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A Deep and Rich Relationship

Dear fellow alums,
Under President Reveley's leadership, the College has undertaken a Strategic Plan with the goal of continuing to be one of the world's great liberal arts universities. Working closely with the Alumni Association, one of the Strategic Plan's key objectives is to build lifelong relationships and Tribe pride with current William and Mary students and alumni. Initiatives to make the W&M experience "not four years, but forever" are being implemented across campus; and we are exploring ways to better communicate this message to all alumni as well.

When I graduated from William and Mary in 1984, I think I can safely say that the last thing on my mind was having a lifelong relationship with the College. My primary goals were to make sure that I had my diploma in hand, a job lined up, and that all my belongings would fit in the back of my father's sky blue Oldsmobile Delta 88. I may have given one last fond look as we turned off Richmond Road headed towards I-95 North; but I doubt it, I was much more focused on what was ahead than what I was leaving behind.

Since graduation, I have always read the *Alumni Magazine* and stayed in touch with many of my college friends, as well as several favorite professors; but I didn't really reconnect with the College until I had been out of school for at least 10 years. In addition, although I was proud of my William and Mary degree, it was never something that I inserted in conversation on a regular basis — unlike many of my colleagues, who would often start off with, "When I was at [insert name of prominent university here]..." In fact, it was more common for me to find out inadvertently that I was working with a fellow William and Mary alum after months, or even years, of interaction.

Well, those days are gone, and it's high time we all got "loud and proud" about our



alma mater. There is so much to celebrate about William and Mary. We have had one of the best sports seasons in the school's history; our national rankings are consistently high; our undergraduate research programs are exceptional; our application pool has never been stronger; and the list could go on and on. In fact, whenever I meet with current students and hear about the amazing things that they are accomplishing, I often wonder if I would even be able to get in if I applied today! Who wouldn't want a lifelong relationship with such an extraordinary place?

So, I challenge each and every one of you to show your Tribe pride in every way possible — talk about our amazing school at your workplace or to prospective students, wear your green and gold, get involved in your local alumni chapter, hire or mentor other William and Mary alums whenever possible, and come back to campus and see for yourself all the ways that the College has evolved while staying true to its history and traditions.

I can tell you from personal experience that while I enjoyed my four years at William and Mary, I have benefited tremendously from reconnecting with the school. I have made friends across the decades and have a deeper and richer relationship with the College than I did even as an undergrad. I urge you to stay connected, or reconnect, with the College. You will get so much more than you give.

Tribe pride: Don't just catch it — share it!

JANET ROLLINS ATWATER '84

President

William and Mary Alumni Association