

## A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS: GEORGE PLIMPTON '44 (1927–2003)

He was, by his own account, a haphazard sort of student. “In fact,” he confessed in the spring 2002 issue of the *Bulletin*, “I was a complete failure. I was asked to leave three months shy of graduation because of a multitude of sins, both academic and secular.”



George Plimpton '44

Whatever the state of his transcript, what was always abundantly clear about George Ames Plimpton '44 was his keen intelligence, his unshakeable curiosity and his great good humor, especially when it came to his own misadventures. Plimpton, who died on September 26, 2003, at the age of 76, combined each of these qualities into a truly singular literary career.

Make that careers. Not only did Plimpton parlay his early stint as a sports editor at *The Exonian* into a decades-long run as one of America's best and most elegant sportswriters, he also co-founded *The Paris Review*, the esteemed literary magazine that celebrated its 50th anniversary just weeks after his death. In the words of *New Yorker* editor David Remnick, Plimpton was “a serious man of serious accomplishments who just happened to have more fun than a van full of jugglers and clowns.”

A lot of that fun, as well as much wonderful writing, can be found in the pages of such books as *Paper Lion*, *Out of My League* and *The Bogey Man*, Plimpton's accounts of his brief forays, as a participatory journalist, into the world of professional football, baseball and golf. What Plimpton lacked in athletic skill he made up for with his love of the game—of most games, in fact—and respect for the people who played them.

“When I was a youngster,” he once observed, “I was convinced that the highest achievement one could hope for in life was to play baseball in the major leagues. My idea of the perfect death was to be beamed by a heavily bearded pitcher late in my career.” He didn't get that baseball career (nor that perfect death), but George Plimpton's achievements were definitely major league.

To read George Plimpton's account of his Exeter years, go to [www.exeter.edu/publications/exeter/spring\\_02/success.html](http://www.exeter.edu/publications/exeter/spring_02/success.html).

## THOMAS EHRLICH '52 ON SERVICE LEARNING

Thomas Ehrlich '52 has divided his distinguished career between education and public service. A past president of Indiana University as well as a former provost of the University of Pennsylvania and dean of Stanford Law School, he also served as the first director of the Legal Services Corporation (founded by Congress to provide legal assistance to the poor) and later oversaw President Jimmy Carter's foreign aid program as director of the International Development Cooperation Agency.

In the latest phase of his career, Ehrlich has managed to combine both these callings. Now a senior scholar with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Ehrlich has become a passionate advocate for community-service learning at both the college and secondary school level. He has co-authored a book on the subject, *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility*. And last fall he spent two days at Exeter talking with students—in classes, at a lunch meeting with leaders of Exeter Social Ser-

vice Organization (ESSO) and at assembly—about the importance of integrating service into the school's curriculum.

“When service is connected to academic courses,” Ehrlich told students, “the result is a much more powerful learning opportunity than when it is a separate experience.” Ehrlich saw that firsthand during his research for *Educating Citizens*, which took him to college campuses around the country, including Duke University, where students can enroll in a yearlong program that combines community service internships with courses that examine “the systemic dimensions of the social problems they confront in their internships.”

A successful community-service learning program depends on three things, said Ehrlich: a strong placement office that links students to community organizations and supports them in their service work; support for faculty as they fuse service learning into their courses; and, finally, a firm commitment from the institution.

“Exeter is an educational leader in so many ways,” Ehrlich said. “My hope is that it may become a leader in this dimension of educating citizens.”



Educator Tom Ehrlich '52: “Community service is much more powerful and has a more lasting impact when it is integrated into the curriculum of a school.”