

EDUCATION



Sophie Sa, '65

**Advanced Degree: Ph.D.,
Sociology and Chinese Studies,
Harvard University**

Profession: Executive director,
Panasonic Foundation

Distinctions: Board of Directors,
Grantmakers for Education; Policy
Review Board, Public Agenda
Foundation; chair, The Center for Fair
and Open Testing

About 15 years ago, a Soviet economist asked Sophie Sa, then a program officer for the Social Science Research Council, about her long-term ambitions. She said, “Gee, a small foundation might be nice.”

Today Sa is running her own small foundation — a foundation whose influence in reforming public school education dwarfs its relatively modest \$24 million endowment. With a full-time staff of only five, but with a team of dozens of education consultants, the Panasonic Foundation now provides assistance to 11 school districts around the nation, from San Diego to Boston.

Its approach of providing long-term expertise to districts, instead of short-term grants, was unique 14 years ago, and today it is emulated and admired by others. “I think we were the first national foundation to focus on both systemic aspects of reform and to approach it through technical assistance,” Sa says.

The journey has been as far for the foundation as it has been for Sa. From 1950 to 1961, Sa lived in Japan, where her father served in the commerce division of the Nationalist Chinese government’s diplomatic mission, as part of the Allied occupation of Japan. During her 11 years there, she attended a Chinese diplomatic school and later two English language schools. For a few years, her family had access to the U.S. Armed Forces PX and other privileges, as a result of which Sa was able to sample many aspects of American culture, including American movies and Sealtest strawberry ice cream. Because of her formal schooling in English, Sa’s parents decided she should continue her education in the United States.

At age 17, Sa came to the United States alone to attend Wellesley. She majored in chemistry but after three and a half years switched to history when she realized that “just because I was Chinese, I didn’t have to be good at science.” At graduation, with no marriage prospects on the horizon, she did the next logical thing — go to Harvard.

In the 14 years that Sa has headed the Panasonic Foundation, she has designed and tended to its mission — the transformation of a public education system that has remained essentially the same over the last 100 years, while almost everything else in American society has undergone dramatic change. Sa believes, and several external evaluations confirm, that the foundation has achieved some success.

“We know we have helped our districts to focus their effort on higher performance standards for all children, on more effective professional development for teachers and other educators, on providing better support to schools, on developing better relations between administrators and teachers unions so that management and labor become more partners than adversaries. But are all students learning better? Certainly not yet.”

**Nannerl
Overholser
Keohane, '61**

**Advanced
Degrees: B.A.,
M.A., Oxford
University;
Ph.D., Yale
University**

Profession:

President of
Duke University

Distinctions:

Past president of
Wellesley

College, author, Marshall Scholar, cited by *Vanity Fair* as one of America’s 200 most influential women



Becoming a college administrator was not high on Nan Keohane’s list of professional goals. In fact, when she was first offered such an opportunity, she almost turned it down.

Back in the 1980s, when she was a faculty member and political philosopher at Stanford University, she drafted a polite “No, thank you” letter, which she retrieved from her word processor whenever somebody asked if she would like to be considered for a dean or provost position. Then one day a presidential search committee from Wellesley contacted her at Stanford, where she had been elected the first woman chair of the faculty senate. She retrieved the letter from her word processor and placed it in her mailbox. Before the mail carrier could pick it up, however, she pulled it out, thinking, “Wow, I don’t know. Maybe if it’s Wellesley that’s asking I should at least talk with them about it.”

After a brief and exciting courtship, Keohane agreed in 1981 to take the job, where she worked for the next 12 years reshaping the mission and vision of her alma mater. “I had become a

committed feminist,” she says. “I felt Wellesley through its history and potential was one of the strongest institutions in the world to support and produce real leaders, and I wanted to go back and help make that true.”

While at Wellesley, Keohane embarked on one of the most ambitious college capital campaigns of that era. She also helped establish Wellesley as one of the leading feminist voices in higher education and continued its tradition of being overtly and consciously committed to providing women with an excellent liberal arts education.

In 1993, after completing many of her goals at Wellesley, Keohane accepted Duke University’s invitation to become its president. She was the first woman to ascend to that post at Duke, and, for that matter, at any major Southern research university. It is a job she says she relishes for its challenges and diversity.

