Literary Ambitions

The International Institute of Modern Letters is staking its claim as the top literary activism group in the country

Wole Soyinka: The Nobel Laureate Stands Out on Campus

Dave Hickey: A Genius’ Take on the Art World

Wole Soyinka
Elias Ghanem Chair of Creative Writing

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THANK YOU
FOR ANSWERING THE CALL
For A Great University

The UNLV Foundation extends its appreciation to all alumni and friends who generously contributed to UNLV through the Fall 2002 Rebel Ring Phonathon!

UNLV is grateful for your outstanding response to calls by current students. Your support benefits the University greatly.

The support of alumni and friends helps to strengthen academic programs, provide student services and fund scholarships for the coming year.

Thank you again for contributing to the future of UNLV. For more information about the UNLV Foundation and the Rebel Ring Phonathon, please call (702) 895-3641.

UNLV FOUNDATION
SPECIAL FOCUS
The International Institute of Modern Letters

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Expansive Thinking and High Ideals

Several years ago when Las Vegas was named America’s first City of Asylum, I was delighted by the development but not surprised by the rest of the world’s apparent skepticism about locating the refuge for dissident writers here in Las Vegas. As president of a dynamic university that seeks a world-class reputation for its teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity, I am keenly aware of the world’s perception of Las Vegas; it seems many people refuse to abandon the stereotypical image of our city, despite knowing that it is a thriving metropolitan area with more than a million people pursuing diverse interests, including many serious intellectual ones. Yes, I was quite aware of the thinking that produced headlines belittling the unlikely pairing of Las Vegas with the distinction of being the nation’s first City of Asylum. On two levels — both as an American literary scholar and as president of UNLV — I was heartened to see our town entrusted with this important role and felt intuitively that it would bring a whole host of other positive connections to the campus and the community. I had no idea just how much good it would bring. A great deal of credit is deserved by those forward-thinking individuals who brought us this program and made possible the ensuing creation of the International Institute of Modern Letters — not the least of which is our generous benefactor, the late Marjorie Schaefer of the Mandalay Resort Group. Glenn, who founded the institute, and English/creative writing professor Richard Wiley can be largely credited with assigning it the boldness to aspire to become a leader in the international literary community? Perhaps, but having a Nobel Prize winner believe in us helped us believe in ourselves with greater certainty.

So how, you may ask, did a modest college, created just under a half century ago in a dusty patch of desert off Maryland Parkway, achieve this? I believe we can thank many individuals who have gone before us, as well as those still here continuing the charge. We can thank the excellent scholars and teachers, researchers and artists who, in the early days of the university, remained devoted to their disciplines despite nagging doubts about their institution’s location. We can thank the administrators who recognized the value of supporting these early scholarly endeavors and who doggedly pursued greater funding to build infrastructure. We can thank a generous community, filled with donors and friends of UNLV, who have understood all along the genuine importance of establishing a strong academic institution for the greater good of the city and of the state. And we can thank our students, past and present, for choosing UNLV and going on to proudly proclaim their alma mater’s success. They all were and are open-minded about our prospects, committed to seeing bright continued on page 31

As president of a dynamic university that seeks a world-class reputation for its teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity, I am keenly aware of the world’s perception of Las Vegas; it seems many people refuse to abandon the stereotypical image of our city.

Fall Enrollment Jumps to Nearly 25,000 Students

UNLV’s enrollment figures increased dramatically last fall, jumping 5.7 percent in the total number of students and increasing an unprecedented 9.5 percent over the previous year in the important full-time equivalent (FTE) figure. FTE, a figure that uses a formula to calculate the equivalent number of full-time students based on the number of credits taken by all students, determines the amount of per-student funding UNLV receives from the Nevada Legislature. In fall 2002, FTE increased to 17,777 and the total count of students rose to 24,965.

“We have been posting spectacular growth over the past several years, but the fall figures passed any we have seen in recent years,” UNLV President Carol C. Harter said.

“UNLV is doing everything possible to accommodate the large number of new students. Despite base budget cuts and additional unfunded costs, we have filled the classrooms and provided the services students require,” Harter said. “It is, of course, exciting to witness the remarkable growth of our maturing campus. UNLV is becoming a reality as well as a passion for many students. There are among the largest 75 universities in the United States.

“At the same time, we are facing a significant challenge. UNLV welcomed 1,347 new students just this past fall. I believe it is incumbent upon UNLV, as the state’s largest university and fastest-growing campus, to serve those Nevadans who choose to pursue higher education.”

Academic Enrichment Center Receives $32 Million from Grants

With the help of $32 million in federal grants, UNLV’s Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach will serve more than 25,000 low-income children and adults in Clark County over the next five years.

The center received two grants through the U.S. Department of Education’s Granting Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), which provides services to students beginning in the sixth grade. The center also received two grants from the Economic Opportunity Center program, which assists displaced or unemployed workers.

Center initiatives, such as study skills workshops, tutoring, and mentoring programs, are already having a tremendous impact on student retention, said William Sullivan, associate vice president for retention and outreach. “The student support services program is resulting in a phenomenal 82 percent graduation rate over five years,” he said. “And we’re achieving that with a population of students — low-income and first-generation college students — who traditionally have much lower college-degree-completion rates.”

“Academic Enrichment Center initiatives, such as study skills workshops, tutoring, and mentoring programs, are already having a tremendous impact on student retention.”

— Tracy B. Cotton, executive director of the center, credits the retention success to early intervention programs. “As GEAR UP targets youths beginning in sixth grade, our Educational Opportunity Center will help their parents reach their own educational and career goals, which in turn puts them in a better position to support their children’s education.”

The new grants will enable the center to serve more than 25,000 people in low-income areas. The grants bring the total amount of the center’s federal support to more than $8 million a year.

The center’s dramatic growth — in 1997 it served 965 individuals on a budget of $800,000 — was only possible by leveraging community resources, Cotton said. The center has partnered with city and county government agencies, the Clark County School District, other not-for-profit organizations, and corporate sponsors including Wells Fargo Bank, Howard Hughes Corp., and The Venetian Resort-Hotel-Casino.

“Although we are a public, not-for-profit organization, our approach follows a very traditional business model in terms of acquiring and managing our resources,” Cotton said. “It’s a somewhat unique model for a not-for-profit organization affiliated with an academic institution, but it allows us to tap the resources of our community partners. At the same time, it allows the university to use its resources to help the community.”

For information, call (702) 895-4777 or visit www.unlv.edu/academicenrichment.
It started perhaps with just a candle or a...
Alumni Center Becomes First Campus Building with Wireless Internet Access

The Richard Tam Alumni Center has established the campus’ first “Wi-Fi” hub — a location where individuals can link to the Internet at high speeds without cables or telephones. The UNLV Alumni Association installed the wireless network to give visitors to the Tam Alumni Center a way to connect to the Internet, read and answer e-mail, and access online campus resources.

Alumni Center visitors, who frequently use the conference room and main auditorium for meetings, can quickly and easily connect to the Internet to display Web sites during presentations, check e-mail during a break, Likewise, students can access lecture notes, assignments, and e-mail from the Internet through their laptop computers, just as if they were using one of the campus’ computer labs. “This is a picture of what we hope will lead to the entire UNLV campus eventually becoming a wireless hub,” said Jim Ratigan, a partner in Advanced Cyber Solutions, the North Las Vegas company that designed and installed the network. “Our hope is the success of turning the Richard Tam Alumni Center into a wireless hub will inspire a campuswide program.”

Advanced Cyber Solutions placed six access points throughout the building to extend coverage to the center’s outdoor patio area. Connecting to the hub with a wireless-capable laptop or handheld device requires a pass code, which can be obtained from the Alumni Association staff in the center.

