

Spring 2004

UNLV Magazine

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UNLV

Magazine

SPRING 2004

Coming of Age

**New preschool facility is
a center of learning for
students of all ages**





**Jim Zeiter '87 BS
Business and Finance
is a member of the
Board of Trustees for
the UNLV Foundation.
He leads this year's
efforts to raise
\$1.4 million in
unrestricted funds
for UNLV.**

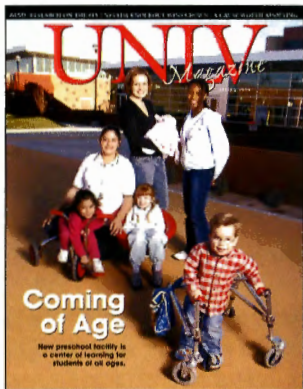
When I was an undergraduate student, I knew that my affiliation with UNLV would extend long beyond my days of classes in Beam Hall. Today, as managing partner of Insight Holdings and the father of two young boys, I appreciate why higher education is important to our economy, our community, and our future. I choose to invest my time and support in UNLV and I invite you to join me.

This spring, students from our Rebel Ring Phonathon will reach nearly 25,000 alumni to share personalized updates on their colleges and programs. When one of our students calls your home, strike up a conversation. Ask about your former professors. Share your college experiences. Learn how you can make a difference at UNLV.

These students will explain how you can help fund priority issues in your college or program of choice. Please consider carefully how you will invest in your alma mater, and make your pledge for annual support.

For more information about the UNLV Foundation and the Rebel Ring Phonathon, please call (702) 895-3641.

UNLV
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Aaron Mayes/UNLV Photo Services

On the Cover: Outside the new Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center are: (standing) UNLV/CSUN Preschool teacher and graduate student Jen Nash, holding Olivia Vaughan, and teacher's assistant Damika Parker; (kneeling) teacher's assistant Amanda Moss; and (from left) preschoolers Janelle Rodas, Kira Champelli, and Keenan Hubel.

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A Renewed Commitment

Iwould like to take this opportunity to thank the campus, the Southern Nevada community, the Board of Regents, and the chancellor

for their recent support of my contract extension. I was grateful for the unanimous vote by the board to extend my tenure as president to 2008, which will enable me and my leadership team to continue advancing the mission of our growing institution. Although I am naturally delighted by this development, I must note for the record that I believe that this affirming vote of confidence is chiefly attributable to the recent accomplishments of the university as a whole. As a result, I share this achievement with the entire campus and those in the community who have so generously contributed their time and resources to promote the success of UNLV.

"Of particular interest to the committee also was a campus culture that greets growth and change with a spirit of enthusiasm."

I also appreciate receiving the feedback provided by those who participated in my evaluation, which is an integral part of the contract renewal process; the input of faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and community leaders into the evaluation is invaluable and has produced some very useful information about our challenges and our strengths. I feel it is important that I share this feedback with the university's key stakeholders, as it offers some significant insights into both what we have accomplished and what lies ahead.

By way of background, I should note that two independent but complementary evaluations were conducted as part of the contract renewal process – one through procedures prescribed by UCCSN policy and the other performed on campus through the Faculty Senate – and both offered extremely valuable feedback. The first was conducted by a committee chaired by Dave Frohn-mayer, the president of the University of Oregon, who led two regents and two alumni as they followed UCCSN evaluation procedures. This included reviewing various background materials, such as planning documents, my self evaluation, and numerous reports, and conducting extensive interviews with representatives of virtually all of the university's major constituent groups, including faculty and department chairs; students and student leaders; deans and administrators; classified and professional staff; and alumni, donors, and members of the community. A total of 70 individuals from these various and critical constituencies participated in the process.

The evaluation report produced through this process included a variety of complimentary (even glowing) observations about

our achievements. It noted the visionary and transformative nature of our endeavors and indicated that what distinguishes these endeavors is our ability to translate and implement our vision into effective programs, clearly stated priorities, and carefully weighed choices.

For example, the report acknowledges the university's "tripling of external research support, a robust capital construction program, the breadth of new program and curricular offerings (including major schools of law, dentistry, and architecture,

among others), and the impressive demonstration of new sources of private support." Of particular interest to the committee also was a campus culture that greets growth and change with a spirit of enthusiasm. "The campus community, especially its new leadership team, is excited by the prospects for its growth and maturity. The decisions made to this point cumulatively are

responsible for the rapid growth in UNLV's resources, facilities, programs, and stature. Unlike many campuses in the United States, UNLV has embraced change and growth as positive values."

I was pleased to find that the report referred time and again to the existence of energy, support, and widely shared motivating values in the campus environment. The report states, "The remarkable growth in national stature of UNLV is reflected in the universally praised academic quality of its new hires, the excellence of its leadership team, and optimism and pride which is shared broadly internally and externally."

While this kind of praise was prevalent throughout the report, one should not assume that critical feedback was lacking from the evaluation team's comments. Many challenges were identified, however none were of a surprising nature to me or to anyone with current knowledge of the campus. I believe they were summarized most succinctly in the following paragraph: "President Harter's agenda is not without challenges that will require focused attention. ... Growth management remains an opportunity but also a road difficult to navigate. Translating the research focus into messages which gain political and public support is an ongoing challenge. Student services are perceived by some to require a greater customer ethic. Media coverage has not reflected the institution's growing national stature."

Some of these constructive criticisms were echoed in the survey results from faculty and staff members in the evaluation conducted for the UNLV Faculty Senate. The survey was designed to measure my performance in achieving a number of objectives, including most of the university's strategic goals. Although I was

continued on page 28

\$3 Million Pledged for New Research Facility

UNLV has received commitments of more than \$3 million to support its Science, Engineering and Technology Building, a facility that will attract top-caliber students and faculty while supporting economic diversification in Nevada.

The gifts, made through the UNLV Foundation, are from some of the university's long-time supporters. Sierra Health Services and its subsidiary company Health Plan of Nevada are partnering to give \$1.35 million. Fred Cox, a member of the UNLV Foundation Board of Trustees, and his wife, Harriet, have committed \$1 million. Bechtel National will contribute \$500,000. PBS&J, an engineering firm with local offices in Henderson, has promised \$150,000 (\$100,000 toward the building and \$50,000 for other purposes in UNLV's Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering).

"The Science, Engineering and Technology building is the cornerstone of our mission to become a premier research institution," UNLV President Carol C. Harter said. "We cannot express enough our appreciation for the outstanding support these community partners have shown in advancing our mission. Research activity is a vital part of our community, and these contributions will enable us to engage in cutting-edge, multidisciplinary research."

The building is a major step in increasing momentum for Nevada's economic diversification efforts. Empowered with the resources needed to compete with other states, UNLV will be able to recruit and retain the best and brightest students from Nevada and around the globe.

As these students graduate, they will increase the pool of qualified employees available to Nevada businesses. In addition, faculty and student researchers will be able to increase their collaborations with local industry and create the academic environment sought by technology-based companies.

"This facility is a unique resource that has tremendous implications for the region," said Raymond W. Alden, executive vice



The Science, Engineering and Technology Building shown in these conceptual drawings will feature multidisciplinary research space.



president and provost. "Not only will it greatly enhance the educational and research experiences of our students and faculty, but it will also allow UNLV to become a top research institution and serve as a catalyst for economic diversification in Nevada."

The 190,000-square-foot building, slated for completion in 2007, will include state-of-the-art labs, "smart" conference rooms, and integrated research space.

Research will include issues in energy and materials sciences, entertainment and convention technology, arid land sciences, and information, data, and communication technology. These fields of study will lead to discoveries ranging from advancements in robotics to new chemical and biological sensors for environmental pollutants. All in all, the building will improve Nevada's competitive edge with surrounding mountain states by offering one of the most advanced research facilities in the Southwest, Harter said.

For more information, visit www.unlv.edu/pubs/scientech.

Dental School Clinic Now Screening Patients

The UNLV School of Dental Medicine is now screening patients for acceptance in its clinic, which will open this summer.

The clinic is open to all Nevadans including those participating in the Nevada Check-Up and Medicaid programs.

Patients will be treated by dental students under the supervision of faculty dentists. Patients will be accepted if they have dental needs that fit with the students' educational needs.

There is no charge for the initial screening appointment. Subsequent treatment fees at the clinic are about one-third to

one-half of the customary fees in the community. If a patient has insurance, the school will assist in billing the insurance company for reimbursement.

Patients must be available for one three- to four-hour appointment at least once every two weeks until their dental work is completed. They must have reliable transportation to the school, which is located at Charleston Boulevard and Shadow Lane in downtown Las Vegas.

For more information, call the School of Dental Medicine at 702-895-0451.

Boyd Law School Achieves Milestone

The William S. Boyd School of Law has been admitted as a member of the prestigious Association of American Law Schools, a nonprofit organization of 164 institutions. The association admits law schools based on such criteria as the quality of law faculty scholarship and teaching, the suitability of its law library and facilities, and the effectiveness of its curriculum.



Aaron Mayes/UNLV Photo Services

Harrah's Archives Housed at Lied Library

Hundreds of photographs, publications, documents, and artifacts chronicling the 65-year history of Harrah's Entertainment Inc. are now housed in special collections at the Lied Library, thanks to a donation by the Las Vegas-based gaming company.

"Anyone wanting a window into the growth and changes in the gaming/hotel/resort industry over the years will find this corporate collection invaluable," said Peter Michel, director of special collections.

The extensive materials include celebrity memorabilia, financial reports, publicity files, corporate communications, film, videotape, and promotional items. The eclectic collection also contains materials about founder William Harrah's large antique car collection and his historical game and card collection.

The collection is part of the Gaming Studies Research Center and is open to the public.

Historian Documents Nevada Test Site Memories

Mary Palevsky's resume contains all the academic qualifications you would expect of an oral historian. Yet her most compelling credential is that she was born into a family of storytellers and scientists.

Her parents – both scientists with the Manhattan Project, the secret World War II atomic weapons development program – would often tell stories that, Palevsky realized later, were filled with the moral dilemmas associated with the project's legacy.

To contribute your story to the Nevada Test Site Oral History Project, contact Mary Palevsky at 702-895-0489 or mary.palevsky@ccmail.nevada.edu

Now as director of UNLV's Nevada Test Site Oral History Project, Palevsky will document similar stories of people involved with the Nevada Test Site (NTS).

"There are many interesting parallels between the ethos of scientists, like my father, who did no weapons work postwar, and of those who worked at the NTS," Palevsky said. "They all shared an amazing commitment to ingenuity, hard work, and sacrifice that their work demanded of them, regardless of their politics. However, I think a lot of people have misconceptions about who these scientists really were

and whether they could be human in certain ways."

Working with history professor Andy Kirk and sociology professor Robert Futtrell, Palevsky expects to interview more than 100 individuals this year. The three-year project is funded by a \$582,000 federal grant.

Interviews will include scientists, administrators, and politicians as well as technicians, soldiers, secretaries, security guards, and others who did not have high-profile roles at the site. Also among proposed interviewees are protesters, "downwinders,"

and American Indians whose lives were impacted by the test site.

"The fabulous thing about oral history is that it's a method to document the experiences and views of people who would not normally be included in the historical record," she said. "Their voices can democratize history, reminding us that history is made by all of us."

Palevsky's own interest in oral history didn't manifest itself until the late 1980s, when she began recording the memoirs of her dying father. Although the interviews left her with as many questions as they did

answers, the experience, along with the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, inspired her to seek out other Manhattan Project scientists.

