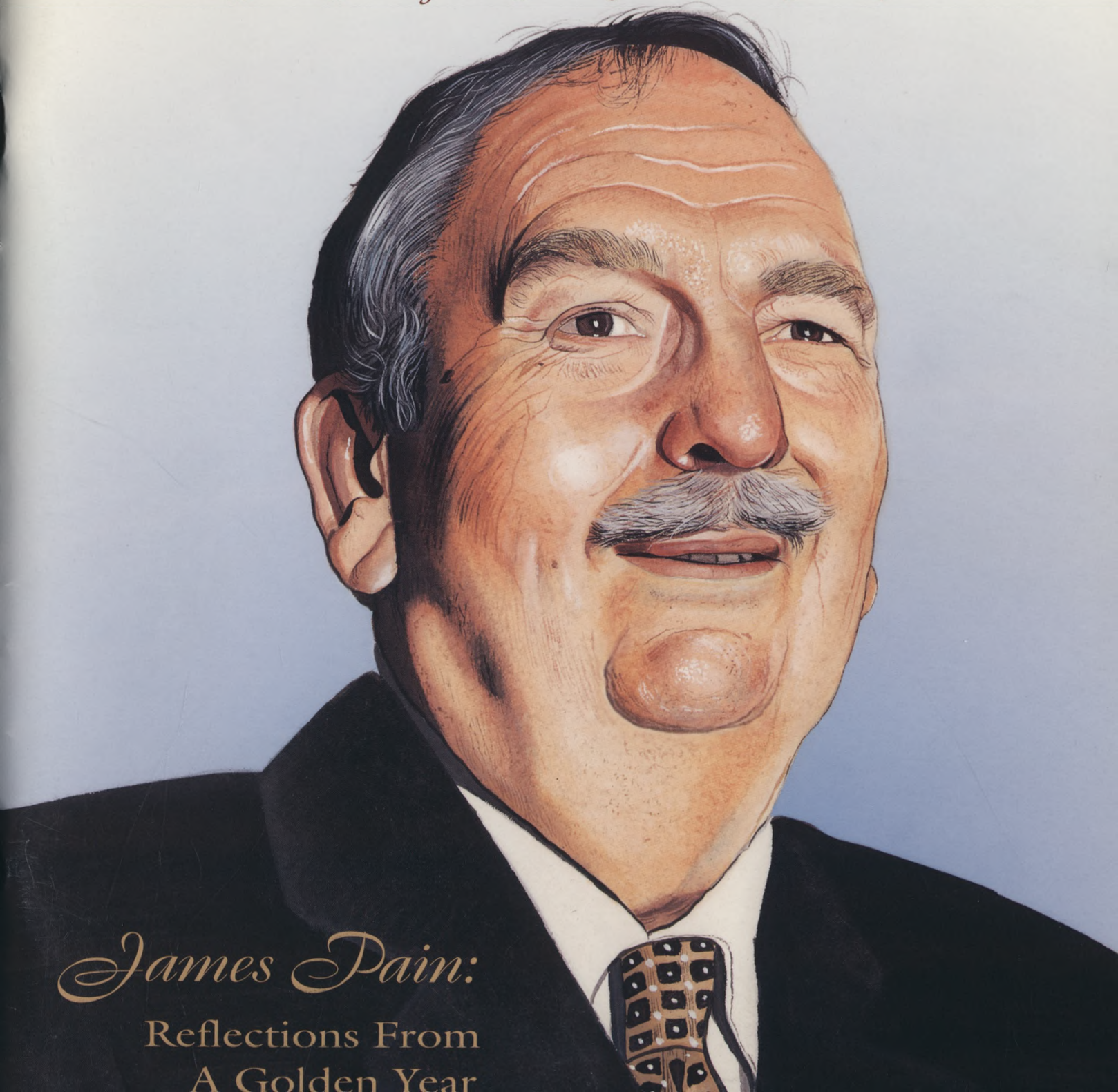


FALL 2001

DREW

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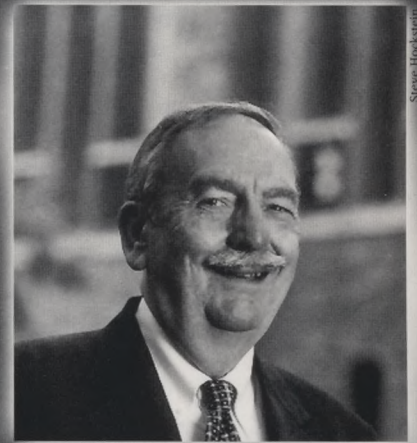
James Pain:

