

December 13, 2012

Class of '55 Award
Academic Year 2012

Dear Class of 1955,

I wanted to write this humble letter to give my thanks for your generosity that has allowed me to accomplish a dream that has long eluded me. I received the Class of '55 Award which allowed me to participate in the Roman Archaeology class that traveled to Rome, Italy in October 2012.

I am a non-traditional student fulfilling my first Bachelor's degree in a triple major of History, Archaeology and Classical Studies. Under the influence of these areas of study, I stepped off the plane eager to see the monuments, artwork, and architecture of the Roman Empire which had filled my studies for the last four years. Each experience of this adventure echoed the rich history of the area. I meandered down the cobble-stone streets of Pompeii on a rainy afternoon, touching the stone that had been covered in ash over a thousand years ago. I strolled the circumference of the Parthenon, amazed by the intricate architecture towering over me. I tossed a coin into the Trevi Fountain, not just to make a wish for the future as thousands had done before me, but also to give an offering of thanks to the ancient gods of Rome for opportunities like this to see the world and touch such awe-inspiring remnants of human history.

It's amazing how twenty years in the "real" world can give one an appreciation for the opportunity to learn. My academic advisor continually says that education is wasted on the young in reaction to my enthusiasm. Coming from a long line of story-tellers, my goal is to become a novelist and I am here at Cornell to build a foundation in History and Archaeology. I look forward to the adventures I will be able to share in creative writing.

These dreams would be an insurmountable obstacle without the financial aid provided by the Class of '55 Award. I am greatly indebted for such generosity. Thank you for supporting my dream. Thank you for enabling and enriching my educational career.

Sincerely,

Paula M Duke



The Streets of Pompeii



Under the dome of the Parthenon



Exploring the tombs of Cervetri



Standing with the remnants of the emperor Constantine