



ROSEMARY MAHONEY '75

Rosemary Mahoney has written five non-fiction books since 1993, describing personal experiences as diverse as living and teaching in China, following traditional religious pilgrimage routes across Europe and Asia, and rowing down the Nile River alone in a fisherman's skiff. Praised by critics, her work has been nominated for a National Book Critics' Circle Award and included in the New York Times list of notable books. These accomplishments were preceded by an academic record that includes degrees from Harvard and Johns Hopkins and prestigious student writing awards.

Today, more than three decades since eighth-grade graduation, Rosemary's memories of her days at CRS are still vivid.

"I spent a great deal of my free time sitting on the upper level of the school library writing stories," she says. "And there were many days when I stayed at the school long after everyone else had gone home to continue reading a book I had borrowed from the library."

Among the influential teachers she had, one stands out. "My education in literature at CRS was mostly one-on-one with Nick Noyes. His praise and criticism of things I had written were usually right on the mark and he was enthusiastic, warm and encouraging. He was also the first person to suggest that I had some small skill at creative writing."

A fourth grade teacher, Joan Marszalek, also left her mark. She suggested that Rosemary read a book about an Egyptian cat that included details about the culture, then gave her a writing assignment on the subject. That project contributed to Rosemary's decision, some 35 years later, to travel the Nile and write a book about the experience.

At CRS, Rosemary gained more than writing skills and a love of literature. It was here that her courage and self-confidence began to grow. She recalls one defining moment: "I asked Bryan Johnson, the hockey coach at the time, if I could play on the boys' hockey team. He looked at me for a while and said, 'Well, why not?' That moment influenced my future enormously. It was perhaps the first time I was given permission to do something that other people would have told me was not possible. It gave me the courage to do things outside the norm. It helped me to believe I was capable. I guess I've been doing strange things ever since. I probably wouldn't have rowed a boat down the Egyptian Nile if, some 35 years ago, Bryan Johnson had said 'no' to me. (And maybe if Joan Marszalek hadn't handed me a book about an Egyptian cat.)"

You can read more about Rosemary Mahoney and her work at www.rosemarymahoney.org.

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