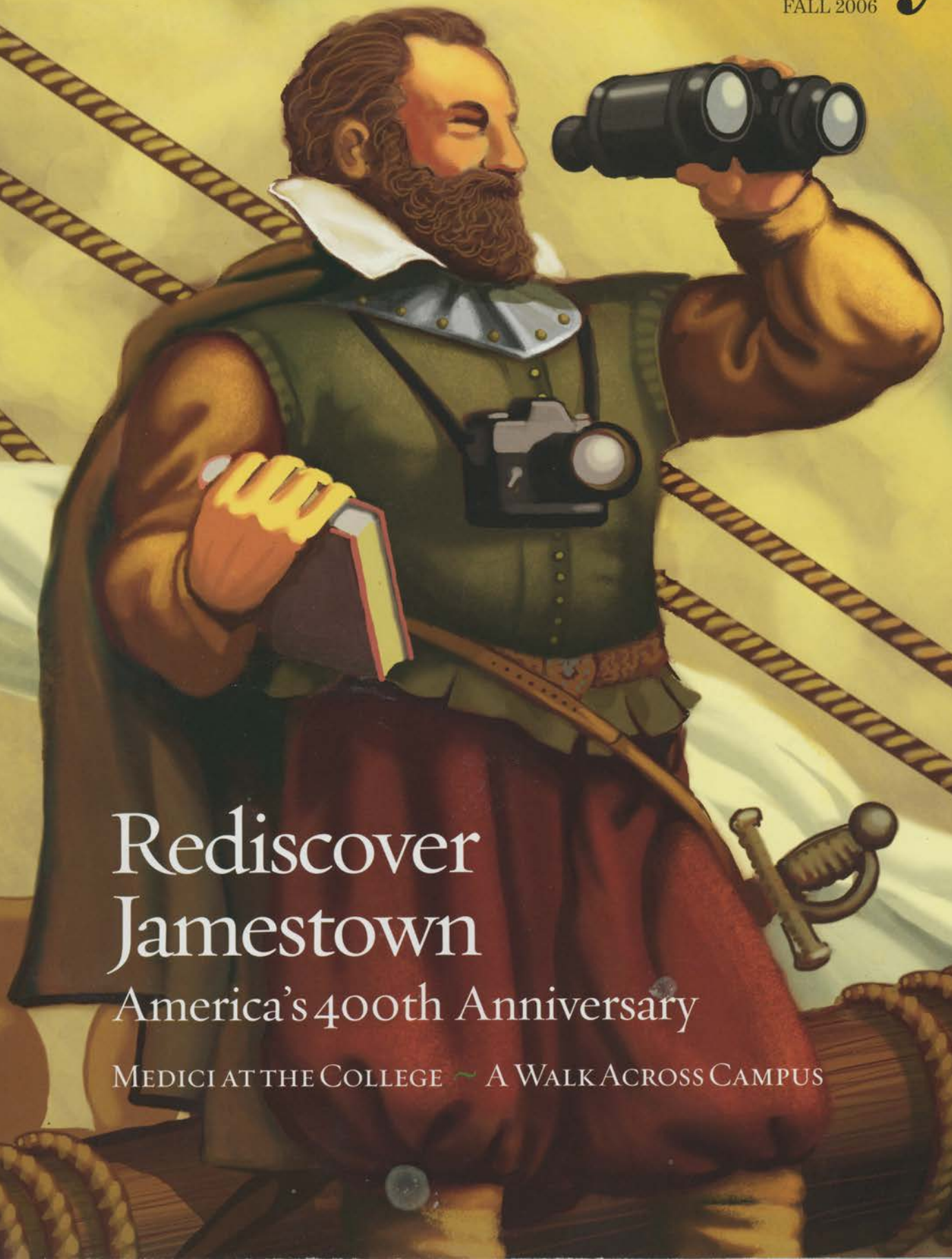


William & Mary

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

FALL 2006



Rediscover Jamestown

America's 400th Anniversary

MEDICI AT THE COLLEGE ~ A WALK ACROSS CAMPUS

TO LEARN WITHOUT THINKING

IS DESOLATION. - CONFUCIUS -

TO THINK WITHOUT LEARNING IS LABOR IN VAIN.



WITHOUT LEARNING

The Joy of Learning

Fellowship Honorees Inspire and Are Inspired by Their Students

INTERVIEWED BY MELISSA V. PINARD

Great teachers encourage their students to learn and to think independently. Below, the 2006 Alumni Fellowship Award recipients answer several questions about their passion for teaching. The general consensus among these professors is that they seek to engage students' minds by allowing them to formulate their own ideas and express their opinions. This sage advice was probably first given to the world by Confucius and is the answer Professor Ram Ganeshan gave to the question "What do you hope students take from your class?" *"To learn without thinking is labor in vain. To think without learning is desolation."* — Confucius.

On Sept. 21, 2006, the William and Mary Alumni Association presented Alumni Fellowship Awards to five professors whose classroom work has already achieved recognition among students, colleagues and staff: Alison I. Beach, Rachel DiNitto, Mark H. Forsyth, Ram Ganeshan and Robert L. Hicks. Each professor received a \$1,000 honorarium, provided through an endowment established in 1993 by the Class of 1968. Every year, the provost and the deans forward the Alumni Association a list of five professors who exemplify excellence in teaching.



RAM GANESHAN
Associate Professor, Mason School of Business

Q: Why do you like to teach?

A: The potential to shape a person's life and make them better citizens.

Q: Describe your ideal student.

A: I want my students to understand the diversity of issues and solutions to every business problem. There is no "right" answer. It is how well you argue for your position. Consequently, this makes most students a little nervous since the focus is now on the merits of the argument and not on the final solution. The ideal student finds her own way to enlightenment — I only lay the first few stones.

Q: Why do you love your subject matter?

A: I am the kid who loved trains, planes, trucks, cranes, ships, and ports. When I was in the master's program at Carolina, I discovered supply-chain management, then a new concept on how products are sourced, made, sold and delivered. I found it instantly fascinating, since it not only encompassed my childhood love for transportation, but was simple to understand and yet very complex to manage.

Q: What do you hope students take from your class?

A: I think Confucius said it best: "To learn without thinking is labor in vain. To think without learning is desolation."

Q: What is your favorite band?

A: I listen to anything and everything. I am partial to hip-hop, alternative music (Enigma), and South Indian Carnatic music (T. M. Krishna).

Q: What are you currently reading?

A: *The World is Flat* by Tom Friedman; *Against Method* by Paul Feyerabend; *Dangerous Summer* by Ernest Hemingway; *Daughter of Fortune* by Isabel Allende; *Night* by Elie Wiesel; and *Marker* by Robin Cook. (I am always reading four to six books at a time.)

Q: Describe your most embarrassing moment in the classroom.

A: I was late from a dentist's appointment. My lower jaw was numb from the anesthetic. I blabbered through the entire class. That was six years ago. My students don't remember my name but still remember that class.

Q: What's the most unusual thing I would find in your office?

A: A 1950s Dogon mask with a bullet hole in it.

Q: If you weren't teaching what would you do?

A: I have often wondered about this (especially when I have had a bad day in the classroom). First, a winemaker — I am an oenophile and dream of buying a vineyard and making some good wine. Second, an architect/designer — I love design, especially early American (colonial) and modern styles. I have designed furniture, functional spaces and my shirts.

Q: What do you consider your most valuable contribution to academia?

A: The book I co-edited with Professors Magazine and Tayur, *Quantitative Models for Supply Chain Management*.