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Literary Ambitions

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

Wole Soyinka:
The Nobel Laureate Stands Out on Campus

Dave Hickey:
A Genius’ Take on the Art World

Wole Soyinka
Elias Ghanem Chair of Creative Writing

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THANK YOU
FOR ANSWERING THE CALL
For A Great University

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

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

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

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

Several years ago when Las Vegas was named America's first City of Asylum, I was delighted by the development but not surprised by the rest of the world's apparent skepticism about locating the refuge for disdained writers here in Las Vegas. As president of a dynamic university that seeks a world-class reputation for its teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity, I am keenly aware of the world’s perception of Las Vegas; it seems many people refuse to abandon the stereotypical image of our city, despite knowing that it is a thriving metropolitan area with more than a million people pursuing diverse interests, including many serious intellectual ones. Yes, I was quite aware of the thinking that produced headlines bemoaning the unlikely pairing of Las Vegas with the distinction of being the nation's first City of Asylum. On two levels—both as an American literary scholar and as president of UNLV—I was heartened to see our town entrusted with this important role and felt intuitively that it would bring a whole host of other positive connections to the campus and the community. Had no idea just how much good it would bring. A great deal of credit is deserved by those forward-looking individuals who brought us this program and made possible the ensuing creation of the International Institute of Modern Letters—not the least of which is our generous benefactors and friends, including Dr. and Mrs. Thomas B. and Mary B. Schaffer of the Mandalay Resort Group. Glenn, who founded the institute, and English/creative writing professor Richard Wilbur can be liberally credited with having the foresight and commitment necessary to bring these prestigious programs to Las Vegas. It was the support of Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, however, that I believe made a powerful, even pivotal contribution. I am convinced that of all those distinguished scholars and creative artists who, in the early days of the university, remained devoted to their disciplines despite nagging doubts about their institution's location, we can thank the administrators who recognized the value of supporting these early scholarly endeavors and who doggedly pursued greater funding to build infrastructure. We can thank a generous community, filled with donors and friends of UNLV, who have understood all along the genuine importance of establishing a strong academic institution for the greater good of the city and of the state. And we can thank our students, past and present, for choosing UNLV and going on to proudly proclaim their alma mater’s success. They all were and are open-minded about our prospects, committed to seeing bright and promising futures, and for their willingness to share their genius with our campus.

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

UNLV’s enrollment figures increased dramatically last fall, indicating a 5.2 percent increase in the total number of students and increasing an unprecedented 9.5 percent over the previous year in the important full-time equivalent (FTE) figure. FTE, a figure that uses a formula to calculate the equivalent number of full-time students based on the number of credits taken by all students, determines the amount of per-student funding UNLV receives from the Nevada Legislature.

In fall 2002, FTE increased to 17,777 and the total count of students rose to 24,965.

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

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

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

Academic Enrichment Center Receives $32 Million from Grants

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

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

Center initiatives, such as study skills workshops, tutoring, and mentoring programs, are already having a tremendous impact on student retention, said William Tracy B. Cotton, executive director of the Academic Enrichment Center initiatives, such as study skills workshops, tutoring, and mentoring programs, are already having a tremendous impact on student retention, said William Tracy B. Cotton, executive director of the Academic Enrichment Center.

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

The center’s dramatic growth—in 1997 it served 965 individuals on a budget of $800,000—was only possible by leveraging community resources, Cotton said.

The center has partnered with city and county government agencies, the Clark County School District, other not-for-profit organizations, and corporate sponsors including Wells Fargo Bank, Howard Hughes Corp., and The Venetian Resort-Hotel-Casino.

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

For more information, call (702) 895-4777 or visit www.unlv.edu/studentinfo.cem
It started perhaps with just a candle or a message of grief left by a stranded firefighter, paramedics, and staff. The team also led seminars about cooking, a fire department cook-off, a fire department T-shirt, reads as both a statement of grief and a tribute to those who gave their lives trying to save others on that day: "343 brothers died, but their flames will still burn in our hearts. God Bless America." The New York-New York Casino just opened the permanent memorial in front of its Statue of Liberty replica. Now a prominent element of the casino's architecture, the granite structure encases a sampling of items left at the memorial. The items on display will be changed periodically to represent the variety of artifacts and sentiments expressed by visitors. The entire collection will be housed at the Lied Library.

As a historian who studies the gaming industry, Schwartz said he cannot recall any other time that a casino's property was transformed into a shrine. The effort is "unprecedented in the history of the gaming industry," he said. "It really is an honor to be entrusted with such a significant responsibility, and it is something we take a lot of pride in. I think it said a lot about UNLV's reputation in the local community that they turned to us first." 

"It's a pleasure to work with the special collections team," said Tom McCartney, senior vice president of marketing and development at New York-New York. "David Schwartz is an absolute professional who is interested in the gaming and entertainment industry, and the team at the UNLV Libraries is preserving the thousands of artifacts and sentiments expressed by visitors from around the world to Las Vegas to pay tribute to those who died in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania."

"Most of the messages are from people who just want to express their sorrow for the victims and to pledge their resolve to fight and win the war against terrorism." One message, scrawled in ink on the front of a fire department T-shirt, reads as both a promise and a tribute to those who gave their lives trying to save others on that day: "343 brothers died, but their flames will still burn in our hearts. God Bless America." The New York-New York Casino just opened the permanent memorial in front of its Statue of Liberty replica. Now a prominent element of the casino's architecture, the granite structure encases a sampling of items left at the memorial. The items on display will be changed periodically to represent the variety of artifacts and sentiments expressed by visitors. The entire collection will be housed at the Lied Library.

