

October 1, 2008

Dear Knox Alumni, Parents, and Friends,



On October 7, 1858, on a platform on the east side of Old Main, Abraham Lincoln denounced slavery for the first time on moral terms. The power of Lincoln's words resonated with the audience of the fifth Lincoln-Douglas Debate and propelled him to the national stage and the presidency. As we continue to learn to understand and overcome the challenges of race 150 years later, another challenging moral issue has emerged—sustainability.

During the brief retired phase of our lives, Anne and I enjoyed sitting on the front porch of our farm house in Fulton County and listening to the frogs croak at Bruce White's farm up the road. We get to the farm less often now, but during summer 2006 we noticed that we didn't hear the frogs. They were gone. I can't tell you why for sure, but I am persuaded that it has something to do with the degradation to which we have subjected our planet.

That fall, '06, it became apparent to me that there were a considerable number of Knox students and several faculty who were interested in sustainability. While the voices of the frogs at Bruce White's farm had gone away, campus voices supporting sustainability had grown stronger. I persuaded the Board of Trustees to include advancing sustainability as part of the College's strategic plan. The Board's action was consistent with its authorization of a \$2 million energy conservation project completed in 2001, and a second, \$2.5 million energy conservation project completed in 2006.

During fall 2007, the Student Senate Sustainability Committee agreed to help me advance sustainability on campus. We formed a presidential task force made up of faculty, staff, and students, which has met regularly and considered several courses of action. The sustainability pages on the Knox web site—[www.knox.edu/sustainability](http://www.knox.edu/sustainability)—show what has been done so far, including the signing of the Talloires Declaration, an institutional commitment to environmental sustainability that has been adopted by colleges and universities worldwide, on May 30, 2008. Plans for the coming year are also highlighted.

And while the College has taken steps in heating and lighting and so on, the important—and hardest—part is to create a culture of sustainability here on the Knox campus and beyond. We all need to be conscious of how our behavior contributes to sustainability. It is only with the help of the entire Knox community, including alumni and friends, that we will make more progress and develop a culture of sustainability at Knox of which we can be proud. Just as I welcomed and was encouraged by the voices on campus, I welcome the voices of alumni and friends and encourage you to share your ideas on how to create a culture of sustainability at Knox. Please e-mail me your ideas at [president@knox.edu](mailto:president@knox.edu).

The Knox Community can set an example on sustainability—an example that I hope may even result in the return of the frogs to Bruce White's pond by the time Anne and I resume our retirement at our farm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger L. Taylor".

Roger L. Taylor '63

President