

# PERSPECTIVE

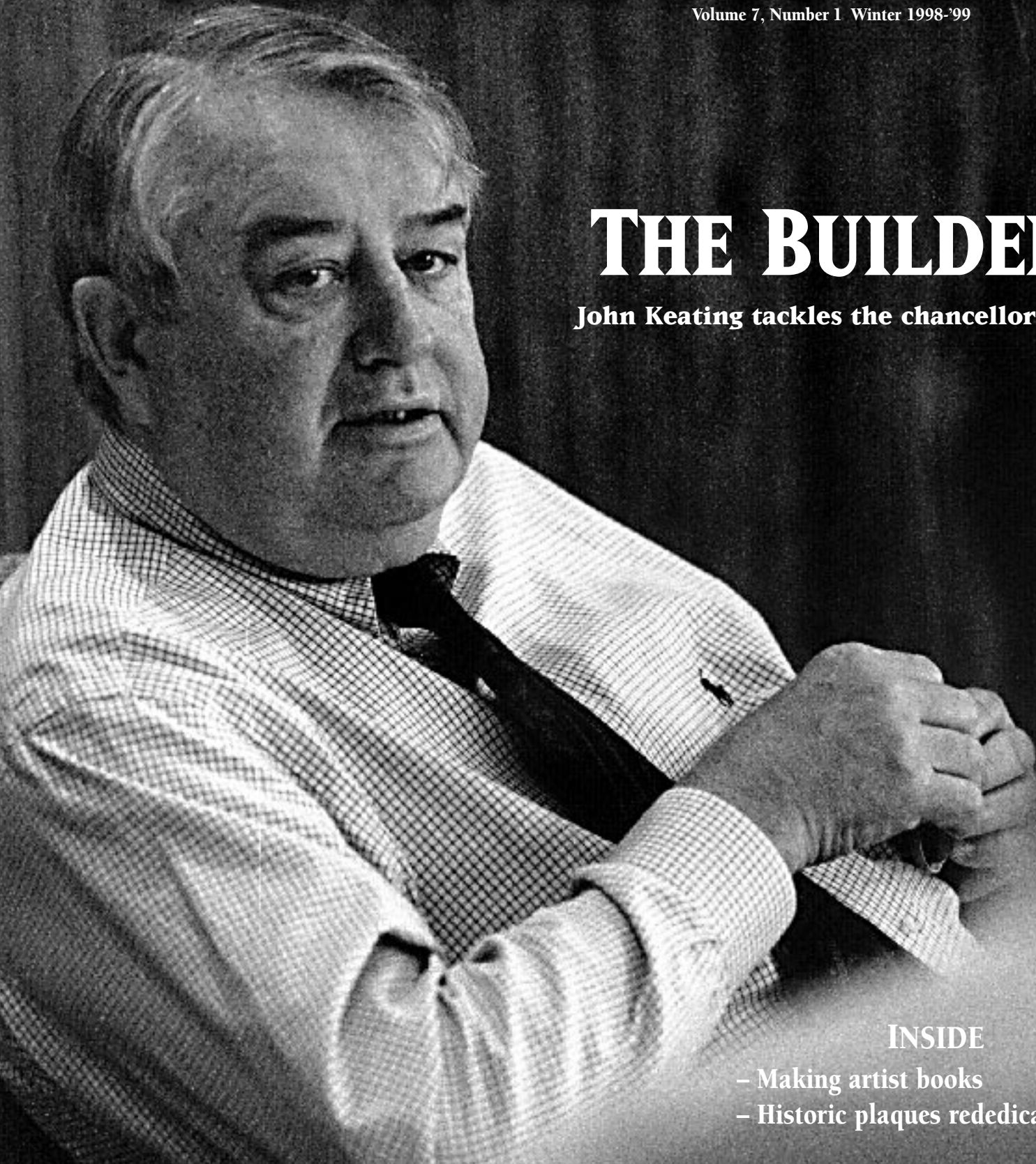
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## THE BUILDER

John Keating tackles the chancellorship

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- Making artist books
- Historic plaques rededicated





# A HOUSE FOR JACK

**Known as a builder, John "Jack" Keating  
takes the reins at a critical time**

**C**hange is in the wind that ripples through the tall prairie grasses, woods and streamlined buildings that are the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. Marking its 30th year, one of the youngest member of the prestigious UW System must set a new course to keep in step with the social and economic boom that is rustling through its surrounding communities.