“I love the complexity of the institution — the fact that my days range from some question involving our mammoth Duke University health system, to some issue about athletics, to fundraising challenges, meeting with students, attending a committee meeting with faculty, addressing alumni, and having lunch with members of the building and grounds team. Obviously all this won’t occur in one day, but some healthy subsection occurs in every day, and I find that fascinating.”

After seven years in her current post, Keohane says she now understands the advice of one of her predecessors, who told her that one day she would begin to recognize almost all the horses on the carousel as they passed by. “He said the way you can do your job best is to look out for that Terry Sanford horse you haven’t seen before and pay attention to it. So that’s what I try to do.” Sanford is a former U.S. senator from North Carolina and a major Duke supporter.

Someday, after she has completed her work at Duke, Keohane says she wants to return to her first loves. “I spent all my life as a teacher and faculty member teaching and writing about issues like power and equality and justice and freedom. Even though a college presidency may not be the most powerful position in the world, there is still a lot of authority in the job. I would like to go back and write about it from the point of view of someone who has actually exercised it, instead of from the point of view of an observer.”

Barbara Jackson, '50

Advanced Degrees:

**M.A., Education,
Columbia University;
Ed.D., Harvard
University**

Profession: Division
chair, Fordham University
Graduate School of
Education

Distinctions: First African
American to serve as a
Wellesley trustee



When Barbara Loomis Jackson attended Wellesley 50 years ago, the College taught her and her classmates to do whatever they wanted to do. But outside the College’s gates there wasn’t much support or acceptance for combining career and family, so most women opted for family.

In one sense, you could say Jackson went the traditional route. She married right out of college and moved to New Jersey with her new husband. And like many women of her generation, she waited a number of years before pursuing a career. At mid-life, after earning graduate degrees in education from Columbia and Harvard Universities, she worked at three different universities: Atlanta University, where she helped develop a new doctoral program in educational administration; Morgan State University, where she served as dean of the school of education; and Fordham University, where she continued her career at age 60.

But in another sense, there was nothing traditional about Jackson’s route from Detroit, where she grew up, to Wellesley. When Jackson attended Wellesley, she was one of a handful of African American undergraduates. “My father was a very successful lawyer,” she says. “I went to a high school that wasn’t segregated, but my social life was. Nevertheless, most of my friends were going to the University of Michigan or state schools. It really wasn’t part of our culture to send your child east to go to school.”

What was life like at Wellesley for an African American in the late 1940s? “It wasn’t as traumatic as you might think,” she says. “Integration was in the air. And I was brought up to be self-confident. I didn’t have any trouble making friends, and I enjoyed my classmates.”

Jackson suggests that the adjustments went both ways — for her, as well as for her white classmates. Those who were open to forging a relationship with a black woman — and she says that was usually the case — could benefit enormously from it. “For

them, it was probably the first time they had a chance to develop a relationship with someone who was black who wasn't a maid," she says.

In 1970, when student enrollment of African American students began to surge, the College invited Jackson to join the Wellesley Board of Trustees — a first for an African American woman. Jackson remained an advocate for black student causes during her 18-year tenure. In her nonconfrontational way, she gave her colleagues a window into the thinking and needs of African American undergraduates.

She continues to advocate the cause of African American women, especially in the field of education. Jackson recently authored a chapter in the book *Sacred Dreams: Women and the Superintendency*. Her chapter notes that in the nation's 14,000 public school districts, only 30 of the superintendents were African American women in the year of the study, 1993–94.



Diana Chapman Walsh, '66
Advanced Degrees: M.S. Journalism, Boston University; Ph.D., Health Policy, Boston University

Profession: President of Wellesley College
Distinctions: Kellogg National Fellow, trustee of Amherst College and the WGBH Educational Foundation; director of the State Street Corporation; author of dozens of professional papers and editor/coeditor of 14 books; recipient of honorary degrees from Boston University, Deree College in Athens, Greece, and the University of Massachusetts

Diane Chapman Walsh, the 12th President of Wellesley College, is the fourth alumna president of the College, which she will lead into a new millennium and through its 125th anniversary.

Since Walsh assumed the presidency in 1993, Wellesley has continued to flourish as a highly respected innovator in liberal arts education for women. During her tenure, the faculty has undertaken a comprehensive review and reform of the curriculum, has enhanced its systems of peer review, and has advanced initiatives in global education, experiential learning, and applications of technology to teaching and learning. In addition, the College has set new records in philanthropic giving and has developed the first comprehensive campus master plan since 1921.

