



Editorial: “A Legacy of Undergraduate Research”

David Frank*, Dean of the Robert D. Clark Honors College

Robert D. Clark, the founder of our honors college, which bears his name, was a strong advocate for the research mission of the University of Oregon. Clark won the prestigious Guggenheim scholarship for his research on Matthew Simpson, the minister who delivered the eulogy at Abraham Lincoln’s funeral. As dean of the College of Liberal Arts and then as president of the University of Oregon, Clark insisted on the centrality of research in a liberal arts education for undergraduate students.

This issue of the OUR Journal, with four articles by teams of undergraduate scientists, would have brought Clark joy. Clark was a professor of rhetoric who helped establish science on our campus. A special newsletter published in 2003, dedicated to the history of the sciences and the chemistry discipline at the University of Oregon, observed “Robert D. Clark, then Dean [of the College of Liberal Arts], had the vision and the courage to build up the sciences.” The intellectual source of this vision was Clark’s firm embrace of science as a critical way of knowing. He was, however, not a scientific fundamentalist. Clark, as do many of our best science students, understood the importance of music, literature, and religion.

The Clark Honors College library, which hosts 2,300 senior theses by undergraduates representing all the disciplines on campus, stands as the best proof that University of Oregon undergraduates command the ability to advance knowledge and understanding in the arts, social sciences, and the sciences. Our best students remain committed to interdisciplinary methods, trespassing often into disciplines outside their majors. A recent Clark Honors College student, who finished an outstanding thesis in the sciences, dedicated her research to Ernest Hemingway. Why would a science student choose Hemingway for a tribute? The student took a course on Hemingway, taught by Suzanne Clark, the daughter of Robert D. Clark, which inspired her to enter Hemingway’s world of literature. Of course, Hemingway was a scientist as well, having served Academy of Natural Sciences as a research scientist on a project involving marlin in Cuban waters.

I am thrilled with the publication of the third issue of OUR Journal. Kelsey Ward, the executive editor, should be proud of this peer-reviewed journal, placing truly exceptional scholarship by our undergraduate students in the spotlight.

*David Frank is the Dean of the Robert D. Clark Honors College and Professor of Rhetoric. Author of six books and twenty-three articles in the leading journals in his field, Frank’s most recent publication, *Frames of Evil: The Holocaust as Horror in American Film*, co-authored with Caroline J.S. Picart, critiques the use of visual rhetoric and narrative devices in *Schindler’s List* and other popular films to explain evil in the world. In February 2008, during the height of the Democratic election primaries, Frank, who is also the director of the UO forensics program, was interviewed on National Public Radio about Barack Obama’s rhetoric of consilience.