This is the challenge facing UW-Parkside's fifth and newest chancellor, John P. Keating. He is only too aware of the balancing act that UW-Parkside must carry off, to maintain its traditional strengths as a liberal arts institution while providing students with the skills needed to succeed in the

rapidly changing working world, a world where technological advances can be almost a daily occurrence.

He also knows that more academic programs must be developed for nontraditional students, as, increasingly, working adults require ongoing education, be it on the track toward a master's degree, a refresher course or the need to develop specific skills.

So at a point in life (61) where others might be thinking retirement or at least of slowing the pace, Keating is motivated by the twin goals of being the leader of a university campus and of breathing a vibrant new life into UW-Parkside. ►

**BY TERRY FOLKEDAHL**



**A LIGHT MOMENT:** Keating and Gov. Tommy Thompson at the groundbreaking for the Sports and Activity Center. Thompson signed construction contracts for the \$11.9 million expansion project.

Even though he hadn't been looking for any motivation.

Keating says he was happy in his role as provost at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. "I wasn't on the (job) market."

But a call from a headhunter friend gradually lured Keating into seriously considering an opportunity to have his own campus. The skills he had shown in his prior academic leadership roles seemed to match perfectly the changes in direction that the UW-Parkside campus and community had identified.

"They knew me as a builder," he said, "as someone who had done that at the University of Washington."

The lure led to a trip to the UW-Parkside campus. "Then it got serious pretty quickly," he said of his responsiveness to the job offer.

His reaction to the wooded campus:

"beautiful, even in the winter."

His reaction to faculty and staff: "energizing and potentially terrific."

"It became clear that Parkside was somewhere I wanted to spend my last years in academia."

**A life in academics**

His new adventure in Wisconsin is just the latest for the big man with silvery hair and an engaging smile. Jack Keating, as he likes to be known, has devoted much of his adult life to academics. His vita reveals an impressive array of degrees: a bachelor's in classics/philosophy and a master's in philosophy from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash.; a master's in theology from the University of Santa Clara in California; and a master's and Ph.D. in social psychology from Ohio State University.

**"This is missionary territory and this campus will become a missionary to provide the education that a democracy needs to prosper."**

As a young Jesuit in California during the tumultuous '60s, Keating felt life pulling him to a different path. "The late '60s, early '70s were changing times. There were other good things to do in society. I rethought my direction."

He said that education remained as a major goal. "I was going to be in higher

education one way or another."

The different path he chose led him away from the priesthood to Ohio State and to his studies in social psychology. "I was interested in helping people to make up their minds about things, and in what influences people's attitudes."

**K**eating recalls that era on U.S. campuses as "exciting, but not always good. There was a lot of interesting thinking, not all of it productive. But it was certainly an interesting time to be a student in higher education."

In his convocation speech to the UW-Parkside staff in August, the new chancellor evoked memories of 1968, the year of the university's founding. He described the state of the nation in '68 as being wrapped "in the trauma of the Vietnam War that was splitting campuses and communities at the seam."

Despite all the turmoil swirling around campus life back then, Keating stayed with his own agenda and was granted his Ph.D. In 1972, he headed West to his first permanent higher-education position as an assistant professor of psychology, a position that included once-a-year sessions lecturing to 700-plus-size classes in "the pits" at the University of Washington.

**Starting from scratch**

Keating steadily climbed the academic ladder, eventually receiving a full professorship and, in 1990, accepting the challenge of becoming dean and vice provost for two new start-up campuses of the University of Washington system. Situated in Tacoma and Bothell, Wash., a city northeast of Seattle, the Bothell campus made Keating, as he sometimes describes himself to groups, "Bill Gates' neighbor."

The Microsoft giant made his fortune headquartered in the same geographical area.

Keating's new job required the fledgling administrator to start up two campuses more or less from scratch. He had to hire

**CHANCELLOR TRIVIA**

Test your knowledge (or lack thereof) of UW-Parkside's five chancellors.

**"WHICH CHANCELLOR..."**

1. Is now a radio talk show host in Colorado?
2. Changed his/her middle name?
3. Served the longest term?
4. Served the shortest term?
5. Raised a family in the chancellor's house?
6. Is a former Jesuit priest?
7. Had worked at the University of Wisconsin?
8. Is credited with helping create the Peace Corps?
9. Is a self-professed Luddite?
10. Came to UW-Parkside from New Jersey?
11. Came the farthest distance to UW-Parkside?
12. Came the shortest distance to UW-Parkside?
13. Has a fondness for romance novels?
14. Tried unsuccessfully to fire 27 professors?
15. Chose the name "Parkside"?
16. Is a former school teacher?
17. Died while in office?
18. Is an expert on responses to disasters?
19. Authored a book that was placed in the White House permanent collection?
20. Was the youngest chancellor in the UW System?