Ratigan, a member of the association’s board of directors and a past president of the organization, said he envisions UNLV having a wireless network similar to the one that his company designed for Tulane University in New Orleans. A donation from one of the co-founders of Netscape allowed Tulane to become one of the first universities in the country to offer universitywide wireless computer access to its students and faculty.

“The communications and business world has been revolutionized by wireless technology,” said Kevin J. Page, association president. “Our goal is to create a wireless hub that enhances the Alumni Center’s educational environment for both students and faculty.”

For information, contact the UNLV Alumni Association at (702) 895-3621 or (800) 829-2586.

Business Hall of Fame Announces 2003 Inductees

One of Nevada’s most notable developers, the groundbreaking businesswoman and entrepreneur, and a world-renowned philanthropist are the 2003 inductees for the Nevada Business Hall of Fame.

The inductees were chosen by the College of Business Executive Advisory Board for having significantly contributed to the economic prosperity of Nevada and for bringing positive recognition to the state. The inductees were honored at a dinner presented in association with Deloitte & Touche. They are: Irvin Molasky, chairman of the Paradigm Development Company since 1951, helped create the first private hospital in Nevada (Sanritse), the first master-planned community (Paradise Palms), the first golf course community, the first high-rise building in downtown Las Vegas (Bank of America Plaza), and the state’s first enclosed shopping mall (the Boulevard). His most recent development, Park Towers, has been named one of the best luxury condominiums in the country. Molasky played a pivotal role in the early development of UNLV through the donation of 45 acres at Flamingo Road and Maryland Parkway. He is a founding trustee of the UNLV Foundation.

Claudine Williams was the first woman elected chairman of the board for a Nevada bank and the first woman inducted into the Nevada Hall of Fame. In 1965, she and her late husband, Shelby, purchased and renamed the Silver Slipper Casino, which they sold to Howard Hughes in 1969. They opened the Holiday Casino in 1973. After her husband passed away in 1977, Claudine Williams became president and general manager of the property. She continued to expand the business until its sale to Harrah’s in 1983. She has served as chairman of the board of Harrah’s Las Vegas and remains part of the Harrah’s family. She is chairman of the board of Nevada Commerce Bank, a commissioner on the Nevada Commission on Tourism, and a founding member and past chairman of the UNLV Foundation Board of Trustees.

The late Howard Hughes helped make Las Vegas the world-class entertainment, commercial, industrial, and residential city it is today. Credited by many for pulling Las Vegas out of the economic slump of the mid-1960s, Hughes pioneered the era of corporate ownership of hotels and casinos in Nevada with his purchase of the Desert Inn and seven other hotels. His impressive real estate holdings in Southern Nevada provided the cornerstone for the phenomenal growth that continues today. Of the 49,000 acres of land owned by Hughes when he died in 1976, nearly half has been developed as Summerlin.

Alumni Association Helps Today’s Students Succeed

The numbers jump out at you: $5.5 million (total monetary donations to UNLV); $2.9 million (total donations for improvements to the UNLV campus); $1.6 million (current amount of alumni scholarship endowments).

The members of the UNLV Alumni Association have worked diligently on behalf of the university, financially sustaining students and faculty while offering leadership, support and encouragement, that benefit the university and enhance the community.

But there’s more to the association than numbers. “The members of the UNLV Alumni Association love UNLV,” said association President Kevin J. Page, ’86 BS Finance, ’87 MBA. “We enjoyed our time here, honored the relationships we have built, and we all feel the need to do our part in giving something back to the university and its current students.”

Many of our members will serve as mentors to students in the particular colleges they graduated from. Other members will participate in events sponsored by the association or volunteer activities for the university. All members of the UNLV Alumni Association and all of the activities we sponsor benefit the university in some manner. Each spring, the awarding of scholarships to more than 50 worthy students is an important and necessary function of the Alumni Association, and in all, close to $1 million has been awarded since the association was created.

“As a student, I looked up to members of the Alumni Association who helped me throughout my education with advice and support,” Page said. “What the UNLV Alumni Association does has perpetuity to it. We were helped as UNLV students, and now we’re giving back to current UNLV students. Our wish is that current and future students will offer the same support to those who follow — that’s what an alumni association is all about.”

Evidence of the association’s generosity is found throughout the campus. The $2.7 million Richard Tam Alumni Center stands as a symbol of the group’s commitment to the university. Both the campus and the Las Vegas community use the center for numerous events.

Recently, the center became the first UNLV building to be equipped for wireless Internet access, meaning anyone who comes to the building with a wireless-capable device, such as a handheld or laptop computer with a wireless card, can access the Internet. The service extends outside to the center’s courtyard.

The Alumni Association also has: planted 40 trees in the Alumni Grove and along Alumni Walk; built the UNLV Alumni Association Pavilion at the Paul B. Soggett Architecture Building; contributed 80 spirit banners to line the Academic Mall; inserted student clock in all UNLV classrooms; donated artwork that hangs in the Moyer Student Union and the Classroom Building Complex; sponsored the updated costume worn by the school’s “Hey Reb” mascot and uniforms for the football team; built a 10-foot observation tower for the marching band.

Association members enjoy a diverse list of benefits and privileges. Events throughout the year include student and faculty awards programs, luncheons, panel discussions, and symposiums. Annual homecoming weekend festivities include a Friday night dinner, football game tailgate party, and a golf tournament.

“Our football game tailgate parties are always fun, well-attended, and a great place to reconnect with old friends and fellow alumni,” Page said.

A single annual membership in the association is $40, and joint annual membership is $60. Lifetime membership is $700 for a single member or $800 for joint membership.

For more information, call the UNLV Alumni Association at (702) 895-3621 or (800) 829-2586, or visit the association Web site at www.unlvalumni.com.
Education professor Jane McCarthy, left, lived in a remote section of the Navajo Indian Reservation to develop programs for teachers in the Pinon Unified School District. She's pictured here with Regina Lynch, who coordinates a federal program for the school district, and UNLV President Carol C. Harper outside a traditional Navajo home.

lives are anything but typical.

McCarthy's projects included establishing an intervention program to help increase student attendance; developing disciplinary policies with the staff; and providing development sessions on classroom management, lesson planning, and teaching techniques.

But she didn't do it alone. McCarthy credits her many colleagues—some of whom traveled to the reservation to deliver workshops—with the success of the program. Among the visitors were Gene Hall, dean of the College of Education, and associate professors Virginia Usnick, Neal Strudler, Aimee Govett, LeAnn Putney, and Nancy Gallavan. A visit from President Carol C. Harper was a highlight for the district's teachers. "I was very proud to see the many accomplishments that Dr. McCarthy and the staff have made in helping these young people excel academically," Harper said.

"The project is helping the Pinon schools offer an enriched, relevant, and successful education to these students," McCarthy said.

The program was such a success that UNLV will continue its work on the reservation, offering classes that lead to further certifications in literacy for the teachers and an initial teaching license for classroom aids.

"Being out there was a personally life-changing experience," McCarthy said. "I know that the lessons I learned will help both to enrich UNLV's education program and improve the assistance we can give to Nevada schools with high percentages of Indian students."

Parent Orientation Program Emphasizes Fun in Youth Sports

As Henderson parents signed up for sports last fall, they had to sign themselves up for a parenting seminar. UNLV and the Henderson parks and recreation department launched the YouthFirst orientation program to encourage parental involvement in sports and to provide a fun and educational learning experience for the young participants.

"An added expectation is that parents, by learning their role in youth sports, will display appropriate and supportive behavior when watching games," said R.R. Apache, assistant professor of educational leadership. Apache and students enrolled in the university's sports education and leadership program conduct the one-hour orientation session that all parents enrolling their children in a Henderson sports program must attend. They discuss the roles of the parent and the coach, as well as why children quit youth sports. Parents complete a certification quiz and sign a code of conduct pledge at the conclusion of the session.