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Alumni Association Helps Today's Students Succeed

The numbers jump out at you: $5.5 million (total monetary donations to UNLV); $2.9 million (total donations for improvements to the UNLV campus); $1.6 million (current amount of alumni scholarship endowments). The members of the UNLV Alumni Association have worked diligently on behalf of the university, financially sustaining students and faculty while offering leadership, support and resources, that benefit the university and enhance the community.

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

"Many of our members will serve as mentors to students in the particular colleges they graduated from. Other members will participate in events sponsored by the association or volunteer their time on activities for the university. All members of the UNLV Alumni Association and all of the activities we sponsor benefit the university in some manner."

Each spring, the awarding of scholarships to more than 50 worthy students is an important and necessary function of the Alumni Association, and in all, close to $1 million has been awarded since the association was chartered in 1965.

As a student, I looked up to members of the Alumni Association who helped me throughout my education with advice and support," Page said. "What the UNLV Alumni Association does has perpetuity to it. We were helped as UNLV students, and now we're giving back to current UNLV students so they can pass on the support to the next generation of students who will offer the same support to those who follow — that's what an alumni association is all about."

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

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

- planted 40 trees in the Alumni Grove and along Alumni Walk,
- built the UNLV Alumni Association Pavilion at the Paul R. Sogg Architecture Building,
- contributed 800 spirit banners to line the Academic Pavilion,
- incorporated in association classrooms,
- donated artwork that hangs in the Moyer Student Union and the Classroom Building Complex,
- sponsored the updated costume worn by the school's "Hey Reb" mascot and uniforms for the dance team,
- built a 10-foot observation tower for the marching band.

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

"Our football game tailgate parties are always fun, well-attended, and a great place to reconnect with old friends and former classmates," Page said.

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

For more information, call the UNLV Alumni Association at (702) 895-3621 or (800) 829-2586, or visit the association Web site at www.unlvalumni.com.
Cultural Immersion
Sabbatical Offers No Rest for Professor

By Gai Galasi

By definition, a sabbatical is a period of rest, a time when daily work is put aside for contemplation or travel. But try telling that to Jane McCarthy.

For six months, McCarthy, a professor in the College of Educa-
tion’s department of curriculum and instruction, lived in a remote community on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona to provide train-
ing to staff in one of the poorest school districts in the country.

"I think I worked harder while on sabbatical than I do at my reg-
ular job," McCarthy said. "There is a whole different set of challenges that you encounter out there (on the reservation) because the area is so remote. We had to cancel school for a couple of days because the roads were too muddy for the buses to get through."

McCarthy first began working with Pinon Unified School Dis-
trict four years ago, when its middle school joined the Accelerated Schools Program—a national reform effort that provides at-risk schools with resources to improve academic performance. She quickly realized that, to best help both the reservation schools and UNLV’s programs, she would have to invest more time to the program. "Being in residence was the only way to truly understand the obstacles that the schools need to overcome in order to improve their academic performance," said McCarthy, who also serves as director of UNLV’s Accelerated Schools Program. "By immersing myself in the Navajo culture, during my sabbatical year I was able to develop a greater appreciation for the strengths and chal-

 lenges unique to the students and teachers there."

The challenges certainly are unique. Located in one of the most remote regions of the United States, the Pinon Unified School Dis-
trict serves seven small Navajo communities. Less than 50 percent of its students have running water in their homes and more than 90 percent live below the poverty level. Many of the students must commute five to six hours each day of travel away from their family in dormitories located on the school campus.

"In some ways the kids on the reservation are just like regular school kids," McCarthy said. "But when you consider the difficul-
ties they endure just to get to school and the added responsibilities at home of taking care of livestock and crops, you realize that their lives are anything but typical."

McCarthy’s projects included establishing an intervention pro-
gram to help increase student attendance; developing disciplinary policies with the staff; and providing development sessions on class-
room management, lesson planning, and teaching techniques. But she didn’t do it alone. McCarthy credits her many col-
leagues—some of whom traveled to the reservation to deliver workshops—with the success of the program. Among the visitors were Gene Hall, dean of the College of Education, and associate professors Virginia Unisick, Neil Strudler, Alme Giovetti, LeAnn Putney, and Nancy Gallavan. A visit from President Carol C. Harper was a highlight for the district’s teachers. "I was very proud to see the many accomplishments that Dr. McCarthy and the staff have made in helping these young people excel academically," Harper said.

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

The program was such a success that UNLV will continue its work on the reservation, offering classes that lead to further certifi-
cations in literacy for the teachers and an initial teaching licensu-
ure for classroom aides.

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

Parent Orientation Program Emphasizes Fun in Youth Sports

As Henderson parents signed their kids up for sports last fall, they had to sign themselves up for a parenting seminar. UNLV and the Henderson parks and recreation department launched the YouthFirst orien-
tation program to encourage parental involvement in sports as an emphasizing fun for the young participants.

"An added expectation is that parents, by learning their role in youth sports, will display appropriate and supportive behavior when watching games," said R.R. Apache, assistant professor of educational leadership.

Apache and students enrolled in the uni-

versity’s sports education and leadership program conduct the one-hour orientation session that all parents enrolling their chil-
dren in Henderson sports programs must attend. They discuss the roles of the parent and the coach, as well as why children quit youth sports. Parents complete a certification quiz and sign a code of conduct pledge at the conclusion of the session.