Her research resulted in a book, *Atomic Fragments: A Daughter's Questions*, which weaves together personal inquiry and oral history to examine the legacy of the Manhattan Project and to better understand the impact it had on her own life. She hopes the NTS project will do the same for others.

"Many people's lives in Nevada were affected by what happened at the test site, so I think that the stories that come out of this project will be important to them," she said. "It's an essentially interesting picture of the developments in American culture during the Cold War, not the least of which is the amazing secrecy surrounding nuclear weapons and the science behind them."

"I don't think we comprehend the extent to which nuclear weapons have changed our lives. What is striking to me is the diversity of views people hold about their meaning."

All tapes and transcripts from the project will be housed in the Lied Library's special collections department, where they will be made available to the public.

— Gian Galassi

KUNV Pumps Up the Volume with New Programming

By Gian Galassi

As more and more venues catering to Las Vegas' jazz enthusiasts close, KUNV 91.5 FM continues to breathe new life into the classic art form.

Now in its sixth year with an all-jazz format on weekdays and an eclectic mix of world music on weekends, the station has been steadily increasing its audience. And while simply staying on air in a notoriously difficult market would be cause enough for some to rest on their laurels, the handful of dedicated staff members and volunteers are not satisfied with the status quo. They continue to both strengthen and refocus their efforts.

Under the management of communications professor Anthony Ferri, the station has made several changes to expand its loyal fan base. Most notable is the addition of program director Gig Brown. A former radio broadcaster, saxophonist, and percussionist, Brown knows what it takes to please an audience. His extensive experience includes stints at some of the nation's most popular jazz radio stations, including the industry leader WBGO in New Jersey.

"We are now refocusing our playlist to bring more continuity to our sound," says Brown, who wants to restore a consistent flow to the daily schedule. "Listeners are going to have a much clearer idea of where the music they're hearing is headed."

Lori Huerta, director of marketing and membership, explained that the station's appeal has always been its traditional jazz programming, which was largely missing from the Las Vegas airwaves before KUNV's 1998 format change. "There are other jazz stations out there but they tend to target more of the soft jazz audience," says Huerta. "Our listeners tend to be local musicians and jazz aficionados who want to preserve traditional jazz in town and who want to hear intelligent information about the music they love."

Brown hopes a recent retooling of the production suite will attract partnership opportunities with international artists. For example, the station hopes to become the home of the nationally distributed program "JazzSet with Dee Dee Bridgewater." Bridgewater and her producer, Ginger Bruner, are local residents.



Geri Koday/UNLV Photo Services

Since Gig Brown became KUNV's program director, the station has retooled its production suite to attract new programming, such as the nationally distributed "JazzSet with Dee Dee Bridgewater." Brown is pictured here with KUNV announcer Freddie Jackson in the background.

Although jazz will always be the main focus of KUNV, two programs have been added recently to attract a wider audience.

Last fall, KUNV became the home for a retooling of a popular radio program hosted by Las Vegas weatherman Nate Tannenbaum. The program, which can be heard Saturdays at 10 a.m., features notable local guests and out-of-town visitors who discuss and play eclectic selections of their favorite music.

Also added is "Our Metropolis," a half-hour talk show Sunday mornings about Southern Nevada issues. It is hosted by history professor Hal Rothman, and guests have included Pat Mulroy, general manager of the Las Vegas Valley Water Authority; Dina Titus, state senator and UNLV professor; and Thom Reilly, Clark County manager.

Huerta and Brown both hope that KUNV's increasingly diverse programming and growing popularity will translate into more financial support for the station. It relies on membership dues, underwriting support, and grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

to pay its bills – including its off-campus rent. The station occasionally receives support from various Las Vegas venues and the artists who play them, but there's no misconception about the nature of the particular jazz scene it promotes.

"While smooth jazz artists are traveling the world playing 17,000-seat arenas," Brown explains, "the traditional jazz musicians that we typically promote are still playing for \$50 and dinner at the local pub."

On the station's "wish list" for 2004 is new equipment for remote broadcasts, server space for broadcasting live over the Internet, a music scheduling and cataloging system, and better production facilities. "The things this station has been able to accomplish with the equipment and facilities that we have is nothing short of amazing," says Brown. "But we need to tap into additional resources if we're going to build on those accomplishments and truly reach our full potential."

For more information, visit kunv.unlv.edu or call 702-798-9169.

■ Educational psychology professor **Gregory Schraw** and anthropology professor **Alan Simmons** were named the 2004 Barrick Distinguished Scholars, which recognizes the achievements of faculty members with more than 10 years of service. Schraw was noted as the second most-published educational psychologist of the past five years in a recent productivity study. His research focuses on how people monitor their own thinking, how individuals experience spontaneous interest in a phenomenon, the assumptions about the origin and acquisition of knowledge, and the impact of highlighting relevant information when teaching. Simmons has spent more than 25 years studying the Neolithic Revolution, the period in which humans adopted food production strategies beyond hunting and gathering.



Anthropology professor Alan Simmons

■ Psychology professor **Daniel Allen** and geosciences professor **Zhongbo Yu** received the 2004 Barrick Scholar Awards, which recognizes faculty with 10 or fewer years of service. Allen's work primarily focuses on the origin of schizophrenia. He has identified at least four schizophrenia subtypes and hopes that by better understanding the functional brain abnormalities specific to each subtype, further advances in preventing and treating the devastating illness can be made. Yu has developed a graduate program in hydrology and hydrogeology and has secured more than \$1 million in research funding. Yu's research has included studies of groundwater contamination at Yucca Mountain.

■ **Michael Bowers** was named vice provost for academic affairs. He joined the political science department in 1988, was promoted to full professor in 1995, and was serving as department chair before the promotion. He also served as assistant/associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts for 11 years.

Hamrick Named Athletics Director



The last time Michael Hamrick worked at UNLV he was an intern in sports promotions. This fall he returned to take the top athletics position on campus.

Now with a few months as athletics director under his belt, Hamrick's top priority is enhancing community support for UNLV's programs.

"Great public universities have strong ties to the communities in which they are located, and athletics provides a way for people to connect with the campus," Hamrick said. "At the same time, teams just don't win

championships without loyal fans cheering them on. By inviting people in the community to be part of our university family through athletics, we hope to create an environment for our student-athletes to grow as individuals, as players, and as scholars."

Hamrick previously was director of intercollegiate athletics at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C. He has also served as athletics director at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and in several assistant athletic director positions. He began his career with the UNLV internship.

Under Hamrick's leadership, East Carolina had no major NCAA violations, doubled its athletics budget, doubled season football ticket sales to 17,000, and increased single-game attendance significantly.

■ Civil engineering professor **Shashi Nambisan** received the 2003 Outstanding Educator Award from the Institute of Transportation Engineering. The award recognizes his accomplishments in teaching, research, and service to the profession. Nambisan was nominated for the award by his students and has involved more than 90 graduate and undergraduate students and 20 high school students in his research efforts. He is the director of UNLV's Transportation Research Center, which was created in 1988 to promote and conduct transportation-related research and policy analysis. Along with his UNLV colleagues and students, Nambisan has studied new and emerging technologies to improve transportation safety and efficiency.

■ **Sam Connolly** was named the university's new associate vice president for human resources and affirmative action. He comes with 23 years' experience in the human resources field. Most recently, he served as assistant to the chancellor and human resources director of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Previously, he worked at North Carolina State University at Raleigh and served as a chaplain with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division.

Hamrick led the development of a comprehensive gender equity plan that increased scholarships for female student-athletes by 167 percent. At the same time, the school's student-athlete graduation rates well exceeded national averages (at 66 percent).

Under his leadership, East Carolina spent \$46 million improving and building athletic facilities, and he raised \$16.8 million in private funds to construct a strength and conditioning/multipurpose building and a baseball stadium/office complex.

Hamrick earned a master's degree in sports administration from Ohio University. He also has a bachelor's degree in education from Marshall University in West Virginia, where he was on a football scholarship as a starting linebacker.

Parables from (a Not Quite) Paradise, NV 89154

Also: *Heart Lines and Lyrics* and *Over the Top*

by William N. Thompson
1st Books Library, 2003

KNPR public radio listeners in Las Vegas are familiar with William Thompson's colorful metaphors and uninhibited expressions of opinion. Now 30 commentaries from the UNLV professor of public administration have been collected into *Parables from (A Not Quite) Paradise, NV 89154*. The essays – which he hopes "occasionally irritate and arouse ire" – frequently focus on his specialty, gaming, but also cover such divergent topics as Las Vegas growth issues, nuclear waste, and Runnin' Rebel basketball.

If you like his parables, you may also like his verse in *Heart Lines and Lyrics*, from Billy Gamble and Friends, written over some 43 years with friend Anthony J. Juliano. Billy Gamble is Thompson's alter ego.

And if you hunger for more of Thompson's iconoclastic way of looking at life, try the third book he published last year, *Over the Top, Solutions to the Sisyphus Dilemmas of Life*, written with former student Bradley L. Kenny. He describes *Over the Top* as a self-help book for managers, but he offers lessons for anyone who feels that life consists of "pushing big rocks up a mountain, only to see them roll back down again ... over and over."

Desert Seasons

A Year in the Mojave

Journalled and sketched by Ruth K.A. Devlin
Nature photography by Frank Serafini
Stephens Press, 2004

Another small treasure representing the author's personal sensibilities is *Desert Seasons: A Year in the Mojave*. Ruth K. A. Devlin, '88 BA Elementary Education and '96 MS Curriculum and Instruction, has coupled her observations and illustrations of the Mojave Desert with photographs by UNLV elementary education professor Frank Serafini to create a book intended for young people, but suitable for a coffee table belonging to readers of any age. The publisher is Stephens Press of Las Vegas, which took particular care with Serafini's color photographs of sand dunes, cactus, and other Mojave images.

The two met when the professor visited a seminar on English language learning that Devlin was teaching. Both are dedicated to literacy programs and, while talking prior to class, discovered another mutual interest: the Mojave Desert. Devlin has known the Mojave for 23 years; Serafini is a new arrival.

Serafini has, however, photographed northern Arizona and southern Utah for the past decade, and has contributed to a number of travel magazines. "It keeps me balanced," he says of his photography, which is an extension of his hiking and traveling.

Noting that many photos in the book are of Red Rock Canyon, he says, "I had been up there many times, but never got a picture I liked. Then one cloudy morning, I went out there and the lighting was perfect. About eight photos in the book are from that single morning."

When not enjoying the desert, Devlin is a second-grade English language learning specialist at the Paradise Professional Development School on the UNLV campus.

