Dedication of Weatherhead East Asian Institute Brings Promise of New Programs

BY KATE MOOKE

Four hundred guests gathered on Wed., Jan. 29 for making a contribution to, a nomenclature to name Columbia’s prestigious East Asian Institute in honor of the Weatherhead Foundation, a twenty-year supporter of Asian studies at Columbia. The value of the Weatherhead endowment now stands at more than $18 million, enabling the Institute to expand its activities in research and education about modern and contemporary East Asia.

“The new Weatherhead East Asian Institute is a testament to Albert and Celia Weatherhead’s remarkable role in educating generations of students about Asia,” stated Lee C. Bollinger, president of Columbia University. “The Weatherheads have long supported Columbia’s academic strength in Asia. The Institute now stands as a symbol of their dedication for future generations.”

The Weatherhead Foundation was founded by A.J. Weatherhead, Jr. in 1953 and is currently headed by his son, Albert J. Weatherhead, III. The Weatherhead Fund at Columbia, created in 1980 with a substantial gift from the Foundation’s first $1.5 million gift to the University, is named for another of the Weatherhead’s sons, the late Richard W. Weatherhead. Richard Weatherhead earned an M.A. in international studies from the University, followed by a P.H.D. in 1966.

“We’re in a celebratory mood tonight,” said Albert Weatherhead, III at the naming ceremony. “The Foundation has now accomplished a remarkable dream that Dick [Weatherhead] conceived years ago. An educator with a profound interest in the Pacific-Rim, Dick must be smiling down from heaven right now, proud of the Institute for its tremendous work throughout the world.”

For over fifty years, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute has been a significant contributor to the current understanding of modern East Asia (covering China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and, increasingly, Tibet and the countries of Southeast Asia). From the first two Institute directors, who participated in policy-making at the highest levels of the nation after World War II, the co-editors of the current China’s New Century, to its current day faculty engagement with contemporary Asia and Asian affairs has not wavered since the day the classroom.

The Institute has educated generations of experts in Asian countries, related careers in academia, international affairs, business and other professions in the United States, China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and, increasingly, Tibet and the countries of Southeast Asia.

With enhanced support from the Weatherhead Foundation, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute has launched an expansion of its programs in 2000. New initiatives include the Weatherhead Policy Forum and the Weatherhead Program in Contemporary Culture and Art in East Asia. Last year these events, among others, drew audiences from across the university and the metropolitan area to hear Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen and former UN commission- er for refugees, Sadako Ogata speak on human security and see films from Hong Kong and Tibet in their first New York City screenings. The first volume in the new series entitled Weatherhead Books on Asia, Nanjing 1937: A Love Story (Columbia University Press, November 2002), has generated a stir in the international book market, with film studios now negotiating the purchase of movie rights.

FCC Forum Addresses Pending Regulations that Will Determine Future of Media

BY COLIN MOORE

Tensions ran high during a recent forum in Abigail Auditorium, as panelists argued the future of American media. Leaders from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) heard representatives from many sides of the broadcast industry appeal for an end to creating new regulations on media ownership—immunized rulings that may greatly impact how and what Americans watch and read for years to come.

Television producers, community leaders, watching representatives, artists, and industry unions officials implored the host of FCC commissioners to keep regulations on broadcast ownership rules intact, citing a steep decline in the quality and diversity of radio to corporate consolidation following the FCC’s loosening of those ownership rules in 1996. Network executives on the panels conversely made their case to further regulate those ownership rules, citing an increase in competition, which they maintain is a threat to the networks. The current broadcast ownership rules are up for review this spring.

FCC Chairman, Michael K. Powell, called for panelists to help develop metrics or models to judge what rules are in the public interest. Congress has challenged the FCC to supply more hard evidence to support their rules in the public interest, which Congress defines as those promoting localism, diversity and competition. As the panelists made their cases through researched statistics and personal testimony, it became clear that “hard facts” may be subject to much interpretation. And because of a large number of stakeholders representing organizations appealing to the FCC, the forum became a bipartisan affair: networks against everyone else.

In terms of diversity, David Poltrack, executive vice president of research and planning for CBS, argued that with the growth of internet and continuing expansion of cable TV channels, television audiences have never been seen as a diverse field of play. Poltrack stressed that all of the major networks have company-owned and affiliated stations that have shown 72% of the same material. The end result is a more homogenous industry of television viewing.

“Members of Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and Writers Guild of America, however, described an increase in syndication and reruns among the networks and their subsidiaries or member stations. Richard Masur, actor and former president of SAG, noted that ten years ago, 68% of primetime shows on the networks were produced independent- ly, compared with the 24% out of network productions today.

In citing examples of radio de-regulation’s affect on diversity, Jennifer Toomey, executive director of the Fairness Doctrine Project, stressed that networks are suffering from an unprecedented {expansion in} competition, say their executives. Networks, she said, see themselves as big fish in a rapidly growing pond, which can be positive, as long as they can defend themselves through further consolidation.

Ellen Agress, a senior vice president of Fox, echoed Poltrack’s illustration of a much larger market through cable channels, the Internet, and other forms of media. Outmusic, the new series entitled Weatherhead Books on Asia, Nanjing 1937: A Love Story (Columbia University Press, November 2002), has generated a stir in the international book market, with film studios now negotiating the purchase of movie rights.

With enhanced support from the Weatherhead Foundation, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute launched an expansion of its programs in 2000. New initiatives include the Weatherhead Policy Forum and the Weatherhead Program in Contemporary Culture and Art in East Asia. Last year these events, among others, drew audiences from across the university and the metropolitan area to hear Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen and former UN commission- er for refugees, Sadako Ogata speak on human security and see films from Hong Kong and Tibet in their first New York City screenings. The first volume in the new series entitled Weatherhead Books on Asia, Nanjing 1937: A Love Story (Columbia University Press, November 2002), has generated a stir in the international book market, with film studios now negotiating the purchase of movie rights.

Weatherhead fellowships for Institute graduate students support a range of activities including language study in Mongolia, internships in Southeast Asia, and research on AIDS in China. Since 2000, the Weatherhead Foundation has sponsored 65 fellows, a feat Henry C. Pinkham, Columbia’s Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, speaking at the event, called “an incredibly generous commitment in these times.”

“The East Asian Institute is a national treasure with a breadth of initiatives touching almost every aspect of a dynamic region,” said Albert Weatherhead, III. “Attaching our efforts, thought and funding to the Institute has been a long cherished dream, and the nam- ing of the Institute forges another enduring link between the Weatherhead family and Columbia University.”

Albert J. Weatherhead, III and President Bollinger enjoy the ceremony.

“The [ruling] is done wrong it could have significant consequences for American discourse and democracy.”

—Michael Powell Chairman, FCC