



Gillibrand takes Clinton's Senate seat

After weighing several other candidates for junior senator from New York—including Caroline Kennedy and Attorney General Andrew Cuomo—Governor Paterson appointed Kirsten Rutnik Gillibrand '84.

GILLIBRAND is viewed as a rising star in the Democratic Party with a bright political future. She succeeds Hillary Clinton, who resigned after she was named Secretary of State in the Obama administration. The appointment is temporary; a special election will be held in 2010 for the balance of Clinton's term, which ends in 2012.

Gillibrand's political rise has been swift and smooth. In 2007, she snatched a long-held Republican congressional seat away from an entrenched incumbent, and then at the next election soundly defeated a challenger.

After graduating *magna cum laude* from Dartmouth, Gillibrand got her law degree from UCLA School of Law. She then practiced law for several years.

But politics were always in her sights. She was born into a politically connected family. Her father, Douglas Rutnik, is a Republican lobbyist, and her grandmother, Dorothea Noonan, was a women's rights activist who founded the Albany Democratic Women's Club.

Gillibrand served as top aid to HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo during the Clinton administration; she is founder and former chair of

the Women's Leadership Forum Network; and she received candidate training from EMILY's List, one of the nation's largest political action committees and financial resources for women candidates.

While a student at Emma Willard, Gillibrand was a classroom leader and an outstanding athlete. She managed the school newspaper and served as a student council representative and year-book photographer. As a senior, she was inducted into the Cum Laude Society, the school's highest academic distinction.



Rita Spellman-Parks '79 (middle center) and her family witnessed the Inauguration from the historic mansion where three generations of ancestors were enslaved.

Front seat at Inauguration

Rita Spellman-Parks '79 and her family were invited to watch the Inauguration from Arlington House, an historic building in Washington with ties to both Robert E. Lee and George Washington. Rita's husband had ancestors who worked as slaves in the 1802 house built by George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted grandson of George Washington.

On Inauguration Day, the Parks and others could see the Capitol building in the distance as they watched Obama take his oath on a nearby television.

"It was quite powerful to be part of the Inauguration," says Rita, "with so much history around us."

Rita explains that her husband's great-grandfather, James Parks, was the groundskeeper at the 1802 home, and when Arlington House was converted into a Field Hospital during the Civil War, he supervised burials. His son, James Parks, was born in Arlington House in 1843 and continued to live and work there until his death in 1929.

"He received the first presidential exemption to be buried at Arlington Cemetery with full military honors," Rita writes. "He also was the first African American to be buried in the main section of the cemetery, thus being the first to integrate the cemetery."

"Once I let silence be in the classroom, it was extraordinary who I heard from."

— Paul Lamar, former chair of the English department, spoke at a forum on The Dodge Study. This 1981 ground-breaking study on the moral decision-making of adolescent girls was reconsidered at Emma this winter as part of a faculty forum.



“Until the girls are educated a society won’t change.”

Greg Mortenson is celebrated around the world for his best-selling book, *Three Cups of Tea*, which documents his work building schools in rural Afghanistan and Pakistan. Emma Willard is bringing Mortenson to Troy, April 13, where he is speaking at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC), an event made possible through the generosity of Lisa Allen LeFort ’72 and Jack LeFort and Anne F. Collins ’56.

It all began for Greg Mortenson in a tiny remote settlement in the Himalayas. Exhausted and disoriented after a failed ascent up K2, he wandered into an impoverished Pakistani village.

The villagers nursed him back to health, and while recovering he saw that the children had no school, no supplies, and no teacher. They sat outdoors, scratching their lessons in the dirt with sticks. When he left, he vowed that he would return to build them a school. That promise grew into an international humanitarian campaign, and Mortenson has dedicated his life to promoting education, especially for girls, in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

