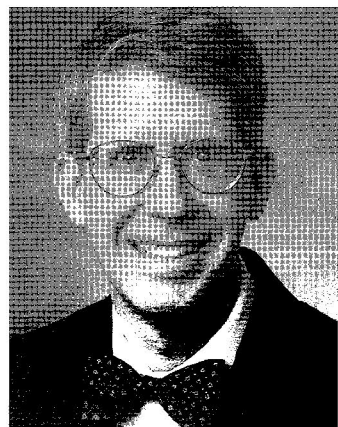


# NOTATE BENE

Brigham Young University's Honors Program Newsletter - Fall 2008

## Notate Bene: "Note Well!"



The current Latin title of our Honors Program newsletter translates as "Note well!" Often appearing as the abbreviation "N.B." in scholarly footnotes, the phrase encourages the reader to pay close attention to what follows. Although this particular rubric predates my tenure as Honors Program director, I find it highly suitable for our honorable venue. As I am fond of joking, "Always use a Latin phrase when an English one would work almost as well." The joke is that few vernacular phrases can compare to the inspiration found in a classical tongue. For example, once upon a time above the track at the Smith Fieldhouse hung a sign that read *Mens sana in corpore sano*. It personally inspired me as an undergraduate to run up to three miles a day, something the more plebeian "A healthy mind in a healthy body" could never have motivated me to accomplish.

Democracy being what it is, I am happy to leave to you *lectores* the choice for our newsletter's future title. I pose, however,

this question: Will you vote for the tried and true, classically inspired *Notate Bene* or for some passing fancy that has yet to endure the proverbial test of time? However you choose to cast your vote, let me take advantage of this forum to provide you with a few words on **how to get the most out of your undergraduate education.**

N.B. (#1): Whenever possible, **choose professors over courses.** By the time I began the second year of my undergraduate education at BYU, I had a list of professors with whom I wished to study, including Terry Warner, Truman Madsen, and Arthur Henry King, all of whose portraits now hang in our Maeser Building gallery of Honors Professors

of the Year. After conferring with upper-division Honors students, I soon added Karen Lynn, George Tate, and Steven Sondrup to the list. By selecting teachers known for challenging and invigorating classes, I ensured that my undergraduate education would be the best possible. You would be wise to do the same.

N.B. (#2): Make sure that you **keep a reading list of non-required books along with a vocabulary list.** While the various Great Works lists are a practical place to start as you select books to read, you need not limit yourself to that resource alone. As you read a daily newspaper, such as the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*, and at least one weekly newsmagazine, you will come across reviews of contemporary books that will not have made it onto any Great Works list. In any case, always carry a book to read while waiting in line or sitting on the bus. When you come across a word whose meaning you do not know, take note of the word and look up its definition. Make a goal to learn at least 10 new vocabulary words a week. Practice using them in sentences so that they become part and parcel of your burgeoning vocabulary.

N.B. (#3): Remember that **we learn by asking questions and by questioning answers.** Do not be

afraid to ask questions in your classes, and do not be hesitant to question answers you do not understand. If the class is too large for you easily to pose questions, approach the professor or teaching assistant after class and ask your question. Or, better yet,

make an appointment during the teacher's office hours so that you may discuss your question in a one-on-one setting.

My final "N.B." relates to the future of the Honors Program. In order to continue offering the scholarships, cultural activities, symposia, seminars, publications, and Great Works experiences, we need your financial help. Enclosed with this newsletter, which is being sent to Honors alumni, is a donation card. If you are benefiting or have benefited from the BYU Honors experience, I invite you to use the card to make a donation to the great cause which is Honors.

*Want to get the most out of your undergraduate education? Take Dr. Sowell's advice!*

1. Choose professors over courses.
2. Keep a personal vocabulary list and a reading list of non-required books.
3. Learn more effectively by asking questions and questioning answers.

~ Dr. Madison U. Sowell

Honors Program Director and  
Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education