



YVONNE OLLINGER

Age: 50

Major: Medieval and Renaissance studies

Graduation Date: May 2008

Not long ago, Yvonne Ollinger, a medieval and Renaissance studies major, indulged in a little time travel and took a course on the films of the 1970s—*Taxi Driver*, *Annie Hall*, *The Godfather*. “It was so enlightening,” she says, “to discuss and read about that period as history when you lived through it.” She was pleased to be able to add the perspectives “of a different generation—but not of a parent” to the discussion. Back in the ’70s, when most of her high-school contemporaries were turning their thoughts college, Ollinger was eyeing the big, wide world. All she wanted to do was see far-off places, so she hit the road, working for a time at a youth hotel in Amsterdam. Eventually, Ollinger got a job with an airline, working for 21 years in areas ranging from accounting to operations (loading planes, with an eye on weight and balance). She traveled extensively—all over western Europe, Asia, even Iceland—and fulfilled her dreams. But at age 40, she felt the pull to return to school and enrolled in Massachusetts Bay Community College, where a history professor spotted her and recommended Wellesley. At three courses a semester, she has followed her passion for medieval and Renaissance art and history—“I thought, ‘I can’t go back to school unless I take what I want,’” Ollinger grins—and will graduate this May. An internship in museum development at the Davis Museum and Cultural Center is ahead this summer, and then, Ollinger thinks, some time off to work before continuing her education. “I have learned I can do this, going back to school as a mature adult,” she says. “I have proved to myself that I can and am coming away with a lot of self-confidence.”

(Continued on next page)