Nicki Johnson whose focus intersected global ethics, human rights, and sustainable development designed a three phase recycling program for an area in Bosnia-Herzegovina after she witnessed hunger and homelessness following the war.

Finding and Clarifying Voice

INDS alumni have explored the concept of *voice* in several intriguing ways in different arenas, including advocacy, professional theater, and higher education. Four alumni represent many other accomplished peers: Christopher Von Baeyer, Kate Wilson, Lois Roach, and John Feudo.

Christopher Von Baeyer, then teaching faculty at Emerson College and later Senior Consultant with the Ariel Group, brought Kristin Linklater, co-founder along with Tina Packer of Shakespeare & Company and Emerson faculty, to Lesley as one of his team members. Linklater inspired Chris and hundreds after him to free their natural voices and work from the inside out. He was struck by the personal and professional connection experienced through her 1986 book *Freeing the Natural Voice*. The legacy continues with current student Melissa Baroni, a talented actress who is interested in voice and studies with Kristin's lead trainer in NYC.

Kate Wilson came to INDS from Shakespeare & Company not only to learn more about speech and dialect for drama but also how to make that information more accessible and user friendly for actors. To that end, Kate moved to New York City to complete studies and an internship under the guidance of Professors Elizabeth Smith and Ralph Zito, drama faculty at The Juilliard School. Kate's outstanding student work and internship performance led to a progression of role development that culminated in Juilliard's hiring her as core Drama faculty in Speech and Dialect. In addition, she extended her Lesley INDS final project studies into voice and dialect coaching of both stage and film actors, earning her an outstanding reputation in her profession, and helping her achieve the vision of her INDS graduate studies.

Well-known in the local media and arts community, Lois Roach entered INDS to study the intersection of communication, media, and the arts. Along the way, she studied the history of African-American theater, techniques of script writing, and media presentation. While Lois's awards and accolades are too numerous to mention here, it should be noted that she won an Emmy for a work she completed while Director of Public Affairs for a major Boston TV network, has established herself as a major figure on the Boston arts scene, and recently completed a 16 year role as part time drama faculty at Wellesley College. In all capacities, Lois applied her considerable talents to bring issues, strengths, and possibilities of marginalized populations into the public arena.

From a different perspective but also involved in promoting meaningful communication through improving voice and speaking, Dr. John Feudo has achieved success in helping individuals speak publicly through facing their fears and projecting their knowledge and personality in public. John uses his own talents effectively in his newest position as Associate Vice President of Boston College, where he is in charge of Alumni

Relations. John's books on alumni relations, (e.g., *Alumni Relations: A Newcomer's Guide to Success*, published in 2009), have achieved favorable reviews and award-winning status. John has enjoyed presenting numerous keynote presentations in the US and abroad and has served as president of the national Council of Alumni Association Executives. In addition to his role at Boston College, he consults with organizations and coaches other alumni directors toward success.

Museum Education

In his roles as program faculty, director, and Dean of the Division of Advanced Graduate Study and Research Division, Professor George Hein attracted the attention of museum professionals to INDS as a place to pursue graduate study. While alumni have applied their constructivist knowledge to create museums, such as Emily Mikolayunas who helped develop the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, MA, other museum studies INDS alumni have contributed to local museum operations, including the Boston Museum of Science, the Children's Museum, the Worcester Art Museum, and the John F. Kennedy Professional Library & Museum. Two INDS alumni capture the flavor of those contributions.

Catherine Hughes built on her INDS experiences in her book *Museum Theater: Communicating with Visitors Through Drama* (1998). She combined theatrical talents, knowledge of museum constructs, and the Museum of Science vision into connecting visitors with museum offerings through drama. She created a collaboration between the museum and the Harvard Medical School to script and present a play dealing with addiction and neurobiology; she also brought science history alive through acting in a play based on the life of Ada Byron King, one of the first "computer" programmers. As the founding executive director of the International Museum Theatre Alliance, Catherine has consulted with many institutions, and she recently completed her Ph.D. at Ohio State University where she studied spectators' affective and cognitive responses activated by museum theater in relation to their comprehension and learning.

In contrast, Sam Rubin explored museum studies from his background as a teacher with a passion for history and love of biography. As an alumnus serving in the role of Education Coordinator at the J. F. Kennedy Museum, Sam has co-created numerous exciting programs that invite teachers to explore notable American figures through biographical explorations and primary research opportunities available through museums. In various venues including specific institutes and conferences and more widely through *New Frontiers*, the library's newsletter for educators, Sam has encouraged educators to schedule excursions for their students to incorporate primary learning experiences to help them discover their own passion for educational studies and locate inspiration for their lives from historical mentors, particularly those who were raised locally. Sam brings history alive for both teachers and students in ways that go beyond reading and discussing a text.

Professional and Personal Coaching

As Kate Wilson uses coaching to extend skill and opportunity for actors, three notable INDS alumni—Bonnie Gorbaty, Lauren Mackler, and Dan Shepard—use coaching to help individuals succeed in their careers and lives. Bonnie applied her INDS studies in the psychology of motivation and achievement and her research with mid-level insurance professionals toward creating a platform of professional enhancement and organizational development based on the intersection of knowledge and personal qualities. She founded Inner Resources, Inc., a company that focuses on building employees’ personal strengths and drive toward achievement of personal and corporate success through cultivation of intrinsic motivation. Bonnie’s accomplishments were recognized by others when she was named a top ten Female Executive Coach in New England.