The students also developed a resource Web site and newsletters for parents. Sue Weakland, Henderson recreation supervisor, said the partnership allows the city to offer a program designed for the local community. "We wanted to take a proactive approach to curbing violence in youth sports," she said. "This program was tailored specifically for our community and gives us direct access to experts in this field."
"We hope to be known as an organization that nurtures the public intellectual, someone who produces the kind of writing that gets read."

- Eric Olsen

executive director of the
International Institute of Modern Letters

The International Institute of Modern Letters has set its goal of becoming the world's top philanthropy organization for literary arts. Why? It’s all in the name of progress.

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

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

The right connections were made years ago, when UNLV creative writing professor Richard Wiley met Soyinka in 1990, when the Nigerian playwright was visiting campus. The two reconnected in October 1999, when Soyinka was on campus to present a Barrick Lecture. “Over dinner and a bottle of wine, Wole was bemoaning the fact that he was having trouble establishing an American City of Asylum,” Wiley recounts. “We started joking about how it would play against type to bring the program to Las Vegas. Pretty soon the joke stopped being a joke.”

The other pivotal connection in the story is Wiley's friendship with Schaeffer. The two had met while attending the respected Iowa Writers' Workshop. Schaeffer had previously expressed his desire to establish a literary arts organization. Then in 2000, UNLV President Carol C. Harper Schaeffer launched the International Institute of Modern Letters, headquartered at UNLV with Olsen as its director. Now the institute is working to become the major patron for the literary arts in the world, Olsen says. "That's not an unrealistic goal, given the lack of organizational support in this area. There are many groups that support performing arts, but few, unless you count corporate publishing, that support literature. We can make a significant impact partly because few others have taken on the challenge."

Though previously overlooked by philanthropists, literary arts are not marginal in their value to society, according to the institute's leaders. The organization's underlying principle is that a thriving literary environment is an essential component of democracy and progress. Writers, they say, fight epidemics of hate, intolerance, and totalitarianism. “We embrace the idea that literature, alone among the arts, stands for intellectual freedom, humane choice, progress, and telling the truth against political lies,” Schaeffer says. But to have that effect, Olsen says, writers must reach a general audience. “We don't want the institute to become a self-referential organization that produces people who only speak to others in the world of literature with a big "L," he says. "We hope to be known as an organization that nurtures the public intellectual, someone who produces the kind of writing that gets read.”

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

Center of Excellence

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

Series Showcases the Craft of Book Making

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

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

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

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

The second Rainmaker Edition is Spirit of the River, the first chapter of a soon-to-be-published novel by Rusell Banks. The book was designed and illustrated by Barry Moser and features woodblock art. Banks is the author of Affliction and The Sweet Hereafter, both of which were turned into movies. Wole Soyinka, another Nobel laureate and UNLV's Elias Ghanem Chair in Creative Writing, is the third featured writer in the series. His Samarkan is a long poem that captures the cultural crossroads of a market in Uzbekistan while denouncing fanaticism and commenting on world affairs. The book is designed by Victoria Hindeley and features illustrations by Bob Kleinschmidt.

Other writers who have agreed to contribute works to the series include Gunter Grass, Kenzaburo Oe, and Henry Louis Gates. Copies of the Rainmaker Editions can also be found at UNLV's Lied Library special collections, which houses a growing collection of fine-press books from around the world.

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

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English professor and director of publications for the International Institute of Modern Letters

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English professor and director of publications for the International Institute of Modern Letters
The Founder: Glenn Schaeffer

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

Many people find it unusual that a casino executive is so interested in supporting literature. Why is literature important to you? You look for your own story in literature; it's one of the best mechanisms you have to convince yourself you're not alone. Literature — and I would add science — are both confirming disciplines. In science, you ask: "Do you see what I see?" In literature, it's "Do you feel what I feel?" Reading and writing are part of who I am, as a person. And for ourselves as a progressive society, we are made up, in real part, by our books or literature.

Why should literature be a matter of interest for the business community? Literary narrative of imagination has been a stimulant to market progress. Many important ideas, often rendered in stories. Maybe because literature is also fun, it's been the first target of tyrannical governments and religious zealots.

Literature causes trouble? That's what the repressive or corrupt authorities seem to believe. They fear literature. That's why they crack down so hard on the isolated scribbler here or there. But censorship, given time, generally fails. We'd like to speed up its failure rate in contemporary life.

"Saving a few good books" is your notion of social activism? Yes, but you aren't such a rare bird. Well, tyrants typically set out to burn books. Before torching the Reichstag, Hitler burned mounds of literature, because literature is the genre most valuable to tyrants, they fear literature. That's why they crack down so hard on literature.

You'd argue that progress is a literary value? Yes, this is how modern society thrives, by risk and new ideas. According to a business writer like Malcolm Gladwell, social and market progress often happens by tiny, seemingly undetectable actions — tipping points, as Gladwell calls them. Books have been those tipping points, again and again.

An example? Thomas Paine's polemical pamphlet, Common Sense, which was read and re-read and re-read until America was an idea, and a nation. (So did Fitzgerald himself, it seems to me.) And at the workshop, I learned I didn't want to be a writer, so I went into business instead.

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

You've discussed some "big-picture" reasons for why literature is important to business. Are there more tangible, day-to-day reasons? Business receives from literature: Business is about character, and character is the subject of literary fiction.

