

it “continues to operate using the same norms.” Thus, faculty members who face hour commutes (not unusual) to get home before caregivers end their work day are disadvantaged by a schedule with FAS meetings that run until 5:30, departmental meetings and seminars that run even later, and frequent dinners and evening hours. These conflicts fall especially heavily on untenured faculty with young children, on women, and on single parents, Martin notes. Beyond “providing better access to childcare, leave, and tenure-clock policies,” she says, Harvard and FAS will have to “reconsider the way that we do business” if faculty members

are to have any opportunity to balance work and family-life obligations in an era when professors can no longer depend on a stay-at-home spouse.

These issues are being raised elsewhere as well. Stanford’s Clayman Institute for Gender Research ([www.stanford.edu/group/gender](http://www.stanford.edu/group/gender)) has just launched a “dual-career academic couples” study, focusing on 30,000 faculty members at leading research universities; the study design notes that an extraordinary number of women scientists and mathematicians are married to men in their own fields, raising difficult problems of mobility and advancement.

The 2006 report of Johns Hopkins Uni-

versity’s Committee on the Status of Women, issued this fall, focuses on “long-standing traditions and attitudes in the culture” that have had “pernicious effects on career success and satisfaction” among women. An “inflated emphasis on the work environment, to the exclusion of all else,” is perceived internally as distinguishing that university “as a male-dominated environment, non-supportive to women.” The report advocates 50 percent representation of women in senior faculty and administrative leadership positions by the year 2020, a goal endorsed, at least as an aspiration, by the provost, who suggests that attaining it will be more diffi-

## Part History, Part Literature

In 1906, Professor Barrett Wendell '77 created a program in history and literature for Harvard undergraduates. In a

later speech to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he explained his creation as a cure for the “confused times” in which he and his students lived. Because everyone was “increasingly apt to think of everything as distinct from everything else,” Wendell proposed a course of study in which everything would be related.

That program became Harvard’s first concentration. And during its 100 years, History and Literature has been shrinking not in the number of concentrators (now around 162) or fields (including six national, eight regional, and three chronological), but the committee’s sobriquet—what began as “History & Literature” became “History & Lit” and has been trimmed most recently to “Hist & Lit.”

A century later, Hist & Lit is still honors-only: every one of its concentrators completes a tutorial every year, each of them still endures an oral exam before graduating, and they all write a thesis. They may communicate the name of their concentration with fewer syllables, but today’s students are as elite as the alumni who came before them.

On Saturday, October 14, 2006, about 70 current and former students converged to celebrate this distinguished but still living legacy in a program called *Beyond the Gates*. Professor of history and chair of history and literature Jill Lepore opened the centennial celebration a few minutes after nine in the morning, too early for most of the students who would later slip into Emerson Hall and take seats in the back. Praising Barrett Wendell and his “daily themes” assignments, Lepore argued that the committee’s pedagogy has always included close attention to student writing. The leitmotif of the day was learning how to live “beyond the gates,” but each of the three panels had its own theme—“Story,” “Justice,” and “History.”

Talking narrative and stories were writers Clara Bingham '85

and Peter Blake '91. Bingham, a journalist who is the author of *Class Action: The Landmark Case that Changed Sexual Harassment Law*, and Blake, a screenwriter for the television shows *House*, *M.D.* and *The Practice*, both said their writing was made possible by History & Literature.

Justice panelist Frank Rich '71, the *New York Times* drama critic turned observer of the American political scene, said “My view of the world came to light in Hist & Lit.” Two younger panelists, Rosa Brooks '91, a *Los Angeles Times* columnist and a professor of law at Georgetown University, and Adam Goodheart '92, the essayist who is director of the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College, both credited the program with their deepest beliefs: for Brooks, that “narrative exists only in retrospect”; for Goodheart, that “we are all becoming history all the time.”

Alumni of the concentration as well as undergraduates used the question-and-answer sessions to remember their favorite tutors, to reflect on the rigor of the committee’s course of study, and to acknowledge how Hist & Lit had changed their lives: a playwright said his works are historical because of the time he spent in the program; a writer wondered aloud whether adapting scholarship for a popular audience compromises it; everyone seemed to be discussing the relevance of cultural studies and narrative history.

In the last round of speeches, on history, Adam Hochschild '63, the author most recently of *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire’s Slaves*, and Nicholas Lemann '76, dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and author of the recent *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*, both spoke about the rise of non-professional journalists, such as bloggers. And panelist Edward Widmer '84, Ph.D. '93, a former speechwriter for President Bill Clinton who now directs the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, captured the room when he read aloud a letter from Hist & Lit alumnus and late-night television host Conan O'Brien '85, who declared, “For anyone with a fear of commitment, this was the department.”

~CASEY N. CEP