Lauren Mackler came to INDS by a different route, returning to college as an adult to complete her education. With a string of professional accomplishments that include prominent media exposure, Lauren’s trailblazing turned inward, into a mission of helping top professionals who find an emptiness after achieving what they thought would bring full satisfaction into internal assessment of what matters most. In short, she teaches how to find personal satisfaction amidst and despite professional accomplishment. Lauren has recently mounted a coaching program to teach others how to help adults to take risks and explore avenues that will lead to personal satisfaction. An accomplished motivational speaker and author, Lauren’s latest book (2009) is *Solemate: Master the Art of Aloneness and Transform Your Life*. She also has her own satellite radio show on Hay House Network.

As one alumnus, echoing voices of others, said recently, “my experiences at Lesley changed my life.” Dan Shepard believes that Lesley’s investment in his ideas and personal support provided exactly the incubating environment he needed to flesh out his thoughts and dreams so that he could help others do the same. After mounting a major career transition to enroll in INDS, Dan’s risk taking was rewarded when he was tapped to become a partner in Essex Partners of Keystone, a top executive career management firm (where he interned as part of his graduate studies) that mentors CEOs, COOs, and others to follow their visions, in effect creating mini-INDS programs for his clients. Dan’s career change proved welcome, as he engages in meaningful assessment, teaching, and coaching clients by applying the theory and practice of appreciative inquiry in a way that is true to his own values.

Award-Winning Authors

Poet and author, Faith Adiele is an award winning author (e.g., Best American Essays listing) and university faculty who has a host of publications ranging from a co-authored account of the travails of being an undergraduate woman of diversity at Harvard to a feature on a PBS special. Her book *Meeting Faith: The Forest Journals of a Black Buddhist Nun* (2005) won the PEN/Beyond Margins Award, among other recognitions,

Another highly regarded INDS author, Barbara de La Cuesta, won the Gival Press Novel Award for *The Spanish Teacher* (2007), a book which explores social politics and human dilemma. Barbara has an impressive record of publication since her Lesley graduation and has received several noteworthy fellowships. Her literary works include:

The Gold Mine (novel in 1989), *Westerly* (non-fiction in 1993), and a long poem, *If There Weren't So Many of Them* (1991).

So Many Trailblazers

Almost all INDS alumni have followed what Robert Frost described as “The Road Less Traveled” and deserve recognition for their remarkable accomplishments. Regretfully, this chapter’s length excludes them in letter, but they certainly are present in spirit. For example, among those not mentioned here who also have influenced fields are: Maureen Ricci and Denise Carpenter’s work with helping students through promoting family literacy in the Providence Public Schools, Deborah Addis’s advocacy on behalf of asbestos cleaning and redress to victims, Lina Abiad’s work in international early education in the Middle East, and Brenda Stockdale’s administrative leadership role at the Cancer Institute in Georgia that led to her writing the book *You Can Beat the Odds: Surprising Factors Behind Chronic Illness & Cancer* (2009). Kim Archung created an inclusive literacy program at the Paige Academy in Boston and then taught in New York City. After earning her doctorate, she now serves as Professor and Director of the Claflin University (SC) Graduate Education Program that emphasizes teacher leadership, in a position that affords her opportunities to pursue her INDS interests in methods and practices of successful African American teachers, multicultural education, and urban teacher education. And, through promoting the power of music in peace education, former music teacher Cheryl Melody Baskin’s journey as composer, performer and recording artist, playwright, educator, and keynote speaker has included seven CDs for children and adults. Cheryl’s awards include the Parents’ Choice Winner and, most recently, the 2010 Kidlutions Preferred Products winner. It should be noted that all six children’s CD’s won the Kidlutions awards—coveted because the winner is determined by votes of teachers, parents, and family therapists across the country for products that enhance children’s social and emotional development.

Other alumni have used their INDS accomplishments to make a difference in local Massachusetts’s communities around Lesley. Kathleen Kolman applies her integrative studies incorporating musicianship (eight instruments), vocal performance (recent CD release), Brazilian culture, and educational curriculum development to succeed in teaching a diverse population of pre K- 8th grade students at the King Open School in Cambridge. Christopher Ellinger’s True Story Theater, headquartered in Arlington, builds on the tenets of Playback Theater to explore issues of conscience and sensitivity through compassionate listening with immediate response through dramatic means and dialogue. Joanne Pressman’s transformation of the Lexington Community Nursery School was notably inspired by her studies of the Reggio Emilia approach. Nancy Megha Bутtenheim contributes her multidisciplinary talents as a master teacher, leader, and visionary at Kripalu Institute. Award winning producer Michelle Sweet is well known for locally for the quality of classical music at WGBH (NPR) radio. And, finally, the formation of non-profits like Brio, Sahar Ahmed’s foundation established in Winchester to integrate the differently abled in shared community experiences, similarly grew from seeds planted in Lesley INDS graduate study.

In Closing

In remarkable ways, Independent Study Degree Program alumni have been the harbingers of Lesley University's future. The extraordinary visions and collective efforts of INDS students and alumni who inspired the development of five divisions of the Lesley University's graduate schools and its Educational Studies Doctoral Program are perhaps the most visible in moving Lesley's mission forward over the past 40 years.

Yet, each aspect of Lesley University's current mission statement can be found in the accomplishments of the hundreds of passionate souls and visionary leaders who graduated from INDS, from its nascent period in the 1960s through today. While contributing their extraordinary talents toward furthering humanitarian goals, INDS alumni insightfully and powerfully bridged Lesley's heritage with its future.

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Some INDS students took advantage of the local Cambridge option of taking four courses on campus and then completing two thirds of their program outside conventional course structures, while others completed the program in its entirety studying in other places, locally or internationally, where the level of sophistication in the chosen area was at the pinnacle of the profession or on location with a particular mentor considered a leader in the particular field.