

# MS. CAMPANILE

MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH ACADEMY

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## Media “miss” represents women

Dear Reader,

**This special women’s issue of The Campanile synthesizes students’ perspectives on the gender issues that pervade all aspects of their lives: the media, arts and entertainment, sports and social interactions.**

**The conflicting messages, both overt and subliminal, that young women receive from the various forms of media they consume became a point of concern in our Journalism class. In informing students of the facets of gender representation, both problematic and worthy of celebration, our goal is to inspire young women to think critically about the role models they choose and the ways in which they allow themselves to be represented.**

**These four pages are the beginning of a series in The Campanile in which we will explore the scope of gender representation in media, culture and politics in hopes of inspiring recognition and conversations about the effects of disempowering gender portrayals.**

**As Beyoncé, our role model and guide to all things fierce, says, “We need to reshape our own perception of how we view ourselves. We have to step up as women and take the lead.”**

By Maddie Lawn '14

Stereotypes and prejudice—nothing could be more essential to the modern woman than destroying what these words define. Every day, we are unknowingly fed a media feast of images, slogans, ideals and degrading portrayals of women and their capabilities. We are witnessing and participating in our own disempowerment, and it is time to put an end to this misrepresentation by defining the issues and refusing to partake in

their perpetuation.

“In a society where media is the most persuasive force shaping cultural norms, the collective message that our young women and men overwhelmingly receive is that a woman’s value and power lie in her youth, beauty, and sexuality, and not in her capacity as a leader.” The organization *Miss Representation*, based on the documentary for women’s empowerment with the same name, identifies this paradigm as the core of female disempowerment.

Founded by Jennifer Siebel Newsom and Regina K. Scully, *MissRepresentation.org* is a nonprofit organization that focuses on highlighting and challenging the limited depictions of women in the media and our larger culture. Newsom is a filmmaker, speaker, former actress, advocate for women and a mother of young children. Scully was inspired by her work with young girls in the beauty industry to found CareerPeeks, a nonprofit organization focused on expanding career options for young women.

Making its way to the forefront of feminist progress, *MissRepresentation.org* has begun a movement called the Representation Project.

This project’s initiative is to use “film and media content to expose injustices created by gender stereotypes and to shift people’s consciousness towards change.” It is not solely focused on promoting women, but instead strives to destroy stereotypes related to gender, age, race and condition in their entirety so that every person is given the same opportunities.

One of the most prominent ways the Representation Project has approached this challenge is

simply by sharing information. It is giving people the real facts—pointing out shocking statistics and subtle to glaring injustices in our every day society. Its biggest end goal is to close the gap between male and female representation. Women comprise 51% of America’s population, and yet continue to fight for a small voice and a small impact on media, industry and politics.

Men occupy 80 to 95+ percent

gets people involved in women’s empowerment by enabling them to host screenings of *Miss Representation*, the film, as well as by encouraging them to take the Representation Project Pledge and become a representative. The pledge states: “I pledge to use my voice to challenge society’s limiting representations of gender.” People can also submit their names to become reps for the Representation Project’s Social

film, *The Mask You Live In*. Expected to come out this year, this film takes a step away from women’s issues to focus on society’s damaging portrayals of men.

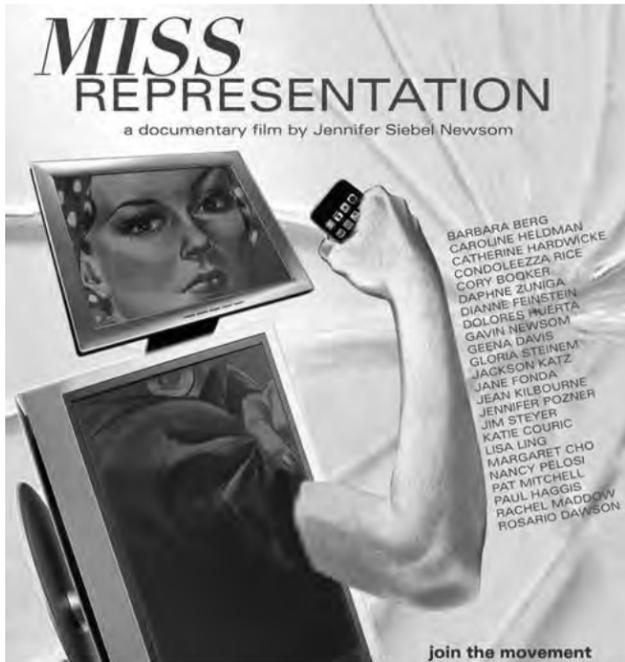
“There are three words that have become the most culturally destructive mandates in this culture. Be. A. Man. If we could change these words, we could change the world.” This quote from Joe Ehrmann, former NFL player and coach and director of Coach for America, opens the preview for the film and embodies what this documentary is all about.