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

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

You might say that, in quite nonlinear ways, both that novel and the Iowa Workshop have had very positive outcomes for me. I also remind people all the time that the Iowa Workshop is the only one of its kind that requires students to live in a non-English-speaking country for at least a semester. The scholars support the students' efforts to translate works written in other languages into English. In addition, the institute is providing grants to individuals to support the translation of selected works. It hopes to launch joint publishing ventures with mainstream publishing houses to get the translations into print.

The translation initiatives are aimed at combating a covert form of censorship: market negligence, especially in this country. Fewer than 300 of the 13,000 works of literature published in any university's Master of Fine Arts program have been translated into English for publication in the United States.

The translation of a single work may cost as much as $100,000. With a $900,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the institute is supporting the translation of a dozen important works from Russian, Chinese, and Arabic languages into English. The institute expects to have translated 100 books into English by the year 2000. The translation efforts are part of the institute's mission to create a center of academic excellence as well as a leader in language and literature.

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

— Glenn Schaeffer

founder of the International Institute of Modern Letters

...and California-Irvine and at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand.

UNLV, however, seems to be embracing the flogelgion organization with the most enthusiasm because, it too, is establishing itself as a premier institution, Olsen says. "The notable thing about this university is that it is young, and the people here are not bound by a hundred years of doing things the same old way. It really makes this an ideal place for the institute. UNLV has well-defined goals and clear ambition to become a major urban university."

In the 2000-01 academic year, Harter charged a think-tank of faculty and administrators with developing UNLV's research macrothemes, or areas in which the university can make significant contributions to the economic and cultural development of Nevada. Among the 11 macrothemes identified is "Language, Literacy, Literature, and Communications."

"The International Institute of Modern Letters is among the vibrant and creative programs that are truly distinguishing UNLV as a leader in language and literature," says Harter, who holds a Ph.D. in English and American literature. "Through this wonderful example of public-private partnership, we are in a unique position to create a center of academic excellence as we simultaneously support the freedom of individuals around the world to write from their hearts and consciences." Olsen adds, "A center of excellence in a specific area tends to raise the general tone of any university. It's not unreasonable to suppose that a physics professor, for example, might see this trickle down — or up — in terms of an improved quality of writing from students."

At UNLV, the institute provides matching funds for the Elias Ghareem Chair in Creative Writing, which Soyinka now holds, and contributes funding for a public reading series. It created two fellowships for doctoral students in the English department's creative writing track. The funding allows the fellows to concentrate on completing publishable works along with their degrees. Last year's recipients were Constance Pruss and Karenmary Penn.

The institute grants scholarships to students in UNLV's master of fine arts in creative writing international program, the only one of its kind that requires students to live in a non-English-speaking country for at least a semester. The scholars support the students' efforts to translate works written in other languages into English. In addition, the institute is providing grants to individuals to support the translation of selected works. It hopes to launch joint publishing ventures with mainstream publishing houses to get the translations into print.

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According to Hickey, while it's flattering to receive such an honor — especially because recipients cannot apply for the grant, but instead are nominated by their peers — it's best to be realistic about it. "It's not genius, it's art criticism genius," he corrects. "That's a faîsly small field, like being the best surfer in Montana.

It's lines like that which set Hickey apart, says author and UNLV English professor John Iredell. "One of the things about David that endears him to me and to others, I think, is his gift for great lines. He has a direct connection to somewhere else that most of us don't have, and he is free with that gift.

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

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

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

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

On whether he is also an artist:
No, I don't think critics should be competitive with their subjects. Thus my distrust of literary criticism.

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

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

On the most influential artists of the last century:Picasso, Pollock, Warhol.

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

On how the layperson views art: Your experience of art is based on your experience of other art. So if you grow up around art and if you don't take the trouble to acquire a repertoire of responses, it's really hard to know what anything is when you see it because it's always more or less than everything else. So it's a completely relative and contingent discourse. It's a classic 'you had to be there' activity. If you just accept the fact that the art world has never been particularly congenial to bourgeois sensibilities, it's a very good place for an artist. Artists in Las Vegas are not the only people who care about and appreciate art — that's a very good place for an artist. It's about the physical. Vegas aspires to a condition of art. Not many places do. Artists in Las Vegas are not the only people concerned with how it looks. In Ann Arbor, Mich., artists probably are the only ones who care how the city looks.

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

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

On art critics: Art critics tend to be fair-eared. When two art critics agree, you've got one too many art critics.
It's 11:25 a.m. I'm standing outside a small office on the sixth floor of the Flora Dungan Humanities Building. The brown plastic sign by the door reads: Mr. Wole Soyinka. A student (I presume) with a book bag slung on his shoulder joins my wait.

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

"That's him," the student says. "His voice stands out, doesn't it?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On receiving the Nobel Prize in literature: It was a mixed bag, actually. It played havoc with my creative life. For some, like me, coming from a certain society, that world's demands were constant, even dangerous. Nigeria's dictator would have considered it his crowning glory to hang a Nobel laureate.

On politics: I've developed through some mysterious means a very conscious sense of justice. I have never been able to accept the absoluteness of a pacifist approach when dealing with state terrorism, when facing the insanity of fundamentalist persecution. I have enormous admiration for Ghandi, Desmond Tutu, Aung Suu Chi. Martin Luther King was also an unquestionably great fighter for social justice. He was able to combine that with absolute faith in nonviolent means. These men are among the saints.

On imprisonment: People try to suggest my writing got darker. My politics certainly became hardened. What I did in the first place to become imprisoned became more strident. As all writers, I bring my experiences into my writing, but my experiences don't change me as a writer. My writing is meant for entertainment, escapist. You read and don't remember it—your mind just goes away. There's so much literature in the world that my advice is to find that which is both enriching and pleasurable to you.

