UNIV Magazine
FOR ALUMNI, FACULTY, AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

VOLUMES OF ENTHUSIASM

Also:
Running the World’s Busiest Airport

Plus:
Entering the Virtual Classroom

UNLV Education
Professor Cyndi Giorgis

Miss Rumphius
Story and Pictures by BARBARA COOKEY
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It's Lonely at the Top

As commissioner of aviation for the Chicago Airport System, Mary Rose Loney runs the busiest airport in the world. Find out what part UNLV played in her steady ascent in the field of airport management.

BY SZAN DIBELLA

The Genetic Factor

UNLV biology professor Deborah Hoshizaki and her research team have discovered that at least part of the cause of obesity can be traced to the genes that regulate the development of cells in our bodies.

BY LAURIE FRUTH

Volumes of Enthusiasm

How can one education professor amass two storage rooms full of kids' books in only five years? With a love of children's literature and the right commitment, it's easy, answers UNLV's Cyndi Giorgis.

BY DIANE RUSSELL

Entering the Virtual Classroom

UNLV psychology professor Russ Hurlburt was fascinated by the idea of offering one of his courses on the Web. But what are the pros and cons of teaching online? He decided to find out for himself.

BY BARBARA CLOUD
Fain, Scaduto Promoted in Administrative Reorganization

UNLV President Carol C. Harter recently announced the reorganization of UNLV's new vice president for administration. George Scaduto, formerly the director of finance and administration, has been named interim vice president for finance.

In addition to his current duties, Fain is also responsible for the areas of student financial services, human resources, diversity initiatives, and facilities management. Scaduto's duties have been expanded to include oversight of the office of grants and contracts, controller, disbursements, payroll, human resources, diversity initiatives, and facilities management.

She holds a doctorate in higher education administration from Ohio State University, a master's degree in educational psychology from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Knoxville College. She has also attended the Management Development Program at Harvard University.

Scaduto has served in several capacities since joining the university in 1991, including associate controller, controller, and, most recently, assistant vice president for budget and sponsored programs. Prior to his joining UNLV, Fain served as associate vice president for administration at Ohio University. She previously had held several positions there, including that of director of student financial aid and scholarships.

Master of Social Work Program Gains Full Accreditation

The master of social work program at UNLV has received full accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education. The program originally had been accredited but was placed on conditional accreditation in June 1997 because of some concerns expressed by the accrediting agency. Since then, the council has worked to resolve full accreditation for the program.

The bachelor's degree program in social work has been fully accredited since 1974, said Esther Langston, director of the School of Social Work.

The conditional accreditation did not apply to the bachelor's program. "Accreditation is vital to students because social work is a licensed profession, and in many states students cannot take the licensing exam unless they have graduated from an accredited program," Langston said. "However, it is important to understand that in UNLV's case, our social work students who graduated in 1997 could sit for the licensing exam because the master's program was accredited, although on a conditional basis."

The conditional accreditation means the Council on Social Work Education identified some specific program concerns, and we were given a year to address these concerns," she said.

"We completed the process successfully because of the strong commitment demonstrated by the provost, dean of the college, and the faculty and staff working as a team. The changes we made included restructuring our curriculum, hiring additional faculty members, and strengthening the administration and advising process," Langston said. "These changes have definitely improved our program."**

Law School Receives Largest Gift Pledge in Nevada History

UNLV has received the largest charitable gift pledge in Nevada history from J. Howard Hughes Corporation, which owns and operates Hughes 1, another example of giving that is a significant step toward the School of Law's goal of becoming one of the top 10 law schools in the West," said Charles R. Philpott, UNLV's associate provost for academic and sponsored programs.

"This collaboration is a great example of how partnerships can benefit both parties," Philpott said. "The School of Law will benefit from the financial resources, expertise, and connections that Hughes 1 brings to the table, while Hughes 1 will benefit from the visibility and recognition that come from being associated with a major university."
Bennett, Hicks Receive UNLV Alumni Association Awards

Gaming executive William G. Bennett and educator Pamela Hicks have been selected by the UNLV Alumni Association to receive the group’s two most prestigious awards.

Bennett, who is a native of the Sahara Hotel and Casino, was chosen as the 1998 recipient of the Silver State Award. Hicks, who serves as an area superintendent for the Clark County School District, was selected as the 1998 Alumna of the Year.

“Bennett's and educator Award. Hicks, chosen as the Alumna of the Year,” said Jim Ratigan, UNLV Alumni Association Board President. Hicks has a reputation for providing quality food, lodging, and entertainment at value prices.

During his 20 years as chairman of Circus Circus Enterprises, he oversaw the opening of the Excalibur and Luxor from the ground level to one of the nation’s top properties. “Bill Bennett has been a dedicated supporter of UNLV, and we wanted to recognize him for his loyalty to the university,” said Carl Cook, assistant director of alumni relations.

Upon receiving the award, Bennett said, “I would like to thank the university and the alumni association for honoring me with the Silver State Award for 1998. This community has given quite a bit to our region, and it is a pleasure to give something back to the community since my wife and I only moved here in 1991.”

Hicks, a former president of the alumni association, said she was pleased to be chosen alumna of the year.

“Hicks, who received a bachelor's degree in 1969 and a master of education degree in 1970, began her career with the school district at an English teacher at Western High School. She later taught at Bridger Junior High School before becoming a dean at Basic High School.

“From there, she moved on to become assistant principal at Valley High School. She next served as principal of Guinn Junior High School and then became director of secondary curriculum for the school district.”

Pam has served the association and the university in so many ways over the years that it is difficult to recount them all,” said Cook. As association president, she was a true leader who worked hard on behalf of both alumni and students.”

Bennett Receives 1998 Nevada Professor of the Year Award

UNLV special education professor Susan Miller has been named the 1998 Nevada Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

“I'm truly honored to receive this honor, but I really see it as a recognition of the good work that all my colleagues and I in the College of Education have done as a team,” said Miller, who joined the UNLV faculty in 1991.

The Professor of the Year program, which was started in 1981, salutes the most outstanding undergraduate instructors in the country. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching sponsors an annual national competition from which the state winners are also selected.

Student Leaders Receive Scholarships

UNLV Alumni Association Board Scholarship Chairman Bruce Ford (back row, left), Alumni Association Board President Jim Rahagan (back row, second from left), and UNLV President Carol C. Harter (back row, right) congratulate some of the more than 50 recipients of the Alumni Association's Student Leadership Scholarships. The students were awarded $500 scholarships that were funded through the UNLV Collegian License Plate Fund Program.