The Lucky

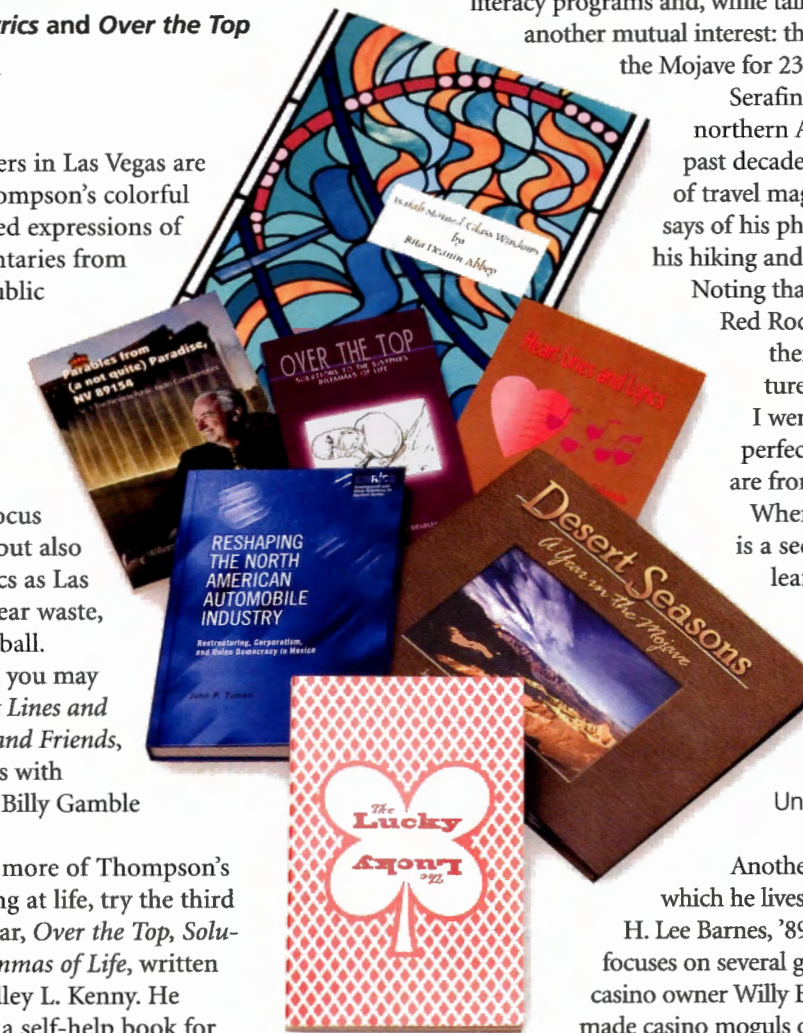
by H. Lee Barnes
University of Nevada Press, 2003

Another alum writing about the land in which he lives, but following a historical theme, is H. Lee Barnes, '89 BA English. His novel, *The Lucky*, focuses on several generations of Las Vegas, including casino owner Willy Bobbins, who represents the self-made casino moguls of yesteryear. "Without the Benny Binions and Sam Boyds in real life, fictional characters of that scope would seem too fantastic to believe," Barnes said, adding that a recent reviewer (new to Las Vegas) said exactly that about Willy Bobbins. "Too bad the reviewer never met Benny over a bowl of chili and listened to the stories."

Barnes did have the chili-and-stories opportunity in 1970, when Binion auditioned him for a dealing job. "I'd practiced exactly one day and made a mess of the audition. When I came off the game, he greeted me with a sardonic smile, called me 'son,' and said that some people don't pick it up right away."

Writing is one thing that the Community College of Southern Nevada teacher seems to have picked up without difficulty. At UNLV he studied under novelist Richard Wiley and graduated as the outstanding senior in what was then the College of Arts and Letters. He went on to earn a master of fine arts degree in creative writing at Arizona State University. He has published *Gunning for Ho* and *Dummy Up and Deal*. His *Talk to Me, James Dean* is a collection of short stories published last fall, and he currently has three works of fiction and non-fiction in various stages of progress.

And although he didn't pass muster with Benny Binion, he has since worked as a dealer in Las Vegas.



What could tiny fruit flies and human beings possibly have in common? While most of us probably would respond, “absolutely nothing,” a team of UNLV researchers is proving that these insects are more closely related to us than we might have ever imagined.

“Few people outside the circles of biology appreciate that the brain cells of the fruit fly are remarkably similar to those in humans,” biological sciences professor Stephen Roberts says. “Because of the similarity, studies on these insects can help us understand – and perhaps even improve – the human condition. Surprisingly enough, fruit flies have even been the study organism of several Nobel laureates in medicine and physiology.”

These small creatures can be conditioned for learning – much like the famous dogs used in Pavlov’s historic work, Roberts notes. But more importantly, the fruit fly offers a powerful model for identifying the genetic, developmental, and environmental underpinnings of brain anatomy and function in humans.

Consequently, the common fruit fly is at the heart of a three-year study led by Roberts and fellow professor Steven de Belle to determine the negative impacts of environmental stress on early brain development and behavior. Along with graduate student Xia Wang and laboratory technician David Green, they are also exploring

the flipside of this issue to determine if a sensory-enriched environment can positively influence brain growth and function – or even repair damage caused by prior exposure to stressful conditions.

With a \$330,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant, the group first intends to discover how exposure to heat stress and environmental toxins disrupts brain maturation. They have already learned that subjecting developing flies to high temperatures for 35 minutes a day causes significant developmental disruption to a section of the insect brain that is similar to the human hippocampus, the center of associative learning. (Further findings, however, indicate that the heat stress has little effect on other brain regions or body parts of the flies.) As part of this initial experimentation, the team also hopes to identify how this impairment directly affects the flies’ learning and memory functions.

The next step is to determine whether a sensory-enriched environment with a constant optimum temperature and pleasing aromas – which to a fruit fly are rotten fruit odors – will “heal” the impaired brain anatomy and cognitive functions.

The final goal is to identify the genes – regions of DNA that contain the instructions for synthesizing proteins – that are affected by stress and sensory enrichment. There are roughly 30,000 genes in humans that provide the code for approximately

100,000 proteins – cut these numbers in half and that’s what it takes to make a fruit fly.

“With the latest DNA technologies, including microarray analysis, we will be able to identify the environmentally sensitive genes that affect brain development and memory,” Roberts says. “Perhaps one day these could be used as targets of gene therapy that might prove useful for those suffering from such things as memory loss, Alzheimer’s disease, or brain injuries.”

Both scientists study a variety of genetically engineered flies in their research programs, although their joint project employs wild flies collected at Gilcrease Orchard in north Las Vegas. Much of their work takes place in the newly established UNLV Stress Genomics Center, a 1,200-square-foot biotechnology facility located in White Hall. The center is the only one of its kind in Southern Nevada and houses a half million dollars’ worth of advanced molecular biology equipment for research related to human, animal, and plant genes.

The center further affords students the opportunity to actively enhance their classroom experiences by working in the laboratory on a major federally sponsored research project. Funding for the facility was made available through a grant from the NSF’s Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) that was written by Roberts and biological sciences faculty member Carl Reiber.

Since their arrival at UNLV, Roberts (hired in 1999) and de Belle (hired in 1997) have received more than \$5 million in federal research funding. The money is supporting the development and maintenance of important life science research facilities, such as the UNLV Center for Biological Imaging, which is under de Belle’s direction. The work of the two scholars, who have published their findings in some of the country’s top professional journals, including *Nature Genetics*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, and *Science*, reflects the strides UNLV is making in becoming a major metropolitan research university.

“This research is not only covering new ground but is expected to be a springboard for additional studies of the biological and social environment and its influences on gene expression, brain development, and learning and memory,” Roberts says. ■



Fly guys Steven de Belle and Stephen Roberts have received more than \$5 million in federal funds for life sciences research.

Fruitful Research

As odd as it may seem, this fruit fly is helping researchers uncover the effects of stress on human brain development



By Caryn Key
Photos by Geri Kodey



Adopting a Cause

Center for Urban Partnerships is fostering hope for Nevada's hardest-to-place children looking for a home.

By Gian Galassi

It's no secret that child welfare agencies have long been overwhelmed by heavy workloads and bantam budgets. Nevada is no exception. Social workers nationwide are struggling to find permanent placements for nearly 126,000 children who, in some cases, have been waiting the better part of their childhood for a place to call home.

Compounding the difficulty of the job, is the fact that approximately 50 percent of these kids are over the age of 9 or have other "special needs," which, studies show, significantly decrease their chances of being adopted. In adoption terms, special needs children include those who are older, from racial or ethnic minority groups, members of sibling groups, or who have special emotional, behavioral, developmental, or medical problems. Although recent federal legislation is providing incentives to promote the adoption of special needs kids, many child welfare workers believe that the support infrastructure required to successfully improve the situation still needs shoring up.

For the past two years, UNLV's Center for Urban Partnerships (CUP) has collaborated with state and county child welfare agencies on a comprehensive Adoption Project to do just that. CUP researchers believe that the Adoption Project, which is funded by a state grant, will help shape future adoption policy, improve placement practices, and enhance worker and student training.

Special Needs, Special Solutions

The project's initial study, titled "Adoption: Those Who Wait, Those Who Do Not, and the Reasons Why," developed an in-depth profile of the children awaiting adoption in Nevada. Working with the state Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and the Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS), UNLV researchers conducted an exhaustive review of the case records to determine exactly who these children are, where they reside, what obstacles they face, and what factors increase the likelihood for their adoption.

The results, which were compiled last summer, were typical of a national profile: the most difficult children for Nevada to place are older children of color who have multiple special needs and who have spent numerous years in foster care.

While the realities for this subset of kids are seemingly grim, CUP interim director Ramona Denby says the data enhances child welfare professionals' efforts to find permanent homes for children.

"Since we know who's spending the longest periods of time in the foster care system, we can specifically address their needs in future recruitment strategies," says Denby, who is also associate dean for research in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs and associate professor of social work. "But it's not an easy thing to do. Some of these kids have experienced horrendous abuse and have been left with severe emotional problems. Unfortunately, a 9-year-old who requires psychiatric care is not always an attractive option for adoptive parents."

Building on previous studies, Denby and her colleagues will further define what motivates the people who do adopt children with special needs and what the state can do to target similar prospective parents and help them follow through with an adoption.



"Unfortunately sometimes parents or adoptive children who have significant physical or psychological problems only to give them back in six months because they were unprepared or overwhelmed."

— Ramona Denby, Center for Urban Partnerships

Often the most able caregivers for these children are the people who already have an emotional investment in their lives. Kinship care, or the arrangement in which a family member accepts primary responsibility for a child, is considered to be the best option for kids when the birthparents are no longer able to care for them.

"Relatives are usually the most viable resource these kids have," Denby explains. "Most relatives are willing to take kids in temporarily, but we're looking at ways we can increase the support services available

to them so that they can more easily become permanent options for the kids. It's a much better alternative than having the kids experience multiple foster care placements with strangers."

Although placement of special needs kids is a major challenge for child welfare officials, recent federal legislation has dramatically improved adoption rates across the country. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 is credited with more than doubling the number of adoptions in Nevada by reducing unnecessary administrative barriers and providing some modest financial incentives. This past November, the federal government renewed ASFA, expanded an adoption tax credit, and included a provision that awards states an additional \$4,000 for every adoption of a child over the age of 9.

Naturally, the legislation has been hailed by most child welfare workers as a long-overdue victory for children who might have otherwise spent their entire childhood in foster care or group homes. But the law's attendant success has also uncovered some deficiencies in the system, not the least of which is the aforementioned lack of support services available to both pre- and post-adoptive families.

As a result, the number of dissolved or unsuccessful adoptions has grown along

with the number of placements of special needs kids.

"Unfortunately what happens sometimes is that parents will adopt children who have significant physical or psychological problems only to give them back in six months because they were unprepared or overwhelmed by the commitment that these kids require," says Denby. "One of the most important aspects of the center's research will lead to a recruitment protocol that will not only help the state target prospective adoptive parents but will also

identify the kinds of support these families need to ensure that the adoptions become permanent ones."

According to a study conducted in 2000 by Thom Reilly, an adjunct professor of social work and Clark County manager, the most needed services reported by adoptive families include financial subsidies for health care, in- and out-of-home day care, tutoring, individual counseling, and support groups.