There's a world-famous writer—I'm not going to name names, of course. I know, academically, that she is a good writer, but somehow her work has never gripped me. I picked up her latest book thinking I'd try again. I set it aside after the second chapter. I think we should be enriched by what we read, but there's no reason to be solemn about it.

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

Advice for young writers: Get ready to receive your rejection slips, treasure them and transcend them. It's a very, very rare writer who doesn't receive them. Await yours and then carry on.
Fled

A let his daredevil presence be discovered in...
Stardumb is a bit of fluff on the body of perceptive art criticism. Hickey has built it over the last decade. He prolifically writes essays for exhibit catalogs and has contributed to Rolling Stone, Art in America, and The New Yorker. In his older corpus of work, some of the more intriguing titles include Art Guitar: Essays on Art & Democracy (1997); Howl: The Artwork of Luis Jiménez (1997); In the Dancehall of the Dead (1993); Last Chance for Eden: Selected Art Criticism by Christopher Knight, 1979-1994 (1995); and The Invisible Drugz: Four Essays on Beauty (1993).

Ahmed's Revenge
by Richard Wiley
Random House, 1998

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

Wiley, who's lived in Kenya, Nigeria, Japan, and Korea, brings the colonial continent of Isak Dinesen's Out of Africa into the 1970s. When young women come to power in Kenya is murdered, his widow, Sonya, decides to investigate. She discovers that not only was her husband involved in the illegal ivory trade, but so was her father. Once a minister of wildlife in the Kenyan government.

The book has been described as an "ingeniously off-the-wall story" and an "exceedingly clever novel" (Wall Street Journal) as well as "nothing short of an exotic page-turner" (Booklist). The New York Times Book Review wrote: "It's a credit to Wiley's intelligence and narrative expertise that the answer he suggests arrives subtly, without the wince of heavy-handed rhetoric." The title character was, by the way, a real elephant so large that his tusks were more than three times longer than average. He was intriguing by the irony of the fact that to protect Ahmed from poachers, they took away his freedom, the author says about one of the themes of his novel.

Wiley's next to UNLV in 1989 to teach creative writing and is now also director of publications for the International Institute of Modern Letters. His novels include Fools' Gold, Festival for Three (Booklist) and another memoir. He won the PEN/Faulkner award as a former exchange student, now a journalist, takes a try to reread a book every week.

Stardumb
by Dave Hickey
Artspace Books, 1999

When you conjure up a vision of a "genius," you likely think of someone like Rodin's famous sculpture "The Thinker," sitting, chin in hand, pondering weighty thoughts. But even a genius has a funny bone. Picture instead the famous photo of Albert Einstein sticking his tongue out for the photographer.

Voice from Silence
by Douglas Unger
St. Martin's Press, 1995

Unger says his book Voices from Silence is, perhaps, special relevance of era of terrorism and anti-terrorism, it deals with state-supported terror and its impact on families and individuals.

What's on Your Bedside Table?

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

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


Richard Wiley: "Feast of Love by Charles Baxter; The Fourth Hand by John Irving; and Great Wine by Andrea Immer."

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


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

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

Voice from Silence has been called "an uncomfortable but effective book." (Booklist) and an "emotionally complicated story (that) is a grisly sequel to El T Nora." (Washington Post).
Cheng, a designer of contemporary homes based in Berkeley, Calif., has won awards for his creativity. He wanted to produce a book full of photos of his work and teamed up with Olsen, who did the writing. Tips for handling the pumice, for combining photos of finished countertops and the process that goes into making them. The authors show the way imagination and creativity can be brought to bear on a material most of us relegate to sidewalks and building slabs. The book quotes Frank Lloyd Wright: "Concrete (a) passive or negative material, regarding aesthetic life almost wholly upon the impress of human imagination."

Olsen has also written several other non-fiction books, including: Lifefit: An Effective Exercise Program for Optimal Health and a Longer Life.

The Books section was compiled by Barbara Cloud, UNLV's associate provost for academic affairs. She is also the editor of Minister to the Cherokee: A Civil War Autobiography by James Anderson Sloan.

The Execution of a Serial Killer:

**Chapter 24:** quaint.

**June 1999:** At the time, Diaz was finishing his dissertation on the death penalty. To his surprise, Florida granted his request, and in December 2000, he held a seat just three feet from serial killer Edward Castro as the man was executed by lethal injection.

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

As a social scientist, Diaz expected to find the experience "informative and profoundly fascinating," he writes. He previously had never taken a strong stance against the death penalty, though he tended to put more value in the studies that showed capital punishment does not deter crime. Diaz had also swayed by incidences of DNA evidence proving the innocence of men on death row as well as the statistics that show capital punishment does not deter crime.

Yet, he also had supported the death penalty at times. In part of the book, he discusses Zane Floyd, who killed four people in a Las Vegas grocery store in June 1999. At the time, Diaz was finishing his doctoral dissertation at UNLV and working part-time in a nearby store. "While the studies (that the death penalty does not deter crime) were scientifically and well-researched, they were strictly theoretical and unemotional," Diaz writes. "Whenever I was asked to defend Zane Floyd, I decided they were ready to show their humane desires to the world, my gut, my emotions, shifted back again to supporting the death penalty."

