HOMECOMING '96 SCHEDULE

Wednesday
October 23 Rebel Variety Show. Moyer Student Union. 8PM.

Friday
October 25 Homecoming Celebration. Cocktails, tours of the new Lied Athletic Complex, awards presentations, class reunions, a chance to meet the coaches, and performances by the UNLV Jazz Ensemble. All at the new Lied Athletic Complex. 6:30PM.

Saturday
October 26 The Great Alumni Tailgate Party. Alumni Park in the Sam Boyd Stadium parking lot, southwest corner. 11AM. Football game — UNLV vs. Fresno State. 1:05PM.

Monday
October 28 Homecoming Golf Tournament. Canyon Gate Country Club. Noon shotgun start. Tee prizes, golf shirts, awards, and a lot of Rebel spirit!

GRAND OPENING
LIED ATHLETIC COMPLEX

All proceeds from Homecoming events go directly to the Alumni and Friends Scholarship Endowment.
CALL TODAY FOR TICKETS! 895-3621
Vol. 5, No. 1

fall 1996

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Bennett Hired as UNLV Governmental Relations Director

UNLV has hired former two-term Nevada Assemblerman Rick Bennett as director of governmental relations for the university.

Bennett, owner of BCB Enterprises in Las Vegas, served in the Nevada Legislature from 1990 to 1994 and was assistant majority leader in the Assembly during the 1993 legislative session. He assumed his duties in the $865,000-per-year position at UNLV in May.

In his new position at UNLV, Bennett will be a key member of the campus leadership, reporting to Executive Director of Alumni and Community Relations Fred Albrecht. He will also work closely with UNLV President Carol C. Harter and other administrators at UNLV and in the University and Community College System of Nevada. He will serve as a link between the university and state and local governments and will lead advocacy efforts aimed at maximizing governmental support of UNLV.

UNLV Scientist Receives $1.4 Million in Grants from NIH

UNLV molecular virologist Marcella McClure has received two grants totaling nearly $1.4 million dollars from the National Institutes of Health to support her research involving viruses.

McClure studies viruses to try to determine their gene functions and how they will change over time. One grant, totaling slightly more than $1 million is intended to support her research over a five-year period. It will pay for a variety of costs associated with her research, including equipment. It also will allow her to hire a computer programmer, a post-doctoral fellow, a graduate student, and several under­graduate students to help with her research. These jobs will afford UNLV undergraduate students a unique research opportunity.

A second grant, called a Research Career Development Award, will total approximately $365,000 over a five-year period. It will pay for 83 percent of her university salary, plus benefits, allowing the university to hire another instructor to teach most of her classes so that she can concentrate on her research.

The funding for both grants comes from the Allergy and Infectious Disease Institute, one of the National Institutes of Health.

"I am pleased with this show of support from the National Institutes of Health and excited about what this funding will mean to my re­search," McClure said.

Warren Burggren, interim dean of UNLV's College of Science and Math­ematics, said that obtaining a Career Development Award from NIH is an impressive feat.

"It is an extremely prestigious award for any university, and it is certainly a first for UNLV," Burggren said. "To get, in addition, an operating grant from NIH concurrently is a truly wonderful achievement."

McClure will be studying RNA (ribonucleic acid) viruses such as measles, mumps, ebola, and HIV to try to determine how they will change over time. She also works on identification of protein function in the newly determined genes from RNA viruses.

Because RNA viruses mutate so rapidly, it is difficult for scientists to develop effective anti-viral agents to kill them, McClure said. But if scientists could find a way to predict how a virus will mutate, that would allow pharmaceutical chemists to get ahead of the curve in developing anti-viral agents, she said. That way, when a virus mutated, scientists would be ready with an effective anti-viral agent to combat the new strain, she said.

McClure, an assistant professor of biological sciences, has been at UNLV since 1993. She earned her doctoral degree in molecular biology from Washington University School of Medicine.

Businessman Stan Fulton Donates $6.7 Million to UNLV

Las Vegas businessman Stanley Fulton, president and founder of Anchor Gaming, has given $6.7 million to fund a new building to house the UNLV International Gaming Institute and to create an endowed scholarship in the Honors College, UNLV President Carol C. Harter announced recently.

Harter said $5 million will fund construction of the new building, and $1.7 million will be used to create an endowed scholarship bearing Fulton's name in the Honors College. She said she is pleased that both gifts reinforce goals established during the campus' comprehensive planning process that call for developing programs of value to the community and becoming increasingly attractive to the best students.

"UNLV is very grateful to Stan Fulton for stepping forward, once again, with a substantial donation to the university's programs," Harter said.

"It has been the dream of the UNLV International Gaming Institute to one day have its own facility. Mr. Fulton's generous support will now make that possible," Harter said. "We are also delighted that Mr. Fulton, who has made his business and his fortune in the gaming industry, has recognized the need to support gaming education and research, as well as student achievement in all disciplines. Fulton, who has already given the university more than $1 million to support academic scholarships, refurbish­ing a biology lab and tennis courts, and general athletics, received the Distinguished Nevadan Award from the UCCSN Board of Regents in 1992. "It's the right thing to do," Fulton said of his new donation.

"President Harter called me with this exciting news just as I finished awarding the small amount of money the Honors College has for scholarships," said Honors College Director Len Zane. "It's wonderful to know that in the future we will be able to offer scholarships to many more of the top students applying for the Honors College as encouragement to study at UNLV."

The new building for the gaming institute will be named in Fulton's honor in recognition of the donation.

"This gift is the culmination of a three-year dream," said Vincent Fado, the assistant dean of the honore admistration college and the institute's former director. "It enables the UNLV Interna­tional Gaming Institute to establish a presence unlike any other educational institution involved in gaming education. This is also a manifestation of the casino entertainment industry's commitment to excellence in gaming education and research. We thank Mr. Fulton for his incredible generosity."

Richard Tam Donates $130,000

Las Vegas businessman Richard Tam has donated $180,000 to UNLV, accord­ing to President Carol C. Harter. Tam, a longtime UNLV friend and benefactor for whom the Alumni Center is named, gave $100,000 to help furnish the new Lied Athletic Complex, $25,000 to the Alumni Scholarship Fund, and $5,000 to the men's basketball program, Harter said.