The documentary aims to change our mistaken standard of what it takes to be a man—a paradigm that promotes aggression, suppression of emotion and psychologically unhealthy practices that can lead to depression and insecurity.

According to Dr. Michael Kimmel, “We’ve constructed an idea of masculinity in the United States that doesn’t give young boys a way to feel secure in their masculinity—so we make them go prove it all the time.”

If we can focus on removing the negative labels that define both sexes, we can work towards a more cohesive and overall productive society that makes use of each individual’s talents and potential. With that in mind, society needs to move to adopt a new, wholesome understanding of the differences and strengths of each sex, as well as a realization of our commonality and mutual humanity.

Opening our minds to see beyond the stereotypes may lead to a whole new generation of extremely talented people in roles that have typically been pursued by the opposite sex. The Representation Project has been fighting to defy limiting standards, and we can contribute by challenging the media and biases we encounter every day.



Representation Project’s Social Action group, which receives special alerts and in-depth guides with specific instruction on how to further the cause of gender equality.

In addition to recruiting reps, *MissRepresentation.org* offers a DVD guided curriculum, differentiated for specific grade levels, which teaches students media literacy with a gender-specific focus. The lessons include relevant concepts, discussion questions, in-class activities and homework suggestions. Teaching kids media literacy is crucial to their healthy consumption of the increasingly large amount of media to which they are exposed.

Several twitter campaigns also implore people to get involved: #NotBuyingIt exposes sexist companies and advertisements, and #MediaWeLike looks to put the spotlight on positive media that empowers women and girls.

Following the amazing success of *Miss Representation*, the documentary, The Representation Project is releasing its second

of the top decision-making positions in American politics, business, the military, religion, media, culture and entertainment. Women own only 5.8 percent of all television stations and 6 percent of radio stations. Fifty-three percent of 13-year-old girls are unhappy with their bodies, and that number increases to 78 percent by age 17. Most surprisingly, America is ranked 23 out of 136 ranked countries for overall gender gap, but that ranking drops to 60 when the focus narrows to political empowerment.

The Representation Project

## FRATERNAL TWINS’ JOURNEY DISPELS GENDER STEREOTYPES

By Catherine Palmer '14

When most people think of lifelong friends, they picture people who have been “besties” since they were young and are the same gender, like the *Pretty Little Liars* girls or Ted and Marshall from *How I Met Your Mother*.

But that’s not what I see. My lifelong friend is of the opposite gender. I have known him since before I was born. He is my twin brother, James.

He is not a substitute girlfriend. And I am not one of his bros. Yet, we are closer with each other than we are with any of our other friends.

My earliest memories are playing with James. We shared a room until the age of five when our parents decided we had finally outgrown our nursery and crib-sized beds. We would spend all day together. We occasionally played with Barbies (yes, my

brother played with dolls) much to our dad’s chagrin. (Though, James was usually more interested in tossing Barbie off imaginary cliffs than in picking out her next outfit.)

We also played more boyish games, too, like cops and robbers and football. I think I actually enjoyed playing football more than my brother, especially once I learned how to throw a spiral. James and I also played other sports like basketball, soccer and baseball in the backyard with our dad. We pedaled our trikes around and gave each other rides in our toy wagon in the driveway.

One of our more amusing and creative forms of entertainment when we were little was making “alphabet soup.” Our mom had gotten us magnetic letters that we were supposed to use to spell out words on a white board. But

James and I had another idea. We would pour all the letters into a toy drum and stir them around with a mallet. Needless to say,



Catherine and her twin James

our soup wasn’t very edible, but it was so much fun to make.

