

Summer 2007

UNLV Magazine

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THE YEAR IN SPORTS

Summer 2007

UNIV

gazine



PLUS:
How writers
and artists
pursue
research

Sweet Return

Gaston Essengue and the Rebel basketball team are back in the national spotlight





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Her Possibilities.

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By creating, composing, and inspiring.

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Engineered for the Future

In my recent inaugural address, I outlined a new vision for UNLV, one that developed after I spent several months assessing the challenges we face and identifying the advantages we can leverage to our collective benefit. Let me share with you some of the comments I made.

As many of you know, I am an engineer by formal training. I have applied many of my discipline's principles to my role as president. I have collected the data, much of it through conversations with students, campus leaders, community members, and alumni. These groups have a wide array of needs, wants, and expectations, but above all else, they share a genuine desire for UNLV to accomplish great things.

For many years, UNLV has focused on keeping pace with our community's phenomenal growth. Now is the time for UNLV to stop keeping pace and to start defining the pace. I have asked members of our campus community to banish the word "expansion" from our lexicon — it no longer represents what we do. Instead, deliberate growth will be the hallmark of our university.

We will grow our campus, but with sustainable facilities. This means we will be a leader in Southern Nevada for intelligent building design. We will also be a valued resource and model for others who wish to pursue this worthy cause.

We will fully commit ourselves to our research endeavors, but with priorities. With the overarching goal of elevating our research programs, we will allocate resources to the areas of research that offer the greatest potential to serve our unique state, enhance our reputation, and open new entrepreneurial avenues. UNLV will be a place that industry and enterprise look to as a leader. And we will bring that research into the classroom to enhance the educational experiences of our students.

We will grow our student population, but with a renewed dedication to those who flourish under higher standards. Our increasing selectivity in admissions will change the character of our student body. UNLV must reshape its undergraduate experience to ensure it inspires our students to persevere and prepares them to be leaders in their chosen fields.

As an alumnus, UNLV's evolution affects you. Your degree will become more valuable as UNLV rises as an institution. I hope you will become engaged in our future development as we work together to build a great university.



David B. Ashley,
UNLV President

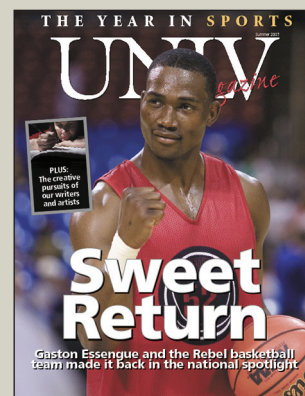


Photo by Geri Kodey

On the cover: Gaston Essengue is pumped up before UNLV's game in the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament in St. Louis.

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Fighting Off Invaders

Class Project Helps Restore Scorched Land

Fending off the invasion of the exotics!
Rescuing species in the path of destruction!
Bringing scorched earth back to life!

Going on one of Scott Abella's experimental field trips is a little like playing Indiana Jones to the plant world for students in his restoration ecology course. They worked in partnership with the National Park Service to preserve plant species on federal lands.

Abella oversees the Vegetation Monitoring and Data Management program of the UNLV Public Lands Institute and teaches in the School of Life Sciences. This spring, he let students earn extra credit by doing restoration work at Lake Mead and on wildfire-charred U.S. Bureau of Land Management lands.

"The experimental field trips exceeded my expectations because they created a win-win-win situation for UNLV, federal agencies, and the private developer," Abella says.

The three dozen students in the class got hands-on learning in the field and contributed to research. The federal agencies benefited from lands restoration. And the developer contributed to local conservation efforts.

Reversing Habitat Loss

Finding native plants for restoration isn't easy — particularly for deserts. So when a grassy site in the southwestern Las Vegas Valley was slated for construction, he worked with the developer to salvage its native plants. Students took more than 100 plants to the Lake Mead nursery facility for restoration and seed production.

Their first job was to revegetate an old landfill near Lake Mead. Students put 216 plants in the ground there, including snake-weed and deer grass, to see if they can resist invasion of non-native plants, such as red brome and Sahara mustard. "The idea is to establish five different native community types, then introduce the exotics that are already present at the site and see which native communities best fend off invasion



R. Marsh Starks

Graduate student Jessica Spencer salvages three-awn grass from a Las Vegas lot being cleared for construction. It will be transplanted onto National Park Service land damaged by wildfires. Researchers hope the restoration project will help prevent the spread of fast-growing invasive plant species.

by the exotics," Abella says.

Next, the class visited Goodsprings, south of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, where fire ravaged the desert in 2005. There they learned how to establish native plants on arid lands by setting up DriWater, a slow-release irrigation system, and shelters for seven native species. Students brought

in 280 native plants, including wildflowers, deer grass, and California buckwheat.

Abella says the rewards of restoration are long-lasting. "Ecological restoration is an increasingly emerging approach to reverse habitat loss and ecosystem decline. And it enhances the services that native ecosystems provide to society."

Dad's Quest to Learn About Autism Leads to New Research in Schools

John Tuman is used to explaining his 4-year-old daughter's behavior to strangers. Other parents usually give him a blank stare or make a polite passing comment. One day at a park near their home, Tuman and his wife were surprised to find that every other parent on the playground could empathize. Each also had a child with autism.

That unexpected break from the social isolation the Tumans often feel was overshadowed by what the unique experience seemed to underscore: the rising prevalence of autism.

"When I first started telling people about Celeste, they would say things like 'Oh yeah, I heard about (autism) on television,'" Tuman says. "But lately it seems people have a much more personal frame of reference, like a family member or a neighbor who has autism."

Countering Prevailing Thought

As a political scientist, Tuman has long studied how social and educational policy and how different governments respond to and fund special education. After Celeste's diagnosis, he began experiencing social service and educational systems as a parent as well. "As an academic, I naturally believe that some things can be figured out empirically, and I noticed that some assertions were being made about autism — often to defend a lack of public policy — that were based on very weak scientific evidence."

Tuman voraciously read everything he could about his daughter's condition. His studies brought him across research by Paul Shattuck of the University of Wisconsin that attributes the increase in autism diagnoses to faulty reporting. But, based on what he knew about Nevada's reporting practices, Tuman saw critical flaws in the study.

Tuman and his wife, Danielle Roth-Johnson, a visiting professor in the women's studies department, collected data from all 17 school districts in Nevada. They teamed with professor Sheniz Moonie, an epidemiologist and biostatistician in the School of Public Health, for the first comprehensive study on autism diagnoses in Nevada's schools.

They found a near tenfold increase in the administrative prevalence of autism in Nevada schools from 1995 to 2004. Administrative

prevalence is the number of children who have been diagnosed with autism or an autism spectrum disorder by school authorities and who receive special education services.

Across Nevada, the prevalence increased from an average of one in 3,750 students in 1995 to one in 422 in 2004. Only the Esmeralda School District — which enrolls fewer than 80 students — reported no prevalence during the study period.

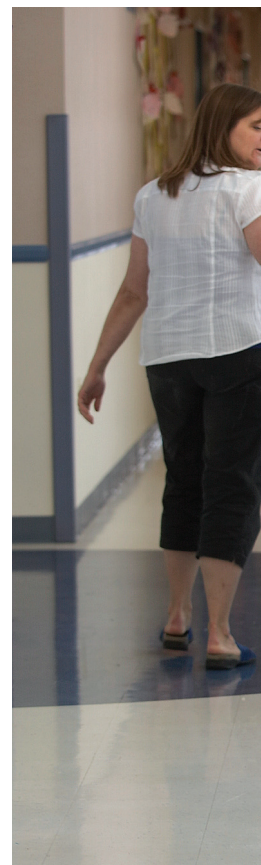
No Substitute

Tuman challenges Shattuck's hypothesis that the increasing administrative prevalence nationwide is a result of diagnostic substitution — the theory that children who were previously classified as having mental retardation or a speech delay are now being classified as autistic.

"Our research shows no evidence whatsoever to suggest that diagnostic substitution is driving the increase in autism prevalence in Nevada," says Tuman. "If diagnostic substitution had been a factor, the study would have shown a corresponding decrease in the reporting of other learning disabilities. But some of those are also on the rise."

Tuman notes that although the prevalence has increased significantly, funding for autism-related education programs has not. Federal funding for all special education programs in Nevada has been cut this year. He hopes his research will increase awareness of autism spectrum disorders and help policymakers correct the discrepancy between the increasing prevalence and public policy.

"By investing in the education of these children on the front end, we can mitigate the barriers to their learning and vastly improve their future and potential for being self-reliant," says Tuman. "Successfully doing so would ultimately translate into an enormous cost savings to society, particularly because this population would be much less likely to require government assistance in the future."



4 Things to do at UNLV This Summer

1 Pretend You're An Astronaut: With views of **California wildfires (at left)** to the shadows cast by the Great Pyramids, "Earth From Space" illustrates how satellite imagery is gathered and used to expand mankind's under-

standing of life on Earth. This Smithsonian Institute exhibit makes a stop at the Marjorie Barrick Museum June 30-Aug. 26. A second exhibit at the museum this summer features the work of Nevada artisans. Visit hrc.nevada.edu/museum.

2 Be the Ultimate Soccer Mom: Get your little leaguer some big-time training under UNLV's coaches. The athletics department sponsors numerous camps for boys and girls, including the big-three sports plus soccer, swimming, and volleyball. Learn more at unlvrebels.com.



Geri Kodey

Political science professor John Tuman and his wife, Danielle Roth-Johnson, found theories on autism diagnoses out of step with their experience as parents of a child with autism. They discovered a tenfold increase in the prevalence of autism in Nevada's schools.

As a parent and advocate, Tuman admits that he often gets frustrated with public policy and funding for autism, but as a social scientist he understands the systemic problems that must be worked through. Ultimately, he hopes his work helps provide Celeste and other children like her with a good education.

"My hope is that she is provided with sufficient opportunities to have a full and complete education so that she can do whatever she wants to do as an adult," he says. "That would be my hope for her regardless."

— Gian Galassi

3 Gain Cultural Perspective: "Japanese Art Will Entertain You" features an eclectic mix of artists, including Ken Hamazaki, Maywa Denki, Rockin' Jelly Bean, and Satoru Tomura. The exhibit, curated by MFA graduate Sush Machida, runs Aug. 21-Sept. 16 at the Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery.

4 Learn Without the Tests: Explore natural wonders and learn about local history from UNLV professors through the Division of Educational Outreach's travel programs. Upcoming trips venture to the La Brea Tar Pits and Great Basin National Park. Visit edoutreach.unlv.edu.

TO THE EDITOR

A Teaching Moment

I recently picked up my daughter's copy of *UNLV Magazine* and read the article about the class that Stephens Bates was teaching this spring titled "Morality, Mortality and Formality: Gazing at the Dead" (Spring 2007 issue). He discussed the Bodies exhibit (which features human cadavers) and topics that I have lived with every day of my life.

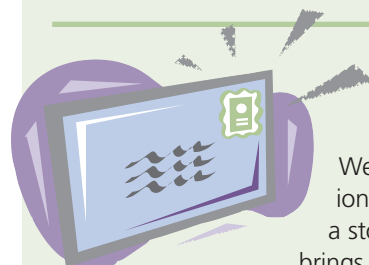
I grew up with a family that owned funeral parlors and a casket factory. I became a paramedic and later switched to respiratory therapy, which led me into teaching at Rancho High School Medical Magnet High School.

When the Bodies exhibit came to Las Vegas, I could not wait to see it. (I have) encountered patients who abuse their bodies throughout life and those who do little to build healthy bodies at a young age. The second time through the exhibit I took my 7-year-old granddaughter with me. I prepared her for the exhibit and talked her through every model. She was intrigued by the lungs and what happens with smoking. She now wants to know if the people she sees smoking (know) their lungs are black too. She wonders why they are still smoking. I always respond that they are making unhealthy decisions.

This is what the exhibit is to me: a teaching moment to help people make better healthy decisions based on what they see and understand about how the body really works.

I also read the article "Image Conscious" about Kathleen Ja Sook Bergquist. I, too, have an adopted Korean daughter, Alexandria Jong Rim, who is 23 and is currently a student in education at UNLV. The article brought to heart the same feelings that we have had as parents and my daughter has wondered about. She fits the mold that was discussed in the article of being well-adjusted but having the missing puzzle pieces. We are taking the journey with her and being supportive when she is ready to search for her Korean birth parents.

Vicki Smith, Las Vegas



Send Us Your Comments

We know you're a diversely opinionated bunch. Let's hear it. When a story touches you, angers you, or brings up a fond memory, we want to know. Please include your name and a daytime phone number. Our full policy on printing letters is posted on our website at magazine.unlv.edu.