"UNLV is very grateful to Richard Tam for his donations over the years," Harter said. "His generosity has made a great difference in the life of this university."

Fred Albrecht, executive director of alumni and community relations, said, "I appreciate Richard's commitment to the university and his continued support for both academics and athletics. Richard has been a tremendous benefactor for the university."

Tam is a member of the UNLV Palladium Society of million-dollar donors. He received an honorary doctorate at the university's commence­ment ceremony in 1995.
**News**

**Associate Provost, Enrollment Management Dean Appointed**

A new associate provost for research and a new dean of enrollment management have recently been appointed to the UNLV administration.

Stephen L. Rice, associate dean for graduate studies and research at the University of Central Florida's College of Engineering, has been named associate provost for research, and Juanita P. Fain, associate vice president for administration at Ohio University, has been named dean of enrollment management.

Rice, who assumed the UNLV research post on Aug. 15, replaced Donald Baer, who has been serving as interim associate provost for research.

Fain assumed the duties of her newly created position July 8.

**Kimball Receives Association's Outstanding Faculty Award**

UNLV music professor Carol Kimball has been selected by the UNLV Alumni Association as this year's recipient of the Outstanding Faculty Award.

Kimball, who joined the UNLV faculty in 1972, was chosen for her excellent record of teaching, research, and service to the university.

She received the award at the Alumni Association's annual recognition luncheon, at which the top students from each of the university's departments were given certificates of recognition for their academic achievement.

Currently serving as editor of the National Opera Association's *Opera Journal*, she also serves on the editorial boards of several other publications.

She has authored numerous articles and reviews and has written a book, to be published this year, titled *Songs: A Guide to Literature and Style*.

Kimball has been invited to perform with a number of groups, including the Mexico National Symphony Orchestra, the Nevada Symphony Orchestra, the Phoenix Chamber Symphony, and the Idaho State Civic Symphony.

**Lied Athletic Complex Opens**

The new $8.5 million Lied Athletic Complex, a 65,000-square-foot state-of-the-art sports facility, opened recently on the UNLV campus.

Located on the northwest side of campus between the Earl E. Wilson Baseball Stadium and the Myron Partridge Track, the building will house the Martin and Si Redd Sports Medicine Center, a strength and conditioning center, a 350-seat auditorium, administrative offices, meeting rooms, and locker rooms.

Football and Olympic sports offices, business offices, and the NCAA compliance office will also be located in the complex.

The building design provides facilities for both female and male athletes from all UNLV intercollegiate sports, providing equal access to all student-athletes, according to Tom Galahard, assistant athletic director in charge of administration.

The building was funded in large part by a major gift of $4 million from the Lied Foundation through Christina Hixson, Lied Foundation trustee.

Also, Las Vegas businessman Richard Tam designated $100,000 of his recent $130,000 donation to the university to help equip and furnish the complex.

The building will be dedicated during Homecoming festivities in October.

**Yes, But**

**Is She a Worthy Widow? The History of Women, Work, and Welfare**

UNLV historian Joanne Goodwin examines one of America's earliest forms of welfare, finding that many of today's concerns about morality, responsibility, and ability to work have been dominating the welfare debate for almost a century.

BY BARBARA CLOUD

The headlines are familiar: "Welfare mothers targeted." "Welfare mothers should work." "Dethrone welfare queens."

With all of the attention to the subject of women and welfare reform in the news these days, you might think that it's a relatively new social problem — one that has perhaps resulted from recent changes in family values or from contemporary economic concerns.

Not so, says Joanne Goodwin, UNLV assistant professor of history.

The "problem" of women and welfare is nearly a hundred years old.

Goodwin has traced the roots of today's policy debate about women and welfare to the early 20th century, and she has discovered several persistent themes.

Specifically, she has found that today's concerns about morality, values, and responsibility have been voiced for the past century. She has also found, not surprisingly, that economics was at the heart of the matter then as much as it is now.

In her forthcoming book, *Gender*
and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers’ Pensions, 1911-1929

Goodwin details the way one city dealt with the needs of poverty-stricken mothers in the days before the Social Security Act and Aid to Dependent Children brought the federal government into the picture. Her research offers unique insights into the way welfare for women began and how much—and how little—the debate has changed.

In 1911, Illinois became the first state to pass a mothers’ pension law to provide relief primarily to women who were widowed and had no other means of supporting their children. Goodwin quotes a juvenile court judge who called it “the greatest law on the statute books” because it allowed the state to encourage and cherish “this most sacred thing in human life—a mother’s love.”

The idea caught on. By 1921, 40 states had some provision for the support of dependent children in their own homes. The popularity of the issue could undoubtedly be traced to the opportunity it presented to the politicians of the day, who enjoyed the chance to pay homage to family and motherhood, Goodwin says. In the grand tradition of politics, those politicians approving the mothers’ pensions made much of the expectation that the assistance would allow widows with children to stay home to care for them.

The majority of the sympathy in those days went to those they deemed to be in the category of ‘the worthy widow,’” Goodwin explains. “People came to a moral consensus that a mother who, ‘through no fault of her own,’ faced tremendous economic hardships, should be able to receive public aid.”

However, such understanding did not extend to mothers who had been deserted or were separated, divorced, or unmarried, Goodwin points out. They were generally excluded from the pension laws, although policies varied across the nation.

“There is evidence of tremendous sympathy for the deserted woman, although I have seen reports of judges saying the man left her because she was a bad cook or bad housekeeper. But there was also a real question about spending public money to supplement this man’s responsibility. No one wanted to say it’s okay to desert your family—the county will make up the difference.”

The issue was not pressing, however, because divorced and unmarried mothers were so few in those days they were easy to ignore.

Goodwin says that mothers’ pension programs, considered the forerunner of modern-day welfare, were based on the assumption that “motherwork”—child care, cooking, and housekeeping—had its own economic value. But fiscal realities quickly set in as politicians calculated the cost of the programs.

As a result, pensions were not easily obtained; authorities insisted on examining the family situation before aid was given. One variable that was taken into account was the wage earning capacity of the family.

Women who were able to work were expected to find employment and, thus, could not focus on caring for their children, Goodwin notes. Indeed, the total ability of the family—including the children—to earn money was considered.