Denby says the current research shaping the recruitment protocol addresses many of the unmet needs identified in Reilly's study and has already led to the development of curriculum and training for child welfare workers, students, foster parents, and other stakeholders.

"It is simply impractical to stop at uncovering factors that will lead to adoption likelihood," Denby explains. "Nevada's children and the professionals who work on their behalf are better served by research discoveries that provide sound information and tangible approaches to decreasing the number of dissolved adoptions and support adoption success."

Given the mandate of legislation like ASFA and others, Denby and her colleagues on the Adoption Project's advisory council believe it is critical that child welfare practitioners and policymakers be given every opportunity to educate themselves about the most current knowledge borne out of CUP's research.

One method toward reaching this goal is the development of a new training series titled "An Integration of Best Practices and Child Welfare Competencies." The series condenses the findings of several School of Social Work and CUP research projects into a comprehensive training curriculum and will benefit child welfare stakeholders — from UNLV students to agency workers to prospective parents. The project's researchers include School of Social Work faculty members Vicky Albert, An-Pyng Sun, Adrienne Ekas, and Stacey Hardy-Desmond. The training series is led by project coordinator Sandra Owens-Kane and CUP project administrator Sophia Warith, while Laurie Smith, formerly with the School of Social Work, serves as the project evaluator.

Launched earlier this year and facilitated by the UNLV distance education program,



Aaron Mayes/UNLV Photo Services

Center for Urban Partnerships director Ramona Denby (right) and graduate student Constance Brooks are matching UNLV resources with community service agency needs to address social issues, such as improving the state's foster care system.

the five-module training program is available via Web-based streaming video or on VHS cassette and covers topics such as kinship care, sibling placements, independent living issues, adoption, substance abuse, appreciative inquiry, and the Multi-ethnic Placement Act. Additional modules will be created later this year as data from other School of Social Work and CUP studies become available.

The preliminary results were also used to revise curriculum used in social work courses at UNLV, including one undergraduate course in general child welfare issues and a graduate course designed for family-centered practitioners.

More Than Research

Founded in 1996, the Center for Urban Partnerships, located in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs, addresses issues critical to Southern Nevada. In addition to conducting applied research, the center matches community needs to the resources of expert faculty, who provide grant and contract writing, program evaluation and development, and policy planning.

"The community gets more than research from the center; it gets

professionals with a human services background who truly care about the issues," says Denby of the center's interdisciplinary faculty and staff. "We not only understand the adoption issue from a researcher's perspective, but we understand it from the children's and the professionals' perspectives."

CUP assigns faculty researchers and 10 research associates to each project. Most of the associates are either advanced-level master's students or Ph.D. candidates. And because of the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, the center draws the best and the brightest students from such fields as social work, public administration, counseling, criminal justice, psychology, and law.

Constance Brooks is one such student. When she's not studying for her master's degree in social work, she serves as research division coordinator for the center, where she is charged with identifying resources from across the campus and the community that will benefit a given project. Constance has organized the efforts of an impressive interdisciplinary cadre of UNLV researchers, including Patricia Markos and Larry Ashley of counseling,

Joanne Thompson and Mary Ann Overcamp-Martini of social work, Daniel Allen and Roslyn Caldwell of psychology, and Lori Glasgow of public administration.

"One of my objectives is to bring various community stakeholders to the table who may not have otherwise been working together," says Brooks, who credits CUP for enriching her educational experience at UNLV. "Working at the center provides students like me with the practical experience that comes from applying what I've learned in the classroom to real-life situations. It's a unique reciprocal relationship because it serves students' needs while also serving the community."

It's this comprehensive approach that Denby says makes the center an asset to the community.

"This is part of what UNLV is — it's part of our commitment to the community. Most of the agencies that we partner with couldn't otherwise obtain the kinds of service we provide because they simply just don't have the budgets for it. And that's really the beauty of our partnership. We're able to utilize resources from across our campus — resources that would probably cost three times as much from a private firm — and address issues that, ultimately, affect us all."

Although most stakeholders understand that the real change they wish to see in the child welfare system will take a significant amount of time, the center and its partners are steadfast in their commitment to chipping away at the obstacles. Progress is being made, however, in that each year greater numbers of children are finding permanent homes with committed, loving families. Ultimately, that's the goal of the project.

"The work that we do can be extremely challenging at times," says Brooks. "But at the end of each day, it is truly gratifying to see those challenges become opportunities for me to have ideal learning experiences and for CUP to truly be of service to the citizens of Nevada." ■

Interested in adoption? Call Adoption Services at (702) 486-7841.

For more information on the Center for Urban Partnership, visit www.unlv.edu/centers/cup/

Preschool Comes of Age

By Diane Russell
Photos by Aaron Mayes
and Geri Kodey


For the children, it's a fun place to be. Easels set up near a mock dry riverbed provide a picturesque setting for a would-be Monet. In nearby classrooms, panels of glass windows can be raised like garage doors to allow the preschool teachers to expand their lessons from the traditional classroom setting to the outdoors. And, come summertime, the dancing waters of a permanent water play area will be the source of refreshing relief from Las Vegas' triple-digit temperatures.

For the children, the newly opened Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center, which now houses the UNLV/CSUN Preschool is a fun place to be.

For their parents – many of them UNLV students – it's an enriching place for their children to learn while they attend their own classes or work. For the staff of the center and for administrators, professors, and students of the College of Education, the \$5.8 million center is a dream realized.

The 20,932 square feet of indoor space allows the preschool staff to improve its already excellent programming (it is one of only a few centers in Southern Nevada to achieve accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children) in ways that simply wouldn't have been possible in the old facilities in the Carlson Education Building and in portable units nearby. Set on 62,000 square feet of land at the north end of the campus, the new center has two-and-a-half times more outdoor space than the old facilities.

And not only did the center get *more* space when it moved into its new quarters in January, it – just as importantly – got *improved* space. Two specially designed research classrooms, for instance, are equipped with laptop stations and one-way mirrors so UNLV students and their professors can observe the lessons without disrupting the



Daniel Tijerina and Kira Champelli play the drums on some outdoor equipment at the newly opened Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center. The center offers parents quality daycare for their children while employing UNLV work-study students, such as Jacklyn Jallal, a junior majoring in political science.

Choosing Your Child's Preschool

Catherine Lyons, director of the UNLV/CSUN Preschool, offers this list of questions to ask when selecting a preschool:

1. Is the facility licensed? Check with your state, county, or city licensing departments to see if a school had any violations noted during inspections or if any complaints have been filed against it.

2. Has the school achieved national accreditation? Accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (www.naeyc.org) shows that the school is committed to ongoing program improvement, Lyons says.

3. How large are the classes? Lyons recommends no more than 20 children per classroom with a minimum of two adults.

4. What credentials and certifications do the teachers hold?

5. What safety features are incorporated into the facility? "In general, the classroom should be arranged at the child's level," Lyons says. "If they can't reach an item, they won't be able to learn from it."

6. Does the curriculum promote hands-on, center-based learning? "Children this age should not be sitting at desks doing worksheets. They should be able to choose from skill-building activities."

7. How is literature integrated into the classroom? "Beginning at birth – if not before – children should be in a literature-rich environment in which stories are read, discussed, and made up by the children."

8. How do teachers facilitate friendships? "Forming friendships is one of the developmental milestones for young children. We give families the opportunity to contact one another to arrange play dates, and we hold monthly events so families can see us facilitate interactions among the children."

9. How is discipline handled? "Our center uses redirection rather than time outs when children exhibit inappropriate behaviors."



The preschool's curriculum creates a literature-enriched environment with hands-on learning activities. (Above) Tara Louviere, a full-time teacher, with 3-year-old Kamileah Kerr. (Top right) Jack Hager. (Right) Teacher's assistant Melissa Stinnett, with Georgia McKnight.



classroom. A similar setup exists in the infirmary for nursing and physical therapy students and researchers. While a camera in one classroom currently enables lessons to be filmed and studied later by education students, teachers, and professors, all the classrooms are camera-ready.

"I never expected an opportunity like this," says Catherine Lyons, who has headed the UNLV/CSUN Preschool for eight years. "Being told you're going to be part of developing an entirely new, state-of-the-art early childhood center from conception through implementation is something I never would have dreamed of. Yet here it is."

"This new center is enabling us to build on what I believe was already outstanding programming in ways that will greatly benefit the families we serve as well as the UNLV students who use the center in their academic endeavors," she says, noting that the preschool is a resource to students majoring in education, psychology, physical therapy, nursing, and food and beverage management. In addition, the center is one of the largest employers of student workers on campus, with 135 students employed in such positions as classroom aids.

"This center is a tremendous resource for parents pursuing a college degree," says Gene Hall, dean of the College of Education.

"It removes the challenge of finding high-quality, affordable, and convenient care for their children while they pursue their college degrees."

One obvious improvement is the numbers of people who will benefit from the center. Lyons estimates that where the old preschool used to serve approximately 90 youngsters at one time, the new early childhood center will serve about 165 children.

However, those numbers don't paint an adequate picture of the service the center provides to both the campus and larger Southern Nevada communities, she notes. Because so many of the youngsters are children of UNLV students who often are enrolled at the center on a part-time basis that mirrors the parents' class schedules, a more accurate measure may be the number of families served per semester. Lyons

continued on page 29



(Above) Classrooms are designed with a variety of learning centers for small-group interactions as well as a central carpeted area for activities involving the whole class.



(Left) Chad Edralin, a sophomore majoring in criminal justice, with Myles Huddleston (facing the camera). "Working here is not only helping me get through college, it's helping me improve my professional communication skills," says Edralin, who is one of 135 work-study students employed by the preschool. "The parents of the infants ask a lot of questions about how their day was and how they're adjusting. It's also kind of my way to give back in the way that my mom – who's been a foster parent – has always given back to children."

Alumni Association Recognizes Top Alumni, Supporter

Through its annual awards programs, the UNLV Alumni Association recognizes individuals who are sterling performers in their fields and who symbolize the ideals of higher learning. The association recently named television producer Anthony Zuiker as its 2003 Alumnus of the Year while community leader Robert N. Broadbent was honored posthumously with the Silver State Award – the top award presented to a non-alumnus. In addition, seven graduates received the Outstanding College Alumni Award.

Zuiker, '91 BA Communication Studies, is the creator and executive producer of the hit television series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigations* and *CSI: Miami*. He has lectured in UNLV classes and continues to support the film department. Zuiker also received an honorary doctorate of humane letters from UNLV in May 2003.

Broadbent, a pharmacist, served as a Boulder City mayor and Clark County commissioner. As director of aviation, he oversaw the expansion of McCarran International Airport. He is credited with making the newly named Robert N. Broadbent Las Vegas Monorail a reality and helped UNLV acquire the former Paradise Elementary School property.

Each year since 1977, the association has recognized outstanding alumni, as well as one non-graduate, for their professional achievements and contributions to the university. In 1996, the program was expanded to recognize individuals from each college.

"The intention of these recognitions is to salute academic performance and fine leadership in a variety of professional areas, and to serve as a point of inspiration to the generations of students that will follow," explains Jim Kirkwood, Alumni Association president.

College award recipients are:

- **Business:** Chip Johnson, '71 BS Business Administration.
- **Education:** Christine Chairsell, '83 BA and '85 MA Political Science and '01 Ed.D Educational Leadership.
- **Engineering:** Joseph Lombardo, '86 BS Geology and '91 MS Computer Science.
- **Fine Arts:** Kasey Baker-Benoit, '97 BS and '99 MA Architecture.