Answers

1. Kaplan (she's also president of Metropolitan State University); 2. Keating; 3. Guskin (1975-'85); 4. Smith (1994 to 1997); 5. Wyllie and Guskin; 6. Keating; 7. Wyllie (History professor, UW-Madison); 8. Guskin; 9. Kaplan; 10. Smith; 11. Keating; 12. Wyllie. Just 110 miles from Madison; 13. Smith; 14. Wyllie; 15. Alaska, to Kenosha is 2,746 miles, 4,420 kilometers or 2,387 nautical miles, as the crow flies; 16. Smith taught grade school in Worthington, Ohio; 17. Wyllie. He died of a heart attack on Oct. 25, 1974; 18. Keating; 19. Wyllie wrote "The Self-Made Man in America"; 20. Guskin, age 38.

- 0 to 2 right:** Are you sure you went to college here?
- 3-5 right:** We grade on a curve.
- 6-10 right:** That's pretty good.
- 11-15 right:** You must be a UW-Parkside graduate.
- 18 or more right:** Scary.



**John P. Keating**



**Eleanor J. Smith**



**Sheila Kaplan**



**Alan Guskin**



**Irvin G. Wyllie**

**"We have to be able to evolve to match the challenges that our students, our communities — both the private and public sectors — are expecting of us."**

faculty, establish programs, gain the support of local legislators and relate the campuses' goals to the surrounding communities. The Tacoma campus project included the rehabilitation of 100-year-old warehouses that provided the campuses with an instant sense of history.

**K**eating is proud that by 2005, the campuses, which offer two-year programs for upper-classmen (juniors and seniors) and master's degrees, should have an enrollment of about 10,000 students each.

The chancellor's Washington state experience mirrors in some respects the situation he is inheriting at UW-Parkside. The twin campuses he served primarily cater to regional students who likely will remain in that area. Many students were not traditional age, with the average around 32.

Keating said the twin-campus programs "offered initiative to people, particularly those with the partially completed baccalaureate."

Accessibility is a huge key to helping people with interrupted educations go on to gain their degrees, he said. "This is my experience, that they will come back if



JIM SLOSIAREK, RACINE JOURNAL TIMES

**"We must make this a vibrant university that's bursting with students and bringing our brilliance to our community, so that we can make sure that southeastern Wisconsin develops as it should through this university's efforts."**

**HERE TO SERVE:** Keating spent a September afternoon bagging books in the Campus Bookstore. The chancellor surprised more than a few employees by dropping by their areas during impromptu tours of campus

all people, but we can figure out what niches we should be targeting. We have to figure out what is our uniqueness."

Keating has asked the faculty to examine their curriculums and to develop ideas on offerings that tie traditional liberal arts offerings to clear career paths. At his convocation speech, he told faculty and staff: "I think we have to shake our curriculum a little. We need to find ways to give job-related opportunities to liberal arts."

The university fell 2 percent shy of its enrollment goal of about 4,900 for fall 1998 but showed impressive gains in its freshmen numbers. Enrollment of new freshmen rose to 883, up nearly 30 percent from fall 1996 and the largest number of new freshmen since 1988.

they can get access and the appropriate supports are in place."

The opportunity to serve as provost at a land-, sea- and space-grant university dedicated to research led Keating and his wife, Dr. Pamela Keating, and their son, John Joseph, to leave their comfortable hillside home in Seattle for the challenge of living off the continent in Fairbanks, Alaska. As the first provost at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Keating found himself in the midst of a transition from a system of having vice chancellors.

"It was a challenge," he recalled. "I had

to do a lot of rearranging — and convincing."

And, of course, there was the weather. "The day I arrived, Feb. 1, 1994, the temperature was minus 44 — and dropped a few degrees after that."

That makes Keating one of those rare people who came to Wisconsin for the mild climate.

#### **A community player**

After talking with the UW System Board of Regents, UW-Parkside faculty and staff, alumni and the Kenosha and

Racine communities, Keating has identified his two biggest challenges as chancellor: increasing enrollment and community outreach.