As Castro's execution unfolds in the book, Diaz finds himself unprepared for his own emotions. The following excerpt is from Chapter 24:

"The Execution of a Serial Killer: One Man's Experience Witnessing the Death Penalty"
March 1
Watch the Rebels play Colorado State with fellow alumni. 5:30pm, Tam Alumni Center
March 10
Board Meeting, 6pm, Tam Alumni Center
March 11
Men’s Basketball, noon, at all day, Tam Alumni Center
April 10
Scholarship Luncheon, noon, Tam Alumni Center
April 16
Board Meeting & Elections, 6pm, Tam Alumni Center
May 2
Dinner Theater: Six Degrees of Separation 6pm, Tam Alumni Center
June 18
Board Meeting & Election of Officers, 6pm, Tam Alumni Center
August 20
Board Meeting, 6pm, Tam Alumni Center

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

March
1. Dance: Spring Dance Concert. 8pm & 8pm, Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2878.
3. Women’s Basketball: vs. Air Force. 7:00pm. Cox Pavilion. 895-3207.
1. Re-entry Services: NUTS Student Peer Support Group. 9am-March 5, 3pm March 19, Moyer Student Union. 895-4475.
2. Music: UNLV Chamber Orchestra Concert II. 1:30pm. Beam Music Center Recital Hall. 895-3949.
6. UNLV Opera Theatre: Die Fledermaus. 8:00pm March 7-8, 1pm March 9, Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2878.
2. Music: UNLV Symphony Band Concert. 7:30pm. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3733.
5. Music: Southern Nevada Community Orchestra and Chorus. 7:30pm. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3207.
7. Softball: vs. UC Riverside. 6:30pm. Wilson Baseball Stadium. 895-3207.
9. Music: UNLV Symphony Orchestra Concert. 7:30pm, Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3733.
10. Tennis: Men’s Tennis. 7pm. Small Tennis Court. 895-3207.
11. Softball: vs. Brigham Young. 6:30pm, April 25; 2pm April 26, Wilson Baseball Stadium. 895-3207.
12. Baseball: vs. Brigham Young. 6:30pm, April 25; 2pm April 26, Wilson Baseball Stadium. 895-3207.
13. Dance: Black Box Dance Concert. 8pm April 25-26; 2pm April 27. Black Box Theatre, Ham Fine Arts Building. 895-2877.
16. Nevada Ballet Theatre: Salute to Richard Rogers. 8pm April 4. (Thurl Matsen). 8pm April 5; 2pm April 6, Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3733.
17. UNLV Jazz Ensemble II Concert. 7:30pm. Black Box Theatre, 895-2877.

April
1. Re-entry Services: NUTS Student Peer Support Group. 9am. Moyer Student Union. 895-4475.

May
1. Music: UNLV Choral Ensembles Concert. 7:30pm. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3733.
2. Music: UNLV Choral Union Concert. 1:30pm. Beam Music Center Recital Hall. 895-3949.
3. Theatres: UNLV and the Nevada Conservatory Theatre present Six Degrees of Separation. 8pm May 2 & 3-10. 8pm May 4 & 11. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2877.
8. Academic Enrichment Center: Awards ceremony. 2pm. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3737.
9. Nevada Ballet Theatre: Academy Recital. 2pm & 7pm. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-4712.
10. Music: Red Mountain Choir Concert. 7:30pm. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. 895-293-5535.

August
25. Fall Semester Begins

Information
24-hour Information Line: (702) 895-3131
Athletic Events: (702) 895-3267
Camping Information: (702) 895-3311
Campus Tours: (702) 895-3443
Arbor/Tree Tours: (702) 895-3392
Fine Arts Events: (702) 895-2286
Donna Bean Fine Arts Gallery: (702) 895-3893
Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History: (702) 895-2381
University Libraries: (702) 895-3392
UNLVtickets: (702) 720-3627, toll-free (866) 383-3267, or www.unlvtickets.com
Events are subject to change/cancellation
In Memoriam: Roman J. Zorn

Former UNLV president and professor Roman J. Zorn died Aug. 8. He was 85. He served UNLV as president from 1969 to 1973, and then as a history professor until his retirement in 1981, when he was named professor emeritus.

Zorn was posthumously awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree during the 2002 winter commencement ceremony. His service brought to UNLV the energy and dedication necessary to significantly expand the student body and more than 100 faculty members, build new facilities, and start new programs,

President Carol C. Harper said during the ceremony, "Dr. Zorn was among the first to suggest, in 1969, that UNLV build a law school."

During Zorn's tenure as president, UNLV established the colleges of Hotel Administration, Arts and Letters, Education, Business and Economics, and Allied Health Professions. He oversaw the construction of the Business Services Center, Chemistry, Flora Dungan Humanities, and William D. Carlson Education buildings, as well as the Judy Bayley Theatre, Holbert H. Hendrix Auditorium, and football stadium now named for Sam Boyd.

Zorn was a "lyrical scholar-administrator" who saw himself as a faculty member who left the classroom for a period of time to serve as an administrator," wrote Leonard "Par" Gatto in 1995, Zorn's fourth president, in Reinventing the System, a book on the history of winter commencements and Community College System of Nevada.

He fought the lingering perception that UNLV was just a bunch of campus, Goodall wrote. "Zorn worked hard to define UNLV's role within the system, ... He was widely respected as a firm spokesman for the student body and campus community.

Before coming to UNLV, Zorn was president of Keene State College in New Hampshire and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Rhode Island. He received a bachelor's degree from Rhode Island State Teachers College in Wisconsin and a master's degree in philosophy and a doctorate in American history from the University of Wisconsin.