The UNLV Alumni Association named TV producer Anthony Zuiker (above) its 2003 Alumnus of the Year. (Right) Doug Broadbent accepts the Silver State Award from President Carol C. Harter on behalf of his father, the late Robert N. Broadbent.

- **Honors:** Mei Mei Wong, '93 BS Mathematical Sciences.
- **Hotel Administration:** Tony Santo, '84 BS Hotel Administration.
- **Liberal Arts:** Stavros Anthony, '87 MA Political Science and '99 Ph.D. Sociology.



Faculty Receive Awards, Grants for Student-Focused Teaching

Acknowledgment for UNLV's top teaching professionals often comes in the form of an expression of sudden recognition on a bewildered student's face or a word of thanks quickly shared between classes. Since 1988, thanks to funding from the UNLV Alumni Association, some of these extraordinary performers have received recognition of another kind.

Selected by a committee of alumni, three full-time faculty members are recognized at a luncheon each semester for the extra effort they invest in helping students learn. Faculty members are also invited to apply for funding of projects that extend special

learning opportunities to students.

"This awards program recognizes academic achievement and commitment to student learning and development," says Barbara Cloud, former associate provost for academic affairs. She collected and forwarded the nominations and project proposals to the association committee.

"These awards have special meaning because of the unique relationship between alumni and university faculty, and we are grateful to the alumni for continuing to recognize the classroom achievements of our hard-working and devoted faculty," Cloud says.

The 2003 Student Focus Award recipients are:

- Ralph Reynolds, educational psychology.
- Louis Kavouras, dance.
- Matt Tincani, special education.
- Ann McDonough, theatre arts.
- Andy Nazarechuk, tourism & convention administration.
- Richard Papenfuss, health promotion.

In addition, psychology professor Karen Kemtes received a \$5,000 Student-Centered Project grant. Her student-run program "Cognition in Aging Training for Southern Nevadans" researches the types of activities that stimulate brain activity in older adults.

License Plates Express Pride, Raise Funds

As the driver of the late-model sedan pulled up to the light, he beeped a greeting to the younger man in the pick-up truck that has seen better days. The second driver couldn't understand his connection to the luxury-car owner until he realized they both proudly display Rebel Pride license plates.

Since its introduction in 1998, the license plate program has raised nearly \$325,000 – proceeds of which benefit scholarship endowments.

As you might expect, some dedicated university leaders, such as President Carol C. Harter and Russel Kost, assistant vice president of alumni relations & development, drive cars with the customizable plates. But enthusiastic alums are getting into the spirit too. Currently, 3,000 Nevada drivers have the Hey Reb plates. "Alum" and "4 UNLV" are among the personalized messages seen around town.

"This program gives UNLV alums, faculty, friends, and staff an ideal opportunity to show off their commitment to the university while adding a personal statement to their vehicles," explains Fred C.

About The Association

The UNLV Alumni Association was established in 1967 to provide volunteer leadership, support, and resources that enhance the UNLV community. The organization bestowed its first scholarship in 1973 and, to date, has contributed more than \$5.9 million to the university in the form of scholarships, projects, major capital endowments, and program assistance.

The value of your UNLV diploma is maximized through your involvement and by giving something back to the institution that set you on your way. The association provides a significant and ongoing connection to the Rebel spirit.

Joining the association, either as an alum or a friend, is an easy and highly effective way of showing support for UNLV.

For membership information, call 702-895-3621 or e-mail alumni.relations@ccmail.nevada.edu.

Albrecht, vice president for university and community relations and the head of the UNLV Alumni Association. "Along with boasting about their affiliation, the plate owners help provide support for talented students, which builds a stronger institution for us all."

The standard plates cost \$60 initially and \$30 at renewal (in addition to regular

car registration fees). A personalized UNLV plate is sold for an additional \$96 initially and \$50 at renewal. UNLV receives \$25 of the initial fee and \$20 at time of renewal.

To download an application for a personalized plate, visit www.dmvnv.com/platescharitable.htm.

As Seen On TV

When the UNLV Alumni Association produced a new television advertising campaign this fall, some notable alumni answered the casting call. U.S. Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, '73 BA History, and former Clark County Sheriff Jerry Keller, '69 BS Biology, donned the Hey Reb mascot uniform in the commercials to encourage graduates to stay connected to the university through the association.

Elizabeth “Liz” Muto is having a banner year. The 23-year-old became a UNLV graduate in May, Miss Black Nevada in August, and Miss Black USA two weeks later. Muto is the first Nevadan ever to win any national pageant title – and she is determined to make the most of the opportunity.

“I definitely feel the weight of this crown,” the Reno native says. “I think this says to the rest of the country that Nevada has so much to offer, and I feel that I need to pave the way for Nevadans. We are a force to be reckoned with and I’m proud to carry that banner.”

Muto will carry that banner to the rest of the country as she embarks on a 100-city speaking tour this year. The tour, along

says, “so I didn’t think I had a chance at winning the Miss Black USA crown.”

With that in mind, she went for broke. Her risky performance earned the respect of the judges and her fellow contestants. “After my monologue, a number of women approached me and shared their stories with me. I realized that we all had taken different paths to get where we were and that, for many, the path had not been easy. Yet here we were – strong, talented and intelligent women with so much to offer the world.”

Muto admits that affection for fellow contestants is something that pageant participants often proclaim but seldom feel. As first runner-up two years in a row in the Miss Nevada pageant, Muto says she is very familiar with the intensity that most contestants

NEVADA KNOCKOUT

with appearances at numerous charity and civic events, comes with the crown and other prizes, one of which is a full scholarship to a university of her choice. Muto plans to use the scholarship to attend graduate school at UNLV after her reign ends. But for now, she’s concentrating on the 100-city speaking tour and her platform message.

“I have so many causes that I want to advocate,” Muto says. “I’d like to develop a non-profit organization that provides accessible and affordable after-school activities for children. I want to help at-risk children stay off drugs and out of trouble. And I also want to work with children who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, or placed in the foster care system.”

Muto knows that some may dismiss her platform as just typical beauty queen rhetoric. But she says her desire to serve as an advocate for children comes from her own life experiences, not from a need to impress judges. Abandoned at the Reno airport when she was just 10 days old, Muto is well aware that her life could have turned out much differently than it has.

“The two pilots who found me turned me over to Children’s Protective Services, and I was placed in foster care,” Muto says. “But I was lucky. I was placed with my parents – Tom and Catherine Muto – who were foster parents at that time. They adopted me, loved me, and raised me.”

Muto based the powerful monologue she presented for the talent portion of the pageant on her own experience as an abandoned child transformed by loving parents and on the story of child abuse victim Antwone Fisher. She had only a few days to write and practice the speech before delivering it before a packed auditorium. The lack of preparation time, however, was not her greatest concern; she was apprehensive about how her message would be received.

“I knew I was going to say that my black parents abandoned me and my white parents came and saved me,” Muto

Alumna’s risky pageant performance makes her the first Nevadan to win the Miss Black USA crown

By Laurel Fruth | Photo by Aaron Mayes

bring to such contests. The Miss Black USA pageant is different, she says, because judges place less emphasis on appearance and more on the goals and aspirations of the contestants.

“In other pageants, I never would have seen a heavier girl or a girl with short hair. These women were beautiful,” Muto says. “The Miss Black USA pageant is all about minority women who are politically astute and spiritually centered, and these values are reflected in all of the contestants. The beauty of the contestants radiated from the inside out.”

Muto was so impressed by the women she met that she is forming a coalition with other contestants so they can present a united front on issues affecting African American and other minority women.

“The best thing about having a national title is that now people will listen to what I have to say,” Muto laughs.

Once her reign has ended, Muto will return to UNLV to pursue a graduate degree in political science or an MBA. She didn’t even consider another university and credits UNLV with helping her define what she has become.

“I was really selfish when I entered college,” Muto says. “I was only interested in careers that would make me a lot of money and bring me a lot of prestige. But, as I learned more about myself, I discovered that I really do want to make a difference in the world.”

She plans to become active in politics and hopes one day to run for public office. But first she wants to ensure that her year in the spotlight is meaningful and productive. She says she’ll work hard to represent her state and her school—but she won’t stop being Elizabeth. When asked to speak at a charity fun run to support Adoption Awareness, Muto says she’d love to speak as long as she could also actually run the 5K event.

“I can give a speech in shorts and a T-shirt,” she proclaims in her most dignified and queenly voice. ■

“I knew I was going to say that my black parents abandoned me and my white parents came and saved me, so I didn’t think I had a chance at winning.”

— Elizabeth Muto,
’03 BS Business Administration



Perfect Pairing: Bryan Page, winemaker

Pairing fine wine with good food is just one component of a great dining experience, but for Bryan Page, '96 BS Hotel Administration, combining the two has turned out to be the main course in his career.

Now a formally trained chef, sommelier, and vintner, Page assigns dual credit for his love affair with the culinary life to his father, a former chef in Southern California, and to Julia Child, who he recalls watching on television as a child. At age 14, when other kids were still reading comic books, Page was experimenting with recipes from his mother's collection of cookbooks.

"I discovered that my mom owned the first book that Julia Child ever wrote and I ended up reading it cover to cover, copying everything that she did," Page says. "And then when my father retired and started cooking more at home, I started cooking more, too."

Even though culinary school would have seemed the natural path for Page after high school, he enrolled at San Diego State University, majoring first in civil engineering, then psychology, business management, and child development. He never quite found the match he was looking for until he realized that his life-long avocation should be his vocation. "Because I loved cooking so much I had always researched culinary schools, and when I finally decided to go, I knew it was the right choice," Page says.

It was while attending the California Culinary Academy in 1991 that Page got his first taste for making wine. While the rest of his classmates honed their craft on the San Francisco culinary scene, Page spent most of his time in Napa Valley, interning at *Wine Spectator* magazine, Haven's Wine Cellars, and Truchard Vineyards – the latter of which he returned to after graduation to work as an assistant winemaker.

"Working on smaller projects like Truchard's and Haven's was amazing because I had the opportunity to learn all about the process," Page says. "I had my hands in everything – from crushing to cellar management to bottling. I absolutely loved it all."

Despite his newfound affection for winemaking, Page didn't abandon his formal education. He worked as a chef at some of Napa's most renowned restaurants and cooked for some of the most respected names in the food and wine industry, including Baroness Rothchild and Claude Taittinger.

But then a serious leg injury made standing for long periods difficult and cut short his career in the kitchen. "After my accident, I realized that I probably wasn't going to be able to do what I'd spent my entire life training for," Page says. "So I figured that if I was going to have to be on the other side of the business, I was going to do it right. And that meant going to UNLV."

Page was chef of the UNLV Wine Club and graduated magna cum laude with an emphasis in food and beverage management and entrepreneurship. But it was while teaching with UNLV's summer studies program in Switzerland that Page's dream job began to take shape. While traveling in 1997 through



Geri Koday/UNLV Photo Services

the St. Emilion and Pomerol districts of the famed Bordeaux region in France, Page tasted the wines that he hoped someday to emulate. Later that year, he returned to Napa Valley and turned his dream into reality.

So far his passion is paying off. With his Page Wine Cellars now on its seventh harvest, Page has grown the production of his red Bordeaux-style table wine from a modest 60 cases in 1997 to approximately 850 cases today. In 2002, *Wine Enthusiast* magazine awarded his 1999 vintage a 93 rating, giving it the prized designation "Cellar Selection."

