



John Gulla  
Head of School

## World Citizenship

In the Doge's Palace in Venice, in the Sala dello Scudo, there is a map of the world as it was known by the Venetians in the middle of the 16th century. Inspired by their own Marco Polo, they were the exemplars of world citizenship of their day. This map shows abundant terra incognita, but to me its most striking feature is that it is "upside down." Italy's boot points north. Africa is above Europe. I place the phrase upside down in quotation marks only to point out the nature of our collective conventions. There is no reason all our maps couldn't be so oriented. This particular map produced by the Venetians could be said to be right side up and those more familiar to us upside down.

The Venetian perspective in 1550 mirrors in some ways a recent period now rapidly fading in our own country. I don't mean an upside down world, but one viewed as having an agreed upon primary, preferred and privileged frame of reference. For most of the earliest map makers, the origin of their Cartesian representation of the world was Jerusalem. For La Serenissima, it was the republic of the lagoon. For most children at Blake today, it is first their family and then their home town, then Minnesota, then their country and, finally, their planet. An education that spans the grades of pre-kindergarten to 12 must help guide children on an ever expanding journey to a broader temporal and geographical worldview.

half century, of inviting students from other countries to come to Minnesota for a semester or a year, and some of our recent international students have been from China, Jordan, Slovakia, Ghana, Russia and Turkey.

We are soon to announce the specifics of the expansion of our language program into the earlier grades of the Lower School. We already offer Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, French and Latin in Middle and Upper School. Our modern and classical language department is growing in many important ways. A group of Spanish teachers visited Santiago over Thanksgiving break to explore the city and attend a conference. Our commitment to international experiences for our students is not new. Each year for the last couple of decades a handful of sophomores have been participating in Swiss Semester in Zermatt.

I had a most poignant reminder of the shrinking of our global village about 18 months ago. I was on a summer holiday in Morocco. My son and our other traveling companions were tired, and they decided to take an afternoon nap. I sought out an Internet café and for a couple of hours immersed myself in Blake e-mail. When I swiveled around at the end of this session at the computer, I first gazed at the dozen other computers in the room. All had Muslim men in front of them and most flirting online via VoIP and webcam. Then I walked out in the labyrinthine streets of eighth century Fez and had a sense of cultural, historical vertigo. One minute answering e-mails about hiring a teacher in Minnesota, the next inhaling the smells of the spice market souk.

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One of the six focal points in Blake's strategic plan commits us to "develop world citizenship." Through the history we study, the literature we read, the art we make and the cultures we explore, Blake's curriculum reflects this global orientation. As you'll see in the various articles in this magazine, Blake sends students and teachers around the world, whether it is Nan Peterson on a service trip to Kenya or Upper School students to summer language school in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Trips to Sierra Leone and China complement opportunities for students and teachers to travel to Costa Rica, London and France. The Plank Fund for Teachers allows a half dozen faculty to span the globe each summer. This school has a tradition, dating back more than a

That the future of today's students will continue to witness an acceleration of this globalization seems to me a certainty. Our increasing economic interdependence, the central importance of our planetary ecosystem and the ongoing telecommunication transformation, all make it a necessity that we educate our students to be citizens of the world.

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## Bursting Through the Bubble: Minnesota is Flat, as is the World

When I was a Blake student, 25-plus years ago, the School had many international initiatives. There were language-focused trips to France, Spain, Germany and Russia (including my 1978 class trip to France with Madame Cassavante), a couple of foreign exchange students each year and a few classes that touched upon international conflicts, other cultures and global economics. I will never forget studying about the Bushmen of the Kalahari and the Yanamomo tribes of the Amazon from teachers Barbara Maxwell and Joanne Scott in fourth grade nor sampling Middle Eastern food and coffee in Vern Olson's sixth grade social studies class.

Back then, however, the world was not flat. Blake did not include international authors in its English curriculum, and classes were not coordinated from a global interdisciplinary approach. Today, Blake's international initiatives are a top priority for the School and for the Board as we as a community strive to make Blake a recognized leader among independent day schools for our international

curriculum, service learning and foreign exchange programs.

Our current initiatives include funding the Jack Edie World Citizenship Fund, which helps provide international experiences for Blake students and teachers, the study-travel program to Switzerland, and making sure that curriculum goes beyond the scope of Western civilizations and cultures to include Asia and Africa as areas of the world for student travel and learning.

