

Bryan E. Carlson
President,
Mount Ida College
Class of 1963



Members of three generations of the Carlson family have been associated with Mount Ida College including Bryan Carlson, who has served as president over the past twenty years. Thus far during his tenure he has led the school through a period of extraordinary growth and transformation. With his guidance, Mount Ida has evolved from a single-sex, two-year institution into the region's leading co-educational TWO PLUS TWO college.

At NHS, Bryan served four years on the student council and played basketball, tennis, and football, making the all-league football team in his senior year. Although he remembers in particular football coach Jim Maloney, who stressed the importance of good character and self-discipline, he appreciates the "kaleidoscope of good teachers" at Needham High who contributed to his well-rounded education.

Yet, Carlson says: "Ironically, when I attended NHS, education was relatively less important to me. Instead, people were extremely important, but without the socialization experience at NHS, I might not have succeeded in the field of education." He credits his peers at Needham High with helping him "formulate many of the major decisions that have determined the course of my life."

From Needham High, Carlson went to Bates College, then transferred to Northeastern University, where he graduated *cum laude*. At

Northeastern he was elected to the Academy (the Honor Society for the College of Liberal Arts) and the Phi Kappa Phi honor society, then earned a master's degree and a doctorate in education at Boston University, where he was a member of the Phi Delta Kappa honor society. During and after his college years, he held several administrative posts at Mount Ida before he was named president in 1976.

During Carlson's presidency, enrollment, facilities, academic programs, personnel, and financial resources have grown consistently and exponentially. Five academic divisions have evolved into eight schools that now offer thirty-five associate and twenty bachelor degree programs. The faculty has grown from sixty-two to over two hundred. Mount Ida is committed to developing leadership skills in all of its undergraduates and to broadening their outlook on the world as they prepare for a wide range of professional opportunities.

Carlson's interest in higher education has involved him in various organizations, such as the New England Junior and Community College Council, in which he has held several offices including that of president. In 1994, he was one of five national college and university presidents to be given a Bennett National Service Award by Phi Theta Kappa. Active in his own community, Carlson has been a member and president of both the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce and the Needham Community Council. He has served as head coach of Needham Youth Football and on the board of directors of Needham Youth Hockey.

Looking to the future, Bryan Carlson has under way several initiatives designed to keep Mount Ida in the forefront of higher education. Among these are plans for a "Muhammad Ali Project," on which he is working with the former heavyweight champion and for which he envisions academic, cultural, and athletic facilities that would serve the Greater Boston community as well as the college. In another Mount Ida project, President Carlson is cooperating with ten former heads of state from North, Central, and South America to address the most critical policy issues common to nations of the Western Hemisphere.