Children over the age of 8 or 9 often contributed to an impoverished family’s income in that era. “The children might be rag pickers. They might be picking up coal off the railroad tracks, or in rural areas they might work in a coal mine. But their work became a part of the family income and helped determine the level of aid—if any—the family would receive,” Goodwin says.

However, child and female labor practices were under scrutiny at the time, and laws were soon passed to get children out of the mines and factories and to limit working hours for women.

Intended to benefit women and children, these laws sometimes aggravated their financial plight instead.

“As soon as they put anti-child-labor laws into place, they took away some of the family’s income, increasing the economic pressures on the family,” Goodwin says.

More than ever, a mother had to find work. So, in spite of the good intentions that seemed to inspire the policies of the era, mothers’ pensions did little overall to accomplish the goal of allowing mothers to stay home to care for their children, Goodwin says.

Mothers who had worked before the advent of pensions continued to work, and more than half of the mothers receiving pensions had jobs outside the home.

“Advice for needy mothers and children initially was a responsibility accepted by state and local government. But when the Depression led to state programs, Congress stepped in and passed legislation—the Social Security Act—greatly expanding the reach of the system. It was at about that time that the mothers’ pension programs started being described as ‘welfare.’”

Goodwin notes that though the term “welfare” does not appear to describe the program may have changed, the underlying discussions of the issues did not.

Approved in 1935, the Social Security Act provided a system of entitlements for employees in certain industries. Title IV of that act included Aid to Dependent Children (AID), a welfare program. Later, legislation extended Social Security benefits to widows and children of those covered by the act.

Goodwin says these measures divided government aid for mothers into two categories, leaving some mother-only pensions out of the mix.

And that’s not all....

The history of mothers’ pensions is not the only topic related to women that UNLV history professor Joanne Goodwin is interested in researching. When Goodwin arrived at UNLV in 1993 to teach women’s history, she decided the women of Nevada would make perfect subjects for student research projects. However, she needed to determine what kinds of materials were available for the students to use in their research.

Her first foray to UNLV’s James R. Dickinson library suggested that sources were extremely limited. But as she explored further, she discovered that tucked here and there were records that collectively amounted to a treasure trove of historical material.

The problem was locating and accessing them. About the same time former state Senator Jean Ford, then serving as interim director of the women’s studies program at the University of Nevada, Reno, initiated the Nevada Women’s Archives Project at the UNR Library.

When the two women discovered their shared interests and concerns, they set about establishing a statewide cooperative project, the Nevada Women’s Archives, to collect, catalog, preserve, and make accessible the records and papers of Nevada women and women’s organizations.

There are now collections of these materials located in each of the University of Nevada libraries. Through the efforts of Goodwin and others at UNLV, materials at the James R. Dickinson Library have already been identified and more accessible to researchers.

Their outreach efforts have brought in additional materials; the UNLV collection, located in special collections department at the library, now has more than 200 items. The brochure prepared to describe the archives gives a sense of the diversity of women’s experiences in Nevada:

“Helen J. Stewart, Papers, 1866-1950s. Owner and operator of the Stewart Ranch, which included the area of the old Las Vegas Fort. Legal papers, business and personal correspondence, family memorabilia, photographs, and scrapbooks.


“The collection also includes records of the American War Mothers from the 1950s and 1960s and the League of Women Voters from 1964 to 1993. Papers of community leaders past and present, such as incoming UCCSN Regent and former Clark County Commissioner Thalía Ponder; and former UCCSN Regent Lily Fong, are also included.

The archives welcomes donations of additional materials on Nevada women.

Correspondence, diaries, minutes, financial and legal records, scrapbooks, photos, films, and audio recordings are just a few of the kinds of materials the archives is prepared to process. Library space does not permit the inclusion of three-dimensional items such as clothing or artifacts, but anyone with paper-type materials is encouraged to call Goodwin at 895-1026 or the Nevada Women’s Archives at 895-3954.

Meanwhile, Goodwin—her book on mothers’ pensions completed—plans to...
After 22 years, former Jazz Ensemble leader Frank Gagliardi is retiring from UNLV. But before he goes, he doesn't mind recounting the highlights of an impressive and multifaceted career in music.

BY DIANE RUSSELL

When Frank Gagliardi was a kid in Denver he used to tag along when his older brother, Vince, went out to play a gig with a band. His brother played the instrument that was, according to Gagliardi, the instrument of first choice for Italian families in those days — the accordion. Vince would lug his instrument down to rehearse for a job playing at a dance or a wedding, and Frank would go along to watch.

But his attention wasn't on Vince and his accordion. In young Frank's eyes there was only one instrument worthy of watching, regardless of who was playing it: the drums. When he was 8, he persuaded his mother to let him take lessons.

Time went by, and the Gagliardi boys grew up. Vince put away his accordion and went to work as a computer specialist for a railroad company. But Frank, he stuck with the drums. That early interest in music parlayed itself into a lifelong career for Gagliardi — a career that has allowed him an impressive array of opportunities, including jobs playing as a percussionist with a symphony orchestra, teaching music, playing in showroom bands on the Las Vegas Strip, writing music, and forming and leading the award-winning UNLV Jazz Ensemble.

Gagliardi retired from UNLV in May, 22 years after accepting an offer to "daylight" as a part-time music instructor at the university while keeping his night job in the pit orchestra at the Sands Hotel.

Before leaving UNLV for the sunny climes of Mexico where he and his wife, Charlene, plan to spend several months a year, he sat down to talk about his life and his career.

Those music lessons at the age of 8 were the beginning of it all, he says. Thanks to a determined music teacher who insisted — over Gagliardi's objections — that the youngster learn to play all the percussion instruments as well as the drums, Gagliardi gained a broad base of musical knowledge that was to prove pivotal more than once in his career.

At 17, Gagliardi joined his hometown orchestra, the Denver Symphony, as its percussionist — a job he was to hold for 15 years. While playing in the orchestra, he earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree in music education from Denver University. After he graduated, he was back on campus one day when a group of student musicians spotted him and asked if he could give them a hand with a jazz arrangement they were trying to play. He stopped to help. Then, he returned to campus to help them again and again. Before long, they had formed a jazz band, which eventually evolved into a class offered in DU's curriculum that Gagliardi was asked to teach.

