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Opening Remarks

Educational Journeys

As a youngster, I would wander around my grandparents' farm in Cayuga County, traveling that fine line between exploration and trouble. In the barn, I scaled hay bales, climbed on old tractors, jumped in the grain bin, talked to the horses and cows, and checked the milk tanks. My grandfather issued stern warnings about monkeying around in the barn. "Stay out of there," he'd say. "You'll get hurt."

Like the barn, the garage was considered off limits, unless my grandfather was within arm's reach. The garage was hard to pass, because of all the intriguing stuff in it, including a set of oil-cloth maps that were wrapped around metal rollers and hung on the wall like window shades. The maps were old, dusty, and cracking—relics from the days when my grandmother was a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. I'd inspected them before with my grandfather, who had shown me the route on a U.S. map that they drove to San Francisco, where my great aunt lived. If my recollections serve me right, there were also maps of New York State, Europe, and the Roman Empire, among others.

One day I decided those maps merited further investigation. I pulled on one and it tumbled from the wall, just missing my grandfather's well-polished sedan. After that nearly fatal move, I scrambled to get the map back in place and escaped the scene. No harm, no foul.

To this day, I think about those "old school" maps. While the global political landscape has changed significantly since those maps informed students in a one-room schoolhouse, education—at its core—remains the same. True, teaching techniques, philosophies, and technologies have evolved greatly, but the commitment to instilling the importance of an education, developing knowledge, and fostering lifelong learn-

ing in students endures.

I remember my own elementary school experiences and have a deep appreciation for the wonderful teachers who opened the world to me. Reading "A Century of Teaching Excellence" (page 36) reinforces this view. The School of Education has a proud, century-long history of schooling future educators, developing innovative programs, and working to ensure that all students are treated fairly, respected, and represented.

Creating appropriate learning environments so students can advance their lives is crucial to society's well-being. Too often today, however, many of our public schools are relegated to survival



status. Budgets are slashed, services are reduced, and teachers are laid off, crowding classrooms and limiting opportunities. It's tragic that any school district has to fight to provide its students with the best possible education.

The days of the one-room schoolhouse are long gone, but the ideals of education persist. When teachers dedicate their lives to enriching students' lives, we should remember the resources we invest today to help teachers and students will reward us all in the future.

JAY COX
Editor

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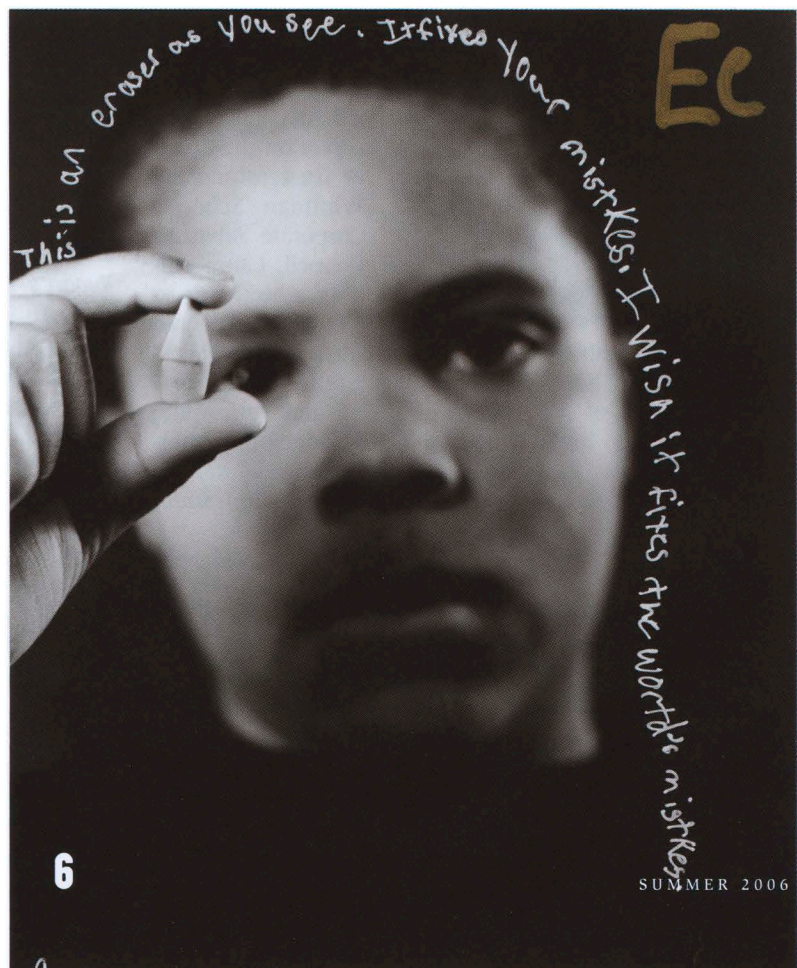
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Cover Illustration by Alicia Buelow



Justus Lacey, fifth grade, Ed Smith Elementary School