The students also developed a resource Web site for parents and newsletters for parents. Sue Weakland, Henderson recreation supervisor, said the partnership allows the city to offer a program designed for the local community. "We wanted to take a proactive approach to curbing violence in youth sports," she said. "This program was tailored specifically for our community and gives us direct access to experts in this field."

Thomas F. Williams was named director of the UNLV Research Foundation, which recently was created to develop public-private partnerships that apply university research to benefit the citizens of Nevada by solving problems and creating high-tech jobs. The Research Foundation will also help provide a vehicle for faculty members to market products and services from their research. Williams, who joined UNLV after serving for 13 years in various capacities with the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Department of Energy, was most recently the director of congressional, intergovernmental, and strategic programs for the Nevada office of the National Nuclear Security Administration.

Janet Ward was named director of interdisciplinary programs and oversees programs in Asian, Latin American, cultural, linguistic, multidisciplinary, and social science studies. She is also an associate professor in the department of history and is currently teaching courses in the School of Architecture and in the Honors College. Ward previously worked at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she served as chair of the department of Germanic and Slavic languages and undergraduate associate chair of the department of comparative literature and humanities. Her book Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany was published by the University of California Press in 2001. She is currently working on a book about the architecture of Berlin.

UNLV undergraduate Ian Jankelowitz received third place in the annual Elie Wiesel Ethics Prize Essay Contest. Wiesel, a noted author and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, is a faculty member at the university. Jankelowitz with the award and a $1,500 scholarship at a ceremony in New York City in December. Jankelowitz’s essay, “From Oppressed to Oppressors: The Ethical Issues of Post-Holocaust Jewish in Apartheid South Africa,” was selected from 582 entries submitted by students from more than 400 colleges in the United States and Canada. A native of Sydney, Australia, Jankelowitz is currently a junior pursuing a double major in music education and art history. He was also recently named a recipient of a UNLV University Forum Fellowship. The essay is posted on the Internet at www.eliewieselfoundation.org.

Barbara Hirshorn was named director of the university’s Center for Aging, which coordinates and promotes research on aging-related issues. The center also works collaboratively with other community organizations to help formulate policy affecting seniors in the Southern Nevada community and nationwide. Previously, Hirshorn was director of intergovernmental studies for the University of South Carolina, a faculty member at Wayne State University’s Institute of Gerontology in Detroit, and a research associate at the Gerontological Society of America in Washington, D.C. Hirshorn’s own research has focused on multifaceted relations and on maintaining the self-sufficiency and productivity of seniors.

Lois Helmbold was named chair of the women’s studies department. Previously, she was a professor and coordinator of the women’s studies program at California’s San Jose State University. Helmbold arrived at UNLV last fall as a Fulbright senior lecturer in American studies at Tsuda College and Japan Women’s University in Tokyo. She is also a prolific author of historical scholarship and feminist commentary. She is currently finishing a book that compares the survival strategies of black and white working-class women during the Great Depression.

Paul Shock, professor and chair of tourism and convention administration, was named one of the 25 most influential people in the meetings industry by Meeting News magazine. The magazine noted her significant contributions to the meetings industry and her continuing commitment to shaping education in the field. Shock joined the UNLV faculty in 1988, and she has since won a Boyd Distinguished Professor Award and a Distinguished Service Award from the International Association for Exposition Management, among others. In 2001, she was named one of the 10 most powerful women in the industry by Successful Meetings magazine.

The College of Business named Sharon Fusco its coordinator of communications and external relations. Fusco will manage the college’s outreach efforts by coordinating internal and external communications, acting as a liaison to its alumni and advisory boards, and organizing special events. She received a bachelor’s degree from Auburn University and a master’s of human relations degree from the University of Oklahoma. She possesses training and community relations management roles for UNLV’s Nevada Small Business Development Center.

Groom and Doom, an original one-act play by Doug Hill, assistant director of the UNLV Senior Adult Theatre program, will receive a staged reading at Mill Mountain Theatre in Roanoke, Va., on April 16. The play follows five women into the basement of a church in Southeast Oklahoma during a wedding at which the bride must decide if marriage is the right choice for her. The script was developed at UNLV in the Playwright’s Lab and received a workshop reading at The Asylum Theatre in Las Vegas under the direction of Chris Mann, ’02 MFA Playwriting.

College of Education professors Kyle Higgins and Randall Boone received a highly competitive federal grant of nearly $400,000 to develop assessment tools to help parents and teachers evaluate educational computer software aimed at children with disabilities. "The reality is that a lot of educational software is for sale has never gone through any formative evaluation, meaning that it has never actually been tested with the kids it’s aimed at,” Higgins said. "Just about the only guide parents and teachers have for making a purchasing decision is what the publisher has said on the box." The evaluation tools will cover software that is commonly used in special education and general education settings.
The International Institute of Modern Letters has set its goal of becoming the world’s top philanthropy organization for literary arts. Why? It’s all in the name of progress.

When Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, then president of an international writers group, announced in May 2000 that Las Vegas had been named the first U.S. City of Asylum for persecuted writers, the world seemed to ask, “Why Vegas?” Headlines pointed to the seeming incongruity of Las Vegas as a refuge for dissident writers — “Unlikely Haven for a Writer” (Los Angeles Times), “A Literary Gambler: Sin City Goes for the Cultural Jackpot as Poet’s Asylum” (USA Today).

The answer, casino executive and UNLV benefactor Glenn Schaeffer says, is straightforward: no other city and no other university had seized the opportunity. “It doesn’t cost much money to claim a leadership position in literary arts; it only requires dedication, motivated community activists, a town with ambition, and the right connections,” he says.

The right connections were made years ago, when UNLV creative writing professor Richard Wiley met Soyinka in 1990, when the Nigerian playwright was visiting campus. The two reconnected in October 1999, when Soyinka was on campus to present a Barrick Lecture.

“Over dinner and a bottle of wine, Wole was bemoaning the fact that he was having trouble establishing an American City of Asylum,” Wiley recounts. “We started joking about how it would play against type to bring the program to Las Vegas. Pretty soon the joke stopped being a joke.”

The other pivotal connection in the story is Wole’s friendship with Schaeffer. The two had met while attending the respected Iowa Writers’ Workshop. Schaeffer had previously expressed his desire to establish a literary arts organization. Then stepped UNLV President Carol C. Harper — “an energetic and thoughtful collaborator,” Schaeffer says — and another Workshop graduate, Eric Olsen. With substantial funding from Schaeffer, the group created the International Institute of Modern Letters, headquartered at UNLV with Olsen as its director.

Now the institute is working to become the major patron for the literary arts in the world, Olsen says. “That’s not an unrealistic goal, given the lack of organizational support in this area. There are many groups that support performing arts, but few, unless you count corporate publishing, that support literature. We can make a significant impact partly because few others have taken on the challenge.”

Though previously overlooked by philanthropists, literary arts are not marginal in their value to society, according to the institute’s leaders. The organization’s underlying principle is that a thriving literary environment is an essential component of democracy and progress. Writers, they say, fight epidemics of hate, intolerance, and totalitarianism. “We embrace the idea that literature, alone among the arts, stands for intellectual freedom, humane choice — progress, and telling the truth against political lies,” Schaeffer says.

But to have that effect, Olsen says, writers must reach a general audience. “We don’t want the institute to become a self-referential organization that produces people who only speak to others in the world of literature with a big ‘I,’” he says. “We hope to be known as an organization that nurtures the public intellectual, someone who produces the kind of writing that gets read.”