Former University of Southern California football coach John Robinson has been hired as UNLV's eighth head football coach, replacing Jeff Horton, who has accepted a post as quarterbacks coach at the University of Wisconsin after coaching at UNLV for five seasons.

“Robinson will lead the Rebels into the 1999 season as the nation’s sixth-winningest active coach with a career record of 104-35-4. Robinson served as head football coach at USC during two different periods. His first stint as head coach began in 1976 and lasted seven seasons. During that time, USC captured the 1978 national championship.”

The native of Daly City, California, headed to the National Football League in 1983 and coached the Los Angeles Rams until 1991. His nine years in the NFL produced six playoff appearances, including two trips to National Football Conference championship games.

In 1992 Robinson left the Rams to work as a television analyst before returning to USC for the 1993 season. His second term at USC lasted until 1997 and featured three bowl victories, including the 1996 Rose Bowl tie against Northwestern.

He was named 1976 National Coach of the Year and is a two-time Pacific-10 Conference Coach of the Year.

John Robinson Named UNLV's Eighth Head Football Coach

UNLV Athletics to Join Mountain West Conference in 1999

UNLV, which is finishing its third year as a member of the Western Athletic Conference, announced recently that it will leave the league this summer to form the Mountain West Conference along with seven other current WAC schools.

Joining the Rebels in the new conference will be the United States Air Force Academy, Brigham Young University, Colorado State University, the University of Nevada, San Diego State University, the University of Utah, and the University of Wyoming.

Citing, among other issues, high travel expenses and a lack of rivalry associated with a five-team league spread over five time zones, the eight schools felt it was in their best interest to form a smaller, more centrally located conference. The group will officially withdraw from the WAC on June 30.

Former Sun Belt Conference Commissioner Craig Thompson was named the first commissioner of the Mountain West Conference, which will be headquartered in Colorado Springs.

UNLV Receives 1998 Nevada Professor of the Year Award

Award recipients are selected on the basis of extraordinary dedication to undergraduate teaching, which is demonstrated by excellence in the following areas: impact on and involvement with undergraduate students; scholarly or creative work in the area of teaching; service to undergraduate education in the institution, community, and profession; and support from colleagues and current and former undergraduate students.

In nominating Miller for the award, UNLV President Carol C. Harter described her as a "consummate classroom instructor" who received UNLV's Alex A. and Faye Spanos Distinguished Teaching Award for 1997-98.

Miller, who earned both her doctoral and master's degrees in special education from the University of Florida, received the Lilly Endowment Distinguished Professor Award from UNLV's College of Education in 1996. She is co-author of the Strategic Math series of seven books designed for teachers to use when teaching math to students with learning disabilities. She has also authored or co-authored six book chapters and 10 monographs related to instructional practices in special education. Also, she has authored or co-authored 45 refereed journal articles.
She has worked her way up from a $2.50-an-hour ticket counter job for Grand Canyon Airlines to the pinnacle of airport management posts. As UNLV alumna Mary Rose Loney looks back on her 20-year career in airport management, she recounts the flight plan that took her to the top.

BY SUZAN DIBELLA

I t is the busiest airport in the world.
Chicago's O'Hare International Airport served 7.4 million passengers last year and conducted 895,000 aircraft takeoffs and landings. It serves as landlord to 93 airlines and 142 business tenants. Fifty thousand people go to work there each day.

It is a city unto itself — a mass of manmade machines, building facilities, tight schedules, and rushing humanity, all relying on a proportionately small number of airport personnel to make the place run tight schedules, and rushing humanity, all relying on a proportionately small number of airport personnel to make the place run.

She has worked her way up from a $2.50-an-hour ticket counter managemen t posts. As UNLV alumna Mary Rose Loney looks the flight plan that took her to the top.

The 1983 graduate of UNLV's master of public administration program is the commissioner of aviation for the Chicago Airport System, which includes not only O'Hare, but also Midway Airport and Meigs Field.

Loney is essentially the chief executive officer of the airport system. Her responsibilities include overseeing an operating budget of $556 million and directing a $2 billion capital development project for the system. She manages 8,550 acres of land and facilities that comprise the three airports, including six terminal buildings, 13 runways, and 35,000 parking spaces.

She supervises a staff of 2,200 and oversees labor contracts with 17 different collective bargaining units.

Loney has held top-level management jobs at six major metropolitan airports over the course of her 20-year career. Most of her work days begin at 7 a.m. and end at 11 p.m.

“诽 my oxygen is pretty much devoted to aviation,” she says with a smile, suggesting that her time commitment alone explains her rise to the top post in airport management.

“She was seven. Her first exposure to the opportunities available in the field of aviation came in the form of an ad for stewardess training that she found in the back of one of her mother’s fashion magazines.

“I cut that ad out and wrote a report on it for my second-grade Catholic school class, highlighting the fact that I wanted to experience travel and romance,” Loney muses. “I don’t think my teacher, Sister Raphael, appreciated it all that much. But I think I always had a real love for adventure and一直 been a very big part of my spirit.”

So big a part of her was her desire for adventure that it led her to go west after graduating in 1973 from the University of Pittsburgh with a bachelor’s degree in sociology and psychology.

“I had spent the preceding summer backpacking in Hawaii, and it was wonderful,” she says. “So I wanted to return to the West right after graduation. I went to hike the Grand Canyon that summer and didn’t want to leave.” She stayed on to take her first job in aviation: selling air tours of the Grand Canyon.

“I worked for Grand Canyon Airlines staffing a ticket counter for $2.50 an hour,” she says, noting that she actually lived in the Grand Canyon for two years. During that time, she made her first trip to Las Vegas, but she moved here in 1976. But she didn’t immediately pursue a career in aviation.

“By 1977-78, I was ready for my first job in aviation, and I decided to work for Lucky Stores,” she says, adding that the move was a significant one for several reasons. Most important, she was selected by Lucky Stores to enter their management training program.

“So at the tender age of 24, I became the first woman in Lucky’s Nevada operation to go through that program,” she says, adding that she found her becoming what was called in those days the “fourth man” — closing night manager at a huge supermarket on Bonanza Road.

“I remember having to climb up on the metal railing that divides the entry and exit doors to lock the store at 10 o’clock,” says the 5-foot, 2-inch Loney. “It was my first shot at management. Here I was at 24 managing a huge commercial operation with a unionized labor force and doing things that prepared me for what I do today.”
In 1978, Loney took her first job in the public sector, a position created through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act; she was hired to train youths and disenchanted adults how to seek jobs. That same year a greater opportunity came her way — her first job at McCarran International Airport. “I was hired as a $9,000 per-year administrative assistant in the business and finance office,” she says, recalling that her first task was to draft a lease agreement for Air Cal. But set in the larger context of what was going on at McCarran at the time, Loney’s humble beginnings there take on greater meaning.

