

THE GREAT TRADITION



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*Classic Readings on What It Means to
Be an Educated Human Being*

edited by Richard M. Gamble



Wilmington, Delaware

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*To Thomas J. St. Antoine,
a teacher with the courage to make students unfit
for the modern world*



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Acknowledgments

Credit for this anthology belongs to the authors included herein. My task as compiler and editor has been merely to reap a harvest that others have sown and tended over millennia. I can offer no better thanks to the faithful teachers within the Great Tradition than to pass on their legacy to others.

This project began while I was on sabbatical leave from Palm Beach Atlantic University in the spring of 2003. The board of trustees and then-president Paul Corts awarded me the inestimable privilege of time away from the daily duties of teaching simply to think, to read, and to begin piecing together what I only vaguely knew as the Great Tradition. A generous grant from the H. B. Earhart Foundation enabled me to spend my sabbatical at Cambridge University. I am indebted to several friends and institutions in Cambridge who welcomed me into their venerable academic community that semester. Bruce Winter, at that time warden of Tyndall House, provided me with an appointment as reader, a comfortable home, a quiet library, and the companionship of an international group of scholars. His generous assistance also opened the way to my appointment as visiting scholar at St. Edmund's College. There is no more hospitable college in all of Cambridge. Also, two dear friends, Chad and Emily Van Dixhoorn, always made room for me in their growing family.

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If this anthology has any single point of origin, it is in the vibrant conversation that took place among the faculty and students in the honors program at Palm Beach Atlantic University. Together, in rare camaraderie, my former colleagues and I struggled to reassemble the liberal arts tradition, to teach ourselves in a comprehensive and systematic way what many of us had been taught only in fragments. The simple joy of discovery sustained us through years of hard work. Our students patiently endured our earnest attempts to teach ourselves in the guise of teaching them. But it was the students, of course, who gave it all meaning and enduring significance. By singling out the program's current director, Tom St. Antoine, to whom this volume is dedicated, I wish to express my indebtedness to all my former colleagues and students. May they continue to give what they have received.

HILLSDALE, MICHIGAN

JUNE 2007