After two or three years he entered the group in a national competition at
The University of Notre Dame, primarily to see what such a competition was like. To his surprise, the group placed fifth. The following year they entered again and won.

Gagliardi was acontent man. He played in the symphony at night. During the day he worked with his students. At home, he and Charlene had two children, Rick and Susan.

Then the unexpected happened.

"I was offered the greatest job that someone could dream of—that was to be the drummer and percussionist at the Sands," Gagliardi says. At that time the Sands wasn’t just a Las Vegas hotel, Gagliardi points out, it was the Las Vegas hotel. It was the Strip home to such luminaries as Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., and Dean Martin.

Gagliardi couldn’t believe his good fortune.

The offer to join the Sands showroom orchestra came unexpectedly. One day he and some friends were attending a meeting in Denver at which Antonio Morelli, the conductor at the Sands, was also present. One of his friends knew Morelli and asked what he was doing in town. Morelli replied that he had been to New York and Los Angeles looking for a musician who was both an excellent drummer and an outstanding percussionist, but he couldn’t find anyone who could handle both jobs.

According to Gagliardi, his friend told Morelli, “Well, Tony, there he is, right over there,” and pointed at Gagliardi.

The next thing he knew, he had been offered a four-week trial stint in the Sands showroom orchestra. He is seen here playing the bongos and clowning around with comedian Joey Bishop circa 1967.

He and the showroom orchestra also accompanied many other stars, including Dean Martin, Lena Horne, and Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme. While playing in the orchestras he indulged a hobby in photography, snapping shots of many of the stars on stage from his seat in the drummer’s chair.

Then, when he was in his 10th year at the Sands, a new trombonist named Ken Hanlon joined the band. Hanlon, who by day was the chair of UNLV’s music department, asked Gagliardi if he would take a part-time job as a music instructor at UNLV, Gagliardi, who missed working with college students, jumped at the chance.

Two years later in 1976, Gagliardi’s UNLV job became full-time, but he hung on to his night job playing in hotel orchestras until 1988.

As UNLV, Gagliardi’s mission was straightforward—to build a jazz program. And build a jazz program, he did. It started as something of a rag-tag outfit. Some students would show up one day, others the next. Gagliardi said he just laid down the law, insisting that students attend every rehearsal. Before long, he says, the students saw the rewards of hard dedication and developed some personality and their group.

Over the 22 years that Gagliardi headed UNLV’s Jazz program and its Jazz Ensemble, that dedication and pride paid off again and again. The Jazz Ensemble has released seven albums, two cassette tapes, and one CD. A second CD was recorded in May and was released recently by Sea Breeze Records. The ensemble traveled extensively overseas, including trips to Brazil, Peru, Poland, Portugal, and Spain; they performed in Japan five times.

Jazz Ensemble alumni have gone on to play with big bands such as the Count Basie Orchestra. Currently, alumni play with Sheena Easton and Paula Abdul.

In 1990, the Jazz Ensemble captured first place at Montreux, a national competition sponsored by Down Beat magazine, the same magazine that Gagliardi describes as the musician’s Bible. The following year the UNLV Jazz Ensemble recorded its first CD, Caliente, May Caliente. The title, which translates as “Hot, Very Hot,” was chosen by Gagliardi and reflects his opinion of the performance captured on the recording. Apparently Down Beat agreed. Caliente, May Caliente was the only university recording awarded four stars by that year by the prestigious jazz publication.

Those two events, according to Gagliardi, marked the UNLV Jazz Ensemble’s entry into the big time.

"Down Beat magazine is merciless when it comes to calling it as it is," Gagliardi said. "There were CDs from Kentucky, there was one from North Texas State, which is a giant in collegiate jazz, and ours was the only one that got five stars. That did us a lot of good. That was our greatest recruiting.

More highlights were to come. In 1994, the UNLV Jazz Ensemble played at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Two days later the group played at the Village Vanguard in New York City, and shortly thereafter Gagliardi took a part-time job as a music instructor at UNLV.

As for the future of the UNLV Jazz Ensemble—an institution that has been synonymous with the name Gagliardi for many years—the master’s advice is not to worry.

As he planned his retirement over the past few years, Gagliardi was on the lookout for a successor. He found two: trumpet player Rudy Winloss, who came to UNLV in 1991 as a lecturer in the music department, and pianist Stefan Karlsson, who came to UNLV in 1994 as an artist-in-residence and stayed to become a permanent part of the jazz program.

"If I see in them was me 20 years ago," Gagliardi says. "I still love the band, and I think I’m still productive with the band, but there comes a time when you say, ‘Maybe it’s time.’ I know these two gentlemen are ready. And, music progresses.

Gagliardi says he knows he’s been incredibly fortunate in his career. Taking the UNLV Jazz Ensemble to the Village Vanguard at the Kennedy Center are two of the highlights, he says.

"The kids have the fun of playing and that’s the greatest, but I have the pleasure and thrill of standing in front. I tell you, I’ve had so many thrilling moments in front of that band.

And, playing in the Denver Symphony—I’ve played with some great conductors such as Stokowski and Slatkin and Stokowski, and then I come to the Sands and play with Sinatra. I’ve had so many of these thrills. I’m a lucky, lucky fellow."

But even Gagliardi’s own description of the thrills of his career don’t capture their essence quite as well as watching one of them happen to him—especially when it’s the one that belongs to an end his UNLV career.

It’s May 7, 1996. UNLV’s Judy Bayley Theatre is filled to near capacity for the last concert of the season, as the UNLV Jazz Ensemble prepares to perform. Stokowski, the renowned conductor and former leader of the Jazz Ensemble.

As he steps on stage to thunderous applause, the band stands so greet him. An obvious emotion welled up in the audience that this concert is going to be difficult since, he admits, “I even cry at basketball games.”

The concert includes Gagliardi’s favorite Jazz Ensemble arrangements from the last 20 years. At one point between songs, the ensemble presents him with a plaque. Then, noted jazz vocalist Marlena Shaw, the concert guest artist, makes her entrance carrying a bouquet of flowers for the conductor. Later, Joe Williams, a famous jazz singer, drops by for an unscheduled guest appearance that truly takes Gagliardi by surprise.