“That was the year we launched the McCarran 2000 project,” she says. “The following year we were out and borrowed $300 million in the revenue bond market to start construction on the project. At the time, it was the largest airport revenue bond series ever issued. And there was risk involved; Las Vegas had a population of 200,000 at the time, and we were planning this very ambitious growth program for the airport.”

In the spirit of the environment in which she worked, Loney herself decided to take a risk that would set the pace and tone of her career. “I was working in the business and finance office, and there was a management analyst position opening that was to report to the director of aviation,” she says. “Our director was a woman from another county department, but I felt I had been overlooked in the selection process. So I remember going to him and saying, ‘I wish that you would consider me for this, and if you’ll give me the opportunity, I’ll be willing to do whatever it takes to enhance my skills and abilities to do the job.’ And he gave me the chance. It was at that point that I made the commitment to seek my master’s degree as well as professional accreditation.

That spring, she enrolled in the master of public administration degree program at UNLV. "It was a wonderful opportunity to pursue the discipline of public administration while working full time," she says, adding that the university’s willingness to accommodate the schedules of working adults made all the difference. "I don’t think I could have succeeded at either my job at McCarran or in the graduate program if I hadn’t done both together. They complemented each other very well."

Simultaneously, she pursued professional accreditation. “In our industry we have an accreditation that is tantamount to an accountant earning a CPA. It’s called an AAE — an accredited airport executive,” she says. “I ended up becoming the third woman in the United States to earn that accreditation. But first I completed my master’s degree in December ’83 and then my accreditation in January ’84.

Throughout the course of her six years at McCarran, she worked her way up through the ranks, eventually gaining the position as assistant services manager of the airport. In that capacity, she led the environmental studies that supported McCarran’s development program. “I established the first noise abatement program for the airport. I also wrote the first comprehensive set of rules and regulations for McCarran. All of those experiences served me very well as I have progressed in my career.”

When the number two post — the director of day-to-day operations — at McCarran opened in 1984, Loney decided to go for it. But this time around, she didn’t get the job. “Once again, I went back to the director and said that I’d really like to be considered for the job. But up to that point in time, all of my skills were really focused on the business and finance side of the airport, not day-to-day operations. And he said, ‘I just don’t think you’re ready to take on this kind of responsibility at this time.’ And in so many ways, he did me a favor, because that was then my incentive to look for other opportunities.”

Not long after, she was selected as the top candidate for the post of assistant aviation director at Albuquerque International Airport. “One of the interesting things about my move over to Albuquerque was that they had just adopted a master plan for the airport,” she says. “And I had just come fresh from being part of the McCarran 2000 team here. So I looked at their master plan and said to the director, ‘You can’t do this! It’s too short-sighted!’ The plan called for ripping up the terminal building for two years for a net gain of three additional aircraft gates. So I convinced him to set aside that master plan and bring in the team that had done McCarran 2000.

That was a big ask for both of them, she reflects, considering that the change in plans required them to go before the Albuquerque City Council to say they wanted to move their project up. Yet, they succeeded and were able to bring in the McCarran 2000 architectural team to work with a local airport on a new plan. “We created the terminal that exists today, and it’s really a charming facility that enacts the ambience of the Southwest at its very functional layer,” she says proudly.

It was also in Albuquerque that she learned one of her biggest professional lessons. Always have a backup plan. “There was one memorable night there when I had been on the job only about six months,” she recalls. “One night, our ground staff had decided to get drunk during their shift. And it wasn’t just, ‘Let’s have a cocktail before we start!’ It was, ‘Let’s have a big party!’ It was an ugly scene. Employees had passed out. Others had even left in the middle of the night to bring in more provisions.

Well, I got a call early the next morning about it. When I arrived, they were all pretty much sobering up to reality and admitted what they had done. So I boldly said right on the spot, ‘All right, you’re all fired!’ The, after they left, the terminal building manager said, ‘That’s great, Mary Rose! But who’s going to polish the floors tonight?’

I looked at him and said, ‘Mario, you and I are going to do the floors together.’ And, sure enough, I came in with him and ran all the floor scrubbers through the shifts moved around. That definitely taught me to always have a backup plan.”

Afer two years on the job in Albuquerque, another opportunity, this time at a larger airport, presented itself. Loney was selected for the second-in-command post at San Jose International Airport, where she administered daily airstside and landside activities at the fourth busiest airport in California.

One of her responsibilities was to reach an agreement with the airlines on financing a new terminal; after her work on the new terminal building in Albuquerque, as well as on the McCarran 2000 project, word was getting around that Loney was the person who could make a capital improvement project happen. While in San Jose, she became increasingly involved in national issues in the aviation field, including government regulation, environmental compatibility, and airport financing. She was also beginning to travel in more influential circles, meeting important networking contacts from throughout the country.

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Two weeks before I was scheduled to leave San Jose, the big San Francisco World Series earthquake hit,” she says, noting that she was, as usual, on the job. “In fact, I was on the phone with my former boss from Albuquerque telling him about my new job in Chicago when the earthquake hit. The ceiling collapsed, and I dove under my desk. But I knew I needed to get out of the terminal to see what kind of damage we had sustained.

“It was just chaos, but we still had our windows intact. People were running outside as I was heading back to my office to get my keys and radio. Then one of the continued on page 25
UNLV biologist Deborah Hoshizaki and her research team have discovered that at least part of the cause of obesity — and fat cell production in general — can be traced to the genes that regulate the development of cells in our bodies.

BY LAURIE FRUTH

YOU'VE TRIED THEM ALL — THE grapefruit diet, the liquid diet, even the highly touted protein diet. You've sweated out miles on the treadmill, trudged up the stairs instead of riding the elevator, and grunted through too many sit-ups to count. And you just can't seem to shed that extra weight you hate.

For most people, excess weight is only a nuisance that, at best, makes their clothes fit too tight and, at worst, forces them to dredge up some nagging self-esteem issues that they'd rather forget.

But for 25 percent of the American population, fat is more than just an annoyance or matter of vanity— it's a serious health risk. The clinically obese are at far greater risk of developing diabetes, cancer, and heart disease than the rest of the population. And as the medical profession warns that the problem is reaching epidemic proportions nationally, scientists are taking a fresh look at its causes — and why some of us become obese while others merely carry around a few extra pounds. Many scientists are no longer blaming the condition exclusively on eating behavior.

UNLV biological sciences professor Deborah Hoshizaki is one of those scientists. She believes that at least part of the cause of obesity — and fat cell production in general — can be traced to the genes that regulate the development of cells in our bodies. She and a team of biology graduate students and post-doctoral researchers are investigating the genetic programming that controls how cells develop and determines which ones become fat cells.

