Foreword

How can one describe the life of a friend—especially a friend one hundred years old? Ken Kaden, dedicated professor and long-time friend of Concordia, looks with love and respect at Concordia College on the following pages. He is careful but kind as his research uncovers interesting details about a life history now ten decades long. Professor Kaden reviews the past, but he cannot disguise his purpose. He wants us to know and love his friend. My prayer also is that all who read this book will either be or become a friend of Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

As in a relationship with a friend, Concordia’s history is open ended or future oriented. The past is but prologue. Professor Kaden examines Concordia’s past because he wants us to prepare for Concordia’s future. With that in mind, he has invited me to write a foreword in order to share some thoughts, hopes, dreams, and visions for Concordia’s second century. In turn, because Concordia stands for a community in harmony, may the foreword invite you to dream dreams and to have vision for Concordia as well.

Concordia’s motto, “In litteris proficere volo, malo diligere Jesum” must continue to guide the spiritual course of the college’s future. Concordia must not become another secular institution, having abandoned its spiritual roots. Times have changed, however. When President Buenger formulated the saying, Latin was an integral part of the curriculum even though the students and faculty were German-speaking Lutheran Christians. Now the motto must be translated for many. My own loose translation or even paraphrase is, “I want to become an educated person, but even more important I want to love Jesus.” Knowledge and love seem an unlikely pair in a culture that proclaims knowledge is power. In a world where many act as though might makes right, the message of Jesus will continue to offer its countercultural spiritual gift and challenge to Concordia’s people.
The meaning of Concordia's inscription presents more than a linguistic challenge. When Concordia began, students came seeking to grow in a faith already held. Concordia combined study of the letters with the Christian faith. As an alumnus of Concordia, I know that Concordia was never perfect. Students caught in doubt and sin always walked its halls. Yet, ideally, Concordia never separated education and spiritual growth. In Concordia's second century, the quest for the unity of spiritual values and human knowledge will be more complicated. Combining academic excellence with Christian principles will need to be more intentional. Retention of both will require thought and care. Concordia's mission is not parochial. Concordia will serve an increasingly diverse student body. Professors with increasingly diverse background and expertise will be required to build and sustain academic quality. A college which began in order to confirm the faith and develop the spiritual vocations of its church parent must continue in that task, but it must also rise to the challenge of finding new ways to set values, identify truth, engage in dialogue, and witness the Gospel to a wide variety of people.

Another way of looking at the challenge of Concordia is to say that Concordia must continue to serve church and community. The dual constituencies challenge the school's identity but also enrich its program. When Concordia identifies only with the work of the church, irrelevant idealism or unloving isolation can result. A healthy struggle with community resources and needs creates an awareness that inspires service and strengthens spiritual values. On the other hand, a focus limited only to community concerns or contemporary culture can lead to an education of limited vision or a secularism which would be contrary to the mission of Concordia.

In service to community and church, Concordia will continue and become even more involved with cultural diversity and global awareness. Located in the Twin Cities, a dynamic urban setting, Concordia's faculty, staff, and students will live on the cutting edge of cultural change. The city will provide students a home, but the urban area will also serve as laboratory, and place of service. Education at Concordia will be increasingly enriched by the many curricular and co-curricular opportunities for academic, social, and personal development in the city.

Two building projects, already moving beyond the planning
stages, will greatly foster the college and community relationship. The Fine Arts Building and the Health and Fitness Center will provide facilities to create a bond between academic excellence and community involvement. The two buildings will provide space to develop talent and offer service. The activities in each building will provide identity as well as purpose for the college. My hope is that the buildings facilitate the interchange of ideas and energy to create opportunity and understanding.

Using old and new resources to embrace the opportunities of diversity will mean constant evaluation and change based on careful long-range planning. Programs will develop and change because idealism will work with pragmatism. Intellectual honesty and rigorous curiosity must march with cultural contingency and relevance. In more specific terms, Concordia faces the challenge of developing its graduate program and international study programs. Education in the traditional sense of four years of college and then graduation is already, by and large, a thing of the past. Ongoing, inservice, and higher levels of education are becoming facts of life for intellectually alive and successful people. Continuing its Oakhill, England, program but developing opportunities for academic and service experiences in Europe, Asia, Africa, as well as Canada and Latin America will enrich institutional and personal lives. Creating an academically strong and culturally relevant graduate program will encourage faculty development and meet student needs. Appreciation of such programs must also increase awareness and support of Concordia as an institution because tuition, endowment, and personal support of benefactors will continue as a necessary replacement for traditional ecclesiastical support.

In the end, although events and opportunities will shape Concordia’s future, the people of Concordia provide its heritage and its hope. As a graduate of Concordia and now as a member of the campus community, I know the quality and strength of Concordia’s people. Stories from alumnae and alumni entertain but also inspire. Personally and on behalf of Concordia, special thanks to Professor Ken Kaden for stories and information that enable us to understand better our past so that we can visualize better our future. He encourages us to believe that Concordia’s future is strong because it is a caring community. Concordia cares about knowledge and truth.
A CENTURY OF SERVICE

It cares about understanding, mutual respect, and justice and love.
It cares about the will of God.

For many of us, the Concordia motto continues to summarize our hopes and prayers for Concordia as the college enters its second century mission. "In litteris proficere volo, malo diligere Jesum."

Robert A. Holst