During the Walsh presidency, the Wellesley Centers for Women was created to unite the work of the Stone Center and the Center for Research on Women. The Davis Museum and Cultural Center established itself as a vital resource on campus and

one of the nation's great college museums.

Wellesley's Religious and Spiritual Life Program has become a national model of how to celebrate religious diversity and to move beyond tolerance to deep respect for a wide variety of faith traditions.

The Knapp Media and Technology Center was conceived and created during this period, helping to establish the College as one of the nation's "100 most wired," according to *Yahoo! Magazine*. And a vibrant new tradition — the Ruhlman Conference — has been established as an annual celebration of students' intellectual achievement and student-faculty collaboration.

After graduating from Wellesley in 1966 as an English major, Walsh earned a master's degree in journalism and a Ph.D. in health policy at Boston University, where she received the Wallerstein Award for the distinguished graduate thesis in journalism in 1971, and the Alumni Merit Award for the best graduate dissertation by a University Scholar in 1983. As a Kellogg National Fellow from 1987 to 1990, she traveled throughout the country and the world studying workplace democracy and principles of leadership, and writing poetry.

Walsh is a leading expert in public health policy and the prevention of illness. Before returning to Wellesley as president, she was the Norman Professor at the Harvard School of Public Health, where she chaired the Department of Health and Social Behavior. Prior to joining the Harvard faculty, she was Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences in the School of Public Health at Boston University and a University Professor there.

In her travels for Wellesley College, President Walsh meets alumnae from across the country, around the world, and down through the generations. She loves hearing their stories and observes that Wellesley women "are literally transforming the world from the inside out — in families, in communities, in corporations, hospitals, courtrooms, classrooms, governmental agencies, research laboratories, nonprofit organizations, and in every sector of human endeavor."

She told a recent incoming class at their orientation that "the women of Wellesley are made of sturdy stuff. They're smart and committed and passionate, and they're careful about their impact on the environments they inhabit. These are women who demand more of themselves than they do of those around them. These are women who become the kinds of leaders who absorb pain and who don't

inflict it. These are women who craft creative ways to serve and not be served. This is the sisterhood of women you are joining today.”

ADVERTISING



**Tina Schiefelbein
Georgeou, '74**

**Advanced Degree:
M.A., Journalism,
Northwestern
University**

Profession: Advertising
executive

Tina Georgeou took a detour somewhere between Romance languages and interpreting and ended up in

advertising. Today she is sitting near the top of her profession and has never looked back.

After majoring in French and Italian as an undergraduate and at the Université de Paris–Sorbonne, Georgeou became an interpreter in Paris but found that the work did not captivate her.

“I fell into advertising via the back door,” she says. “Once I started to do interpreting for French companies, I found the most interesting part was the marketing — finding out who they were trying to reach. Being in advertising is so much a study of culture, what motivates people and what trends are occurring in a culture.”

Georgeou decided to go back to school, where she earned a master’s degree in advertising at Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism. The degree helped her launch an advertising career that has taken her to positions in Paris, Mexico City, Montreal, and New York City.

She worked in Paris and Mexico City for advertising giant Ogilvy & Mather, where she rose to the position of vice president and director of client services. Then she left to start an agency in Canada.

“Founding and growing a company are the ultimate forms of creative expression in business,” she says. “I created my own advertising firm with another woman in Montreal in 1988, and we built and ran it together until I got married and moved back to the States in 1995.”

“When I moved back to the U.S., I worked for a short time in a large multinational agency and realized that it was very difficult to work as a part of a large machine. After being an entrepreneur and being used to making your own decisions, having the ability to act on those decisions and see the direct results of your own actions was a rhythm I sorely missed. For that reason, I joined DeWitt Media.”

In 1997 Georgeou was named president of DeWitt in New York City and now deals largely with the business side of running the \$350 million company. Clients include BMW of North America, Bacardi USA, New York Life Insurance, Rite Aid, and Sprint.

She credits a broad educational background with helping her get started in the creative side of advertising and with helping her to continue interpreting a range of information.

“Studying liberal arts exposes you to a wide variety of cultures, disciplines, and subjects,” Georgeou says. “You need that breadth to select a magazine, to know what people are reading about, or to know what is really happening out there in the music field. You need to see all sides of an equation.”

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