

Behind the Scenes—but in the Middle of Everything



IF THERE WAS SOMETHING “popping” at Penn State in the past 26 years, Carolyn Dolbin was on it.

Dolbin spent those years as the executive administrative assistant to President Graham Spanier and his predecessors, Joab Thomas and Bryce Jordan, managing their daily schedules. “Every day there are different issues, things that are brewing, things that are urgent, things that have deadlines,” she says. In other words, as Dolbin calls it: popping.

Dolbin, who retired on Sept. 30 after 44 years at the University, was honored with the 2010 Lion’s Paw medal, presented annually by the Lion’s Paw Alumni Association

for outstanding service to the University. As she prepared to leave, she talked

about what “popped” for her over the years—and what will be in the future:

COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT: A computer to keep Spanier’s schedule, which includes everything from meetings with University administrators to public appearances to racquetball games. There’s also her BlackBerry. And, to relax, a cup of tea.

MEMORABLE MOMENT: A glide over campus in the Goodyear Blimp. Dolbin was pulled out of a Board of Trustees meeting one fall Friday in the early 1990s with an offer to ride. She thinks President Thomas, whom she had told about her fascination with blimps, gave up his spot on the airship.

TRAVEL PLANS: Dolbin and her husband, **David ’75 Edu**, plan to visit Scotland and Wales, where they can research his Welsh ancestors.

READING LIST: An autographed copy of *Still Bullish on America (A Memoir)* by **William Schreyer ’48 Bus**.

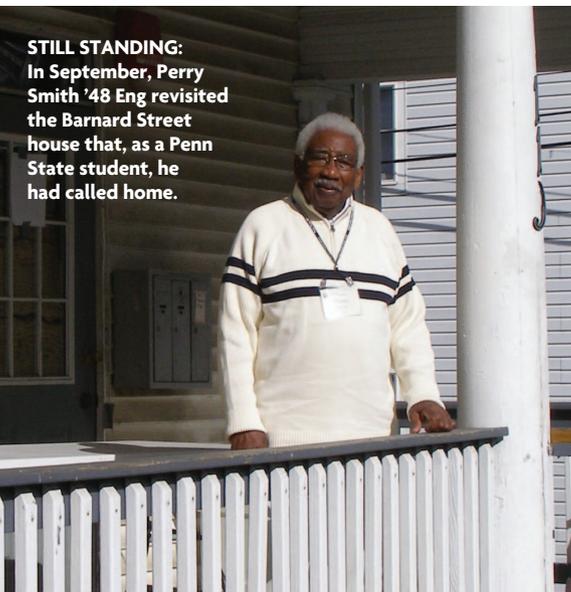
QUILTING: Dolbin and her grandmother started a rose appliqué quilt decades ago, and now she has time to finish it—with her mother’s help. “It would be very sentimental to finish with my mother something I started with my grandmother,” she says. —MICHAEL DAWSON ’02 COM/LIB

A Trip Back to “Lincoln Hall”

LIKE MANY FRESHMEN, PERRY SMITH ARRIVED FOR HIS FRESHMAN YEAR at Penn State in 1944 without a place to stay. He was given a list of options—but, as a black man, he had fewer than most. Penn State’s dorms weren’t integrated until 1950, and in the mid-1940s they were crammed full with military trainees. So it was no surprise that he ended up at the first house on the list: 119 Barnard Street.

The house, owned by a black couple named Gifford who cooked for local fraternities, was home to about half of the black students on campus. They paid \$6 a week to live there and called it “Lincoln Hall,” as in Abraham.

Smith ’48 Eng visited his college home during the Black Alumni Reunion Sept. 10–12, and he recounted his memories to **Darryl Daisey ’83 Bus**, the organizer of the African American Chronicles website, which is preserving the history of African-Americans at Penn State. To learn more or share your own story, go to blackhistory.psu.edu. —LS



STILL STANDING: In September, Perry Smith ’48 Eng revisited the Barnard Street house that, as a Penn State student, he had called home.