The institute’s latest affiliate, UNLV art criticism professor Dave Hickey, is an example of a public intellectual, Olsen says. “Dave’s a genius in the art world (see page 14). But one thing that sets him apart is that he is skilled at expressing his ideas — which are sometimes at odds with the art community — to a broad audience outside the art world.”

Center of Excellence

The institute still oversees the City of Asylum-Las Vegas, providing the resident writer with a townhome, living stipend, and health insurance (see page 18). To support emerging writers, it has established programs at the universities of Iowa and Nevada.

Series Showcases the Craft of Book Making

When writing is your profession, it’s not very often that you want to just give away your literary. Yet, it hasn’t been difficult to convince Nobel laureates and National Book Prize winners to donate their words to the International Institute of Modern Letters.

“We make them an offer they can’t refuse: we ask them to help other writers in need,” says Richard Wiley, a UNLV creative writing professor and director of publications for the institute.

Rainmaker Editions, a series of fine-press books, is the primary fund-raising effort of the institute, which supports persecuted and emerging writers from around the world. The collectors’ books, available by subscription only, are crafted with original artwork on handmade paper. Subscribers receive three books each year, all signed by the author, illustrator, and designer. “Collectors of fine-press books prize these beautiful pieces of art and writing,” Wiley says. “To describe them is difficult; they are really something meant to be held so the craftsmanship that goes into them can really be appreciated.”

The first book in the 2002-03 series is Five Poems by Nobel laureate Toni Morrison. The book was designed by Peter Koch with illustrations by Kara Walker, an African American silhouet-ette artist. Morrison also wrote The Bluest Eye, Tar Baby, and Beloved.

The second Rainmaker Edition is Spirit of the River, the first chapter of a soon-to-be-published novel by Russell Banks. The book was designed and illustrated by Barry Moser and features woodblock art. Banks is the author of Affliction and The Sweet Hereafter, both of which were turned into movies.

Wole Soyinka, another Nobel laureate and UNLV’s Elias Gharem Chair in Creative Writing, is the third featured writer in the series. He co-authored and illustrated a work that celebrates the cultural crossovers of a market in Uzbekistan while denouncing fanaticism and commenting on world affairs. The book is designed by Victoria Hindley and features illustrations by Bob Kleinschmidt.

Other writers who have agreed to contribute works to the series include Gunter Grass, Kenzaburo Oe, and Henry Louis Gates.

Copies of the Rainmaker Editions can also be found at UNLV’s Lied Library special collections, which houses a growing collection of fine-press books from around the world.

For Rainmaker Editions subscription information, call (702) 895-3033 or visit www.modernletters.org.

"Las Vegas is an international city, and not just because of the gamblers from China. This institute builds on our multifaceted nature."  — Richard Wiley, English professor and director of publications for the International Institute of Modern Letters

When writing is yourprofession, it’s not very often that you want to just give away your literary. Yet, it hasn’t been difficult to convince Nobel laureates and National Book Prize winners to donate their words to the International Institute of Modern Letters.

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The Founder: Glenn Schaeffer

Glenn Schaeffer, founder of the International Institute of Modern Letters, is president and chief financial officer for Mandalay Resort Group, which operates 16 casino properties nationwide. His educational background, however, is in literature, and he received a master of fine arts degree from the University of Iowa’s prestigious Iowa Writer’s Workshop. He is an avid collector of first editions of American poetry.

Many people find it unusual that a casino executive is so interested in supporting literature. Why is literature important to you? You look for your own story in literature; it’s one of the best ways, I think, to understand who I am, as a person. And for ourselves as a progressive society, literature is important to you?

You obviously put a lot of stock in the liberal arts. Liberal arts teaches people to exercise judgment, analyze complex ideas, tolerate differing viewpoints, and form cohesive arguments. Those are the traits of success in any social environment like business or government.

On a personal level, what books have been important to you? The Great Gatsby was a major influence. It was after reading that novel that I decided I wanted to be a writer like Fitzgerald. As a result, I went to the Iowa Writers’ Workshop. I seem to have completely missed the point of the novel, however, and aspired to live Gatsby’s life, minus the locomotives. (So did Fitzgerald himself, it seems to me.) And at the workshop, I learned I didn’t want to be a writer, so I went into business instead.

Another book was Harriet Beecher Stowe’s social protest novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin. For some reason, this book’s not held in the esteem it once was, but its message united one of the world’s most victorious armies. Every Union soldier’s backpack came standard issue with a copy of Uncle Tom, not the Bible. It’s hard to prosecute any war, let alone one of such high stakes and cost, without an anthem. We’d have been a different and lesser country without that novel.

“Saying a few good books” is your notion of social activism?

Another book was Thomas Paine’s pamphlet, Common Sense, which is how modern society thrives, by risk and new ideas. According to a business writer like Malcolm Gladwell, social and market progress often happens by tiny, seemingly undetectable actions — tipping points, as Gladwell calls them. Books have been those tipping points, again and again.

An example?

Thomas Paine’s political pamphlet, Common Sense, which illustrated American spirit and stirred a political revolution, that, turn upon turn, reversed world power over the next two hundred years — from Eurocentric colonialism to global Americanism. Not everyone’s supremely happy with that outcome, but the material result for the masses has few parallels, if any, in world history.

“Whenever (writers) voices or persons are punished, you find market corruption, political totalitarianism, backward social customs and anti-feminism.” — Glenn Schaeffer

founder of the International Institute of Modern Letters
According to Hickey, while it’s flattering to receive such an honor — especially because recipients cannot apply for the grant, but instead are nominated by their peers — it’s best to be realistic about it. “It’s not genius genius, it’s art criticism genius,” he corrects. “That’s a fairly small field, like being the best surfer in Montana.”

It’s lines like that which set Hickey apart, says author and UNLV English professor John Iredell.

“One of the things about David that endears him to me and to others, I think, is his gift for great lines. He has a direct connection to somewhere else that most of us don’t have, and he is free with that gift.”

“One of my spies reported to me that recently, when David was in Texas at a symposium in San Marcos in honor of the writer John Graves, the conversation turned to presidential libraries. Lyndon Johnson’s was in Austin, at the University of Texas, and they spoke of that. Someone then brought up the library of Bush the Younger, and wondered where it would be. ‘It will be a small one’; David said, ‘since none of the books will go past chapter 11.’

“When someone asked him if that had come to him on the spur of the moment, he admitted it had. ‘It’s what I do,’ he is reputed to have said. ‘It’s only a tiny part of what he does, of course, but a delightful part.’”

Here, then, are some of Hickey’s thoughts on art, art criticism, Las Vegas, and a diversity of subjects.

On what he decided to pursue in college in art criticism rather than his original choice of literary criticism: The art world is more social and it’s more gregarious. Things look better, people dress better and stay up later. It’s not quite as seedy and tweedy.

On whether he is also an artist:

No, I don’t think critics should be competitive with their subjects. Thus my distrust of literary criticism.

On what motivates people to become artists:

Artists come out of the penthouse and out of the ghetto. They rarely come out of the suburbs. The art world, in fact, is mostly rich kids and poor kids. People who want the car and the house and the pool and everything don’t tend to be artists — they’ll become art professors, perhaps, or curators or art administrators, but they don’t become artists. Most successful artists make a lot less than university professors do — and they don’t have health insurance.

On what art is:

It’s what we call it. It’s a wildcard in the hand that culture deals us. So we decide what it is. The function of art changes from generation to generation. It does whatever needs to be done, if it’s any good. And what is the function of art in this generation? Hard to say. The general function of modern art is to reorganize society. In other words, works of art create constituencies of people who like it, and these constituencies can be ground by race, color, creed, region, or religion, and so they create new modes of social organization. And it’s art’s ability to override these sorts of primordial instincts that is the thing that appeals to me the most.

