

OpeningREMARKS

Inspiring Hearts and Minds

Early on a Saturday morning in September, my wife, daughter, and I piled into our car and drove a dozen miles down the road to watch the annual Tully Community Fair parade. As small town events go, it was a slice of pure Americana. But what made the morning even more special was the appearance of Tully's hometown hero, Olympic runner Lopez Lomong, who carried the American flag in the opening ceremony in Beijing. He is one of the many "Lost Boys of Sudan," who escaped the horrific violence in their homeland and eventually resettled in Central New York and other parts of the country. Their story is truly inspirational—and the welcomes they've received from their adopted hometowns speak volumes. In thanking the crowd, Lomong expressed his gratitude to those who had "opened" their hearts to him.

Reflecting on this issue of the magazine, I couldn't help but see parallels between Lomong's journey and the stories of some of the people in these pages. First and foremost, there's Ernie Davis '62, whose tale of courage in a segregated United States has finally been resurrected by Hollywood and will hopefully inspire a new generation of Americans. No matter your political leanings, our look at the 2008 presidential campaign and the Democratic Party nomination of Barack Obama captures this historic moment of progress in our country. Likewise, "Appealing Prospects"—which focuses on the Class of 2012, one of the most accomplished and diverse first-year classes in SU history—highlights the University's commitment to providing opportunities to students who are the first in their families to attend college and to those who, without financial support from the University, would be unable to pursue their dreams. This issue also contains one of the most powerful examples yet of how students and faculty can make a difference in the world. The College of Law's Cold Case Justice Initiative (CCJI) investigates unsolved murder cases from the civil rights era, helping families who lost loved ones to the hateful violence of that time. Whatever CCJI can do to bring healing to the victims' families and to bring society long-overdue justice in these cases is heroic.

Every step we make toward accepting one another and freeing ourselves of bigotry and racism is one well-worth taking. As director Ping Chong and producing artistic director Timothy Bond of Syracuse Stage point out in the article about the production *Tales from the Salt City*, there's a great deal we share in common and it's crucial to appreciate our differences rather than fear them. We can draw tremendous inspiration from the struggles and stories of others, but it's up to us to embrace these lessons with open hearts and minds.



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