Write: UNLV Magazine, 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89154-1024

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Anyone who's ever uttered the phrase "those who can't do, teach," has obviously never met Virko Baley. The Ukrainian-born professor joined UNLV in 1970, and has since written scores of scores, garnering critical praise along the way (*The Los Angeles Times* said of 'Dreamtime': "As chamber music goes, Baley's opus is grand."). In late June, Baley will complete the prestigious Petro Jacyk Distinguished Research Fellowship at Harvard University, where he is working on his opera, "Hunger (Red Earth)." Though a welcome surprise, the fellowship came at a bad time. He

spent the spring semester commuting cross-country to teach his UNLV graduate students. He and fellow music professor Jorge Grossman also organized the first Nevada Encounters of New Music (NEON) composers' symposium, a three-day festival of lectures, performances, and master classes. While he's not a fan of the time spent on airplanes ("At my age, it's not exactly ideal."), Baley maintains that "everything has its price, and it's the artist's concession to have to travel."

— As told to Maria Phelan

Keeping Score

Virko Baley, music composition professor

■ **Baby Mozart:** When I was still a baby, basically in the crib but standing up already, any time there was music playing on the radio, I would stop, listen, and wave my arms. Now, I could've been waving my arms for all kinds of reasons, but my mother decided that it was for the purpose of following the music, that I was listening and following the beat ... which I use as justification for my conducting career.

■ **I Want My MTV:** MTV was a huge revolution because it brought the message that music was commercially viable, and that in turn influenced everything else. Suddenly, \$1 million wasn't nearly a success. You had to have \$10 million and \$100 million.

■ **Under the Influence:** The list of influences gets huge at a certain point. There are different people for different reasons. The influence that contemporary music has had on me as a composer has been more in the area of jazz. Bebop for the most part, I find very, very interesting. And flamenco has been a very big part of my life. Recent rock and roll, I find basically boring.

■ **Learning to Compose:** When I realized music was going to be my life, it was two areas: piano performance and composition. I made the decision to only get a degree in performance, and that was under the influence of one of my heroes at that time — Bela Bartok, who I discovered when I was about 16. Bartok essentially stated that composition was not a subject that you could teach. My position on

that is yes, he's right, and yes, he's wrong. What he meant by that was the way you teach composition is by teaching music in-depth, and to do that, you really had to perform. He thought that it was not possible for someone to be a really first-rate composer without also doing a lot of performing. There are obviously exceptions to that rule, but I think on the whole, the rule is accurate.

■ **Youthful Thinking:** I always took composition in college, but that was not my degree, because I felt, in kind of a snobbish way, that people took composition as their major because they didn't have any other skill. We all have our moments of arrogance, and that was mine.

■ **Students:** If I had a favorite, I wouldn't admit it to you.

■ **Hitting the Woodshed:** The ideal thing is to set aside four hours a day for writing. I think it's difficult to be a professional, functioning composer without doing that. Still, before a deadline you end up writing 12, 14 hours a day to make up for the fact that you didn't do it along the way.

■ **Alternate Ending:** If I hadn't become a composer, I would've gone into filmmaking. I co-produced (*Swan Lake: The Zone*), which won an award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1989, and then I did music for *A Prayer for Hetman Mazepa* in 2001. I think each century has its primary art. The first

half of the 19th century it was music, and the second half I think the novel. In the 20th century I think it's film that became both the great art form and also the most popular.

■ **Short Pants:** I was 10, going on 11 when we landed on the American shores. I think the shock of the new isn't all that shocking, but you have to learn to deal with the social mores of where you are. I was 11 going on 12, and I decided to go to school — in Europe it would be very standard — in short pants. I was laughed at. I remember going back home taking the long way through the woods. I realized that in the United States, for a kid who was already past kindergarten to wear short pants was considered sissy, or something like that. I remember sitting there trying to figure out what you do and don't do, just in terms of social interaction.

■ **Long Pants:** At the twilight of my years, I see the composers conference and UNLV's composition program here as the important thing I want to do, to get it on solid ground. The program here wasn't really functional until about eight years ago, so it's very young and it's still going through some adolescent growing pains now — it's exchanging short pants for long pants.

■ **Nurturing New Ideas:** Well-established schools often get in the way because they're known as well-established schools. UNLV allows for new ideas, and I appreciate that immensely about the school.



**“The last group that I think has written
some really terrific songs is the Beatles.”**

Gerri Kodey

How You Rated Us

Association Redeveloping Programs, Benefits to Attract New Members

By Erin O'Donnell

UNLV alumni are proud of their school, and they want others to know it. They want to remain connected to the university, but they want an easy way to come back. They felt well-prepared to start their careers after college, and now they're looking for help making a change or moving up.

Those are just a few of the facts that the UNLV Alumni Association learned from the 2007 Alumni Attitude Study. Graduates of more than 75 universities were surveyed about their experiences as students and as alumni, and more than 1,000 from UNLV participated.

The two areas highlighted most were communication and benefits, says Keri Russell, associate director for membership marketing for the association. Alumni want regular updates about the university and the association, and they want benefits from membership that are relevant to their lives and location.

Be An Ambassador

This fall the UNLV Alumni Association will launch its membership ambassador program, heeding the call of members who say they want to be more involved but have limited time to volunteer.

Ambassadors are asked to participate in just three events a year such as football tailgates or business networking events. They share with event-goers ways to stay involved with UNLV.

Discounts Rock

UNLV Alumni Association members can save up to 25 percent off spa and salon services, food and beverage, and shopping at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas. Members also receive complimentary tickets and VIP line passes for select concerts and other entertainment. Special room rates are offered periodically. You must present your association membership card when accessing services.

Building a strong association on a traditional commuter campus can be tough, Russell says. "But the survey also showed that many people feel a strong connection to UNLV and the experiences they had here. They have a lot of pride, and they want to share that pride with others — they want to bleed Rebel red."

Almost 89 percent indicated that their current opinion of the university is either "good" or "excellent." And they are spreading the word. Sixty-five percent indicated that they promote the university regularly or all the time.

Getting the Word Out

New UNLV Alumni Association programs and more efficient processes in alumni relations are making it easier to stay connected. Recent changes have resulted in association membership doubling in the last year to 3,700 paid members out of 65,000 graduates. "With such diversity in our graduates and a very young alumni base, we can't take a one-size-fits-all approach," Russell says.

The survey helped show the association that it has to get members when they're young — even before graduation. That means branching into the hot frontiers of electronic communication. First will be a revamped website with social networking features, due to launch this summer.

The survey reinforced that the association is on the right track with efforts to improve communication. With the hiring of a full-time communicator, a more traditional print newsletter was revived this spring; the second edition is scheduled to come out this summer. An e-mail newsletter is also in the works.

This summer, all members will receive a revamped welcome kit. It includes a membership card and a brochure outlining the benefits of join-

ing the association — a direct response to the survey, which showed that many alumni were fuzzy on the perks of joining the association.

Building a Broad Benefits Program

Although the majority of UNLV alumni — 59 percent — live in the Las Vegas area, a relatively large number of them live out of state, compared to alumni from UNLV's peer universities.

"The feedback on the survey showed





that the out-of-staters want to be connected to the university, and they want some benefits to hit close to home," Russell says. "It's not surprising that somebody in Denver doesn't value two-for-one appetizers at Applebee's in Nevada."

So the association has spent the last year developing new benefits that can be used anywhere, such as travel discounts, deals on health care and AAA coverage, and free subscriptions to the Rebel Nation sports newspaper. Out-of-state alumni are

also being sought as volunteer ambassadors for the association and the university, and to set up alumni groups in their regions. Benefits are also going upscale. Soon alumni everywhere can join a wine club for discount shipments from wineries such as Ferrari-Carano Vineyards and Winery, owned by alumnus Glenn Carano.

Career Help After the First Job
UNLV survey respondents indicated that their extracurricular activities were tied to their major to a greater degree than alumni of other universities — 43 percent at UNLV compared to about 30 percent for

all schools surveyed. They tend to be more job-oriented, perhaps because UNLV is a young university with many commuter and nontraditional students. That information helps the association reach far-flung subgroups of alums, and is driving a focus on college-based ties to the association.

Alumni still want career support and guidance from their alma mater even years after graduation, Russell says. "Our somewhat older graduates are asking for emphasis on career development benefits. They want extra support for those early-to mid-career transitions a few years after graduation."

Today, all association members can tap into UNLV Career Services, which helps place students in full-time jobs and internships. The association also offers networking events and business forums throughout the year. But, Russell says, mid-career alumni may need more specialized offerings. The next step is for the association to evaluate how it can help graduates even years after they've left UNLV.

What You Said

Respondents provided a lot of thoughtful suggestions to the open-ended questions in the recent Alumni Attitude Survey. Many also shared their Rebel pride.

"(I'm) now living in the Midwest. The novelty of attending UNLV has always been a great icebreaker at interviews."

"I graduated from the college of my choice and try to promote UNLV as much as I can because I am proud of my degree — especially being the only Indian woman in gaming with a concentration in gaming management."

"Without the core classes, I never would have had such a wonderfully broad range of knowledge to follow me through my computer and film careers. I am better because of it."

"(Attending UNLV) was simply the best thing that ever happened to me. I now have a son who went all the way out to UNLV from New York and is now a freshman. I hear my '60s self in his voice and that makes me very happy."

"I still wear my school name all the time and if anyone engages me in a conversation, I give that person an earful ... although I'm actually quite tired of people asking me if I got a degree in gambling. I do my best to dispel that myth."

Talk to us: We want to know more about you. What's your biggest accomplishment? What obstacles have you overcome? Visit magazine.unlv.edu to take our newest survey on your life as a Rebel.

Student Brings Reading Program to Reservation

By Lisa Shawcroft

At 3 p.m. every day, doctoral candidate Amy Morris stands at the door of a tiny school in tiny Piñon, Ariz. The kids have just spent seven hours in school. Some face a two-hour bus ride home over roads that can get so muddy that school is cancelled. Rounding them up for extra tutoring can be a hard sell, but the effort is paying off.

Morris immersed herself in life on the Navajo Reservation to study the effects of a reading intervention program, called Next Steps, for Native American students. The students in this program have reading levels two or more years behind where they should be for their grade.

Receiving the President's Graduate Research Fellowship enabled Morris to live in Piñon, about three hours north of Flagstaff, while finishing her doctorate.

The one-on-one tutoring program has been successful in other schools with struggling readers as well as students learning English as a second language. This is the first time the program has been used at Piñon Elementary, where many of the students speak Navajo — not English — at home.

The program serves about 25 students in grades three through five who are tutored by a dozen parent volunteers trained and supervised by Morris. "Although the tutors have limited education and some haven't graduated from high school, they are able to be effective in helping these struggling readers," Morris says.

Students develop reading skills through word games and by reading older books, which Morris finds in thrift stores or buys

off the Internet. According to Morris, the books used to teach reading changed in the late 1980s, focusing more on creative stories rather than decodable text. Morris believes the older texts helps students build the reading skills they need. The books used in this program have controlled vocabulary and progressively difficult stories.

Changing Lives One at a Time

Because the project demands most of her time and attention, the fellowship she received has provided great financial relief. She is the first student from the College of Education to receive the fellowship. "If it weren't for the fellowship, it would be impossible for me to do this research. I wouldn't be out there," Morris says.

The fellowship pays tuition, program materials, and her living costs in Piñon, where she lives in housing for teachers located right behind the school. "Some of the perks are there is no pollution and no traffic," she says. "But there is not much to do."

The lack of leisure activities in town isn't a problem for Morris, who has more than enough work to keep her busy. During the school day, she plans lessons for each tutor to give to the students, meets with teachers, and does other school-related tasks. She individually tutors two students with especially low reading levels for 45 minutes daily.