"What people need to realize is that, yes, if you eat too much, you're going to gain weight. But that's just a small part of the problem," Hoshizaki explains. "For many years it was thought that you're born with a certain number of fat cells that either grow or diminish according to your eating behavior and metabolic rate. But as it turns out, that's not true. We can always make more fat cells."

Of course, making more fat cells is the problem — it's getting rid of the ones we have. But, as the thinking often goes in scientific research, if you can find out how and why a condition develops, you can often discover how to make it stop developing. Hoshizaki believes that her work may someday make this possible.

She and her team have already identified two genes that play a critical role in the development of fat cells and are in the process of cloning a third. But in order to conduct their research, they have had to examine cells before they've matured, which has made working with human cells unfathomable; hence, their research subjects are not exactly what you might expect.

"We have used fruit flies because we're looking at the very earliest stages of development — stages that you can't see in humans," Hoshizaki says. "And with the exception of some very early events in the creation of an embryo, the rules that govern embryo development in the fruit fly are the same rules that govern embryo development in humans."

Because the genetic rules are
essentially the same for humans and fruit flies, Hoshizaki believes her research will pave the way for future studies on human subjects.

"We have colleagues in France who are interested in doing human studies, and they call and say, 'So, do you have it?' They're waiting for us to identify the genes that control fat cell development in the fruit fly so that they can begin to look for the same genes in humans. But they may have to wait a while longer. The process of finding the genes is not simply a matter of looking at a gnat under a microscope. As Hoshizaki explains, every single cell in a fruit fly's body contains the same genetic material or DNA. But only a portion of that genetic information is needed for a cell to become what nature intended it to be. The researchers must discover which genes tell a cell to activate or "turn on" the specific portion of the DNA sequence that will program it to become a fat cell rather than a heart cell or muscle cell.

To find that gene, scientists in Hoshizaki's lab have performed their own brand of detective work. They have scoured the scientific literature for clues. They have asked "what if" questions of each other and carefully examined their findings in the scientific literature. They've also found that their examination of this aspect of the gene's function may be the opposite effect. "In some parts of the embryo, we have AhdB turned on but the serpent gene is not turned on. We believe that Ubx may be repressing the serpent gene in these areas," Miller says, explaining that their examination of this aspect of the gene's function may be the opposite effect. However, if Hoshizaki, Miller, and Hayes can find out more precisely how these three genes interact to produce fat cells, perhaps they and their colleagues can begin to unravel the mystery of why fat cell generation continues. They've also found that working long hours on such a specialized research project presents some other non-scientific challenges as well. "It can be lonely," Miller admits. "It's hard to talk to people outside the lab because you're focused on what you're doing, so you find yourself socializing primarily with other scientists. And this can lead to some interesting conversations. I was in an elevator one day with a lab friend and another person. Without thinking, I said to my friend, 'Oh, I hope my embryos turned out okay.' Then I noticed the strange looks I was getting from other people in the elevator."

But both Miller and Hoshizaki are committed to spreading the word about their research and increasing awareness of the problems associated with obesity. This spring, they are presenting two series of talks on childhood obesity — and, as Hoshizaki describes it, "how fat cells talk to the brain" — for local physicians and families of obese children. Though their lectures are not specifically focused on their own research, Hoshizaki says they offer her and her graduate students the opportunity to apply their scientific knowledge in a different setting, as well as a chance to do a bit of public service. "It strengthens the more the general public understands how we do science — how we make observations, how we collect data, how we use models — the better informed they will be when it comes to making decisions about health issues. We do this public service because we want the scientific community and the general public to know that UNL is a resource," Hoshizaki says.

Through their work with the clinics, Hoshizaki has met children and their families whose lives have been so adversely affected by obesity, she says. "It's been truly compelling to meet these children, their families, and their investigation of the fat cell continues. Though Hoshizaki does not intend to extend her research into human testing of her theories, she is interested in developing methods and establishing a facility in Las Vegas for diagnosing genetic defects that cause childhood obesity. She plans to seek grant funding in the community to pursue the idea. "No one knows to what extent obesity is inherited," Hoshizaki says. "But the data we're collecting at the local clinics suggests that the genetic contribution to obesity is much greater than we imagined. For that reason, we are very interested in developing diagnostic tools to determine which genes are responsible."

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Cyndi Giorgis has acquired a huge number of children's books. For those who wonder what would bring someone to possess such a collection, the UNLV education professor has a quick answer: With a love of children's literature like hers — and a little storage space — who wouldn't want to own 7,000 kids' books?

BY DIANE RUSSELL

If you want to get on Cyndi Giorgis' good side, just talk knowledgeably about Miss Rumphius.

If you don't know about Miss Rumphius — the "Lupine Lady" who makes the world a more beautiful place by scattering flower seeds wherever she goes — then a trip to the library may be in order; for Miss Rumphius is the title character of a children's book by Barbara Cooney.

"I love this book, and it's just so me," Giorgis says with obvious enthusiasm. "I connected to it the minute I saw this book."

And when you consider just how many children's books Giorgis loves — and owns — you would recognize that her appreciation of Miss Rumphius is indeed an honor. After all, Giorgis has collected more than 7,000 children's literature books over the years. "I use them in everything I do — everything," she says. "Whether it's reading to one of my classes at UNLV, making a presentation at a professional conference, or conducting an in-service for Clark County School District teachers, I find that it's essential to have the books I'm discussing on hand. People don't just want to hear about a book, they want to see it. They want to have their hands on it."

Her extensive collection reflects her zeal for the written word, which she has tried to instill in all of her students over her 16-year career in education. Giorgis passed it on to many of her first-grade pupils when she taught in Wyoming eight years ago and tries today to instill it in tomorrow's teachers who study with her now.

"I try to have them see how much fun children can have learning," Giorgis says. "And also how much they can learn by looking at books."

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"I love this book, and it's just so me," Giorgis says with obvious enthusiasm. "I connected to it the minute I saw this book."

And when you consider just how many children's books Giorgis loves — and owns — you would recognize that her appreciation of Miss Rumphius is indeed an honor. After all, Giorgis has collected more than 7,000 children's literature books over the years. "I use them in everything I do — everything," she says. "Whether it's reading to one of my classes at UNLV, making a presentation at a professional conference, or conducting an in-service for Clark County School District teachers, I find that it's essential to have the books I'm discussing on hand. People don't just want to hear about a book, they want to see it. They want to have their hands on it."

