

manager of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), in Philadelphia, he cut that system's operating costs by almost 30 percent while rebuilding the cars and infrastructure.

In 1984 he moved north, where he took on one of the biggest challenges of his career: New York City's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). "The system was in crisis. They'd just given up," Dukakis explains. "When [Gunn] went up to look at [the MTA], he commented that 'No sane man would take this job.' I took that as a tip-off that Gunn was going to take it." Gunn spent six years and nearly \$12 billion rebuilding the entire system—but perhaps his best-known accomplishment was simply ridding it of the sprawling graffiti that blanketed almost every subway car running and had come to symbolize the urban decay of New York City. "The graffiti was only a minor part of it, but from a passenger perspective, it was hugely important," he explains.

Practicing what he preached, Gunn also earned praise because he didn't use a car in the city. He took the subway for almost all of his personal and business travel—even to pick up his mother at the airport. He did use an MTA car and driver briefly while recovering from testicular cancer in 1985, but returned to the subway after the car was stolen from his driver's driveway one night.

When he left the MTA in 1990 to become general manager of the District of Columbia's Metro system, the *New York Times* dubbed him "The Man Who Saved the Subways." In Washington, he supervised the development of the last 13 miles of the system's tunnels. "Eventually, it came in on time and under budget—which is pretty good for government work," he says with a smile.

Critics and supporters alike say that Gunn does not suffer fools gladly. He left the Metro after assailing the board for continual interference in day-to-day decisions, saying it made his job almost "impossible." In several cities, his direct approach earned him more than his share of labor problems, but even most of his critics concede that Gunn does make the trains run on time.

From Washington, Gunn moved to the Toronto Transit Commission. He retired in 1999, moved back to his ancestral home

Aloian Winners

Established in 1988 to honor the late David Aloian '49, a former executive director of the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) and master of Quincy House, the Aloian Memorial Scholarships recognize two seniors who have made unique contributions to their Houses and to

undergraduate life. This year's recipients are Justin Erlich and Angela Freeburg, who were to be honored at the fall dinner of the HAA's Board of Directors on October 10.

Erlich, of Oakland, California, and Quincy House, is credited with transforming an underutilized space into the new Quincy Grille: fresh décor, an extensive menu, and a promise to stay open until 2 A.M. have brought together students from many of the Houses. "The success of the Grille under Justin's leadership has attracted the attention of the Undergraduate Council, which may consider using it as a model for a student center or centers," says Quincy House resident tutor Ryan Oyama. Erlich, a government concentrator and John Harvard Scholar, also plays on Quincy intramural teams, writes for the *Independent*, participates in the Harvard-Radcliffe Drama Society, and serves as a mentor in the Mission Hill Big Brother Program. He is considering law school and envisions a career in city government.

Freeburg, of Hollywood, Florida, and Cabot House, has fostered interactions between newly arrived sophomores and upperclassmen by creating Cabot Key, a committee of Cabot residents who plan welcoming activities. She has organized care packages delivered by singing seniors, and the popular spring bowling outing. The House committee that nominated Freeburg called her "probably the most visible, well-known, and well-liked person in the House." Also a dancer and choreographer, she has competed with the Crimson Dance Team and choreographed last year's House musical, *The Wiz*. She is an Afro-American studies concentrator; her senior thesis focuses on how race and gender affected the lives of black women at Radcliffe from 1862 to 1940. After graduation, she hopes to pursue a career in broadcast journalism.



Justin Erlich and Angela Freeburg

STEPHANIE MITCHELL/HARVARD NEWS OFFICE

on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, and had just fulfilled his lifelong dream of obtaining Canadian, in addition to American, citizenship when Amtrak's "desperate" problems convinced him to return to the working world.

THE DIFFERENCE Gunn has already made at Amtrak can be summed up by the fact that the trains are still running. Although the system has been weakened by the political need to run unprofitable trains through remote congressional districts, Gunn has focused on cleaning up internal problems first. Within weeks of taking the job, he announced that new accounting of the company's finances showed its debts were \$200 million higher than previously reported. His subsequent decision that the railroad would begin shutting down operations in early July unless the government produced a new loan touched off a crisis on Capitol Hill. "People said I threatened to shut down Amtrak. It was-

n't a threat. We were going to shut down," he says. "About the third week in July, checks were literally going to bounce." As the deadline for the shutdown neared, Amtrak's foes criticized Gunn for "playing games," while people who knew him better understood that the railroad veteran meant every word he said. "It's typical Gunn...The first thing he did was go up to the Hill and tell them self-sufficiency was a loony idea," Dukakis says. Amtrak got the loan and the trains continue to chug down the tracks—at least for now.

For his part, Gunn rails against the spending excesses and priorities of previous Amtrak administrators. Close to a hundred wreck-damaged cars languished in Indianapolis as part of a deferred maintenance plan—which meant that, after a July derailment in Maryland, Amtrak had too few cars to run its daily routes. Moreover, "They spent \$12 million on a consultant. With that I could have rebuilt 30 or 40 desperately needed cars. Which do you