A lot of kids tend to make a distinction between their friends and their siblings, but not James and I. First of all, unlike most siblings, we’re in the same grade.

By the time we were old enough to go to school, we were already too close for anyone to come between us. Our lives up until high school were basically intertwined. Going to separate high schools brought about a change in our relationship. We learned how to function independently of each other. We now each have different friend circles and different lives a lot of the time.

However, James and I are still very similar. (Yes, we do sometimes do that twin thing where we say the same thing at the same time or finish each other’s thoughts.) Our similarities are more prominently shown, though, by the fact that we have never really fit into or broken traditional gender stereotypes. We are both athletic and especially love swimming. He is, in fact, a very accomplished swimmer. However,

his true love is piano. I, similarly, am not merely a sporty tomboy. I love music as well, though I prefer singing. We also both enjoy drawing and painting.

Our main differences lie in our true passions and plans for the future. James plans to study piano performance at a conservatory or college. I, meanwhile, have become far more interested in history, English and law. James is excited about my passion for law but has no real interest in law himself. Similarly, I greatly admire his musical abilities, but I am not fond of playing the piano.

We have different passions and goals in life, but our relationship does not suffer as a result. We embrace and even encourage our differences, but still hold onto our many similarities, the most important of which is that we know that we will always be there for one another no matter what.

## Mariska Hargitay responds to real-life violence

By Regina Yoast '14

When Mariska Hargitay is not portraying the character of female role-model Det. Olivia Benson on the hit crime-fighting series *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, she's taking on the role of mother, wife and advocate for the end of rape and assault.

Fourteen years ago, when Hargitay first started playing the role of Det. Olivia Benson, she received letters from her fans which told not of their love for the show, but of gruesome stories of their personal experiences of rape and abuse.

"That these individuals would reveal something so intensely personal—often for the very first time—to someone they knew only as a character on television demonstrated to me how desperate they were to be heard, believed, supported, and healed . . . I obviously had my role to play on television, but I felt a great responsibility to these brave women and men and wanted them to know that they had been heard

and that they could have hope," Hargitay wrote on the Joyful Heart Foundation website.

Hargitay did her research and discovered some horrifying statistics: One in three women report being sexually or physically assaulted by a husband or boyfriend at least once in their life; every two minutes someone is sexually assaulted in the United States; more than five children die every day in the United States as a result of child abuse and/or neglect.

She knew she had to do anything she could to help, so she trained to become a crisis counselor and used her position in the public eye as an actor to raise awareness.



Mariska Hargitay advocates for victims of rape and sexual assault through her Joyful Heart Foundation.

She blurred the lines between television and reality, taking on the beliefs and passions of her character. With the support of her

coworkers from *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, she created the Joyful Heart Foundation. The foundation works to help victims of rape and assault move past the horrid ordeals they have gone through, and reclaim their lives.

Since its inception in 2004, the foundation has raised over fourteen million dollars through fundraisers, personal donations and the donations of companies such as Bloomingdale's, Fran's Chocolates and Me&Ro. The foundation's goal is to create a world with no sexual assault, domestic violence or child abuse.

Hargitay wrote, "In creating programs for our participants, we quickly realized that everyone heals differently. We choose approaches that engage the mind, body and spirit for healing purposes and try to discover the strategies that work for each individual. We provide an extensive network of resources and our own groundbreaking retreats that complement traditional counseling and therapy."

The Joyful Heart Foundation has hubs in New York, Los Angeles and Honolulu, where counselors dedicate their time to create these programs to help survivors heal. They also work towards educating the public on such issues and fighting for victims rights in the legal system.

Hargitay said, "When people are abused and assaulted, it is like the doors to their souls slam shut. The goal of Joyful Heart is to let the light, and the life, back in—to banish the darkness and let the healing begin."

## A modern Ophelia takes on The Bard

By Ophelia Rodriguez-Mazza '15

"Frailty, thy name is woman!"  
Thanks, Will.

Shakespeare's works are filled with almost unnoticeable innuendos about the feminine sex, such as this one from *Hamlet*. And though he disguises his comments under the mask of comedy, it makes me question those who consider William Shakespeare to be a feminist.