As a member of the Blake community for the past 35 years, I am so proud of the increasing role this School continues to play beyond our Midwestern bubble and into the sphere of world citizenship. My fellow trustees share this sentiment.



*Kent Adams '81*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kent R. Adams".

***The following is an excerpt from Kent Adams's address at this year's Convocation ceremony.***

This year's theme, "In our Backyard and Around the World," is personified in one student of Blake's 50th reunion class — the class of 1957 — and former Blake teacher Mr. Chuck Ritchie. Mr. Ritchie taught and coached here at Blake for over 35 years. Like most Blake students, Chuck excelled in academics and extra-curriculars at Blake; he was a true student/athlete who ultimately received an Ivy League school education from Dartmouth College, served in the military and came back to Blake to teach.

When Chuck was awarded the 1995 Outstanding Alumni Award for his long-term commitment to Blake and education, it was written: "Thanks to his fascination with other cultures and his fluency in languages, he has successfully brought back to his home community the best of many lands. As the leader of more than 20 student journeys to Europe and Asia, he has encouraged in young people a spirit of exploration and openness to other cultures. As director of the international program at Blake he has unlatched the door to a whole new world and challenged our self-

satisfied American parochialism." If you look at the list of other recipients of Blake's Alumni of the Year Award, and there have been 24 in all, you will note that four of them were lifelong volunteers, four were educators/scholars, four were activists in the areas of the environment, animal safety, public health and religion, two were civic leaders and one was an international businessman.

So students, as you think about the opportunities that Blake affords you and why as a school we come together today to "strengthen commitments to life-long learning, community service and world citizenship," I challenge you to be like Chuck and these other Blake alumni — giving to others, exploring the planet and its different cultures, being selfless and kind to others throughout. Many of your current teachers have followed Mr. Ritchie as former Blake students who now devote themselves to you as teachers at Blake. These include Mr. Druskin, Ms. Franchot, Mr. Passi, Mr. Zalk, Mr. Graham, Mr. Crushshon, Mr. Jolton, Ms. McConkey, Ms. Huddy, Ms. Gilmer, Mr. Colburn and

Ms. Youngdahl — 12 educators who are former Blake students who decided to take that Blake education and give back every day.

My message to you, young and old, is that even if you are thinking of pursuing a career in business, sports, law or medicine longer term, think about giving yourself to something extraordinary to help others even if for only a short period of time. There will be no rush after college, your life is going to be long and blessed, so take the time when you can to help others, whether that is in education, the Peace Corps, volunteer work, the arts, social activism, foreign service or public service. When you look back on life, you will discover that that time of giving will be the most satisfying years in your life. It was for me as I taught at a school similar to Blake for two years after graduating from college, and it is what we are trying to teach you here today on Legacy Day — that life goes beyond the bubbles of Blake, Minneapolis, Minnesota, the Midwest and, ultimately, the United States.

## A Welcoming Place, A Revealing Process Admissions at Blake

On a crisp fall day, Peter and Mindy Rechelbacher climbed the two small stairs leading them to a place they had heard of but never visited: The Blake School. The Twin Cities natives were in the all-important process of choosing a school for their young son.

The Rechelbachers had heard about Blake from other parents and knew of its excellent reputation. They had carefully read the admissions information that had been sent to them and explored the School's web site. Although Blake was highly recommended by many, the Rechelbachers still had concerns that it might be too privileged, not well rounded enough or that it might be too homogenous. So they decided to visit and find out if this was a place that would support their family and prepare their son for a lifetime of learning, discovery and world citizenship. They wanted to see for themselves if Blake's mission and values, which reflected their own values, were truly a part of the School's culture.

Today, based both on the experience of that crisp fall day visit and of a half-year of attendance, they are happy to report the experiences and impressions of that first visit not only addressed their information-gathering needs but also gave them an accurate glimpse

of the dynamic community they have come to know as Blake. They learned much about the "real" Blake on this first day and how it felt and matched their values. Diversity became more than just a word in the brochures they had received, as they observed students studying world languages and cultures and saw for themselves the variety of backgrounds in the classrooms.

The Rechelbachers' experience is just one of the many of the prospective families and students who visit The Blake School during admissions season. Visitors consistently remark on the students' depth of curiosity, the commitment and creativity of the teachers and staff, the warmth of the community and the forward-focus of the School's vision. They claim to better understand and appreciate the powerful combination of high academic standards with innovation, creativity and personal attention — all hallmarks of a Blake education.