"Sometimes I can't believe that I'm already on the fifth release of my own label," says Page, referring to his 2001 vintage that will be released this spring. "It's a lot of hard work but I can't imagine doing anything else. Cooking provides instant gratification, but winemaking requires a sustained level of heart and soul, from the harvest until the time when the wine is ready to release."

Recently engaged to be married, Page is now looking forward to a new chapter in his life, one that includes growing his winery to about 3,000 cases per year and making the best product he can. "My goal is to make amazing wine. I just want to continue doing this one thing and do it really well."

— Gian Galassi

To learn more about Page Wine Cellars, visit www.pagewinecellars.com.

■ 1970s

Jose A. Cardenas, '74 BS Political Science, is chairman and partner in the international practice group of Lewis and Roca law firm in Phoenix. A graduate of Stanford Law School, he previously served as law clerk to Robert F. Peckham, chief judge of the U.S. District Court of Northern California. He is president of the state's Arizona-Mexico Commission and vice chairman of Greater Phoenix Leadership. He also serves as a board member of Chicanos Por La Causa, Center for the Future of Arizona, Arizona Family Housing Fund, and the

Greater Phoenix Economic Council. He received the Arizona Civil Liberties Union's Civil Libertarian Award in 2002.

Thad Martin Major, '74 M.Ed., is retired from the Clark County School District. He lives in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, with his wife of 33 years.

Dr. Jerry W. Chernik, '75 BS Zoology, is a dentist in Wasilla, Alaska. He received his doctor of dental medicine degree from Oregon Health Sciences University and previously served in

the U.S. Dental Corps. He and wife Kris have a daughter, Shelby.



Fong

Kenneth W. Fong, '78 BS Management, was elected the 2004 president of the Las Vegas chapter of the Institute of Real Estate Management. A certified property manager, he is a partner-manager of Fong and Associates, which manages shopping centers and offices in Nevada. He holds an MBA from San Francisco State University.

Mark R. Vincent, '78 BS Accounting, is director of the finance business services department for the city of Las Vegas. Previously he served as director of finance and business systems manager for Nevada Test Site contractors EG&G, REEC, and Bechtel Nevada. He and wife **Denise Robichaud**, '81 BS Special Education, have five sons, Nicolas, Douglas, Thomas, Brian, and Evan.

■ 1980s

Salvatore Semola, '81 BS Hotel Administration, is chief operating officer of Greektown Casino in

Good Cop, Smart Cop: Dennis Cobb, deputy police chief

When Dennis Cobb became a police officer, he figured his work-related travel would be limited to patrolling city streets. But since joining the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department in 1983, the political science graduate has expanded his policing skills by visiting more than 20 countries as a Fulbright Fellow and a White House Fellow.

"My travels from the Gobi Desert to the jungles of Columbia have given me a broad perspective of the underlying similarities of policing around the globe," says Cobb, '79 BA Political Science. "There may be different laws, but when it comes down to it, a domestic violence call in Beijing isn't all that different from one in Las Vegas."

Cobb, now deputy chief for Metro's Technical Services Division, was one of two officers from the United States awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in Police Studies in 1992. Two years later he became the first UNLV alumnus selected for the White House Fellows program. In the one-year appointment as special assistant to the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Cobb worked in 15 countries to develop policy recommendations on issues such as White House security and counter-narcotics use of unmanned airplanes.

Judging by his accomplishments, Cobb clearly found his calling. Yet, like many college freshmen, he had just a vague notion about his future career when he entered UNLV. A guitar player, he originally pursued a teaching degree to ensure he wouldn't have to lead a starving musician's life. Inspired by professors Jerry

Simich and Andy Tuttle, Cobb switched majors to political science.

After graduation he tried a few professions, including substitute teaching and firefighting. "When I became a reserve police officer, I discovered that I'm more suited to the self-determined environment of policing. In firefighting, everything is reactive – I liked going out to look for stuff."

Cobb now oversees more than 550 employees, including those in facilities management, motor vehicle fleet, communications, civil fingerprinting, records, and information technology.

The overseas experiences gave Cobb a clear indication of the value of his education. "When we gathered for a photo

of all of the White House Fellows, I learned that I was the only one with just a bachelor's degree and the only one who didn't graduate from a place like Stanford or Harvard. It was exciting to realize what a good job UNLV had done to get me there.

"I think what I learned most as a student was how to satisfy my curiosity. It seems a liberal arts degree doesn't prepare you to do things so much as to know things – to know how to acquire knowledge. That's served me well."

Cobb lives in Summerlin with his significant other, Colleen Sisley, '95 BA and '97 MA Psychology, a marriage and family therapist.

— Cate Weeks



Geri Koday/UNLV Photo Services



Gerri Kodely/UNLV Photo Services

Animal Attraction: Sue Lynn Reif, zookeeper

A beloved 17-year-old diabetic cat named Mimi provides Sue Reif with all the animal companionship she wants – at home. While some animal lovers populate their houses with numerous pets of all species, Reif sees no need to do that. After all, what pet besides Mimi could compete with the wallabies, mute swans, exotic parrots, capuchin monkeys, capybaras, and African spurred tortoise?

Reif, '92 BA Psychology, is a zookeeper at California's Happy Hollow Zoo and co-founder of the Pacific Cetacean Group, a non-profit organization devoted to marine conservation.

While the aforementioned zoo animals are all well and fine, she admits a particular fondness for the ungulates. Say again? Ah, yes, ungulates, better known to non-zookeepers as hoofed animals. Reif is charged with the African pygmy goats, miniature horses, and the like. Her duties include training the animals, formulating their diets, feeding them, and, when necessary, giving them medication.

"I'm always keeping a keen eye to seeing if they're healthy and if their behavior is normal," she says. "As you work with them, you get to know their personalities and natural behaviors and that helps you spot when something is wrong."

Reif's favorite ungulate is the San Jose zoo's 22-year-old dwarf zebu—a species of cow from India—named Nicky (seen with Reif at left).

"I had to win him over when I was first working with him," Reif recalls. "He thought of himself as the head cow, and I was just the new guy on the block. I had to get him to respect me so that he would see me as the head cow. Now he lets me brush him and he loves his neck rubs."

Getting inside the zebu's head to figure out how to get him to regard her as "head cow" is just one example, Reif says, of how she has put her UNLV psychology training to work in her various jobs in the animal world.

"I well remember learning about conditioning and positive reinforcement in my classes," she says. "And positive reinforcement is exactly what I use when I'm involved in training the animals. I received an excellent education at UNLV, and I've really applied it to the work I do."

It was while at UNLV that Reif, who then was known as Sue Konopka-Reif, got her start working with animals. She landed an internship at the Kewalo Basin Marine Mammal Lab in Honolulu offered by psychologist and University of Hawaii professor Louis M. Herman, who is known worldwide for his intelligence and cognition work with bottlenose dolphins. When that internship ended, she moved right into a humpback whale internship offered by Herman.

Returning to UNLV after nine months in internships, Reif was more certain than ever that she wanted to work with animals. After she graduated, Herman hired her to do field work on his Humpback Whale Project. For three years during the winter months, Reif headed out each day in a boat to track the whales and collect data. How many whales in this pod? Where is this

pod located? What kind of behavior is this pod involved in? She also did underwater videography, recorded the whales' songs, and photographed their tail flukes. Humpback whales can be identified by the unique patterns on the underside of their flukes – making it possible for those studying them to track migration and association patterns.

Reif then moved to California to work with dolphins in Monterey Bay for the Earthwatch project. Her tasks were similar to those she had when working with the whales.

While there she also became involved with wildlife rehabilitation work through the Monterey County SPCA. Animals hit by cars and seabirds snagged by fishing hooks or injured by oil spills were common. Pelicans, owls, hawks, songbirds, opossums, raccoons, and deer were among the species brought to the center. The animals were treated, rehabilitated and, when possible, released into the wild. During that same period she became involved with sea otter rehabilitation through the world-famous Monterey Bay Aquarium, working with injured otters and orphaned otter pups.

Reif still finds time today to do marine mammal work. As an independent contractor, she is a gray whale observer, counting the huge animals as they migrate from Alaska to Mexico. And she does sea otter census work for the U.S. Geological Survey each spring and fall.

"I am very excited to do what I love," she says. "Life is too short to spend it doing something you don't truly enjoy."

—Diane Russell

Detroit. He recently received the Gaming Professional of the Year Award for the Eastern United States from the Casino Management Association. He began his career as a pit clerk and has held numerous management positions with Casino of The Sun in Tucson, Ariz.; the Reno Hilton Hotel and Casino; the Silver Eagle Casino Riverboat in East Dubuque, Ill.; and Station Casino in Kansas City, Mo. He has taught gaming management courses at UNLV and at UNR. He lives with his wife in Grosse Pointe Park.

Sheila S. Trexler, '82 BS Nursing, practices law in San Diego and Inland Empire, Calif., specializing in medical malpractice defense and other health-related legal cases. She received her law degree in 1985 from California Western School of Law and was recently named as one of the top 50 women litigators in California by the Daily Journal Inc., the publisher of 19 legal, real estate, and business publications.

Joseph Maloney, '83 BA Hotel Administration, is vice president of

operations for Park Place Entertainment's Sheraton Casino & Hotel in Robinsonville, Miss.

Vida Chow, '87 BA Hotel Administration, is director of event management for the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong. She manages catering sales and convention services.

Leon R. Symanski, '87 BS Management, '94 MPA, '01 JD, is an attorney in personal injury and workers' compensation at Craig P. Kenny Associates in Las Vegas. A former Rebel basketball player, he previously played professionally overseas and worked in the hotel industry for 10 years.

■ 1990s

Curt Miller, '91 BS Hotel Administration, is director of conference services at the Iowa State Center at Iowa State University in Ames. Previously he was general manager of Residence Inn in West Des Moines. He and wife Sarah have two sons, Jack and Colin.

R. Scott Barclay, '92 BS Management Information Systems, is managing partner of Main Advantage Tech-

nology Services, a Las Vegas consulting firm he founded in 1998. The company provides specialized technology services for the legal, financial, architecture, and real estate industries. He is a Microsoft certified systems engineer, Microsoft certified database administrator, and amicus attorney certified consultant.

Cliff Odle, '92 BS Secondary Education, is a firefighter, police officer, and emergency medical technician in Sunnyside, Calif. A former all-conference soccer player and team captain for UNLV, he played professionally for the Las Vegas Dustdevils and was a teacher and head soccer coach at Chaparral High School in Las Vegas. He operated his own bottled water company for six years before selling it to take on a new career as a firefighter and police officer. He lives in Santa Clara with his wife, Michelle, and their son, James.

Lyra Beck, '93 BS Hotel Administration, works for Harrah's Entertainment-Western Division and travels to properties in Lake Tahoe, San Diego, and Shreveport, La., where she lived prior to returning to Las Vegas.

Richard Baldwin, '95 BS Accounting, is director of corporate finance for International Game Technology and heads investor relations. He is maintaining his Rebel ties despite living among Reno's Wolf Pack.

Bob Glenn, '95 MA Communication Studies, is a professor at Owensboro Community College in Kentucky, where he coaches the speech and debate team. He was awarded the 2003 Outstanding Teacher Award at the 45th Annual Kentucky Communication Association's fall conference. He also is a representative to the legislative assembly of the National Communication Association.

