

To the College President

Respect, Renewal—two values we hold

To serve the students well springs from the earth

Like yellow daffodils, to show rebirth

And good fortune, new beginnings from old.

Doctor Spalding—Keep the doors open by grace

To all beyond what money might allow.

Give hope to the jobless with sweat dried brows,

And guide our hands to a successful place.

Today, we shower you with poppies, the air

Fragrant with the chrysanthemums and white

Lilies. We give you high regard outright,

And we expect your commitment to care.

We invoke Robert Hutchins to wake

Our minds, "the best education for all"

Implies the teachable is meant for all.

As we accept this tenet, we may shake

Away complacency to sing a song

That proclaims equality. As the dust

Of the crisis settles, we place our trust

In you as president to act with strong

Measures to make student learning central

And keep the teaching standards high. One day

your mantle will pass on, and we will say,
"The college acts as 'first-responders' to all."
We take up our passports to the future,
Unafraid and confident the journey
Does not end in the ruins of a factory,
But steps toward endless learning that endures.

— Robert C. Abbate

RCCC English faculty member

May 1, 2009