

ALUMNI ADVENTURES

Explore the world with Carleton College

April 2, 2009

Dear Carleton alumni and friends,

I am delighted to invite you to join Beth Schwarzman '66 and me in traveling the length of the Grand Canyon by river dory in the fall of 2010.

Although Beth and I have been co-leaders of this trip only once (in 2004), she has led all the previous alumni trips through the canyon. The daughter of a geologist specializing in the geology of the canyon and herself a geologist, Beth provides a fascinating wealth of information, not only about the awesome geological features of the canyon but also about its broader ecology, history, and lore. Aside from gawking at the splendor of the place, I hope to foster critical discussions and reflections about ethical aspects of our relation to the canyon, to other natural wonders, and to our natural environment in general.

Aside from the two of us, you will enjoy the company of two groups of interesting persons. About a dozen and a half other alumni and family members also with interests in the canyon and in the outdoors will be your constant companions for two and a half weeks. Old friendships will be renewed and new ones formed. In addition, we will all be in the capable hands of a team of expert boatmen. They will amaze us with their agility, endurance, and river smarts as we travel over 250 miles in their beautiful double-ended, five-person dories. Equally amazing and enjoyable are their knowledge of the canyon and its history, their infectious joy at being in it, their culinary abilities, and their wit and conviviality.

There can be no doubt, however, that the star of this trip will be the Grand Canyon itself. Even if you have marveled at the canyon from overlooks on its rims or from an airliner at 36,000 feet, and even if you have hiked a vertical mile down into its innards, you will not have grasped more than a small fraction of what you will gain from living in it for two and a half weeks. If you like experiencing nature's marvels first-hand, if you are invigorated by exciting boating, if you like snuggling into a warm sleeping bag on a soft sand bank while looking up at a starry sky, if you love the smell of a camp fire and the taste of camp food, and if you thrive on informed and stimulating conversation, then you will love this trip. I look forward to seeing many of you there in 2010!

Perry C. Mason

John E. Sawyer Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Liberal Learning