

Wei Sun Christianson '85

Beijing, China



Terras Irradiant. This is a phrase oft seen on the quads of the college and heard in the speeches of faculty and alumni. It is both an exhortation to those who benefit from the education here as well as a mission statement of the College.

I was the first student from the People's Republic of China admitted to Amherst. At that time, China was just emerging from educational dark ages, when all colleges had

been closed. China was a harsh environment, where opportunities were few and far between. I was searching for the best educational opportunities, ones that would prepare my mind for the challenges of a graduate education and a career in a challenging field. I found such an opportunity at Amherst. All Amherst alumni whom I know proudly agree that Amherst's liberal arts education is what has enabled our accomplishments later in life.

The traditional liberal arts education that Amherst champions is what brought me and most of you to this campus and is what allowed so many of us to build solid foundations for all that we have pursued. When resources are plentiful, a liberal arts education can be expanded to mean many things to many people. However, that which is the essence of a liberal arts education must be more strongly defended when the economic reality of the times constrains available resources.

The most fulfilling part of my time at Amherst was grasping the implications of new ideas and contributing my unique view to the dialogue that was astonishing, expansive and probing. It was this free-flowing atmosphere that made Amherst so enjoyable and rewarding. In a world where change is never ending and diversity is commonplace, success depends ever more on adaptability and the experiences that we create.

As a trustee, I will work to facilitate the connectivity and access to resources that the student body and faculty need to create fertile fields for intellectual growth and ensure that an Amherst education will always mean *Terras Irradiant*. To so serve Amherst and you as a Trustee would be a great honor.

Amherst: B.A., Political Science '85, *cum laude*

Further Education: J.D., with honors in International Law, Columbia Law School '89

Alumni Activities: 1821 Society

Professional: Managing Director and China CEO, *Morgan Stanley*, responsible for all aspects of the firm's China business, including formulating China strategies and executing various firm initiatives; member of Morgan Stanley's Management Committee (1998–2002 and 2006–Present). Managing Director, Chairman and Country Manager for China, *Credit Suisse*, and Managing Director and Chairman of China for Citigroup Global Markets at *Citigroup* (2002–2005). Associate Director of Corporate Finance Department, *Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission* (early 1990s): helped formulate the rules and regulations of the local securities market in preparation for the public listing in Hong Kong of the first group of Mainland Chinese companies in 1993. Lawyer in New York, specializing in U.S. securities transactions, before relocating to Hong Kong.

Included in the "International Power 50" in 2008 and 2009 as one of the 50 Most Powerful Women in Business by *Fortune* magazine; one of the 50 Women to Watch, 2006, 2007 and 2008, by *The Wall Street Journal*; and one of the Top 25 Nonbank Women in Finance, 2007 and 2008, by *American Banker and U.S. Banker*. Awarded the Medal for Excellence by Columbia University School of Law Association; The Pinnacle Award as one of the Outstanding 50 Asian Americans in Business 2009 by Asian American Business Development Center; The Legacy Award in 2008 by Museum of Chinese in America; The China Women's Achievement Award in 2008 by Women's Federation of P.R. China and Sun Media Group.

Community, Not-for-Profit and Volunteer Service: Co-Chairman of the International Advisory Board of the Columbia School of Law

Personal: Married to Jon Christianson, a partner of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates. Mother of three boys, Erik (18), Neil (15) and Nicholas (13). Skis and scuba dives with the family whenever she can.