Don't get me wrong. I love Shakespeare. I have a deep respect for his works, and I believe with all of my heart that he is one of the greatest writers in history. However, I would not use the term "feminist" to describe him.

This isn't entirely his fault though. It's nearly impossible to explore his work through a feminist perspective because, let's face it: Feminism wasn't around when he was a writer. Sexism itself wasn't even a concept! A woman was a man's property, and that was all there was to it.

Take *The Taming of the Shrew*, for example. Kate, the main female character,

is a stubborn, independent-minded woman who simply does not want to get married. But her father wants her to marry Petruchio, so obviously, she has no choice. The entire play is about how Petruchio needs to "tame" Kate and literally break her spirit just to make her a proper wife.

Then there's the classic *Hamlet*: a tragedy with no survivors. Ophelia, Hamlet's "love interest,"

appears to have little to no self-sufficiency. Throughout the play, Ophelia is little more than an object, a tool used by Polonius (her father) and Hamlet to play games with each other. After losing her father and Hamlet's love, Ophelia goes insane and drowns herself. Cheerful, right?

Both of these examples can be interpreted in different ways

entertaining. Shakespeare, in a sense, was a champion for women at the time. He gave women a voice through his characters, which is much more than many had at the time.

Though he never let women win a complete victory over the men in his plays, he encouraged the presence of wit and intelligence in a woman's mind. And

Macbeth, to kill the king in order to take the throne. Eventually the guilt leads her to suicide.

*Macbeth* leaves the audience questioning the traditional boundaries of female and male roles, especially since women are portrayed as crafty, manipulative beings that use men in order to achieve their own ends.

It's not a nice thought, but I

and the gorgeous Heath Ledger is inspired by *The Taming of the Shrew* and remains reasonably faithful to the original story. Kat (Kate in the play) is obviously Patrick's (Petruchio) equal and never does anything that she doesn't want to do. The majority of sexist components are removed and the end result is one of the best and most entertaining rom-coms in recent films.

Ready for a surprise? Disney's *The Lion King* is loosely based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Granted, the movie receives the musical treatment and has a happy ending, but if you look closely enough, the story remains the same. Except, of course, that Ophelia is the powerful lioness Nala who takes control and puts Simba in his place when he's being foolish.

And then we have *She's the Man*, which is based on *The Twelfth Night*. I have never met anyone who thinks that Viola, played by Amanda Bynes, is a weak female character. *She's the Man* is an awesome movie because of its strong female lead.

So I guess it's a bit extreme to try to apply feminist critiques to Shakespeare's plays. It's too easy to be biased and jump to conclusions because there is obvious evidence of sexism.

But if you take a balanced look at his plays, are they inherently negative about women? I think not.



Elizabeth Taylor stars as Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*.



Julia Stiles sheds a modern light on Shakespeare's Kate in *10 Things I Hate About You*.

though. Perhaps Ophelia's suicide was actually her open refusal to be the property and plaything of Hamlet and her father. And maybe Kate wasn't broken...maybe she tamed Petruchio just as much as he tamed her. But this is mere speculation, and it could be nothing more than wishful thinking.

Kate is Petruchio's equal in intelligence and wit, which is ultimately what makes the play so

he wasn't always putting women down in his works. He had a deep understanding of women's capacity to work around their situation and be independent-minded.

Lady Macbeth defies nearly all gender stereotypes. She is cold, ambitious, ruthless and violent. Throughout *Macbeth*, she openly rejects feminine qualities that she associates with weakness. In the play, she pushes her husband,

prefer that to being considered less than a man.

So overall, Shakespeare's women are either weak or manipulative. Or both. But, maybe it's because they are still women of their time.

Luckily, many modern films are able to give us a new take on these women.

*10 Things I Hate About You* featuring the talented Julia Stiles

## Beyoncé reigns as musician and mother

By Becca Smart '14

Though some may know her as Queen B, Mrs. Carter or even Sasha Fierce, the whole world knows her as Beyoncé Knowles: the queen of modern pop.

What makes Beyoncé one of the most successful female artists in music history? Well, the fact that she is tied with Adele for the female artist with the most Grammy awards won in a single night (6) and is tied with Dolly Parton for holding the most Grammy nominations ever for a female artist (46) may help explain why.