Reflections From
A Golden Year

Drew's Living Legend



Shelley Kusnetz



Steve Hockstein



Sal Benedetto

DEAN PAIN'S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY MARKS DREW'S SEASONS OF CHANGE



BY GLORIA ROJAS C'98

"I stayed so long, perhaps I am a monument to inertia." With a little smile, Dean James Pain, of the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies makes it clear that the image of the monument stems not from diffidence, but from the ironical sense of humor that has served him so well for 50 years at Drew University. A half-century—that's how long he has stayed, and in that time, says Professor of English Robert Ready, "Dean Pain has become the embodiment of the mission and history of the University."

In 1951, Pain arrived at Drew to become a theological student. A Californian, he had headed east when so many in the east were beginning to head in the opposite direction. Says Pain, "The entire country was in transition following World War II. The Christian humanism world I moved into was in flux, re-examining the nature of seminaries and churches. The GI bill bubbled up when the whole country was in turmoil and it changed forever the student body of Drew.

"Before the war," he says, "the Methodist college had served students from rural New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, drawn to Drew by proximity and church connections." But the flood of veterans and the changing patterns in education soon brought large numbers of other students. So Pain, after receiving two advanced degrees from the Theological School, and becoming an ordained minister, settled into his new and satisfying campus life, not at one school, but at all three schools at Drew, the College, the Graduate School, and the Theological School. Even now, decades later, he can conjure up some of the faces in his classes in those early years.

Pain taught, lectured, preached, counseled, and over the years, he also observed the changes.

"The college had been a regimented domain *in loco parentis*. Brothers College was monastic and penalties were strict. Men were being trained for the seminary. But change has been radical."



Pain's generosity is legendary. Here, he signs autographs for young 'fans' at a Korean folk village.

Literary Language Lost

With his 50-year perspective, Pain recalls the strict curriculum that required an introduction to all the humanities, classes where discussion was lively, and subject matter provided students with a background of Greek and Arthurian legends, the plays of Shakespeare, Milton, the Bible, and much more. Today's students are more reticent in classes, and Pain regrets "the loss of allusion, the backbone of conver-

sation." He complains that "baseball and politics" have replaced the literary pool from which we drew colorful language and a shared history. "The curriculum," he explains, "has moved in a different direction. Changing attitudes require different outcomes, and students are specializing and preparing for careers."

The Graduate School, now called the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies, is where Pain's values and commitment are easily measured. His decade-long tenure as dean has helped produce financial stability, new degree programs, and a focus on innovative courses of study.

"He stepped in at the right moment when he was acutely needed and turned that moment into 10 years of splendid leadership. In his guardianship, the graduate school received a very important naming

[gift].” That is Professor Merrill Skaggs’ assessment of the man who followed her as dean of the graduate school, and her opinion is heartily seconded by religion Professor Don Jones: “Jim Pain is a contradiction of the Peter Principle,” says Jones. “He has been promoted commensurate with his abilities and capacity. In fact, he has landed where he should have landed, a continuity of scholar, teacher, and administrator.”

The naming gift is, of course, the generous contribution of New Jersey’s Caspersen family. Barbara Caspersen was a young mother of four children when she decided that despite her many roles as corporate wife, parent, and community volunteer, her mind was not sufficiently nourished. She enrolled in the Graduate School at Drew and studied English Literature, eventually earning her doctorate. A longtime trustee of Drew, Caspersen has championed the Graduate School and remains “delighted” that she and her husband, Finn, were able to support it through a major gift for endowment, financial aid, and facility improvements.

Speaking of her relationship with Dean Pain, Caspersen said, “Jim is a wonderful Dean—his considerable intellect is matched by deep spirituality and also by an innovative approach to graduate education. Under his leadership the school has added several new degree programs while continuing to offer the core degrees for which it has been traditionally known and respected. For me, it’s a great pleasure to work with and support Jim and the school during these exciting times.”

Niche Programs

Several innovative programs introduced in the Caspersen School break new ground in New Jersey.

