Benedictine Service Award 2009 Speech: Kelly deRosier

My mother instilled five things in me: a love of books, faith, feminism, curiosity about other cultures, and the need for service to others. I set off for Saint Ben’s with those gifts in my arsenal, and Saint Ben’s enhanced, challenged and supported those beliefs. I was in one of the first classes to go co-ed: Constitutional Law with Brother Jeremy Murphy at SJU. EVERY morning he did roll call “Mr. deRosier?” EVERY morning I responded “Ms. deRosier, present.” I was in the first group from St. Ben’s to study abroad in France with Monsieur Villette. East Asian History with Sr. Carol Berg fanned my interest in Asia and art. A part in the Hobbit with Sr. Coleman O’Connor helped with my dramatic flair. Working and smoking with Sr. Mae after working in the library, getting called on the carpet a few times by Mary Mark, great liturgies, Carmel rolls after church on Sunday, cramming for tests, laughing with friends, swimming in the Sag, hiking in the woods, the occasional kegger, stopping to say a quick prayer in front of the St. Kateri Takewitha statute, my patron saint-- these are some of the great memories. And, St. Ben’s gave me lifelong friendships: Marilyn, Barb, Janet, Monica, Bev, Bridget, Mary, Kathy, Maebomb. Several Bennies are today in my book clubs—great and wise women.

I have worked in social service since graduation. I have been an adoption social worker for more than 20 years. I love what I do. The families I work with and the special needs children I place fill me with awe and wonder. These kids with multiple challenges and the parents who help them meet these challenges continue to inspire me. I work with a fabulous team. I was blessed to marry a friend from junior high, Eric. Besides being a great guy he also supports and participates in much of my social service work. We have been married 30 years! One of my dreams had been to adopt from Korea. After the birth of our son, Austin, we adopted two daughters from Korea, Alex and Kate. It is an amazing adventure to become a multi-cultural family. Then later, we had a gift, a successful pregnancy and another son, Christopher. I am truly blessed.

I am honored to receive this award. In the early 1970’s St. Benedicts graduated many, many woman who work in schools, churches, and other social service areas. In honor of all of these women I accept this award with gratitude. Thank you!