Near the end of the job, Gagliardi introduces the audience to his family, including his brother Vince—who he once played the accordion. The introduction of his wife until last, his voice is so choked with emotion that he can barely speak her name.

Then he turns to lead the band in a final number, a new composition of his own. Before the occasion he had explained the title he had chosen for this one was “Tribute to Blues Number.”

With his number played, Frank Gagliardi’s final concert at the helm of the UNLV Jazz Ensemble ends.

Except for one thing: the standard deviation, during which audience members rise nearly simultaneously to their feet to applaud and cheer vigorous. Now it’s a wrap.
UNLV alumnus John Davis got a second chance at getting an education. Now, he’s dedicated to helping others do the same.

By Donna McAleer

It wasn’t an obvious blueprint for success. John Davis picked cotton, pulled corn, harvested sorghum, and worked as a cook and a carhop during his high school years in the small town of Belmont, Miss.

But he was forced to drop out of high school to work even more because there was simply not enough financial or emotional support at home to sustain him. Without a high school diploma, Davis knew he was destined to work a string of dead-end jobs.

Determined to find a way out, he joined the Army at 17. It was there that Davis got the second chance he needed by earning his GED (General Equivalency Diploma).

For Davis, passing the GED exam was the first of many educational successes. He discovered he was a born learner and a born teacher. At 18 he became an Army training instructor and took every course and certificate program he could during his stint in the Army.

After he left the service in 1962, he sold insurance and took advantage of many of the professional training opportunities available in that field. He also served as an insurance training instructor.

In 1974 Davis started taking classes at UNLV on the GI Bill; he earned a bachelor’s degree in education in 1978 and a master’s degree in educational administration three years later. He also enrolled in UNLV’s doctoral M.R.A. program.

His return to the classroom as a student inspired him to return to that setting as a teacher. For several years he taught history and served as yearbook advisor at Boulder City High School.

But Davis soon realized that to him, offering someone a second chance was a more important calling. And he could think of no better way to do that than by helping others take advantage of the same opportunity that opened to many doors for him: the GED.

That realization led him to his current job as a training consultant who prepares adults to take and pass the GED exam.

Davis is frequently hired by some of Las Vegas’ most notable resorts, including The Mirage, Treasure Island, and the Rio, to conduct their in-house GED training programs. He comes to his clients highly recommended by the Clark County School District.

But Davis’ versatility is another reason he is one of the busiest GED training consultants in town. He is fully certified to teach all of the five subjects on the GED test (writing skills, social studies, mathematics, science, and interpreting literature and the arts), a qualification most other teachers don’t have.

And he is an expert on the GED program itself, which was started by the U.S. Armed Forces Institute in 1942 for World War II soldiers who didn’t have a chance to finish high school because of the war.

When they returned to their civilian lives afterward, the thinking went, they would be competing for jobs in a tight post-war economy; the GED would give them a chance to show they had learned what a high school graduate knew, even if they hadn’t learned it in the classroom.

But, more importantly, Davis notes, it also gave them a chance to continue their educations.

During the ’50s the program came under the management of the American Council on Education and was offered to the general public.

Today, the GED is recognized as the equivalent of a high school diploma in all 50 states, Canada, and many foreign countries. Each year approximately 700,000 people participate in the program. To earn a GED, a participant must take an eight-hour standardized test covering the five aforementioned areas. In each of his test preparation classes, Davis usually covers the same familiar material. But he refuses to take a cookie-cutter approach when it comes to his students.

He assesses each one individually to determine his or her strengths and weaknesses. A wall in his office is covered with Polaroid pictures of each of his current students.

“I keep them up there until they pass the test or leave the program. Most of them pass,” he says with a smile.

The circumstances that have brought people to the GED program are very different, Davis says. For some, school “just didn’t click” when they were younger. Some, like Davis himself, experienced problems at home and had to go to work to survive. Others worked to help out their families or left school to have a baby. Still others decide they want to earn a degree after immigrating to the United States.

Despite their differences in age, nationality, and type of work, program participants share one characteristic, according to Davis: exceptional motivation.

They all seem to pursue their GEDs with unusual dedication, he says, though they do so for a variety of reasons. Setting an example for their children was frequently cited by participants as the most compelling reason for earning the GED.

Davis’ former student Angie Hernandez was one of those parents who wanted to be a good role model.

“I was so touched when my eight-year-old said to me, ‘I’m going to get my diploma, too, but in high school.’ Then I knew all the hard work was worth every minute,” says Hernandez, a class of ’94 GED graduate.

Davis notes that people in the program don’t usually have problems handling these students. “It’s all the rest — managing all the other aspects of their lives, their jobs, families, and finances — that make completing the program a challenge,” he says.

His courses meet two evenings each week, with a third session every other week. Each session is two hours.

“Make no mistake about it. These students pay a tremendous price,” Davis
to teach the adult learners in his classes. His goal is to keep his students excited and involved, despite the great differences in their learning styles, backgrounds, and even languages.

"Many of the skills I use today I gained in insurance. But the knowledge I impart I gained at UNLV," says Davis. Some of those skills include fostering a "can-do" attitude and mastering mnemonic techniques to help students keep the names and dates in history straight. But Davis isn't content to have his students simply memorize. He wants them to recognize, relate, assimilate, evaluate, and apply what they've learned.

It's his individual approach that many students credit with their success in the program. He tailors assignments to their needs. And when a series of practice tests and his 20+ years of experience tell him someone is ready, he or she gets a chance to keep the door open a little longer. He recognizes that some of his students won't have anything close to perfect attendance because of the demands of home and work.

He keeps the door open for them, however, tutoring them individually over the rough spots, evaluating their assignments, encouraging them to continue, and letting them know when they're ready to take the test.

"I make class as much fun as possible," Davis says. He takes his students through American history, polynomial equations, sentence structure, and appreciation of the arts. He doesn't rely on the straight lecture approach. He supplements textbooks with his own materials and videos. He gets students actively involved in problem solving and discovery. He prides himself on keeping the material fresh. Davis draws on his experience as a professional trainer in the insurance field to develop an atmosphere in which each student is free to study at his own pace. He gets to know his students and values his own success in helping them achieve their dreams. He gets to know them personally over the course of a lifetime. It's been a personal triumph for Davis as well as for his students. He's seen them make class as much fun as possible and keep the door open a little longer.

