

David Roberts, W'84, sees Penn GSE leading the charge to meet challenges and opportunities in education today. A senior managing director at investment advising firm Angelo, Gordon and Co. in New York City, Roberts is the new chair of Penn GSE's Board of Overseers and the father of three Penn graduates, including high school English teacher Lauren Roberts, C'10. He begins his term as chair with three years' experience on the GSE board and fresh perspectives gained from board roles at numerous corporate and nonprofit organizations, including Riverdale Country School in New York City, Success Academy Charter Schools, and startup company BridgeEdu. Currently Roberts is writing a novel about an investment banker working on Wall Street between 2006 and 2010. We sat down with him to discuss his perspective on education, and what lies ahead for Penn GSE.

What does Penn GSE mean to you?

Penn GSE is producing the educators and leaders who will address the greatest challenges facing education today. For me, it's important to contribute to my community and the larger world, and I feel that through my involvement with Penn GSE I am fulfilling that responsibility.

The theme of this issue of *The Penn GSE Alumni Magazine* is "Opportunity." How can Penn GSE help to increase opportunities for young people in the face of growing inequality in our country?

Penn GSE is giving aspiring teachers the tools to meet the needs of underserved populations. It is also developing new approaches through policy to help improve high school graduation rates and college access. Looking ahead, innovation and entrepreneurship will be critical for the future of education in our country, and these have always been a strong hallmark of GSE.

A Bright **FUTURE**

interview by Karen Doss Bowman

New Board of Overseers Chair David Roberts, W'84, on Penn GSE's Second Century



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

What challenge in education today resonates most with you?

A huge issue from my perspective is the fact that teachers and other professionals in education are not given the proper amount of respect and acknowledgment. For example, I would argue that being a teacher is just as important as being a doctor or lawyer, or any other profession our society holds in high regard. The value of teachers' work should be recognized accordingly.

What are you looking forward to about your role as Board of Overseers Chair?

I'm excited to work with Dean Pam Grossman and the entire Board to further GSE's mission. Dean Grossman is very dynamic and energetic, and I think each of us on the Board sees a very bright future for GSE's role in education and the world as the School embarks on its second century.

What has education meant in your own life?

I have a very curious mind. If I weren't constantly learning new things, I'd feel as if I were withering. Graduating from The Wharton School was the end of my formal education, but I'm still learning all the time.

Why do you believe it is important to support Penn GSE?

As one of the nation's leading education schools, and one that is associated with a leading university, Penn GSE can be a great force for good. It is important to support GSE because it is at the forefront of meeting the challenges and opportunities in education today, particularly in our country. ■