"We need to ensure that the campus is totally committed to the community," he said. "We now have to strategize on how to do those things."

The university must be an active player in the future of southeastern Wisconsin, he said. "We have the two cities plus the rest of the region facing various social and economic problems that the university can and should respond to."

Quoted in a story in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Keating called the boost in the freshman class “a great shot in the arm.” He noted the increase in marketing and advertising efforts by UW-Parkside, started during the administration of his predecessor, Interim Chancellor Gordon Lamb. Keating also called for UW-Parkside faculty and staff to continue efforts “to become more visible in the communities we serve.”

While recruitment is a large component in boosting enrollment, the chancellor said, retention is just as crucial. “We have to have a better record of retention,” he said. “The most easily recruitable student should be the one that’s already sitting in the classroom on campus.”

In addition to serving traditional students, UW-Parkside also must look at the non-traditional, he said. With the emergence of Marquette University, Concordia University and others offering non-traditional programming in the Kenosha-Racine area, it’s clear that the demand exists.

The growing appeal of distance education that caters to busy working adults “speaks to the fact that there is a market in our area,” Keating said. Recent research also bears this out, with one survey showing about 80 percent of the



**TRIUMPHANT:** Keating is all smiles after being installed as UW-Parkside’s fifth chancellor.

parents of college-age children in the region have not completed a college degree.

Serving such students likely will mean more night classes, Keating said. “They need special help and they need special times. We have to look at our schedules and provide access to our returning

students. They are excited to be in the classroom.”

He also recognized that such schedule accommodations will need to be made carefully. “Being as small as we are, we can’t abandon the traditional students.”

Keating is finding the other system chancellors to be helpful sources of advice. Attending an academic retreat in Madison during the summer, he took advantage of the opportunities. “I’ve been picking their brains on certain issues,” he said. “Wisconsin is known as having a strong system of higher education.”

#### Home on the range

When not focusing on his university mission, the Keatings have been trying to put together a comfortable home in the unpretentious white former farm house that stands on a wooded corner of the campus. The move to Wisconsin hasn’t been without mishaps. Grounds workers mistakenly cut down trees that weren’t intended for the chipper. The journey via ship back to the mainland of the couple’s possessions resulted in some damages and losses. Plus, Cormac, Keating’s faithful 16-year-old standard poodle, was uprooted yet again, although he is said to be adjusting well.

Then there was the matter of the other Dr. Keating’s career objectives.

**“Now we’ve had 30 years of experience, we’ve had 30 years to understand who we are, what we can and should do for our communities.”**

Pamela Keating is the recipient of a Senior Scholars grant to conduct research on K-12 education at the Federal Office of Education in Washington, D.C., for the next two years. After soul-searching and discussion, the couple agreed that Pamela would become a frequent flier, commuting home to Wisconsin on weekends.