Although her notable count of awards and nominations is impressive, there is more to Beyoncé than the number of Grammys she has won.

Not only is she a complete performer who has the ability to command the stage with such a sweeping presence, but Beyoncé also has proven herself to be a role model for females all over the world.

"I guess I am a modern-day feminist," said Beyoncé in a recent interview with *Vogue*. "I do believe in equality. Why do you have to choose what type of woman you are? Why do you have to label yourself anything? I'm just a woman and I love being a woman."

This is not the first time Beyoncé has voiced her opinion on the social rights of women. In

fact, she has been singing about female empowerment since the early days of Destiny's Child, and she did not stop after going solo. Many of her own songs, such as "Run the World (Girls)" and

In the documentary, Beyoncé again speaks out about gender equality and unfairness saying, "Equality is a myth, and for some reason everyone accepts the fact that women don't make as much

yes, it's true. Women can make just as much money as men do.

It's not all about the money, though, for this practically royal couple. Aside from all their fame and glory, Beyoncé and Jay-Z have the joy of their one-year-old daughter, Blue Ivy, to keep them grounded.

Beyoncé tells *Vogue*, "Family has always been very important to me. At some point I want my daughter to be able to experience life and run through the sprin-

streak of accomplishments spanning over a decade, including Billboard Female Artist of the Decade, female artist with the most Top 40 hits of the decade and female artist who has spent the most weeks (37) at No. 1 this decade (just to name a few!), Beyoncé admits that her greatest accomplishment was giving birth to her beautiful baby daughter.

Beyoncé has solidified herself in her industry and has become synonymous with dominance



Beyoncé struts her stuff as a successful music and entertainment icon.



The star displays her motherly side with her daughter, Blue Ivy.

"Single Ladies," are also about the power of being a woman.

*Life is But a Dream*—her recent, autobiographical television film directed and executively produced by Beyoncé herself—also doubles as the superstar's mission statement.

money as men do."

Speaking of money, Beyoncé is one half of the most powerful showbiz couples in history, with the *International Business Times* recently estimating Beyoncé's and Jay-Z's combined wealth to be north of one billion dollars. So

klers and have slumber parties and trust and live and do all the things that any child should be able to do."

This is the difference between an entertainer and a real person. Despite the attention, the money and the fame, Beyoncé always puts family first.

Considering her unblemished

and female empowerment all by the age of 32. But there's nothing stopping her yet, even if a few more children are included in her future. There is no doubt that Beyoncé Knowles-Carter will continue making history and will forever be known as the Queen.

### THE CAMPANILE

120 WEST WISSAHICKON AVENUE  
FLOURTOWN, PA 19031

#### Journalism Class:

- Monica DiLenno '15
- Amanda Geiser '15
- Maddie Lawn '14
- Reagan McCarthy '15
- Annie O'Sullivan '15
- Catherine Palmer '14
- Maura Peifer '15
- Ophelia Rodriguez-Mazza '15
- Christine Sedlack '15
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- Regina Yoast '14

Adviser: Ms. Bernadette Leonard

## J-Law inspires fans to be confident

By Monica DiLenno '15

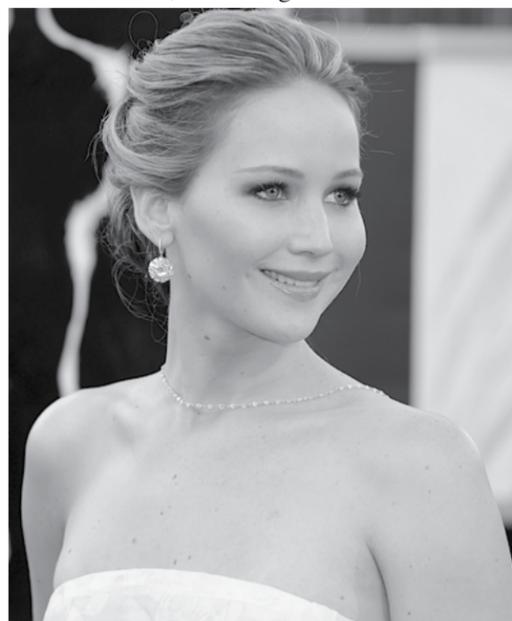
With the record-breaking opening of *The Hunger Games* series' second installment, *Catching Fire*, Jennifer Lawrence has indeed 'caught fire' and is now more popular than ever. For good reasons, too.

