

friends, and wife, Julia Clinker, a photographer who teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design and takes primary care of their two young sons. It was while earning a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Tufts and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1990 that Gross, who had plans "to photograph how the police treated people," first met Boston community activist Reverend Eugene F. Rivers III '83; he ended up teaching art to kids through the Azusa Christian Community (begun as a Harvard student group in the 1980s), where Rivers was pastor, and its affiliated Ella J. Baker House, which serves high-risk families in Dorchester. During the next decade, he was based primarily at Baker House as a teacher, street worker, and community organizer.

The work was faith-based, but "whether you believe in God or not was (and is) not critical," says Gross, who is basically agnostic after years of studying religion.

"I believe that people are capable of living up to their potential if given love and attention and opportunities. I connect with the communities of faith because they are dedicated around principles that I agree with—that every human life is worth something and worth doing something about."

Divinity School "was a great place for me to ask new questions; I'm a much more lethal debater thanks to Harvard," he says. He was especially drawn to professors Harvey Cox and Kevin Madigan and former faculty member Father J. Bryan Hehir. He took "Justice" with Bass professor of government Michael Sandel and still listens to the lectures through his iPod while jogging. "Harvard was a respite from the streets," he continues, "and it renewed me to come and do this": move to Providence (where his wife grew up) and take on the job of building up the nascent institute.

Gross's own religious background is complicated. His mother, a Serb, deplored organized religion. His father, a Croatian Jew, once aspired to become a Catholic priest largely because he was hidden in a monastery during World War II (his mother died in the Holocaust); his eventual move to Israel was to be near his sole remaining relative, a sister. "My father's the one who taught me all about Jesus," Gross says. "It was not an observant Jewish household; we also celebrated Christmas. But in Israel, you begin to absorb the culture and I did. I still love the slowing down on Fridays. I really miss that."

Though far from being a violent young man, Gross says he has always tended to "question everything" and was somewhat rebellious. He recalls breaking a window, slapping a teacher, throwing a kid over a table—"typical, aggressive kid stuff"—and says fighting at school and on the

## Anthony Woods: Taking a Stand

**When Anthony C. Woods, M.P.P. '08,** delivered the graduate English address at Commencement last June (shown at right), he had just made a momentous decision: to publicly acknowledge his homosexuality and effectively end a military career that had spanned nine years and two tours in Iraq.

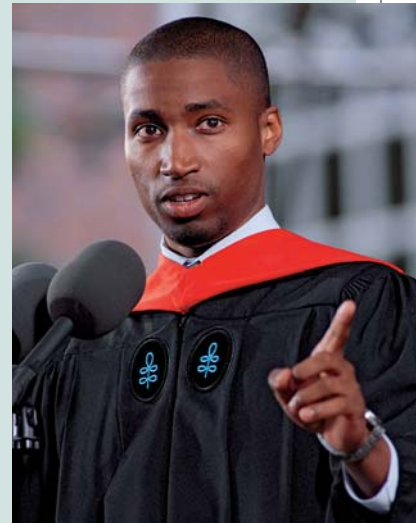
Woods did not mention this decision in his speech. Soon after, though, the West Point graduate and U.S. Army captain informed his commander that he was gay, initiating his dismissal under the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy. In early November, Woods learned he would be "eliminated" from the army on the grounds of "moral and professional dereliction" and required to repay \$35,000—the amount of his scholarship to attend the Kennedy School.

A military career may seem a curious choice for a young man who is gay or even questioning his orientation. But for the son of a single mother, growing up in an Air Force town in northern California, acceptance to West Point was an honor—and an opportunity—beyond compare. Woods focused on the professional to the exclusion of the personal; with the country at war, that wasn't hard. But two years at Harvard gave him space to think—and to face his dismal prospects for upward mobility in an organization with an explicit homosexuality ban and a strong culture of marriage and children. Even if he had stayed closeted, he says, "It wasn't going to be possible for me to fit the mold, and I knew that because of that, there was going to be a glass ceiling."

Even after the invasive court-martial process—the military conducts interviews with friends and family to verify homosexuality, presumably to prevent fraud, for instance by soldiers who wish to avoid an additional tour in Iraq—Woods is reluctant to malign the officers who carried out his investigation. He says they are simply implementing a policy. Change might come from Congress, but Woods believes the Supreme Court is a more likely venue: "I think it's going to take a landmark court case, like *Brown v. Board of Education*."

As recently as a year ago, Woods thought life after Harvard would include at least five more years of military service. He had been accepted to teach at West Point—"a huge, huge dream," he says. Now, even as he waits to hear whether his discharge will be honorable or dishonorable, Woods has begun a new chapter: while working as staff secretary to New York governor David Paterson, he is applying to law school. He dreams of a role in changing the policy that cut his own dreams short. But his decision to come out already constitutes a significant first step. "If this policy's ever going to go away," he says, "they have to lose talented people. It's not going to go away unless it hurts."

~ ELIZABETH GUDRAIS



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