Her extensive collection reflects her zeal for the written word, which she has tried to instill in all of her students over her 16-year career in education. Giorgis passed it on to many of her first-grade pupils when she taught in Wyoming eight years ago and tries today to instill it in tomorrow's teachers who study with her now.

"I try to have them see how much fun children can have learning," Giorgis says. "And also how much they can learn by looking at books."

Giorgis has acquired a huge number of children's books. For those who wonder what would bring someone to possess such a collection, the UNLV education professor has a quick answer: with a love of children's literature like hers — and a little storage space — who wouldn't want to own 7,000 kids' books?
about to read them a story. As the weeks pass, however, "they come to expect it, and then when I don't read a story to them, they're disappointed."

This makes perfect sense to Giorgis, who says, "We love to hear stories. We love to hear language."

And the stories and books we read often serve to create a bond between us and others who have read and loved the same books, says Giorgis, who holds a doctoral degree in language, reading, and culture and a master's degree in library science, both from the University of Arizona.

"It's amazing how much of that literature really stays with us, whether it's Mother Goose or Little Women. It's something that draws us all together. Even though we may be thinking of it in different ways, somehow that literature ties us all together."

For instance, when she asks the women in her classes how many of them remember reading the Judy Blume book, Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, "Hands all go up. It's one of those classes that so many of us related to because it was that coming-of-age kind of thing for girls."

Giorgis, who at 13 began working in the local library in Jackson, Wyo., as a story-time reader for youngsters, says she still has vivid memories of the books she read as a girl.

"I read every Nancy Drew book there ever was. I read Little Women. I remember my fifth-grade teacher reading Where the Red Fern Grows, and I remember crying and just sobbing. I think that's what speaks to that literature — that it can stir our emotions."

Today, Giorgis has what she calls a personal text set — a subset of her larger collection — that contains hundreds of books that she considers to be among her favorites and to be relevant to her life.

Hamlet and Othello is included because of her German heritage; many dog books, such as Wilson Rawls' Where the Red Fern Grows, are also included because of her love of canines. Never Spit On Your Sharks, about a little boy's first day in the first grade, and Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret are also among the books in her personal text set.

"It's just the books that really have touched me or signify something important in my life experiences," says Giorgis.

She says her personal text set — as well as her larger collection — has taken years to create and is always evolving. She began collecting books on her own many years ago, and these collections have been greatly supplemented in the last five years through her involvement in a number of book-judging and book reviewing projects, from which she has received free copies of books from publishers.

However, that doesn't mean she has stopped buying children's books. "I have the credit card receipts to prove it," she says with a laugh.

One of Giorgis' missions these days is to help other find those books that will make a difference in their lives.

That's where the Teachers' Choices program comes in. Through that program, hundreds of new children's books are provided by publishers to teachers throughout the country so that they can be introduced to the newest children's literature.

Giorgis, who is in her third and final year of administrating the program, says it has been a real boon to a number of schools in the Clark County School District because it has resulted in their libraries receiving dozens of the latest and best children's books for free.

The way the program works is that publishers of children's books supply the International Reading Association with hundreds of copies of what the publishers consider to be their best new books for youngsters. Teachers' Choices coordinators such as Giorgis then distribute them to teachers at participating schools so that they can review them. Teachers are encouraged to read the books they are reviewing to their classes so that they can gauge the students' reactions.

Giorgis has made a special effort to target schools that serve at-risk students because she has noticed how those schools have inadequate library collections, and the pupils could really benefit by having dozens of the newest books on their shelves. Last year, each of the seven participating elementary schools received more than 100 books.

The book distribution session that takes place after the judging has been completed is something to see, according to Giorgis. It's handled something like a sports league draft. Participants choose their top 20 titles, then their next 20 titles, until all the books have been distributed.

"It's like Christmas because they're picking out these books, and they're just overwhelmed," she says.

Also overwhelming can be the task of culling the books away. "Last year we had suitcases. We had boxes. We had luggage carts. It was hysterical."

Once the reviews, which also include numerical scores, are turned in by the teachers, the coordinators from across the nation send their data to the reading association to be tallied. The results showing what America's teachers consider to be the best new children's books then appear each November in the Reading Teacher, a journal published by the association.

The publishers benefit, too, because making the list of best new books ensures increased sales, Giorgis says, noting that many children's librarians use the list when placing book orders.

"It's been a tremendous project," she says of the local program. "I'm sorry it's my last year because I've enjoyed the fact that it's brought so many teachers back to reading and discussing books and taking such an active role in the selection of literature. It's really part of that national project, and they're helping to select these books for this national award, so it's pretty exciting."

"With Teachers' Choices, teachers are starting to dialogue about books. They get excited about them and say to one another, 'Oh, you've got to see this book. You've got to read this book.'"

One comment she says she has heard repeatedly from participants is that they had not realized the diversity of topics that today's books cover. She adds that timely topics such as homelessness and the prevalence of guns are included in current children's literature.

"It really has made the teachers stop to think about not only the literature that they're reviewing, but also about the literature they've already been using in the classroom," Giorgis says. "Teachers are kind of creatures of habit in some ways, and they'll keep using the same books over and over and over until they begin exploring other options."

While Giorgis wouldn't want to see classics such as E.B. White's Charlotte's Web tossed out, it would be a true shame if no new books made it into the country's classroom, she says.

"Some of the most incredible multicultural literature published today is literature that is for children and young adults," says Giorgis, adding that adults can read and enjoy many of the books. "I always tell my students, "These are really adult books disguised as books for children.'"

Another of the reasons it's important for new books to be introduced into the schools is that at last long ago, when children's authors were writing and realizing that all we had representing ethnic lines.

"There's so much incredible multicultural literature being published," says Giorgis, noting that for years there had been a noticeable absence of such literature for children that was well written.

"It's exciting. With some of the literature that is coming out now we're starting to really see an awareness of cultures and ethnicity and an authenticity in the ways they are being portrayed," Giorgis says.

"For a long time there were books like Little Black Sambo that were just so stereotyped," she says. "People began to look at the field of children's literature and realize that all we had representing people of color were books like Little Black Sambo. I've had students in my class — African American students — who said, 'I liked this book because it was the only book I ever saw that had a black character,' which is kind of sad.

"All children need to be able to see themselves in literature, according to Giorgis. "I always tell my students, 'These are really adult books disguised as books for children.'"

One of her favorites among the new multicultural children's books is To Be A Drum by Evelyn Coleman.

"It talks about Africans who — when they were brought to this country — had their drums taken away. So they began using their bodies and their voices as drums as they worked in the fields," Giorgis says. The book continues, telling how after slavery was abolished, the descendants of these same people began using their education and their votes as drums. "It's really nice when we can begin to see that it's not an issue of color; it's an issue of experience."

