

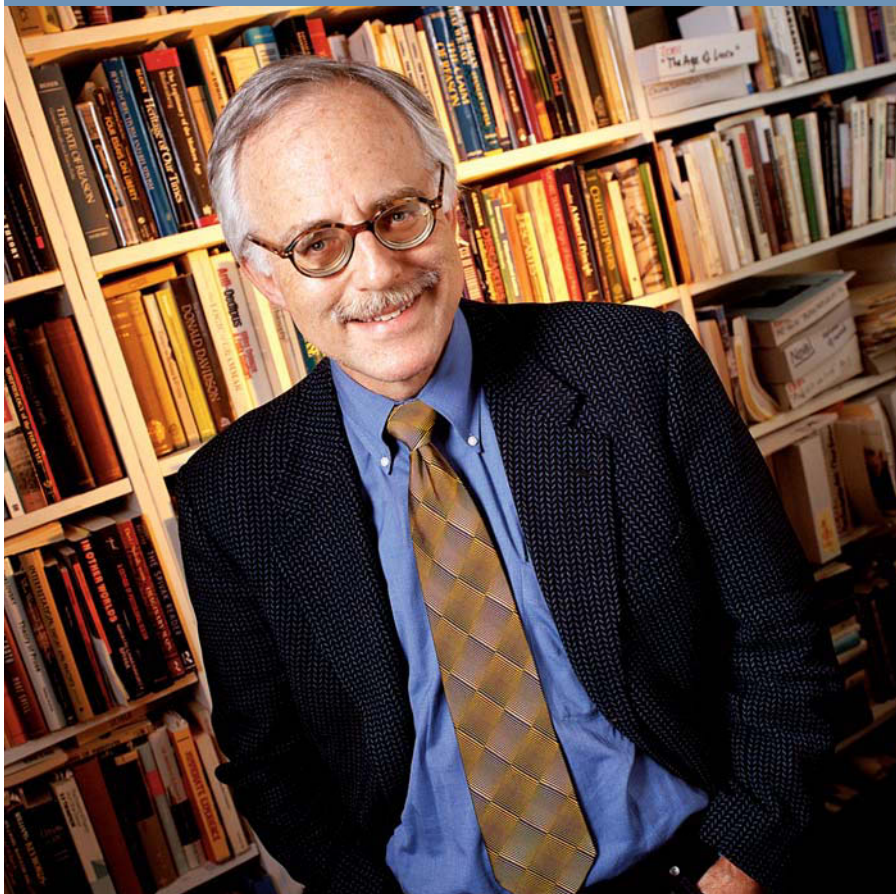
ondary schools, students, alumni, and businesses. The Supreme Court, the brief argues, should not “trigger wrenching disruption” by overturning its own established precedent.

Turning to substantive matters, the brief argues that universities should be free to compose classes comprising many different kinds of students, so long as they do not rely on impermissible processes that “separate, subordinate, or stigmatize” applicants or exclude a student from a place in a class on account of her or his race. Moreover, universities ought to be able to pursue diverse approaches in lawfully composing their student bodies, rather than being subjected to the “dead hand of a stifling uniformity.” Given agreement on the *ends* of diversity, the *means* by which it should be achieved—at issue in the Michigan cases—ought to be left to the “institutional competence and academic freedom” of the universities themselves.

“Diversity helps students confront perspectives other than their own and thus to think more rigorously and imaginatively,” the brief argues. Among the educational benefits are the opportunity for students to discover that “there is a broad range of viewpoint and experience *within* any given minority community....”

Those benefits are realized through the admissions practices now in place (for a brief description, see the “Browser,” page 15). Harvard and its side assert that the arguments advocated by the litigants who challenge the University of Michigan are “beset by intractable contradictions”: their supposedly “race-neutral” alternatives, meant to produce diverse and racially inclusive student populations, will displace as many or more nonminority applicants than the policies they oppose—or they will fail to bring about diversity. Either way, such policies would cripple universities’ abilities to diversify their student bodies by musical talent, personal experience, or other criteria, and so are “anti-meritocratic and utterly contrary to...individualized admissions philosophies.” Moreover, for selective national universities and for graduate schools, rules such as guaranteeing admission to the top 4 to 20 percent of each high-school class (the practice in Califor-

HARVARD PORTRAIT



Lindsay Waters

LINDSAY WATERS is an uncommon bird. He is both the executive editor for the humanities of Harvard University Press—perforce a generalist, seeing 10 or so “slow-cooked” books through publication each year—and a productive scholar himself. At the University of Chicago he began as a medievalist, doing his doctoral dissertation on the fifteenth-century poet Luigi Pulci. He has written extensively about the late deconstructive literary theorist Paul de Man. He is author of a book, *Against Authoritarian Aesthetics: Towards a Poetics of Experience*, which he wrote in English but which was translated into Putonghua and published in Beijing by Peking University Press. And he has contributed to scholarly journals feisty articles chiding certain branches of the academy for requiring tenure candidates to churn out books that often are unreadable, uninspiring, and a burden to their authors, publishers, and audiences. As a publisher, he hopes to do his part to further develop ideas in analytic philosophy (espoused at Harvard by now-emeritus professors Hilary Putnam and Stanley Cavell) and to revitalize literary studies. “The humanities are deeply in the doldrums,” he says, “but there is a way out. We’ve lost a sense of what it is that gets people turned on by art. We need to look at affect.” He believes the humanities are at a “great moment,” when young scholars, bucking a trend dominant for decades, are “paying attention to content and the effect that close reading has on them overall, body and soul.” Waters is married and has three children. His older son is a musician, and he himself likes a good rock concert. Boston’s The Pixies and Portland, Oregon’s, Sleater-Kinney are favorite groups. He wants to see such contemporary arts brought into the curriculum.