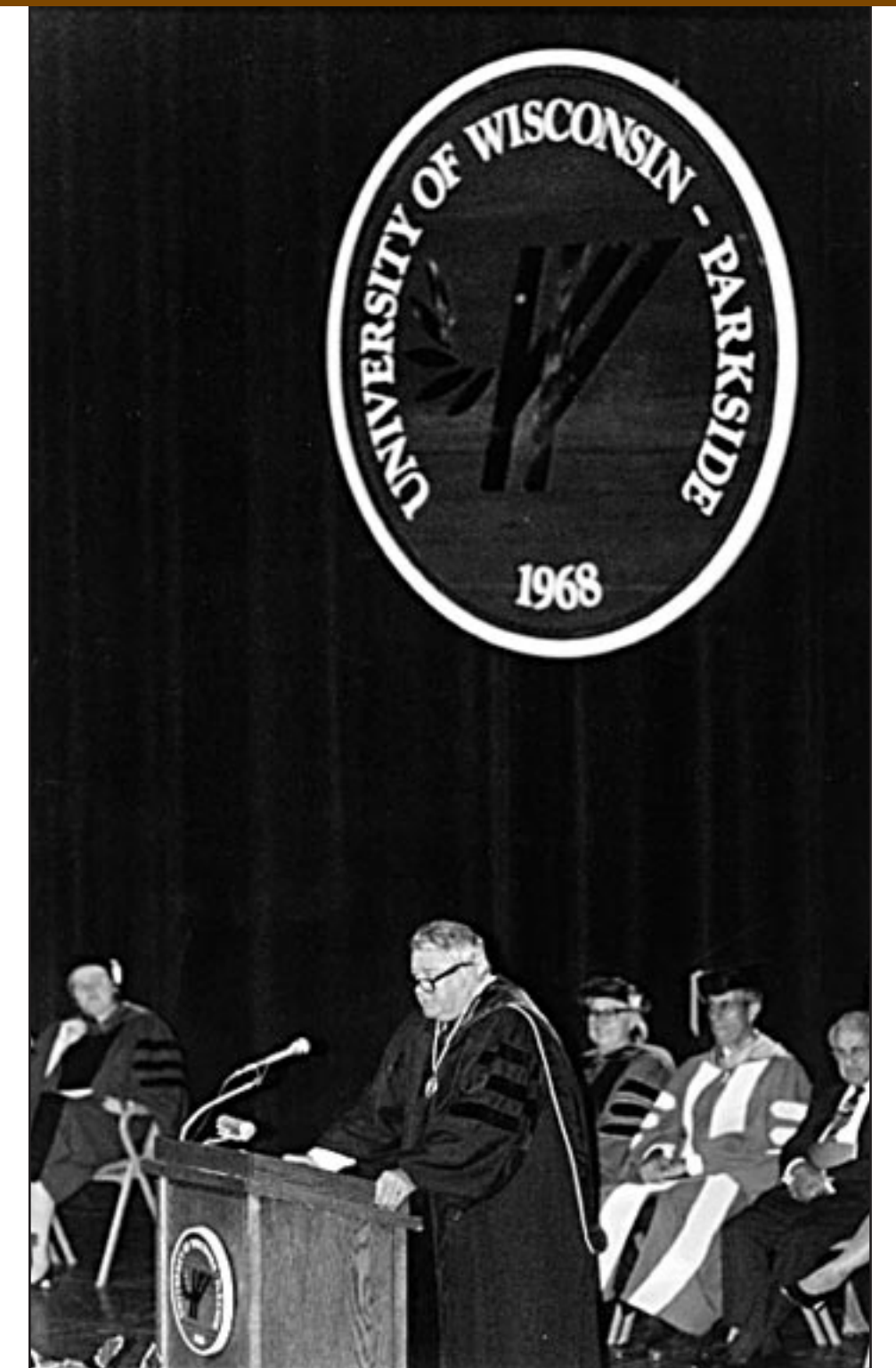
And the UW folks in Madison were not in favor of the Keatings living in the house, as it was in a state of disrepair from stint as a rental unit during the tenure of former Chancellor Eleanor Smith. But when the community emotionalism regarding the residency issue (Smith lived in a Racine condominium) became apparent, Keating said the campus house would do just fine.

“It soon became apparent to me that the best thing to do would be to live in the campus house. The downside would be worse than not.”

Keating knew he made the right choice when a local newspaper reporter’s first question was: “Where are you going to live?”

#### Setting new goals

Keating didn’t shy away from UW-Parkside’s situation when he addressed his new faculty and staff for the first time at his convocation in August: “I was told by the regents that we have an urgent situation,” he said. “We have to be a team. We have to work together.”



**A CHALLENGE:** At his inauguration, Keating called on UW-Parkside to be an “engaged university.”

His vision for UW-Parkside is “a warm community of scholarship.” It should not be a “place of last choice,” he said. “This is a place you come to because you chose it.”

“We are here for students,” he said.

“Faculty have to keep on top of their fields in today’s exciting and changing

world.” Service to the community is guaranteed by the state through its university funds, he said, “and it is our responsibility to deliver service to our region.”

“Our region — our laboratory — is around us. And we must use it.” ■

## What colleagues say about Jack Keating

“There are good people and there are smart people. But there are few people with Jack’s combination of first-rate mind and a first-rate moral center.”

— Claude Steele  
Professor of psychology, Stanford University

“Even back when he was a young Jesuit, we thought he’d be the president of a college one day. We’re not surprised he’s a chancellor.”

—The Rev. John Coleman S.J.  
Charles Cassasa Chair in Social Values  
Loyola Marymount University

“In his high school years he was an all-star ace pitcher who attracted both college and pro scouting interests. Just imagine how you would like to see Jack Keating ferociously and aggressively staring down at you from the height of a pitching mound.”

— James F. Brown  
Professor of philosophy, Univ. of Washington-Tacoma

“Under Jack’s leadership, quality grew (even) while money shrunk.”

— Joan Wadlow  
Chancellor, University of Alaska-Fairbanks