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'Amazing Grace'

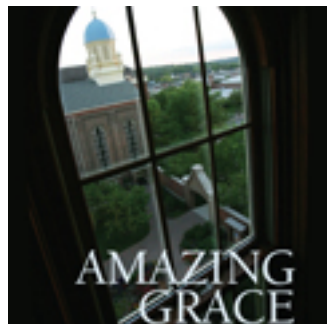
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'Amazing Grace'

06.11.2010 | Campus and Community, Faculty

The theme of God's grace flows through the essays of Thomas M. Columbus, whose poignant and powerful columns have graced the *University of Dayton Quarterly* and *University of Dayton Magazine* for nearly two decades.

As he prepares to retire as editor of the *University of Dayton Magazine*, his colleagues have compiled his editor's columns into a book, *Amazing Grace: Hopes and Memories*. The proceeds will benefit the Benjamin Taylor Columbus Scholarship Fund at the University of Dayton in memory of his 15-year-old son who died in 1996 on a local soccer field.

Columbus writes what he calls "the stuff of everyday life and eternity, of sadness and of joy." He tells stories of hopes and memories, piety and basketball. And whether writing about the death of a university president or his teen-age son, he reminds readers of God's grace.

"It isn't easy steering a university magazine that examines the intellectual and the spiritual, that brings religion into the conversation," said Kerry Temple, editor of *Notre Dame Magazine*. "And yet Tom has done that so gracefully. And these columns show why. Tom is honest in his communication. He's humble and true. He cares, he feels. He brings it home."

Brian Doyle, editor of *Portland Magazine*, called Columbus "one of the great editors of his profession."

He "is as deft and creative an editor as there is in the vast field of university magazine editing. He made a periodical that you could not ignore, recycle easily, dismiss, or put aside for reading when you were down with the flu. Issue after issue for years he handed the world the very best of Flyer flavor -- spiritual zest, communal verve, intellectual and emotional and cultural and social epiphany, tears and joy, a sense of his beloved university as a place that mattered far beyond its ostensible boundaries," he said.

Columbus will remain on the University communications staff in a part-time role as editor emeritus. Matt Dewald, managing editor of the *University of Dayton Magazine*, has been promoted to editor. Michelle Tedford, who serves as director of University communications, takes on the additional role of managing editor.

This collection culminates a remarkable 43-year career at the University of Dayton. Fresh from earning a master's degree in English from the University of Virginia, Columbus arrived on campus in 1967 for a one-year assignment teaching English and stayed -- six years in the English department and 37 years in the University communications office as a writer and editor. "In the first year of the column, I wrote of the deaths Tom Frericks and Father Raymond Roesch, S.M., two giants in making UD a major national university. So from the beginning, the column reflected on life and death, on God and grace, on the underpinnings of the nature of this University," Columbus said.

"When our youngest child died, I hesitated to bring my family life into the spotlight. But over the years I have been thanked by many for sharing my sorrow, for joining in their attempts to face life and death, to love God and accept his grace. I have learned much about what a community can be. Maybe others will see in this book something of the wonder of the community that is the University of Dayton," he said.

A graduate of Cleveland St. Ignatius High School and College of the Holy Cross, Columbus edited his high school newspaper, *The Eye*, but never envisioned a career as an editor/writer. It is his calling: His work has garnered more than two dozen national honors from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, whose annual awards program showcases the best work on college and university campuses in the world.

Amazing Grace: Hopes and Memories is available for \$25 at the University of Dayton bookstore or online at <http://bit.ly/ccDJLn> (url: <http://bit.ly/ccDJLn>). Columbus will sign copies of the book at a campus retirement reception from 3:30 to 5 p.m. on Friday, June 18, in the Kennedy Union Ballroom.

For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or