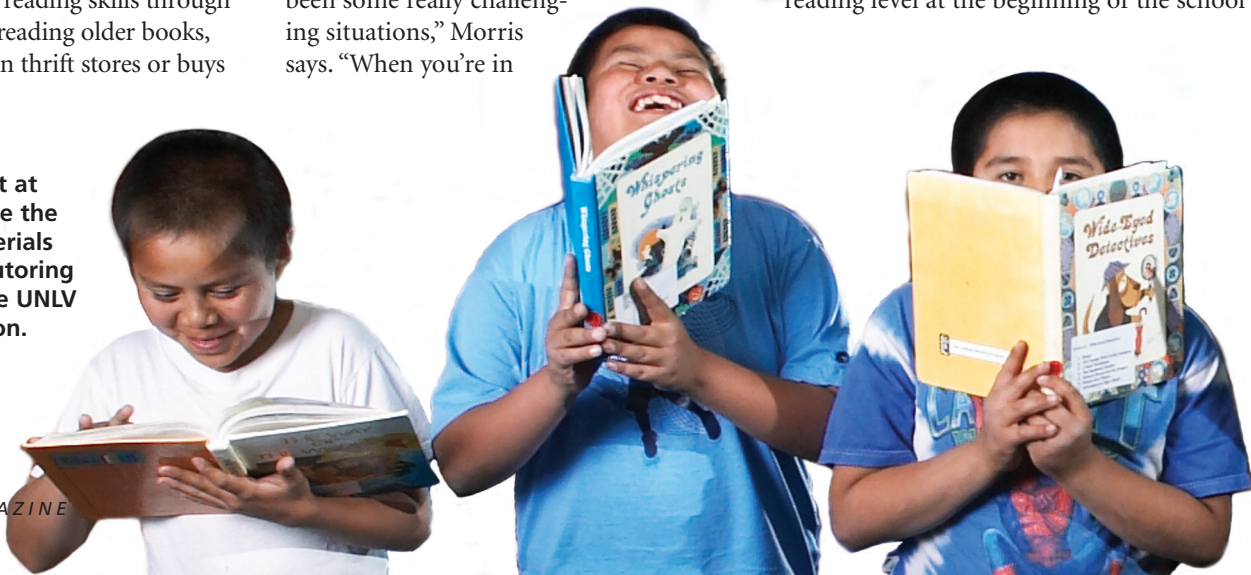
Some students get frustrated because of their lack of reading skills. "There have been some really challenging situations," Morris says. "When you're in



the fifth grade and read on a first-grade level, school is really not enjoyable for you."

For the most part, however, Morris finds that the students are excited about the program because they are seeing their success. One child came in at a kindergarten reading level at the beginning of the school

Used books bought at thrift stores provide the right learning materials for students in a tutoring program run by the UNLV College of Education.





The remote locale didn't dissuade Ph.D. candidate Amy Morris from spending a year researching a program for students struggling with literacy.

Brian Leddy

year, and half way through the program is already up to a second-grade level.

"I know it's changing their lives," Morris says. "They are getting help they wouldn't have gotten otherwise. They'll have the literacy they need to get a job and succeed in school, and maybe even go on to college."

Accelerating Research

Morris got involved with the Navajo community after talking with Jane McCarthy, interim dean of the College of Education. The college has worked with the Piñon schools for eight years under the Accelerated Schools Program. The school-reform program provides professional development to the teachers in 19 at-risk schools in Nevada, Utah, and Arizona.

On the Navajo Reservation, UNLV professors have worked with school staff

to develop a challenging curriculum. In 2006, a high school in the program had the highest percentage of academic gain of any reservation school.

"It's a different experience growing up on the reservation," Morris says. "Some of the students come to school with limited English skills, which makes it hard for them to learn to read. I got involved because the opportunity to work in that environment would be different and a chance to really help people."

The reading program runs through the end of the year, but Morris will stay to work with students during summer school and train her replacement to run the program next year.

After completing her doctorate next May, Morris plans to find a position where she can teach at the college level and continue to do research related to reading.

DONOR HONOR ROLL

The UNLV Foundation recognizes the following new members of its annual fund gift club programs for their contributions of unrestricted funds, their involvement in UNLV's development, and their advocacy on behalf of UNLV.

President's Inner Circle Gold

(Individual gifts of \$10,000 to \$24,999)

Elaine Wynn

President's Inner Circle

(Individual gifts of \$5,000 to \$9,999)

Maria and Joel D. Bergman

President's Associates Silver

(Individual gifts of \$2,500 to \$4,999)

Jennifer '94 and Daron '98, '01
Dorsey

Jimmy Lee '94

President's Associates

(Individual gifts of \$1,000 to \$2,499)

Anne and Glenn C. Christenson

Ellerie and Charles E. Cleveland

Georgina G. Corbalan '91

Sara and Jamie Costello

Theodore H. Dake '06

Susan '72 and Maddy Graves

Pamela '69, '70 and Kenneth '68
Hicks

Scott L. Phillips, '96

Michael A. Richmond

Geri and Michael '76 Rumbolz

Liz '03 and Robert Werner

Academic Corporate Council Gold

(Corporate gifts of \$10,000 to \$24,999)

Credit One Bank

G.C. Wallace

Harrah's Las Vegas

Konami Gaming Inc.

National Security Technologies, LLC

Rinker Materials

Academic Corporate Council

(Corporate gifts of \$5,000 to \$9,999)

Aristocrat Technologies Inc.

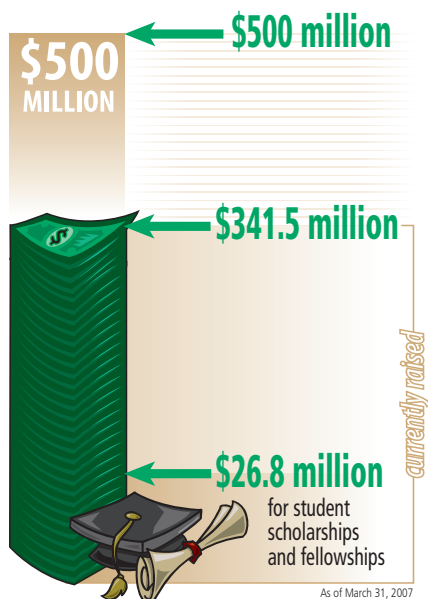
Colliers International

Development Funding Group Inc.

Nevada Commerce Bank

Silver State Bank

(Members joined from Dec. 21, 2006-June 6, 2007)



Private Support Helps Students Focus on Studies

The Invent the Future campaign will provide \$500 million for UNLV. Such private support helps the best and brightest students — both undergraduate and graduate — realize their dreams through a college education.

Scholarships and fellowships help UNLV attract top students and assist those who have financial need. Additionally, funds allow students to focus on their studies and fully experience university life, rather than pursue outside employment.

Student Leadership Program on Target

Shannon Richardson and Lindsay Beirne, both seniors at UNLV, had spent hours preparing the presentation. With their notes in hand and their experiences to guide them, they felt ready to ask Target Corp. to help bring the LeaderShape Institute to UNLV. But their passion got the better of them.

“There was one point where I sort of abandoned the outline in my head and just really talked about how I felt about LeaderShape and shared what a significant impact it had on me,” says Richardson, who had attended a national LeaderShape session in 2005.

Their enthusiasm was not lost on Target representatives Kimberly Kalmbach and Renee Pictor. In mid-February, Target responded with the largest corporate sponsorship the UNLV Division of Student Life has received for a development program. “We had such a positive experience with the students and staff at UNLV,” says Kalmbach.

Pictor, a district team leader at Target, adds that the program’s goals correlated well with the retail giant’s “expect more, pay less” philosophy.

LeaderShape is a nationally recognized leadership development program that takes students on a retreat for six days.

“Students are encouraged to practice new skills, give and receive feedback from peers and faculty, and risk new behaviors in a safe, supportive atmosphere,” says Scott Blevins, program coordinator for student leadership at UNLV. “Everyone at the LeaderShape Institute is a teacher and everyone is a learner.”

The costs of attending the national session — about \$1,000 — limits the number of students who can participate. With Target’s assistance, UNLV was able to join about 65 other institutions as a program host and expand the number of Rebels attending.

In May, UNLV held its LeaderShape session at Zion Ponderosa in Mt. Carmel, Utah, with nearly 50 students, selected faculty, and guest speakers from Target. Student participants represented all class levels and a wide range of ages. They were competitively selected in March based on applications and interviews.

“The University of Nevada, Las Vegas prides itself on developing ‘the leaders and best’ of tomorrow,” says Beirne, who graduates in December. “Imagine the impact that 49 UNLV LeaderShape graduates will have on campus.”

—Angela Sablan

YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

Grad Helps UNLV Hit Milestone

Ron Harbison, ’04 BS Business Administration, recently made the 50,000th gift to the Invent the Future campaign. When a student Rebel Ring Phonathon caller asked, Harbison pledged his support to the College of Business’s annual fund. He mailed his gift the following week; it was counted by the UNLV Foundation as the 50,000th gift to UNLV since the campaign began in early 2002.

“I grew up here, and I’ve always been a Rebel fan since I was a little kid,” says Harbison, a Green Valley High School graduate. “I knew I wanted to come to UNLV, and I am proud to continue my support as an alumnus.”

Harbison worked as a casino dealer while in college because the schedule and break times fit his studies. He liked the business and worked his way into management. “I took Casino Games Protections with Jeff Voyles as an elective one semester,” he says. “Jeff has a passion for casino life and was really able to open my eyes to all the excitement of the industry.”



R. Marsh Starks

Ron Harbison, a table games supervisor at Treasure Island, is one of nearly 6,000 alums who have contributed more than \$22 million in gifts and pledges through the Invent the Future campaign.



Gerri Kody

Gina Cassaro, left, and Alyssa Ventura help fellow undergraduates go beyond Google when searching for information. They work at UNLV Libraries through the Undergraduate Peer Research Coaches program.

Mentor Program Makes School Manageable

As a former English instructor, Flora Mason is familiar with UNLV students and the challenges they face completing their degrees. And as a member of the Libraries Advisory Board, she also knows that today's academic librarian is much more involved with teaching and collaborating on course design than librarians from even 10 years ago.

So when librarians Victoria Nozero and Diane VanderPol developed a pilot program to address retention of undergraduate students, Mason knew exactly how she could help.

She and her husband, Stuart, provided funds to allow the University Libraries to launch the Undergraduate Peer Research Coaches pilot program last year. The opportunity trains selected students as front-line research coaches for their peers.

Gina Cassaro, the first student recruited

for the program says, "What I've learned working in the Libraries already has made my classwork more manageable."

"One of the best ways to learn is to teach others. With this job, that opportunity is handed to us every day."

— undergraduate Gina Cassaro, on her job as a research coach

Studies have shown that college students who work in libraries, especially assisting in classrooms or at reference desks, strengthen their own research skills and academic performance. Participation in the program, which includes a librarian mentor, encourages the students to stay in school and finish their degrees.

"The most impressive benefit of the program is that it allows us to focus mainly

on graduating, while also doing meaningful work," says peer research coach Alyssa Ventura.

Undergraduate students who are overwhelmed by the resources available or who hesitate to ask questions of librarians can turn to their peers for help. The coaches assist with myriad tasks, including conducting library tours, assisting at the reference desks and during instruction courses, and guiding others through research quests.

Going forward, two additional first- or second-year students will join the peer research coaches group each fall. Libraries administrators hope that a focus on bright, enthusiastic students who are considered at risk of not finishing their degree will make a measurable impact on both the student mentors and the peers they will serve throughout the program.



Katherine Anne Porter: The Life of an Artist

by Darlene H. Unrue

University Press of Mississippi, 2005

The life and work of author Katherine Anne Porter has absorbed English professor Darlene H. Unrue for some two decades. The near-obsession has led to six books, numerous articles and presentations, and the creation of a body of scholarship that has resulted in many awards for Unrue, including designation as UNLV Distinguished Professor of English. Her latest book, *Katherine Anne Porter: The Life of an Artist*, won the prestigious Eudora Welty Prize for Excellence in Modern Letters.

Unrue, who came to UNLV in 1972 soon after completing

her Ph.D. at The Ohio State University, says her studies of Porter are a natural follow-up to her dissertation topic on “Henry James and Gothic Romance.”

“I noticed a similarity in their techniques,” Unrue recalls, “and I knew there had to be some connection.” Sure enough, she found that Porter loved James’ work and was influenced by it.

But that isn’t the only attraction Porter holds for the UNLV professor. “She had a fascinating life, a tragic life that she lived with great courage and fortitude,” Unrue says. A scandalous love life — she had five husbands — only adds to the fascination.

Following her subject’s wandering travels has taken Unrue to France, Italy, Mexico, and other countries. She discovered the kinds of intriguing coincidences that biographical researchers love. Unrue and her husband, fellow English professor John

Darlene Unrue's quiet study of the tumultuous life of an author resulted in Unrue's garnering a top award for biography writers.

Geri Kodey

Unrue, visited Guadalajara, Mexico, chasing details about Porter's life. "A friend had recommended that we stay at the Fenix (Hotel), which we did. Later I discovered a letter showing that Porter had actually stayed in the same hotel when she was in the city in 1922."

Porter was also a celebrated cook, so Unrue visited the famed Cordon Bleu cooking school in Paris to verify that Porter had, indeed, taken lessons there and to uncover some of the novelist's recipes.

Unrue's first book about Porter, *Truth and Vision in Katherine Anne Porter's Fiction*, was published in 1985. Now Unrue is editing a collection of letters — Porter was a prolific letter writer. Also in the works is a special volume of collected stories for the Library of America.

Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature (2006)

Women Composers: A Heritage of Song (2005)

by Carol Kimball
Hal-Leonard Corp.

Lovers of music accustomed to being thrilled by the vocal prowess of UNLV professor Carol Kimball may be surprised to learn that her passion for song flows through her fingertips onto the printed page. Two recently published books testify to that connection.

In the first book, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, Kimball has revised a work she originally completed in 1996. The first section contains her discussion of song styles and the connection between music and poetry. She describes the components of style: melody, harmony, rhythm, accompaniment, and texts.

The second — and major — part of the book lists composers and their songs, grouped by nationality. Each country's group is introduced with a short essay giving the particular characteristics of its music. Then Kimball gives a brief description and history of each song.

Song is widely used around the world as a text and reference for song literature classes.

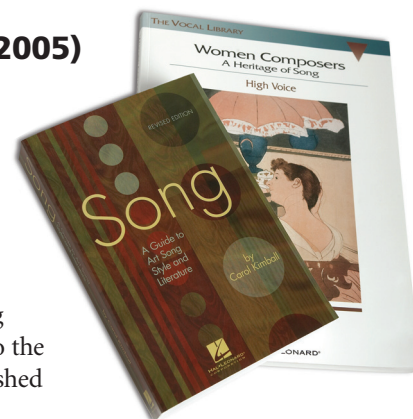
In *Women Composers*, Kimball continues her focus on the history of music and its composers. Twenty-two different women composers are featured, accompanied by the scores of up to five of their songs. "All of the women featured in *Women Composers* are strong, interesting people," she says. "They had a core strength. They were not free spirits in a flighty sense, but strong individual personalities."

Among the composers included in the anthology is Alma Schindler, who married fellow composer, Gustav Mahler. Kimball says Schindler was a "beautiful, beautiful woman." Her father painted portraits in Vienna, and she was exposed to a steady stream of the leading cultural figures of her day.

When Mahler proposed to Schindler, he set the condition that she stop composing and accept his music as hers. "Have you any idea how ridiculous and degrading such a competitive relationship would eventually become?" Mahler asked her. "You must become what I need," he insisted. Alma complied and they married in 1902. As a result, Kimball explains, "There are only a few of her songs, but they are very beautiful."

Another female composer and performer, Clara Wieck, married composer Robert Schumann who, unlike Mahler, supported his wife's creative efforts. Schumann recognized the challenges Wieck had balancing composing and domestic life: "Children and a husband ... do not go well with composition. Clara cannot work at it regularly, and I am often disturbed to think how many tender ideas are lost because she cannot work them out."

Felix Mendelssohn's sister Fanny Hensel also had a supportive



BOOKS ON THE BEDSIDE TABLE

Gregory Borchard, professor and journalism historian in the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies: *Freedom, Union and Power: Lincoln and His Party During the Civil War* by Michael S. Green, a Community



College of Southern Nevada professor; *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov; *John Charles Fremont and the Course of American Empire* by Tom Chaffin; *Highway 61: A Father-and-Son Journey through the Middle of America* by William McKeen; and *I Am Charlotte Simmons* by Tom Wolfe.

Joseph McCullough, Distinguished Professor of English: *The March* by E. L. Doctorow; *The Year of Magical Thinking*

by Joan Didion; *The Tender Bar* by J.R. Moehringer; and Alan Alda's *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed*.

Patricia Iannuzzi, dean of the UNLV Libraries, slipped a work-related book onto her bedside table, but she also has several choices with a lighter theme: *Information Literacy Collaborations that Work* by Trudi Jacobson and Thomas P. Mackey; *Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant*, *A Memoir* by Daniel Tammet; *The Italian American Experience in New Haven* by Anthony V. Riccio; *Stud: Adventures in Breeding* by Kevin Conley; and *Under Orders* by Dick Francis, a former jockey turned mystery writer.



husband even though her father, after educating her alongside his son, insisted that she needed to prepare for the “only acceptable job for a woman — a housewife.”

Kimball says 19th century society accepted some women composers better than they did others, and adds that it is “still hard for women” to make their way as composers.

Her favorite among the women in her book is Parisian Pauline Viardot. Kimball says Viardot was no beauty, but she epitomized La Belle Epoch, the period from 1871-1914 when composers, artists, and writers filled Paris with creative energy.

Kimball's own creative energy has been in high gear since she came to UNLV in 1972 to teach voice, opera, and music education and learned as soon as she arrived on campus in September that she was expected to produce an opera in November. “We worked very hard to get it together and used people in the community,” she recalls about the two one-act operas she produced. The initial UNLV Opera Theatre effort was so successful she returned the following year with “a beautiful production of *Hansel and Gretel*” done in cooperation with the theatre department, which had

just hired the late Ellis Pryce-Jones.

Since those early days, UNLV has added music faculty to handle the opera theatre, leaving Kimball time for her second love, writing. The recent recipient of the Charles Vanda Award for Excellence in the Arts says she is considering a new book that will discuss recital format and repertoire. “Recital as an art form is dying out,” she says. “People don't go to a recital for entertainment unless they know the performer.” She hopes the new book will help rebuild the audience for classical music.

Literature for Young Children, 5th Edition

by Joan I. Glazer and Cyndi Giorgis
Pearson Education, 2005

Although targeted to prospective teachers, *Literature for Young Children* offers much to parents wanting to develop their children's reading skills and appreciation of literature. Along with guidance on fostering a love of reading, parents will find help selecting the

most appropriate — and inspiring — books to read to their youngsters.

Selecting which children's books to highlight in this textbook keeps co-author Cyndi Giorgis busy. Publishers send the curriculum and instruction professor thousands of books to review each year. “I am constantly reading books to include in this text as well as ‘test driving’ them with children to determine their appeal as well as curricular possibilities,” she says.

The result is a textbook for teachers (and parents) to help preschoolers appreciate the wonders of the written word. The book shows ways in which carefully chosen literature can foster language, intellectual, personality, social, moral, and creative development.

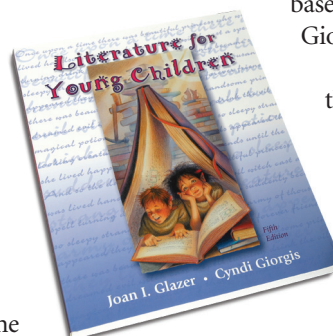
Given that she's a lifelong avid reader, it's not surprising that Giorgis chose to focus on literature when she became a teacher of teachers. “I believe there are rewards in learning how to read and one of them is having the opportunity to lose yourself in a good book. Books change, enhance, or extend our lives, thoughts, perceptions, and sometimes ideas. They allow us to learn, to empathize, and to grow.”

Giorgis gives due credit to her father for frequently reading to her. As a teenager she also volunteered in a public library program to read to young children. But, she added, the quality of the books she read was critical in her career path. It was “the pleasure in reading a good book that propelled me to the next one and provided an option for my professional life.”

Co-author Joan Glazer wrote the first edition of *Literature for Young Children* in 1981. Glazer is now retired and professor emeritus at Rhode Island College. Giorgis was asked by the publisher to revise the fifth edition and will be solely responsible for the book in the future. A major innovation

of the new edition is a section of web-based supplementary materials, Giorgis says.

She is already at work on the sixth edition, which will be published in 2009. It is the only work of its kind focusing on early childhood. As more and more states increase their pre-elementary programs, demand for the book is growing.



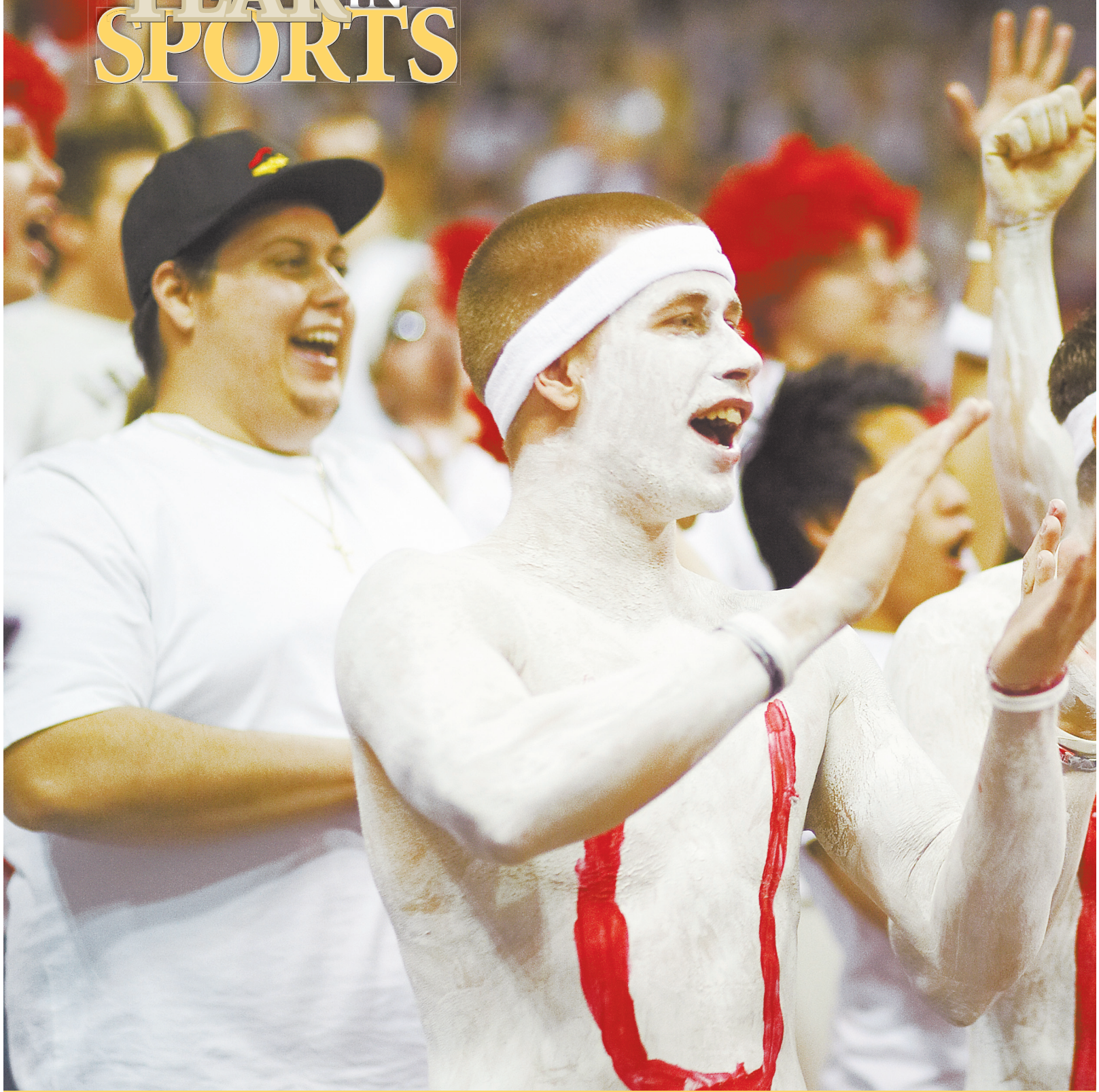
A full-page photograph of a basketball game. In the center, a player in a red UNLV jersey is in mid-air, performing a layup. His right arm is extended upwards, holding a basketball just above the hoop. His head is tilted back, and his mouth is open. In the lower-left foreground, another player in a red UNLV jersey is looking up at the ball. In the lower-right, a player in a white jersey is also visible, looking up. The background shows a large arena with spectators and a scoreboard. The title 'THE YEAR IN SPORTS' is overlaid in large, stylized letters. The word 'THE' is in white, 'YEAR' is in a light beige, and 'IN SPORTS' is in a bright yellow. The letters have a slight 3D effect with shadows.

THE YEAR IN SPORTS

Rebels guard Wink Adams makes a layup during UNLV's NCAA Tournament game against Oregon.

THE BASKETBALL TEAM'S NCAA TOURNAMENT RUN WASN'T THE ONLY HIGHLIGHT FROM THE 2006-07 SEASON

THE YEAR IN SPORTS



REBEL BASKETBALL FANS PACKED THE THOMAS & MACK CENTER AT LEVELS NOT SEEN IN YEARS. AND WITH GOOD REASON: HEAD COACH LON KRUGER RETURNED HIS TEAM TO A NATIONAL PROMINENCE IT HADN'T ENJOYED SINCE THE EARLY '90S.



How sweet it was



AMONG THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: A 30-7 RECORD; THE TEAM'S FIRST NATIONAL RANKING IN 14 YEARS; A CONFERENCE TOURNAMENT TITLE; AND THE PROGRAM'S FIRST TRIP TO THE NCAA TOURNEY'S SWEET 16 IN 16 YEARS.