On the most influential artists of the last century:

Picasso, Pollock, Warhol.

On what excites him about art:

I’m excited by the fact that some of it is exciting. It is one of the few places that you can see something new and weird and disorienting. Not always, but there’s always the possibility of something exciting. When people ask me what I want to see, I say, ‘I don’t know what I want to see. I want to be amazed.’ That’s my job.

And is he amazed often? Pretty often. You know, more often than insurance adjusters. They’re probably more appalled than amazed.

On how the layperson views art:

Your experience of art is based on your experience of other art. So if you don’t grow up around art and if you don’t take the trouble to acquire a repertoire of responses, it’s really hard to know what anything is when you see it because it’s always more or less than everything else. So it’s a completely relative and contingent discourse. It’s a classic ‘you had to be there’ activity. If you just accept the fact that the art world has never been particularly congenial to bourgeois sensibilities, it’s fairly amazing democracy.

On people in the art world:

High art is art about people who love change and love adventure. Not many people like to be challenged. Not many people like to be threatened. It’s not a game for losers and not a game for sissies.

On success in the art world:

You can be a successful artist even if everybody hates your work — if they hate it enough. Success in the art world has more to do with the sheer quantity of response from people who care than with authorized approval of the work.

On why he gets so much work:

Hickey doesn’t solicit writing assignments. The publications ask him.

Part of the reason that I work so much, and that the reason everybody else who’s an art critic works so much, is that so many kids died in the ’60s with AIDS epidemic. There’s a whole generation of art critics who are just dead. So, in a sense, I’m doing a lot of their work.

And thus, by these days, AIDS just ravaged the art world — and as much in criticism as in any other place. In my generation, nearly everybody overdosed and, fortunately, I didn’t do that.

On why Las Vegas is not an odd place for someone who loves art to live:

Las Vegas is a place that looks interesting. That’s a very good place for an artist. It’s about the physical. Vegas aspires to a condition of art. Not many places do. Artists in Las Vegas are not the only people concerned with how it looks. In Ann Arbor, Mich., artists probably are the only ones who care how the city looks.

On why he abandoned his Nashville songwriting career: I decided at some point that I could be an A-plus art critic and only a B-plus songwriter. So I went with the higher grade. Unfortunately, I did that without ever thinking how much money a B-plus songwriter makes. I couldn’t be sitting in West Palm in my yacht. So much for genius.

On art critics:

Art critics tend to be eccentrics. When two art critics agree, you’ve got one too many art critics.
I t’s 11:25 a.m. I’m standing outside a small office on the sixth floor of the Flora Dungan Humanities Building. The brown plastic sign by the door reads: Mr. Wole Soyinka. A student (I presume) with a book bag slung on his shoulder joins my wait.

We stare at the study-abroad posters on the bulletin board. We’re both early for our respective appointments— we’re not meeting the kind of man you keep waiting. A deep voice with a distinct diction echoes through the hallway maze; it’s finishing a conversation started on the elevator, politely turning down an invitation to a book festival only because the speaker will be out of town.

“That’s him,” the student says. “His voice stands out, doesn’t it?”

Indeed, Soyinka stood out in that hallway. He stood out to UNLV President Carol C. Harter and English professor Richard Wiley, who recruited Soyinka in 2000 to hold the first Elias Ghahem Chair of Creative Writing, a position funded by donor Glenn Schaeffer.

He stood out to the Nigerian military dictatorships that placed him in solitary confinement for 22 months in the 1960s and forced him into exile in the 1990s. He stood out to the Swedish Academy, which in 1986 awarded him the Nobel Prize in literature, the first given to an African writer.

And he stood out to graduate theatre student Jonathan Shultz, who now speaks to Soyinka in a decidedly deferential manner as the playwright invites us into his office. The office’s bookshelves wrap around the walls, sagging under the weight of the poetry, novels, plays, and essays they hold. Soyinka grabs a paperback—his own play King Baabu—signs it, and hands it to Shultz. “I wanted you to have this from me.”

“That has to be one of the coolest things anyone has ever given to me—I ever will give to me,” Shultz says later. The actor traveled to Greece last year with fellow UNLV students and faculty to perform Oedipus at Colonus, a play written and directed by Soyinka. “I mean, he gave me incredible opportunities and experiences and here he is giving me his just-published work. I traveled out of the country for the first time because of him, and my resume will always have on it that I worked with him on the world premiere of his play—that carries a lot of weight when you walk into an audition.”

As Soyinka turns to my interview questions, I’m suddenly grateful for my tape recorder as his word choice tests my note-taking skills. Here are his views on teaching, books, and politics.

**On today’s literature:** It’s the nature of the mind to constantly make comparisons and look backwards. The classes (I taught) yesterday were on the American novel. We discussed how many great writers all matured in the early part of the 20th century—Steinbeck, Faulkner. When you have a cluster of creativity, people tend to see successive periods as lacking in the density, even dangerous. Nigeria’s dictatorships that placed him in solitary confinement for 22 months in the 1960s and forced him into exile in the 1990s. He stood out to the Swedish Academy, which in 1986 awarded him the Nobel Prize in literature, the first given to an African writer.

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**On today’s literature:** It’s the nature of the mind to constantly make comparisons and look backwards. The classes (I taught) yesterday were on the American novel. We discussed how many great writers all matured in the early part of the 20th century—Steinbeck, Faulkner. When you have a cluster of creativity, people tend to see successive periods as lacking in the weight and profundity of the period. I don’t believe that. Literature moves on a continuum. All ideas build on one another. One of the joys of literature is it doesn’t stand in isolation.

**On teaching and directing:** I think my father passed the teaching genes down to me. It keeps my mind very, very active—I think there’s too much intellectual curiosity. Directing, too, is a teaching process. The most fascinating part is to watch human beings in the exercise of self-transforma­tion. Their minds develop as they take on characters and they go so far beyond that which was such agony in the beginning.

Here, Shultz can offer some insight. Oedipus at Colonus “was so different than any play I’ve ever worked with before. The language is so dense, and I didn’t know where to go with it or how to work with (Soyinka).” I really struggled. Somewhere along the way I realized how far ahead of everyone he was, and I just had to trust him and catch up. Once I did, it was such a joy, such an incredible experience.

**On receiving the Nobel Prize in literature:** It was a mixed bag, actually. It played havoc with my creative life. For a long time, I really struggled. Somewhere along the way I realized how far ahead of everyone he was, and I just had to trust him and catch up. Once I did, it was such a joy, such an incredible experience.

**On the writing process:** I find it very difficult actually. I really don’t know why I write when I do. . . . I don’t think you can force it. I’ve known writers who sit at a typewriter and demand of themselves that they produce a certain number of pages every day. To me, if it doesn’t come, there are equally important things in life, like going to the nearest bar for a glass of wine.

**Advice for young writers:** Get ready to receive your rejection slips; treasure them and transcend them. It’s a very, very rare writer who doesn’t receive them. Await yours and then carry on.
Editor's Note: Syl Cheney-Coker contributed this essay to UNLV Magazine before his term as Las Vegas' first writer-in-residence under the City of Asylum program ended in January. The poet and novelist plans to return to Sierra Leone, which he fled in 1997 after a military coup that led to a civil war. With the help of the United Nations, the nation's版面有成就的作家，于1997年逃离了塞拉利昂。他计划返回塞拉利昂，该国在1997年因军事政变爆发内战。在联合国的帮助下，他将返回塞拉利昂。
King Baabu
by Wole Soyinka

Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka continues his outspoken criticism of the misuse of power in his 17th play, King Baabu. It tells the story of General Basha Bash (bearing a strong resemblance to Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha), who takes power in a coup and decides to turn his country into a kingdom and call himself King Baabu.