### Beyond Diversity

This year the entire Blake community is exploring white privilege (see definition below) and its impact on the community. The School believes continuing discussions on white privilege is important because Blake continues to be predominately white in its institutional systems.

To launch our community dialogue on white privilege, Tim Wise, anti-racist activist and author of "White Like Me," conducted a half-day workshop in late August to help faculty, staff and administrators better understand and ultimately take action concerning the effects of white privilege in the classroom. That same evening, Wise spoke to the broader community at an open-to-the-public event sponsored by Blake and held on the Northrop campus. He urged attendees to identify the cost of white privilege, to see how and where it manifests itself in our homes, in our schools and in our social, economic and governmental institutions, to find ways to personally resist its perpetuation, and to collaborate for

positive and equitable change.

**Bryan Fleming**, Blake's associate director of Admissions, gave a heartfelt and thought-provoking close to our evening with Tim Wise. His comments exhorting us to "Stay at the Table" can be found online at [www.blakeschool.org/atTheBlakeSchool/centerDiversity](http://www.blakeschool.org/atTheBlakeSchool/centerDiversity).

### White Privilege Defined

"Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do. Access to privilege doesn't determine one's outcomes, but it is definitely an asset that makes it more likely that whatever talent, ability, and aspirations a person with privilege has will result in something Positive for them."

~ Peggy McIntosh



## Making Blake Look Good

Wandering through the hallways and across the grounds of each of our campuses, it's easy to see why our buildings and grounds crew is one of the best in the business. Manicured fields, well-lit hallways and pristine classrooms are just a few examples of how dedicated this group is to making our School look good each and every day.

This year the buildings and grounds crew has made Blake look good in one more way: by reaching 100 percent participation in the 2007–08 Annual Fund. That's right — each crew member from every campus has made a gift this year!

When asked why they give back to the School, the leads on each campus had similar responses:

*"Blake has always been good to us, and we want to be good to Blake."*

*"We love the sense of community at Blake and how we are always included as part of the community. Giving back to the Annual Fund is just something this community does."*

*"We feel like part of the bigger picture and know that what we do is important and that our participation will make a difference."*



Members of Blake's dedicated buildings, grounds and security crew. Pictured, seated, L to R: Jerry Jacobson, Dale Melom, Jeff Jensen and Kurt Erickson. Standing, L to R: Jim VanDyne, Jason Skaalerud, Dave LaBoda, Jim Dussau, Curt Hanson, Deone Ozanne, Russ Gronlund, Tom Donahue, Rick Gunderson, Bob Roster and Gary Gravitt. Not pictured, Dave Coleman, Steve Haugh, Dave Herron, Michael Hubbard, Kevin Insley, LeRoy Miller and Ken Nivala.

It is clear from talking with any member of the buildings and grounds crew that the family atmosphere created among the crew and the greater faculty is the top reason why they love working at Blake. Of course, we who benefit every day from the efforts of buildings and grounds know that spending our days in a well cared for environment makes working and learning at Blake a truly enjoyable experience.

The buildings and grounds crew is a key piece of the impressive overall participation (nearly 90 percent!) of Blake's entire employee base, including teachers, staff and administration. These high participation numbers on the part of all those who dedicate their days to working at Blake serves as inspiration for the rest of the community.

## Breakfast at Blake: Serving up another year of captivating speakers and topics

The third year of Breakfast at Blake, an Alumni Association-sponsored speaker series for Blake parents and alumni, is off to a great start, featuring intimate talks with guest speakers who were both knowledgeable and entertaining. In October, current Blake parent and 1987 alum **Dean Phillips** kicked off the series with his talk on "Family Business, Family Philanthropy." Phillips, the president and CEO of Phillips Distilling Company, represents the fifth generation of his family to manage the Minneapolis-based spirits producer and marketer. In November, **Kim Carlson '77** shared her expertise on the timely



Earth-friendly living maven Kim Carlson '77 (with Woody Kingman) spoke about the benefits of "going green."



Dean Phillips '87 (with Woody Kingman '78) was this year's first Breakfast at Blake speaker. He discussed "Family Business, Family Philanthropy."

topic of "going green." And **Al Franken '69**, a candidate for Minnesota's US Senate seat, was scheduled to speak just before the Bulletin went to press.

Be sure to mark your calendar for future Breakfast at Blake presentations. It's an event you won't want to miss!