THE YEAR IN SPORTS

The 2006-07 year offered all the best of college sports — major wins, surprising upsets, and a few heartbreaks.

In his third season as head basketball coach, Lon Kruger brushed aside pre-season predictions of mediocrity. The Runnin' Rebels won the conference title, reached the Sweet 16 in the NCAA Tournament, and finished with a No. 14 *USA Today* ranking. Kruger extended his contract through 2012 and then landed a strong class of recruits, including a highly touted 7-footer.

The women's soccer team upset ranked teams in tournament matches. The softball team narrowly missed a post-season berth. The men's swimming and diving team captured its third straight conference title. And both tennis teams advanced to the NCAA tournament.

"Elena and Kristina will still go down as one of — if not the — best doubles teams UNLV has had."
— women's tennis coach Kevin Cory



TENNIS

MATCHED UP

Junior **Elena Gantcheva** (left) and freshman **Kristina Nedeltcheva** became only the second team in UNLV history to win a match at the NCAA Doubles Championship. They stunned the third-seeded team from national champion Georgia Tech.

Both from Bulgaria, Gantcheva and Nedeltcheva finished the season ranked 18th nationally with a 24-4 record, including going 6-2 against ranked opponents. Both were named all-conference in singles and doubles. Gantcheva was named the MWC Co-Player of the Year.

TRACK & FIELD

A REBEL RETURNS

With her victory in the 1,500 meters, **Charlotte Browning** (right) became the first Rebel to win an event at the MWC Outdoor Track & Field Championships since 2005. The freshman from Addlestone, England, finished eighth at the NCAA West Regional. She was selected all-MWC, named conference Freshman of the Year, and garnered all-West region honors.



SOCCER

NO. THAT'S NOT ZIDANE

Senior midfielder/defender **Cole McCool** (right) and the men's soccer team had a brutal season, finishing with a 1-15-2 record. The team's lone win was an upset of the University of Denver, which was then ranked 21st. Next year should be better with all-Mountain Pacific Sports Federation players **Lamar Neagle**, **Nicholas Paterson**, and **Mason Trafford** returning.



"These undersized, scrappy and defensive-minded Rebels have resurrected a program that fell to the wayside."
— *USA Today*



MEN'S BASKETBALL

DEFENSIVE STOPPERS

Joel Anthony (above) says a blocked shot energizes the team and gets the home crowd going. On the road, it can silence the crowd and change momentum. "Timing is everything," he says. "You have to stay far enough away from the player to avoid the foul, but close enough to get the ball."

With 2.9 blocks per game, Anthony was ranked 11th nationally and set the MWC and UNLV records for most blocks in a game with 13 against TCU on Feb. 7. He was named the conference's Defensive Player of the Year.

Junior **Sequoia Holmes** garnered the same honors for the women's team with averages of 2.62 steals, 6.3 rebounds, and 14 points per game.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

FATHER & SON

UNLV point guard **Kevin Kruger** (right) took advantage of a short-lived NCAA rule that applied to graduates who had a year of eligibility remaining. Kruger transferred from Arizona State and worked on a master's degree while playing for his father, coach **Lon Kruger** (below).



"I may be small, but I can jump."
— freshman goalie **Alicia Lugo**



WOMEN'S SOCCER

BIG SURPRISE IN SMALL PACKAGE

UNLV's post-season hopes dimmed when starting goalie **Ciera Nero** (above) went down with a season-ending injury at the MWC Tournament. Enter freshman **Alicia Lugo** (left). At 5'5", Lugo falls well short of most NCAA goalkeepers. "I thrive on people thinking I can't get it done," she says.

Lugo and the Rebels went on to defeat Wyoming 1-0. Starting for the first time in six weeks, she led UNLV to upset wins over 19th-ranked BYU and 10th-ranked Utah in the championship game. The team brought home the conference title for the second year in a row.

"It makes the team easy to coach when (student-athletes) are successful academically; they are responsible and committed." — volleyball coach Allison Keeley



TOP MARKS

- Freshman baseball player Kyle Kretchmer was named UNLV's Most Outstanding Male Scholar-Athlete (3.91 GPA, kinesiology sciences) while junior swimming captain Kim Bonney took the honors among female athletes (3.89 GPA, accounting and management).
- 15 football players were named to the academic all-MWC team; sophomore defensive tackle Jacob Hales was selected to *ESPN The Magazine's* Academic All-District 8 first team (3.72 GPA, Spanish).
- Seven women's volleyball players were selected academic all-MWC.
- 11 women's soccer players earned academic all-MWC honors.

**At presstime, academic MWC results only available for fall sports.*

HONORABLE MENTIONS

- The men's swimming and diving team won its third consecutive MWC Championship. Sophomore Johan Claar pulled a monumental upset in the 1,650-meter freestyle, defeating the three-time defending champion by 0.46 seconds.
- Women's volleyball finished 20-10, the second most wins in team history since the sport was reinstated in 1996. Maria Aladjova, Lauren Miramontes, and Jada Walker (top left) earned all-league honors.
- Men's tennis advanced to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1999 with its conference championship win. Sophomore Elliot Wronski, all-league in singles and doubles, beat seven ranked opponents this season, including the then-third-ranked Tony Paul of Wake Forest. Wronski was named the Mountain Region Player to Watch by the International Tennis Association. Owen Hambrook was named the ITA Mountain Region Head Coach of the Year.
- Sophomore softballer Christie Robinson was named the MWC Pitcher of the Year. Lonni Alameda earned the conference's Softball Coach of the Year honors as the Rebels went 37-27.

THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR

- Despite a 2-10 record, the football team ended the season by beating Air Force. Coming back this fall is **Ryan Wolfe (left)**, the MWC Freshman of the Year and a first-team all-league pick.
- Women's basketball finished with a 14-15 record, but ended the regular season on a four-game winning streak, including wins over BYU and New Mexico. The Lady Rebels return all-league performers Shamela Hampton and Sequoia Holmes.
- The Hustlin' Rebels finished with a 24-36 record, the team's second straight losing season. Baseball coach Buddy Gouldsmith looks to return the team to its winning ways. The Rebels captured three straight MWC titles from 2003 to 2005.



It's a busy Friday afternoon, and Doug Unger stands in his office, pulling files from a box at a steady pace.

"The Turkey War was a wrong turn in leaving the Land, and I came back to the idea later," he says, flipping through files in rapid succession. The files are from *The Turkey War*, his only book for which all the notes and drafts fit in a single, albeit fairly large, box. "I did a full first draft, then a second, a third, an edited fourth draft — there were more," he trails off.

"Working on a novel is the marathon of writing. It's like an ongoing construction project. It takes years."

He is in a hurry. In the next half hour, he will meet with a student who is considering enrolling in the English department's master of fine arts program. The next several weeks will bring a flurry of meetings with the admissions committee and sessions with current graduate students about to defend their theses.

Once the school year ends, it would seem a flurry of meetings with the admissions committee and sessions with current graduate students about to defend their theses.

and many of the university's other faculty members may leave their positions to pursue their own research projects or to work on their own books.

It's time to re-evaluate the university's research program. The next several weeks will bring a flurry of meetings with the admissions committee and sessions with current graduate students about to defend their theses.

As UNLV works to elevate its research program, it's also looking for ways to attract more students to its research program. They may be looking for ways to attract more students to its research program.

through continuing

Right-Brain Research

You probably get how pivotal science professors are to UNLV achieving prominence as a research university, but how do our artists, musicians, and writers fit into the goal?

Stories by Maria Phelan
Photos by Geri Kodey

It's a busy Friday afternoon, and Doug Unger stands in his office, pulling files from a box at a steady pace.

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field. But when it comes to those laboring in the fine and liberal arts, the research might seem a bit vague to outsiders.

Jeff Koep, dean of the College of Fine Arts, says his faculty

this activity would die down, but not for Unger and many of the university's other faculty. Classes may let out, but for these professors, it's time to rev up the other half of their work — their creative pursuits.

As UNLV works to elevate its status as a research university, it's probably clear how that applies to professors in the science colleges. They must demonstrate their excellence through continuing research in labs and in the field. But when it comes to those laboring in the fine and liberal arts, the idea of research might seem a bit vague to outsiders.

Jeff Koep, dean of the College of Fine Arts, says his faculty is evaluated along the same criteria as professors in any other college — just replace the word “research” with “creative activity.”

“The creative activity for our faculty is a mirror of what is thought of as traditional research,” he says. “If you're a scientist, you do research on an aspect of science to show that you know your craft and you're continuing to work at it. If you're a singer, you perform. It's the same with acting, or filming a movie, or creating visual art.”

And if you're a creative writer, well, you write. Unger, for example, is the author of four novels, including *Leaving the Land*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

“You get very busy sometimes and it's hard to balance,” he says. “But it's important to have active, established artists working with developing artists — it's how we all learn and grow.”

In the Eye of the Beholder?

For Chris Hudgins, chair of the English department, the value of professors like Unger who have been successful at creative activity is immense. He believes the most accomplished professors will bring in great crops of students. “They're the ones we want teaching our next generation of writers,” he says. “Their excellence will have a huge impact when they're teaching in classrooms.”

Koep stresses that the faculty's accomplishments are as diverse as the crafts they are constantly honing. When professors win major awards or are hired for a prestigious job against a national pool of applicants, they prove they know what they are doing.

“And that brings recognition and value to the university,” he says.

For the university's practicing artists, the emphasis is on producing quality work. But how is the quality of an artistic endeavor measured?

Though each professor's work is unique, there's the prestige factor. Is the gallery, publisher, or theater company that exhibits or accepts the work or artist well-known, Hudgins and Koep ask. Reviews are another strong indicator. Was the professor's work noticed by a major publication? Did the reviewer say something positive?

When judging quality, Koep also considers the amount of time that went into the work. “It might take two years to turn out a book, and then we'll look at the publisher, and how many copies were printed,” he says. “Based on that we can say, ‘This is good, it accounts for two or three years' worth of work.’”

A perfect example, Hudgins says, is professor Richard Wiley's newest book, *Commodore Perry's Minstrel Show*. It was one of the first to be published in the new Michener Series at the University of Texas Press, and has already received a quality review in *Publisher's Weekly*, a leading trade publication for booksellers, publishing companies, and librarians.

Getting noticed does more than bring a professor esteem. It also heightens the department's reputation. In the end, it boils down to bringing in students. “And students want to go where the good faculty is,” Koep says.

Wooing Students

Walking into a classroom without the cachet that comes from playing would be daunting to jazz bassist Tom Warrington. “I wouldn't want to learn to do heart surgery from a doctor who never operated,” he says.

Warrington splits his time each week between teaching in Las Vegas and performing professionally in Los Angeles. Most of his live gigs are in Los Angeles, and Warrington said from time to time his students make a trip to California to hear a live performance. It's an experience that generally leaves both Warrington and the student invigorated. “You have to practice what you preach,” the music professor says. “Students want to respect the people they study with, they want to hear you play. It's important that you keep growing and

learning as a professor — that you stay hungry for knowledge.”

For recent UNLV music education graduate Nick Waters, who now teaches band and percussion at Foothill High School, the professors who had the biggest impact on him continually passed along lessons learned through their own creative activities.

“When we played a piece that originated in Mexico, or somewhere else in the world, it helped that Dean (Gronemeier, director of percussion and assistant dean of fine arts) could share his worldly knowledge when he was teaching the piece,” Waters says. “Because he's traveled so much to play percussion, he could tell us about where the music came from, different cultures, all of those aspects of music that go beyond notes on paper.”

Tony LaBounty, associate director of bands, has been one of Waters' biggest influences. LaBounty's creative activities include conducting music clinics and judging competitions throughout the country. “Because (LaBounty) has so much experience teaching, he's got a lot in his bag of tricks that he uses to teach us to be better teachers, and that's very important,” Waters says.

Francisco Menendez, chair of the department of film, says as part of his advanced directing workshop, students get the opportunity to work with professional actors and professional scripts. The students also participate in workshops where they direct scenes, then receive critical feedback and editing help.

Universities generally take a one-man-band approach to student filmmaking, Menendez says, but in UNLV's film program, students work together with professors to create films as a group.

“The idea is for students to get to work with me and other professors and artists-in-residence to create real films,” he says. “They work on every aspect of the film — from directing to editing to all the technical things — with professionals, so they see how films are made and they participate in the process.”