Beautiful, talented and admirable, Jennifer Lawrence has gained recognition for the inspiring messages she sends out to girls. Lawrence, unlike many young women today, is courageously unafraid to be herself and accepts her body as it is, which is an example that all young girls need to see.

Lawrence said, "In Hollywood, I'm obese. I'm considered a fat actress. I eat like a caveman. I'll be the only actress that doesn't have anorexia rumors! I'm never going to starve myself for a part. I'm invincible. I don't want little girls to be like, 'Oh, I want to look like Katniss, so I'm going to skip dinner!'"

Though Jennifer Lawrence offers much wisdom through her words, she never does so without a little humor. Her famed sense of humor is one of the best in Holly-

wood. The down-to-earth, sarcastic, blunt personality that she so proudly displays is one of the reasons that she is loved by so many. This past March, while going up to claim her Oscar, she tripped up the stairs, something that would



Jennifer Lawrence radiates confidence and beauty at the Oscars in 2013.

have mortified most people. But Jennifer handled the situation as gracefully as possible, cracking a joke when she made it up to the microphone.

Besides being a role model offscreen, Jennifer Lawrence in-

spires onscreen, too. After winning the Oscar for Best Actress in *Silver Linings Playbook* at only twenty-two, Lawrence earned the respect of both famed actors and adoring fans alike. Her recent movies show just how phenomenally she acts and how easily she is able to portray such raw emotion in a moving, realistic way.

She even sends out a good message in regards to her career and her success. Lawrence has refused to let any of her newly attained fame inflate her ego, and she is determined to work hard and make her career the way she wants it to be.

"There are actresses who build themselves, and then there are actresses who are built by others. I want to build myself," said Lawrence about her career.

Her dedication and incredible success at such a young age show that anything can be accomplished with hard work, self-confidence and a true sense of self.

# Columbro reflects on Title IX

FORTY-TWO YEARS AGO, THE PASSAGE OF TITLE IX LEVELED THE PLAYING FIELD FOR MEN'S AND WOMEN'S HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

By Danielle Kosman '15

Title IX, passed on June 23, 1972, with a series of other education regulations as a part of the Education Amendments of 1972, ended discrimination based on sex in every aspect of education. The law begins, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Contrary to the common belief, this law benefits men and women alike in providing equal opportunities in education and activities. Because the law covers the broad realm of education and activities, the guarantee of equal access to sports was just a small part of the original idea; however, it has become the most well-known aspect of the legislation. Title IX brought much more recognition for and a dramatically increased variety in women's sports upon its passing.

Mrs. Janet Columbro, Mount's Athletic Director, who was a high school student when Title IX was passed, experienced the outset of the law and lived through its impacts and advancements.

I interviewed Mrs. Columbro on her experiences with Title IX as an athlete at the time of its inception and as an athletic director at an all-girls' high school.

**Danielle:** When did you first hear of Title IX, and what did you think of it?

**Mrs. Janet Columbro:** Title IX was enacted when I was in high school, and it was a big deal back then. I went to an all-girls' high school, so it didn't have the same impact it did on co-ed schools; however, it finally made the playing field a little more even for athletic scholarships. As an athlete, it was very beneficial

across the board. I was there at its inception and have lived through it.

**Danielle:** Since Title IX was instituted, there have been an increased number of male coaches in women's sports, arguably because Title IX increased the caliber, recognition and competitiveness of women's sports. However, there have not been many female coaches in men's sports. Do you think this could possibly discourage young women from leadership roles?

**JC:** I don't think it discourages women from leadership roles. I don't see that transition. I think what we'll see is more women coaching women's sports at the collegiate level and fewer men in those high-profile sports, such as basketball on the collegiate level, which was mainly dominated by men for so many years.

**Danielle:** What is your opinion of male coaches for female teams, and how does it affect your hiring practices?

**JC:** When I'm hiring coaches, I look for strong female role models to hire; however, a lot of times we don't have the female applicants, so we need to select male coaches. I try to follow my gut on personalities—men who can relate to women, who treat us with respect. Coaching men and coaching women are com-

pletely different jobs. I try to find coaches that I feel will enhance the whole experience, not just the win, and that have respect.

attending schools for particular sports? If so, which ones stand out?