Soyinka (see page 18) satirizes the rule of the brutal and corrupt Abacha, so it is not surprising that the work was not staged in Nigeria until after Abacha's death in 1998. The play premiered in the Lagos’ National Arts Theatre in 2001. “Baabu” is a pun on a Hausa word meaning “nothing,” or metaphorically “finished.”

Soyinka was getting ready to stage his own The Beatiﬁcation of Area Boy in Lagos in 1994 when he learned that Abacha wanted him arrested. He ﬂed into self-imposed exile and continued to write and produce plays critical of the brutality and corruption in his homeland.

Abacha is dead, other corrupt regimes remain in Africa and around the world, giving King Baabu, like Macbeth, which it loosely resembles, continued currency.

MacArthur Fellow Dave Hickey’s (see page 20) latest work is more tongue in cheek than tongue in your face, and it is a far cry from his usual art criticism.

In Stardumb, a slender volume described on its back cover as “the astrology book for the art world at the millennium,” Hickey and psychedelic artist John DeFazio have indulged their lighter sides amidst wild, colorful characters. Hickey’s vignettes have art themes and frequently involve drugs and sex.

One might think that because Hickey took the time to write about astrology he takes it seriously, but the title, Stardumb, reveals his basic view of the subject. “I know nothing about astrology and care less,” Hickey says. “This is one of the characteristics of Sagittarius, like myself.”

Hickey says, “I get an astrology-for-idiots book — a redounding, I know — and used its characteristics of the various sign-types as occasions for little stories about the art world.

“I wrote them in order, one a day for 12 days, revised for two more, and that was it,” he conﬁrms. “The stories are not as shiny as you would like, but they are professional writing and they get better as you go along.” (They also tend to get longer, offering more space for development, which may have something to do with Hickey’s greater satisfaction with the later pages.)

Ahmed’s Revenge
by Richard Wiley

It’s been more than four years since novelist Richard Wiley’s Ahmed’s Revenge reached bookstores. In the intervening years Wiley, who sets his ﬁction in foreign locales, has researched and indexed Commodore Perry’s Minstrel Show, so in the not-too-distant future, readers can expect a novel where Japanese people, culture, and places provide the synergy for the story. Ahmed’s Revenge, however, is a long way from Japan. Instead of ﬁtting onto the small islands with their crowded cities on the western edge of the Paciﬁc Ocean, the characters in Ahmed’s Revenge have the vast expanse of Africa with which to play out their tale of mystery, moral conﬂict, and racial identity.

Wiley, who’s lived in Kenya, Nigeria, Japan, and Korea, brings the colonial continent of Isak Dinesen’s Out of Africa into the 1970s. When Ahmed’s brother, who was the power in Kenya when Ahmed was murdered, his widow, Zainab, decides to investigate. She discovers that not only was her husband involved in the illegal ivory trade, but so was her father. One minister of wildlife in the Rynan government.

The book has been described as an “ingeniously off-the-wall story” and an “exceedingly clever novel” (Will Street Journal) as well as “nothing short of an exotic page-turner” (Booklist). The New York Times Book Review wrote: “It’s a credit to Wiley’s intelligence and narrative expertise that the answer he suggests arrives subtly, without the wear of heavy-handed rhetoric.”

The title character was, by the way, a real elephant so large that his tusks were more than three times longer than average. He was “intrigued” by the irony of the fact that to protect Ahmed from poachers, they took away his freedom,” the author says about one of the themes of his novel.

Wiley came to UNLV in 1989 to teach creative writing and is now also director of publications for the International Institute of Modern Letters. His novels include Fools’ Gold, Festival for Three Thousand Maidens, and Indigo. He won the PEN/Faulkner award for best American ﬁction in 1987 for Soldiers in Hiding, his ﬁrst novel. In addition to Commodore Perry, Wiley fans can expect a novel set in the United States to come out in the future.

Voices from Silence
by Douglas Unger

Douglas Unger’s Voices from Silence has, perhaps, special relevance in the era of terrorism and anti-terrorism, it deals with state-supported terror and its impact on families and individuals.

Stardumb is a bit of ﬂuff on the body of perceptive art criticism Hickey has built up over the last decade. He ponders exquisitely for essays in exhibit catalog and has contributed to Rolling Stone, Art in America, and The New Yorker. In his older corpus of work, some of the more intriguing titles include Art Guitar: Essays on Art & Democracy (1997); Howl: The Artwork of Luis Jimenez (1997); In the Dancehall of the Dead (1993); Last Chance for Eden: Selected Art Criticism by Christopher Knight, 1979-1994 (1993); and The Invisible Druggers: Four Essays on Beauty (1993).

Richard Wiley:

The Devil and Sonny Liston by Tom Tosches (2002), as well as a collection of books about the Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio for a review for The New Yorker.


Douglas Unger: The Best Democracy Money Can Buy by Greg Palast; Stupid White Men by Michael Moore; and a stack of The Nation.

Eric Olsen: Picasso’s War by Michele Cone, The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays by Isaiah Berlin, and December 6 by Martin Cruz Smith.


In the novel, a former exchange student, now a journalist, takes his wife to Argentina to introduce her to his former host family, the Beneventos. He becomes deeply involved with the family’s tragic circumstances after military dictatorship takes over their country. Two of the family’s three sons “disappeared” while the third went into exile.

The journalist narrates the story, which is based on Unger’s own experience as an exchange student who became close to a family in Argentina. “I call it a novel of witness,” Unger told The New York Times when the book was ﬁrst published in 1995. “I promised my Argentine family I would tell their story.”

Voices from Silence has been called “an uncomfortable but effective book,” (Boston Globe) and an “emotionally complicated story (that) is a grisly sequel to F J. Tenaghi” (Washington Post).

What’s on Your Bedside Table?

Editor’s Note: “What’s on the Redside Table” is a new feature of our books section. This issue, our featured UNLV authors, as well as the International Institute of Modern Letters’ founder, Glenn Schaeffer, share the titles that they read for pleasure.

Wole Soyinka: The Nobel laureate was difﬁcult to pin down as to specifics, but here’s his response: “My current traveling companions appear to be poetry — the latest being Hugh MacDiarmid and Peter Balakian. Not any special reason. I grab them off the shelf as I dash off to the airport. Plus new African writing as it lands on my desk. Bedside reading mostly trying to finish off the saved magazine sections of the Sunday papers — all week. I never succeed because I fall asleep too fast.”


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Concrete Countertops
by Fu-Tung Cheng with Eric Olsen
Tanton Press, 2002
Most members of the International Institute for Modern Letters
deal with abstract ideas and ideals. As befits the person responsible
for the day-to-day smoothing of the path for the idealists, Executive
Director Eric Olsen writes about concrete. Olsen is the author, with designer Fu-Tung Cheng of Concrete Countertops, a how-to for those who want an alternative to granite, Corian, Formica, or other traditional surfaces in their kitchens or baths.

by James W. Hulse, with Leonard Goodall and Jackie Allen
University of Nevada Press, 2002
Former UNLV President Leonard "Pat" Goodall's contribution to James Hulse's history of the University and Community College System of Nevada is a chapter on UNLV and six other institutions of higher education, gives a southern flavor to what might otherwise have been a largely northern exercise.

That's not to say Jim Hulse wouldn't have given the south its due; the UNR professor emeritus of history has a statewide reputation for fairness and objectivity. But he might have had only a single chapter on "The Universities," treating together, as he has lumped the community colleges into one chapter.