“We occupy a special niche in that we don’t do everything, but we do what we do very well,” explains Pain, and points with pride at the Medical Humanities programs that offer either a master’s degree or a certificate. “We don’t simply do ethics, we do medical narrative and use literature and anthropology. Medicine is the most humane of the sciences, and we impact not only doctors, but also nurses, administrators, even the medical insurance industry. We teach the cultural differences in areas such as blood transfusion, autopsies, and dietary rules.”

The need for this focus is clearly visible in today’s headlines: a pharmacist is accused of watering down prescriptions for cancer patients, and medical personnel have to resolve conflict with young patients and parents in disputes concerning autopsies and transfusions.

The successful programs of Master of Letters [M.Litt.] and Doctor of Letters [D.Litt.], interdisciplinary humanities programs of real value in northern New Jersey, which began in the tenure of Dean Bard Thompson, continue to flourish in the Caspersen School. They draw a wave of adult students inter-

ested in lifelong learning. Says Ready, “Dean Pain has made it possible for people in their 40s, 50s and 60s to seek out the special mission of Drew. Pain understands that mission and knew where to take it. The immediate consequence is that the Graduate School is in the black and has won the respect of financial offices. Pain didn’t do it alone—he had the faculty, the students, and the economy working for it also, but he was the dean who could bring it all together.”

Pain’s style of administration is exactly what was needed, according to Jones: “Not bureaucratic. Not autocratic. It’s familial, tribal, organic. Jim Pain consults and communicates; committee meetings aren’t his true style because his is an interpersonal approach. He is trusted because he trusts.”

Loyalty to his faculty has won loyalty in return, and Pain has also earned respect with his compassionate ability to bend rules in special situations. Says Ready, “He also respects the autonomy of the faculty, yet when he needs to exercise pressure, he can do it with grace: Autonomy if you’re doing it right, but you hear from him if you’re not.”

Pain’s generosity is legendary beyond his administrative role. Skaggs says “he was the most singularly giving person I worked with. He lavishes himself, giving time, attention, and empowerment, and he does not hold back. He has mentored more dissertations than anyone. He is well-read, has a broad range of scholarship, unusual recall, and is extraordinarily generous in sharing his knowledge.”

A visit to a graduate seminar enables a visitor to experience the broad scope of Dean Pain’s learning. The summer seminar meets in a cool lounge at Faulkner and draws a half-dozen doctoral students; the subject is Spirituality in the Age of Chaucer. The dean’s style is conversational, yet elegant and very learned. What does spirituality mean in the short span of Anglo-Saxon life? Is it only for the monastic? Does the life of the spirit exist only if you are spirited away from the reality of the world? Pain answers the

questions by looking at village life where the parish church provides identity, genealogy, marriage, and common laws. The simple premises are furnished with the writings of figures like Anselm, Bernard, Augustan, and Viviana, some



Dean Pain receives honorary doctorate of humane letters at Commencement 2001 for his ongoing service to Drew

Dave Hollander

familiar, some uncommon, all dwelling congenially in the vast accumulation in Pain's mind.

Jones says Pain's breadth of religious grasp is enormous, even paradoxical. "He is as comfortable in the circles of Protestant Evangelicals as he is in the orthodoxies of the Eastern church. His studies can range from Father Divine to Fulton Sheen."

In his classes, Pain uses music and painting, including modern painting, to demonstrate the human condition through the ages.

Deep Thinking

Pain occasionally punctuates his lecture with a laugh, a small gesture, and a sound—hm-mm. It is a two-tonal murmur that makes you pause; it issues an invitation to a thought. Ready has noticed the same technique at meetings with the dean when he says simply, "Isn't it odd?" Once again, the implied message is far more complex. Ready translates it to mean, "Isn't this serious? Shall we think on this more deeply?" and, according to

Ready, it is as endearing and effective a quirk as the two-tonal "Hm-mm."

Shall we think about it?

Spirituality and religion aren't just classroom subjects in Dean Pain's life. Although he is an ordained minister, he has taken advantage of Drew's great freedom to become expert in the Eastern Churches, both Greek and Russian Orthodox. He became seriously interested in religion and scholarship when he was only 12 because he read a treatise by Athanasius, an early church figure. Pain's interest was piqued because the introduction was written by C.S. Lewis, whom he later studied and met while at Oxford University earning his doctorate.