"I was very impressed," says Sheila Best, a GED recipient from the Mirage. "His commitment to us really showed through in his teaching."

Within the successes of his students brings him great satisfaction, the larger social good of the employer-offered GED training programs is not lost on Davis. The need is certainly there, he points out, citing statistics from a recent newspaper article indicating that nearly 12 percent of local high school students dropped out of school last year. And while the booming service industries of Southern Nevada may provide these people with jobs initially, they often end up in low-paying positions with little hope of advancement.

Without a high school diploma, it will be harder for them to get ahead, he says, noting that dropouts earn about 30 percent less than high school graduates.

The nearly 100 employees who have completed Davis' GED classes at The Mirage, Treasure Island, and the Rio have not only the intangible satisfaction of achieving a long-held goal, but, in many cases, the tangible reward of receiving a promotion or two.

But the GED clearly means more to the students than just a chance to get ahead. For many, passing the GED is a personal triumph. Take, for example, Sherry Roretz, one of Davis' students who wrote a poem to describe her feelings about her success in the program and the man who helped her achieve it.

"Not everyone can feel that his job makes a difference, but I do. I really feel like I've helped people change their lives. It's a great feeling," he says.

During your lifetime and that gift will have far-reaching ramifications, affirming UNLV's mission of education, touching the lives of students for years — even generations — to come.

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An Exercise in Healthy Living

It's a familiar and nagging message: Exercise is the key to good health. But for a handful of diabetic patients, it's a message that could save their lives, according to UNLV kinesiology professor Jack Young.

By Laurie Fruth

Two times a week they head to the McDermott Physical Education building for a 50-minute workout. Sporting spotless new running shoes and 50+ years of life experience, they arrive with determination in their hearts and at least a little trepidation in their souls.

By the third week of class most students were in the 50s and 60s—overweight, with adult onset diabetes. They are predisposed to develop the disease, many of whom have never exercised regularly, according to Jack Young, a UNLV kinesiology professor who has set out to help motivate and train diabetics to exercise.

When Young recognized the need for an adult fitness class tailored for the hard-to-reach diabetic population, he assigned himself the task of developing such a course at UNLV. The idea took hold when he was asked to participate in a two-day Diabetes Treatment Center Education Program at Desert Springs Hospital.

"The scheduled exercise physiology class at UNLV was taught the last minute, and I was called to fill in," Young explains. "I went and began my standard talk about the need to exercise and the benefits to be derived from exercise. As I was talking, I began to talk about the need to exercise and the benefits to be derived from exercise. As I was talking, it dawned on me that these people—most of whom were in their 50s or 60s—didn't have a lot of experience with exercise. They needed to be taught how to exercise, not just told how to do so."

Forming an informal partnership with the health educators from Desert Springs, Young and graduate assistant Kami Prince quickly developed a comprehensive exercise program tailored to meet the special needs of the diabetic patient.

"We didn't want just another adult fitness class. Our idea was to get them into a group, teach them how to exercise, talk to them about diet and diabetes management, and hope that eventually they would incorporate these changes into their lives."

Students for the class were recruited directly from the Desert Springs diabetes education class, often at the urging of their physicians. Some came willingly, some came reluctantly, and some came for only one session.

"The first semester we had only one student, so she got a lot of attention from Kami, who is the instructor of the course," Young says. "By the second semester, the word had gotten out, and the class had grown to four students. I anticipate that in a few years this class will grow to a pretty good size largely because of the efforts of the Desert Springs program— they've been very supportive of our efforts here."

As evidence of this support, Young points to the presence of nurse educators from the hospital who attend each class to discuss diet and diabetes management strategies and to monitor blood glucose levels and heart rate.

This medical oversight is important, Young explains, because of the significant health risks associated with adult onset diabetes.

"These people are particularly disposed to cardio vascular disease, and are more susceptible to traumatic injuries of the foot because of decreased sensation in their extremities," says Young, who recently authored a journal article on the role of exercise in diabetes management.

"And, because they are overweight, they often have high blood pressure, orthopedic problems, and flexibility problems. The challenge for us was to design an exercise regimen that was safe for them to do while still providing the benefits they needed."

Walking, bicycling, water aerobics, and low-impact step exercises were among the activities Young selected to introduce to his students—with varying degrees of success.

"One student loved water aerobics but didn't want to try anything else," Young notes. "But for the most part, they like coming here, and we appreciate the opportunity to get more involved in our community. It's a nice exchange. I've continued my involvement with Desert Springs Hospital, and they've been extremely supportive."

And while Young is pleased that the students seem to enjoy the class, it is more important to him that they continue to exercise once they've completed it. "It's an old message but an important one for diabetic patients. If you want to manage your diabetes and prevent additional illness, you're going to have to do it."

As the students of PED 191, a new community outreach class developed by UNLV for newly diagnosed patients of adult onset diabetes, they are unified by their common goal of learning how to use exercise to fight a disease that could take their lives.
change your lifestyle. We can teach patients how to exercise, we can teach patients how to change their diet, but the motivation has to come from inside."

To emphasize just how important exercise is to diabetic patients, Young compares the process of sugar transport in a healthy body to that which occurs in life-threatening form of the disease.

"In a healthy individual, the hormone insulin facilitates the transport of sugars in the bloodstream," Young explains; most people know that we produce insulin but, for reasons as yet unexplained, the body doesn’t recognize the insulin. In other words, they have the key, but the system doesn’t work properly.

Sugar continues to come into the body but the body cannot accept it. As the level of sugar rises in the bloodstream, the pancreas — the organ that produces insulin — senses that too much sugar is in the bloodstream and attempts to correct the problem by producing more insulin. Then, excessive levels of sugar and excessive levels of insulin are present in the blood of these patients. It’s a double whammy — too much sugar and too much insulin.

If this situation is allowed to continue, the cells that produce the insulin eventually burn out. When this happens, the Type II diabetic becomes a Type I diabetic.

To manage the levels of sugar and insulin in the blood, Type II diabetics often take medication to reduce sugar absorption or improve insulin efficiency. But Young asserts that many of them could achieve the same effect by exercising regularly and eliminating fatty foods and foods high in sugar from the diet.