He is survived by his wife, Ann Zorn, of Las Vegas, four children, and three grandchildren.

Kathryn Ann Norris, '78 Sec ordary Education, is founder and director of Norris Workshops, a geotechnical engineering firm. She also holds a master's degree in geotechnical engineering from UNLV.

Norman Tsang, '84 BS Account ing, has worked in hospitality management for 15 years and is now focusing on teaching at the university level. He lives in Las Vegas. He is also a professor of hospitality management for the University of Wisconsin. He received a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin. He was a co-founder of the Hospitality Industry Education Association.

DeAnn Fisher (Burns), '83 M.Ed., Curriculum & Instruction, is the assistant director of graduate admissions at Bryant College in Smithfield, R.I.

In spring 2003, Jenny Vaughan says, "I see that myself."

"Looking back, I see that my professors helped me to see a way into the world that was influenced by my explicit and uncompromising commitment to truth," she says. "Though he could have just as easily coaxed the truth in my writing to the surface, instead, with a few swift strokes and a magician's slight of hand, Davey would pick the flax of any beast I placed before him, take their temperature, sing to their soul, breathe life into their wayward sponge. They made it very clear to me that I could write whatever I needed to write," said the announcement was made in June and the ceremony was in October, so I had a long time to relish it."

Huddleston received a $1,000 start up prize and had her play published by Dramatic Publishing. Her other plays include Children of an Idol Moon, Madame John's Legacy, April 10, 1535, and Lysergic Acid Diethylamide. Her work has been produced in the United States, including Vital Theatre in New York City and Oakland Public Theatre. She now lives in Pleasant Hill, Calif.

Laird, a 1996 graduate, teaches playwriting at DePaul University in Chicago and is a resident playwright with Chicago Dramatists, where her play Ballad Hunter received its world premiere and a nomination for the Jeff Award for New Work. Her recent play, Sky Girls, received a National Endowment of the Arts puppetworking grant and is being featured in Chicago's Northlight Theatre through March 2003.

"My time as UNLV was a life-altering experience," Laird says. "It was sort of like hiking at high altitudes. You know your muscles should hurt because you're working really hard, but the lack of oxygen has you feeling punch-drunk. So, you come home and you cramped up and in front of the other, similarly admiring the view, completely unaware of the intensity of the climb."

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Settling an Example

Marcus Threats '87 BA Hotel Administration and '99 MBA

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

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

"Unfortunately, in Las Vegas, too many kids just don't get the message that a college degree is something they really can — and should — attain," Threats says. "They want, without a college degree, to go to high school, and they look forward to earning tips as dealers or bartenders. They don't always see that, long-term, the college degree will open so many doors for them."

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

The Las Vegas native said the mentorship activities also provide him a chance to give students direction in the management of the business of casinos. For example, when he tells students what he does for a living, he invariably gets the comment, "You must see a lot of money." Not so, he says. "Auditors don't have to see the cash; we just have to see the numbers."

He also combats the myth that college is too hard for high school students at the top of their classes. "I didn't do well in high school," he says. "I wish I had better study skills coming in. I want the kids in high school to know that it's never too late to get those skills. They will succeed in college if they try."

With the exception of seven years as a Navy pilot, Threats has spent his entire working life in casinos. In high school, he worked as a busboy and cook. While working on his bachelor's degree, he started dealing cards. Joining the Navy after graduation, he says, gave him a chance to pursue his childhood dream of flying. It also financed his adult dream of getting an MBA.

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

Eventually, Threats wants to return to daily casino operations as a well-rounded executive. "I like being with every person in the business, from the housekeeper to the president of the property," he says. "That's certainly a possibility for me just as it is for the kids I talk to."

— by Cate Weeks

CLASS NOTES

Lisa Bowman Roman, '80 MS Marketing, '90 Ed. Special Education, was pursuing dual master and master's degrees in dispute resolution at Pepperdine University School of Law in California. She also was presented in Pepperdine's Special Education program for addressing several advocacy issues for children with special needs. She plans to become a special education attorney and mediator in both California and Nevada. She lives in Calabasas, Calif., with her husband, Patrick, and their three children, two of whom have medical and special needs. The Roman family's life story of special needs and struggle will be featured in an upcoming issue of a parenting magazine.

Darrin Brighthorn, '90 BA Sociology, is senior project manager for Eveready Battery Company in San Diego, and a major in the U.S. Marine Corps. He volunteers with the Volunteers in the Yellow Springs Motorcycle Club's novice roadracer division.

Jennifer Grbibron Malone, '80 BA Communication Studies, is a founder and general manager of Homeroom Entertainment, a television production company. She recently oversaw production of 15 series and specials for various cable television networks. She lives in Beverly Hills, Calif.

James V. Covey III, '91 BA Management, is the operations manager for Las Vegas Technologies, a local IT solutions provider. He lives in the Whalou Spring Motorcycle Club's novice roadracer division.

Michael Gerenda, '92 BA Hotel Administration, holds a master's degree in education and teaches middle school science and history in Briggs, Tex. He is involved in the South Central Texas Alliance for Science Outreach program, which teaches students about ecology and survival skills. He coaches a boys basketball team using a "Hummer" Rebel playing style. He was just named top youth coach and runs a tour company for young adults.

Kenneth Kuykendall, '92 BS Hotel Administration, is a purchasing agent, owns and operates Michelle's Bridal, an invitation, accessory, and newsworthy financial planning business in Las Vegas. They have three children, Tyler, Patty, and Brandon, and a 95-pound black lab.