And the sharing of experiences through books is key to instilling the love of literature that Giorgis is so committed to engendering in her classrooms — and just about everywhere she goes.

Perhaps that is why she loves Miss Rumphius so much. She has shared the experiences of the title character, like Miss Rumphius, Giorgis is trying to make the world a more beautiful place. But instead of doing so by scattering flower seeds wherever she goes, she is spreading the seeds of learning.
Entering the Virtual Classroom

UNLV psychology professor Russ Hurlburt was intrigued by the idea of offering one of his classes on the World Wide Web. But what were the pros and cons of teaching — and learning — online? His decision to find out led him on an educational odyssey of his own.

BY BARBARA CLOUD

TUTORS IN ONE SECTION OF UNLV psychology professor Russ Hurlburt's statistical methods course don't have to search for a campus parking place on their way to class. They don't have to adjust their schedules to make class meeting times. Heck, they don't even have to change out of their pajamas to participate in class.

If you're wondering if things have drastically changed on campus since you went to school, you're right — but perhaps not in the way you're thinking. Students in Hurlburt's class are enrolled in one of the first UNLV courses to be offered on the Internet's World Wide Web.

His students sign up for the class as they would for any other. But instead of coming to a classroom to hear him speak and to receive his handouts, they find both his lectures and his course materials on his specially designed Website, along with instructions on how the course will function, what software will be required, and what to expect as they enter this virtual classroom.

As long as they submit their assignments on time — which they do by electronic means — they can begin whenever they choose; they can also communicate their questions and comments to him electronically by email. The only time they have to appear in person on campus is to take examinations.

For the students, convenience is the name of the game in this undergraduate-level Statistical Methods in Psychology course that was offered last fall and is being offered again this spring.

For Hurlburt, developing a course on the Web was a great opportunity to discover whether students learn as much in the virtual classroom as they do in a traditional one. The recipient of a UNLV Distinguished Teaching Award last year, Hurlburt is committed to understanding how students learn. By teaching as many different courses as possible during his tenure at UNLV, he has been able to observe how students learn in different situations and how they respond to different teaching techniques. For him, to turn next to the Web was natural. After all, he points out, you can't get much different than this.

He was also interested in offering a Web course from a research perspective. A longtime researcher of individuals' "inner experiences" of the world around them, Hurlburt just couldn't pass up the opportunity to run a pedagogical experiment. He was already teaching a regular classroom version of this statistics class, so why not add an otherwise identical Web version of the course and compare their effectiveness?

Hurlburt's own education was gained mostly in traditional classrooms. He earned a bachelor's degree in engineering from Princeton University and, in what he calls a "previous lifetime," was an aeronautical engineer who designed computer models to determine where nuclear bombs would hit if they were dropped "deliberately or by accident." When he realized he was more interested in people than bombs, he enrolled at the University of South Dakota, where he earned a Ph.D. in psychology.

He came to UNLV's department of psychology in 1976 expecting to leave computers and technology behind, but he found himself looking for ways to help students master the statistics they needed to be successful psychology majors. He began writing computer demonstrations for his statistics class, and a software package is now available with his textbook on statistics, published in 1990.

Then came expanded possibilities through the Internet. Suddenly, the option of putting a whole course on the Web was an opportunity to discover whether students learn as much in the virtual classroom as they do in a traditional one.

This Web page from Hurlburt's class offers students information about the pace of his course.

For UNLV psychology professor Russ Hurlburt, developing a course on the Web was an opportunity to discover whether students learn as much in the virtual classroom as they do in a traditional one.
More on Distance Education at UNLV

Psychology professor Russ Hurlburt's Web-based version of Statistical Methods in Psychology is just one of several types of courses offered by UNLV's Distance Education program. Instead of bringing higher education to people who are prevented because of location, employment, or other constraints from attending university classes as traditionally structured, distance education takes a number of forms.

UNLV Distance Education Director Charlotte Farr explains that some courses are taught via interactive video, which allows students and teacher to hear and see one another even though they may be hundreds of miles apart. A special arrangement from the Nevada Legislature has enabled program organizers to set up a network throughout the state that is used for video conferencing as well as classroom instruction.

Other forms of distance education via video involve sending videotapes to an off-campus location or transmitting an ordinary broadcast or cable signal. There are also the increasingly popular Internet courses that are accessible globally.

A professor may decide to put a course fully into one of these media or to combine one or more with regular classroom instruction. Many faculty now require their students to get e-mail accounts and to communicate electronically as part of the course experience. Some make supplementary materials available on Web pages. However, even courses that are offered entirely online may require the student to come to campus or some other location occasionally to meet with the professor and to take examinations. Hurlburt, for example, has arranged to have exams given at various locations where students can be supervised.

Farr expects the number of online courses offered by UNLV to increase gradually. Some kinds of material lend themselves more readily to electronic versions than do others, and her staff of course designers are helping faculty decide how to make the best use of the medium.

They prefer to be among other students and like the give-and-take of both formal and informal educational exchanges. As Hurlburt notes, they simply may not be comfortable in the Web environment. Also, some students are not yet capable of navigating confidently or effectively on the Web. Hurlburt has found some difficulty getting all of his students to use the right kind of computer hardware and software to be able to take full advantage of his course.

Hurlburt says incompatibility of equipment and inexperience with technology have contributed to student frustrations, a fact acknowledged in the distance education community generally and one that UNLV is trying to address by encouraging standardized structural approaches to Web course design. But rapidly changing technology will surely not improve compatibility but also enhance and increase the user-friendly features of electronic instruction. And, as Hurlburt notes, though he himself deliberately chose not to use the video format for his short lectures for his own reasons, computer video is available and can provide a way for both instructors and students to have more personal interaction if they want it.

As the semester was winding down in December, Hurlburt — holding true to his role as an objective researcher — felt he had gleaned some insights about Web-based instruction but was still weighing its pros and cons. And what of his dual-course experiment? "The jury is still out," he says. "The final grades aren't in, but I don't think there is going to be a clear winner as to which is better, the classroom or the Internet. I think there will be advantages and disadvantages to each — and that's what we want to understand." He plans to teach this Web course in the future, though he will continue to refine it as he and his students learn more about the medium.

Asked, in final analysis, he enjoys teaching in the virtual classroom, Hurlburt says he always enjoys learning new ways to teach. And, he muses, the parking advantages are also a plus.

