

VINCENT BZDEK was raised in Colorado and came to Colorado College in the late 1970s, graduating with honors as an English major in 1982. At Colorado College he also played varsity basketball for four years and served as a news editor of the *Catalyst*, the student newspaper.

After college he worked as a reporter and editor for the *Colorado Springs Sun* and *The Denver Post*. He served as a deputy managing editor and assistant news editor for *The Denver Post* from 1993–2005.

In recent years he has been a news editor and senior editor for *The Washington Post*. He writes occasional feature articles for *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Wired Magazine*. He also offers guest political commentary on occasion for CBS Evening News, MSNBC, BBC radio, Fox-TV, Inside Edition, and elsewhere.

He is the author of two bestselling trade books *Woman of the House: The Rise of Nancy Pelosi* (Palgrave/Macmillan, 2008) and a more recent book, *The Kennedy Legacy: Jack, Bobby, and Ted and a Family Dream Fulfilled* (2009). His first book was hailed as “a superbly written, fascinating page-turner of a political biography” that “teaches us a lot about Speaker Pelosi, House politics, and big-city politics.” His second book splendidly captures the Kennedy family, its politics and its triumphs and tragedies.

He vividly remembers playing quite a lot of pinball with legendary history professor (and pinball wizard) T. K. Barton. “I still remember a rewrite of a paper he required that made the paper half as long and twice as good, and I practice his rewrite philosophy to this day.”

Bzdek also remembers many a beer-drinking afternoon with several of his English professors at Roger’s Frontier Bar in Old Colorado City. “We ate green chili and tortillas, drank our beer in glass chalices and talked books, movies, philosophy, politics, love lives, and fathers and sons.” “CC’s education,” Bzdek recalls, “was not just an academic education, but an emotional one for me, an education in how to be well-rounded, empathetic, and, above all, curious. I found to my surprise that the English professors at CC cared not just about my brain, but equally about my heart and soul, and quietly demanded that I leave college with a good heart, a heart commensurate with my brain, or maybe superior to it.”

“CC and its professors are still my gold standard to this day ... and CC’s dedication to challenge and excellence and originality are a deep well I draw on still.”

— Tom Cronin

DIANE RAYOR entered Colorado College with experience in mime, horsemanship, and poetry. Her languages then were English, Spanish, and Hebrew. At CC she acted, wrote more poetry, studied history, and started classics with the first iteration of the Dobson-Riker Greek History and Philosophy course. She graduated in 1980 with a senior classics thesis consisting of 14 poems by the early Greek writer Sappho, translated in a mature, well-considered and beautiful English, presented face-to-face with Greek text and all set by hand and printed at The Press at Colorado College. (There was a set of scholarly notes on the poems as well, not included in the volume from The Press.)

Her career has included outstanding work taking off from that undergraduate performance, amplified in a literature/classics doctoral program at Santa Cruz. Her “Sappho’s Lyre: Archaic and Women Poets of Ancient Greece” (University of California Press 1991, now in its fourth printing) got rave reviews: “literal, graceful, and idiomatic,” said one reviewer; “these works surpass any translations of the archaic lyrists that I have seen” said another. It won a Merit Award from the Columbia University Translation Center. More recently, California has published her translation of the “Homeric Hymns” (2004), which the *Classical Outlook* hailed as “the translator’s art at its best.” Her translations of newly discovered but very old poems of Sappho and Archilochus appear in the new Norton anthology of “The Greek Poets: Homer to the Present” (2009). Her serious interest in drama continues: her translation of Sophocles’ *Antigone* for the Cambridge University Press was workshopped at Grand Valley in the spring of 2009 and performed at a local high school last fall, with her as dramaturg. A bit of her Sappho was recently inscribed on park benches in New York’s Central Park: “Evening Star who gathers everything / shining dawn scattered — / you bring the sheep and the goats, / you bring the child back to its mother.”

She is also leader in the field of classics. After a series of short-term appointments combining classics with general humanities, in the Chicago area, she moved to the up-and-coming Grand Rapids campus of the University of Michigan system. Starting with one position in the English department of Grand Valley State in 1991, she and colleagues engineered an expansion job by job, becoming a free-standing classics department in 2000.

The department now justly proclaims itself as “one of the youngest and fastest-growing departments of classics in the world” with eight faculty members. It will be co-hosting the largest regional classics meeting, the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, this coming spring. Prof. Rayor herself continues as a leader at Grand Valley and a voice to be listened to at gatherings of regional and national organizations in classics, translation, and literature.

Diane Rayor has made a harmonious and excellent life and career in poetry, classical languages, literature, and drama and will do us honor in accepting the degree of doctor of humane letters.

— Owen Cramer and Marcia Dobson