Melissa Harness Sangs, '95 BS Hotel Administration, is a sales system analyst and group room coordinator for the Four Points Sheraton in Las Vegas. Her husband, Lawrence, is general manager of the South Staff NICO Club on the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

Elaine Hernandez Sanchez, '95 BA Political Science and BA Criminal Justice, is general counsel for the City of Las Vegas. She was recently elected vice chair of the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District board.

Kristen Le Blanc Duncan, '95 BS Hotel Administration, is senior catering manager for the Hyatt Regency in Denver. She previously lived in Chicago. In September, she and Dauer Duncan were married at Inverleigh Castle in Scotland.

Ken Tamory, '95 BA Communication Studies, is division administrator for the Division of Rheumatology, Allergy & Immunology and for the Division of Dermatology at the University of California, San Diego. He is also director of the University of California, San Diego Department of Medicine. His responsibilities include systems and personnel management, business planning, fiscal analysis, clinical program management, database management, computer services, and research programs operations. He previously served as business coordinator of the UNLV Student Health Center and worked as medical assistant for public health for San Diego County. He is a veteran of the Air Force.

Jan McIntyre-Strasburg, '94 MA English, Ph.D. English, is director of computer-assisted writing and assistant professor of English at St. Louis University. She recently earned a Mellon Fellowship to study at the Huntington Library in San Marino, Calif. She worked on her dissertation under the editor of Thalass: A Journal of Literary Humor and Web manager for the American Humor Studies Association's site.

Peter Weingartner, '94 BS Hotel Administration, and wife, Michelle, operate Michelle's Bridal, a Las Vegas-based wedding planning business. He also manages his own financial planning business in Las Vegas. They have three children, Tyler, Patty, and Brandon, and a 95-pound black lab.

Francis J. Rodgers, '96 Ed. Special Education, is a special education teacher at Cash Elementary School in Henderson. He received the 2001-02 Distinguished Teacher award from the Southeast Region of the Clark County School District. He expects to complete his master's in educational leadership from UNLV in May.

William James Schutt, '96 BS Recreation, is a director of activities for NCAA Compliance Student Services at the University of Arizona in New York. He recently completed compliance with NCAA, American East Conference, and Northwest Conference regulations. He has created and now directs a comprehensive program for NCAA education-based teams and sees several intercollegiate sports teams using his methodology. He is a coordinator of NCAA academic compliance for UNLV. He lives in Gladi­ larz, N.Y.

Adam Botwink, '97 BA Psychology, and Jennifer E. Schut, '96 BA Political Science, were married in September 1999. Jennifer received a master's degree in school psychology from Northern Arizona University and is a school psychologist. Adam is a full-time national coordinator of NCAA academic compliance for UNLV. They live in Gladi­ larz, N.Y.

Alison Puglisi Hodge, '97 BS Mechanical Engineering, is a postdoctoral researcher at the Laboratory of NeuroInte­ gral Surgery Laboratory in Colorado. She recently received a doctorate in material and structural science and engineering from Northwestern University. She lives in Arizona.

Branden Wiktor, '97 BS Criminal Justice and BA Political Science, graduated in 2000 from University of Nevada-Las Vegas. He is a law student and has been a professional football player and is associate attorney for the Clark County School District.
President's Message
continued from page 2
and compelling possibilities for UNLV, much as the founder of the International Institute of Modern Letters are.

So it is with great pleasure that I introduce in this issue the wonderful visionaries behind the institute. You will find them pasting their personal stories, as well as their thoughts about literature, democracy, art, freedom of expression, and creativity, simply fascinating. I also believe you will admire them for leaving the path of conviction to answer, "Why not?" when asked "Why Las Vegas?"

They carry on the spirit of the many individuals who gave the same answer when the question of our university was at stake at various times over the course of the last five decades. And ultimately, they represent the expansive thinking and high ideals that make UNLV what it is today.

Modern Letters continued from page 13

fiction and poetry published annually in the United States are translations from another language.
The reason for that gap is primarily economic—the cost of translating works can easily consume the small profit they may generate—but the literary market is just as challenging to societal progress as censorship by dictators, Olsen says. "It has an isolating effect on our culture. It limits our ability to understand global changes, our ability to understand the peoples of other countries, such as Afghanistan and Iraq and Korea."

Writers in the Schools

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

The innovative project caught the attention of the National Endowment for the Arts, which awarded a $40,000 grant to the institute to present a full-scale program this semester. That grant was matched with $46,374 in applied research initiative funding from the UNLV College of Business to support the project.

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In Memoriam

John Standish, former director of financial aid, died Jan. 8 at the age of 79. He came to UNLV in 1965, and in 1989 was named director of financial aid. He also served as a member of the UNLV Alumni Association board and the Leadership Scatoldale program.

Standish was a native of Maryland Heights, Mo., and a graduate of the University of Missouri. He received a B.A. in economics from the University of Missouri in 1952 and a M.Ed. in counseling from the University of Missouri in 1954.

He was a member of the United Methodist Church and a 50-year member of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

He is survived by his wife, Joyce, and three children: Douglass, a former member of the UNLV faculty; Susan, who teaches mathematics at the University of Missouri; and Mark, who works for the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The family requests that contributions be made to the UNLV Foundation, c/o Development Office, Las Vegas, NV 89154-4000.
Face Lift
The Boyd School of Law hit another milestone in the fall with its move to its permanent home on campus. The old library buildings were renovated to accommodate the law school's classrooms and offices as well as the 225,000-volume Wiener-Rogers Law Library.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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