Glenn Casale, head of directing in the theatre department, says every aspect of his professional work outside the university is beneficial because it's experience he can bring back to the classroom. Continually working on productions outside of the



Glenn Casale

Head of directing in the theatre department's MFA program

When Glenn Casale joined the theatre faculty in 1999, it was a homecoming of sorts — the celebrated director had received his master's degree from the university 20 years before. He had just directed the Tony Award-nominated version of *Peter Pan* starring Cathy Rigby (the production went on to win an Emmy Award). He also directed national productions of *Dragapella* (nominated for Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel awards), *Anything Goes*, and *The Threepenny Opera*, and has branched into television, directing episodes of *The Wayans Brothers Show* and *The Faculty*.

Casale has spent the school year teaching and directing performances by the Nevada Conservatory Theatre at UNLV, including its most recent *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

The much-in-demand Casale will be taking a sabbatical in the coming year to direct productions in New York, Berlin, The Netherlands, and Spain, as well as Beijing as part of the opening ceremonies for the 2008 Olympics.

He'll bring those experiences back to campus to share with students. "What I like about directing is that it's an ever-changing business," he says. "At the university level, I have a chance to take everything that I've learned about that business and share it with future directors."

university allows him to see what's evolving in the ever-changing theater and entertainment businesses.

"By going out and seeing what's evolving out there, I can bring all of that fresh information back to my students," he says.

Graduate students sometimes accompany Casale when he leaves the university to direct a new production. The students work on the productions as interns, which allows them to leave the university with a degree as well as credit as an intern on a New York or international production.

"These aren't small productions," he says. "Most of the productions I work on are big shows with budgets of \$2 (million) to \$12 million, so they are getting serious professional experience."

Balancing Acts

Striking a balance between creative activity and time in the classroom hasn't been hard for Warrington. He just has to be willing to say no to some things or be prepared to

work harder to make up for time he spends on creative activities.

"I try not to take on other things during the school year, unless it's something I think will pay dividends for the school," he says.

For Casale, finding that balance also has been a smooth process, and one that has benefited his students.

"I've been directing for 20 years, so when I took the job teaching, I made it clear to all of those people I'd been working with professionally that if they wanted me to direct, summer and winter break would be the times I was available," he says.

Of course, Casale does take the occasional directing job during the school year, and in those cases, his graduate students end up with internships.

Claudia Keelan, the director of creative writing for the English department and editor of *Interim*, the university's annual literary review, says she's gotten used to writing whenever she can, so much so that interruption and working on the fly have become part of her creative activity.


"I write in the car at stoplights a lot," she says with a smile. "Everyone thinks poets need a lot of solitude to work. If that was true, I'd never write anything."

And as creative activity encourages the university's professors to function as working artists, that creativity, in and of itself, can also benefit students. Unger says he was influenced by both the creative activity and the creative atmosphere his professors provided as he worked on his graduate degree.

Now he hopes to create the same environment for his own students.

"When I work with the grad students, I make it very one-on-one, and I try to make it a workshop where everyone is equal by sometimes handing out a sample of something I'm working on for the students to critique," Unger says. "It's something I learned from John Irving when I was a student at the Iowa Writer's Workshop, and I think it worked. I think artists, whether they are new to their craft or established, thrive in an atmosphere where everyone feels they can be creative together."





Tom Warrington

Assistant professor of music, jazz studies

A composer and bassist, Tom Warrington has been a prolific writer and recording artist since graduating from the University of Illinois with a master's degree in composition.

Warrington says the teaching and performing aspects of his career as a musician are thoroughly intertwined. "I tell my students that the learning process never stops," he says. "You're always striving to better yourself, to learn more and stay current, and then teach what you have learned. If you disengage yourself from that, you start to decline."

In the mid-1970s, Warrington moved to New York, where he spent more than two years as a member of the Buddy Rich Band, then toured Europe extensively as a clinician and performer. His name appears on playbills alongside jazz greats Stan Getz, Dave Liebman, and Hank Jones.

He has lived in Los Angeles for past 20 years, and during that time has performed with Freddie Hubbard, Mose Allison, Arturo Sandoval, and Peggy Lee. He has contributed to more than 100 recordings in a range of styles, from jazz to pop to television and movie scores, including a turn as a featured artist on the *Little Man Tate* soundtrack.

Though he's currently based in Los Angeles, Warrington spends three to four days a week teaching in Las Vegas, and has published nine instruction books, including his most recent, the beginning bass method book and CD *Crawl Before You Walk*. In 2005, his Tom Warrington Trio released its most recent album *Back Nine*.

Last summer he toured New Zealand and performed a series of concerts in Edinburgh, Scotland. This year he will return to New Zealand to recruit students.

Claudia Keelan

Associate professor and director of UNLV's creative writing program

Known in poetry circles for her fragmentary, lyrical style, Claudia Keelan specializes in creative writing and poetry criticism, and currently serves as the English department's only full-time poetry professor.

Her inspiration comes from her daily life and reading. "A lot of times, things that make me mad make me write."

Most recently, her anger prompted "Everybody's Autobiography," a poem that traces the life of her late father and the role of oil companies in Westerners' "enslavement to the gasoline combustion engine." The poem was featured in the January/February 2007 issue of *The American Poetry Review*, where Keelan shared the cover with early 20th century writer Gertrude Stein. Says fellow English professor and fiction writer Doug Unger, "That would be like putting me next to Hemingway. It indicates how important Claudia Keelan and her poetry are considered on the American scene — as new and cutting edge as the best of the Modernists of the 1920s and 1930s were in their time."

Keelan takes inspiration as it comes and doesn't fear the occasional writer's block. "As a writer, everything in your life is part of writing, and there is a lot of processing that goes into that," she says. "So even if I'm not writing, I try to not put too much pressure on myself because the whole time I'm processing life for my next poem."

A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Keelan has published five books of poetry — *Refinery*, *The Secularist*, *Utopic*, *The Devotion Field*, and the letterpress chapbook *Of & Among There Was a Locus(t)*. She recently completed a collection of elegies tentatively titled *Missing Her*. She also serves as the editor of *Interim*, the university's annual literary review, which recently became available online at www.interimmag.org.





In The Genes

A Tedious Hunt Leads to Genetic Breakthrough for UNLV Alumna

By Beth English

Though most people expect a baby to bring profound changes to his parents, few expect him to launch a 14-year-old cousin's career. But the birth of Hiba Risheg's cousin, Zied, led to a breakthrough career in genetics.

Zied was born with tuberous sclerosis complex (TSC), a genetic disorder characterized by developmental delay or mental retardation, seizures, and lesions of the skin and nervous system.

"We'd never heard of TSC before or had anyone in the family with any form of seizures," says Risheg, '97 BS Biological Sciences, in her laboratory office. "My mother and I started researching it. It was an eye-opener."

The experience prompted her parents, Samira and Mohammed Risheg, to seek graduate degrees and work with children just like Zied in the Clark County School District. Their daughter, however, took a different approach. She wanted to understand the genetics behind the disorder. Years later, she has her answer. TSC can be inherited, but most often results from a spontaneous genetic mutation. "It's something that just happens. Just by chance," Risheg says.

But in searching for answers for her family, Risheg has found answers for a number of other families. In April, she was credited with discovering the gene that causes a form of mental retardation called FG syndrome. It's a breakthrough for scientists and families who have been searching for the gene responsible for the condition for more than 40 years.

Sequence of Events

At 29, Risheg has accomplished more than most people twice her age. She started at

UNLV at the remarkable age of 16 while living at home. As an undergrad, she admits, "I wasn't the best at genetics in college. I initially had trouble relating it to human genetics." By 18, she had finished her undergraduate degree in cellular and molecular biology with a minor in chemistry. The following year, she stayed at UNLV in the biological sciences master's program. That year was an important one for her.

She began teaching students under the guidance of her mentor, biological sciences professor Roberta Williams. The

experience is one that was both comical and enlightening.

"Most students were older than me. I think they were stunned," she says, smiling. "But that experience shaped me. I wanted to teach. I wanted everyone to be as excited about biology as I was."

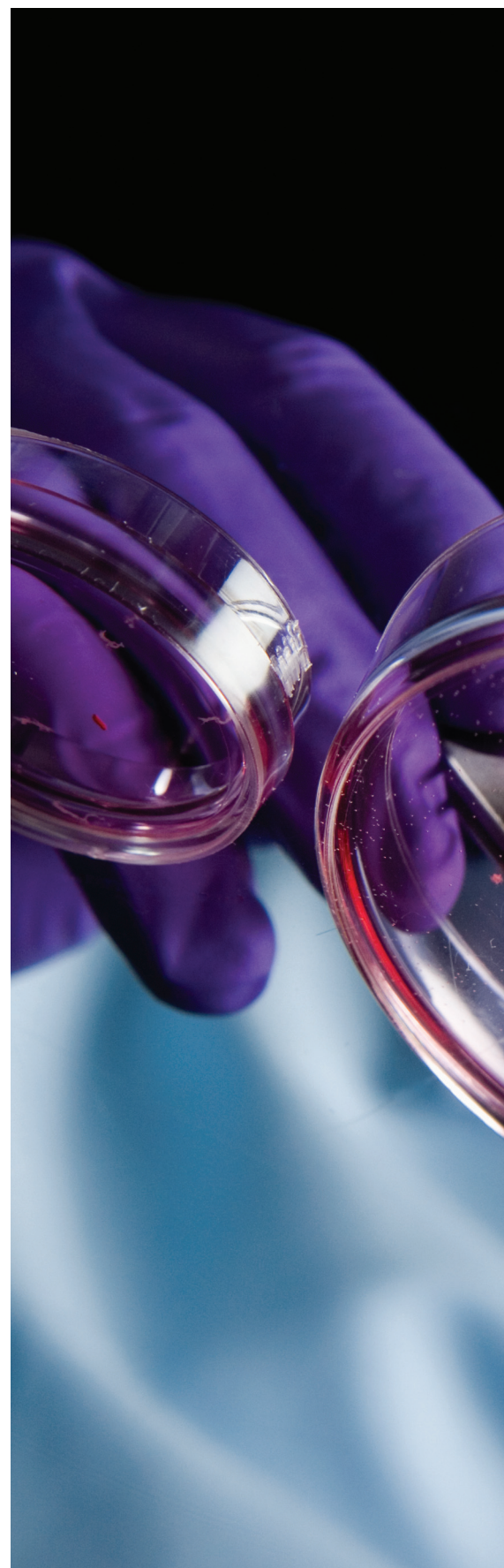
A year later she was ready to leave the comfort of Las Vegas for the University of Alabama at Birmingham's doctorate program in medical genetics, where she spent the next four and a half years. She began to catch up to her peers in age. But still, she didn't fit the mold of a staid researcher. "I was giggly, and I wanted to mess around in the lab," she remembers with a laugh.

Then, she landed at the Greenwood Genetic Center in South Carolina for a post-doctoral fellowship. The nonprofit institute provides clinical services, conducts research, and trains individuals with medical or doctorate degrees seeking specialized academic, clinical, and research careers in human and medical genetics.

Risheg focused on two areas of study — clinical cytogenetics (the study of chromosomes and the diseases that result from structural abnormalities) and molecular genetics (the branch of genetics that deals with the expression of genes by studying DNA sequences). The difference between

"It's big from a genetics standpoint."

— Hiba Risheg, on discovering the gene responsible for a form of mental retardation





UNLV alumna Hiba Risheg examines a chorionic villus sample at her laboratory at GeneCare Medical Genetics Center in Chapel Hill, N.C. Her work involves prenatal diagnosis of genetically inherited diseases.

Chris English

the two areas is one of degrees. A single band on a chromosome contains hundreds of genes. “Molecular genetics is as small and as exact as you can get. You’re looking for a change in gene sequence.”

Center directors were interested in HOPA/MED12, a gene on the Xq13 chromosome suspected of being related to mental retardation. But sequencing the very large gene would be months of tedious work. When no one else stepped forward, Risheg volunteered. “Scientists have been looking at this gene for years but no complete sequencing has been done on a population of mentally retarded individuals — mostly because of the breadth of the undertaking.”

During the year she spent on that one gene, she admits she sometimes wanted to move on to something else. The work was tedious, though. *Why can’t I get myself a fun job*, she wondered to herself. After all, no one else had had luck with that gene. In the quiet of the lab, she used to joke with herself: “Hiba HOPA she finds a mutation.”

“It’s like you’re on a hunt. So I sequenced, I sequenced, I sequenced.”

Then, with just three months left in the fellowship, she found it.

Two samples showed the same sequencing change and analysis yielded an apparent link between a base change (R9261W) within the gene of two males with mental retardation and FG syndrome. FG syndrome is an X-linked form of mental retardation first described in 1974 in five related males with mental retardation, relatively large heads, diminished muscle tone, and certain facial characteristics.

Then she located five additional FG syndrome families with the same R961W mutation in HOPA/MED12. The next step was to test samples from the general population.