Teri Helfrich-Love, '95 BA Communication Studies, and **Kevin Love**, '00 BS Civil Engineering, live in Hanford, Calif., where he is a civil-sanitary engineer for Carollo Engineers. They have two children.

Andre Lagomarsino, '95 BA English, is founder of Lagomarsino Law Offices, a general practice firm in Las Vegas. He received his law degree from Creighton University School of Law.

"Wanny" Mun-Yee Hui, '95 BA Hotel Administration, coordinates a biannual tradeshow for gifts, toys, and housewares in Dongguan, China. Previously she worked for Adsale Exhibition Services, a tradeshow company in Hong Kong.

Kyle Yahiro-Okino, '96 BA Hotel Administration, coordinates computer-related courses and is the webmaster for UNLV's Educational Outreach Division.

Lee Hocking, '97 BA Communication Studies, is a deputy prosecutor for the county attorney's office in Mohave County, Ariz. He handles criminal cases in Kingman and Lake Havasu City. He received his law degree from the University of Tulsa College of Law and was previously employed with the Las Vegas law firm of Blalock & Associates.

Scott F. Murray, '97 MA Ethics & Policy Studies, is a lieutenant colonel with the U.S. Air Force stationed in Honolulu. He is currently the director of the commander, Pacific Air Forces, Personal Staff Action Group.

He received a master's degree in air and space science from the USAF School of Advanced Air and Space Studies in 2003.

Patrick Smith, '97 BA Communication Studies and '01 MPA, is an account executive with The Rogich Communications Group in Las Vegas. He focuses on government and community affairs.

Jody Walker, '97 BS Civil Engineering, has opened the firm Walker Engineering LLC in Las Vegas.

Man-Auk Chun, '98 BA Hotel Administration, is senior sales manager at the Sheraton Grande Walkerhill Hotel in Seoul, South Korea.

Sangmi Park, '98 BA Hotel Administration, and **Jinho Lee**, '97 BA Hotel Administration, live in Seoul, South Korea, where he is a financial consultant manager for AIG.

Stacey Andrews Sawyer, '99 BA Communication Studies, is the morning and noon meteorologist for KAMC 28, an ABC affiliate, and

KLBB 13, a CBS affiliate, in Lubbock, Texas. She started her weather career interning at KOVR in Sacramento, Calif., before moving on to KEVN in Rapid City, S.D., and KRCR in Redding, Calif. She has three dogs, named Vegas, Nevada, and Sahara.

Leah A. Ayala, '99 BA Environmental Studies and Political Science, '02 JD, is an associate attorney in the litigation department of Lionel Sawyer & Collins in Las Vegas. Her practice includes tobacco litigation, criminal writs of habeas corpus, probate, and contract formation and disputes. She also does legal work with local and state government agencies. Previously, she served as judicial extern to U.S. District Judge Philip M. Pro.

Ka Kei "Karrie" Yuen, '99 BA Hotel Administration, is an assistant sales manager at The Royal Garden Hotel in Hong Kong.

■ 2000s

Carl J. Alstatt, '00 BS Finance, is a first lieutenant in the Air Force. He graduated from pilot training in May

2002 and flew a C-130 aircraft in Operation Iraqi Freedom and in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Cheryl Berry, '00 BS Hotel Administration, is assistant club manager at Hill Air Force Base in Ogden, Utah. She previously worked at Hurlburt Field in Florida.

Steven "Carson" Booth, '00 BA Computer Science, is director of information technology for Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Europe/Africa/Middle East Division. He lives in Brussels, Belgium.

Rizzalyn E. Viernes, '00 BS Civil Engineering, is a lieutenant with the 9th Civil Engineer Squadron at Beale Air Force Base in California. She received the 2002 Company Grade Officer Award.

Brian R. Irvine, '01 JD, is an associate attorney with Jones Vargas in Las Vegas. After graduation, he was selected from hundreds of applicants to serve as judicial law clerk for Melvin Brunetti, senior judge for the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

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Aaron Whitman, '01 MA Architecture, is job captain for ZGA Architects and Planners in Boise, Idaho. He is working on projects for St. Luke's Regional Medical Center and for the General Services Administration.



Whitman

Shelly Marshall, '03 BS Human Services Counseling, and **Michael Salay**, '93 BS Business Administration, were

married Dec. 20 at UNLV's Richard Tam Alumni Center. The couple honeymooned in New York and Washington D.C.

In Memoriam

Robert Jay Kendall, '81 BA Psychology, died Aug. 11, 2003. He held flight instructor ratings for commercial and multiengine planes and was a musician, paralegal, and pharmacy technician. He was a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association;

UNLV Alumni Association; and Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary Catholic Church in Las Vegas.

Michael Derwood Williams, '02 MS Social Work, died Nov. 3, 2003, of a major coronary. He was employed at Bechtel Nevada as an employee assistance program counselor. He previously worked at the Center of Independent Living and was a director for the United Way's foster children program. He is survived by his wife,

President's Message

continued from page 2

pleased to find that I received favorable ratings on many items, the need for greater infrastructure support for students, faculty, and staff was identified. More specifically, improving our customer-service orientation in the business we conduct with students and providing greater internal support services for faculty are at issue.

I want to assure the campus and the community that the challenges cited in both evaluations are being explored fully, taken seriously, and will be addressed. I have already initiated discussions about several of these points, and I consider myself accountable for setting concrete goals directed at producing timely and positive results. I am clear that a favorable evaluation does not allow us to rest on our laurels; many challenges lie ahead, and I look forward to meeting them with the same vigorous, practical approach that I have traditionally adopted.

Additionally, I have outlined several goals that I plan to pursue in the coming years, and I would like to share them with you as well. These goals were included in my self evaluation, which was part of the evaluation process, and, though many of you may be familiar with them, I believe they serve as a concise reminder of some of UNLV's most important projects. Thus, in the coming years, I plan to accomplish the following:

- Continue to pursue the planning for a capital campaign through the UNLV Foundation with the goal of significantly raising the bar for private giving among members of the UNLV extended family.
- Continue to be actively involved in shaping the campus physical master plan for future campus construction, expansion, land acquisition, and fund raising.
- Seriously undertake campus planning and preparations for the university's 50th anniversary celebration in 2007-08.
- Move forward with the construction of the Science, Engineering, and Technology Building and the planning of other desperately needed campus construction projects, particularly Greenspun Hall and the Student Services Building.
- Continue progress toward our goal of becoming a Doctoral/Research Extensive University (Research I) as defined by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Continue to seek tenants and partners for the Harry Reid Research and Technology Park.
- Continue to prepare for the implementation of the new admission policies at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- Continue to develop and build the professional programs on campus – the Dental School, the Law School, the School of Architecture, and others that are planned for the future, particularly in various health sciences disciplines.
- Continue to seek opportunities to work collegially and to seek collaborations with UCCSN partners.
- Continue to upgrade athletics competition and our commitment to enhancing student athlete academic success and graduation rates.
- Continue to identify community linkages and collaborative opportunities for the benefit of the entire community and state of Nevada.

I have also identified several of my ambitions as president that I will share. To offer some context, I should explain that I have a vision of UNLV as one of the premier metropolitan research universities in the Southwest and ultimately in the United States. This vision includes the following outcomes:

- UNLV will be a significant leader in the development of the higher education system in Nevada and will have a unique set of programs and research emphases to offer the region, state, nation, and world at large.
- UNLV will successfully combine excellent undergraduate teaching with superb research productivity.
- UNLV will reach the Carnegie Foundation's Doctoral/Research Extensive classification (Research I) within the next five to seven years.
- UNLV will conduct a capital campaign and, ideally, will raise an unprecedented amount of private support. Among other campaign goals, these funds will be used to create endowed chairs in a dozen or more areas through which we can create internationally recognized centers of excellence.
- UNLV will become an indisputable resource and partner in economic development and diversification, health care, fine and creative arts activities, highly competitive athletics, and community development.
- UNLV will transform, in every way, our community.

I hope sharing these goals and ambitions offers you some additional insights into our collective vision for the campus. Once again, I want to thank you for your support of UNLV. I feel we are enjoying a period of renewed commitment and unparalleled optimism, as well as the esprit de corps that naturally emanates from the shared pursuit of an inherently noble cause. I look forward to pursuing that cause, as I have in the past, with genuine enthusiasm and unwavering dedication. ■

Preschool

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expects the center to serve as many as 400 families, more than double the 180 served at the old preschool. The center also plans to expand its schedule so that it no longer closes during winter and spring breaks.

The entire community, not just UNLV, benefits from the new facility, Hall says. With the enhanced resources, the college is expanding its leadership in early childhood education. In addition to serving as a model for other centers, UNLV will offer development programs to early childhood educators throughout the valley.

Campus Within A Campus

The center, which was designed by architect Eric Strain of Assemblage STUDIO in Las Vegas and built by Isaac Building and Design Co. Inc., features six buildings with a total of 12 classrooms situated around a large courtyard. "It was designed with a village in mind because we really wanted a strong feeling of community," Lyons explains. "That's why we wanted several smaller buildings rather than just one or two large ones. It's intended to be like a campus within a campus."

The main building houses the infant classrooms – something new for the center, which until last month served only children ages 12 months to 5 years, but now takes children as young as 6 weeks – administrative offices, and teachers' prep room. The family resource center is staffed to help parents with their computer research on children's issues and to help them find books and materials appropriate for their children.

The other buildings contain classrooms and one large multipurpose room for group activities, including children's cooking and creative movement programs. The multipurpose room also is the setting for family events, such as presentations on pediatric CPR, nutrition, and the ever-popular sessions on managing childhood behaviors.

The buildings are wired to accommodate the latest in computer technology as well as equipment used by students with special medical needs. UNLV's program is dedicated to the philosophy of "inclusion," which refers to making classrooms available to all students, including those with disabilities.

"As many as 10 to 15 percent of our students have disabilities," Lyons says. "We



The Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center was designed as a small village with six buildings surrounding a large central courtyard.

believe that all children belong together and that children with disabilities have the right to be in the same classroom that they would if they did not have a disability. This benefits all the children as they learn to accept people who are different from themselves. One of our goals is building a community of people who are accepting of diversity."

The center's inclusion policy dates back about eight years. At that time, the Clark County School District selected it as the model for preschools serving children with disabilities. School district specialists assist the center in areas such as speech and language, occupational therapy, and mobility.

Learning Outside the Classroom

The center's outdoor play area is both attractive and large. A small patio for each classroom can be closed off for small-group activities or opened so children can flow into the main courtyard. A bike path encircles the courtyard, which is divided into smaller play zones with grassy areas, sand pits, art centers, and water features. A variety of age-appropriate equipment helps develop both fine and gross motor skills.

"Because we want the playground to be a true learning experience for the children, we have a teacher who is hired just for the playground," Lyons explains. "She does a complete daily lesson plan. On any given day, children may be able to choose from art and dramatic play opportunities as well as a large activity such as an obstacle course."

"We know that the children's educational experience doesn't begin and end in the classroom, and we wanted our new center to reflect that."

A Community Project

The center was built with funds donated to the university by local community

members. In addition to the fees paid by the families who use the center, its operations are supported by student government and the College of Education with some state and federal support.

"Without the support of Lynn Bennett and her late husband, William, this center never would have been possible," Hall says. "Between their \$5 million donation for this center and their previous donation that made possible the William Bennett Professional Development Center here on campus, the Bennetts have had a tremendously positive impact on not only services provided to children, but also on the undergraduate and graduate education programs offered by our college. These centers will be vital in assisting us in preparing the next generation of teachers for our community and our state."