Ready says he thinks that Dean Pain himself is a patriarch and exercises that role in the Religion

Department. He has counseled students and leads a weekly liturgy. In the recent tragedy at the World Trade Center, a former student in anguish over a person missing in the disaster called Dean Pain because he remembered where there was comfort and counseling.

Jones sees Pain as a pious man, "not in a sentimental

way, but in a pure and perfect sense." He says Pain has deep authentic faith and even when he wears no collar, he has an aura that gives him credibility.

Pain's tastes in music have the same wide range that his intellectual interests and scholarship have. What do Patsy Kline's music and *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* have in common? The country legend and the classical composer, Mozart, both share Pain's appreciation and a place in his record and tape collection.

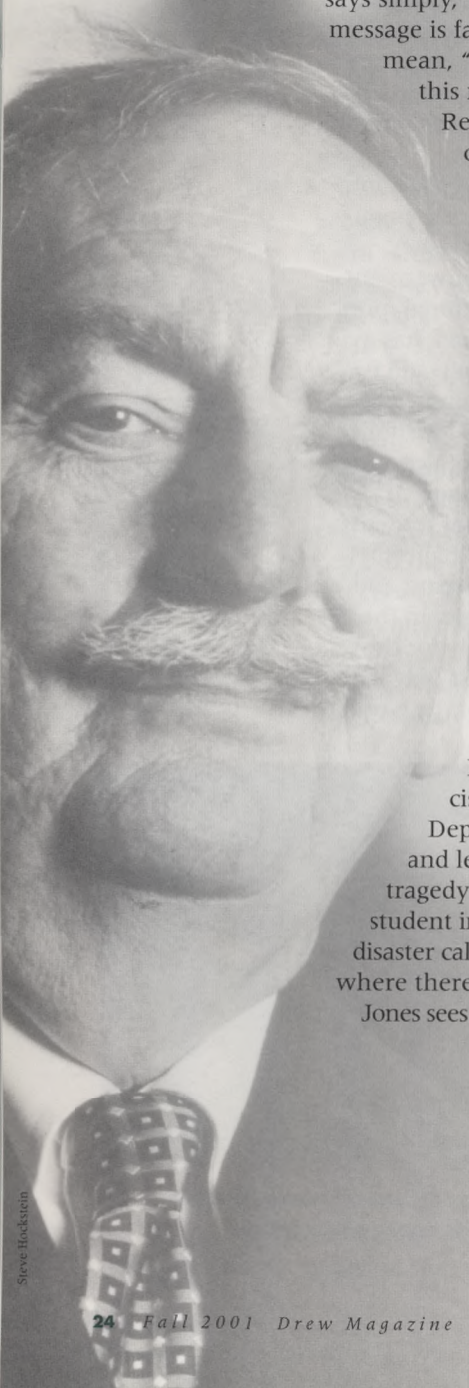
"Years ago," he says, "I learned just enough about playing music to know how it's done, but it is a very important part of my life. In times of sorrow, I return to the musical scores and classical compositions I love. Some people call it 'centering,' but I see it differently. Music helps you gather your pieces together when you are fractured. Beethoven's late works, for example, are healing."

Pain does not easily focus on all that he has given Drew. He is a modest man. He likes to talk instead about what Drew has given him. Certainly, academic freedom and acres of forest have been a big part of Pain's rootedness in Drew. He has occasionally explored a possible move to another campus, but he laughs when he recalls of a trip to Dallas. Upon his return, he asked, "Where were the trees?"

A campus has seasonal changes, and the forest at Drew marks those changes. Pain appreciates what the gift of the forest has meant to him: "I developed a proprietary interest in the forest and great affection for some trees. A tree's dying does not go unmarked, and I have seen many taken down to be replaced by new ones. I believe in the integrity of spaces." And this is his space, what he calls his "home base."

When he arrived 50 years ago, the young college graduate could not envision that he would spend his life here. But here is also where he found a world of colleagues and friends, the woman he loved and married, and an institution to which he is deeply grateful. He also found a college president, Tom Kean—or Tom Kean found him—but Pain considers it a real privilege to work with Kean in the growth and development of Drew.

Pain lets everyone know how he feels. The commercials played on WQXR are his. Skaggs says those radio spots have changed her view of academic advertising. Jones says the spots are only part of Pain's gift in rhetoric. Pain has been student, scholar, professor, and dean. He is also The Voice of the University.



Steve Hockstein