Reinventing the System tells the story of the conception, growth, and development of the statewide system of higher education. Nevada is the only state with a single board responsible for all of higher education. As part of the story, the book discusses the terms of the seven presidents who have served UNLV — from Roman Zorn (see page 26) to Carol C. Harter — telling us about the people themselves and the issues that marked their presidencies. For example, it was during Goodall's own presidency (1979-1984) that the Barrick Lecture Series was established, the UNLV Foundation was created, the Thomas & Mack Center opened, and Jerry Tarkanian's Runnin' Rebels brought UNLV national attention.

A number of historical descriptions in Reinventing the System echo today. "Zorn was convinced that both the Board of Regents and the Legislature favored UNR in the budget process," Goodall writes, noting further that UNLV faculty had a "stepchild attitude" to UNR.

Goodall, now emeritus professor of public administration, also describes the establishment of UNLV's colleges and other units key to the development over its 40-year history. The chapter concludes with "UNLV in the Twenty-First Century," noting the creation of the International Institute of Modern Letters and the Boyd School of Law and the building of the state-of-the-art Lied Library.

UNLV's role as a part of historical photography to the volume in which Hulse explores the interactions among community members, politicians, and educators that shaped the system.

The Execution of a Serial Killer:
**A Man's Experience Witnessing the Death Penalty**

Joseph Diaz, '97 MA and '99 Ph.D. Sociology
Poncho Press, 2002
The Execution of a Serial Killer explores the life and death of a serial killer as well as the impact his execution had on the author, a UNLV graduate who is now a sociology professor in Minnesota.

Diaz's journey into the death chamber began with a news report about prison officials having trouble finding people to serve as witnesses during the execution of prisoners. Hoping that the experience would help his research, Diaz sent letters to Florida and Texas officials volunteering to witness upcoming executions. To his surprise, Florida granted his request, and in December 2000, he held a seat just three feet from serial killer Edward Castro as the man was executed by lethal injection.

Six months after witnessing Castro's execution, the death penalty came to the forefront of the media as Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh's execution neared. In the two days leading up to McVeigh's execution, Diaz was interviewed by 20 news organizations. The Execution of a Serial Killer, he writes in the book's introduction, grew out of a question he was asked repeatedly, "How did it make you feel?"

As a social scientist, Diaz expected to find the experience "informative and profoundly fascinating," he writes. He previously had never taken a strong stance for or against the death penalty, only that its binding does not allow it to lie impressively open, this is a coffee table-quality book, the authors show the way imagination and creativity can be almost wholly upon the impress of human life.

**ALUMNI AUTHOR**

Joseph Diaz, '97 MA and '99 Ph.D. Sociology is a professor of sociology at Southwest State University in Marshall, Minn., where he teaches and researches in the areas of criminology and antisocial behavior. He and his wife, Camille, have three boys.

Trying to understand it objectively, I constantly wonder what it was about the execution that affected me so strongly. I had been trained in criminology and the social sciences. I knew what I was getting into, so why was I so surprised and shocked?

I traveled to Florida with the image of myself as a professor, detached from the subject. I went as an educated man who studied human beings and what drives our behavior. Horrible images were not new to me. I had watched videos of suicides and studied countless diaries and photos of murder scenes. In some of my classes I even had to interview the victims in an effort to help others understand what a killer does and why he attacked the victim in a particular way. But this was different, and I knew it.

The death scenes I had previously viewed were just that... scenes. Like a movie, they weren't real to me. And more importantly, they had nothing to do with me personally. This execution, however, was related to me. It was personal because I helped do it. I helped execute Edward Castro. No academic training, no theory, no intellectual approach could distance me from that fact....

Only now, after the event, did I understand the difference between "watching" an execution and "witnessing" one. I had come to Florida to watch an execution, not realizing that I would actually witness it. The subtitle distinction is important. When a person watches something, like a movie or a television show, he is not part of the episode. He is merely an observer. A witness, on the other hand, is a person involved with the outcome of the event....

I realized that I would never have been invited into the chamber if I had said in my letter to the State of Florida that I wanted to "watch" an execution. By chance, I used the word "witness" and had used it twice in that fateful letter. I had asked to take part in the execution of another person, when I really thought I was asking to "see" it happen. I feel guilty about the study. It was a way for me to come to grips with the hunt for the executioner. But I had become a part of Edward Castro's execution, and now it was part of me.

The Execution of a Serial Killer is available through Poncho Press, (868) 350-1445, or visit www.ponchopress.com.
2021 January 28

University Forum Lecture: "Wired to the World: The Telegraph and the West," 7:30 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Music: UNLV Jazz Ensemble I Concert. 7:30 p.m., Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.

Women's Tennis vs. Connecticut: 2 p.m., UNLV Tennis Complex, 895-3307.

Music: UNLV Women's Tennis "giant" grant recipient. 7 p.m., Paul B. Sogg Architecture Studies Library. 895-3051.

Softball vs. Colorado State, 1 p.m. March 28, vs. New Mexico, 1 p.m. March 30. Eiler Media Stadium. 895-3207.

Women's Tennis vs. San Diego State: 2 p.m., Women's Tennis vs. Wyoming, 1 p.m. March 29, vs. Colorado State, 11 a.m. March 30, Ferritta Tennis Complex. 895-3057.

Baseball vs. San Diego State: 3:30 p.m., 29 March 29, 1 p.m. March 30. Wilson Baseball Stadium. 895-3207.

University Forum Lecture: "The Story of 'Stopped Change/cancellation'," 7 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Baseball vs. UC Riverside, 6:30 p.m., Wilson Baseball Stadium. 895-3207.

University Forum Lecture: "Northwest Coast Indian Art: Masks and Symbols of Social Structure," (slide illustrated), 7:30 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Music: UNLV Symphony Band Concert. 7:30 p.m., Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3333.

Baseball vs. UC Riverside, 6:30 p.m., Wilson Baseball Stadium. 895-3207.

University Forum Lecture: "Seven Days in the Movies - Then and Now," 7:30 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Stage: Sam Mendes, "It's Only A Play," 8 p.m., April 5-25; 2 p.m., April 19 & 24. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Music: UNLV Symphony Orchestra Concert. 7:30 p.m., Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3207.

Softball vs. Brigham Young, 6:30 p.m., April 8; 2 p.m., April 13 & 14. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Baseball vs. San Jose State, 2 p.m. March 22, vs. Air Force, 2 p.m. April 4; 2 p.m. April 5, 4:30 p.m. March 28, vs. New Mexico, 6:30 p.m. April 4; 2 p.m. April 5. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Baseball vs. UNLV Choral Ensemble Orchestra Concert. 7:30 p.m., Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3401.

Music: UNLV Jazz Ensemble II Concert. 7:30 p.m., Black Box Theatre. 895-2877.

Theatre: "The Road to Mecca," 7:30 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Theatre: "Six Degrees of Separation," 8:30 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Theatre: "Circle of Light," 7:30 p.m., Black Box Theatre. 895-2877.

Theatre: "The Story of 'STOPPED CHANGE/CANCELLATION,'" 7 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Theatre: "Six Degrees of Separation," 7:30 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

Music: UNLV Choral Ensemble Orchestra Concert. 7:30 p.m., Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3401.

Theatre: "The Story of 'STOPPED CHANGE/CANCELLATION,'" 7 p.m., Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.

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William E. Rini, 71, MS Biological Sciences, was recently named director of operations for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in Washington, D.C. He will oversee operations in 17 Western states, working directly with the bureau's commissioners to ensure agency projects are consistent with federal and state laws, interstate compacts, and international treaties.

He previously served as deputy regional director of the Lower Colorado River, managing the Colorado River from Lee's Ferry in Arizona to the Mexican border and providing technical and policy guidance to local water resource organizations with planning and development assistance.

Dannion Fisher (Burns) Mitchell, 74, AA Nursing, was awarded a doctorate in nursing from Texas Woman's University. She recently retired with the rank of commander from the U.S. Naval Reserve. She lives in Waco, Texas.