Hurlburt acknowledges that convenience is one of the greatest advantages of online learning.
March 1999

1 Concert: Mariposa Trio in Recital. 7:30pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-3801.
1-6 Basketball: Men’s and Women’s Western Athletic Conference Championships. Call for times. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3207.
1-13 Exhibit: Blood, Eoff, and Parsons. 3 From Texas. Wednesdays, 9am-5pm. Saturdays, 10am-2pm. Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery. 895-3803.
2-3 Baseball: UNLV vs. Loyola Marymount. 3pm. Wilson Stadium. 895-3207.
5 Concert: Montserrat Tamara Boiko & Hans Kraven, piano duo. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
5-7 Baseball: UNLV vs. BYU. March 11 & 12, 3pm; March 13, 1pm. Wilson Stadium. 895-3207.
11-21 Theatre: Shakespeare’s Henry VI, Part III. Call for times. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
13-14 Women’s Tennis: UNLV vs. BYU. March 13. South Carolina - March 14. 10am both days. Fertitta Tennis Complex. 895-3207.
14 Master Series: Orchestra of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
15 Baseball: UNLV vs. Southern Utah. 3pm. Wilson Stadium. 895-3207.
15-16 Men’s Tennis: UNLV vs. Tennessee - March 15. Purdue - March 16. 1:30pm both days. Fertitta Tennis Complex. 895-3207.
20 Track & Field: UNLV Desert Classic. 8am. Myron Partridge Stadium. 895-3207.
21 Concert: UNLV Orchestra and Chorale. 2pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
23 Concert: Jazz Ensemble II. 7:30pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-3801.
25 Women’s Tennis: UNLV vs. San Diego - March 25, 8pm; April 24, 2pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3207.
27 Multicultural Student Affaire: UNLV Greek Step Concert. 5pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
27 Multicultural Student Affaire: UNLV Greek Step Concert. 5pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
28 Concert: Music Department Gala. April 18, Noon. Fertitta Tennis Complex. 895-3207.
29 Concert: University Choral Ensembles. 6:30pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
30 Baseball: UNLV vs. San Diego State. 7pm. Wilson Stadium. 895-3207.

April 1999

3 Track & Field: UNLV Invitational. 9am. Myron Partridge Stadium. 895-3207.
6-10 Women’s Tennis: UNLV vs. Central Florida - April 6, 2pm. San Diego State - April 10, 10am. Ferritta Tennis Complex. 895-3207.
9-11 Baseball: UNLV vs. San Jose State. April 9 & 10, 7pm; April 11, 1pm. Wilson Stadium. 895-3207.
12 Jean Nidetch Women’s Center Workshop: Communication and Speaking With Authority. Dr. Deborah Wicker-Wright. 6pm. Classroom Building Complex C-219. 895-4475.
14 Concert: Jazz Ensemble. 7:30pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-3801.
27 Concert: Community and Symphonic Band. 7:30pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
28 Concert: Jazz Combo. 7:30pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
29 Concert: University Choral Ensembles. 6:30pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.

May 1999

1 Performing Arts Center: Canadian Brass. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
2 Jean Nidetch Women’s Center: Eye on Women Expo. 8:30am. Location TBA. 895-4475.
1-2 Baseball: UNLV vs. San Diego State. May 1, 7pm. May 2, 1pm. Wilson Stadium. 895-3207.
4 Concert: UNLV Chamber Chorale. 7:30pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
7-8 Softball: UNLV vs. Utah. May 7, 2pm; May 8, 1pm (DH). Rebel Diamond. 895-3207.
9 Concert: Music Department Gala. 4pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
15 Commencement: UNLV Graduation Ceremony. 9am & 1:30pm. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3448.

For more information on UNLV events and publications, visit UNLV’s World Wide Web home page at http://www.unlv.edu/
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afterhood hit, and I went down. I broke my arm, but I didn’t even know it,” she says. “I worked all night. It wasn’t until about 24 hours later that I looked down at my arm and thought, ‘Wow, this really hurts.’ I had been dropping things all night and kept thinking that maybe I was a little more nervous than I had thought. I’m sure it was just the adrenaline that kept me from recognizing it was broken. But we ended up being the only airport in the Bay Area that was operational because San Francisco and Oakland had sustained more damage.

Despite her injury, Loney looks back on the incident as another lesson learned. “The earthquake was an extremely valuable experience,” she says. “In the airport industry, we practice a great deal for emergencies, but they’re always our emergencies, whether they’re aircraft crashes or acts of piracy. We had never really practiced natural disasters. And when those hit, all the resources that you would normally depend on to be marshaled to your aid are all of a sudden being dispersed for everyone else’s catastrophe. So it was an important lesson in resource planning and allocation.”

It also strongly reinforced her decision to go to O’Hare. “Yep, afterward my motto was, ‘Chicago — my kinda town,’” she muses. But she is quick to add that her move to O’Hare was an important step in her career. “That was probably the most remarkable step,” she says. “I’ve loved every bit of my career, but that was a real giant step because I went from running the day-to-day operations of an airport that was handling about six million passengers a year to one with 60 million a year.”

Almost immediately, she faced some O’Hare-sized challenges. “To start, it was the most delay-plagued airport in the country at the time. It also had a considerable homeless population camping out in and around the terminal buildings. Additionally, the local media had recently reported substantial inadequacies in airport security.

During her three years in that position, she addressed each problem — along with many others — methodically and thoroughly. She formed and led a task force to examine and make recommendations about delay problems; she convinced the airlines to contribute to the financing of a homeless shelter for the airport, and she worked with consultants from Israel’s major airline to help beef up security. All the while she had 14 line divisions reporting to her, including operations, security, parking, ground transportation, and facilities maintenance and construction.

But even with the ability to direct that diverse assortment of divisions, she realized that her background lacked the area of decision-making expertise: finance. So she left O’Hare in 1992 to become the deputy executive director and chief financial officer at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airports, the second busiest airport in the world.

“I wanted to round out my skills,” she says. “I wanted to position myself to be the number one at a major airport, and I knew I needed more experience to do that. I had started my career in the business and finance office at McCarran, but I was doing support work. I wasn’t making the final decisions about the budgets. So, I went and became a Texan for 18 months.”

Once again, Loney was presented with a unique set of challenges. She had just begun to negotiate the acquisition of homes to build an eighth runway at Dallas/Fort Worth when a different type of professional opportunity arose. She was approached by the Clinton administration about running the Federal Aviation Administration. She interviewed twice for the job with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena and was eventually asked to take the number two slot with the FAA.

“But just about at the same time, Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell called me, saying they had heard about me and wanted to talk to see about running Philadelphia’s airport. At first I said, ‘Are you kidding? I was raised in Pennsylvania, and I’m not going back there,’” she laughs. “I had felt that Chicago was about as far east as I wanted to go again. But he said, ‘At least come and talk to us.’ And, as it turned out, it was the best career decision I have made. It just made more sense to me to be the number one in Philadelphia than to be the number two with the FAA.”