Retired Las Vegas pediatrician Joseph Lapan and his wife, Joan, also donated thousands of dollars, Hall says. "Dr. Lapan for many years has taken a sincere interest in the needs of the community's children, and we are thankful that he chose to lend his support to this worthwhile project."

Additional support has come from IBM, which donated Little Tykes Young Explorers computers, and from Mountain States Wholesale Nursery, which donated landscaping materials.

"I feel we've accomplished a great deal already and have a solid track record of providing an excellent educational experience for the community's youngsters," Hall says, "but with this outstanding new facility we have our sights set even higher." ■

For more information, call the Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center at 702-895-3779 or visit www.unlv.edu/centers/preschool.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EVENTS

- Feb. 18** Board Meeting. 6pm. Tam Alumni Center.
- March 12** Dinner Theatre - Rip Taylor's *It Ain't All Confetti*. 6:30pm. Tam Alumni Center.
- March 17** Board Meeting. 6pm. Tam Alumni Center.
- March 30-31** Grad Fair. 11am-2pm. Tam Alumni Center.
- April 16** Scholarship Luncheon. Noon. Tam Alumni Center.
- April 21** Board Meeting. 6pm. Tam Alumni Center.

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

February

- 6-15 Nevada Conservatory Theatre:** *Lenny*. Feb. 8 & 15, 2pm; Feb. 6-7, 12-14, 8pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 9 Music:** Faculty Bassoon Recital, Janis McKay. 7:30pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3929.
- 10 University Forum Lecture:** "Korea: Land of the Morning Calm." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 11 Music:** UNLV Symphony Orchestra Concert. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 12 University Forum Lecture:** "Abraham Lincoln, Slavery and American Memory." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 13 The World Stage:** American Spiritual Ensemble. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 14 MBA Infosession:** Noon. West Charleston Library Theater. 895-1367.
- 16-28 Art:** Sean Slattery MFA Exhibition. Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery. 895-3893.
- 17 Music:** Master Flute Recital, Mary Pluenneke. 4pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3332.
- 18 Charles Vanda Master Series:** Moscow Festival Ballet performing *Carmen* and *Paquita*. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 18 University Forum Lecture:** "Decorating Your Home the Feng Shui Way." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 19 Nevada Business Hall of Fame Induction:** 6pm. Off-campus. 895-3362.
- 20 Music:** UNLV Jazz Ensembles. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 20-22 Nevada Ballet Theatre:** *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Feb. 20-21, 8pm; Feb. 21-22, 2pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787 or 739-3267.
- 22 Best of the New York Stage:** Marvin Hamlisch featuring the UNLV Classics and Jazz Orchestras. 4pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 23 MBA Infosession:** 5:30pm. Moyer Student Union Fireside Lounge. 895-1367.
- 24 University Forum Lecture:** "Seeing Ourselves Through the Mirror of Law: Views of Human Nature Reflected in American Law." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 25 UNLV Career Day 2004:** 9am. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3928.



James Galway
March 26

- 26 Music:** UNLV Wind Orchestra Concert. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787 or 739-3267.
- 27 Music:** UNLV Chamber Orchestra Concert. 2:15pm. Beam Music Center, Room 160. 895-3949.
- 27-28 Dance:** Dance Salad Concert. Feb. 27-28, 8pm; Feb. 28, 2pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 27-29 Nevada Conservatory Theatre University Company:** *Emerald Eagle*. Feb. 29, 2pm; Feb. 27-28, 8pm (also March 3-7). Black Box Theatre. 895-2787 or 739-3267.
- 28 Las Vegas Philharmonic:** Northern Exposures Concert. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787 or 739-3267.
- 29 Music:** Master Singers Concert. 4pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3377.
- 29 Theater:** *The Vagina Monologues*, sponsored by Women Against Violence and the Women's Studies Department. 7pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 1-13 Art:** James Hough MFA Exhibition. Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery. 895-3893.
- 2 Music:** Faculty Flute Recital, Richard Soule. 7:30pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3377.
- 3-7 Nevada Conservatory Theatre University Company:** *Emerald Eagle*. March 7, 2pm; March 3-6, 8pm (also Feb. 27-29). Black Box Theatre. 895-2787.
- 4 University Forum Lecture:** "The Past and Future of Environmentalism." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 4 Charles Vanda Master Series:** Moscow State Symphony featuring Navah Perlman. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 5-7 Music:** UNLV Opera Theatre presents Gianni Schicchi and Suor Angelica. March 5-6, 7:30pm; March 7, 3pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 8 University Forum Lecture:** "The Oldest Mummies in the World: Chinchorro." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 8 Music:** UNLV Jazz Ensemble. 7:30pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-2787.
- 11 MBA Infosession:** 5:30pm. Moyer Student Union Fireside Lounge. 895-1367.
- 12 Best of the New York Stage:** Newport Jazz Festival 50th Anniversary Tour. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 12-21 Nevada Conservatory Theatre:** *Rip Taylor's It Ain't All Confetti*. March 14 & 21, 2pm; March 12-13, 19-20, 8pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 14-27 Art:** MFA Exhibit, Carrie Jenkins. Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery. 895-3893.
- 18 Music:** UNLV Jazz Ensemble I. 7:30pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 18 Nevada Small Business Development Center:** Loan Expo. 6pm. Off campus. 895-4270.
- 19 MBA Infosession:** Noon. Green Valley Library. 895-1367.
- 21 Las Vegas Philharmonic:** Classical and Transcendent Concert. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787 or 739-3267.
- 22 University Forum Lecture:** "The Desert and the Self: A Trek to Bright Angel Point." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 24-28 Nevada Conservatory Theatre University Company:** Ten-Minute Play Festival. Mar. 24-27, 8pm; Mar. 28, 2pm. Ham Fine Arts Building. 895-2787.
- 25 University Forum Lecture:** "Shamans and Indigenous Healers." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 26 Charles Vanda Master Series:** Sir James Galway. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 26-28 Nevada Ballet Theatre:** *Classic Crossings*. Mar. 26-27, 8pm; Mar. 27-28, 2pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 28-Apr 10 Art:** Miguel Rodriguez MFA Exhibition. Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery. 895-3893.
- 29 Music:** Sierra Winds in Recital. 7:30pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3738.

March



Parsons Dance Company
April 16

April

- 1 University Forum Lecture:** "From Trenchtown to Babylon: Marketing Early Reggae Music in America." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 1 MBA Infosession:** 5:30pm. Moyer Student Union Fireside Lounge. 895-1367.
- 1 Music:** Bright Light City Bassoon Ensemble. 7:30pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3332.
- 9 Nevada Opera Theatre:** *Madame Butterfly*. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3827.
- 12 University Forum Lecture:** "Urban Architecture: The City After Now." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 14 Music:** UNLV Community Concert Band. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3733.
- 15 Music:** 18th Annual Chamber Chorale Home Concert. 7:30pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3008.
- 16 Best of the New York Stage:** Parsons Dance Company. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 16-25 Nevada Conservatory Theatre University Company:** *Floyd Collins*. April 18 & 25, 2pm; April 16-17, 21-24, 8pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-2787 or 739-3267.
- 19-May 1 Art:** Juried Student Exhibition. Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery. 895-3893.
- 20 University Forum Lecture:** "Folksongs and the U.S. Labor Movement: A Commonwealth of Toil." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 20 MBA Infosession:** Noon. Las Vegas Library. 895-1367.
- 20 Music:** UNLV Symphony Orchestra, Huntzinger Concerto Competition. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 22 University Forum Lecture:** "The Incorporation of Mexican Americans into U.S. Society." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 22 Music:** UNLV Symphonic Winds Concert. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3733.
- 22 Music:** Morelli Quintet. 4 pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3332.

Want to catch
a game?
Rebel athletics schedules
and news are available at:
<http://unlvrebels.ocsn.com>

- 23 Music:** UNLV Chamber Orchestra. 2:15pm. Beam Music Center, Room 160. 895-3949.
- 25 Music:** Nextet with Jed Distler. 7:30 pm Beam Music Center. 895-3332
- 26 Music:** UNLV String Chamber Orchestra. 7:30pm. Beam Music Center. 895-3949.
- 27 University Forum Lecture:** "Looking for War: Readings from a New Book of Short Stories." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 27 Music:** UNLV Jazz Ensembles. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 29 University Forum Lecture:** "Japan's Emerging Strategy for the 21st Century." 7:30pm. Barrick Museum Auditorium. 895-3401.
- 30 Dance:** Black Box Dance Concert. Apr. 30-May 1, 8pm; May 1-2, 2pm. Ham Fine Arts Building. 895-2787.
- 30 Music:** UNLV Concert Singers and Chamber Chorale. 7:30pm. First Christian Church, 101 S. Rancho Dr. 895-3008.
- 30 Nevada Conservatory Theatre:** *A View From the Bridge*. 8pm (also May 2-9). Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 14-16 Nevada Ballet Theatre:** *Giselle*. May 14-15, 8pm; May 16, 1pm & 4:30pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787 or 739-3267.
- 15 UNLV Commencement:** 9am & 2pm. Thomas & Mack Center. 895-3229 or commencement.unlv.edu
- 16 Music:** UNLV Childrens Chorale. 6:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-3008.
- 20 Music:** Duquesne University Tamburitans. 7:30pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 22 Performing Arts Center Season Finale:** Hal Holbrook in *Mark Twain Tonight: 50th Anniversary Tour*. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787 or 739-3267.
- 23 Arnold Shaw Popular Music Research Center:** Ruth Brown Tribute Concert. 2pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-2787.
- 28 Music:** Desert Chorale's Annual Memorial Weekend Concert 2004. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-2787.
- 5-6 Nevada Ballet Theatre:** Academy of Nevada Ballet Theatre Annual Recital. June 5, 7pm; Jun 6, 2pm. Ham Concert Hall. 895-4712 or 739-3267.

June

May

INFORMATION

- Athletic Events:**
(702) 895-3267
- Campus Operator:**
(702) 895-3011
- Campus Tours:**
(702) 895-3443
- Arboretum Tours:**
(702) 895-3392
- Fine Arts Events:**
(702) 895-2787
- Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery:**
(702) 895-3893
- Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History:**
(702) 895-3381
- University Libraries:**
(702) 895-2286
- University Infoline:**
(702) 895-3131
- UNLVtickets:** (702) 739-3267, toll-free (866) 388-3267, or www.unlvtickets.com

Events are subject to
change/cancellation

1968



Premiere Football

UNLV's first football team took the field on Sept. 14, 1968, when the school was still known as Nevada Southern University. The Rebels were coached by UNR graduate Bill Ireland. Playing its opener at the old Cashman Field, NSU defeated St. Mary's College from California 27-20 before 8,000 fans. Ireland's squad was led by quarterback Bill Casey, who also punted for the Rebels in his one year with the team. The team would win its first eight games over teams such as Azusa Pacific, San Francisco, and UC San Diego. The 69-0 drubbing of Cal Tech on Oct. 26 still stands as the biggest victory margin in UNLV history. Hopes for a perfect season were spoiled, however, in the season finale when Cal Lutheran came to Las Vegas and downed the upstart Rebels 17-13 on Nov. 23. The Rebels of 1968 wore a silver helmet with a logo shaped like a football filled with a Confederate Flag design. However, that decal was quickly replaced with a more appropriate emblem in time for the next season as NSU officially became UNLV in 1969. (Above) The inaugural team celebrates the end of the season with Mr. Las Vegas himself, Wayne Newton.





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