Kathryn Ann Norris, 76, BS Secondary Education, is founder and owner of Systematic Interior Designing, a geotectonic landscape design firm based in Boulder, Colo. She holds a master's degree in geotechnical engineering from the University of Colorado, Denver.

Norman Tian, 84, BS Accountancy, received a large sum of money when he lost an appeal in the late 1990s for a claim he made against his former employer, a sports betting firm. He is a partner in LearnSystems.com, a company that provides turnkey hospital operations management.

Shawn Hollaway, 82, BS in Health Administration, and Todd J. Zorn, 85, BS, have three grown children. The couple have been married for over 60 years.

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David Marlin-Jonas, BS in Business Administration, and E. Rinne, BS in Business Administration, have two children, Ron and Jenny.

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Ron is the internal sales manager of Rerracon, a geotechnical engineering firm. He also holds a master's degree in geotechnical engineering from UNLV.

Soaking It Up: Cherylide Huddleston, "97 MFA Playwriting

Jenny Kish, 97, MFA Playwriting

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"Looking back, I see that my professors helped me to peel away layer after layer of artifice, fear, and southern politeness in my writing and in myself." - Jenny Kish
Setting an Example
Marcus Threats '87 BA Hotel Administration and '99 MBA

When 16-year-old Marcus Threats started his first job as a bobsled at the Four Queens Casino Hotel, he quickly saw how limited his options were for high school students. Now, he hopes to inspire minority teens to seek more than just a job after high school.

Threats, a casino accounting manager at The Mirage, volunteers in "Be A Rebel Day," an event that brings local high school students, particularly those from disadvantaged areas, to campuses to learn more about the William F. Harrarah College of Hotel Administration. He is also involved in the college's mentor program, which pairs Simian professors with current UNLV students, and serves on its advisory board.

"Unfortunately, in Las Vegas, a lot of kids just don't get the message that a college degree is something they really can — and should — attain," Threats says. "They want to get out of high school, and they look forward to earning tips as dealers or bartenders. They don't always see that, long-term, the college degree will open so many doors for them."

"It's important for kids to know that they can work and get a degree. In fact, in the millions of kids working while going to the College Hotel, you're missing out on the best part of a UNLV hotel degree. There's no other place where you can get this kind of on-the-job and in-the-classroom training."

The Las Vegas native said the mentorship activities also provide him a chance to give students a taste of the business of casinos. For example, when he tells students what he does for a living, he invariably gets the comment, "You must see a lot of money."

"Yes, he says. "Auditors don't have to see the cash; we just have to see the numbers." He alsocombats the myth that college is for high school students at the top of their classes. "I didn't do well in high school," he says. "I wish I had had better study skills coming in. I want the kids to know that it's not too late to get those skills. They will succeed in college if they try."" With the exception of seven years as a Navy pilot, Threats has spent his entire working life in casinos. In high school, he worked as a busboy and cook. While working on his bachelor's degree, he started dealing cards. Joining The Navy after graduation, he said, gave him the chance to pursue his childhood dream of flying. It also financed his adult dream of getting an MBA.

Now Threats is finishing a second master's degree, this one in accounting, and has law school in mind for next year. "Going to school is almost like a hobby to me," he says. "Instead of going out for a drink after work, I go to class. I plan to attend law school, and then my college education will be complete."

Eventually, Threats wants to return to daily casino operations as a well-rounded executive. "I'm like every other person I've talked to in the industry, who wants to be the president of the property," he says. "That's certainly a possibility for me just as it is for the kid I talk to — by late Teens

Lisa Bowman Roman, '90 MS Market- ing, '90 Ed. Special Education, is pursu­ ing dual master and mas­ ter's degrees in dis­ pute resolution at Pepperdine University School of Law in California. She participates in Pepperdine's Special Education Program and is involved in advocacy issues for children with special needs. She plans to become a special education attorney and mediator in both California and Nevada. She

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President's Message continued from page 2

and compelling possibilities for UNLV, much as the founder of the International Institute of Modern Letters are.

So it is with great pleasure that I introduce in this issue the wonderful visionaries behind the institute. You believe you will find their personal stories, as well as their thoughts about literature, art, freedom, expression, and creativity, simply fascinating. And I also believe you will admire them for having the courage of conviction to answer, "Why not?" when asked "Why Las Vegas?" They carry on the spirit of the many individuals who gave the same answer when the question of our university was at stake at various times over the course of the last five decades. And, ultimately, they represent the expansive thinking and high ideals that make UNLV what it is today.

Modern Letters continued from page 13

fiction and poetry published annually in the United States are translations from another language.

The reason for that gap is primarily economic — the cost of translating works can easily consume the small profit they may generate — but the result is just as chilling to societal progress as censorship by dictators, Olsen says. "It has an isolating effect on our culture. It limits our ability to understand global changes, our ability to understand the people of other countries, such as Afghanistan and Iraq and Korea."

Writers in the Schools

While the institute clearly has an international focus, it is not neglecting the local community. In 2001, the institute launched Writers in the Schools (WITS) as a pilot program to promote contemporary literature in area high schools.

The innovative project caught the attention of the National Endowment for the Arts, which awarded a $1,000 grant to the institute to present a full-scale program this semester. That grant was matched with $56,347 in award research identifying the benefits of a literary arts learning program. The graduate students will guide the teens through the collaborative process and work with them on writing skills through the fall semester.

"WITS is a project moving. I predict in the next half decade the institute will show itself as the literary opportunities for students, faculty, and the community are enriched by its presence. The programs it sponsors. Both the campus and the community are nurtured by its efforts to bring internationally acclaimed writers, teachers, and artists to campus."

library and cultural activities, and other economic impacts on the community."

"The institute not only brings national visibility to UNLV and to the English department's M.F.A. programs," he says, "it also enhances the literary opportunities for students, faculty, and community members by virtue of the programs it sponsors. Both the campus and the community are enriched by its efforts to bring internationally acclaimed writers, teachers, and artists to campus."
Face Lift
The Boyd School of Law hit another milestone in the fall with its move to its permanent home on campus. The old library buildings were renovated to accommodate the law school's classrooms and offices as well as the 225,000-volume Wiener-Rogers Law Library.

The 67,030-square-foot building pictured here was renamed the James E. Rogers Center for Administration and Justice in honor of the local lawyer, businessman, and philanthropist. The connecting 57,700-square-foot round building was renamed William S. Boyd Hall in honor of the school's namesake patron.

The law school received full accreditation from the American Bar Association in February, the earliest time possible under ABA guidelines.

The Lied Library's special collections department houses a vast collection of UNLV and Southern Nevada historical photos. For more information, visit www.library.unlv.edu/speccol/index.html.
ONCE A REBEL.
ALWAYS A REBEL.

The college experience is a lifetime experience, not one that ends when you pick up your diploma. That’s what we are hearing from members of the UNLV Alumni Association. They’ve elected to become members because of a long list of real benefits and, perhaps more importantly, the intangible ones.

Like being able to say, "I’m a Rebel."

It’s the best way to demonstrate your pride, stay connected with your fellow Alumni, give back to UNLV and its students, and stay in college forever. Learn more about the UNLV Alumni Association at www.unlvalumni.com or call us at 895-3621 or 1-800-829-ALUM.
STAND OUT IN A CROWD.

Show your Rebel Pride and support UNLV by purchasing a **UNLV REBEL License Plate**. Funds from the sale of UNLV REBEL plates go back to the school, supporting UNLV's Alumni and Athletic Scholarships. Pick up your UNLV REBEL license plates at any Nevada DMV office or call the UNLV Alumni Office at *(702) 895-3621* for more information.  

[www.unlvalumni.com](http://www.unlvalumni.com)