"Exercise, in and of itself, stimulates sugar uptake and increases insulin sensitivity," Young notes, adding that the less sugar there is for the body to deal with, the easier it is to facilitate transport. However, as Young is quick to point out, most people are reluctant to give up the fatty foods they enjoy when they believe they can achieve the same result by simply taking a pill.

"Overweight people have been told all their lives to lose weight and to exercise. They say, ‘If it was easy for me, I would have done it years ago. I can’t do it, and I don’t need to do it. I can take medication to control my diabetes.’"

This is the mindset that Young strives to overcome. Resigned but not yet discouraged, he reiterates his prescription for successful diabetes management — education, exercise, eating right, and a healthy dose of encouragement.

"Some people can make the necessary changes in their lives, and some people can’t. But UNLV is here to help those who want to try."
November 1996

1 Greenspan Lecture: Susan Stamberg. 7:30pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
2 Music Department Opera Theatre: Hugger. 7:30pm. Nov. 1 & 2. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
3 Music Department: Jazz Ensemble I. 7:30pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
4 Music Department: Collegium Vassal. 8pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
5 Alumni Event: Dinner/Theater Event. 6pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
6 Music Department: Wind Symphony. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
7 University Theatre: A Midsummer Night’s Dream. 8pm. Dec. 4-6. 8pm. Dec. 7 & 8. 2pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-3801.
8 Music Department: Wind Ensemble. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
9 Performing Arts Center: Los Vegas Marinha Quartet. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
10 Performing Arts Center: Las Vegas Marinha Quartet. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
11 Community Concert: Brassissimo Vienna. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
12 UNLV Library Society: UNLV Authors Reception. 7:30pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
13 Music Department: Community Band. 7:30pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
15 Alumni Event: Dinner/Theater Event. 6pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
16 Law Forum: Las Vegas Law School Forum, 9am. 3pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall Lobby. 895-3801.
17 Nevada Symphony Orchestra: Classical Concert. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
18 Performing Arts Center: National Song & Dance Co. of Tibet. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
19 Master Series: Inishke Perlman. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
20 Alumni Event: Board Meeting. 6pm. Alumni Park. 895-3621.
21 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. CS-Northridge. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
22 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. San Diego State. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
23 Music Department: Musical Arts Society. 3pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
24 Concert: Musical Arts Society. 3pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
27 Master Series: Budapest Festival Orchestra. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
29 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. UNLV. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)

December 1996

1 Music Department: Collegeium Vassal. 8pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
2 Alumni Event: Dinner/Theater Event. 6pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
3 Chamber Music Southwest: Hey-Jung Kim. 8pm. Armenia Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
4-8 University Theatre: A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Dec. 4-6, 8pm. Dec. 7 & 8. 2pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-3801.
5 University Theatre/Performing Arts: Roscoe Lee Browne and Anthony Zerbe in Behind the Broken Words. 8pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-3801.
6 University Theatre: Winter Formal Celebration. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
7 Music Department: Wind Ensemble. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
8 Concert: Gamble-stinos Christmas Concert. 2pm & 6pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
9 Performing Arts Center: Las Vegas Marinha Quartet. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
10 Community Concert: Noel & Leandra. 8pm. Armenius Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
12 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. Southern Utah. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
13 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. UNLV. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
15 Alumni Event: Board Meeting. 6pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
16 Chamber Music Southwest: L.V. Philharmonic. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
17 Master Series: Wavuz. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
20 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. UNLV. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
21 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. TCU. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
22 University Theatre: Midsummer Night’s Dream. 8pm. Dec. 15, 8pm; Feb. 16, 2pm & 7pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
23 Chamber Music Southwest: L.V. Philharmonic. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
24 University Theatre: A Midsummer Night’s Dream. 8pm. Dec. 15, 8pm; Feb. 16, 2pm & 7pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
26 Alumni Event: Career Day Reception. 3pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
27 Music Department: Mariposa Trio. 7:30pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
28 Performing Arts Center: Alvion Alley American Dance Theatre. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
29 Alumni Event: Career Day Reception. 3pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
30 University Theatre: Dinner/Theater Event. 6pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
January 1997

1 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. Wyoming. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
5-9 University Theatre: Senior Adult Theatre Festival. Begins 8am daily. Judy Bayley Theatre and Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
9 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. San Diego State. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
10 Performing Arts Center: Paris Opera Ballet. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
11 Continuing Education: EXCEL Convocation II. 10am. Artemus Ham Concert Hall Lobby. 895-3801.
13 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. San Jose State. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
15 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. Fresno State. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
16-18 University Dance Theatre: Midsummer Night’s Dream. 8pm. Feb. 15, 8pm; Feb. 16, 2pm & 7pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
19 Alumni Event: Board Meeting. 6pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
20 Alumni Event: Board Meeting. 6pm. Richard Tam Alumni Center. 895-3621.
21 Chamber Music Southwest: L.V. Philharmonic. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
22 Men’s Basketball: UNLV vs. TCU. Details TBA. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3900. (tentative)
23 Performing Arts Center: Alvion Alley American Dance Theatre. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
24 Barrett Lecture: Sam Donaldson. 7:30pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.
26 Music Department: Mariposa Trio. 7:30pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
27 Performing Arts Center: Alvion Alley American Dance Theatre. 8pm. Artemus Ham Concert Hall. 895-3801.

For more information on UNLV events and publications, visit UNLV’s World Wide Web Home Page at http://www.unlv.edu.

* Events are subject to change/cancellation.
Wayne Nunnely, '75
BS Physical Education, is the defensive line coach with the New Orleans Saints. He served as UNLV's head football coach from 1986 through 1989. He also served as running back coach at the University of Southern California and as defensive line coach at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Sacramento. Previously, served as UNLV's head football coach at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Robert Kiest Scherer, '77 BS Hotel Administration, is the president of Sugarfoot Toy Company of Sacramento. Previously, he worked for Western Interior, Marriott, Americas Honda, and Jenoys Restaurants. He lives in Antelope, Calif.

Alan Kilmer, '78 BS Hotel Administration, earned a master's degree in hotel and restaurant management from Florida International University and is now the director of sales at Doubletree's Panama Valley Resort in Scottsdale, Ariz. Previously, he worked as sales manager at the Arizona Biltmore.

