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
To Thomas J. St. Antoine,

a teacher with the courage to make students unfit

for the modern world
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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.

At ISI Books, editor in chief Jeremy Beer guided this project from the time it was barely a mental sketch. His enthusiasm, good humor, and attention to detail make it an ongoing privilege to work with him. Managing editor Jennifer Connolly hunted down copyright holders and brought order and coherence to an unwieldy mass of material. In every facet of its operations, ISI Books blends professionalism and informality in a way that makes an author feel at home.
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