**JC:** Our biggest impact has definitely been crew. The number of girls being recruited for crew [has increased]. I was not exposed to crew as a high school sport until I came to the Mount. I guess it goes in cycles of how many kids are recruited each year for athletics, but I would have to say that crew is on the rise, and I'm sure that has to do with money available at the college level.

**Danielle:** What are some of the positive impacts Title IX has had on not only women in sports, but also in other aspects of life?

**JC:** Well, I think they finally have the exposure that they deserved. Successful women in sports never received recognition before Title IX. We still get less press in the paper than the boys' teams, but I think it's much better than it was. For example, Serena and Venus Williams both have sponsorships now, which they wouldn't have had back in the day. So there have been some improvements, but we're still not equal with the guys.

**Danielle:** Do you think there have been any negative impacts of Title IX for women? If so, please explain.

**JC:** I think the improvements that have been made are good. I

don't think we have taken a step backwards. I think there are more steps to take, we definitely have come a long way from 1972, but there are still major strides to take.

**Danielle:** Now that Title IX has been in effect for 42 years, what do you think the next big step should be for women's sports, if any?

**JC:** Title IX has been in existence for a long time, but I don't think there's true equity yet. Here it's easy to control the equity, and in single-sex schools you don't have to worry about if the boys' teams are having more than the girls' teams. It's still not as fair as we hoped it to be after forty-two years. I mean there have been great improvements: Now, we have athletes getting full rides to college, and that is a huge improvement. They still don't get as much as the boys. I guess the biggest improvement is more women in leadership roles—even with athletic directors. I've only been one for fifteen years, but when I first started, when I would attend state conventions, the ratio of males to females was probably ten men for every two women. In my fifteen years, I've probably seen the numbers triple for how many women are in AD positions—in co-ed schools. You can understand in a women's school, but in co-ed schools there are now a lot of ADs running both shows.

**Danielle:** Thank you for your candid and insightful remarks on Title IX, for all you have done and continue to do for the advancement of women's sports and for your dedication to all of us here at the Mount.



## Franklin takes gold in and out of the pool

By Reagan McCarthy '15

Although an encouraging role model may be difficult to find today, look no further than the U.S. Olympic swim team.

Missy Franklin is a 5-time Olympic medalist, a Division I collegiate athlete for the University of California at Berkeley, holder of 2 world records and 2 American records and only 18 years old.

To accomplish all of the above by the age of 18 is no easy task. To be humble about such feats is even more challenging. Although she is the current star of the Women's U.S. Olympic Swim Team, she never boasts. Missy is always pushing herself to do more and never sings her own praises regarding her stellar successes.

Franklin's athletic accomplishments alone make her admirable, but her dedication and inexhaustible hard work earned them. When Franklin was just 13, she qualified to compete for a spot on the 2008 Olympic team, but fell short in trials. Franklin's response was to focus on 2012 in London, where she competed.

"I wanted to compete for a spot on the U.S. Olympic Team. I have worked as hard as I can every day since [2008] preparing for this June [2012]."

Franklin went on to win not one, not two, but five Olympic



Missy Franklin is all smiles after winning a gold medal at the 2012 Olympics.

medals in London.

Missy Franklin is famous for her athletic ability, but what makes her truly special is her

bubbly, humble personality.

Franklin is an outlier in the world of athletes for her stature. Her modesty is unparalleled in comparison to other athletes of her success level.

She always says, after her events, that she was "just having fun," and compliments her competition.

It is common for athletes with her accomplishments to pass on college, and immediately turn professional by taking many endorsements. This was not in the realm of possibility for Missy.

In an interview with the *New*

*York Times*, Franklin comments on the difficulty of college, saying, "I've learned that Berkeley is very hard. Classes are definitely kicking me in the butt. But I love it."

When Missy signed up for a full athletic scholarship and rejected a professional contract, she knew she had a hard road ahead of her. But in reflecting on her choice, Missy said it was the "best decision I have ever made."

An extraordinary athlete, an exceptional human being, a humble character, Missy Franklin fits the bill for a positive role model.