Nancy Ostrowski, '78 BA Criminal Justice, is a judge in Las Vegas Justice Court. In 1994, she received the “Judge of the Year” award from the Nevada Judges Association. The following year she served as president of the association. She also produces and hosts the local television show "Law for the Layman."

'70s

'80s

Laurie Kulin, '87
BUS Administration, is a partner with SPNMC International, a personal and professional development firm, for which she is a coach and corporate trainer.

'90s

Laurie Salkin, '87 MBA, is a business development officer with Tracker River Bank's Small Business Administration loan production office in Las Vegas. Before joining the bank in 1994, she worked as executive director of the Southern Nevada Certified Development Company. She has also worked with the Nevada Institute for Contemporary Art, G&B Optics, and the Nevada Small Business Development Center at UNLV.

Chrisy Sesso, '90
BS Business Administration, is a production manager for Mexico, Vanich & Dickerson Advertising and Public Relations. She is also pursuing a master's degree in ethics and policy studies at UNLV. Previously, she worked at UNLV's Thomas & Mack Center as a corporate relations representative.

Larry Merle Ball, '91 BS Architecture and Construction Management, teaches heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration maintenance, repair, and installation at Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center.

Karen Garbevenson, '91 BS Hotel Administration, is the assistant food and beverage director at the Anchorage (Alaska) Hilton. Previously, she worked at the Anahiem Hilton and Town in California.

Pattil Hanlon, '92 BS Hotel Administration, is self-employed. He works with companies to help them improve customer service. He also develops trade shows and takes part in the family business of designing and manufacturing children's clothes. He lives in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Monika A. Martin, '92 MS Hotel Administration, is the merchandising manager of foodservice marketing for R & G Gallo Winery in Modesto, Calif. She lives in Riverbank.

Paul F. Wakefield, '92 BS Political Science, was recently commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Navy after completing Officer Candidate School at the Naval Aviation Schools Command at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Fla. He completed his training with distinction. He joined the Navy in 1992.

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Please be patient! Because of the popularity of the Class Notes section, UNLV Magazine cannot use every entry as soon as it arrives. If the information you have submitted for a Class Notes entry becomes outdated, please submit a new entry and indicate on the form that it is a replacement.

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families on welfare (ADC) and giving others Social Security benefits. And she says, there were significant differences between them.

Social Security was an entitlement: if the father was covered under the act’s provisions, so were his widow and children; no additional economic test or standards of behavior were used to evaluate a family in order for it to qualify.

On the other hand, if the father had worked in agriculture or other employment not covered by Social Security, his widow and children could receive only the more restrictive Aid to Dependent Children, which required applicants to face the scrutiny of the agency granting the aid.

Although ADC was established by the federal government, it was administered by the states; to protect their economic interests, some states continued to use the family’s wage-earning ability to determine eligibility.

Critics accused them of forcing women to work at “starvation wages,” pushing them into domestic, seasonal, and other low-paying jobs.

“ADC was intended for those who had ‘been deprived of parental support and care,’” Goodwin says. “To the authors of the Social Security Act, ‘parental support’ referred to the income the father would have brought to the family if he had been alive; the ‘parental care’ was provided by the mother of the family. Soon, however, both care and support became the responsibility of the mother when the father was gone.”

In the decades that followed, even the federal government largely abandoned the goal of attempting to enable mothers to stay home with their children, Goodwin explains. By the 1960s both parents were given responsibility for the financial support of their children. Absent fathers were expected to pay child support, and mothers were expected to take their places in the work force.

Goodwin points out that the Family Support Act of 1988 made these expectations official, although they had clearly governed policy for decades.

With such extensive knowledge of the history of the welfare policy debate, Goodwin finds herself in a unique position to comment on contemporary welfare reform efforts.

She observes that today’s discussions on the subject openly center on putting mothers to work — ostensibly as a means of getting them off welfare.

But the current battle cry of policymakers — “ending welfare as we know it” — is not as easy as they make it sound, Goodwin adds, noting that putting people to work requires access to jobs.

“The rural poor have few job opportunities. Even in cities there are not enough jobs to take everyone off welfare,” she says.

Training is another important component of welfare reform because most welfare recipients have few skills, Goodwin notes. Also, little attention is given to the question of who will look after the children while the mother is at work.

Complicating policy-making, Goodwin says, is a major misconception about welfare: namely that all recipients are mired in it forever.

“For most people, welfare helps in a crisis. They don’t use it long-term,” she explains. “About 23 percent of welfare recipients receive benefits for 10 years or more, which is still a considerable number, but by no means a majority.”

But, of course, to policy makers, every welfare recipient costs money, and money — not family values, such as a mother’s desire to stay at home and look after her children — has been the real driving force in welfare policy, she says.

Goodwin acknowledges that the plight of welfare mothers might seem to be an unlikely choice of research topics for her. After all, she grew up in comfortable circumstances and attended Whitman College, a small, private liberal arts college in Walla Walla, Wash., during the late 1960s. It didn’t take Goodwin long to recognize her privileged status; she was a college student during a period when consciousness raising was perhaps at its peak.

At the time, she recalls, she viewed the issue of poverty with a combination of intellectual curiosity and genuine concern.

“I knew that I had a lot of advantages, but I didn’t understand how there could be poverty in the midst of an era of not only personal, but national affluence,” she says.

So, she dedicated two years to the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program, working mainly with impoverished families in the Appalachians.

“We tend to forget the rural poor and talk mostly about the urban poor,” she says, reflecting on her VISTA experience. “But I think it’s important to consider both. Contemporary welfare reform is based on getting people jobs, and getting a job requires a different strategy in the country than in the city.”

When she decided to pursue her doctorate in history at the University of Michigan in 1983, the Reagan administration was attempting to create new policies, and welfare was frequently in the headlines. The debate renewed her interest in the problems of needy mothers.

“I wanted to know what scholars had done on the topic, and I found out that they hadn’t done much,” she says.

“When I started the research, women’s historians had written about the origins of laws such as Aid to Dependent Children and about the intent of keeping mothers at home to care for their children. But they hadn’t looked at what really happened.”

And, as most historians will tell you, what really happened yesterday can tell us a great deal about what should — or shouldn’t — happen tomorrow, she says.
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