“No one in the general population had it. I did over a thousand samples.”

That’s when her fellow researchers got excited. “It’s big from a genetics standpoint.”

Her findings were quickly confirmed in conjunction by scientists at the Greenwood Genetic Center and at other institutions in the United States and Europe. In April, the research was published in the academic journal *Nature Genetics*.



Chris English

Hiba Risheg

**Cytogenetics Laboratory Director
'97 BS Biological Sciences**

Starting college at such a young age:

Risheg’s parents took her to Amman, Jordan, during her high school years so she could learn the language and appreciate the culture of her family. She spent three years there and completed the British equivalent of a high school diploma before returning to Las Vegas.

UNLV Family Tree:

Hiba Risheg is one of a long line of Rebels. Her mother, **Samira Risheg**, earned three degrees: '85 BS Hotel Administration, '96 MS Special Education, and '03 EdD Education Leadership. Her father, **Mohammed H. Risheg**, has three: '85 BS-BA Economics, '86 MBA, and '01 M.Ed. Special Education. He taught statistics and economics as an adjunct faculty member and worked for the Center for Business and Economic Research (Hiba’s first job was at the center as a data entry person). Two of Hiba’s uncles earned degrees at UNLV the same year: **Khalil Risheg**, '84 BS Electrical Engineering; and **Munzer Risheg**, '84 BS Civil Engineering, the father of Zied (see main story).

With the causative gene isolated, the syndrome can be better defined and diagnostic testing can be offered. All the families that are known to have FG were invited to Greenwood Genetic Center to be re-evaluated and tested this spring. Their blood samples will be important as scientists begin studies on how the mutation alters gene function and affects the protein.

With all the attention the discovery is getting, Risheg is modest about her role. “It’s not just about how smart you are,” she says. “It’s about how determined you are to finish.”

Life After Research

Six months ago, Risheg became clinical cytogenetics laboratory director at GeneCare Medical Genetics Center in Chapel Hill, N.C.

She oversees an 18-member laboratory staff that primarily conducts prenatal chromosome analyses and molecular testing. Her lab grows cells from an amniocentesis, looks at the chromosomes, and determines if a syndrome is present. They also do chromosome analysis on people who already have a chromosomal translocation and worry about passing that on to their future children.

“In graduate school, you’re so busy doing the work you don’t realize how important it is until you’re actually in the seat and signing someone’s report. People’s decisions are based on what you see.”

Risheg pulls out a gel sheet of chromosome types and points to various pairs and talks about what they are looking for. She patiently explains how chromosomes contract and expand and how that sometimes affects what shows up on the DNA sample.

“You need to make sure you’re the best at what you do, so that at the end of the day you’re not going home worried about a sample.”

The desire to teach is still under the surface. She started a monthly “let’s get together and talk about a syndrome” group and strives to be accessible to her staff.

She enjoys that where she works provides a service to people. And it’s a place that allows her the freedom of life after hours in a way that academia would not. But after the experience of making a genetic discovery, research may not be completely out of her future.

“It’s a very sweet reward. I’m proud of myself for sticking with it.”

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt and khaki pants, is climbing a steep, reddish-brown rock face. She is wearing a climbing harness and has a blue bag attached to it. She is looking up and to the right, reaching for a hold. The background shows a clear blue sky and a rocky landscape.

Are You Living Life in **Full** **Color?**

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The Surreal Life of a Director

Wolfgang Muchow sits beside a yellow submarine suspended over a backyard pool. The 33-year-old is filming a documentary about eccentric neurosurgeon Lonnie Hammargren, and he can hardly believe his luck. When he heard of the former lieutenant governor's plan to hold his own funeral, Muchow knew he had the makings of a good film. "It has everything. I just have to turn the camera on and be there."

After UNLV, Muchow went on to get a graduate degree at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Then Las Vegas — with its rich backdrops and stories such as Hammargren's — called him back. Two years ago he formed PixelVision Productions to realize his dream of being a commercial and documentary filmmaker.

"I have knowledge of this city and training from New York," Muchow says. "I'm working to put those two things together."

At times his job is surreal, like when he watched Hammargren be fitted for a death mask in a Tarzan loincloth. "It beats working," he quips.

Still, Muchow has a business to run. "With filmmaking I know what to do," he says. "But when it comes to networking and drumming up new work, that's not something I'm trained in."

The work is coming, though. He's produced music videos and a series of shorts for the Runnin' Rebels. He is in talks

with HBO about his documentary on Hammargren, and he recently completed filming documentaries on the Stardust Hotel and Walking Box Ranch. Muchow and partners are launching El Camino International, a branded entertainment production company to develop episodic commercials for local hotels.

Challenging the Expected

A sense of playfulness is evident in Muchow's work. His company, PixelVision Productions, takes its name from a toy camcorder produced by Fisher-Price in the 1980s. "It was great technology at the time," he says. "It shoots on an audio cassette, which is so bizarre, but I think the raw and gritty image is gorgeous."

More than inspiration, technology is a central part of Muchow's job. "The digital revolution has and is continuing to change the face of this business. Something that was out of reach is now in reach for almost everybody," he says. "It's an exciting time to be a filmmaker."

Muchow, a native Las Vegas, is drawn to the city's history and characters. "People have different thoughts about what this city is. Everyone has a different idea," he says. "I'm interested in trying to distort or play with those stereotypes in my movies."

So he challenges the expected, as he did in his short film *Leo Las Vegas*, which screened at the CineVegas Film Festival. "I didn't have one shot of the Strip in

that film even though it is about a Vegas lounge singer," Muchow says. "Every film about Vegas has a shot of the Strip, and there is more to life here than that."

"I want films to show me a part of life that I didn't know, maybe capture a spirit that will help me feel more optimistic or laugh."

He has found a wealth of such stories in Las Vegas. Hammargren is one example. Muchow offers the recently demolished Stardust, subject of his latest documentaries, as another.

"I always try to have layers in my films. On the top layer is the story of this hotel. Beneath that is the thematic layer of how historical things that are meaningful to people are being discarded," Muchow says. "I'm telling that story through the life and death of the Stardust, through the stories of the people who cared about that hotel."

Student Becomes Teacher

Muchow credits the UNLV film department, especially the guidance of professor Francisco Menendez, with giving him a solid foundation and encouraging his pursuits. "I

■ 1970s

Brenda D. Mason, '74 BA Sociology, '77 MS Counseling, is a lawyer and was recently appointed to the advisory board for the San Diego Public Library. She earned her law degree in 1984 from Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego and is a vice president of its alumni association. Her hobbies include singing.

Charles L. Doughty, '77 BS Engineering, went to work for Electric Boat Corp. in Groton, Conn., after 11 years active duty in the U.S. Navy. He served on the USS Albuquerque, a nuclear submarine, and retired as a

weapons officer. He now helps maintain the software for shipboard control systems and is also involved in simulation development. He earned a master's degree in computer science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. His hobby is building robots. He and his wife, Denise, have been married for 20 years and have three teenage children. They live in Gales Ferry.

David Randel, '77 BS Hotel Administration, is the vice president of Villa Marketing for Marriott Vacation Club International. He has been with the company for 29 years, starting as a food production manager in Bal-

timore right after graduating from UNLV. He also serves on the Time-share Advisory Board at UNLV. He lives in Orlando, Fla.

■ 1980s

Marc Kalagian, '82 BA Criminal Justice, is the managing partner of Rohlfling & Kalagian in Long Beach, Calif., representing the disabled before the Social Security Administration and federal courts in California and Nevada. After graduation, he worked for then-U.S. Rep. Harry Reid in Washington, D.C., and Las Vegas. He is married with two teenage daughters and lives in Whittier.

Clarence "Lance" Schlag, '82 MA Public Administration, is assistant director for financial management for a U.S. Department of Energy Consolidated Business Center in Cincinnati. He retired from the U.S. Army Reserves as a sergeant major in 1996 after 27 years of active and reserve service. He is married with five children and nine grandchildren, and enjoys hiking and hunting. He lives in Loveland.

Jill Hancock Lucca, '83 BS Nursing, is a part-time nurse practitioner in cardiology clinical trials, Division of Education and Research, St. Mary's Hospital





Geri Kodey

Wolfgang Muchow

Film & Commercial Director
'99 BA Communication Studies

Childhood Hobby: "My parents used to think there was something wrong with me because I would line up Matchbox cars and just look at angles, like how I might shoot them if I had a camera. I was very, very young. And I would just sit there and stare at them. I haven't shot a car chase scene yet, but I'm sure I will one day."

Favorite Commercial: "The Spike Jonze Ikea commercial is my favorite of all time. Look it up on YouTube. It's an unbelievable commercial. You'll want to cry for a lamp."

Favorite Documentaries: "I like different films for different reasons. *Hoop Dreams* is fantastic. I screen that in class. *American Dream* is also really good. It was made in the '80s about a union going on strike at the Hormel hot dog factory."

went in there really hungry. They gave me a camera and got me started," Muchow says. "It was exactly what I needed at the time. It gave me structure, and I learned a lot about the art of telling stories."

Now Muchow is doing the same for future filmmakers. He teaches music video

and documentary courses in the department. "I really enjoy that, particularly the documentary class," Muchow says. "It forces students to open their eyes to the world around them and the community, to tell stories about it."

As Muchow is talking about the work of

a documentary filmmaker, Hammargren enters the backyard to say a plastic cow has slid down a fiberglass moon in a display above his home. Muchow picks up his high-definition digital camera. "Every day is an adventure," he says, and he returns to work.

— Eric Leake

and Duluth Clinic in Duluth, Minn. She also serves as a training faculty member for basic and advanced cardiac life support. In 2006 she received a certificate of advanced study in clinical investigations from the MGH Institute of Health Professions, and in 2005 she received a certificate in cardiovascular nursing from Loyola University, Chicago. She is married with five children. Her hobbies include hiking, skiing, boating on Lake Superior, and kayaking the smaller lakes.

Steve Sepersky, '83 BS Management, is CEO for Elite MD Solutions.

The firm handles business issues for Oasis Radiology, which has the medical-services contracts for several California hospitals. He and his wife, Susan, have a daughter, Serena. They live in La Quinta, Calif.

Abbi Silver, '86 BA Political Science, is a judge and was elected to the Las Vegas Justice Court Bench, Department 10 in November.

Kirk Hartle, '88 BS Business Administration, is a CPA and director of finance for Ahern Rentals Inc. He also co-owns Action Imprinting, a custom screen-printing and embroidery

company, with **David Dreibelbis**, '88 BS Management Information Systems. Hartle is the current president of the UNLV Alumni Association and has served on the board of directors for 12 years. He and his wife of 18 years, **Rosemarie Puccio Hartle**, '91 BS Elementary Education, have two children, Nick, 13, and Taylor, 11. He enjoys golfing with his children, playing basketball, and spending time with his family at their cabin.

■ 1990s

Jay Coates, '90 BS Biology, is a doctor and program director of the trauma/surgical critical care fellowship at UMC

Hospital. He is also vice chairman of the trauma department.

William White, '90 MA Anthropology, is project director for Statistical Research Inc., a cultural resource consulting contractor for private and government agencies. He is a founding board member of Western Rock Art Research, a nonprofit, research-oriented group dedicated to recording rock art in the far West. He lives in Woodland, Calif.

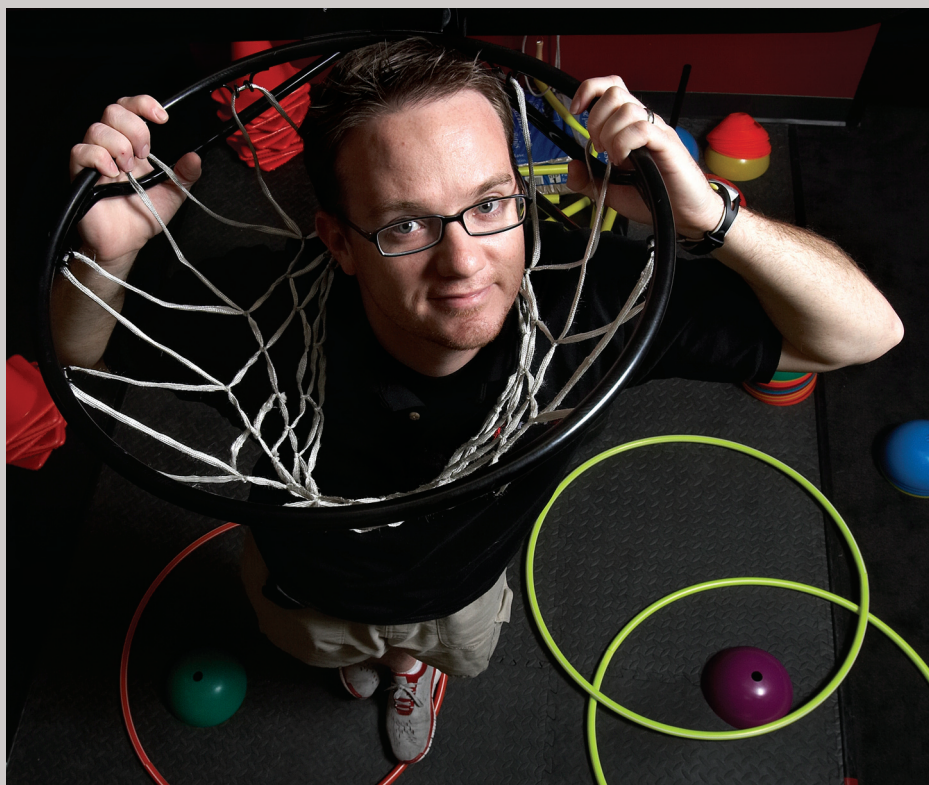
Merlinda Gallegos, '92 BA Criminal Justice, '95 MA Sociology, '99 Ph.D. Sociology, was promoted in

Travis Underwood

Owner of a Children's Fitness Club
'01 BS Physical Education

Overcoming Adversity: "It was hard being 8 years old, watching other kids out riding their bikes and playing sports. For me it was exhaustingly painful to walk three steps."

