

## Carol Christ

At the press conference announcing CNR's research partnership with Novartis, the bionic baking brigade threw a pie at Gordon. He dodged it, deftly, explaining that in past life, as I think you all know, he had been a boxer. If only at the beginning of our working relationship as Dean and boss, I had known that fact. Gordon and I came into office at the same time when there was a threat of significant loss of resources to the college from the DANR realignment proposal. Gordon was pugnacious and wily in his defense of the college then and he's been stalwarted and strategic in his defense of it since.

The philosopher Isaiah Berlin has made a distinction based on a fragment from the Greek poet, Archilochus(?) between the fox and the hedgehog. "The fox knows many things. But the hedgehog knows one big thing." For Berlin the distinction marks the deepest difference between different kinds of writers and thinkers. Foxes pursue many ends, often unrelated. Hedgehogs relate everything to a single, central vision. Shakespeare is a fox. Milton is a hedgehog. Or to switch spheres of activity, Bill Clinton is a fox. Kenneth Starr is a hedgehog. I've been wondering whether Gordon is a fox or a hedgehog. He's brought an extraordinary variety of innovative ideas and strategies to his Deanship. The personality of the fox. He knows many tricks. But his most characteristic strategy is to resort to first principles. In that he is a hedgehog. He has insisted on uncompromising standards of excellence. At the same time, he's created an organization for the college that respects its variety. It's a testimony to his achievement as Dean that he is something of both the fox and the hedgehog. Or to return to my first metaphor, the boxer, who can weave and dodge, can stand his ground, can jab effectively and deliver a knock out blow when he sees his opening. Gordon, I want to thank you for all you've contributed to the college and I've very much enjoyed working with you.