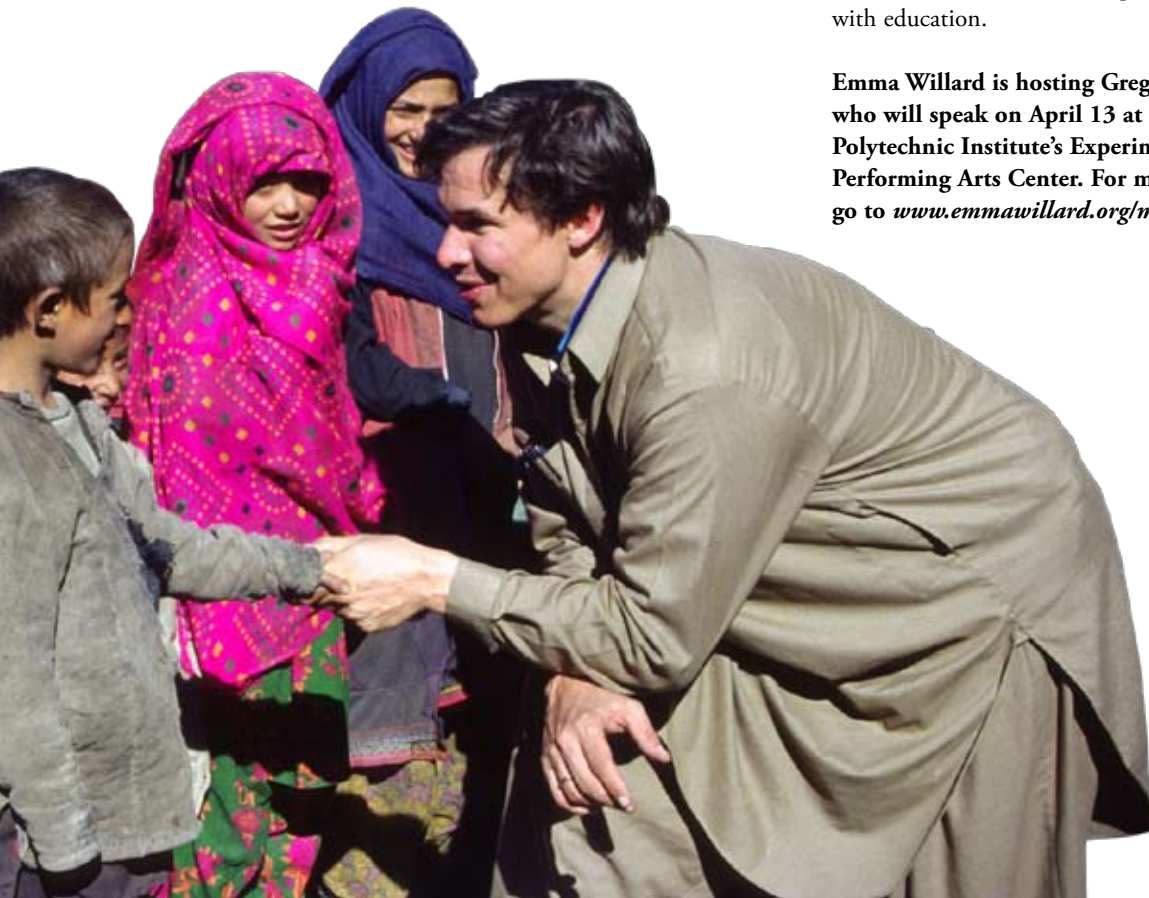
“You can drop bombs, hand out condoms, build roads, or put in electricity,” he has written, “but until the girls are educated a society won’t change.” He believes that girls’ education is the top priority if one is to promote economic development, peace, and prosperity in a country.

As of 2008, Mortenson had established over 78 schools in rural and often volatile regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, which provide education to over 28,000 children, including 18,000 girls, where few education opportunities existed before.

Humanitarian work comes naturally to Mortenson, who though born in Minnesota in 1957, grew up on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. His father co-founded Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center and his mother founded the International School Moshi.

His work has not been without difficulty. In 1996, he survived an eight-day armed kidnapping in Pakistan, and escaped a 2003 firefight with feuding Afghan warlords by hiding for eight hours under putrid animal hides. He has overcome two fatwehs from enraged Islamic mullahs, endured CIA investigations, and also received hate mail and death threats from fellow Americans after 9/11, for helping Muslim children with education.

Emma Willard is hosting Greg Mortenson, who will speak on April 13 at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center. For more information go to www.emmawillard.org/mortenson



On Ice

The morning of December 11, the storm began in earnest. And as advertised, it was a bad one. But the campus was braced. And ready.

The last bad ice storm had been in 1987, and Emma was hit hard. Power was out for days and students had to be sent home. Lesson learned. Emma Willard installed a back-up generator.

So when at midnight, after a day of rain and sleet, the power failed, not only on campus but in the whole city of Troy, Emma was ready. That back-up generator kicked on and a few buildings of the campus—Sage and Kellas—had heat and lights.

Ian Smith, director of facilities, describes the scene that night: “I live on campus and could hear trees breaking and branches coming down all night. Next morning it was a mess. Power lines were down on campus, pulled down by fallen branches weighted down by ice.”

Power was out for four days.



Photo by Linda Maier

INDIA PROJECT Enhances History and Art Courses

Last summer, 16 teachers were chosen from the United States to participate in the Fulbright-Hays program.

Director of Curriculum Allyson Montana was one of them.

Fulbrights in India are offered on a regular basis by the Department of Education because of the belief that American students do not learn enough about India in the social studies classroom.

“In fact, I heard recently that the average American history student reads two paragraphs pertaining to India in their entire high school career,”

says Montana. “Of course, this does not, nor ever did it ever, apply to Emma students!”

She spent five weeks traveling around India and Sri Lanka to learn about Indian culture, government, and education. She visited schools, cultural sites, homes, and government buildings.

Each Fulbright participant was responsible for completing a project geared to the needs of their school. Montana’s project, “A Visual Vocabulary of India: Teaching Hinduism through Symbolism in Indian Art,” may be used in a variety of courses like Ancient and Medieval History, Rise of the Modern World, and AP Art History.