Giving Back: The Underwoods plan to open four or five more Fitwize locations, and hope to eventually establish a nonprofit location in the center of the city. "We're here to help families and help kids out."



Geri Koday

Alumnus Fills Hole in Fitness Market

It makes sense that anyone who would major in physical education might just have a thing for fitness. For Travis Underwood, that interest has expanded beyond coaching into a business that approaches youth fitness in a whole new way.

After five years of teaching in local middle and high schools, Underwood and his wife, Michelle, opened Fitwize 4 Kids in the southwest valley. The emphasis is on strength, not body-building. The gym offers a 45-minute circuit training system with equipment designed for children ages 6 to 15 — the same age group at which obesity can often become a factor. Exercise is key to prevention, but today's kids don't always have many opportunities to flex their muscles and build their lungs.

"There was nothing like this for teens and 'twens," he says. "They can't work out with mom and dad at the

big athletic clubs." And Las Vegas' heat sends them indoors.

Matters of the Heart

Underwood's own medical history influenced his career in youth fitness. He underwent open-heart surgeries at age 8 to repair a co-actation that limited the blood flow to his legs. Because of the co-actation, he developed a mitral valve prolapse, which prevented one of the valves in his heart from opening and closing correctly. The malfunctioning valve had to be replaced with a mechanical one.

"After the first surgery, there was an understanding that I would eventually need another, but not for a long time," he says.

That eventuality became a reality almost three years ago when Underwood went in for a regular checkup with his cardiologist and was told he had "big issues."

Underwood's wife was then six

months pregnant with the couple's daughter, Sage (he also has a 10-year-old son, Bailey, who lives with his mother in Washington). His doctor recommended postponing the procedure until after the baby was born.

"I said 'No, let's just do it now,'" he says. "Later, it turned out to be fortunate that I did. After getting in there and doing the surgery, the doctor said I would have been in big trouble three months down the road."

The second open-heart surgery at Stanford Medical Center left Underwood feeling grateful for his relative good health. "I was in the critical care unit in a room with three or four other people, and they'd all had heart transplants," he says. "It was tough, being there and knowing that someone lying three or four feet away may be dying. But I was thinking, 'My heart is beating, I can leave.'"

— Maria Phelan

January from director to vice president of corporate philanthropy for MGM-Mirage. She oversees the company's charitable giving and activities associated with the Voice Foundation, the company's non-profit entity that disperses employee donations to charities. Under her leadership, the philanthropy department directed the Katrina Recovery Fund and other relief services for employees of the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, Miss. She also serves on the advisory board for the College of Liberal Arts.

Raechelle E. Bogdon, '93 BS Hotel Administration, just celebrated her sixth anniversary with Barrick Gold of North America, one of the world's largest gold producers. She was recently promoted to accounting supervisor of financial planning for the shared business unit of Nevada operations. She has been married for 17 years and has two sons. Her hobbies include hiking, camping, and jogging. She lives in Spring Creek.

James A. Jaramillo, '96 BS Business Administration, owns a trio of real-estate businesses based in Albuquerque. Coba Investment Co. is a real estate brokerage firm specializing in vacant residential and commercial land and site acquisitions in three counties. He is also a general contractor and owner of Jara Construction Co., and he owns Rio Grande Portfolio Inc., which provides property management services. In addition, he is owner of All Washed Up, a carwash and self-service laundry chain with five locations in greater Albuquerque. His hobbies include art, athletics, and travel.

Geoff Neuman, '96 Bachelor of Music, '01 Master of Music, is orchestra director at Green Valley High School in Henderson. In April 2006, he conducted his students at Carnegie Hall. He also conducts the Las Vegas Youth Symphony, plays string bass in the Las Vegas Philharmonic, and performs with a jazz trio. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Kristen, and their son, Aidan. They live in Henderson.

Melania Sandra, '96 BS Hotel Administration, '01 BS Management Information Systems, is a Realtor and recently expanded her business to include furniture sales. In 2002,

she and her husband opened Las Vegas' first Indonesian restaurant; they sold the business in 2006. Her hobbies include ballroom dancing, swimming, traveling, and dining.

Miriam E. Rodriguez, '98 BA Spanish and '03 JD, opened her law practice in 2006. She participated in the same commencement ceremony as her son, **Juan Rodriguez**, '03 BS Biological Sciences. An interest in law runs in the family. Her son went on to earn a law degree from Franklin Pierce Law Center in Concord, N.H.; he specializes in intellectual property/patent law and plans to take the Nevada bar exam. Her daughter, Miriam, plans to transfer to UNLV after completing paralegal studies at CCSN. The elder Miriam has been married for 29 years to husband Juan Rodriguez.

Kristen Galioto, '99 BS Hotel Administration, and her husband, Ralph, welcomed a baby girl, Chloe Rose, on July 11, 2006. They live in Newtown, Penn.

Charles "Mike" Prince, '99 BS Education, teaches math at Pahrana-gat Valley Middle School and raises beef cattle on his ranch in Alamo. He earned his degree the same year he retired from The Howard Hughes Corp. He enjoys writing cowboy poetry and Western stories and novels for young people. His first novel, *Flint Pierce: To Catch a Legend*, will be published by Cowboy Miner Publications later this year. He and his wife, Alma, have been married for 48 years; they have three children and 18 grandchildren.

■ 2000s

Adoracion "Dori" Lastimoso, '00 MS Public Administration, retired in January after 15 years with the Nevada secretary of state's office, where she was a compliance/audit investigator. She then traveled out of the country for two and a half months. She has been married for 30 years and has one daughter.

Marc Bromley, '01 BS Hotel Administration, recently became assistant food and beverage director for the Four Seasons hotel in Chicago. Previously, he had been director of restaurants at the Peninsula Chicago hotel for two years and at the Peninsula Beverly Hills for four years. He enjoys athletics,

food, wine, and travel. He and his girlfriend, Katie, live in Chicago.

Michele A. Lucero, '01 BS Business Administration, was one of 32 minority law librarians profiled in the American Association of Law Librarians' publication *Celebrating Diversity: A Legacy of Minority Leadership in AALL*. She has been the legal information manager at Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw in Houston since June 2005. She is now pursuing an MBA in strategic management at the University of North Texas and plans to graduate in December.

Danielle Marrone Pates, '02 MS Exercise Physiology, married Joel L. Pates on March 24 in Jackson Hole, Wyo. They live in Houston.

Mary Beth Hartleb, '03 JD, has a hand in many diverse businesses. Her primary business, PRISM Human Resource Consulting Services, provides human resources support for businesses. She also operates MarketYourJobSearch.com to help job seekers enter Nevada and improve their prospects here. She imports Turkish chocolate under Symphony Foods International. And she manages rental beach property in Mexico. She likes to travel and lives in Henderson.

Elizabeth Muto, '03 BS Business Administration, is director of development for Girls and Boys Town of Nevada, whose national crisis line she had called for help as a child. In 2004, she became the first African-American to win the titles of Miss Las Vegas and Miss Nevada, and went on to compete in the Miss America Pageant. As Miss Nevada she developed the HELP program (Heal, Evaluate, Love, and Progress) for foster children and others facing adversity, and she continues serving children in need by promoting the Safe Haven program and acting as spokesperson for several organizations, including the National Council for Adoption. She is now pursuing a Master of Public Administration degree.

Pablo Sanchez Ortiz, '03 BS Business Administration, moved back to Spain after graduation to work for Accenture in its natural resources department. His job has taken him around the world. In the past two years he has worked on projects in

seven countries. He is planning a July wedding and hopes to move back to Las Vegas in the future.

Carlos Sinde, '03 BA Business Administration, was recently promoted to group sales account executive with the Los Angeles Dodgers after two years as an inside sales representative. He has also worked for the Major League Soccer team Chivas USA and for Kroenke Sports Enterprises, owner of the Denver Nuggets and Colorado Avalanche. He enjoys sports, traveling, and swimming. He lives in Pico Rivera, Calif.

Renato N. Estacio, '04 Bachelor of Music, became director of marketing for the Las Vegas Philharmonic in March. He is the former assistant director of the UNLV Writing Center. He also recently joined Mortgage of Nevada, Anthem branch, as a mortgage agent/loan officer. This year he plans to complete a master of music degree with an emphasis in applied voice as well as an MBA. He is active in cultural affairs with the city of Las Vegas, teaching music appreciation and history at the Reed Whipple Cultural Center and conducting a new choir for the city in the fall. In addition to singing, his hobbies include participating in dog shows.

Nataly Tatone Mattox, '05 BS Business Administration, is a real-estate broker with her father's RE/MAX Professional Realty office in her hometown of Roseburg, Ore. She married Jason Mattox in August 2005, and their daughter, Joelle Michaela, was born in January 2007. She competes in rodeos as a barrel racer, and her husband is a professional bull rider.

Angela Theobald Campbell, '06 BA Communication Studies, has joined Danny's Family Cos. in Scottsdale, Ariz., as director of marketing. She and her husband, Stephen, also own two Tan Factory salons in the Phoenix area and will open two more this year. Their first child is due in July. They live in Litchfield Park.

■ Death

Thomas C. Donnelly, '70 BA Hotel Administration, died Jan. 10, 2007, at the University of California-Davis Medical Center after a lengthy illness. He was a charter member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity chapter at UNLV.

Official Bling

The presidential medallion symbolizes the continuity of leadership at UNLV. Cast in sterling silver, it is hand-engraved with the state seal of Nevada. The names of UNLV's leaders, starting with Donald Moyer, and the years they served are carved on individual links in the chain. The president wears the medallion at commencement and other ceremonial events.

The Consolidated Students of the University of Nevada (CSUN) commissioned the medallion from Huntington Jewelers in 1973 as a gift to the university.

Weight: 10 ounces
Length: 17 inches
Diameter: 3.25 inches

Each link takes about an hour and a half to lay out, engrave, and antique.

"When I saw the seal, I thought, how in the world am I going to do all the carving? It was really a labor of love."

— Jack Huntington, jeweler

An Arduous Process: Casting and engraving such an intricate, heavy piece was a challenge for jeweler Jack Huntington, who was known as Las Vegas' hand-engraving expert for more than 50 years. It took Huntington several days to carve the wax for the medallion's mold by hand. From that, he developed the cast into which he poured the melted silver.

Carving Out Traditions: Huntington, who learned to carve in the Boy Scouts, graduated from Bradley University's engraving school. He opened Huntington Jewelers in 1950 and taught his oldest sons to engrave. Ron Huntington engraved the most recent link in the medallion chain for President David Ashley.

Ric Huntington, BS '73 Accounting, now runs the family business. As a UNLV parent, Jack Huntington said it was a privilege to create the medallion. "This was one of my prize accomplishments," he says. "Engraving has always been something very special, and I've had the fortunate ability to create tradition."

— Erin O'Donnell



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UNLV Is Turning 50



UNLV's 50th birthday bash begins this fall and we want you to be part of the fun. Mark your calendar and join us for these exciting events.

University Days

September 12-15

UNLV Homecoming

October 16-21

Capitol Steps in Concert

January 17, 2008

Itzhak Perlman Anniversary Concert

January 26, 2008

Hal Holbrook in Mark Twain Tonight

May 3, 2008

Picnic Pops Concert

June 7, 2008

For a complete list of activities, log onto **celebrating50.unlv.edu**.



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