



MOVING FORWARD

I am fond of saying that Centre College is a place where “important conversations occur” given the broad range of eminent thinkers and scholars who have visited our campus, over the last several decades in particular.

To make the point, I often refer to guests such as Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Colson Whitehead, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks, Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, and media magnate Arianna Huffington. Nor to be forgotten are the vice presidential debates in 2000 and 2012 that put the College at the center of the political universe.

In time, this may be how we come to characterize the nearly 30 hours of discussion that took place May 2-4 during a three-day sit-in and demonstration by some number of our students near the end of the recent spring term. These “Old Centre Conversations,” as I choose to call them, were specifically about ways to strengthen diversity and inclusion on campus, topics to which the College has been attentive for some number of years. What we are able to accomplish for good as we move forward will determine how May 2-4 will be judged.

The hallmark of important conversations is that they help us each personally in our own individual growth and more broadly in our evolution as a member of a community.

How will these recent conversations help us as an *academic* community committed to learning, leadership, and service—educating students to become citizen-leaders on a global scale?

While it is the spirit of the current moment to protest and make demands, Centre has long been a place that takes a family approach, where we can disagree without becoming disagreeable, where differences of opinion are welcomed, and where all people are made to feel important and know that they matter.

This is to say I wish that what led to the Old Centre Conversations might have been handled differently, and it is my hope in the future that the peaceful and cooperative manner in which the conversations took place demonstrates that we are capable of being “family,” even when the topics might be difficult.

Clearly, as we continue to become a place of greater diversity, we must work to meet that pace of positive change in our community with the energy we devote to making all feel included. In fact, because of what occurred in early May, we will view these concerns with fresh eyes in a way that has the promise of making Centre a better and stronger place for all our students.

And so we move forward on these and other important issues, anticipating our recognition in 2019 of the College’s bicentennial.

As we do so, you can be assured that Centre remains committed to remaining a place of high achievement and high opportunity, where all its members—trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends—expect extraordinary things to occur, working to make a difference for good with their lives, serving others above self, and knowing that each day is a gift.

My best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Roush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "R".

John A. Roush