But what was waiting for her in Philadelphia was no runway of roses; to say the least, Philadelphia International Airport had its share of problems. In a 1992 national survey of 34 major airports rated by passengers, Philadelphia received some of the lowest rankings possible in many areas, including speed of baggage delivery, cleanliness, convenience, and food quality and price. Employees’ attitudes were poor, ground transportation signage was confusing, and the tied facilities were sorely in need of repair. The abundant problems of the airport were the favorite topics of everyone from cab drivers to the media. But Loney, in her inimitable way, welcomed the challenge.

“These have been problems of the airport that have largely been neglected and expanded to suit and enhance the airport. And as it turned out, I continued on page 28
Douglas Crevaly, '66 BS Business Administration, is a partner in the law firms of Jones Vargas. He earned his law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco in 1969. Today, his primary areas of practice are corporate, gaming, and general business law. He also owns a cruise-only specialty travel agency, Cruise Holidays of Las Vegas, which has two offices in Southern Nevada.

Dick Johnson '77

Mark McKinley '78

John S. McClushan, '81 BS Hotel Administration, is semi-retired and doing volunteer work as "Doctor Magg" at Sunrise Children's Hospital and University Medical Center. He performs magic, makes balloon figures, and entertains in the children's information officer and as a management analyst in the city's special affairs division. In 1994, he was honored with the Nevada Women's Rule Award.

Allison Coopman, '93 BA Communication Studies, recently opened Allara Creative Services, a company specializing in public relations, video production, and special events. Previously, she worked as marketing director of Purchase Pro Inc. She also serves as a trustee of the Desert Research Institute Foundation and on the statewide board of directors of Kids Voting USA.

Kurt A. Goebel, '83 MS Geosciences, has been promoted to the position of senior geologist at Cenovus Consultants, where he has worked since 1991. He serves as a senior project manager responsible for technical quality, project staffing, and business development. He is a Nevada certified environmental manager and registered hazardous substance professional. His project experience includes regulatory compliance, hazardous waste minimization, and waste material management.

Edward H. Jensen, '89 BA Criminal Justice, earned a master's degree in homeland security and naturalization issues from St. Mary's University of Minnesota in 1998. He works for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department as director of the police employees' assistance program. He administers crisis care to police and emergency service personnel.

Kimberly McDonald '88

Thomas J. Heider, '90 BS Civil Engineering and Bachelor of Fine Arts, works as an engineering technician II in the land development area.
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really turn it into a diamond,” she says, adding that within a year, even the Philadelphia media began to acknowledge she had made significant progress. By the time she left in 1996, she had directed a $500 million capital improvement program that included major terminal renovations, airfield rehabilitation, and construction of a new runway. She had also effected sweeping changes in food, beverage, and retail offerings, as well as employee attitudes toward customer service. Philadelphia’s turnaround is still one of her proudest accomplishments.

“I probably would have stayed longer if Mayor Daley hadn’t called me to come back to run O’Hare, Midway, and Meigs,” she says a bit wistfully. “But how can you turn down an opportunity like the Chicago Airport System? The answer is you don’t. You just don’t. And I think in my heart of hearts, the Chicago job was the one I always wanted. It’s the top of the mountain. O’Hare is the world’s busiest airport. It’s the ultimate challenge. That kind of challenge is very important to me.”

She returned to Chicago in September 1996 to find that progress had been made on some of the issues she had worked on during her previous tenure there. But, she says, many of the same issues she had faced in all of her other airport positions — noise abatement, airport compatibility with surrounding environments, security, and safety — were still critical concerns for her at O’Hare and will remain so throughout the rest of her career.

Additionally, she must now direct two other smaller airports — Midway Airport, which serves to relieve some of the commercial traffic that would otherwise land at O’Hare, and Meigs Field, a smaller, centrally located general aviation airport. Both have their share of difficulties.

Midway, which served 10 million passengers last year, is undergoing extensive renovation of its 50-year-old terminal building, and it must remain fully operational during construction. Meigs Field, which Loney calls “the world’s tiniest airport with some of the biggest challenges,” has been the site of two significant plane crashes in the last two years and faces closure in 2002 when the property on which it sits will be converted back to a lakefront park.

Though both require her attention, there’s only so much to go around; she estimates she spends 60 percent of her time at O’Hare and splits the rest between Midway and Meigs Field.

Despite a seeming lack of any available personal time, Loney maintains she has found balance in her life more now than ever. Though she prefers to keep her personal relationships private, she acknowledges that she was married once — back in her Las Vegas days — but got divorced as her career took flight. She now maintains a long-distance relationship with an East Coast commercial developer.

“We see each other on weekends,” she says, “so it pretty much works out that I can remain focused during the week on my job, which is nice because, as you know, relationships require time, commitment, effort, and energy, too.”

She also finds time to participate in the Chicago Network, an organization for the area’s top professional women, and to serve — along with several other women from O’Hare — as a mentor for a Chicago area group for 10-to-15-year-old girls.

“There are tremendous examples of women succeeding at Chicago O’Hare and Midway, whether it’s a woman air traffic controller or a woman captain of a 747,” she says proudly, adding that she has tried to give as many opportunities as possible to women on their way up.

“I think that it’s important for women who have achieved success to widen the path for women who are coming up behind them by creating opportunities. I’ve appointed a woman as the chief financial officer for the Chicago Airport System. I have a woman serving as my deputy commissioner who oversees our real estate transactions and another woman who directs all of our contracts and leases. I’ve put women into other nontraditional positions, as well. My chief of day-to-day operations at Midway is also a woman.”

Her advice to women seeking career advancement is quite simple.

“I think there is no substitute for being technically competent in whatever field you choose,” she says. “That has to come first. So pursue that competence, whether it’s through higher education or on-the-job training or both.”

And don’t be afraid to ask for an opportunity, she says, but be willing to back up that request with true commitment.

“I always advise young women to think of it this way: If your boss is willing to take a risk and make an investment in you, you must make that same commitment in return. And sure it’s hard, but make that commitment, like you would to anything else, whether it’s a commitment to a relationship or a commitment to changing a habit, such as dieting or quitting smoking. Just make that commitment and pursue it with as much passion and as much energy as you can muster. And if you can’t muster the passion for it, then you are probably in the wrong field.”

As for herself, Loney couldn’t be more certain she chose the right one.

“Can you tell I’ve loved my life?” she asks. “I have had a lot of wonderful opportunities along the way, and I’ve tried to seize those opportunities. My only regret is that it’s going by so fast.”
Thank you to the 2,225 donors who responded to the Household Bank Challenge!

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